Webinar 1

Strategic Planning, Designing, and Developing of Competency-Based Education and Curriculum Review and Reform

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Introduction

Countries invest in education as the foundation for developing necessary human capital. This is the basis from which citizens gain the knowledge, skills and values to contribute to social and economic development. Curriculum has increasingly become the avenue through which the aspirations of nations have been channelled. The choice of any curriculum approach is dependent on what the country’s perceived or defined educational needs are. In this regard curriculum planning, design and implementation, monitoring and evaluation are critical stages which eventually define the worth of any curriculum.

African countries find themselves at different levels of educational change and reform. Countries revise the national curriculum to meet contemporary and future needs. Curriculum programmes and standards in several countries serve as both professional and administrative guidelines for the design of textbooks and learning materials and for teaching, learning, and assessment. The education systems in the various African countries were greatly influenced by the countries that colonized them. In this regard often education reflected the kind of curricula that were embraced by the colonizers i.e. British, French, Portuguese etc. As the African countries gained their independence they began to reshape their education systems to suit the needs of the countrymen and women. Over time, the curricula offered in many counties now largely represent the aspirations of the individual country but still have a global touch that enables Africans to adapt and fit into the global arena with ease.

The 21st Century demands on universal skills have seen countries embrace the Competency-Based Education for all levels of education. This has led to countries reviewing and reforming curricula in order to better facilitate the acquisition of defined competences according to their requirements. Changing the curriculum has been viewed and used as an effective way to change classroom practice and to influence student learning to meet the needs of the ever-changing world (Cai & Ni, 2011). Thus, the following discussion on planning & designing a Competency-Based Curriculum brings light to the community of practice, the strategies, experiences, successes and challenges that have influenced different countries.

The Shift to Competency-Based Curriculum

According to IBE-UNESCO (2017) Competency-Based Curriculum “emphasizes the complex outcomes of a learning process (i.e. knowledge, skills and attitudes to be applied by learners) rather than mainly focusing on what learners are expected to learn about in terms of traditionally-defined subject content. In principle, such a curriculum is learner-centred and adaptive to the changing needs of students, teachers and society. It implies that learning activities and environments are chosen so that learners can acquire and apply the knowledge, skills and attitudes to situations they encounter in everyday life”.

The key strategy in redesigning the curriculum to ensure acquisition of the 21st Century skills is the inclusion of the core competences. This echoes the global trends of competencies in education such as used by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and countries such as Finland, Australia, and the United States. The ambition is to educate and prepare individuals for future and probably unknown life and work. The Competency-Based Curriculum seeks to reorient the learning from content to outcomes, with emphasis on formative assessment (assessment for and as learning), as well redesign of textbooks and standards to increase the ultimate function of education. Specific changes include adding the goals of helping students learn how to learn; cultivating information processing, knowledge acquisition, problem-solving, and cooperative learning abilities; and developing essential knowledge and skills in relation to lifelong learning (Guo, 2012).
I. The CBC Planning Process

Definition

According to UNESCO IBE, the curriculum planning is “The process concerned with making decisions about what to learn, why, and how to organize the teaching and learning process taking into account existing curriculum requirements and the resources available. At the general level, it often results in the definition of a broad curriculum framework, as well as a syllabus for each subject to be used as a reference by individual schools. At the school level, it involves developing course and assessment plans for different subjects. At the classroom level, it involves developing more detailed plans for learning units, individual lessons and lesson sequences”.

In this section, we focus on the planning at the curriculum level. Aligning the curriculum to national priorities is paramount since education is actually the engine of social, economic and environmental development.

Integrating National and Global Agendas in the Curriculum – Planning Process

Introduction

According to Faiz, B., (2019), “Education is the driving force for the national development and well-managed economic growth. There is no doubt in saying that the quality of a nation’s education determines the level of its national development”. A country with a well-managed education is a country with a well-managed economy. When planning the development of the curriculum, it is important to establish the place of education for the achievement of national social, economic and environmental priorities.

In this resource compiled for Webinar 1, we look at two examples of national development plans for two countries, Lesotho and Namibia. Take note that Namibia is not a GPE member, nor a member of KIX Africa 19 Hub. The aim for sharing some aspects of the national development orientation is for participants in this webinar to connect education to the high aspirations of their respective countries while reforming, reviewing or developing new curricula.

We also introduced the global 2030 agenda that all countries across the continents agreed to implement by 2030. We will get a discussion on how the sustainable development goals are important to feature in the curriculum implementation to keep learners aware of the trends the world facing and how to participate and get ready to achieve these goals while studying or in employment.

Case of Namibia

Extracted from the National Development Plan 5 found at https://www.gov.na/documents/10181/14226/NDP+5/

Part of the National Develop Plan Five (NDP 5), the Government established four integrated pillars of sustainable development:

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• **Economic Progression**

The goal of this pillar is to achieve inclusive, sustainable and equitable growth for the Namibian society: Introducing in school curriculum the notions of inclusivity, sustainability, and equity to prepare learners to grasp these important concepts to start thinking about economic growth.

*The desired outcome is to diversify the economy from reliance on primary industries towards greater contribution of secondary and tertiary sectors. In addition, the outcome looks at mechanisms to achieve the inclusivity to the majority of citizens to unlock their potentials for entrepreneurship and production of goods and services.*

• **Social Transformation**

The Goal of this pillar is to build capable and health human resources. Quality human capital is crucial to optimizing productivity and associated socioeconomic benefits to citizens. At this particular point in time, the Namibian population is undergoing a demographic transition where the age structure is changing from dominantly children to one dominated by working age population. There is potential for demographic dividend for Namibia, therefore the country should choose to accelerate demographic transition through investment in youth, education and health complimented with sound economic reforms and good governance.

*The expected outcome is improvement in Human development index.*

• **Environmental Sustainability**

The Goal of this pillar is to ensure a sustainable environment. Namibia is endowed with abundant natural resources such as wildlife, fisheries, forestry, minerals as well as a solar and wind regime that is suitable for renewable energy. Natural resources-based sectors are among the largest contributors to GDP and they employ more than 30% of the country’s workforce.

The desired outcomes are: sustainable management and utilization of natural resources and sustainable management of the environment.

• **Good Governance**

The goal of this pillar is to promote good governance through effective institutions. Good governance, responsive institutions and an engaged citizenry are the bedrock of democracy and sustainable development. Namibia’s economic, social and environmental future rests on its ability to put people at the centre of decision making. During NDP5 Namibia wants to continue to be safe, secure, peaceful and upholding the rule of law; to be the most transparent and accountable nation in Africa; and to improve service delivery to the satisfaction of its citizen.

**Fundamental Question:** How can these pillars be infused into the school curriculum for the conceptualisation of the roadmap followed by the country at the foundational level in basic education?

**Case of Lesotho – National Development Plan**

To achieve the National Vision goals and to reduce poverty and achieve sustainable development, the NSDP strategic goals will be to:

- **Pursue high, shared and employment creating economic growth**
  The most effective way out of poverty is the creation of opportunities for employment. The Plan therefore seeks to establish the pre-conditions for high, sustainable and private sector led economic growth coupled with faster job creation up to 2016/17 and beyond. This Plan targets the attainment of 50,000 private sector jobs and long-term GDP growth of 5% per annum, which will double the size of our economy every 16 years. The key strategies for creating high and shared growth are:
  - Mobilization of domestic and foreign savings and improving the investment climate;
  - Promoting economic diversification;
  - Improving quality and competitiveness of the labour force;
  - Facilitating technology transfer and partnerships for research;
  - Building minimum infrastructure platform, especially to link production centres and markets and to facilitate external trade and
  - Promoting global integration and trade; and
  - Development of the private sector.

- **Develop key infrastructure:**
  Lesotho needs to identify and develop the minimum infrastructure platform that is necessary to propel growth. This has several components:
  - Water: The primary focus will be on developing water harvesting capacity and distribution networks to industry, households, other institutions and the Southern African region
  - Transport: The objective is to develop integrated transport systems. Priority lies with the improvement of national roads and access roads to production sites for agriculture, manufacturing, tourism, mining and other areas.
  - Energy: The electricity distribution network needs to be revamped to improve safety and reliability and to expand connections to households and potential growth areas, including institutions such as mines that are currently off-grid.
  - Information and Communication Technology: Lesotho has experienced a decade of high growth in the sector, driven by mobile phone technology. The main goal is to build on this success and continue to improve the operating environment and backbone infrastructure.
  - Shelter and Property Development: In order to develop well-planned towns and human settlements
  - Growth poles and Industrial hubs: Increasing urbanization and area specific comparative advantages offer opportunities for the development of growth poles in urban centres, including industrial and service sector nodes and hubs.
  - Sports: The Government will develop sports infrastructure, within a phased multi-year programme and through promoting private sector participation in sports infrastructure development that have high commercial viability.

- **Enhance the skills base, technology adoption and foundation for innovation:**
  In this thematic, we provide few examples:
The Government focus will be on:

(i) Improving relevance and applicability of skills;
(ii) Expansion and upgrading of TVET institutions to support growth sectors;
(iii) Transformation of tertiary institutions in the education sector to become world class in selected fields;
(iv) Improving performance and promoting enrolment in science and maths at all levels through increased quality of teaching and improvement of infrastructure;
(v) Enhancing the foundation for skills development by improving access, instituting appropriate curriculum and best practices in teaching from early childhood to high school;
(vi) Strengthening the national library system;

Technology and Innovation: Entrepreneurship development and competitiveness depend on use of appropriate technology. Lesotho needs to create an ecosystem that facilitates technology diffusion and adoption and to build good foundation for innovation in selected areas of science and other disciplines, such as law, economics and finance, to develop business technology.

- **Improve health, combat HIV and AIDS and reduce vulnerability:**
  Efforts will be made to improve the health of the nation and special focus will be given to programmes that are aimed at improving infant and child nutrition and both under-5 and maternal mortality. The key strategic objectives for the sector are to:
  
  (i) Improve the coverage of health facilities, their management and quality of services;
  (ii) Improve planning, health information and public financial management system;
  (iii) Improve quality and coverage of health prevention and education programmes, including use of ICT solutions;
  (iv) Improve procurement and dispensing systems for pharmaceuticals and essential supplies;
  (v) Promote blood donation and improve health laboratory system;
  (vi) Establish institutions for development of high-end skills and improve capacity and quality of education of existing institutions;
  (vii) Strengthen public-private partnerships and complementarity of services and promote research, including traditional medicine.

- **Reverse environmental degradation and adapt to climate change**
  Sound environmental policies and land use planning can make a significant contribution to long-term sustainable economic growth. To achieve this, there is need to:
  
  (i) Reverse land degradation and protect water sources through integrated land and water resource management;
  (ii) Improve national resilience to climate change;
  (iii) Promote biodiversity conservation;
  (iv) Increase clean energy production capacity and environment friendly production methods and explore opportunities for carbon trading;
  (v) Improve land use and physical planning as well as increasing densification and ringfencing towns to avoid human encroachment on agricultural land and other fragile ecosystems.

- **Promote peace, democratic governance and build effective institutions**
  Lesotho is a relatively young and stable democracy. The Government will focus on consolidating past achievements by continuing efforts to improve public sector effectiveness and efficiency in service delivery, improving public financial management, deepening decentralization, fight corruption, prevent and strengthen capacity to manage conflicts, maintain the rule of law and the independence and efficiency of the judiciary. It is important to institutionalise wide participation in policy-making and planning and create mechanisms to improve implementation of plans, strengthen public accountability and transparency and create the space for a well-functioning media. Lesotho is also a member of a number of regional and international blocs and should position herself to tap opportunities and
influence policy-making internationally. These can only be realised if we have effective, efficient and adaptable institutions.

**Fundamental Question:** How can these strategic goals be infused in the school curriculum for the conceptualization of the roadmap followed by the country at the foundational level in basic education?

**Education as a Contributor Factor to Sustainable Development Goals**

**Introduction**

In 2015, Member States of the United Nations (UN) adopted a global 2020 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The agenda is made of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), where education is a goal on its own, SDG 4. The SDGs establish development priorities to 2030\(^3\) and succeed both the Millennium Development Goals and the Education for All (EFA) goals, whose deadlines expired in 2015.

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<th>SDG Goals</th>
<th>Education Linked to Other SDGs</th>
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<tr>
<td>Goal 1</td>
<td>Education is critical to lifting people out of poverty.</td>
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<td>Goal 2</td>
<td>Education plays a key role in helping people move towards more sustainable farming methods, and in understanding nutrition.</td>
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<td>Goal 3</td>
<td>Education can make a critical difference to a range of health issues, including early mortality, reproductive health, spread of disease, healthy lifestyles and well-being.</td>
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<td>Goal 4</td>
<td>Education for women and girls is particularly important to achieve basic literacy, improve participative skills and abilities, and improve life chances.</td>
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<td>Goal 5</td>
<td>Education and training increase skills and the capacity to use natural resources more sustainably and can promote hygiene.</td>
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<td>Goal 6</td>
<td>Educational programmes, particularly non-formal and informal, can promote better energy conservation and uptake of renewable energy sources.</td>
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<td>Goal 7</td>
<td>There is a direct link among such areas as economic vitality, entrepreneurship, job market skills and levels of education.</td>
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<td>Goal 8</td>
<td>Education is necessary to develop the skills required to build more resilient infrastructure and more sustainable industrialization.</td>
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<td>Goal 9</td>
<td>Where equally accessible, education makes a proven difference to social and economic inequality.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goal 10</td>
<td>Education can give people the skills to participate in shaping and maintaining more sustainable cities, and to achieve resilience in disaster situations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goal 11</td>
<td>Education can make a critical difference to production patterns (e.g. with regard to the circular economy) and to consumer understanding of more sustainably produced goods and prevention of waste.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goal 12</td>
<td>Education is key to mass understanding of the impact of climate change and to adaptation and mitigation, particularly at the local level.</td>
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<td>Goal 13</td>
<td>Education is important in developing awareness of the marine environment and building proactive consensus regarding wise and sustainable use.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goal 14</td>
<td>Education and training increase skills and capacity to underpin sustainable</td>
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livelhoods and to conserve natural resources and biodiversity, particularly in threatened environments.

**Goal 16**
Social learning is vital to facilitate and ensure participative, inclusive and just societies, as well as social coherence.

**Goal 17**
Lifelong learning builds capacity to understand and promote sustainable development policies and practices.

**Fundamental Question:** How can these goals be infused in the curriculum to ensure that learners from primary to secondary schools can be engaged in understanding, supporting and participating at their levels to the achievement of these goals?

These two cases, including the role of education in the achievement of the remaining 16 SDGs, will be used to brainstorm around the rational of the curriculum components, such as content, teaching methods, even assessment, both formative and summative.

**Why Competency-Based Curriculum – What’s the Problem?**

**Introduction**

There is an increasing outcry on the quality of education all over the world, and especially in Africa, where it is recognized that children’s enrolment in schools has increased considerably but the quality of learning is unsatisfactory where learners attend schools but learn almost nothing (UNESCO UIS, 2017). There are multiple reasons why such situation prevail in many countries: (1) lack of qualified teachers, (2) Lack of appropriate learning resources, (3) the taught curriculum not matching the intended curriculum (issue of alignment), and (4) focus on the time spent in the classroom teaching than on what students learn, etc.

The few reasons as stated above can negatively affect the learners’ performance and over time, learners develop a huge learning gap that leads to school dropout and poor quality graduates. Even though schools may have qualified teachers and quality learning resources but if the focus is mainly on the covered content only, learners may acquire the knowledge but lack the thinking skills that permit them to develop problem solving abilities.

**Problem Definition**

The issue is when the learners acquire knowledge through different external sources, memorise the facts in order to be able to remember them if asked but without the ability to demonstrate what they can do with such knowledge. In such situation, learners may find themselves in a situation where they can fail to realise that what they know may be the answer to solve a given problem. Therefore, the acquired knowledge without a sound thinking skill leads to poor quality learning process. In real life, a student who has never been exposed to

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competency-based learning approach may at a certain point in time lack the skill of transforming the acquired knowledge into solutions of the encountered challenges.

**Distinction between Competence and Competency**

The two concepts are at times used interchangeably but they have different meanings and implications. Competency means what a person needs to have to be successful in lifelong expectations (Capacity). The competency models are less prescriptive and more future-oriented highlighting the future capacity of an individual (Woodruffe 1993). It is the expected capacity the learner should build to be successful in his/her career. A competency is written in broader terms and not directly measurable.

The competency is behaviour based, manner of behaviour and how the standard is achieved. In addition, the competency focuses on how people do it. It refers to the behaviour by which the skill or standard is achieved.

Competencies are statements of characteristics that graduating students should demonstrate which indicate they are prepared to perform and function independently in practice. They represent the integration and application of learned facts, skills and affective qualities needed to progress. On the other hand,

Competence means specific current ability or set of skills that are necessary to perform successfully (ability) Curricula expectations.

Competences are measurable knowledge, skills and attitudes the learner should possess to be successful in the career. Competence is skill-based, standard attained and what is measured. In addition, the competence describes what people can do. It means the skill and the standard of performance reached.

There is an interface between the two, which is the competent application of a skill is likely to make one act in a competent manner.

The competence and competency consist of three components:

- **Knowledge** - collection and retention of information in one’s mind. Knowledge is necessary for performing a task but not sufficient. For example, a person can read, describe how to cook food but mere description will not enable the learner to cook food, something more than knowledge is necessary to enable the learner to cook food. Therefore, the person also needs to have skills to translate knowledge into action.

- **Skill** - is the ability to demonstrate a system and sequences of behaviour, which results in something observable. Therefore, both knowledge and skills are required to perform a task.

- **Motive/attitude** - is an urge to achieve one’s goal. This continuous concern of a goal achievement directs a person to perform better.

The relationship between Competency and competence is: **Competency = competence and commitment**

**Why Competency-Based Education (CBE)?**

As we mentioned already earlier in this resource about the shift to Competency-Based Curriculum, the need for CBE is to ensure that learners can not only exhibit what they know but in addition they can demonstrate what they can do with the knowledge they have acquired. CBL is also to enable students to have a voice, choice and being agents in their own work. In CBL, students show what they know and they progress based on the demonstrated mastery of what they learned. It improves students’ engagement and ownership of learning. CBL increases the variability of students’ progress as they develop at their own pace and even through different
pathways. Therefore, Competency-Based curriculum (CBC) primarily focuses on the student’s demonstration of their desired learning outcomes as central to the overall learning process. It is largely based on the premise of student’s progression through the curriculum at their own speed, pace, depth and other similar parameters.

CBC standardizes learning outcomes and individualises the learning process. It integrates formal knowledge with learner experiences. It develops habits of inquiry and innovation. Even though the concept and limits of Competency-Based Education (CBE) are frequently unclear, there is a broad promise that CBE is the development of (1) clearly defined competencies, (2) a mapping of the curriculum to achieve the defined competencies, and (3) an assessment procedure aligned to the competencies (Jones, Voorhees, & Paulson, 2002). In general terms, the competencies are linked to the attributes of knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs). A Competency-Based Curriculum comprises a quantified, systematised body of learning activities intended to provide learners with the KSAs and the integrative experiences that propel them to the acquisition of competencies needed for a qualification (Jones, 2001).

**Identifying Competencies**

Competencies are neither curricula nor learning objectives (Kim, J., 2015). Competencies do not address the details of how the KSAs are to be packaged, the best methods for learning, or the criteria for attainment. What they do provide is a framework based on performance outcomes around which a curriculum is developed and delivered and against which performance can be measured. Thus, a competency-based curriculum is organized around competencies required for practice. It is also grounded in the empirically validated principle that students, when given appropriate instruction, can all master the prescribed performance outcomes.

In the planning phase, curriculum developers should establish the general and specific competencies that form the core foundation of the curriculum using the competency-based learning orientation. In the design phase of the resource for webinar 1, we will look in details the identification and development of the general and specific competencies. We will also discuss briefly about the establishment of learning experience.

**Policies Enforcing the Curriculum Change**

**Introduction**

Change is a common feature of the workplace and advocating change always makes nervous and unwilling the intended people who are invited to embrace the suggested change (Robbins, 1992). This human behaviour can be explained by the way the brain functions. Once a new suggested practice is different to the practice already wired in the human limbic system (the place that keeps memories and habits), the latter immediately and unconsciously rejects the suggested change because it is not part of the system; this reaction is considered as a normal process (Anne Grady, 2017). In principle and as change agent, it is important to accept the spontaneous rejection to change because it is a normal psychological defense mechanism of the human brain to preserve the already wired information from any loss without prior new experiences. The new learning experience requires practice and it happens in prefrontal cortex, the part of the brain responsible for higher level thinking and planning (Anne Trafton, 2012). What is important is how to engage those who initially rejected the change and carefully listen to the reasons of their refusal of that change and start the consultation process. According to Robbins (1992), it is important for the person who is invited to embrace change first to understand why change is happening in terms of how it will benefit the organisation. and ideally how will it benefit them. This is similar
in education, educators need to understand how the curriculum change will be beneficial to the schooling system in the country and especially how it will benefit them.

**Policies Related Curriculum Change**

As we said previously, resistance to change is a normal process because change threatens the natural habit patterns of human beings. This is true for a new role, a new way of doing things, new routine, etc.; the brain has to work overtime to learn to adapt and to familiarise itself to the change. To be successful in implementing the suggested curriculum change, decision makers need to articulate on the rational of the change on all the aspects of curriculum development and clearly articulate how the change will be implemented. The formulation of policies to accompany such change is paramount to ensure effective coordination of the identification of the change to be implemented, the consultation of all the involved stakeholders and the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the change. The following policies are important to ensure smooth curriculum change implementation:

**Education Change Management Policy**

This policy is the foundation of change management in any field of work and including in education. The policy institutes the desires and requirements for change in such a way they can be managed, monitored, evaluated and auditable to ensure the educational proceedings do not stop due to the change. This policy document should contain but not limited to the following (Xavier Bonal, 1995):

- Policy background information,
- Definitions,
- Objectives,
- Policy administration information; and
- Policy statements.

These five components of the policy constitute the basic requirements for change management. These components are not proposed to express the procedures or processes, but instead, establish the framework on which procedures and processes can be built upon. The change management procedures should be defined in the Change Management Procedures document. The Ministry of Education can develop a blueprint policy and all educational institutions may use the blueprint policy to develop theirs.

**ICT Policy for Education**

ICTs represent today’s great opportunities to realise quality education. Educational institutions are required to adjust the way they manage teaching, learning, assessment, even research while using ICTs. Therefore, it is important to have an ICT policy in education that will guide the technology-enhance teaching and learning in all educational institutions in the country.

**eLearning Policy**

Since the advent of COVID-19 pandemic, agencies within Ministries of education are looking at innovative ways of ensuring that learning never stops. These agencies are exploring or using online and or offline systems that permit learners to continue learning in the physical classroom and beyond. Therefore, it is important to develop
an eLearning policy that will guide how available technologies at schools may be used to ensure effective learning is taking place

**Professional Development Policy**

For any change in the curriculum, there is implication on the teaching, learning, assessment, and in some instances how to manage the classroom. For this to be successful, regular teacher continuous professional development programmes (TCPD) are required to ensure successful change management and implementation. It is therefore important to develop a professional development policy to guide and regulate the implementation of TCPD.

**Textbook and eTextbook Policy**

The development of learning materials is a critical aspect to realise quality education across the country. Without quality learning materials and especially an effective distribution process of such resources, an education system may fail to succeed. With the advent of ICTs in education, digital learning resources have become alternative and cost-effective resources in the education sector. To ensure successful development and distribution of textbook or digital textbook, it is important to develop a policy dealing with the whole process of design, development, quality assurance and distribution of these learning resources.

**Curriculum Policy**

UNESCO IBE\(^5\) defines curriculum policy as “*Formal decisions made by government or education authorities that have a direct or significant effect on the curriculum, its development and implementation. These decisions are normally recorded in a range of official documents*”. It is obvious that the development of the curriculum alone may not enhance the quality of education; a political support, guidance and commitment is paramount to ensure all stakeholders are pulling and moving in the same direction for the interest of the learner and to achieve the high national aspirations. A curriculum policy shall contain but not limited to:

- What the policy is all about, its aims and rational. In this case, the policy shall set out the responsibilities for the implementation of the curriculum in the established school's plan, the teaching and learning delivery plans and models.
- A policy statement highlighting the general curriculum requirements including the curriculum framework and the principles on which the curriculum is based. The statement shall highlight the responsibility of the schools to plan for the curriculum implementation and the development of the teaching and learning programmes’ delivery plans that address the requirements of the national curriculum framework.
- State to Whom the policy applies to, for example to all public schools from pre-primary to senior secondary.
- The context to which the policy shall be implemented; for example stating that the (1) learners and development are at the centre of a school’s curriculum, (2) the aim of the curriculum is to develop learners by empowering them with the knowledge, understandings, capabilities and values to participate as active members of their community and society.
- Determine the responsibilities towards the implementation of the curriculum by the School principals, School Boards, School Network Leaders and indicate who is the policy custodian.

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- The monitoring, evaluating and reviewing by indicating that the policy custodian monitors the policy. In addition, indicate that one of the tasks is to perform an annual scan of operation and review the overall implementation of the policy. Also indicate after how many years the policy will be reviewed.

Harmonising technical, social, economic, environmental and political dimensions in curriculum change

CBC planning is oriented towards a social logic in which all members of the learning community are equally valued, participate actively and are responsible for their own learning. Democratic orientation to curriculum development involves reflection on the forces affecting societies and relationships in order to understand and facilitate change. CBC is rooted in a democratic and emancipatory view of education that aims to enhance learning for all by providing the appropriate conditions for learning. This requires both learners and teachers to engage in dialogue and act as critical thinkers, which allows both to reflect on their own situation and in doing so they are empowered to enact change. Therefore, the implementation and planning of CBC requires the engagement and support of the whole school community. Key players who may influence curriculum change

- Global, regional and national trends /expectations of quality curriculum
II. The CBC Designing Process

Introduction

As any other types of curriculum orientation, developing a competency-based curriculum requires first conducting a needs analysis to determine the key concepts and skills that are currently taught within the country education system. Such needs analysis should look at the alignment of the current curriculum and the national educational priorities, the qualifications and accreditation requirements, current strengths the gaps of the curriculum in implementation. The needs analysis will determine which parts or components of the curriculum need to be revised. In this section, we discuss some important stages of the CBC design. Let us start with the identification of the theories supporting the competency-based curriculum.

Theories underpinning the Competency-Based Curriculum

There are several theories constituting the building block of the competency-based education. The CBE leans on the constructivist educational philosophy where teachers are facilitators with the responsibility of helping learners construct their own knowledge. CBE requires that teachers personalise learning opportunities to meet the needs of learners having diverse learning needs. Personalised and differentiated instructions are the common ways to provide tailor-made instructions to accommodate learners with mixed ability.

It is important to note that learner-centred and active learning paradigms are the building blocks of the CBE. The CBC model cannot be effective, even successful without the implementations of these two paradigms. Theories exemplifying the tenets of CBC include the following theoretical or conceptual frameworks:

   a) The learning theories

   The CBC built its foundation on the constructivism philosophy as it was mentioned earlier. Constructivism theory is closely interlinked to objectivism and cognitivism theories since learners are expected to create new knowledge (constructivism) using the acquired knowledge (objectivism) that they have deepened (cognitivism) to solve problems at hand.

   b) Understanding by Design (UbD)

   According Della McGuire from study.com, UbD is a CBE theoretical framework for teaching and assessing with the aim to achieve the understanding. The following are the component of the understanding by design framework:

   • The intent is deeper student understanding as well as the effective use and application of content knowledge.

   • Students are given autonomy as they perform demonstrations of their learning by explaining, interpreting, application, shifting perspective, empathy, and self-assessment. They are not required to memorise and regurgitate the fact given by the teacher.

   • Desired Results, Evidence, and Learning Plan are the steps that drive curriculum planning backward from the objectives.

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• Teachers coach students through their process of understanding. They ensure the learning is occurring and assess the student's meaning making and transfer of knowledge.
• Teachers participate in discussions with other subject matter experts in the quality and efficacy of the curriculum.
• Teachers use student data to make adjustments in the curriculum content or instructional methods so they are engaged in ongoing self-evaluation and improvement.

c) Jean Piaget’s Cognitive Development Theory
The development of a child occurs through a continuous transformation of thought processes. Although students are usually grouped by chronological age, their development levels may differ significantly, as well as the rate at which individual children pass through each stage. This difference may depend on maturity, experience, culture, and the ability of the child. Piaget believed that children develop steadily and gradually throughout the varying stages and that the experiences in one stage form the foundations for movement to the next.

d) Vygotsky’s Social Cultural Theory
The theory asserts that learning is an essentially social process in which the support of parents, caregivers, peers and the wider society and culture plays a crucial role in the development of higher psychological functions. Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory views human development as a socially mediated process in which children acquire their cultural values, beliefs, and problem-solving strategies through collaborative dialogues with more knowledgeable members of society.

e) Multiple Intelligence Theory - Howard Gardner
It suggests that the traditional notion of intelligence, based on I.Q. testing, is far too limited. Instead, Dr. Gardner proposes eight different intelligences to account for a broader range of human potential in children and adults. In order to capture the full range of abilities and talents that people possess, Gardner theorises that people do not have just an intellectual capacity, but have many kinds of intelligence including musical, interpersonal, spatial-visual, and linguistic intelligences.

f) Instructional Design Theory
An instructional design model provides guidelines to organize appropriate pedagogical scenarios to achieve instructional goals. Instructional design can be defined as the practice of creating instructional experiences to help facilitate learning most effectively. Instructional design is learner-centered, goal-oriented, focuses on real-world performance; focuses on outcomes that can be measured in a reliable and valid way; and a team effort.

g) Strategic Questioning/Essential Learning Questions
According to Zineb DJOUB (2018), strategic questioning or essential learning questions are a foundational theory in competency-based education where they are intentional, systematic and target students’ learning. Since education is defined as educating learners to think, the essential learning questions support learners to shape their thinking skills. Within such a process, students are not just listening and answering questions, but they are also involved in analysing their teacher and peer’s questions, raising more questions, taking turns to discuss each other answers, and evaluating them.

There are several resources available to provide guidance in reframing the questions you ask your students to emphasise those concepts essential to learning. Using essential learning questions will help stimulate higher order thinking among students.

**Competency-Based Curriculum Design**

1. **Backward design methodology**

   It is believed that the educators who did not go through rigorous teaching training design activities teach the way they were taught (Amanda Oleson & Matthew T. Hora, 2013). They often design activities using what they know from previous experience, which usually includes traditional approaches (e.g., lectures or demonstrations) to well established activities, rather than beginning at the “design codes” that need to drive curriculum work. Furthermore, results from activities, projects, and programmes are typically assessed only once: A “snapshot of knowledge” test at the end of the activity, project, or programme.

   The Backward Design methodology looks at how the ideal graduate should look like, then think of what the learners will need first and targets assessment and instructional strategies around those needs (Wiggins and McTighe, 1998). Backward design starts first with the desired results. Questions like “What is it that we want our audience to learn? What concepts need to be developed? Are they based on content standards? Is it about Life Skills?”

   Given that there are usually more concepts available that can be addressed in a curriculum, one must prioritize desired results. Guiding questions as follows may to determine what is desired:

   a) What is worth being familiar with?

   b) What is important to know or do? and

   c) What should be considered “enduring” understandings, things that are important for the audience to retain after they’ve forgotten many of the details?

   According to Wiggins and McTighe (1998), the following shall be implemented to determine what’s most important to include in the learning process (Suggested filters):

   a) Determine the “big ideas” that are essential for understanding. Do not “clutter” a curriculum with facts and ideas that are not going to having enduring value.

   b) What will allow for authentic learning experiences that involve learners the opportunity to “do” the subject rather than be told or demonstrated the subject?

   c) Concepts, processes, and/or skills that learners often have difficulty understanding or mastering are important ones to consider. Teach for understanding such that the learners can gain an understanding or master a skill.
**Backward Design Stages**

1. Identify Desired Results
2. Determine Acceptable Evidence
3. Plan Learning Experiences and Instruction

**Key components of a Competency-Based Curriculum Design**

Competency-based learning is a well-known approach to education that primarily focuses on the student’s demonstration of their desired learning outcomes as central to the overall learning process. It is largely based on the premise of a student’s progression through the curriculum (as their competencies are proven) at their own speed, pace, depth, and other similar parameters. Rather than just focusing on what learners are expected to learn in terms of traditionally defined subject content, a competency-based curriculum emphasises the various complex outcomes of a learning process such as skills, knowledge, and attitudes to be applied by learners.

Designing a competency-based curriculum is largely about creating varied opportunities for students that allows them to demonstrate important skills in authentic contexts. Competency-based curricula are usually designed around a set of key competences/competencies that can be cross-curricular and/or subject-bound. When designing the CBC, remember the golden rule based on the backward design principle. In designing a Competency-Based Curriculum, the following steps may be considered:

1. **Identification of General competencies**

   The first step in developing this kind of curriculum is to identify and map the general competency areas to a wide range of sources of information and techniques to collect them. These competencies offer a framework based on specific performance outcomes to develop a curriculum and measure performance. You can use subject matter experts, high performing students, educators, articles and others. The techniques you can use include focus groups, surveys, readings and observations. These competency maps are created by observing and interviewing top performing students so that their performance can be captured as a list of core competencies (Knowledge and abilities).

   To identify the general competencies, we can ask these fundamental questions:

   - What does a learner of a particular level look like in terms of capacity to do something?
   - What are the competences (Knowledge, skills and attitudes) that a learner needs to obtain in order to be competent?
   - What evidence will prove that the student can demonstrate mastery of a competency?

   Consider the alignment of those answers to the actual learner experiences by organising competencies into specific themes as discussed below:
2. Organising the General Competencies into Themes and Identification of Specific Competencies

The focus in this step is the context within which the general competences selected earlier will be operationalised. Based on the description of the competence parameters, indication of the disciplines that may be considered to provide the elements of content are highlighted. To be able to fully define a competency, reflect thoroughly on its composing elements. For instance, for public speaking, consider both delivery (body language, voice) and content (language, persuasion, organisation). The following questions can frame the goals specific elements around competency-based curriculum

- What are some of the specific goals and outcomes to be achieved?
- What is the content required to support the development of the specific competency in the curriculum?
- What are the instructional strategies and methods that are most effective in developing the specific competency?
- How will successful the acquisition of the competencies be measured?

Once the themes have been established and containing related competencies, then the overall specific competencies should be defined within the already established themes. You define specific competencies in each general competency area. Developing an accurate and precise description, including the competence statement will make the next steps much easier in the process of the curriculum development.

3. Establishing criteria for performance

For each of the competencies, the standards or rubrics by which one can measure the competence must be created. It is essential to describe several levels that define positive and negative achievement of the competence. This will help in gauging the effectiveness of the curriculum and find out what works well and what doesn’t for the learners.

4. Creating learning experiences

Once you have defined competencies and criteria for outcomes, think about how students will demonstrate these skills via learning experiences. There are multiple ways to demonstrate these skills, so make sure that the products of the assessment – the students’ work – are varied and interesting. The ideal way to recognise a competency-based learning experience is to look at the work the students produce and the learning environment in which they produce it. For instance, teachers and students use the identified competencies and outcomes to engage in regular, open reflection on learning. The essence is to empower students to be the real learning designers. Allow them to use the rubric to design a learning experience where they can demonstrate the learning outcomes and give them the responsibility of the planning, execution, and presentation of their work for assessment.

5. Assessing competency

A successful competency-based curriculum should enable students to apply and execute the desired knowledge, skills, and abilities in a relevant context. When assessing competencies, there is need to use a variety of assessment methods which will include formative and summative assessments as well as peer
and self-assessment. A combination of alternative modes of assessment provides the learner opportunity to engage in the process in different ways thus better bringing out their potential and ability.

6. Evaluating the effectiveness of the curriculum

As the curriculum gets implemented and students begin to develop their competence in various areas, there will be a lot of likely changes. It is therefore important to evaluate the efficacy of the curriculum to deliver competence, refine it to better meet the desired goals and then repeat the process to ensure ongoing effectiveness. In planning a CBC attention should be paid to how learners understand and recognise their success. Planning to include formative and summative assessment of competencies is a crucial aspect of overall curriculum implementation and development. CBC implies that knowledge is tacit, situated and gained through experience the learning, therefore, is situated and contextually.

Establishing Assessment Modalities

During the planning process, it is imperative to strategise how to measure if the learner has developed the desired competences. A successful Competency-Based curriculum will enable students to apply and execute knowledge, skills and the desired abilities (competences); it is important to plan how such measurement will be developed, implemented and in which conditions. To bridge the gap between curriculum and assessment, there is a need to establish the modalities in the planning phase and design its structure during the design phase. Further discussion related to the assessment modalities will be discussed in the design stage of this resource park. Under the development section, we will introduce the concept of “Constructive Alignment Framework” to ensure natural links between the outcomes target the achievement of the competence, the concepts and skills forming the competence, the teaching strategies and the formative assessment, and finally the assessment (summative) providing evidence that the learner has acquired the competency.

Classroom-Based Assessment indicators for Competency-Based Learning

Classroom-based assessments contribute to and build on the use of formative assessment in the classroom (Elaine Sparling, 2016). They happen during normal class time and resemble the learning that occurs daily. They capture the knowledge and skills that are not easily assessed in a timed pen and paper type examination and are assessed at a common level by the class teacher.

The concept of Classroom-Based Assessment (CBA) will be discussed in details in Webinar 3 “Assessment for Competency-based Learning”.

Competency indicators identify specific aspects of a competency that are transferable across subject areas or contexts. Competency indicators:

- Focus the scope of each competency
- Help educators determine which aspects of a competency are evident within learning outcomes, learning experiences or assessments
• Describe cognitive, affective or psychomotor behaviors to help identify situations where a competency may be applied or developed. One or more indicators may be used to identify situations that develop a particular competency.

The table below provides some examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competence</th>
<th>Indicator(s)</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Critical Thinking</td>
<td>• questioning and analysing evidence, assertions or assumptions</td>
<td>• I explain why I think, believe or act.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• demonstrating intellectual integrity, fairness and open-mindedness</td>
<td>• I take ethical responsibility for the implications of my thoughts or actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem Solving</td>
<td>• identifying what is known and what is required to clarify a problem</td>
<td>• I break problems into smaller or simpler parts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• assessing options to generate courses of action</td>
<td>• I choose between independent and collaborative problem-solving approaches.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Inquiry, Problem, Project, System Thinking, and Action on Learning, Case Study - Based Learning Methodologies

One of the dimensions of CBC is to provide real-life experiences to students. Considerations need to be given to planning opportunities for students to put into practice the skills they have learned in authentic situations which are beyond the confines of the classrooms or school at times. Competency-Based Education is learner-centered and advocate active learning. In this regard it entails a major shift from the traditional instructional methods where the teacher “tells” to embracing more participatory methods where the learner is at the center of the learning process.

CBC is advocating learning aligned to performance-based activities and the following learning models are suited to spearhead the competency-based learning:

a) **Inquiry-based learning** is an approach to learning that emphasises the student's role in the learning process. It is a form of active learning that starts by posing questions, problems or scenarios. Instead of memorising facts and material, students learn by doing. This allows them to build knowledge through exploration, experience, and discussion. This approach is governed by 4 phases which if well-articulated gives the learner the intended opportunities to achieve the designed learning outcomes. The phases are interaction; clarification; questioning and designing. The teacher’s guidance is critical in this process.
b) **Problem-based learning (PBL)** is a student-centered pedagogy in which students learn about a subject through the experience of solving an open-ended problem selected from a topic being discussed. Complex real-world problems are used as the vehicle to promote student learning of concepts and principles as opposed to direct presentation of facts and concepts. The process allows for learners to work in groups and develop skills used for their future practice. Such skills include working in teams, holding leadership roles, oral and written communication, self-awareness, working independently, explaining concepts, self-directed learning, researching and information literacy amongst others.

c) **Project Based Learning** is a student-centered pedagogy that involves a dynamic classroom approach in which it is believed that students acquire a deeper knowledge through active exploration of real-world challenges and problems. Students gain knowledge and skills by working for an extended period of time to investigate and respond to an authentic, engaging, and complex question, problem, or challenge.

d) **Interdisciplinary learning** According to Chris Imperiosi (2020), interdisciplinary learning is a concept based around the fact that every child learns differently, and thus a well-rounded curriculum that incorporates multiple disciplines and learning styles at once provides the best opportunity for a child’s development. However, it is not limited to preschools for young children; it’s used in many elementary schools, middle schools, high schools, and colleges to forge connections between different subjects.

e) **Systems thinking** is a holistic approach to analysis that focuses on the way that a system's constituent parts interrelate and how systems work over time and within the context of larger systems. According to systems thinking, system behavior results from the effects of reinforcing and balancing processes. This is a discipline that can be used to understand the role of systems theory in leading to the achievement of desired effect. The foundational principles associated with systems thinking include wholeness and interactive; openness; patterns; purposefulness; and multi-dimensionality.

f) **Acting on Learning** Once a learner has learned and achieved the learning outcomes and has acquired the required knowledge and has deepened this knowledge, the question is what next? This learning method helps students to explore more possibilities of the developed knowledge and skills with the help of the teacher, who is in this case a coach or a guide. Learners will be encouraged to ask essential questions to determine their own perspective towards the new knowledge and develop the understanding in their own context through consistent questioning techniques with the aim to achieve the transformative learning. This learning approach is in line with the competency-based learning using the constructivism approach.
Mastery learning in Competency-Based Learning

Benjamin Bloom, the father of Mastery Learning, defines it as a teaching strategy that allows learners to spend enough time on a course topic until they master the content before they move to the next topic. Benjamin Bloom realised that when students are allowed to master each topic of a given course before to move to the next topic, learners manage to demonstrate a long term learning outcomes achievement with outstanding performance (Sian Evans, 2017).

In a traditional learning setup, learning is linked to the scheduled time and the taught covered content but not on learners’ mastery of the topics being taught.

Mastery learning is a prominent and successful teaching strategy employed in competency-based learning, together with differentiated teaching approach to boost learners’ confidence and mastery of their learning journey.

In a traditional learning setup, the situation looks as follows:

```
Unit 1: 80% of Mastery
Unit 2: 60% of Mastery
Unit 3: 30% of Mastery
Unit 10: 10% of Mastery
```

In a traditional learning setup, the teacher moves the learning process simultaneously for all learners, even for those who did not understand the topic at hand. Doing so, the learning gap will widen over time and learners will not succeed in their learning.

On the other hand, mastery learning is illustrated by the following scenario:

```
Unit 1: 80% of Mastery
Unit 2: 80% of Mastery
Unit 3: 80% of Mastery
Unit 10: 80% of Mastery
```
The fundamental difference between Competency-Based curriculum and other models of curriculum resides on the principle of mastery learning. For a CBC model, the most important is not the time spent or the pace of the covered topics but it is on the principle of learners demonstrating mastery of the learned topics.

When assessing the competencies you need to address two important questions.

- Do the students acquire the specified competences by the end of the programme?
- If yes, was this acquisition of competences a result of the programme?

You need a variety of assessment methods in this case for assessing the programme, the level competencies including formative and summative assessment as well as self-assessment.
III. The CBC Development Process

Introduction

Once the CBC designing phase is completed, it is time to start with the development phase. The curriculum development stage consists of the construction of the elements of the curriculum taking into consideration of the design already produced. During this development, directions and guidance provided during the design phase are used to finalise the production of the curriculum document ready for implementation.

Competency Structure at Course Level

Competencies involve the application of combinations of knowledge, skills and attitudes (KSA) that students develop and apply for successful learning, living and working. They emphasise aspects of learning that apply within and across all subject areas. Students develop competencies through programmes of study that have defined learning outcomes. Examples are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Competence Statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Critical Thinking</td>
<td>Remember with CBC the learner is looked as an individual. Students reflect on their thinking to improve it. They challenge assumptions behind thoughts, beliefs or actions and value honesty, fairness and open-mindedness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem Solving</td>
<td>Students analyse situations, create plans of action and implement solutions. They evaluate alternatives and their consequences. Students approach challenges with creativity, flexibility, and determination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing Information</td>
<td>Students assess, interpret, evaluate and share information from a variety digital and non-digital sources. They are ethical and effective in how they use and share information. Students value reliability, validity and integrity of information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Students engage in formal and informal exchanges with others. They consider how culture, context and experience impact messaging. Students demonstrate respect, empathy and responsibility when communicating with others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural and Global Citizenship</td>
<td>Students acknowledge varied perspectives when taking action on local or global issues. They advocate for the dignity and well-being of individuals and communities. Students value equity and diversity, and believe in their capacity to make a difference.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Linkage of the Competency statements with course objectives/outcomes

Competencies and learning objectives are often thought to be the same. However, there are significant differences between the two. Let us define these two concepts.

**Competency** is the desired knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) a participant needs to perform specific tasks. Competencies commonly define the applied skills and knowledge that enable people to successfully perform in professional, educational, and other life contexts.
**Learning objective** is a very specific statement that describes exactly what the participant is expected to do after completing the course or programme. There may be more than one measurable outcome defined for a given competency.

**The difference between a competency and a learning objective**

Using the above definition of competency, we can say that competencies define the applied skills and knowledge that enable people to successfully perform their work while learning objectives are specific to a course of instruction. Competencies are relevant to an individual’s job responsibilities, roles and capabilities. They are a way to verify that a learner has in fact learned what was intended in the learning objectives. On the other hand, **Learning objectives** describe what the learner should be able to achieve at the end of a learning period. Learning objectives should be specific, measurable statements and written in behavioural terms. In short, objectives say what we want the learners to know and competencies say how we can be certain they know it.

In a competence statement, a set of learning objectives/outcomes are generally defined and we can say the learning objectives/outcomes are used to achieve a given competence.

**Establish well-articulated alignment between the content, the instructions (learning activities), the assessment, the learning outcomes, including the competences**

As outlined in the above section, there is a close relationship between the competency and the learning objective. When a competency is identified, learning outcomes and learning objectives linked to the outcomes are established. In addition to that, concepts that learners have to learn and the subsequent skills have to be established as well. Once the concepts are identified and the skills established, the teaching strategies to impart on learners are also identified, including the formative assessment that will enforce the learning process of the learner. Once all these elements are in place, evidence that the learner has learned should be set and this represents the summative assessment. The described process is what we call “Constructive Alignment” between (1) competency and outcomes, (2) concepts and skills, (3) teaching (learning facilitation) and learning activities (formative assessment), and finally (4) summative assessment. The process is summarised in the matrix below and the process will be explained in details during Webinar 2 “Teacher professional development for competency-based education”:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competencies/Outcomes</th>
<th>Concepts &amp; Skills</th>
<th>Teaching Strategies &amp; Formative Assessment</th>
<th>Assessment (Summative)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>21st Century Skill Development</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="Icons" /></td>
<td><strong>Concepts:</strong></td>
<td><img src="image2.png" alt="Icons" /></td>
<td><img src="image3.png" alt="Icons" /></td>
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<td><strong>Skills:</strong></td>
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</table>

Take note that this constructive alignment process is linked to 21st century skills development and ICTs are used when they are available. The 21st century skills are shown below:

**Exhibit 1: Students require 16 skills for the 21st century**

![Image](https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/03/21st-century-skills-future-jobs-students/)

Note: ICT stands for Information and Communications Technology.

Image extracted from [https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/03/21st-century-skills-future-jobs-students/](https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/03/21st-century-skills-future-jobs-students/)
Current trends in Competency-Based Curriculum

Curriculum reform in education is a worldwide-practice phenomenon that is involved in striving for the best educational practices, primarily with the demands of the twenty-first-century knowledge economy. African countries immediately after independence had to inherit the colonial education system, which was discriminative and which demanded realignment to societal and cultural demands of the nation. Coincidentally curriculum reforms in most African nations adopted the content or knowledge-based approach. After years of implementation, the Knowledge-based curriculum dissatisfied most countries for its products were too academic, but lacking skills and knowledge in the applicability as required by the demands from the workplace. Currently, due to technological advancement, most countries have opted for a competency-based curriculum (CBC), which appears as worldwide trends in offering skills that match with the requirements of companies’ employers. The question shall be: does the job market currently determine the curriculum reforms in education?

CBC is a curriculum reform that recently has gained popularity in African countries. CBC emphasises on the paradigm shift of pedagogical practices from teacher-centered approaches to learner-centered approaches. The diverse political and socio-economic difference in Africa display different countries with varied educational challenges. The adoption of CBC is a noble move but in the midst of the existing realities that most implementation happens with little regard for available capacities or resources; especially teachers’ values, practices and beliefs that majorly shape the outcomes of application and that the way to understand implementation is to start with an examination of the context. Globalisation process forms discourse on the impact of local context on considerable African diversity. The political economy and the role of decisive development partners and multilateral agencies play a significant external force to consider in internal curriculum implementation in Africa countries. The resilience of distinctively African interwoven social organisation and educational politics need a deep understanding.

Competency-based curriculum vis-à-vis Inclusiveness

Fundamentally, competency-based learning creates space and room for a culturally responsive curriculum to emerge. If content merely becomes a vehicle through which competencies are taught, it’s possible for the curriculum to serve as both a mirror of our students’ lived experiences and a window that reveals alternate ways of life. With CBL’s emphasis on personalisation and differentiation, schools can fully engage in educating the whole child, regardless of where they’re from.

Implementing CBL won’t automatically create a culturally responsive curriculum; it only serves to loosen existing constraints. Schools will still need to make intentional, deliberate choices in how to rethink the role of content and curriculum to make it more inclusive.

**Actions we can take include:**

- School leaders need to make equity and inclusion in the curriculum an institutional priority. Leadership should consider embedding professional development and training of staff in culturally responsive pedagogy.
- Strategies for enhancing equity and Inclusion should include the development of a rubric to review and evaluate how culturally responsive the curriculum is, and schools should create a committee of staff to assist with that review.
Teachers should allocate time during the school term to review their achievements in the implementation of the curriculum. Doing so will go a long way in engendering goodwill and incentivising the change that is needed in our schools.

**Benefits of competency-based learning**

a) The approach is flexible as learners can move at their own pace
b) Supports students with diverse literacy levels, knowledge backgrounds, and other related aptitudes
c) Students are far better prepared with the necessary skills to succeed as adults
d) Allows students to take responsibility for their education

**Conclusion**

A relatively modern approach to learning design, competency-based learning is gaining rapid popularity among educational institutions since it shows a definite improvement in job-oriented skills for students. By identifying the skills, knowledge, and abilities necessary for achieving success in any industry or occupation the students choose to pursue, the approach can be used to develop and evaluate a competency-based curriculum. It ensures that students are better prepared to face work-related challenges later in life. Apart from helping students develop and demonstrate mastery over a topic, a competency-based curriculum also builds a culture of equity and inclusivity and adequately prepares students for life.

**Assessment strategy**

- Engage the participants to research their national educational goals linked to the national development plans and priorities; and then establish if the alignment exists between those goals and competencies/outcomes in their respective curriculum frameworks. If the alignment does not exist or is not clear, the participants will be requested to establish the alignment for the next reform or review of the curriculum.
- Engage participants to identify who are the stakeholders involved in the management of the curriculum matters and who in their views should be involved. Request the participants to strategically propose a plan to identify all the stakeholders that should be involved in the management of the curriculum matters and how they may share their plan with others in their respective Ministries.
References


