

The Zimbabweanised Competency-Based Curriculum Controversy Surrounding Implementation

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Abstract: A paradigm shift occurred in the country's education sector following the growing need for a skill-driven curriculum that is capable of meeting the demands of the skills agenda and life in the 21st century world. Such a curriculum is competency-based, a curriculum that was rolled out in primary and secondary schools in 2017. According to official policy, the competency-based curriculum was earmarked to phase out the traditional content-based curriculum which had remained in existence since the achievement of the political independence on 18 April 1980. Apparently, the ultimate objective of the competency-based curriculum was to address the lived realities of people, offer solutions and facilitate the process of developing the learners' lifelong learning habits and the acquisition of appropriate real life skills thus, its position as a school curriculum was justified on this basis. Despite being an educationally sound and laudable initiative, the adoption of the curriculum reform in Zimbabwe occurred amid some controversies following its seemingly pre-mature introduction into the school system, where the majority of the unprepared educators were required to implement it. Data was collected via the 'WhatsApp', social media platform, an emerging form of doing research (Reeve & Partridge, 2017). Thus, a group chat involving fifteen (N=15) educators was purposively selected from secondary schools in the Kwekwe district. The study established that most of the educators had a partial theoretical and practical knowledge of the competency-based curriculum and that schools have not yet fully institutionalized the practice particularly the CALA component. The study however, proposes intervention avenues which the MoPSE can adopt to improve delivery and practice.

Keywords: curriculum shift competency Zimbabweanised paradigm

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INTRODUCTION

A paradigm shift has occurred in the Zimbabwean Primary and Secondary school sector which has since ushered in reforms in classroom practice and delivery. The Government of Zimbabwe (GoZ) and various stakeholders had high expectations and confident that the reforms would be at the cutting edge of the process of facilitating the development of appropriate real life skills that are in tandem with the skills agenda and life in the 21st century. Cognisant of that seemingly laudable vision, the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE) adopted the reform initiative willy-nilly for its public schools. Although the initiative seemed the way to go, its inception was dominated by controversies that have since raised questions about the knowledge of the educators to successfully turn the wheel. Why such controversies have risen remains unclear hence the need

for this research emerged. This study is therefore set to review the Zimbabweanised competency-based curriculum rolled out in 2017 in order that the root cause of the controversies behind the weak uptake of the curriculum is established.

CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

To contextualize the Zimbabweanised competency-based curriculum for readers, the writer found it pertinent to first and foremost highlight briefly about its theoretical genesis. As literature has alluded to, the competency-based curriculum has been adopted by nations who had been dissatisfied by the existing curriculum whose products were too academic, lacking

skills and knowledge in its applicability as required by the skills' agenda and life in the 21st century (Commission of Inquiry into Education and Training (CIET) 1999; Dokora, 2015; Mugabe, 2015). Thus, cynics observed that such a curriculum promoted rote learning or banking approach only for the purpose of learners to achieve good grades (Cheptoo & Ramadas, 2019). It is perhaps upon the growing dissatisfaction on the existing curriculum that the decision to introduce a curriculum that is competency-based emerged. For the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE, 2022), the competency-based curriculum was an option that was found to facilitate the development of lifelong learning habits and the acquisition of appropriate real life skills required by industry and commerce. Thus, when a paradigm shift took to the direction of the competency-based approach, countries that adopted it, Cameroon and Rwanda in particular, looked up the approach to assist in churning out graduates with capabilities, knowledge, skills, and attitudes useful for solving social and economic challenges bedeviling these countries. In Rwanda, just like in Zimbabwe, the competency-based curriculum was considered an endgame for establishing strong scientific, mathematical and technological oriented learners capable of meeting the moral, national identity, pride, civic obligations for the value of their country heritage (Georgescu, 2015; Rwanda Education Board, 2017; MoPSE, 2021). Thus, the competency-based curriculum was rolled out in the primary and secondary school sectors in Zimbabwe replacing the traditional knowledge-based curriculum that the first republic had inherited at independence in 1980 along this basis (MoPSE, 2021). Apparently, the adoption of this policy direction was based on the findings of the Commission of Inquiry into Education and Training (CIET) that was formulated in 1999. According to MoPSE (2021), the major goal in adopting the practice was to improve the provision, quality and relevance of education and training delivered in the country as well as to align it with the ever-changing demands of the global labour market. As Walsh (2016:2) puts it, the paradigm shift necessitate the teaching and learning in the classroom to reflect on and keep pace with wider societal developments that promote hands-on application of learned knowledge, skills, attitudes, competencies as demanded by the labour market. Besides being technologically inclined and worldwide trend, research discovered that the competency-based curriculum is the best option for providing skills that approximate the requirements of the skills' agenda and life in the 21st century (Tores, Brett & Cox, 2015; Sotco et al., 2018 Cheptoo & Ramadas, 2019). Research further discovered that at the inception of the competency-based curriculum in Zimbabwe, MoPSE had already crafted the Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education (CFPSE), 2015-2022 that was used as a blue print for drawing up different subject syllabi formations and formats for both levels of primary and secondary school education (Chanda, 2022).

Drawing from the foregoing literature, it is apparently clear that the significance of the competency-based curriculum cannot be contested. The major concern however lies on the issue surrounding the educators' knowledge to communicate and deliver the new practice as universally prescribed. Given the various mutations of implementing the competency-based curriculum, it has made it really necessary that an investigation be conducted to establish circumstances that may have led to its poor uptake that eventually could lead to its demise.

THE 'WHAT' OF THE COMPETENCY-BASED CURRICULUM

The concept of competency-based curriculum is quite illusive hence various names for it have been observed in schools, viz, proficiency-based learning, standards-based learning and mastery-based learning (Tores, Brett & Cox, 2015). Instead, Tores, Brett & Cox (2015) came up with four common elements to help explain the nature of the competency-based curriculum. Thus, in the competency-based curriculum:

- Students must demonstrate mastery of all required competencies to graduate.
- Students advance once they have demonstrated mastery
- Students are assessed using multiple measures to determine mastery
- Students can earn credit toward graduation in ways other than seat time

For further understanding of what the competency-based curriculum entails, a synopsis of the forenamed common elements is proffered in the ensuing paragraphs. It is from this synopsis that the possible causes of the controversies surrounding the implementation of the reform initiative can be deduced.

Students must demonstrate mastery of all required competencies to graduate.

The competency-based curriculum is anchored on learner competency mastery, thus, a learner is expected to demonstrate mastery of all required curriculum competencies before graduating to the next level. Simply put, these are the skills that the learners would need for postsecondary success. Tores; Brett & Cox (2015) call this, the 'moral purpose' of competency-based practice. To measure the extent to which mastery has occurred is left for the individual schools to decide. Among different strategies schools could opt for comprehensive methods that can give them a general impression of the learner' level of mastery. Such methods would eventually direct them on what can be done to assist the learner in areas of difficulty (Tores, Brett & Cox, 2015).

Students advance once they have demonstrated mastery

The competency-based curriculum is a concept that has been put in place in order to replace the traditional content-based curriculum which subjects learners to a tremendous pressure of covering the syllabus at the expense of taking more time to comprehend the basic but important concepts (Makamure, 2018). Since the competency-based curriculum emphasises, the traditional content-based curriculum it fails to recognise that learners do not attain mastery at the same time, that is, Sarte no two learners are alike as they differ in either personality, background, or interests (Makamure, 2018). The implication is that learners will need to be treated as individuals and allowed to take a positive role in shaping their education and their lives. The shift to the competency-based allows learners the opportunity to receive extra support up to when they are able to meet the competency requirements as individuals. This is possible only when schools choose among a repertoire of alternatives such as arranging for personalized learning plans or placing learners in appropriate-level classes and then provide them with extra support (Omebe, 2014). Alternatively, learners may be made to either start the next unit or lesson within the same class or be placed in classes based on their level of understanding rather than on their class level (Omebe, 2014). This approach is costly as it needs to be sufficiently resourced both human and financial.

Students are assessed using multiple measures to determine mastery

As has already been alluded to, multiple measures of assessment are a common element in the competency-based curriculum practice. Basically, the competency-based assessment methods are locally-based, performance-based, standardized and authentic assessment procedures (Omebe, 2014). In fact, the decision about a learner is not based on the result of a single one-shot as assessment takes place throughout the whole process of teaching and learning applying both formal and informal activities (Reddy et al., 2016; Tores, Brett & Cox, 2015; Omebe, 2014). Given that assessment is an integral part of teaching-learning process in the competency-based practice, educators are involved in the final assessment of the learners they taught. This is a bit different from the external examining bodies that only hire other teachers to mark and grade the learners' work and so provides scanty information that does not indicate much or give a true picture of the overall performance of the learner. Through multiple measures of assessment applied in competency-based curriculum, more comprehensive information on cognitive, affective and psychomotor measurements of an individual is obtainable (Omebe, 2014). With CA, learners continue practicing or

revising when they are "not yet" proficient until they reach the commonly defined performance level that demonstrates mastery of learning expectations.

Students can earn credit toward graduation in ways other than seat time

Omebe (2014) observed that the pressure to achieve better examination results leads to thinly covering all topics in the syllabus with little grasp of concepts. The multiple assessment method used in the competency-based curriculum provides students with learning opportunities outside the traditional classroom setting. Learners are assessed in a plethora of programmes involving inter-alia, career related and technical education programmes. Most importantly, learning opportunities are through multiple pathways in which students create their own paths toward completing graduation requirements outside the traditional classroom. Many scholars argue that the one-shot external examination cannot be indicative of the overall ability of the child. Moreover, the system seemed to serve best those who score high grades in the traditional subjects, that is, English, Mathematics, Sciences, and Humanities at the end of secondary education. Many of those learners whose aptitudes, interests, and abilities lie in vocational education, arts, and sports are denied opportunities by the system. Despite, the 21st century job market is evolving in order to create more opportunities in small and micro enterprises rather than in the traditional models of employment in careers such as teaching, medicine, engineering and so on. Finally, the competency-based curriculum is a move away from the traditional knowledge based curriculum that suppresses interactive learning, and prevents learners from developing skills and attitudes relevant to the world of work. In light of the foregoing divergent views, the researcher sought to interrogate why there are controversies over the implementation of such a laudable initiative.

THE 'WHY' OF THE COMPETENCY-BASED CURRICULUM

Many world nations have since opted for a competency-based curriculum in their quest for appropriate knowledge, values and skills that match with the requirements of the skills agenda and life in the 21st century (Rwanda Education Board, 2015). Various authors including Sotco et al (2018) have confirmed circumstances that have since lured several nations to adopt the practice in their private and public schools. This inter-alia includes the need to achieve employment-related success involving practical job skills, technical skills, occupation survival skills, job search skills and entrepreneurial skills (Likisa, 2018; Ngendahayo & Askell-williams, 2016; Georgescu, 2015). The competency-

based curriculum has established its usefulness in Rwanda for solving the economic recession caused by the widespread unemployment among the youth in this national state (Mbarushimana & Kuboja, 2016; Sotco et al., 2018). In Zimbabwe, the following has been drawn by MoPSE (2021) as the aims for adopting the competency-based curriculum, that is, the competency-based curriculum aims:

- To prepare learners for life and work
- To foster life-long learning
- To prepare learners for participatory citizenship, peace and sustainable development
- To prepare and orient learners for participation, leadership and voluntary service
- To promote and cherish the Zimbabwean identity (MoPSE, 2021).

In one way or another, these aims approximate the common elements of the competency-based curriculum that were presented by Tores, Brett & Cox (2015) in the preceding paragraphs.

THE 'HOW' OF THE COMPETENCY-BASED CURRICULUM

The importance of understanding how a curriculum is delivered finds expression in Casey and Sturgis (2018)'s observation that, "leaders and teachers don't just want to know what to do; they want to know how to do it and how to travel the path from here to there". The implication in this is that, an understanding of a practice more deeply aids educators to be able to implement it fully. The situation in Zimbabwe for instance is reminiscent of the proverbial blind people attempting to describe an elephant. This is because various mutations are being observed in implementing the competency-based curriculum where upon the approach employs several interactive instructional strategies that potentially transform lessons to an enriching curriculum experience (Casey and Sturgis, 2018). An interactive process is one that is characterized by a high intensity of communication, interaction and exchange of activities, change and variety of activities, processability focused reflection by participants in their activities and interaction (Zenina, 2012). Interactive learning is a special form of organization of cognitive activity, a method of cognition implemented in the form of joint activities of students, in which all participants interact with each other, exchange information, jointly solve problems, simulate situations, evaluate the actions of others and their own behaviour, immerse themselves in real atmosphere of business cooperation to solve the problem (Vinogradova, 2014). The essence of interactive learning "is to create didactic and psychological conditions that contribute to the manifestation of intellectual, personal and social activity of students" (Vinogradova, 2014). The learning process, based on the use of interactive teaching methods, is organized taking into account participation in the learning process of all students in the group, without exception.

Joint activity means that each contributes to learning in a special way - it is the exchange of knowledge, ideas, and ways of working. It can be organized both individually and in pairs, in the form of group work, using project work, role play, work with documents and various sources of information. Interactive methods are based on the principles of interaction and activity of students. An environment of educational communication is created that is characterized by openness, interaction of students, equality of their argumentations, accumulation of joint knowledge, possibility of mutual evaluation and control (Vinogradova, 2014b). The term 'interactive,' in educational research discourse, appears in two distinct strands: one concerning pedagogy and the other concerning new technologies in education (Prince, 2004). The pedagogic aspect defines a plethora of instructional delivery strategies that are necessary for promoting effective classroom learning. Thus, the pedagogical approaches involved in competency-based teaching and learning according to Stronge (2018) emphasizes on the interactive learner-centred approaches that are believed, keep learners focused and engaged. Stronge (2018) presents what he refers to as characteristic features of the competency-based curriculum as including:

- A wide range of teaching styles , strategies and activities that cater for student diversity in learning abilities, needs and interest
- Learning activities with clear learning objectives in which students are informed of them at the onset
- Learning activities that are planned with students' prior knowledge and experience in mind
- Student talks as an important means by which they actualise learning, thus, educators promote quality classroom interaction by the effective use of questioning and feedback, and a supportive classroom atmosphere.
- Effective enquiry where student exploration precede formal presentation by educators and students' questions and comments determine the focus of classroom discourse
- Learning activities that are designed to develop generic skills and reflective thinking in the context of the syllabus content
- Student encouragement to reflect critically on the procedures and methods they use in learning and taking responsibility for their own learning
- The roles of educators and learners in different learning activities are clearly delineated , with both parties being well informed of their roles
- Feedback and authentic assessment are integral parts of learning and teaching , in particular in setting targets for future learning
- A range of resources, especially those involving the use of information technology , are used flexibly to support student learning

In addition to the pedagogical aspect of the competency-based approach, new technologies in education have been found to support interactive learning through a wealth of information and resources. For instance, the use of digital learning technologies, smart

phones, broadband connectivity to internet and social media are said to have brought substantial changes to the way schools provide learning opportunities for students (Firdissa, 2005). Implementing technology in school makes interactive teaching and learning environment easier to build and it increases the visual-spatial skills, memory skills, and multitasking ability to the students (Firdissa, 2005). For instance, the emergence of smart schools led to virtual learning, online learning and remote training through new technologies such as education websites digital libraries and so forth. For Firdissa (2005) new technologies have allowed educators to create more interactive and engaging lessons that cater to the different learning styles and abilities of learners. Similarly, educators have found it possible to integrate education websites and create interactive assignments online through new technology in education. However, there is overwhelming evidence that the competency-based approach is being hastily implemented in Zimbabwean Primary and Secondary schools without thorough groundwork having been done leading to multiple controversies amongst schools' stakeholders. Given the foregoing scenario, it is necessary to further investigate the controversies and realities that confront educators regarding the how to implement the reform initiative to identify the exact nature of the deficiency that is to be addressed by this study.

NATURE OF THE COMPETENCY-BASED ASSESSMENT

Generally, assessment comprises all activities carried out by educators and learners to acquire information which can be utilised to modify teaching and learning (Walde, 2016; Camargo 2015). Among the various assessment methods mentioned in the preceding paragraphs, the competency-based curriculum emphasises on continuous assessment (CA) and as such, it has become one of the competency-based curriculum's distinctive features. Walde (2016) observed that CA eliminates focus on high stakes examinations because these examinations tempt learners to compete for grades rather than self-improvement yet deviating from the goals of the competency-based curriculum (Makamure, 2018). As correctly pointed out by Reddy et al. (2016:47), CA is the way to go since it takes place throughout the whole process of teaching and learning by applying both formal and informal activities. In addition, CA uses various instruments like tests, assignments, projects, observation, interviews and questionnaires to accord educators the opportunity to participate fully in the final assessment of their learners. Thus, with CA, any decision about a learner is not based on the results of a single one-shot examination but on a variety of assessment instruments that assess various components of learning not limited to the thinking processes but behaviours, personality traits and dexterity among others (Gamuchu & Teklu, 2020).

It is noteworthy mentioning that at the epicentre of CA is the CALA, a concept that is rooted in educational activity where learners demonstrate and perform their understanding, proficiency and knowledge of any subject they are learning to produce tangible products that serve as evidence of learning (Makamure & Jojo, 2023; Chigonga, 2020). Simply put, CALA is practical in nature a situation where knowledge is gained as learners engage in hands-on activities. Bennett (2011) construes CALA as a means that enhances learning and that promotes problem-solving skills in learners. Dambudzo in Makamure & Jojo (2023) argue that CALA is not just restricted to pencil and paper but also involves tasks, projects and or observations that should demonstrate that a learner has grasped the concept, and can therefore soundly make connections with other interrelated concepts (Makamure, 2018). As submitted by Muzawazi (2021), CALA examines three domains in the learner, viz, the cognitive domain (knowledge domain), the affective and the psycho-motor domains. Thus, CALA tests the learners' knowledge, physical skills as well as emotional skills respectively. However, whilst the intended goal of CALA is educationally sound and laudable, there has been controversy surrounding the exact manner for delivering the practice given that various mutations in its implementing are still being observed. The foregoing evidence is shared with the Permanent Secretary's Circular No.10 of 2021 which indicates that CALA is essentially a new assessment method that requires learners to perform and demonstrate knowledge, understanding and proficiency. However, the processes of introducing reforms such as CA are not always perfect and as such often result in controversies or user-resistance and subsequent demise of the envisaged innovation.

METHODOLOGY

The approach to empirical research adopted for this study was one of a qualitative study design. Because of time and financial constraints the data was collected via the 'WhatsApp', social media platform, an emerging form of doing research (Reeve & Partridge, 2017). Thus, a group chat involving fifteen (N=15) educators was purposively selected from secondary schools in the Kwekwe district. The research acknowledges that in soliciting for participation in this study, an undertaking was made to informants that their names were not going to be mentioned to conceal their identity. The study established that most of the educators had a partial theoretical and practical knowledge of the competency-based curriculum and that schools have not yet fully institutionalized the practice particularly the CALA component. The study however, proposes interventions which the MoPSE can adopt to improve delivery and practice.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this qualitative study, the researcher presents the research results and immediately discusses them. In doing so, unnecessary repetitions are avoided that usually results when presentation of results and their discussion are separated (Mouton, 2008). In addition, thick descriptions and the informants' own words are also used in order to keep the analysis remaining qualitative. A thematic analysis approach involving three sub-themes viz; 'how educators conceptualise the competency-based curriculum', 'the Controversy over educators' knowledge to deliver competency-based practice' and 'perceived barriers to effective implementation of the competency-based curriculum' was employed. The thematic analysis approach was found to be useful in ascertaining that no aspects of the problem being researched are left out for analysis and to also ensure credibility of results (Chanda, 2022).

How educators conceptualise the competency-based curriculum

Throughout the social media group chats, the informants expressed various opinions about how they perceived the competency-based curriculum. The information about how educators conceptualise the competency-based curriculum was sought. The study discovered that there was overwhelming evidence to suggest that educators partially understood the competency-based curriculum though they already had started using it in their teaching. However, various mutations were observed and these were construed as exemplified by the excerpts drawn from the informants. For instance when asked 'What do you understand by competency-based curriculum?' the response by one of the informants was:

The Competency-Based curriculum is a skill-based curriculum in which learners are taught various skills that they would use to solve day to day problems after they have left school. This type of curriculum ensures that learners acquire survival skills through practical and interactive learning approaches involving tasks and projects.

Generally, the views expressed by most informants were almost identical, describing the competency-based curriculum as a learner-centred approach that is aimed at inculcating work related skills and values in the learners during their school life. During the group chats there was continued emphasis on the aspect of skill development in the learners, a clear indication that educators had a somewhat idea of what is involved in the Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education (2015-2022). However, the informants demonstrated a minimalistic level of understanding of the curriculum having failed to pinpoint some of those critical elements

of the model as is presented by Stronge (2018). For instance, in a shared chat, another informant wrote:

In my view, the competency-based curriculum is a concept meant to develop competencies that are relevant to after school life. It involves programmes that the learners can take in preparation of their roles in the world of work. Because learners are engaged in hands on activities, there are skills that are instilled in them, which can sustain them throughout their lives.

Such responses recurred all across the chats in which the informants continued to focus more on the economic without indicating dimensions portraying the holistic nature that caters for all developmental aspects of the learner. In all instances, the common position was that educators are not fully conversant with the way to go although they are theoretically acclimatised to the concept. Apparently, informants made their way clear to say that they were not very comfortable with the practice due to lack of resources, large class size, clear manuals and guidelines on how to implement the competency-based curriculum.

Controversy over educators' knowledge to deliver competency-based practice

The educators who participated in this study expressed their disgruntlements against lack of resources and enough time to prepare their lessons as prescribed by the Curriculum framework for Primary and Secondary Education. The participants indicated that the inception of the competency-based curriculum has been dominated with multiple controversies and top among the list is the bunching of CALAs within one term instead of spreading them over the entire course of study. The study discovered that this is the root cause of rampant cheating by both students and teachers resulting in dubious and unauthentic results. Furthermore, there is overwhelming evidence that the competency-based approach is being hastily implemented in Zimbabwean Primary and Secondary schools without thorough groundwork having been done leading to multiple controversies on its delivery. When asked, whether educators were knowledgeable of the new practice, the educators gave somewhat similar responses such as the one in the following excerpt:

Actually, I am struggling to get things done the correct way. I am still bothered by too much work load. An average of 9 CALAs per 9 subjects per learner is no joke. This kind of load actually impact on the quality of CALA because everything is done thinly without depth. Moreover, training was very short and some of the teachers did not even get training. This is evidenced by the varied ways teachers are implementing CALA in their classrooms.

It has become evident from this study that educators do not have sufficient knowledge to handle the

competency-based curriculum and that they are still struggling to turn the wheel. Their concern according to research findings is that the meagre and depleted resources in their schools had become an impediment to the full implementation of CALA. In fact, the general concern of the participants was that, whilst the theoretical goals of CALA are quite educationally sound, lack of training and sometimes buy-in from MoPSE has become an impediment towards the achievement of the CALA goals. The study revealed that educators were incapacitated to the extent of demanding their learners to pay them facilitation fees for CALA projects.

Perceived barriers of the competency-based curriculum implementation

After being asked if there were any challenges experienced in implementing the competency-based curriculum, the informants pointed out that the inherent lack of proper guidance and buy-in made implementation of the competency-based curriculum difficult. Different teachers had different perceptions about the competency-based curriculum as exhibited by what they do in the classroom. For example, after being asked to explain the activities done by the learners as CALA activities, here is what some of them said: Similar concerns were registered during interviews with teachers.

The other major challenge according to the informants was that of the external candidature. In Zimbabwe non-formal system runs concurrently with the formal system and subsequently assessed by a common examination board (ZIMSEC). In terms of CALA, non-formal candidates normally approach the subject teachers at an examination centre of choice to sign and formalise the CALA activities so that they are accepted by ZIMSEC. There is no strict monitoring of how the CALA projects were developed and are considered valid as long as a teacher agrees to sign them confirming that they were done under his /her supervision. Besides, the results of this study do not suggest high levels of implementation of the competency-based curriculum in the secondary school sector because the educators claim that the approaches take a lot of their time apart from the lack of proper training by teachers to deliver and supervise CALAs.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to explore the controversies surrounding the implementation of the competency-based curriculum as an approach to teaching and learning. The study also established that, although in theory the approach is the way to go, it was prematurely introduced into the system without training of teachers who are the foot soldiers and chief implementers. Despite the idea of CALA being an educationally sound and laudable, there is concern that

teachers are partially knowledgeable about how this model is applied to promote mastery of the required competencies. This study recommends support and developmental programmes which can equip teachers with the appropriate skills to implement the competency-based curriculum. This is consistent with Walde (2016)'s contention that training of teachers is an investment that will provide them with cutting edge skills they require to implement a project like the competency-based curriculum effectively.

RECOMENDATION

The data collected established that there are various issues that need to be addressed in order to settle the controversies surrounding the implementation of the competency-based curriculum. First, the study recommends for intensive training of teachers who are the foot soldiers of the implementation process. The training should be organised in the form of workshops, seminars and in-service programmes to raise the level of use of the new assessment scheme. Secondly, since the study established that teachers are struggling to embrace CALA as a new learning model, CALA guides should be prepared on each learning area at district, provincial and national levels. These should embrace different types of assessment techniques that are relevant to assess the competencies and performance of learners in their different learning areas. Finally, the Government should listen to the teachers' concerns, particularly the salary structure. There should be a difference in salaries according to qualifications and experience rather than all teachers getting almost the same salary.

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