

Strengthening teachers' training for the success of CBC

In 2017, Kenya embarked on a significant educational transformation by introducing the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC), replacing the long-standing 8-4-4 system. The focus of the Government was to move from an examination-based assessment to a more holistic approach that emphasizes the development of various competencies in learners, including critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, and communication skills, in order to prepare learners for real-life challenges and not just academic success.

However, as with any significant change, the CBC journey has been marked by challenges that have tested the resolve of educators and stakeholders alike. These challenges include; lack of clear educational policies for effective implementation of the curriculum, doubts about the validity and reliability of learners' scores, inadequate information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure, an insufficient number of adequately trained teachers, and a prevailing negative attitude among educational stakeholders towards CBC.

The lack of properly trained teachers stands out as a primary obstacle to the successful implementation of the CBC. A significant number of teachers lack essential ICT skills, finding it difficult to integrate technology into their instruction within Competency-based subjects.

A report recently presented to the President by the Presidential Working Party on Education Reforms (PWPER) highlighted the pressing need for qualified teachers to facilitate the CBC's success. The report recommends that the Ministry of Education develop guidelines for all teachers who graduated before 2023 to undergo a mandatory one-year retooling and upgrading program. This initiative, while commendable, underscores the urgency of addressing the training gap among teachers in the CBC era.

One promising solution to this challenge involves learning institutions establishing a group of academic experts who will ensure the success of the curriculum by providing and equipping teachers with the skills needed through the implementation of a Central Academics Team (CAT) model in our schools.

The Central Academics Team also known as Curriculum Leadership Team comprises a group of educators and administrators within an educational institution or school district that is responsible for overseeing and coordinating various aspects of the academic program. The model ensures the delivery of high-quality education, consistent curriculum standards, and effective instructional practices throughout the institution. In addition, its composition and responsibilities vary depending on the size and structure of the educational organization.

Teachers are the primary beneficiaries of the CAT model, as it places a strong emphasis on their professional development, collaboration, and instructional support, keeping them abreast with the latest academic methods and educational trends. This investment not only enhances teaching skills and practices but also provides critical guidance to address teachers' concerns and further cultivates competent future school administrators.

By working closely with teachers, CATs collaborate to develop lesson plans, instructional strategies, and teaching resources that support student learning and engagement. This collaborative approach ensures a supportive learning environment for both students and staff, fostering a culture of continuous learning.

Additionally, CATs ensure curriculum development by designing, updating, and aligning the curriculum to educational standards and learning objectives. This approach creates a cohesive and well-organized educational framework for all grade levels and subject areas. Consequently, teachers gain the

knowledge and tools needed to create meaningful relationships with students, energize lessons, enhance the learning environment, build motivation, and improve attitudes.

Collaboration is crucial for educational progress, and CATs play a pivotal role in fostering it among teachers, administrators, and other stakeholders. When teachers collaborate to improve lesson plans, the result is more engaging classroom sessions that benefit students directly.

At Makini Schools, we provide an example of a successful implementation of the CBC curriculum from the pre-primary level to Upper Primary level. By embracing the CAT model, we boast of well-trained teachers committed to delivering learner-centered, child-friendly, and innovative 21st-century lessons that set us apart from other education providers. This is achieved by employing fun-filled learning experiences that ignite the urge of learners to acquire new skills, knowledge, and competencies.

To realize the education reforms suggested by PWPER, learning institutions can emulate the CAT model to address the training gap faced by teachers. The benefits of this model are not limited to teachers alone; they extend to ensuring quality education, upholding high curriculum standards, and securing a brighter future for the education system as a whole.

It is a call to empower teachers, ensuring they are equipped to lead the way in realizing the full potential of the CBC curriculum and nurturing the next generation of informed and capable learners.