

## TRANSFORMING EDUCATION: THE ROLE OF INSTRUCTIONAL SUPERVISION IN SHAPING UGANDA'S COMPETENCY-BASED CURRICULUM

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### Abstract

Uganda's adoption of a competence-based curriculum (CBC) at the lower secondary level, aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals, underscores the need for quality education and economic growth. As global industrialization enters a new phase, characterized by diverse demands, the CBC aims to cultivate adaptable and skilled human capital. Despite its potential, challenges plague the curriculum's implementation, ranging from stakeholder resistance to material shortages. Effective instructional supervision becomes paramount to ensure successful adoption. Developing nations must shift towards active learning, fostering engagement, participation, and discovery, transcending rote memorization. This educational reform necessitates curriculum redesign, program review, and stakeholder collaboration, accommodating varying national contexts. The CBC emerges as a pivotal approach capable of enhancing skill levels, mitigating unemployment, boosting productivity, and fostering international competitiveness. The transformative potential of this curriculum relies on tailored adaptations that encompass historical, cultural, economic, and political dimensions.

### Introduction

Uganda has rolled out a competence based curriculum (CBC hereafter) at lower secondary level, with the pioneers being in their second year of secondary education. This follows the demands of achieving the sustainable development goals which aim at ending poverty and ensuring quality education plus decent work and economic growth among others. Today, the world is heading for another phase of industrialization that demands for a new world demand (Miuro, 2022). This phase of human development and civilization will demand for skilled, flexible, agile and talented human labour in order to determine the needs of the future generation. The CBC emphasizes action in the world of work. The implementation of the new curriculum has got many challenges, beginning from negative attitude of most stakeholders to lack of sufficient teaching and learning materials.

Instructional supervisory techniques have to be applied to ensure that the new curriculum is efficiently implemented. Developing countries should embrace more inventive view of learning that emphasis active intellectual engagement, participation and discovery rather than passive absorption and reproduction of facts. This reform requires re-designing, reviewing and implementing the new curricula and educational programmes that would transform the teaching and learning process. The reform also requires high level support from educators, industry, government, prospective students and other relevant stakeholders. The innovations should be customized to fit the country's stage of development, political system, social structure, economic capacities,

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history and cultural system. Therefore, CBC is one major teaching and learning approach that has a strong potential to increase skills levels, reduce unemployment rate, increase productivity and to achieve international competitiveness.

Competency Based Education and Training (CBET) curriculum has been successfully implemented globally. In Africa, it was implemented in South Africa since 1998. In Tanzania, implementation of CBC started in 2005 with Ministry of Education and Vocation Training. In the Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children (MoHCDGEC) adapted CBC curriculum since 2008, (Mmari, 2019)

This is a period of creative and flexible learning where vocational education and training should not adopt an inactive approach to learning. The success of students should not depend on their ability to replicate a reasonable part of their notes from memory. The curriculum and teaching methods in the developing countries should change because employers are demanding technical competences, analytical thinking, communication and entrepreneurial skills.

The outcomes of learning need not be tied to descriptions of work or specific workplaces activity. This limits transfer of skills and hence labour mobility leaving graduates largely for routine and restricted tasks which may not guarantee employability. Employees need to acquire a wider range of soft skills, professional competencies and attitudes to continually adapt and transfer skills and knowledge in different contexts. Industries also should engage in innovative forms of collaboration to achieve industry-demanded driven form of training and smooth transition of students from school to work. The feedback from assessment should focus on task-oriented information and corrective advice to build students' self-esteem to self-regulate their learning towards the achievement of learning goals.

It also necessitates development of competencies for each discipline and subsequent means of measurement and performance of assessment.

Thus, CBC has become essential because of the increasing number of students passing out from institutions of higher education without the required skills to work in the actual world situation.

Many employers are recognizing that the narrow specific approaches to job training are far from adequate to meet their future strategic needs. Competence therefore should be described in general terms as being able to perform whole work roles rather than just specific skills and tasks to the standard expected in employment. Even some students have negative attitude towards the curriculum. They think it is waste of time since they do not understand it.

### **The concept of Competence Based Curriculum**

The Competency based curriculum is that curriculum that emphasizes what learners are expected to do rather than focusing on what they are expected to achieve (Makunja, 2016 cited in Mabonga, 2021). It is therefore learner centred. It approaches learning through discovery by the learner. Therefore, learning approach must involve individualized materials, flexible learning time and continuous feedback to and from the learner. It is adaptive to changing needs of the students, teachers and society. It emphasizes the KUSVA (Knowledge, understanding, skills, values and attitudes). The teacher is a facilitator of learning, but not the sole source of knowledge.

The CBC encourages more of formative assessment or continuous assessment than summative assessment. Assessment focuses on competencies.

It promotes creativity and innovations of the learner, who are guided by their facilitator how to do their projects. A teacher shifts away from the traditional chalk and talk to becoming a facilitator, an advisor or coach or assessor; the learners need to be active and exploratory in the learning programmes. The role of the teacher is that of cognitive guide as to encourage students to engage in active inquiry in the learning activities. The CBC provides learning environments that promote the development of competencies. The facilitator plays a background role. At the front line is the learner himself or herself.

One of the main roles of education is to create teaching and learning environments which are able to bring about desired changes in learners. Since the core spirit of teaching and learning any subject is to make learner able to acquire the needed competences, these competences should shelter the learner with more knowledge, better skills while influencing him/her with attitudes and values.

Ten Cate (2007) defined competence as the usual and prudent usage of the message, understanding, practical abilities, scientific thinking, feelings, ethics, and reflection in everyday preparation for the advantage of the individual and public concerned. The competency-based movement was introduced in America near the end of the 1960s in response to concerns that learners are not taught the skills they require in life after school. The similar interest has been conveyed in Rwandan education during 2015. According to Malan (2000), competence-based education is built on six strong gears such as (a) explicit learning outcomes with respect to the required skills and standards for assessment, (b) flexible time frame to master these skills, (c) variety of instructional activities to facilitate learning, (d) criterion-referenced testing of the required outcomes, (e) certification based on demonstrated learning outcomes, and (f) adaptable programmes to ensure optimum learner guidance. Interestingly, all of these six gears are noticeable in the outcome-based learning. This is to say that in this approach, learners are also accountable for their own achievements (Malan, 2000).

According to Kouwenhoven (2003), competency is the capability to apply an integrated combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes to perform a task in a given context. On the other hand competence refers to the capacity to accomplish up to standard the key occupational tasks that characterize a profession. Therefore, competency defines the necessary knowledge, skills, experience and attribute to carry out specific functions effectively. Competence refers to the capability to effectively perform a given task at both individual and organization levels using required skills, traits, characteristics and behaviours.

The individual learners must be actively involved in the acquisition of knowledge and skills. CBC integrates knowledge, skills and attitudes or attributes. The competence based programme is the programme which is trained to make sure that the trainee is going to acquire step by step the knowledge that a learner is supposed to acquire at a certain level, so learners are supposed to complete one part of the module content before moving from one level to another. Competency based curriculum is characterized by orientation to professional practices meaning that the future occupational practice of the learner must be the pivot around which the curriculum should evolve.

### **The Concept of Instructional Supervision Techniques**

Instructional supervision is that phase of school administration which focuses primarily upon the achievement of the appropriate expectations of educational system” (Eye, Netzer, & Krey, 1971:30 as quoted by Peretomode (2021)). Wiles (1976) as quoted by Peretomode (2021) sees it as those activities which are designed to improve instruction at all levels of the school enterprise. Instructional supervision is also viewed as behaviour officially designed by the organization that directly affects teacher behaviour in such a way as to facilitate learning. From the definitions provided above, it is evident that instructional supervision is mainly concerned with supporting and helping teachers to improve instruction through changing their behaviour.

The instructional supervision techniques include classroom observation, teacher demonstration, workshops, micro teaching and watching videos, YouTube as well as teacher visitation. These aim at guiding teachers about how to teach well, they provide guided practices and research. (Peretomode, 2021).

***Characteristics of Instructional Supervision:*** The following are the features of instructional supervision.

- i. It is an innovative and dynamic practical service.
- ii. It offers leadership with additional knowledge and more skills.
- iii. It encourages supportive educational effort in a responsive atmosphere.
- iv. It gives coordination, direction and guidance to teacher’s activities.
- v. It inspires the continuous progress of teachers and development of pupils or students.
- vi. It improves instruction and teaching-learning situation and the procedure.
- vii. It supports the accomplishment of appropriate educational aims and objectives (Lovely Professional University, 2020:225 in Peretomode, 2021)

### **Challenges of Implementing the Competence Based Curriculum**

A number of challenges have affected the implementation of the competence-based curriculum. To begin with, the change resistance by some implementers is of great effect. Change is always resisted. Many teachers are still contented with the old curriculum. Teachers have a negative attitude towards the new curriculum. They refer to the curriculum a tiresome in terms of preparation and this attitude seems to affect their efforts towards

implementing the intended curriculum. They view the CBC as wastage of time and resources, thus poor implementation.

Poor assessment is another challenge. Teachers still carry out assessment that bends towards summative. Much as the CBC emphasizes activities of integration per topic and end of year general assessment, most teachers are still giving learners end of term examinations. Trainers need to have sound knowledge and skills on the assessment and evaluation methods. Assessment and evaluation of competence based curriculum is one of the essential components due to the fact that, it is the one that provides assurance of the validity of all the processes conducted in the implementation stage. (Kanyonga, et al, 2019).

In addition, insufficient teaching aids and lack of internet facilities are other challenges. Most schools in Uganda lack internet facilities. They do not have computers, electricity supply and internet connection. Those which have some solar power still need more technology to acquire enough of it.

Furthermore, inadequate training of teachers has led to poor implementation. Only around half the number of teachers has been trained. Even those have not fully grasped the concepts of the competence based curriculum. This is because the training sessions have been so short and selective besides some trainers being just partly knowledgeable about the curriculum. Trainers need to be aware of the process of selecting suitable teaching methods that match with the contents to be taught or skills that need and developed among students during the process of teaching and learning. (Ndiokubwayo, 2019).

Further still, lack of some teachers for some compulsory subjects in some schools is a very big challenge. The affected subjects mainly include Kiswahili, Physical Education and core science subjects. A number of schools, especially in rural areas have never received teachers for some of those subjects posted by the Ministry of Education and Sports, yet they are expected to teach them to all students in lower secondary. Such schools are also unable to hire such teachers privately. The situation is worse in private schools. Students, therefore, end up missing out.

Besides, crowded classes in some schools have affected the implementation of the CBC. The curriculum requires the facilitators to have close interaction with every learner. However, with big numbers of learners in the classroom, this can only be possible with just a small fraction of a class.

Inadequate infrastructure is another challenge. Most schools in Uganda have inadequate classrooms because of big numbers of students vis-a-vis the small-size and few classroom. They also lack the well-equipped laboratories and libraries. This hinders hands on learning and personal research by students.

### **Purposes of Instructional Supervision**

The purposes of supervision of instruction include:

- i. To directly influence the behaviour of teachers and the teaching processes employed to encourage pupil learning.
- ii. To ensure that each individual teacher within the school system has been performing the duties for which he was programmed.
- iii. To cooperatively develop positive climate for real teaching and learning.

Others that have: been identified by Ogunsaju (1988) in Peretomode (2021) are:

- iv. To know the performance of the teachers employed to teach in the school system.
- v. To decide whether a teacher should be transferred, promoted, retrained, retooled or terminated.
- vi. To improve the incompetent teacher, help him or her to plan for and present instruction and use up-to-date teaching methods and resources.
- vii. To discover distinct capabilities or potentials possessed by teachers in the schools.
- viii. To provide a guide to staff development.
- ix. To discern the effectiveness of classroom management by the teachers.
- x. To evaluate the "nature" of the school and identify some of its most vital needs

### **Instructional Supervision Techniques and Implementation of Competence Based Curriculum**

There is a range of activities that the skilful instructional supervisor can employ to bring about appropriate effect in teacher performance for attaining teaching effectiveness in competence based curriculum.

These methods include the following:

**Classroom Observation:** Observing in classrooms is one of the most commonly used techniques of instructional supervision. This method involves the organized live observing of a teacher and analyzing his or her classroom practices and the teaching-learning process. It is a situation where the teacher is working directly with the learners and the instructional supervisor is present as a witness to observe systematically classroom events. The clinic cycle of classroom observation involves the following steps: planning cooperatively, teaching realistically, observing systematically and objectively, analyzing, providing feedback, interpreting cooperatively, valuing decision making for improvement, and re-planning cooperatively.

During observation, the overseer also looks for planning, and preparation, lesson presentation, teacher's behaviour and student-teacher interactions or relationship. The casual 'drop in' visit to a teacher's classroom is still a common procedure but should not be confused with classroom observation activity. Observations serve to inform supervisors not only of the problems teachers come across, but also the exceptional practices in effect (Haris, 1975; Goldhammer, Anderson and Krajewski, 1980, Ogunsaju, 1988) as quoted by Penetomode (2021)

**Demonstration:** Demonstration is one of the most effective techniques of stimulating teachers' growth. It involves the presentation of a pre-organised series of events to a group for their observing. To be effective, however, the demonstration should be realistic, practicable and lacking any form of insincerity. It has been pointed out that demonstrations are most effective when involvement is enhanced by viewers using orderly observation procedures followed by activities such as discussion, videotape replays and focused practice.

**Teacher Visitation:** This activity, which is also referred to as inter-visiting involves one teacher visiting and observing another teacher in action in another class within the same school (inter class visitation) or in a class in another school (inter school visitation). Also called reciprocal visitations, the technique is a good supervisory one that often yields valuable consequences. The approach gives opportunity to various kinds of teachers to visit others in another school and watch them teach. This approach is particularly helpful if the beginner or inexperienced teacher watches experienced teacher in action, thus helping him to learn how to organise and manage students in the classroom, and to plan effectively and in the effective exploitation of resources.

**Workshop:** This is another very valuable method in the supervision of instruction to achieve implementation of the competence based curriculum. The activity encompasses a small group of people that is temporarily formed to discuss a specific topic, or work on a common problem, and trying to find solution(s) to a definite problem. A workshop may be organized at a particular time during the year to meet a particular need. In workshops, maximum emphasis upon collaboration and an optimum amount of critical analysis of ideas related to the problem or topic at hand is encouraged in a non-judgemental, topic-centred, face to face situation.

**Micro-teaching:** This activity is very essential for the training of both pre-service and in-service teachers. A concise description of micro-teaching is a technique that could be utilized by supervisors. Micro-teaching is a teaching situation which is scaled down in terms of time, class size and teaching complexity to allow the teacher to focus on a selected teaching approach. It is intended to develop new skills and improve old ones.

In a typical micro-teaching lesson, a teacher teaches a group of five to ten pupils, using a specific skill, within, say ten minutes. The lesson contains two elements, namely, content (usually a segment of a topic in a subject area) and the skill in a selected specific teaching skill. Depending on the availability of facilities, the micro lesson may or may not be recorded. After the lesson, the teacher and the supervisor (together with the pupils) view the replay of the videotape of the lesson, appraise the person and discuss aspects of the lesson. The supervisor points out the strengths and weaknesses of the teacher. If the lesson was videotaped, the student teacher or supervisor sees or listens to his or her mistakes. The supervisor suggests ways of which the lesson could be improved. Based on the knowledge of the instant feedback and recommendations for improvement, the teacher re-teaches the lesson to the same group, or preferably to a different group of students or peers.

**Listening to Tape, Radio, or Recordings:** This supervisory technique, according to Harris (1975) in Peretomode (2021), involves using sound recordings to present ideas to one or more listeners in such a way, as to help develop understanding or skills. Tape recordings of selected portions of a class meeting have been successful in simulating group discussions and consequently changes in teacher behaviour that improves teaching effectiveness. The use of visual presentations through media of film, television, or videotape are increasingly vital in the supervisory process.



**Guided practice:** This supervisory technique encompasses individualised or small group manipulative activities. It is an approach in which doing is emphasised rather than talking with practice activities arranged out of situation. Guided practice activities are sometimes associated with inter-visitation, and observation may indicate the need for skill development. If lesson-planning skills are involved, an interview may lead to a visit to observe a teacher whose teaching reflects skilful planning. A follow-up activity may well include a guided practice session in which the teacher develops her plans with direct, individual assistance from the supervisor.

**Research:** Research is the systematic and objective collection and analysis of data in order to find solutions to identified problems and improve life and other activities. It could be used as a technique for instructional supervision. In this regard, the supervisor has to work with and through teachers to finding solutions to challenges of teaching and learning that confront them instead of dictating solutions to or autocratically resolving educational problems concerning teaching and teachers.

### **Conclusion**

CBC approach to teaching and assessment is a relatively new concept in Uganda. For its implementation to be successfully achieved, it is imperative that the instructional supervisory approach or techniques be utilised or adopted to put teachers on track. The instructional supervisory approach is considered suitable because it is more guidance oriented than indicting. It promotes cooperative educational effort in a friendly atmosphere aimed at improving teaching and learning processes and outcomes. Irrespective of its challenges, this approach still stands as a veritable tool for the successful implementation of the new competence based curriculum.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations are considered pertinent

1. Instructional supervisors should regularly witness classroom activities and provide positive guidance where necessary.
2. Encourage reciprocal visitations between teachers of the same school.
3. Regular workshops/seminars to enhance interaction and exchange of ideas between teachers be organized.
4. Teachers and other stakeholders should be given opportunity to present challenges, make inputs.
5. Text materials on competence curriculum approaches/methods be made available to teachers as a reference guide.

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