

## **TEACHERS' PREPAREDNESS AND ITS EFFECT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF COMPETENCY-BASED CURRICULUM IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN TAITA TAVETA COUNTY, KENYA**

**Jacinta Mwende Muthoka.**

Student, Master of Education (Educational Administration), Kenyatta University, Kenya.

**Dr. Daniel Mange Mbirithi.**

Department of Educational Management, Policy and Curriculum Studies, Kenyatta University, Kenya.

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## **ABSTRACT**

Teachers' preparedness noticeably dictates how effectively a curriculum is implemented. The resolve of this study was to establish teachers' level of preparedness and how this affects the implementation of the competency-based curriculum (CBC) in public primary schools in Taita sub-county Taita Taveta County, Kenya. The present study was steered by the stated objectives, namely to: determine teachers' preparedness to effectively include core competencies when lesson planning; establish teachers' preparedness to employ learner-centered teaching methods and skills; evaluate teachers' preparedness to effectively implement digital learning integration; and establish teachers' preparedness to implement formative assessment in line with CBC. According to Gross's 1971 Curriculum Implementation Theory, a teacher must be fully prepared for any curriculum reform to succeed at implementation stage. The descriptive survey research design was employed to guide this study. The target population for this study comprised 50 head teachers and 344 handling grades 1 to 6 in the 50 public primary schools in the sub-county. Simple random sampling technique was used to obtain a sample of 24 head teachers

and 105 teachers who participated in this study using Taro Yamane's formula. Qualitative data were obtained by interviewing the head teachers while quantitative data were obtained from teachers who filled the questionnaires. Qualitative data from interviews with head teachers and open-ended questionnaire items were analyzed thematically by grouping the data into major themes as per the objectives and variables, and then presented in form of narrations. Quantitative data were analyzed using measures of frequency with the help of SPSS Version 24 to obtain descriptive statistics, and then presented in the form of frequency tabulations, graphs and percentages. From the research findings, this study concludes that the level of teachers' preparedness has a bearing on the effective implementation of the competency-based curriculum in public primary schools in Taita Sub-County, Taita Taveta County. The findings obtained from the research might be useful to education policymakers, scholars and various education stakeholders including KICD, MOE, and TSC in making decisions geared towards improved implementation of the competency-based curriculum in primary schools in Kenya.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The world over, schooling is considered to be the best footing for inclusive prosperity (OECD, 2010; UNESCO, 2019). The trend in educational reforms has been to change the curriculum to endow citizens with practical knowledge levels, soft and hard skills, desirable attitudes and appropriate values that are in tandem with the changing societal needs in order to facilitate sustainable development (KICD, 2017; UNESCO, 2019). Starting with the USA in the early 1970s, the world is moving away from the traditional educational curriculums to competence-based curriculum (CBC) with the hope of not only stimulating learners to attain optimum academic performance but for them to relate with what they study in their everyday activities (Kiugu, 2020; Benen, 2021; Kisulu, Simatwa & Ndolo, 2021; Jepkoge, Waswa & Kipkoech, 2022). The CBC education is premised on learners' capacity to master and relate with the values, attitudes, skills and knowledge that they secure progressively throughout their education life.

Today, many countries in the world have adopted the CBC namely USA, Europe (France and Finland), Mexico, Australia, British Columbia, New Zealand, Japan and Hong Kong (Benen, 2021; Jepkoge, Waswa & Kipkoech, 2022). The CBC education system is preferred since the learning outcomes do not emphasize mere acquisition of knowledge rather on the use of attained competencies to actual life situations by pupils for their own advantage and to benefit the larger society (Chu, Reynolds, Tavares, Notari & Lee, 2017).

Regarding our continent, several African countries have adopted the competence-based curriculum namely, South Africa, Ghana, Cameroon, Mozambique, Zambia, Botswana and Ethiopia, despite facing diverse challenges ranging from poor and dilapidated infrastructure, inadequate resources, poor teacher staffing levels and deplorable leadership (Kiugu, 2020; Benen, 2021; Jepkoge, Waswa & Kipkoech, 2022; Wanjiku, 2022). The competence-based curriculum is now the trend in Africa since its focus is on what learners are likely to fix (competencies met) rather than focusing on what learners are to study (subject content).

In the East African region, it is now a requirement since 2013 for countries in the region to adopt the competence-based curriculum (EAC, 2014; IBE-UNESCO, 2017; Kisulu, Simatwa & Ndolo, 2021). Several countries in the region adopted CBC before Kenya did. They include Rwanda, Burundi and Tanzania. Notable changes that have come with the competence-based curriculum include the augmented focus on the core competencies; the deployment of learner-centred teaching methods particularly the emphasis on practicals and group work; shift away from summative (standardized test scores) to cumulative (formative) assessment; and parental involvement in homework and the subsequent parent-teacher interaction (KICD, 2017).

Kenya decided to implement the CBC in January 2017 following the Taskforce report of 2012 to realign the schooling sector with the 2010 Constitution, Vision 2030 and Sessional Paper No. 10 of 2015 on “Reforming Education and Training in Kenya”. The move was dictated by the realization by majority of the citizens that the existing system of education (8-4-4) anchored on “education for self-reliance” philosophy had become obsolete (GoK, 2007; KICD, 2017; Kisulu, Simatwa & Ndolo, 2021). The major criticism was that previous systems of education in Kenya (7-4-2-3 and 8-4-4), rewarded those who scored highly in traditional subjects namely English, Mathematics, Science and Humanities at the terminal stage of the secondary school educational phase. The typical erroneous expectation was that they would land white collar jobs. Moreover, those whose propensity, talents and aptitudes were domiciled in non-academic pursuits such as sports and arts were disregarded (RoK, 2012; Kabita & Ji, 2017). The competence-based curriculum emphasizes practical subjects and seeks to produce self-reliant, creative and innovative citizens to preempt the sky-high unemployment rates in Kenya.

Ideally, the teacher’s part in the CBC scheme, which is learner-centered, is that of an enabler rather than being transmitters of knowledge. However, teachers chaperon learners by supervising and become actively and closely involved in almost all the activities. All teachers are obliged to ordinarily demonstrate sufficient mastery (or ability to learn and apply) of the subject content (knowledge), skills and attitudes; accentuate relevant competencies including solicitation and conception of knowledge and the advance of vital skills and temperaments; sound knowledge on CBC pedagogy (pedagogical approaches and models); individualized learning characterized by diversity of learning styles; competencies in frequent and ongoing assessment; and talent identification and nurturing.

The goal of competence-based curriculum is to ensure learners acquire essential competencies that comprise collaboration and communication, problem-solving and critical thinking, imagination and creativity, digital literacy, self-efficacy, learning to learn and citizenship (KICD, 2016). Besides, the learners are expected to acquire several core values that include honesty, humility, love, respect, unity, responsibility, peace, patriotism, integrity and social justice (KICD, 2016; 2017; Kisulu, Simatwa & Ndolo, 2021). A study done by Sifuna and Obonyo (2019) on prospects and challenges of implementing CBC in primary schools in Kenya pointed out that schemes of work and lesson plans were too detailed hence teachers found it time consuming and others not preparing them. Roberson (2010) affirms that a teacher who teaches without professional documents would be incompetent in the actual classroom. Teacher preparation and use of professional records provide a road map for effective teaching. This demands teachers to be keen and accurate when preparing teaching documents. Every teacher should be well trained to be able to include the core competencies when lesson planning.

Tanzania introduced CBC in secondary schools in 2005 and in primary education in 2006. A study carried out by Makunja (2016) on challenges facing teachers in implementing CBC in Tanzania confirmed that lack of adequate in-service training for teachers resulted to limited teacher preparedness in the application of pedagogical knowledge during teaching and learning process. The current study seeks to establish how well teachers have been trained to effectively employ learner-centered pedagogy while implementing CBC in Taita sub-county.

Orodho, Waweru and Nthinguri (2013) reports that East Africa resource insufficiency has greatly contributed to the lack of digital learning integration. For example, schools in Rwanda do not possess adequate digital infrastructure and resources contributing to deplorable teaching and learning outcomes (Republic of Rwanda, 2015). Similarly, in Uganda there has been persistent lack of classrooms, desks and ICT equipment and tools in many public primary schools. In Kenya, KICD requires ICT to be a delivery tool for all learning areas in CBC (KICD, 2016). A teacher should be well trained on computer and pedagogical skills to enable him or her to effectively implement digital learning in all the teaching areas.

CBC stresses on the use of formative assessment focused on the prescribed competences. It emphasizes teachers to assess learners frequently using authentic assessment methods such as portfolios, classroom or field observation, projects, oral presentations, rubrics, checklists among others (Sturgis and Casey, 2018). A study done by Jelagat (2020) noted that insufficient training of teachers on assessment adversely affected the realization of the objectives of the new curriculum in North Rift and Western Kenya. It emerged that teachers were not sufficiently trained partly because of scarcity of resources. Similarly, a study by Waweru (2018) on teachers' mode of assessment in CBC in Nyandarua sub-county indicated that almost half of the teachers required professional support to be able to design assessment rubrics. Hence, teachers ought to have been trained on how to prepare and use the assessment methods and tools as required by the new curriculum.

Teacher' preparedness and capacity remarkably determines how effectively the curriculum is implemented (IBE-UNESCO, 2017; KICD, 2017; Benen, 2021). The quality and effectiveness of the application of the CBC requires thorough in-service training of teachers who happen to be the executors (Kiugu, 2020; Kisulu, Simatwa & Ndolo, 2021; Jepkoge, Waswa & Kipkoech, 2022). Gross (1971) puts it clearly that one cannot implement what he/she does not know.

The study's site is Taita sub-county, which is characterized by a tough terrain and hostile environment. Data from the TSC office Taita sub-county as at December 2023 indicates that CBC capacity building training sessions were provided to school heads and classroom teachers in private and public primary schools as follows: 2019 (205

teachers); 2020 (163); 2021 (163); and 2022 (nil) (Table 1.1). There was no CBC training sessions for teachers in the years 2022 and 2023. It was against this background that the researcher chose the sub-county as study locale to investigate teachers' preparedness and how this affects the execution of the CBC design in public primary schools.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The excellence of the learner-focused curriculum instruction depends on the aptitude of the teacher. Expectedly, teachers are required to demonstrate specific competencies (knowledge levels, skills, attitudes and values); possession of the capacity to translate the same to learners using CBC appropriate innovative pedagogical approaches and models; and be able to appropriately assess their learners. For this to occur, teachers are expected to build their capacities to be able to understand pupils; promote pupil learning and cultivate instructional leadership as laid down by the KICD. Teacher preparedness and capacity building is achieved through frequent in-service training, seminars and workshops based on predetermined learning outcomes. Though teachers are customarily facilitators of learning, they are expected to be ready for curriculum implementation and delivery through individualized classroom instruction. The current study will focus primarily on teachers' preparedness, and the effects thereof, on their capability to construe and deploy the learner-based curriculum in public primary schools in Taita Sub-County. Data obtained from the sub-county office indicated that in year 2019, 142 teachers; year 2020, 96 teachers and year 2021, 98 teachers out of 344 were trained on CBC implementation. The researcher found the numbers to be inadequate since not all the teachers had been trained on CBC which could negatively affect the expected outcomes of the curriculum. Thus, the researcher decided to establish the level of teacher's preparedness to implement CBC in the sub-county.

### **Purpose of the Study**

This study aims at ascertaining the level of teachers' preparedness and its effect on the implementation of the competency-based curriculum in public primary schools in Taita Sub-County, Taita Taveta County.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The following objectives guided this study, namely to:

- i Determine teachers' preparedness to effectively include core competencies when lesson planning in public primary schools in Taita Sub-County, Taita Taveta County;
- ii Establish teachers' preparedness to employ learner-centred teaching methods and skills in public primary schools in Taita Sub-County, Taita Taveta County;

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks**

The study embraced Gross's theoretical framework on Curriculum Implementation authored in 1971. According to the theory, enhanced implementation of any new educational reform depends on effective stakeholder involvement and participation; clarity and awareness of the expected changes; support and expected resistance from the environment. Gross also pointed on challenges that can obstruct the smooth implementation of curriculum changes such as inadequacy of instructional resources, increased workload and pupil to teacher ratio (class size and staffing). He further underscores the importance of sufficiently involving education stakeholders in curriculum changes. Specifically, he argues that the competence of the teacher is non-negotiable. Gross states that teachers are key stakeholders whose efforts count for successful curriculum implementation.

The theory links very well with the current study which is establishing whether teachers have been prepared adequately to enable them achieve the objectives of CBC on certain key areas. Teachers, being the implementers of the curriculum, are expected to be competent and conversant with what is to be implemented, that is, contents and pedagogies of the new curriculum. They should have adequate knowledge and skills regarding inclusion of core competencies when lesson planning; using learner-centered teaching strategies; implement ICT and assess learners on competencies acquired. This can be achieved through adequate training before implementation and continuous in-servicing sessions for teachers already in the profession. When teachers are not competent and/or adequately informed on the curriculum changes then implementation may falter.

### **Teacher Preparedness to Include Core Competencies when Lesson Planning**

According to Wilson and Floden (2003), all teachers engaged in actual classroom activities in the federal states of USA must prepare and use professional documents. There exist some federal agencies that liaise with the schools to certify the requisite documents from teachers before they use them. Similarly in Kenya, head teachers check and approve the requisite professional documentation ranging from schemes of work and lesson plans among others. These observations are relevant to the current study that is seeking to establish whether teachers in Taita Taveta County include core competencies when lesson planning.

Roberson (2010) affirms that a teacher who teaches without professional documents would be incompetent in the actual classroom. Teacher preparation and use of professional records provide a road map for effective teaching. This demands teachers to be keen and accurate when preparing teaching documents. It would be interesting



to undertake this study to determine whether teachers in Taita Taveta County include core competencies when lesson planning.

KICD (2016) affirms the seven competencies that learners need to attain, namely: imagination and creativity, collaboration and communication, critical perceptiveness and problem-solving, digital mastery, resourcefulness, open-mindedness and citizenship. Teachers should be conversant with these competencies and values since they form the objectives of CBC. It would be interesting to undertake this study to determine whether teachers in Taita Taveta County include core competencies when lesson planning.

Waweru (2018) did a study on constraints facing successful operationalization of CBC in public primary schools in Nyandarua North Sub-County. It emerged that the instructors were not adequately prepared to put into practice the competency-based curriculum. The study pinpointed teachers' competency to infuse core competencies during instruction, obtainability of teaching materials, teacher's style of valuation of learners (design and use of rubrics) and lesson planning were key areas of concern. It occurred that teacher had difficulties scheming lesson plans guided by the available CBC designs and extracting the relevant content from the course books. Specifically, the study concluded majority of the instructors (95%) could not prepare lesson plans for all learning areas since for them a single lesson plan required relatively much time. It would be interesting to undertake this study to determine whether teachers in Taita Taveta County face the same challenges when lesson planning.

IBE-UNESCO (2014) documents the stakeholders' misgivings on the progress of the shift to talent-focused from content-oriented education system. The transition process was hurriedly done without due consideration teachers' preparedness. Similarly, IBE-UNESCO (2017) reports that teachers from Nyeri County sluggishly prepared for lessons thereby compromising adequacy of time required for individualized instruction. It would be interesting to undertake this study to determine whether teachers in Taita Taveta County experience the same challenges when lesson planning.

Akello, Barasa and Omulando (2022) investigated the impact of teachers' unpreparedness on end-user language efficacy among pupils in Busia County. The study's finding indicate that teacher unpreparedness hinder the operationalization distorts the usefulness of the CBC language curriculum. Ostensibly, most of the teachers were ineffectual; could not mine schemes of work and proper lesson plans; and lacked awareness on how to mine the core competencies in line with stated learning aftermaths. Therefore, it would be remarkable to undertake this research to determine whether teachers in Taita Taveta county were able to incorporate the core competencies when lesson planning.



Jepkogei, Waswa and Kipkoech (2022) emphasizes the importance of training teachers and considering school dynamics before successfully launching and implementing a new education curriculum. The study's findings are that teachers' preparation and capacity (knowledge, understanding and interpretation) of the course syllabus define the knowledge acquisition environment and process. And, teachers require key competencies that include selection and appraisal, instructional diversity, classroom behavior supervision, and teamwork. It would be interesting to undertake this study to determine whether teachers in Taita Taveta County include core competencies when lesson planning.

### **Teacher Preparedness to Employ Learner-Centered Teaching Methods and Skills**

KICD (2019) reports that the developers of CBC emphasized on an individualized learning that catered for different learning styles of learners. The CBC syllabus requires the teacher to have knowledge on appropriate methodology for learners to be competent. CBC expects the teacher to be a facilitator and not sole expert of knowledge, using learner-centered approaches like projects, role-play, case studies, problem solving, study visits among others. A teacher who had been trained on delivering 8-4-4 curriculum should be prepared again on the new methods of implementing CBC so as to achieve the desired goal in the learner.

Akello, Barasa and Omulando (2022) acknowledge that most of the CBC teachers had not attended capacity building forums. The teachers need to be re-tooled with a range of instructional strategies to preempt them from monopolizing class sessions. They needed to be trained on how they can facilitate and allow learners enough room to engage and interact with knowledge in an environment characterized by minimal supervision. The study recommends capacity building training opportunities especially professional development courses to develop their knowledge, skills and CBC pedagogy. These observations are relevant to the current study that is seeking to establish whether teachers in Taita Taveta County are adequately prepared and have the capacity to use learner-prioritized teaching methods and approaches.

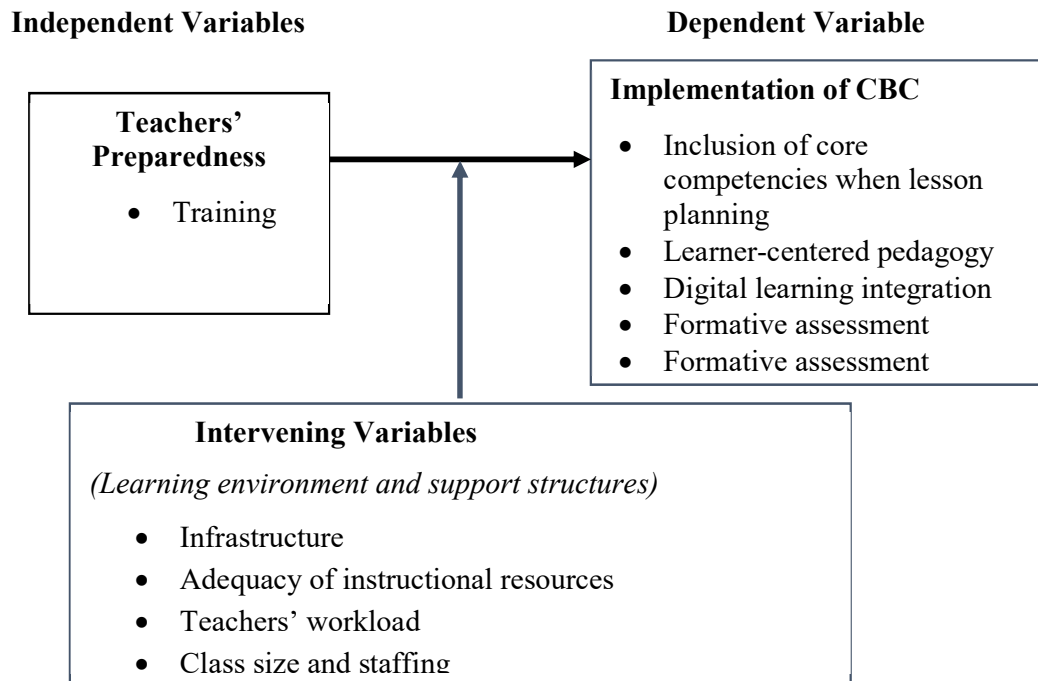
According to Amutabi (2019), the learner's ability and interest is taken care of when planning for the learning experiences that are majorly activity oriented and teachers are just facilitators of knowledge. Similarly, Scheopner, Brett, Cox, and Greller (2018) observes that learners need customized instruction to ensure they exhibit what they are educated in the schoolroom. The efficacious comprehension of the instructions is depended on the facilitators of learning. It would be interesting to undertake this study to determine whether teachers in Taita Taveta County are sufficiently prepared and have the capacity to apply CBC pedagogy in the classroom. Kisulu, Simatwa and Ndolo (2021) observes that teacher sensitivities positively contributed to the exemplary accomplishment of CBC in public primary schools in

Rangwe. Clearly, induction induced confidence in teachers to be able to effectively teach Competence Based Curriculum. Similarly, Kiptoo and Kitainge (2020) noted that effective implementation of the CBC curriculum requires teacher's successfully undergoing capacity building sessions. It would be interesting to undertake this study to determine whether teachers in Taita Taveta County are sufficiently prepared and have the capacity to apply CBC pedagogy in the classroom.

UNESCO (2019) reports that the competency-based curriculum involves the application of competencies to everyday living. The implication is that when education is made learner-focused it becomes relevant and interesting. Similarly, Laaria (2013) observes that when teachers are properly equipped with pedagogical skills they are better able to motivate learners. Learner-centered pedagogical skills encourage group discussions, hands-on activities and doing assignments. These observations are relevant to the current study that is seeking to establish whether teachers in Taita Taveta County are adequately prepared and have the capacity to use learner-centered teaching pedagogy.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The illustrative representation in Fig. 1 below shows how the independent variable (teachers' preparedness) influence the dependent variable (the implementation of CBC). Teachers' preparedness imply their expertise and methodological competence which are imperative quality components with regard to appropriate implementation of the CBC. This can be attained if teachers have undergone adequate in-service training to enable them achieve the expected outcomes of CBC. An adequately trained teacher should be able to, (i) include core competencies in lesson plans (ii) use learner-centered teaching strategies more frequently, (iii) effectively integrate digital learning and (iv) assess learners 'competencies using recommended tools.



Source: Researcher, 2023

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Conversely, a teacher who is inadequately trained would find it challenging to implement the new curriculum in relation to the above dependent variables. Accordingly, this study will investigate the extent to which the preparedness of teachers affect the execution of the Competency-based curriculum.

The intervening variables comprise of dynamics that control the sway of the independent variables on dependent variables in terms of augmenting and/or offsetting the outcome. They include learning environment and support structures (poor infrastructure, inadequacy of instructional resources, increased teacher workload, large class size and low staffing levels).

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research was guided by the descriptive survey research design which permitted the researcher to amass data on the actual situation of the study units without manipulating the respondents. Both quantitative and qualitative data were gathered and analyzed to offer insights on teachers' preparedness and its effect on their capacity to implement CBC in public primary schools in Taita Sub-County.

The research area was Taita Sub-County, Taita Taveta County located at the Coastal part of Kenya. The researcher found the location appropriate for this study because data from the TSC office Taita Sub-County as at December 2023 indicated the CBC capacity building training sessions provided to public primary school teachers in

between 2019 and 2022 was too low (refer table 1.1). Additionally, no study on teachers' level of preparedness to implement CBC had been undertaken in the locale. The research targeted all the 50 public primary schools in Taita Sub-County. So, the target population for this research comprised 50 head teachers and 344 teachers handling learners in grades 1 to 6 in the 50 public primary schools in Taita Sub-County. Primary school teachers' honest views and experiences on their preparedness to interpret and implement CBC was crucial for this study. Head teachers are immediate instructional supervisors in schools and are expected to oversee the implementation of curriculum hence the researcher felt that they would give detailed data about teachers' preparedness and capacity.

Simple random sampling technique was utilized to select the schools for this study. The 50 primary schools in the sub-county possess almost similar characteristics in that they were all rural-based day schools hence each school stood an equal chance to provide required data from teachers and head teachers. The head teachers of the randomly selected public primary schools participated in this study as respondents. Simple random sampling was also be utilized to sample teachers as respondents drawn from the randomly selected public primary schools.

A representative sample of 229 was scientifically determined using the Taro Yamane's formula. Primary data were gathered by administering questionnaires on sampled teachers. Semi –structures questionnaires were used to gather quantitative data from teachers handling CBC learners in grades 1 to 6. For qualitative data, the study used interview schedule on sampled head teachers. Head teachers are in charge of curriculum supervision hence one should be able to give inferences about the teachers' preparedness in their schools. Interview method allowed the researcher to probe the interviewee using the relevant questions hence got detailed understanding of the topic under study. The data obtained from head teachers assisted in interpreting some of the numerical data obtained from questionnaires. Data collected was analyzed thematically and presented in form of narrations.

Data analysis was done for each research objective with the aim of describing the level of teacher preparedness and its effect on implementation of CBC in public primary schools in Taita sub-county. For every study objective, both quantitative and qualitative data were gathered. The researcher ensured that all quantitative and qualitative data from questionnaires and interviews were well captured, cleaned and coded in preparation for data analysis and interpretation.

Each qualitative data from interviews with head teachers and some questionnaire items were analyzed thematically by grouping the data into major themes as per the objectives and variables, and then presented in form of narrations.

Each quantitative data was duly cleaned, coded, entered and manipulated with the help of SPSS Version 24. Measures of frequency were employed to analyze quantitative data to obtain descriptive statistics for each research objective. Data presentation was rendered in the form of frequency tabulations, graphs, and percentages.

The interview respondents, who happened to be teachers, were coded as below to ensure confidentiality: HTeacher 1, 2, 3, 4..... The codes were used, while hiding the identity of the specific respondents, during the presentation of research findings.

## **RESULTS AND FINDINGS**

The total participants that completely filled in the questionnaire were 105. The desired survey sample size was 185. Thirty four of the teacher (32.4%) respondents identified themselves as male and 71 (67.6%) as female. Six teachers were within the 21-25 year age range, 25 fell between 26-30, 22 were between 31-35, 14 were between 36-40, 9 were between 41-45, 10 were between 46-50, 11 were between 51-55 and the rest 8 were between 56-60 years.

Thirty teachers indicated they had between 1-5 years in teaching service, 19 had between 6-10, 17 had between 11-15 years, 9 had between 16-20 years, 9 had between 21-25 years, 2 had between 26-30 years, 6 had between 31-35 years, and 5 had more than 35 years in teaching service.

### **Teachers' Preparedness to Effectively Include Core competencies When Lesson Planning**

The first objective of this study was to determine teachers' preparedness to effectively include core competencies when lesson planning in public primary schools in Taita Sub-County, Taita Taveta County.

According to Table 4.2, a majority 83 (79%) of the teachers stated that they were fairly familiar with collaboration and communication. However, a mere 20 (19%) were very familiar while 1 (1%) were not familiar and the rest 1 (1%) did not comment. This was confirmed by the majority of the interviewed head teachers.

Sixty six (62.9%) of the teachers stated that they were fairly familiar with self-efficacy while 35 (33.3) were very familiar and the rest were either not familiar 2 (1.9%) or did not comment 2 (1.9%).

Sixty four (61%) of the teachers stated that they were fairly familiar with problem-solving and critical thinking while 37 (35.2%) were very familiar and the rest were not familiar 3 (2.9%) or did not comment 1 (1%).

More than fifty per cent 59 (56.2%) of the teachers stated that they were fairly familiar with imagination and creativity while 40 (38.1%) were very familiar and the rest were either not familiar 2 (1.9%) or did not comment 4 (3.8%).

The most discussed challenge in the CBC is digital literacy. Survey findings indicate that only 7 (6.7%) of the teacher respondents stated that they were very familiar with digital literacy while 47 (44.8%) were not familiar and the rest were either fairly familiar 48 (45.8%) or did not comment 3 (2.9%).

More than fifty per cent 64 (61%) of the teacher respondents stated that they were fairly familiar while 33 (31.4%) were very familiar and the rest were either not familiar 2 (1.9%) or did not comment 6 (5.7%).

More than fifty per cent 63 (63.8%) of the teacher respondents stated that they were fairly familiar while 31 (29.5%) were very familiar and the rest were either not familiar 5 (4.8%) or did not comment 2 (1.9%).

**Table 1: Familiarity with Core Competencies**

Familiarity with Core competencies	Very familiar		Fairly familiar		Not familiar		Neutral		Total	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>F</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>F</i>	%
Collaboration and communication	20	19.0	83	79.0	1	1.0	1	1.0	105	100
Self-efficacy	35	33.3	66	62.9	2	1.9	2	1.9	105	100
Problem-solving and critical thinking	37	35.2	64	61.0	3	2.9	1	1.0	105	100
Imagination and creativity	40	38.1	59	56.2	2	1.9	4	3.8	105	100
Digital literacy	7	6.7	48	45.8	47	44.8	3	2.9	105	100
Citizenship	33	31.4	64	61.0	2	1.9	6	5.7	105	100
Learning to learn	31	29.5	63	63.8	5	4.8	2	1.9	105	100

Through interviews with head teachers it emerged that it is important for teachers to incorporate core competencies when lesson planning as required by the CBC since it helps in the achievement of learner-oriented education. One head teacher observed:

*Actually, core competencies are the objectives of the CBC. Also, including competencies such as collaboration and communication and citizenship help the learners to acquire values from the competencies (Interview Hteacher 1 October, 2024).*

Fieldwork findings indicated mixed reaction on the teacher respondents' familiarity, interpretation and inclusion of the core competencies when lesson planning as per the requirements of the CBC. On the whole, it emerged that majority of the teachers did not include the core competencies while lesson planning. One of the interviewee responded:

*Sometimes even where the core competencies had been indicated in lesson plans, problems arose in the actual lesson delivery. The core competencies ended up not coming out clearly (Interview Hteacher 2, October 2024).*

That being the case, my own personal interaction with head teachers and teachers made me conclude that majority of the teachers felt partially prepared to teach the new curriculum (CBC).

Similar findings were reported by Akello, Barasa and Omulando (2022) from a study in Busia County. The study noted that because of teachers' unpreparedness, they were unable to extract the core competencies in line with stated learning outcomes. Similarly, Waweru (2018) concluded that approximately 95% of the instructors in public primary schools in Nyandarua Sub-County failed to properly lesson plan because they were not properly prepared to implement the CBC.

The competency-based curriculum has unequivocally seen a significant variation for the teachers and learners notably the shift from specific grades to attainment based on the attainment of lesson goals and competencies (IBE-UNESCO, 2014; 2017). It occurred that the shift from content based education system to focus on talents comes with challenges with lesson planning.

At the epicenter of the new curriculum is the incorporation of core competencies when lesson planning. Core competencies, namely, communication and collaboration, self-efficacy, problem solving and critical thinking, imagination and creativity and digital literacy are strongly related to learning, cognitive development and improving understanding. Whereas citizenship is more related to values, learning to learn has four pillars, namely, learning to know, learning to do, learning to be and learning to live together. Other core values include unity, peace, patriotism, integrity, honesty, humility, love and social justice (KICD, 2016; 2017; Kisulu, Simatwa & Ndolo, 2021).

According to Table 2, most of the teachers 84 (80%) are of the opinion that it is very important for teachers to incorporate core competencies when lesson planning as required by the CBC while 14 (13.3%) state it is fairly important the rest said either important 5 (4.8%) or slightly important 2 (1.9%).

**Table 2: How important is it for teachers to incorporate core competencies when lesson planning as required by CBC?**

<b>How important</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative percent</b>
Very important	84	80.0	80.0
Fairly important	14	13.3	93.3
Important	5	4.8	98.1
Slightly important	2	1.9	100.0
Total	105	100.0	

Several studies such as Benen (2021), Kisulu, Simatwa and Ndolo (2021) and Jepkosgei, Waswa and Kipkoech (2022) recommend in-service training for teachers for them to appropriately implement the CBC curriculum. Yet an overwhelming majority of 99 (94.2%) the teacher respondents said "No" when asked whether they have ever attended any seminars and workshops on the inclusion of core competencies when lesson planning since the inception of CBC in their school while 5 (4.8%) said "Yes" and the rest 1 (1%) did not comment (Figure 4.1).



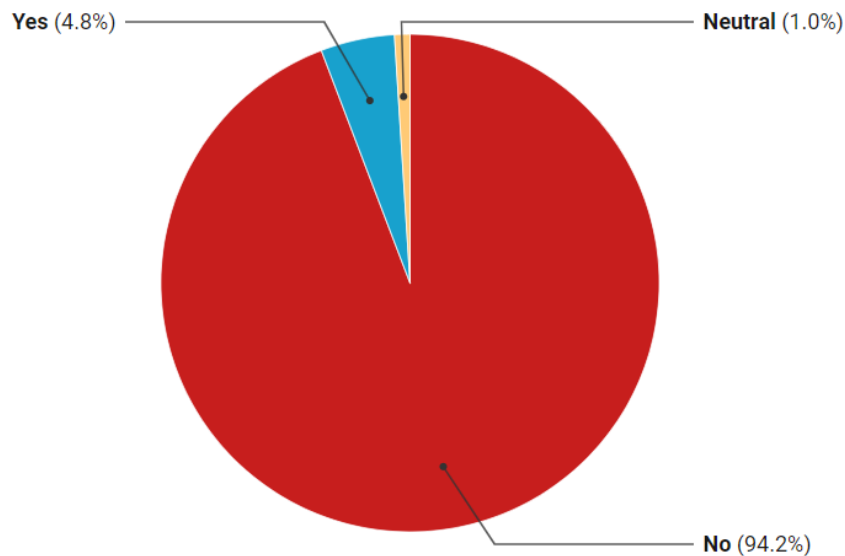


Figure 1: Since the inception of CBC in your school, have you attended any seminars and workshops on the inclusion of core competencies when lesson planning

Only 2 (1.9%) of the teacher respondents answered “Many times” when asked on the frequency of CBC training they have attended while 37 (35.2%) said occasionally and the rest 66 (62.9%) said they have never attended any. Their statements paint a clear picture that they did not CBC training was adequate (Figure 2).

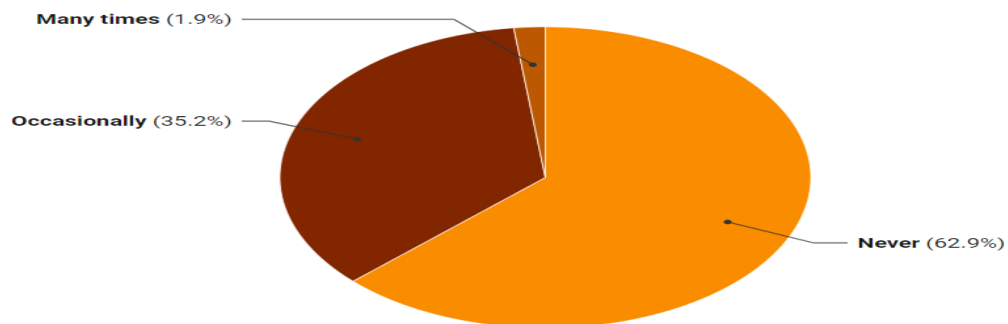


Figure 2: How frequent have you attended CBC training

On the appropriateness of the CBC training, majority 64 (61%) of the teacher respondents were of the opinion that it was less than expected while 13 (14.3%) said it was as expected and only 10 (9.5%) indicated it was more than expected while 16 (15.2%) did not comment. Their statements paint a clear picture that they did not feel the CBC training received was appropriate (Figure. 3).

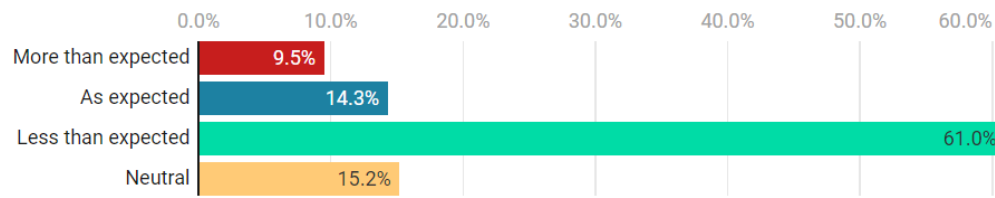
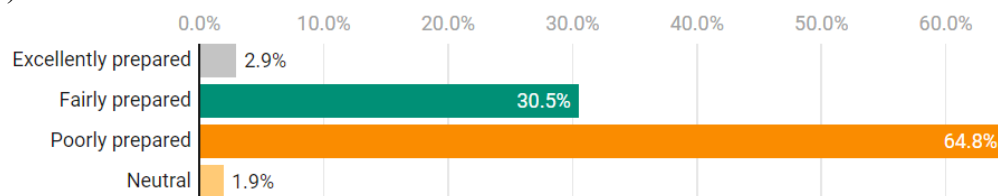


Figure 3: How appropriate was the CBC training received

Not all the teachers that participated in this study had undergone any in-service training in the competency-based curriculum for various reasons. Interview with head teachers indicated that some had just been recruited as teachers in the current year. Still, there were cases of teachers who had been in the service for years but had not undergone the training for lack of opportunity. One head teacher remarked:

*Perhaps this shift from exam-oriented curriculum to one premised on competencies is timely but it has been hurriedly implemented without allowing enough time to prepare teachers satisfactorily (Hteacher 3, October 2024).*

When asked how well-prepared they are to include core competencies when lesson planning after the in-service training of the CBC only 3 (2.9%) said they were excellently prepared, 32 (20.5%) said they were fairly prepared and the majority 68 (64.8%) felt they were poorly prepared. Their statements paint a clear picture that they did not feel comfortable including core competencies when lesson planning (Figure 4).



The inclusion of core competencies when lesson planning is a positive factor in the implementation of the CBC. The in-service training help equip teachers with skills and knowledge such that they are able to incorporate what they have been trained on. Teachers commented on their perceived preparedness. Nevertheless, only the minority of the comments were positive. The majority made comments about being ill prepared to teach, that is, that were not adequately empowered with knowledge and skills.

Notably, most of the teachers stated that they encounter numerous challenges when implementing the CBC particularly in the attempt to include core competencies when lesson planning. It emerged that those who had not been trained for long found it difficult to infuse the core competencies.

The most pronounced challenge was the time it took to complete the lesson plan and the appropriate learners' assessment. It emerged that the lesson planning and the formative assessment were far more time consuming in relation to the time allocated

per lesson. Time was not enough for teachers to prepare for each lesson since one has to read and research a lot.

Also, lesson planning requires choosing lesson goals and the core competencies yet some teachers lack a clear understanding of the core competencies, and their application in lessons. Still, it is not very clear where core competencies should be put in the lesson plan hence teachers have troubles implementing the competences properly in their lessons.

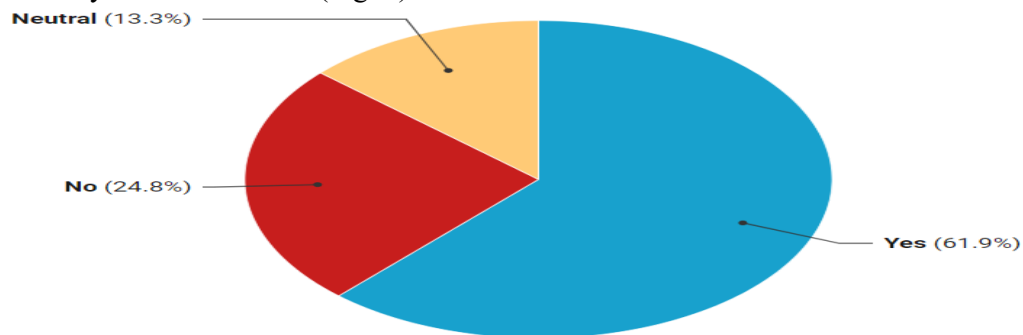
The other challenge was the difficulty in translating the core competencies for easy understanding by the learners. This is compounded by the implementation of new methods and the time taken due to the different levels of learning abilities.

Some teachers said they did not feel prepared after training since they were asked to teach subjects in which they had not been trained e.g. Creative Arts.

Acquisition of materials for practicals and other learning materials often poses a challenge when including core competencies during lesson planning. This is because of the lack of enough resources such as supplementary books.

The head teachers said they play a pivotal role in respect to the in-servicing of teachers to comply with the CBC curricula. They advise them on the benefits associated with frequent consultation among themselves. They also normally give opportunities for teachers to be trained whenever sessions organized by the sub-county directors become available. They also guide teachers who have challenges with core competencies including encouraging team teaching and mentorship.

Majority of the teacher respondents 65 (61.9%) confirm the view that the training of teachers to include core competencies when lesson planning affect the implementation of the CBC curriculum, 26 (24.8%) said it doesn't and the rest 14 (13.3%) did not comment. With regard to the extent to which in-service training prepared teachers to effectively interpret and teach the core competencies the reaction from the head teachers during the interviews was mixed. Most of them felt that the improvement was only to a small extent (Fig. 5).



**Figure 5:** *Does the training of teachers to include core competencies when lesson planning affect the implementation of the CBC curriculum*

This study documents CBC training experiences, content, challenges and even their possible solutions to be made considered.

The most cited aspect of the CBC training was on how to include the core competencies during lesson preparation. Some teachers felt that without the CBC training you cannot teach the CBC since knowledge or lack of it thereof affect lesson planning. Indeed, most of the head teachers interviewed commented that it was challenging to implement the CBC without training on how to prepare and use the professional documents, construct the lesson plans, and skim the guidebooks. This is because knowledge and skills of core competencies enables teachers to design and meet learning outcomes. So, incorporating core competencies when lesson planning would enable teachers to meet learning outcomes.

It emerged that the training on how to include the core competencies into lesson preparation assisted on the implementation of the CBC in the classroom and of the curriculum.

Actually, incorporating core competencies ensures that learners are able to show case their different talents and abilities as required by the CBC curriculum. Learners become more competent in various learning areas. Equips them with skills and knowledge thereby helps learners to participate fully in the lesson.

The CBC implementation including core competencies has made learners have a positive change in behavior.

Even then, the head teachers noted that some competencies were not well understood. And as such, not all core competencies were captured in lesson plans.

Regarding teacher training, majority of the teachers felt they were not well prepared for teaching and implementing the CBC. The most commonly discussed challenge was that a large number of teachers were yet to receive the CBC training.

Teachers discussed their partial preparedness when it came to core competencies in general. They indicated that while a few core competencies were clear during the training for others they were still unprepared. It emerged that the most of the CBC training did not prepare them adequately to deal with challenges while on duty. A teacher who received multiple training sessions indicates that it took several sessions to grasp some of them fully and some still are not clear.

Besides, the CBC training was too short such that teacher trainees had to cover everything that needed to be covered in three or four days. It felt more of a crash-course program. More days of training were needed to fully impart the knowledge needed to implement the CBC.

Further, teachers that did attend the training experienced issues with the quality of the training. For example, some competencies were only partially made clear. And, the information provided during the training was primarily of general nature. Further still, this challenge was compounded by the instructor-to-teacher ratio. There were too many teachers learning about the CBC for each instructor leading to a reduced quality of the training.

Teachers commented on the lack of time to prepare before going to the CBC training. They stated that they did not receive the information about the CBC on time before the training so they could not prepare themselves properly.

Most of the teachers stated that they did not feel comfortable since they were often asked to teach subjects in which they had not been trained while in college. The challenge is most pronounced due to high learner population coupled with delays in syllabus coverage.

To mitigate the gaps, most teachers felt there was need for more training targeting each specific core competency, and training on how to deal with the specific challenges to increase their effectiveness.

### **Teachers' Preparedness to Employ Learner-Centered Teaching Methods and Skills**

The second objective of this study was to establish teachers' preparedness to employ learner-centred teaching methods and skills in public primary schools in Taita Sub-County, Taita Taveta County.

Table 4.4 presents survey findings on teachers' perception on their familiarity with learner-centred methods and skills.

With regard to debate, more than half 57 (54.3%) of the teachers indicated that they were fairly familiar with it as a compliant CBC pedagogy in the classroom environment while 34 (32.4%) said they were very familiar and the rest said they were either not familiar 5 (4.8%) or did not comment 9 (8.6%).

Teachers sentiments indicate that 64 (61%) of teacher respondents considered themselves fairly familiar with brainstorming as an important learner-centred pedagogical skill worth fostering to motivate learners while 33 (31.4%) said they were very familiar and the rest were either not familiar 1 (1%) or did not comment 7 (6.7%).

With regard to social media, 49 (46.7%) of the teachers who participated in this study were fairly familiar that social media is an important learner-focused pedagogy while 33 (31.4%) said they were very familiar and the rest were either not familiar 8 (7.6%) or did not comment 6 (5.7%).

More than half 56 (53.3%) of the teacher respondents were fairly familiar that mentorship programs assist learners to apply competencies to everyday living while 27 (25.7%) were very familiar and the rest were either not familiar 9 (9.6%) or did not comment 12 (11.4%).

Teacher respondents 65 (61.9%) said they were fairly familiar with the use of role playing as a learner emphasized teaching pedagogics while 36 (34.3%) said they were very familiar and the rest were either not familiar 1 (1%) or did not comment 3 (2.9%). Sixty three (60%) of the teacher respondents said they were familiar with the use of extended learning outside the classroom as a competence based training approach to handle learners while 36 (34.3%) said they were very familiar and the rest were either not familiar 1 (1%) or did not comment 5 (4.8%).

Fifty one (48.6%) of the teacher respondents indicated that they were fairly familiar with the use of competitions as a learner-oriented teaching pedagogy while 43 (41%) said they were very familiar and the rest were either not familiar 5 (4.8%) or did not comment 6 (5.7%).

Sixty four (61%) of the teacher respondents remarked that they were fairly familiar with the application of simulations as learner-oriented teaching approach while 22 (21%) said that they were very familiar and the rest were either not familiar 9 (8.6%) or did not comment 10 (9.5%).

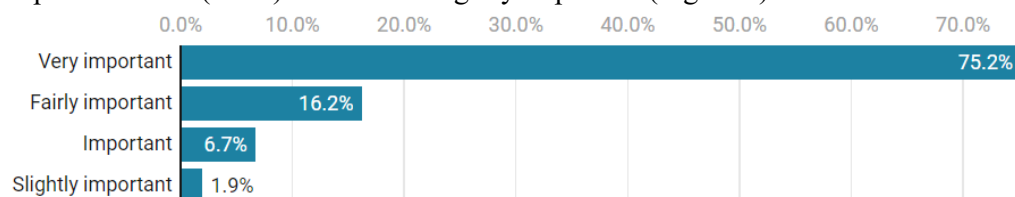
**Table 3: Familiarity with Learner-Centred Methods and Skills**

Familiarity with Learner-Centred Methods and Skills	Very familiar		Fairly familiar		Not familiar		Neutral		Total	
	f	%	f	%	F	%	f	%	F	%
Debate	34	32.4	57	54.3	5	4.8	9	8.6	105	100
Brainstorming	33	31.4	64	61.0	1	1.0	7	6.7	105	100
Social media	42	40.0	49	46.7	8	7.6	6	5.7	105	100
Mentorship program	27	25.7	56	53.3	9	9.6	12	11.4	105	100
Role playing	36	34.3	65	61.9	1	1.0	3	2.9	105	100
Extended learning outside the classroom	36	34.3	63	60.0	1	1.0	5	4.8	105	100
Competitions	43	41.0	51	48.6	5	4.8	6	5.7	105	100
Simulations	22	21.0	64	61.0	9	8.6	10	9.5	105	100

The competency-based curriculum has witnessed a shift away from traditional teaching methods to the learner-centred teaching methods and skills notably the focus on practicals. On the whole, the teachers as demonstrated through survey findings indicated that they were fairly familiar with a range of learner-prioritized instructional strategies and approaches. Apparently, most of the teachers lack a clear understanding of the learner-centred teaching methods and skills.

Several studies that include UNESCO (2019) and Laara (2013), have revealed that the delivery of learner-focused education teachers must be properly equipped with learner focused pedagogical skills for them to facilitate hands-on activities, group discussions, and doing assignments.

With regard to the significance for teachers to incorporate learner-centred pedagogies as required by the CBC, majority 79 (75.2%) of the teacher respondents said that this was very important, 17 (16.2%) said it was fairly important, 7 (6.7%) said it was important and 2 (1.9%) said it was slightly important (Figure 6).



**Figure 6: How important is it for teachers to incorporate learner-centered pedagogies as required by CBC**

On whether since the inception of CBC teachers have been trained on the use of learner-centred teaching methods and skills, an overwhelming majority 98 (93.3%) of

the teacher respondents said “No”, 5 (4.8%) said “Yes” and 2 (1.9%) did not comment (Figure 7).

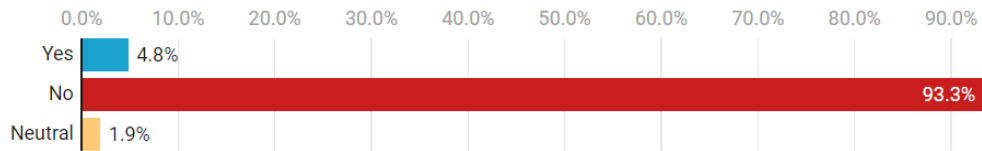


Figure 7: Since the inception of CBC in your school, have you been trained on the use of learner-centred teaching methods and skills:

Through interviews with head teachers it emerged that it is important for teachers to deploy competency-based pedagogy as required by the CBC since it helps in the achievement of learner-oriented education. The head teachers affirmed that they extend a variety of support to teachers to enhance teacher pedagogies in the CBC. They said they also provide teaching aids and resources to facilitate the CBC education. They said they talk to parents to buy necessary materials for projects and class activities. And, when funds are available, they said they normally purchase learning resources that include colour pencils, acrylic threads, leather items, manilas, glue, and scissors etc. One head teacher intimated:

*I must say, CBC is quite expensive...Not only that I really doubt if as a country we were sufficiently prepared for this transition. I really doubt the teachers I have in this school can deliver this curriculum without re-tooling interventions. I suspect that is the case for the rest of the schools (Interview, Hteacher 4, October 2024).*

Previous studies such as Kiptoo and Kitainge (2020) acknowledge that teachers must be sufficiently prepared through capacity-building sessions to be able to implement the CBC curriculum. Capacity building forums can take the form of induction (Kisulu, Simatwa & Ndolo, 2022) and professional development courses (Akello, Barasa & Omulando, 2022).

Only 3 (2.9%) affirmed that the in-service teacher training was useful but on the contrary an overwhelming majority 93 (88.6%) indicated that the training was not useful and 9 (8.6%) did not comment. Their statements paint a clear picture that they did not find the in-service training to be useful. Most of the head teachers were also of the opinion that the in-service training was largely not helpful. They observed that the training usually took 2-3 days but discussed a range of topics (Figure 8).

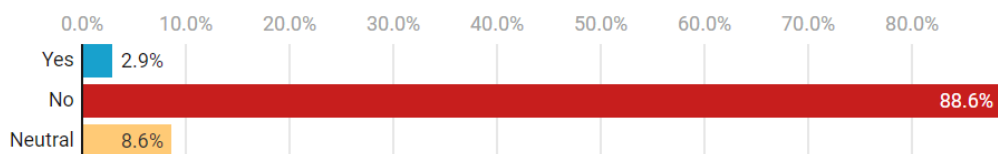
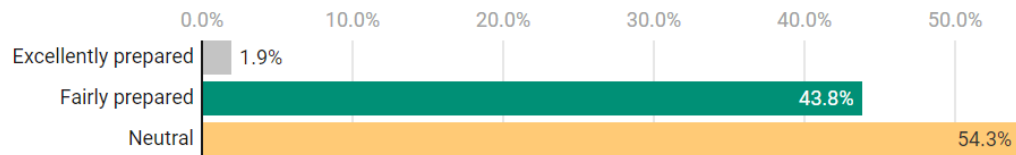


Figure 8: Was the in-service training useful?



Previous findings from similar studies such as Ondimu (2018) and Sifuna and Obonyo (2019) blame the inadequate preparation of teachers on the shortness of teacher training. They observed that during in-service training that normally lasts for less than four days, teachers are overloaded with enormous content rendering it difficult for them to implement the new curriculum.

Indeed, only 2 (1.9%) of the teacher respondents said they were excellently prepared to after the in-service training to teach in line with the CBC, 46 (43.8%) said they were fairly prepared and 57 (54.3%) said they had not undertaken any in-service training (Figure 9).



*Figure 9: After the in-service training, how prepared are you to teach in line with CBC*

Majority of the teachers acknowledged positive outcomes associated with learner-oriented pedagogy pointing to an increase in the retention of learners in schools since they enjoy the lessons more, especially the practicals. Learners also seemed to remember more because they were more engaged. The learners also seemed to learn cooperation, respect and love among themselves through the materials they brought along. However, survey findings (Table 4.5) indicate that learner-centred methods and skills were not frequently deployed to benefit CBC learners. For example, some teachers still prefer use lecture method of teaching. The implication is that majority of the teachers were still deploying teacher-centred teaching approaches commonly found in the 8-4-4 system. When asked on the frequency of role playing, only 12 (11.4%) of the teacher respondents said that the pedagogical strategy is almost always deployed, 46 (43.8%) said often, 44 (41.9%) said sometimes, 1 (1%) said seldom and the rest 2 (1.9%) said never.

With regard to brainstorming, only 2 (1.9%) of the teacher respondents said that the strategy is almost always adopted, 11 (10.5%) said often, 51 (46.6%) said sometimes, 40 (38.1%) said seldom and the rest 2 (1.9%) said never. Only 1 (1%) teacher respondent said group discussions are almost always used, 9 (8.6%) said often, 24 (22.9%) said sometimes, 70 (66.7%) said seldom and the rest 1 (1%) said never.

Survey findings indicate that only 10 (9.5%) opined that learner mentorship programs almost always come in handy, 13 (12.4%) said often, 30 (28.6%) said sometimes, 50 (47.6%) said seldom and 2 (1.9%) said never.

Only 1 (1%) of the teacher respondents said class projects were almost always frequently deployed, 2 (1.9%) said often, 23 (21.9%) said sometimes, 35 (33.3%) said seldom and the rest 44 (41.9%) said never. Only 3 (2.9%) said competitions are

almost always used, 5 (4.8%) said often, 24 (22.9%) said sometimes, 33 (31.4%) said seldom and the rest 40 (38.1%) said never.

Some 5 (4.6%) of the teacher respondents said that simulations are almost always used, 13 (12.4%) said often, 21 (20%) said sometimes, 32 (30.5%) said seldom and the rest 33 (31.4%) said never. Some 3 (2.9%) said that posing open-ended questions to learners is almost always used, 13 (12.4%) said often, 30 (26.6%) said sometimes, 55 (52.5%) said seldom and the rest 3 (2.9%) said never.

Some 9 (8.6%) said that using PowerPoint is almost always used, 20 (19%) said often, 36 (34.3%) said sometimes, 23 (21.9%) said seldom and the rest 17 (16.2%) said never.

**Table 4: Frequency of Learner-Centred Methods and Skills**

Frequency of Learner-Centred Methods and Skills	Almost always		Often		Sometimes		Seldom		Never		Total	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Role playing	12	11.4	46	43.8	44	41.9	1	1.0	2	1.9	105	100
Brainstorming	2	1.9	11	10.5	51	48.6	40	38.1	2	1.9	105	100
Group discussion	1	1.0	9	8.6	24	22.9	70	66.7	1	1.0	105	100
Learner mentorship programs	10	9.5	13	12.4	30	28.6	50	47.6	2	1.9	105	100
Class projects	1	1.0	2	1.9	23	21.9	35	33.3	44	41.9	105	100
Competitions	3	2.9	5	4.8	24	22.9	33	31.4	40	38.1	105	100
Simulations	5	4.6	13	12.4	21	20.0	32	30.5	33	31.4	105	100
Posing open-ended questions to learners	3	2.9	13	12.4	30	28.6	55	52.4	3	2.9	105	100
Using PowerPoint slides	9	8.6	20	19.0	36	34.3	23	21.9	17	16.2	105	100

Most of the teachers made positive remarks on the learner-centred nature of the CBC particularly the teaching methods. Nevertheless, survey findings documented numerous complications teacher respondents and interviewed head teachers encountered in their attempt to utilize learner-centered teaching pedagogies that reduced their motivation to implement the CBC correctly. Indeed, teachers recounted hallowing experiences in their attempts to keep their classes learner-centred.

The most pronounced challenge was that of high workload coupled with the time-consuming nature of the CBC activities. Almost all teachers stated that they have experienced an increase in the lesson workload as a direct result of the implementation of the CBC. The lesson workload is not manageable due to lack of enough teachers. The increase in work was compounded by the strict time schedule that the CBC follows. The end game is that the high workload and strict schedule puts pressure on teachers to work longer and to skip aspects of the CBC whenever the time available is not enough. The high workload has forced some teachers to be tempted to partially abandon some activities and revert back to the old teaching methods and skills.

This challenge is closely related to the high pupil-teacher ratio. With the implementation of the CBC, most teachers ended up having classes of 50 plus learners. The majority of the teachers included in the survey had between 40 and 110 learners in their classrooms far higher than the 40: 1 recommended by UNESCO (UNESCO, 2006). Teachers recounted hallowing experiences in their attempts to keep their classes learner-centred. This is basically because the pupil-teacher ratio to a large extent affect the way teachers are able to implement the CBC. Indeed, it emerged that that due to high learner population sometimes it is difficult to involve all learners or give each a chance. The implication is that once a teacher has many learners it is not possible to nurture talent. It is also difficult to have practical lessons. Therefore, it is difficulty to meet the expectations that the CBC was designed for.

Further, the learner-centred education is quite expensive to implement. The focus of the CBC curriculum is practicals. Almost every CBC activity is practical-oriented. The practical aspect of the CBC means the sufficiency of teaching and material resources is non-negotiable. Yet the lack of enough resources such as materials for practical work, swimming pools, musical instruments and other learning materials such as text books is a common hurdle to overcome. It emerged that some KPSEA projects are too expensive to conduct and also time consuming. Besides, some learners fail to afford the required portfolios and materials to be used. The expensive nature of the CBC poses a big challenge for the teachers. Indeed, the unavailability of resources and materials results in a higher cost for the teachers. They are often called upon to buy the materials themselves without compensation. Teachers have to contend with the increased workload, low remuneration and the added costs from the implementation of the CBC. These challenges repeatedly forces teachers to resort to theoretical instruction.

Further still, the new curriculum comes with a heavy toll on the learners. More than half of the head teachers interviewed remarked that learner also experience challenges related to the CBC rendering it difficult for the teachers to implement it. Often, the learners are very many, the

rooms are small and the books are not enough leading to incorrect implementation purposefully or not. Learners had difficulty adjusting to the new learning style. For example, learners face unique difficulties to work together as they are used to competition. Learners also fear standing in front of the class for lack of self-esteem. Worse, it also emerged that some learners lack the requisite skills to full engage with the CBC. For example, some learners don't know how to read and write. Besides, some learners lack the foundation needed for the CBC in later years. Most importantly, if the learner has not understood the concept it is not easy for them to communicate and explain themselves correctly.

Delays by parents to avail materials due to their weak financial status was also a major challenge. Areas for doing practicals was not enough or available since the size of land is small and the terrain not conducive.

Finally, the CBC also proved challenging to those abled differently. This category of learners who happen to be in integrated settings find it difficult to get the full attention of teachers. It emerged that the CBC training may not have prepared them adequately on how to implement learner-centred methods to this category of learners.

Most of the teachers felt that training on learner-oriented education needed to span more time, and a certificate issued to those teachers who complete the CBC education training. Besides, the material need for the training could be distributed earlier to allow teachers the opportunity to prepare and potentially increase the success of the training.

The teachers also remarked that their colleagues could explore other methods and avenues of increasing preparedness. They observed that helping each other can be instrumental in spreading knowledge surrounding the CBC. Once a teacher has gone for training they can be tasked with explaining what they learned at the training to others who have not personally gone for the training. This way the teachers who have not personally gone for the training can benefit from those who have undergone the training. The teachers also opined that it was possible to consult each other when faced with challenges. They also observed that teaching experience can come in handy – most teachers felt more prepared by gaining experience over time. Finally, it emerged that personal research was instrumental in improving teacher preparedness to handle the competency-based education.

In regard to the lack of materials, the teachers were of the opinion that government could provide more materials for practicals and make more books available. The government could also be tasked with the role of finding ways to minimize the cost of materials needed.

The teachers also suggested an increase in salary. The teachers felt that there needed to be some compensation to counter the perceived increase in lesson workload and costs associated with buying materials.

Interviews with head teachers revealed that the objective of the CBC framework is to transit 60 per cent of JSS learners to take up the pathway of Science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). However, one head teacher observed the following:

*In our attempt to implement the CBC, we face a myriad of challenges ranging from lack of laboratories and necessary equipment to a shortage of qualified teachers. We are not only under-staffed but even the available staffing does not match the skill sets of the teachers. What is happening is that science subjects are being taught by arts teachers* (Interview, Hteacher 5, October 2024).

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Summary**

With regard to teachers' preparedness to effectively include core competencies when lesson planning the study's findings indicate that most of the teachers demonstrated incomprehension and application of the core competencies. On account of this, majority of the teachers were to a large extent unprepared for teaching the CBC in public primary schools in Taita Sub-County, Taita Taveta County.

The study also established that the vast majority of the teacher respondents had never attended any seminars and workshops on the inclusion of core competencies when lesson since the start of the CBC. Even the few teacher respondents that managed to attend the training did not find the CBC training suitable.

The study's findings also indicate that an absolute majority of the teacher respondents had not attending any in-service training in the competency-based curriculum. In view of this, more than half of the teacher respondents admit that they were hard prepared knowledgeably and skill wise to include core competencies when lesson planning. Accordingly, the implementation of the learner-focused curriculum is characterized a set of challenges that include time constraints, lack of clarity of meaning, difficulty translation core for easy understanding by learners and lack of enough resources.

The study's findings demonstrate the pivotal role head teachers serve to ensure teachers are properly in-serviced in compliance with the competency-focused curricula. Indeed, according to the findings the bulk of the teacher respondents were of the view that work-based training was advantageous in the execution of the CBC. Even then, it was evident from the research outcomes that the in-serve training negligibly assisted teachers to effectively interpret and execute the core competencies in public primary schools in Taita Sub-County, Taita Taveta County.

The study's findings documented teacher respondents' sentiments on their training experiences, shortcomings and suggestions for improvement in their preparedness. It was evident from the research that proper training was key to effective implementation of the CBC. Unfortunately, the most of the teachers had had no opportunity to benefit from the training.

The few who had, felt that the training had not prepared them well enough to confidently handle the program. It emerged that that training was too short, theory-laden, vague, overcrowded and of poor quality.

### **Conclusion**

From the foregoing discussion, this concludes that the level of teachers' preparedness has a bearing on the effective the implementation of the competency-based curriculum in public primary schools in Taita Sub-County, Taita Taveta County.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the foregoing findings of the study, it is clear areas of teacher preparation require attention.

- i. More CBC training opportunities need to be made available for more teachers to get the opportunity to be trained in the competency-focused education;
- ii. Extend the time allocated for CBC training sessions in order to provide more in-depth information regarding the CBC;
- iii. Emphasize on practicals (not theoretical) and mentorship aspects of learner centred education during the CBC training such that teachers are able to give and receive feedback based on real-world experience;
- iv. Provide adequate follow-up in-service CBC training sessions to enable teachers build upon knowledge acquired in previous sessions and gain a deeper understanding of the CBC;

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