

Challenges Faced by Teachers in the Implementation of Competency Based Approach in Secondary Schools in the Southwest Region of Cameroon

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to find out the challenges faced by teachers in the process of implementing the Competency-based approach in secondary schools in the Southwest region of Cameroon. The sequential exploratory survey research design was adopted for the study. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected using the questionnaire and interview guide. The sample size of the study consisted of 332 teachers, 18 principals and 10 regional pedagogic inspectors. The internal consistency of the participants' responses was satisfactory with a Cronbach alpha value 0.861. The quantitative data were analysed using the SPSS 21 while open ended questions were analysed thematically using themes-grounding-quotations. Findings revealed that teachers faced enormous challenges in the implementation of Competency Based Approach (CBA). The most frequently mentioned challenges were inadequate teaching time, lack of didactic materials, large class size, lack of CBA text books, inadequate CBA skills for teachers, unclear CBA assessment techniques and lack of understanding of the CBA concept. Based on these findings, it was recommended that educational authorities should improve the teacher training programmes in order to provide pre-service teachers with necessary skills for the implementation of competency based approach in schools. Regular trainings should be organized for in-service teachers to enable them acquire up-to-date teaching skills as required by the changes introduced in the school curricula. Teachers are encouraged to be active participants in their own continuous professional development. All educational stakeholders should be involved in decisions regarding the adoption or introduction of any new curricula. The budget allocation to schools should be increased so as to provide adequate infrastructure and material resources needed for the implementation of CBA.

KEYWORDS: *Challenges, Teachers, Implementation, Competency Based Approach, Secondary Schools, Southwest Region, Cameroon*

INTRODUCTION

Sub-Saharan Africa where Cameroon is found still remains one of the sub-regions in the world with the lowest levels of attaining access to education, and more importantly, the provision of quality education (UNESCO, 2012). Educators and governments in their national policies have taken the initiative to arrest this trend, by adopting reforms for education which should maximize achievement of desired students' outcomes and raise the standard of education (Ahmed, 2006). One of such reforms is the introduction of the competency based approach to education. Cameroon adopted the CBA in the year 2011. The competency based approach is believed can inculcate in learners responsible behaviour, knowledge and competences necessary for meeting the challenges of a rapidly changing technological world. Teachers are therefore required to create and sustain conditions that will enable students to discover and actively construct knowledge and develop the higher-order thinking skills. Teachers need support to develop the understanding and skills needed to carryout teaching and learning activities responsibly and effectively. This study examines a brief history of the competency based

approach (CBA), the rationales for using the CBA, challenges faced by teachers in implementing the CBA and some recommendations.

BACKGROUND

The idea of competency based training and assessment appear to have originated in performance-based teacher education (PBTE) in America in the 1960s. A range of commentators (for example, Norton, Harrington & Gill, 1978; Britell, 1980; Harris et al, 1995) assert that the launch of Sputnik by the Soviet Union, was one of the main reasons that led to the development of competency based training in the United States of America (USA). Another reason was the high and unacceptable dropout rates among secondary school students in the USA and difficulties of graduates in getting jobs. The concept of competence has since then been applied in different domains of education.

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training for workplace which began in the United States, led to competency based vocational education in a number of countries ((Argüelles, & Gonczi, 2000; Ropé & Tanguy 1994). Several other countries and regions like Australia, Belgium, Switzerland and Quebec later introduced these approaches into their general education programmes, particularly into the primary sector (Boutin, 2004: 28; Rey, 1996). In the realm of higher education, the Bologna Declaration of 1999 encouraged European universities to develop competence-based approaches (Koenen, Dochy, & Berghmans, 2015). South Africa adopted the competency based curriculum in 1998, in a bid to change attitudes of all South Africans and equip them with employable skills to cope with challenging issues in the 21st century (Komba & Mwandangi, 2015). Tanzania adopted the Competencies Based Approach with the aim of improving the quality of secondary education, whereby learners were expected to obtain appropriate knowledge, skills, attitudes and problem-solving ability necessary to make them meet the changing needs of society (Komba & Mwandangi, 2015, p. 74). Cameroon adopted the Competencies Based Approach in the year 2011. The Republic of Cameroon adopted the competency based approach in order train citizens to acquire a good mastery of the two official languages (English and French), and who deeply rooted in their cultures but open to a world in search for sustainable development and dominated by information and communication technologies. The objectives were not only to develop intellectual, civic and moral skills in these children but also competences and fundamental knowledge which will either enable them to foster their education, or to prepare them for a smooth insertion into the job market (MINESEC, 2014).

Concept of the Competency Based Approach

Competency based approach is a sequence of learning experiences that seek to ensure that students attain specific skills, knowledge, and abilities considered important with respect to whatever they are studying or the transitions for which they are preparing. The responsibility for learning is entrusted to students who have to build their own knowledge through means made available by the teacher (Boutin, 2009). The teacher assumes the role of a facilitator. S(he) has the task of advising, motivating and encouraging students to be creative, ensuring the planning and organization of activities, and suggesting ideas without imposing them. In a competency-based learning system, students are not allowed to continue until they have demonstrated mastery of the identified competencies (Savage, 1993; Rutayuga, 2010; and Mosha, 2012). What it means to have mastered a competency depends on the learning domain (subject matter) or the employer. The competency based approach is believed can help teachers not only to identify the academic strengths and weakness of students but also to track specific concepts and skills students have not yet mastered. The transition to a competency-based system, may require significant changes in how a school operates and how it teaches students. This may be in how report cards are structured, the grading system, methods of instruction and assessment and even the school culture.

Arguments for using the Competency Based Approach

The following arguments for using CBA were discussed in this section: legal arguments, economic arguments, political arguments and academic arguments.

Legal Arguments for using CBA

Education in Cameroon is supervised by the state through legislation. Improving the quality of education for all Cameroonian children through the development of competence, creativity and innovation has been a priority for policy makers in Cameroon since independence. In 1995, this effort culminated into the National Forum on Education whose recommendations were later formulated into the Cameroon education policy statement (law no. 98/004 of 14 April 1998) to lay down guidelines for education in Cameroon. These guidelines prescribed that: *"The general purpose of education shall be to train children for their intellectual, physical, civic and moral development and their smooth integration into society bearing in mind the prevailing economic, socio-cultural, political and moral factors"*.

Section 5 of the 1998 Law laying down guidelines for education in Cameroon, spells out nine different articles of national policy which stipulate the training of versatile citizens in cognitive, affective and psycho-motor domains. The nine articles highlight domains including national and international cultures, universal ethical values, family life, national languages, democratic culture, practice and other concerns, the cultivation of an ethos of work, creativity and related aspects, sports-cum-physical education and artistico-cultural concerns, hygiene and health education. Furthermore, in Section 25, the Law asserts: "The Education provided in school shall take into account scientific and technological advancements and shall be tailored in terms of content and method to national and international economic, scientific, technological, social and cultural trends."

The application instruments of the education policy framework of 1998 include amongst others:

Ministerial decision N° 49/06 of 08 February 2006 creating a commission charged with preparing texts of application of the 1998 orientation law of education.

It is on the basis of these legal instruments that in 2006 work effectively started on the conception of the new curriculum.

The idea of changing the education system from a colonial objective driven, cognitive focused approach to a more competency oriented system was introduced to the Cameroonian public by education stakeholders, on the 17th September 2012. This approach, which was to be progressively introduced into the education system was tailored to address urgent socio-economic realities. While content remains essentially the same with slight modifications to reduce bulk and irrelevance, the teaching approach is a total paradigm shift from earlier practices. This paradigm shifts calls for continuous teacher professional development and retraining to meet up with the new challenges especially the enhancement of learner-centeredness. New syllabuses for the competency based approach were introduced in secondary general schools in the 2013 / 2014 academic year (MINESEC, 2014). The syllabuses contained expected competences which learners are to acquire at the end of the learning process.

Economic arguments for using CBA

Many people around the world look to schools to equip youth with new sets of skills to meet up with the

challenges of a rapidly changing world economy. For these reasons, some scholars posit that rote memorization of facts and hierarchical school and classroom patterns are no longer suitable for the competitive global market, where the skills of inquiry and problem solving to address rapidly-changing environments are needed (Vavrus, Thomas and Bartlett, 2011). The outcomes-based education movement in South Africa, for example, is rooted in the belief that international trade and production have changed along with the global economy; the government believes students' skills and competencies should also change (Weber, 2007).

As Cameroon looks forward to achieving her goal of becoming an emergent nation by 2035, it is imperative that she uses her educational system in training students with skills to meet up with this goal. The skills associated with CBA pedagogy, such as 'learning how to learn' and communication to co-construct knowledge, are those sought by an increasing number of employers around the world. Therefore, the government of Cameroon wants to see schooling align more closely with the needs of industry. There is enough evidence that schools are not meeting the economic needs of the country. Report from Sector Wide Approach to Education (2006) talks of high levels of wastage as a consequence of low internal efficiency (for example, failure of students in examinations and dropout), coupled with low external efficiency (inadequate relevance of programmes of instruction to the priority development needs of the country). From this point of view, human capital development must expand beyond the acquisition of basic skills and content knowledge to include strategies for becoming 'lifelong learners' and creative entrepreneurs in ever-changing economic environments.

Educational reform according to World Bank (2007) must extend beyond increasing access and enrollment to include the introduction of approaches to teaching and learning that parallel changes in the global economy. Developing the skills necessary for this new economy places new demand on teachers to learn ways of teaching consistent with CBA.

Political Arguments for using CBA

There is empirical evidence showing that the way teachers teach and not only the content of their classes may contribute to students' political socialization and engagement in democratic processes (Bartlett, Thomas and Vavrus, 2011). The relationship between students and teachers, especially opportunities for students to express their views in the classroom, is considered especially influential in developing students' views on democracy and their degree of civic engagement. Dewey, in particular, believed that education systems should prepare citizens for active involvement in democratic forms of governance. Merely gaining knowledge about equitable social policies or democratic processes, he argued, is not adequate to effect political change (Dewey, 1916). Advocates of CBA usually share Dewey's faith in democracy and believe students need to experience democracy in action in the classroom and in the school as a whole to become democratic citizens. Engendering democratic civic values, they contend, requires practice and experience with negotiation, cooperation, and critical thinking.

Participatory teaching methods such as the CBA, that allow students to practice democratic behaviour by experiencing negotiation, collaboration, and active civic engagement in the classroom seem to have the greatest influence on students' views on democratic values. In contrast, programs that rely on teacher centred pedagogical approaches in teaching reinforce authoritarian and non-democratic forms of interaction in the classroom (Antal and Easter, 2009).

Today's teachers are increasingly required to abandon the use of a banking system in education wherein factual information is simply deposited into the minds of their students and withdrawn when needed. This type of positivist approach to education limits the possibilities for students' development and ultimately liberation of oppressed people. However, the development of critical-thinking skills in students and the greater democratization of schools may also be seen as threatening to parents, teachers, school heads, and political leaders.

Education strengthens the political development of nations by promoting the civic engagement of their populations. People with more education consistently participate more in political activities than those with less education. Education increases awareness and understanding of political issues, fosters the socialization needed for effective political activity, and increases civic skills (Campante and Chor, 2012 cited in WDR, 2018. P. 62).

As Cameroon has embraced democracy as a form of governance, it is logical that CBA would serve as a complement to this political change by modelling some of the same practices in the classroom. Cameroonian youth spend large portions of their young lives at school, particularly for those who attend boarding schools, it is therefore reasonable to assume that the unspoken lessons they learn are internalized and applied as adults.

Academic Arguments for using CBA

Apart from the other reasons mentioned above, the primary reasons for teachers, schools, and ministries of education to adopt the use of CBA, is due to its Cognitive and psychological benefits on learners. The term cognitive refers to mental processes, such as remembering or solving problems, while psychological encompasses cognition but also includes the study of emotions, motivation, and interpersonal relationships (Vavrus, Thomas, & Bartlett, 2011. p.45).

CBA, it is believed has the potential to develop in students, higher-order thinking and critical engagement with the world around them, skills deemed necessary for success in a complex global society. Higher-order thinking skills, such as the abilities to analyze, evaluate, and create knowledge (Anderson and Krathwohl, 2001), enable students to examine and process the wealth of information that is available in the modern era. Secondly, specific competencies help students as well as other stakeholders such as employers and policymakers, to have a common understanding about the specific skills and knowledge that students should master as a result of their learning experiences. Some other academic benefits that are believed to result from CBA may include:

- Development of critical thinking and problem solving skills
- Students having the ability to link new information with existing knowledge in meaningful ways.
- Leads to creativity as students can start thinking out of the box to solve the challenges of a rapidly changing world.

Potential Barriers to CBA Implementation

In as much as there are many advantages associated with teaching using the CBA, there are also many factors that may impede its effective implementation. Examining barriers provide basis for better planning for implementation of CBA and other changes that may be adopted in the future. Some of these barriers are:

1. Teachers may not be willing to implement CBA because the transition may warrant them to spend large amounts of uncompensated time for extra planning, preparation and training.
2. **Top-down Adoption:** The non-involvement of practitioners in the decision making process may hurt its implementation (Titanji, 2017). Teachers should be involved in the decision making process so that they should be aware of the necessity of the change. This can also help them make contributions on their level of preparedness and the training needed for effective implementation.
3. **Lack of shared need:** Educational stakeholders such as teachers, students and parents should be able to see the reason and need for any change in curriculum for it to be effectively implemented. Shared need increases motivation and commitment. Without proper attention given to address this problem, the tendency will be that, there will be change in policy, without a corresponding change in the teaching practices of teachers.
4. **Inadequate capacity building:** The ideal situation should have been the training of teachers before the adoption of CBA. This should have given the teachers the confidence needed in trying out new things. Many teachers may choose not to change their old practices because of the fear of making mistakes and being ridiculed by their students and peers. Lack of training hurts teachers psychologically. The implementation of CBA will involve concerted effort of school leaders to embark on the training of teachers. Regional and divisional seminars should be used for training using CBA in order to develop the capacities of teachers. Training increases sense of efficacy.
5. **Inadequate resources:** Resources are important in policy implementation. Some teachers, who may want to implement the CBA, may not have the resources available to do so. Lack of adequate resources such as time for teachers to work together, books on CBA, among others can impede the effective implementation of the policy of CBA.
6. **Lack of common meaning:** A critical feature of policy is the degree of conflict or consensus over goals and objectives. Teachers need to have a common understanding of changes expected from them. They need a common understanding of CBA. If this is not done, what goes on in the classrooms may be totally different from what policy demands leading to a waste of time and resources.

7. Parents' concerns about the abandonment of traditional styles of grading, report cards and transcripts, which they have become used to, may pose a problem to students seeking admission to higher learning institutions.
8. A competency based system may eliminate many of the competitive dimensions of academic achievements such as class rank that tend to favour high achieving students.
9. The difficulty for educators and other stakeholders in identifying and agreeing upon the most important competencies, how to best assess them and how to support learners that struggle.
10. Doubt about CBA producing the desired results. Many education stakeholders still think teachers have not changed their teaching practices and schools still do not have adequate resources to implement the change.
11. Inadequate support in forms of provision of basic inputs and encouraging messages.
12. The prevailing culture of schools characterized by norms of isolation or privacy.
13. Past negative experiences with change. In the case where other change efforts did not yield any positive results, teachers may be reluctant to commit themselves in any new reforms.

Competency Based Approach in Cameroon

Cameroon adopted the competency based approach with a view of changing the focus from a teacher centred approach to a more child centred approach of teaching. This is because recent trend shows that many graduates either lack employable skills or cannot create jobs on their own. Many of them depend on the government for employment. Many were quick to point accusing fingers at teachers for not being innovative enough in their teaching practices. They claimed that teaching in most secondary schools in Cameroon was often characterized by teacher dominance with students being passive recipients of knowledge. The government's initiative for the introduction of competency based approach gave impetus for educators to realize that their task was not only to equip their students with knowledge, but also with skills important for the graduates to provide better human resources in the workforce (Ministry of Secondary Education, 2014). Educators were therefore called and still being called upon to develop teaching and learning practices which promote the development of students' competencies in the domain of knowledge, skills and attitudes or dispositions.

Goals of Competency Based Approach in Cameroon

At the beginning of this millennium, as Cameroon strives to become an emerging nation by the year 2035, its secondary education sub sector faces many challenges including:

- Offering quality training and education to most young Cameroonians within the context marked by large classes in primary education;
- Preparing them for smooth insertion into a more demanding job market worldwide, through a pertinent teaching/learning process.

According to (MINSEC, 2014), competency based approach was introduced with the goal of helping the secondary education sub sector to:

- Shift from a knowledge based approach of teaching and learning to a competency based approach through situations in real life. It is expected that the CBA will emphasize the active role of students in the learning processes, encouraging appropriate learning activities to foster a deep rather than a surface approach to learning. While the knowledge based approach can be effective in transmitting information, it may be ineffective in promoting independent thought because students are not actively engaged and their enthusiasm is not adequately stimulated.
- Offer a shift from a school cut off from society to one that prepares citizens for a smooth integration into the socio-cultural and economic activities of their respective communities
- Offer a shift from an evaluation of knowledge to that of competencies necessary for sustainable development, and
- Increase the relevance of secondary education in response to growing concerns.

Aim of the CBA programme

It has as main aim to inculcate in the learner responsible behaviour, knowledge and competencies, necessary for meeting with the challenges of the rapidly changing technological world. It is also expected to help the learner to focus on what s/he can do after leaving school, that is developing a career (Bipoupout, Matip & Nanga, 2011).

Specific objectives of CBA

After being taught using the CBA, the learner is expected to:

- Understand and explain natural phenomena;
- Solve real life problems, through the use of the scientific approach in problem-solving;
- Acquire skills that will enable him/her to work in a group, respect others, and their opinions;
- Manage his/her environment in a sustainable manner;
- Have value for his/her health and that of all others in his/her surrounding;
- Use process skills to acquire and apply knowledge;
- Acquire life skills such as reading information and applying safety and security rules;
- Communicate results obtained and ideals developed with others;
- Do simple scientific diagnosis and repairs of scientific and technological equipment and appliances;
- Acquire personal attributes and seek ways of enhancing them

In order to achieve these objectives, the learner should be able to mobilise, all the pertinent resources in terms of knowledge, knowhow and attitudes. The resources to be mobilised by the learner are found in many disciplines and areas of learning. Therefore, syllabuses that are developed to teach using CBA should not be implemented in isolation but as interrelated subjects.

It worthy of note that the objectives listed above can only be achieved if teachers are provided with the right conditions necessary for its implementation. The views and attitudes of teachers toward educational change in their school should be taken very seriously as this may lead to positive or negative reactions and practices in the classrooms.

Statement of the Problem

Introduced into the education Cameroon education system in the year 2008, the competence based approach (CBA) is aimed at addressing limitations of instructional practices by adopting practices that are more practical and productive in education. From its inception, it was widely applauded by educators and policy makers as the way forward towards revitalizing the effective process of skills acquisitions by our learners. For example, it is supposed to strengthen the ability of students and make them more efficient in productive skills (MINESEC, 923/2008). Since its introduction, literature reveals no empirical studies aimed at monitoring and evaluating the implementation process. Good practice requires that the implementation of an innovation be regularly monitored and evaluated in order to identify implementation constraints and take appropriate actions to address them.

Article 4.1 of the 1998 law to lay down guidelines on education in Cameroon states that, the general purpose of education shall be to train children for their intellectual, physical, civic and moral development, and their smooth integration into society bearing in mind prevailing economic socio-cultural political and moral factors. Based on the general purpose as prescribed in article 4.1, one of the objectives defined in section 2 of same law is to develop creativity, a sense of initiative and the spirit of enterprise in learners. The government has placed great importance on quality education and recognizes it as an essential component for the development needs of the society. However, quality is still an issue of concern at all levels of the education system of the country as is seen in the high dropout rate and high levels of unemployment. Putting it differently, the quality of education especially in terms of relevance is the most important issue facing the country today.

The competency based approach was adopted and believed to have enormous potential to improve secondary education. Since its adoption, little to the best of this researchers' knowledge, has been done to monitor the experiences of practitioners as well as its outcomes. This may lead to teachers going back to their traditional ways of teaching which is teacher centered. Good practice requires that when a change is introduced, there should be a monitoring and evaluation component. This is hardly done in the republic of Cameroon.

Purpose of the Study

- The purpose of this study is to find out the challenges faced by teachers in the process of implementing the Competency-based approach.

Research Question

- What are the challenges faced by teachers in the process of implementing the Competency-based approach?

Significance of the Study

The study is very important in understanding the difficulties teachers face in implementing the Competency Based Approach (CBA) in Cameroon. This can lead to appropriate measures being put in place by the different educational stakeholders in ensuring that teachers are well equipped with all what it takes to attain the objectives of the competency based approach.

Methodology

An exploratory sequential research design was used. Qualitative data were first collected and analyzed, and themes were used to drive the development of a quantitative instrument to further explore the research problem.

The population of the study was made up of principals (368) and teachers (8,417) from 368 secondary schools, including 87 regional pedagogic inspectors in the South west region.

However, the accessible population was made up of eighteen (18) principals, one thousand two hundred and forty-five teachers (1,245) and 35 regional pedagogic inspectors. This gave a total of one thousand two hundred and ninety-eight participants (1,298).

Multistage sampling techniques were adopted for the study. Teachers were randomly selected to fill in the questionnaire. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the schools, teachers to be observed in class, the principals and regional pedagogic inspectors for the study. Out of the total 1298 teachers and pedagogic inspectors that were considered as the accessible population, a sample size of 360 was used for the study in accordance with sampling guidelines provided by Morgan and Krejcie (1970). 332 teachers, 18 principals and 10 regional pedagogic inspectors.

The internal consistency of the participants' responses was satisfactory with a Cronbach alpha value 0.861. Data was collected using the direct delivery method.

Two data analysis approaches were used for the study; qualitative and quantitative data. Data collected via the interview guide were analysed thematically (qualitative approach) using key concepts/themes, groundings and quotations. The key concepts/themes here refer to the key words that emerged from participants' direct statements. On the other hand, groundings or frequency represent the number of times that a particular concept or theme emerged from the participant's direct statements and some of the statements have been used as sampled

quotations. However, in the context of qualitative analysis, the concepts/ themes are more important than the grounding or frequency. This therefore implied that a concept/theme with a grounding or frequency of one is equally as important as any other concept/themes with groundings or frequency of more than one.

For the quantitative data, a pre-designed EpiData Version 3.1 (EpiData Association, Odense Denmark, 2008) database which has an in-built consistency and validation checks was used. Before the quantitative data were entered using the pre-designed EpiData Version 3.1, the demographic information and the test items were coded with numbers. The questionnaires of individual respondents were also assigned with serial numbers. The reason for this coding of the test items was to ensure easy traceability of the participants' individual responses per test items if necessary. The data were then exported to SPSS version 21.0 (IBM Inc., 2012) for further consistency check, data validation, to identify invalid codes and eventually cleaning of the data in areas where some inconsistency and invalid codes were observed.

After the data had been thoroughly checked, the descriptive statistical tools (frequency count, percentages and multiple responses set) were used in analyzing the quantitative data. Finally, findings were presented using frequency distribution tables and thematic tables.

FINDINGS

Nine structured items were personally constructed by the researcher to find out if they are challenges faced by teachers in the implementation of CBA Findings on table 1 showed that the nine challenges identified by the researcher are some of the challenges faced by teachers in the implementation of CBA. For instance, majority of the teachers 242 (81.2%) strongly agreed and agreed that the unavailability of text books on the teaching of CBA makes its implementation difficult. The lack of didactic materials was also identified by majority of the teachers 222 (75.5%) to be a barrier in the implementation of CBA. Unclear assessment techniques were also strongly agreed and agreed by majority of the teachers 211(73.3%) to be another challenge faced in the implementation of CBA.

Table 1: Challenges surrounding the implementation of CBA

Test items	Strongly agree/Agree	Disagree/Strongly disagree
The unavailability of text books on the teaching of CBA makes its implementation difficult	242 (81.2%)	56 (18.8%)
Implementation of CBA requires the use of more teaching aids which are not always available	222 (75.5%)	72 (24.5%)
Gaining an understanding of the concept of CBA is one of the challenges I face	214 (72.1%)	83 (27.9%)
Assessment techniques using CBA is not clearly defined	211 (73.3%)	77 (26.7%)
Large class size does not permit the use of interactive teaching techniques	183 (62.7%)	109 (37.3%)
The lack of support from administration is a hindrance to the implementation of CBA	191 (63.9%)	108 (36.1%)
The school climate does not permit teachers to work as a team to help resolve identified challenges in the teaching of CBA	153 (52.0%)	141 (48.0%)
I don't know the indicators to use to determine if a defined competency has been mastered by students	139 (47.1%)	156 (52.9%)
My workload doesn't permit me to try out new teaching strategies	126 (42.6%)	170 (57.4%)

n=295

Findings also showed that majority of the teachers 214 (72.9%) and 183 (62.7%) respectively strongly agreed and agreed that lack of understanding of the CBA concept by teachers and large class size is another barrier to the implementation of CBA. Findings also showed that majority of the teachers 191 (63.9%) identified lack of support from the administration to be another challenge in the implementation of CBA while less 126 (42.6%) of the teachers strongly agree and agree that workload is another challenge faced by teachers in the implementation of CBA.

In addition to the structured questionnaire items, respondents were required through an open-ended item, to mention other factors they thought were affecting the effective implementation of CBA in secondary schools. Table 2 below presents samples of their quoted responses as well as their corresponding frequencies.

Table2: Other factors identified by teachers that affect the implementation of CBA.

Themes	Frequency	Sampled Quotations
Limited teaching time	140	"The duration of a lesson is short" "Given the limited time a lesson is supposed to take; it is not possible to monitor a large group of students" "Because time will not be enough to do that when you split children into groups of say 5, time will catch up with you when nothing has been achieved". "Time allocated per subject is not enough to focus on the need of individual students".
Teachers not well trained on CBA	63	"No proper training" "No mastery of the CBA" "Inadequate training of teachers at training colleges". "Teachers need the skills to teach CBA".
Poor classroom environment/ infrastructure	61	"Infrastructure not adapted to CBA implementation". "Large class size" "Bad chalkboards" "The classroom environment does not permit its implementation".
Inadequate financial motivation	29	"Teachers have little or no motivation and cannot go all the way because of poor pay" "Lack of motivation to teachers".
Difficult to plan lesson notes	23	"It makes lesson planning difficult" "Difficult to implement"
Evaluation of CBA perceived to be difficult	21	Evaluation becomes difficult
Lack of internet facilities for research	21	We don't have appropriate equipment to facilitate the programme like internet services". "No internet facilities for the programme". "Lack of internet". "Lack of internet to carry out research on CBA".
Lack of appropriate schemes	16	"Lack of appropriate schemes that focuses squarely on CBA"
Resistance to change by some teachers	14	"Conservative nature of old teachers" "Some teachers are resistant to innovation". "Many teachers are already familiar with old techniques and methods so they find it difficult to change".
Examination oriented nature of the syllabus	12	"System is designed such that emphasis are focused on completing the syllabus and passing examinations rather than understanding and demonstrating competences"
Low level of learners	10	"Lack of basic knowledge / skills" "One of the factors that affect the implementation of CBA is the level of students. some are slow learners, average, while others are fast learners".
Differences in learners	6	"Different capabilities of students since more are coming from different schools". "Variation in classroom situation".
Lack of adequate capacity building programs	5	"Absence of seminars" "Inadequate seminars/workshop to empower teachers to teach CBA". "More seminars and workshops are needed to train the teachers". "No seminars hold on CBA approach".
Interruption of lessons by the administration	2	"Students are frequently taken out of class by the administration". "Students taken out of class during lesson affects the implementation of CBA".
Laziness	1	"Laziness in trying out CBA methods"
Lack of school needs by learners	1	"Lack of resources by learners"

Findings on table 2 showed that teachers identified 16 other challenges that they faced in the implementation of CBA. The frequently mentioned challenge faced is that the instructional time is too short for teachers to implement CBA. Other challenges were that teachers are not well trained on CBA hence they faced difficulty in understanding, planning and carried out evaluation using the CBA. Poor classroom environment, lack of motivation for teachers, lack of internet facilities for research some areas in which schools are located were also some of the difficulties faced by teachers. Lack of appropriate scheme on CBA with the syllabus highly examination oriented was also other challenges faced by teachers in implementing CBA. Resistance to change by some teachers, lack of capacity building programmes, lack of learning needs by students, differences in students and frequent interruption of classes by school administration were other challenges that cause teachers to face difficulties in the implementation of CBA.

It is worthy to note that not only teachers were asked to identify challenges they faced in the implementation of CBA. some principals and regional pedagogic inspectors were interviewed to share their views on same topic and findings were the same with challenges identified by teachers. From the perspective of some principals and regional pedagogic inspectors, they said: "The challenges are enormous. I cannot tell you that there is just one challenge. They are many. Some teachers especially the young ones are still grappling with the concept of CBA. Some of them don't even know it. So, that is a big challenge. You cannot ask a colleague to go and teach what they don't know. We also have a group of old teachers in the system, and so taking them to that approach is a big challenge, and they don't see any reason why they have to change their method of teaching".

Another respondent said: "If you talk about mastery and implementation, we will say to about some 50%. Teachers have been a bit resistant".

From these two quotation, is clear that teachers do not understand the CBA concept while some are resistant to change. Findings also showed that the Cameroon General Certificate of Education (GCE) syllabuses do not reflect CBA practices. Thus, this may account for the reason why one of the participants said CBA to an extent is implemented in form one and two but when it gets to form three where children are gradually prepared for GCE and other higher classes, CBA is not respected any more. Evidence of this is reflected on the quotations below: "Just take a look at the GCE syllabuses and compare them with what you get from the Teachers' resource unit and see if they match. GCE syllabuses does not have the CBA. They are examination focused. That is why some teachers may try to implement it in the lower classes like forms one and two, but not in the higher classes".

Furthermore, findings also revealed that the difficulties teachers faced in the implementation of CBA is as a result of the wrong approach used in the adoption of CBA by policy makers.

Quoting one participant,

"CBA was hurriedly conceived by educational stakeholders in the ministries. I was in Yaoundé at the time that happened. The officials themselves were not properly trained. They came to Buea and were struggling to teach teachers to understand it. The best option should have been the training of teachers before the adoption and implementation phase. In short, that thing is not working".

Lastly, findings from principals and regional pedagogic inspectors showed that lack of teaching resources are also factors that are making teachers to face difficulties while implementing CBA.

There are many challenges identified on the field that are impeding the proper implementation of the competency based approach. The most frequently mentioned were the following: the lack of teaching resources, large class size, lack of CBA text books, limited capacity building programmes short duration of instructional time, lack of equipment, noninvolvement of practitioners in decision making, lack of extrinsic motivation and over examination oriented nature of the syllabuses. According to Gauthier (2013, pg. 433) teacher training, an essential aspect of reform is, often badly designed. Most teachers and regional pedagogic inspectors confirmed that teacher training colleges in Cameroon do not make use of the CBA in their training. Teachers therefore graduate from such training schools with little or no knowledge of the concept of CBA. In general, the relationship between teachers and the reform is not sufficiently taken into account. Training for the concept of the reform more often than not target intermediate employees rather than teachers who are to carry out its implementation. Moreover, initial teacher training, which is essential to ensure the capacity of the teachers who will go into schools and implement the competency-based approach, was regularly neglected and kept separate from the reform programme (Gauthier, 2013, pg. 433).

Enlarged workshops organized for the training of teachers are often time overcrowded. The presenters themselves often read what they have prepared with little time for actual practice. This also ties with the observation of Gauthier that a significant number of teachers received no training, and that others received training that did not give them a clear picture of the educational rationale for the reform. "As a result, many teachers received top-down training at best, trickling down from the ministry, but no support or advice on implementation, so they often felt endlessly overburdened." Going by the assertion of Moshia (2012) that teachers need to be trained and retrained wherever there is curriculum innovation so that they can successfully carry out the innovations, Makunja (2015) observed that many teachers did not get any training before the implementation of CBC. Only a few (27%) of the teachers had received such training. This implies that majority of teachers implemented the competency based curriculum without being oriented with the new approach.

Many teachers complained of large class size coupled with inadequate resources as being a hindrance to the implementation of CBA. They lacked the resources to plan meaningful activities to meet the needs of all the learners. Teachers are also caught in the trap of hurrying to complete the syllabuses at the expense of student's

learning. Documentary analysis and post lessons discussion with some teachers revealed some disparities between the syllabus gotten from the delegation, which is activity focused and those given from the GCE board which is examination focused. Many teachers, especially those teaching forms three to five preferred using what they get from the GCE board on grounds that, everything culminates in the assessment which the GCE board does. According to them what is essential is that learners acquire the basic knowledge to succeed in their end of course examinations.

Resistance to change: A majority of teachers who have taught for many years did not see any reason why they should change their old teaching methods. They argued that they themselves were taught using this method and they are all doing well. That they have been teaching students who have had good grades at their end of course examinations and are doing well in the society. Such line of thinking ties with the observation of Diagne (2010) that, it is foolish to believe that, because the notion of competence offers several interesting advantages, as described by various experts, it can calmly make its way into a traditional school system and gradually become the new reference point for education.

In order for teachers to become effective in their careers, they should be prepared to be lifelong learners of more sophisticated pedagogies and technologies and be able to form and reform productive collaborations with colleagues, parents, community agencies, businesses, and others.

Recommendations

- A key learning point from the findings is that if the responsible authorities want teachers to implement CBA, they should improve the teacher training programmes in order to provide pre-service teachers with necessary skills for the implementation of competence based approach in schools.
- Regular trainings for in-service teachers should be conducted to enable teachers acquire up-to-date teaching skills as required by the changes introduced in the school curricula. Capacity building should involve a planned, systematic and ongoing process with measurable performance objectives, defined outcomes, specific implementation strategies, and ways to measure capacity results and performance over time.
- The involvement of practitioners in decisions regarding the adoption or introduction of any new curricula. That is, teachers should be given opportunities for their participation in formulation and/or review of curriculum.
- The budget allocation to schools should be increased so as to provide adequate infrastructure and material resources needed for the implementation of CBA.
- Teachers are encouraged to be active participants in their own continuous professional development.

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