

Research Article**ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS OPINION ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CBE
FOUNDATION PHASE CURRICULUM*****Khumalo Charity and Vilane Mduduzi**

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to investigate the English Language teacher's opinion in the implementation of Competency Based Education (CBE) curriculum in the foundation phase in Eswatini. The study was carried out using the survey research design. Data was collected from 4 English teachers who were purposively sampled from a school in the Lubombo region. An observation guide was used to solicit information from the classrooms. The results generally revealed that some teachers are explicitly carrying out the objectives embedded in the CBE curriculum especially grade one classes. The recommendations were that the teachers should slowly secede from using traditional methods of teaching and try to inculcate learner participation as a dominant teaching method.

Keywords: CBE, Foundation phase, Implementation.

INTRODUCTION

The genesis of Competency Based Education (CBE) in the USA has a close link to the "behavioral objectives movement of 1950s" emanating from the thinking of educators such as Benjamin Bloom with a focus on intended outcomes of learning (Jurashka 2021). In Africa, the competency-based curriculum was adopted for the first time in South Africa in 1998, following the acute shortage of professionals such as engineers, technicians and artisans. The curriculum was adopted in a bid to change attitude of all South Africans and equip them with employable skills to cope with challenging issues in the 21st century (Patrick & Levine 2019). In Eswatini CBE was propagated by socio-economic changes and its implementation was facilitated by the World Bank. The education sector policy of 2011, section 2.3 states that the country needs to introduce a new competency-Based curriculum, mainstreaming HIV and AIDS awareness and prevention as a component of life skills and implement this one grade per year at a time. The Competency Based Education (CBE) curriculum is implemented in stages with effect from 2010.

Statement of the problem

The researchers experience in teaching Grade two during the CBE piloting and implementation phase stimulated the haunch to find out about, how fellow colleagues are coping with CBE. The teachers' seemed rigid towards learner-centered teaching approach. Some teachers felt it could be impossible to facilitate the learner centered approach required by CBE. The English language has been chosen because is one central language across the curriculum. The subject enhances the learner to understand all the other subject in the curriculum except for siSwati. English is also an international medium of communication.

Purpose of the study

To investigate English Language teachers opinion on the implementation of CBE foundation phase curriculum.

Objectives

1. To find out the teaching methods that are used by teachers in a CBE class.
2. To find out the activities that are given to learners in a CBE class.
3. To find out the assessment tools used by teachers in a CBE class.

Research Questions

1. What are the teaching methods that are used by teachers when teaching CBE?
2. What are the activities that are given to learners in a CBE class?
3. What are assessment tools used by teachers during CBE lessons?

Scope of the study

The study will involve four English Language teachers from the CBE foundation phase within four classes.

Significance of the study

The study will give evidence to the ministry of education in Eswatini, CBE experts, curriculum planners, teachers and stakeholders of the CBE curriculum, on how the CBE is being implemented in the foundation phase.

Definition of operational terms

Competency Base Education (CBE): According to Mulenga and Kabombwe (2019), an instructional approach that places more control over the learning process with the student, rather

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than the instructor making all learning decisions regarding the subject. Students demonstrate the ability to meet competencies set by the curriculum.

Outcome Based Education (OBE): Bilyk *et al.* (2020) define Outcome Based Education as a student – centric teaching and learning methodology in which the course delivery, assessment are planned to achieve stated objectives and outcomes.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical framework

This study was guided by the Concerns – Based Adoption Model (CBAM) which is based on the belief that all change originates with individuals. It focuses on enabling teachers to adapt the curriculum and to view it as their own. In this model the curriculum is not implemented until the teachers concerns have been adequately addressed (Hall 1974). Thus, for the competency based curriculum initiatives to succeed, use CBAM and modify it.

Empirical studies

Lukindo and Jesse (2016) conducted a study Exploring Competency Based Education (CBE) in Rural Secondary Schools in Tanzania: English Language Teachers Conceptions and Experience. The study was aimed at getting an insight about the implementation of CBE in Tanzania. The study adopted a qualitative research approach. Data was collected using an interview guide. Findings revealed that teachers preferred question and answer and lecturing methods when teaching CBE. Recommendations were that there has to be a top-down approach in changes of the curriculum in order to adhere to the mandated education philosophy and the new teaching paradigm. It was concluded that successful of CBE in schools needs total involvement of all stakeholders. The Similarity between Lukindo and Jesse' study and this study is focus on English Teachers' Conceptions about CBE. The difference, however, is the area of study. Lukindo and Jesse' study was conducted in Tanzania while this study was conducted in Eswatini. Another study was conducted by Rodgers (2021) on Exploring Secondary Teachers' Perspectives on Implementing Competency- Based Education. The study was aimed at taking an in-depth examination on teachers' beliefs around CBE and its impact on their classroom practices in three New Hampshire districts USA. The study adopted a sequential explanatory mixed method. Data collection tools were survey data and follow up interviews and observations. Findings of the study revealed that contextual factors informed teachers' beliefs and subsequent practices. The study concluded that Districts with administrative support revealed more widespread impact on teachers and students. The Similarity between Rodgers' study and this is the theoretical framework used. These studies, however, differ in research approaches. In the case of Eswatini, a study was conducted by Dlamini and Bhebhe (2018) on The unfolding Competency-Based Education in Swaziland 2010-2017. The study focused on the implementation of CBE in Eswatini and used a mixed method approach. Data was collected using a semi structured interviews and documents. Findings of the study showed that the World economic meltdown of 2010-2012 forced Eswatini to refocus on education. It was concluded that refocus on CBE was initiated by socio-economic challenges of 2008-2012 and facilitated by World

Bank. It was recommended that professionals and teachers should reflect on their perceptions and understanding of CBE and how their perceptions may affect the teaching of CBE. Dlamini and Bhebhe' study is similar to this study in the sense that both studies focus on Competency Based Education in Eswatini. However, they differ in the sense that Dlamini and Bhebhe study looked at the unfolding of CBE in Eswatini while this study looked English Language Teachers Opinion on the Implementation of CBE Foundation Phase Curriculum. Nothing has been researched on the opinion of teachers on the implementation of CBE. English Language has since been the focus because it is one language that is vital to learner's ability to understand other subjects, it is also an international language. Research studies has proved that the emergence of CBE has brought changes in the perceptions of teachers in all countries. The study conducted by Lukindo shows that teachers in Tanzania have knowledge about CBE and has some preferred teaching strategies. However, scholars such as Rodgers disputes the notion that teachers have enough knowledge about CBE. In the study conducted in New Hampshire, Rodgers argues that teachers have different perspectives about the implementation of CBE. The findings indicate that contextual factors informed the teacher's beliefs and practices. Dlamini and Bhebhe conducted a study in Eswatini where they explored the unfolding of competency based education. No scholar has considered the opinions of teachers in the implementation of CBE in Eswatini. Thus this study seeks to find out the opinions of English teachers on the implementation of CBE in Eswatini.

METHODOLOGY

Research paradigm

The interpretivist theory will be adopted as the paradigm for this study. According to Thanh (2015), researchers who are using interpretivist paradigm and qualitative methods often seek experiences, understanding and perceptions of individuals for their data to uncover reality rather than rely on number of statistics. That is why, therefore the interpretivist paradigms viewed as the best for the study because it seeks to understand the perceptions of CBE English teachers in the foundation phase.

Research approach

The qualitative research approach will be used as the lens for this study. Lin (2009), argues that qualitative research approach is best employed to explore issues, understanding phenomenon and understanding questions. Yin further states that this approach to research is employed to gain insight in people's attitude, behaviors, values, concerns, culture, motivation and aspirations. It is against this information that qualitative approach seems to be suitable for this study.

Research Design

The study will be carried out using the qualitative survey research design where by data will be gathered using an observation protocol and analyzed using themes. The survey design was chosen because it allows a relatively large sample to participant in the research topic.

Area of study

The study focused in the Lubombo region.

Population

The target population for this study are the primary teachers who teach English Language in the CBE foundation phase in the Lubombo region. The region has been chosen due to its convenience to the researcher.

Sample Size

Four teachers were sampled for the study. Gay and Dieh (1992) states that even one tenth of the population is an acceptable representation in qualitative research.

Sampling Procedure

The study will adopt purposive sampling. Hu Li ZaZhi (2014) pinpoints that to draw a purposive sampling, the researcher select participants from the sampling frame because they have characteristics that the researcher desires.

Data collection procedure

Permission to collect data was sought from the head teacher of the school. The researcher used an observation protocol to collect data from the classrooms during the lessons. The researcher used the time stipulated for English language to visit each classroom, which was an hour from each grade.

Data collection instruments

An observation protocol was used by the researcher to establish the findings.

Data analysis

All collected data was analyzed into interpretable and manageable information. This information was grouped into various themes. The themes then, have been discussed and summarized.

Ethical considerations

The researcher observed the obligation to protect the participants and hence paid attention to anonymity and confidentiality.

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

During the lessons, formal presentation preceded student exploration. Pupils were given a variety of activities starting from listening, speaking, and reading and writing, hence there are no individualized educational programs. The project of the learners were not appropriately kept and used effectively from time to time. Some teachers did not even have them altogether. Some teachers do not view rubrics frequently during lesson.

Conclusion

Teachers are not doing well in lesson presentation, formal presentation should come after learners' exploration. Teachers give learners the sufficient activities to empower the learners with listening, reading, writing and expressive skills. No proper procedures is followed to keep learners projects hence some teachers do not have them altogether. Rubrics are not followed from time to time during lesson presentation.

Recommendations

- Teachers should try to allow learners exploration of the content prior to formal presentation.
- Teachers should also prepare Individualized Education Programme to cater for learners various learning paces.
- Teachers are encouraged to consult their rubrics from time to time when conducting lessons.

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