



Beyond Resource Constraints: Rural Primary Schools as Adaptive Educational Ecosystems in the Enactment of Competence-Based Curriculum in Uganda

Mark Michael Waiswa¹, Eric Douglas Kalanda² and Mohammed Isiko³

¹Department of Teacher Education and Extension, Kyambogo University

²Department of Teacher Technical and Instructor Education

³District Education Officer Namutumba District Local Government

Email: mmwaiswa@kyu.ac.ug

Abstract: Although Competence Based Curriculum (CBC) reforms aim at re-orienting the teaching-learning process in schools from imparting knowledge to developing competencies, its implementation is influenced by environments of the schools. This research sought to explore how the rural school environment influences the implementation of CBC in primary schools of Namutumba District in Uganda. Based on Curriculum Enactment Theory, complemented by constructivist and experiential learning approaches, a qualitative case study approach was employed in two rural government-aided primary schools. Data collection involved semi-structured interviews, classroom observation, and document analysis conducted among 50 respondents comprising of head teachers, teachers, learners, and community members. The results indicate that the CBC implementation in rural schools is a dynamic process of balancing both constraining factors and opportunities presented by the school environment. Though the lack of infrastructure, instructional materials, professional support, and large-class sizes constrained the consistent use of learner-centred teaching approaches and competence-based assessment, teachers and community improvised and made use of the learners' experiences and local knowledge. Cross-case analysis further showed that school leadership, teacher agency, and community partnerships mediated how rural schools responded to curriculum demands. The study challenges deficit-oriented understandings of rural education by demonstrating that rural schools are not merely disadvantaged spaces where curriculum reforms encounter barriers, but adaptive educational ecosystems where teachers, learners, and communities negotiate and reconstruct curriculum possibilities. The study contributes to curriculum implementation by highlighting the importance of context-responsive approaches that address structural inequalities while recognizing the social and pedagogical resources embedded within rural learning environments.

Keywords: Competence-based curriculum, Curriculum enactment, Rural schools, Teacher agency, Contextual learning, Experiential learning, Uganda

How to cite this work (APA):

Waiswa, M. M., Kalanda, E. D. & Isiko, M. (2026). Beyond Resource Constraints: Rural Primary Schools as Adaptive Educational Ecosystems in the Enactment of Competence-Based Curriculum in Uganda. *Journal of Research Innovation and Implications in Education*, 10(4), 532 – 546. <https://doi.org/10.59765/gsph8>

1. Introduction

Across the world, education systems have increasingly shifted from content-oriented curricula towards competence-based curricula (CBC) that emphasize learners'

ability to apply knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes in authentic contexts. This transition reflects growing recognition that traditional examination-driven systems often prioritize the reproduction of knowledge rather than the development of critical thinking, creativity,

collaboration, communication, and problem-solving competencies required for lifelong learning and participation in contemporary societies (Namatende-Sakwa et al., 2025). Consequently, many countries have adopted competence-based reforms to improve the quality, relevance, and responsiveness of education to changing social, economic, and technological realities.

Contemporary curriculum scholarship further argues that the success of competence-based reforms depends not only on curriculum design but also on how curriculum is interpreted and enacted within particular educational contexts. Rather than viewing curriculum implementation as a linear process of translating policy into classroom practice, curriculum enactment perspectives recognize that teachers, school leaders, learners, and communities actively interpret, negotiate, and reconstruct curriculum intentions according to their institutional, social, and cultural realities. Consequently, school environments, teacher capacities, leadership practices, learner characteristics, and community relationships significantly influence how curriculum reforms are experienced in practice.

In Uganda, the introduction of the Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC) for primary education represents a major educational reform intended to transform teaching and learning from teacher-centred, examination-oriented practices towards learner-centred pedagogy, continuous assessment, and holistic competence development. Guided by the National Curriculum Framework for Primary Education (NCDC, 2019), the Uganda National Teacher Policy (MoES, 2019), and the Education Sector Strategic Plan (MoES, 2020), the reform seeks to develop learners who can apply knowledge creatively and effectively to real-life situations. However, studies continue to report challenges related to inadequate instructional resources, limited teacher preparedness, difficulties in competence-based assessment, and persistent examination-oriented cultures that constrain effective curriculum enactment, particularly in rural primary schools.

Although rural schools are frequently portrayed as disadvantaged settings characterized by inadequate infrastructure, limited instructional materials, and insufficient professional support, they also possess important contextual resources that can facilitate competence development. Learners' lived experiences, indigenous knowledge systems, locally available materials, community expertise, and strong school–community relationships provide opportunities for contextualized and experiential learning. Understanding how these contextual resources interact with structural constraints is therefore essential for explaining how competence-based curriculum is enacted within rural school environments.

1.2 Problem Statement

Despite the introduction of the Competence-Based Curriculum in Uganda, evidence suggests that its enactment remains uneven across schools, particularly in rural settings where structural challenges continue to limit the consistent implementation of learner-centred pedagogy and competence-based assessment. Existing studies have primarily focused on teacher preparedness, instructional resource shortages, and assessment challenges associated with curriculum implementation. While these studies have generated valuable insights into the barriers affecting CBC, they largely conceptualize implementation as a problem of limited capacity and inadequate resources.

Consequently, there remains limited empirical understanding of how rural school environments shape curriculum enactment through the interaction of physical and instructional conditions, teacher agency, learner experiences, and community participation. Existing research has paid insufficient attention to how rural schools simultaneously negotiate structural constraints and utilize locally available social, cultural, and environmental resources to enact competence-based curriculum. This knowledge gap is particularly evident in rural districts such as Namutumba, where the realities of curriculum enactment may differ substantially from those documented in urban or better-resourced contexts. Addressing this gap is important for generating context-responsive evidence that can inform policies and practices aimed at strengthening competence-based curriculum enactment in rural primary schools.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore how rural school contexts influence the enactment of the Competence-Based Curriculum in government-aided primary schools in Namutumba District, Uganda. Specifically, the study examined how physical and instructional environments, teacher agency, learner experiences, and community participation interact to shape the negotiation and enactment of competence-based curriculum within rural school settings.

Specifically, the study sought:

1. To explore how physical and instructional environments are negotiated in the enactment of competence-based curriculum in rural primary schools.
2. To examine teachers' experiences and pedagogical practices in implementing the competence-based curriculum within rural primary schools.
3. To explore how learners' experiences and characteristics are incorporated into competence-based teaching and learning.
4. To examine how community participation supports or constrains competence-based curriculum enactment in rural primary schools.

2. Literature Review

In order to explore how rural school contexts, influence the enactment of the Competence-Based Curriculum in government-aided primary schools, and how physical and instructional environments, teacher agency, learner experiences, and community participation interact to shape the negotiation and enactment of competence-based curriculum within rural school settings the following aspects were reviewed. Conceptualizing Competence-Based Curriculum Enactment, Rural School Contexts and Competence-Based Curriculum Enactment, Physical and Instructional Environments in CBC Enactment, Teacher Agency and Pedagogical Practices in CBC Enactment, Learner Experiences and Characteristics in Competence-Based Teaching and Learning, Community Participation and Competence-Based Curriculum Enactment, and Theoretical Perspectives Guiding the Study. Also, the following theories that underpinned the study were studied to underpin their implications; Curriculum Enactment Theory, Constructivist Learning Theory, and Experiential Learning Theory

2.1 Conceptualizing Competence-Based Curriculum Enactment

Competence Based Curriculum (CBC) is a move away from conventional systems of learning which focus on the acquisition and reproduction of subject matter knowledge towards systems which emphasize the application of knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes. In addition to improving academic performance, CBC aims at developing competencies like critical thinking, innovation, teamwork, communication, and problem-solving skills among others that can help the learner cope with modern-day social and economic challenges (Voogt & Roblin, 2012). Consequently, many education systems have adopted CBC as a strategy for improving the relevance and quality of learning.

However, evidence from diverse contexts proposes that the realization of CBC hinges less on curriculum design than on how it is interpreted and enacted within schools. Contemporary curriculum scholarship rejects the notion of enactment as a linear relocation of program into classroom practice. Instead, curriculum is agreed as an enacted procedure in which teachers, school leaders, learners, and communities actively interpret, adapt, and reconstruct policy intentions in response to local realities (Priestley et al., 2015). This perception shifts attention from whether schools comply with curriculum requirements to how curriculum is negotiated in practice.

The distinction between curriculum implementation and curriculum enactment is therefore critical. Implementation implies fidelity to prescribed policy, whereas enactment recognizes teachers as professional agents whose decisions are shaped by interactions among policy expectations, school conditions, learner characteristics, and community

contexts. Consequently, schools implementing the same curriculum may produce markedly different learning experiences because curriculum is mediated through context rather than simply delivered as designed (Sachs, 2016).

In Uganda, the Competence-Based Curriculum introduced through the National Curriculum Framework for Primary Education (NCDC, 2019) seeks to transform primary education from a predominantly examination-oriented system to one emphasizing learner-centred pedagogy, continuous assessment, and the practical application of knowledge. While current studies have largely concentrated on teacher preparedness, resource shortages, and assessment challenges (Mabonga, 2021; Nakawuki et al., 2025), they provide limited insight into how rural schools negotiate these constraints while pursuing curriculum goals. Understanding CBC through the lens of curriculum enactment therefore offers a more context-sensitive explanation of implementation by recognizing that curriculum reform is co-constructed through interactions among teachers, learners, schools, and communities rather than determined solely by policy prescriptions.

2.2 Rural School Contexts and Competence-Based Curriculum Enactment

Rural school contexts have emerged as a significant focus in research on competence-based curriculum (CBC) because curriculum reforms are enacted within diverse social, material, and institutional environments rather than under uniform conditions. Although CBC policies often prescribe common learning outcomes and pedagogical expectations, schools differ considerably in their capacity to translate these aspirations into practice. Consequently, curriculum enactment is molded not only by rule but also by the contextual realities within which teachers and learners operate (Priestley, Biesta & Robinson, 2015; Ball, Maguire & Braun, 2012)

Existing scholarship offers two broad perspectives on rural CBC enactment. The dominant perspective portrays rural schools as structurally disadvantaged environments characterized by scarce infrastructure, limited instructional resources, teacher deficiencies, congested classrooms, and restricted access to professional support and educational technologies (UNESCO, 2020; World Bank, 2018). Such conditions are widely reported to constrain learner-centred pedagogy, practical learning, and continuous assessment, thereby limiting the realization of competence-based reforms.

An emerging body of literature, however, challenges this predominantly deficit-oriented perspective by arguing that rural contexts also possess important educational assets. Community knowledge, indigenous practices, locally available materials, and learners' lived experiences can provide authentic contexts for inquiry, problem-solving, and experiential learning (Avery & Kassam, 2019). From this

perspective, rurality is not simply a constraint but a pedagogical resource that can enrich competence development when effectively integrated into classroom practice.

Evidence from Uganda reflects both perspectives. Studies consistently report that rural primary schools experience shortages of instructional resources, inadequate teacher preparation, and enormous class sizes, all of which complicate the implementation of learner-centred approaches promoted by CBC (Mabonga, 2021; Nakawuki et al., 2025). At the same time, teachers frequently respond to these constraints by improvising teaching materials, drawing on learners' everyday experiences, and utilizing community resources to support learning. These adaptations suggest that curriculum enactment in rural schools involves continuous negotiation between policy expectations and contextual realities rather than simple compliance with curriculum prescriptions.

Despite these insights, existing research has largely examined rural CBC through either a deficit lens that emphasizes implementation barriers or an asset-based lens that highlights local opportunities. Few studies have examined how these apparently competing realities interact to shape everyday curriculum enactment. This study addresses that gap by conceptualizing rural schools as adaptive educational ecosystems in which structural constraints, teacher agency, learner experiences, school leadership, and community participation interact to influence how competence-based curriculum is enacted in practice.

2.3 Physical and Instructional Environments in CBC Enactment

The physical and instructional environment plays a central role in shaping competence-based curriculum (CBC) enactment because learner-centred pedagogies require spaces and resources that support interaction, collaboration, practical activities, and continuous assessment. Unlike traditional teacher-centred instruction, CBC depends on learning atmospheres that enable learners to actively engage with knowledge through inquiry, experimentation, and application (Voogt & Roblin, 2012).

Research consistently shows that insufficient infrastructure and inadequate instructional resources constrain the enactment of competence-based pedagogies, particularly in low-resource settings. Overcrowded classrooms, shortages of teaching and learning materials, limited access to digital technologies, and inflexible classroom spaces often restrict teachers' ability to organize group work, practical activities, and formative assessment (UNESCO, 2020; World Bank, 2018). Such conditions frequently create a disconnect between curriculum expectations and classroom realities.

However, studies increasingly suggest that the influence of school environments extends beyond the availability of formal resources. Teachers frequently adapt to material constraints by improvising instructional materials and drawing on locally available resources to support experiential learning. These adaptations indicate that the relationship between resources and curriculum enactment is mediated by teachers' professional judgement and their ability to connect classroom learning with local contexts rather than determined solely by resource availability (Priestley et al., 2015).

In Uganda, existing research has primarily documented shortages of infrastructure and instructional materials as barriers to CBC implementation (Mabonga, 2021; Nakawuki et al., 2025). Whereas these scholarships offer significant evidence of structural constraints, they offer limited understanding of how rural schools negotiate these conditions in everyday practice. Consequently, less is known about how physical environments simultaneously constrain and enable competence development through the creative use of locally available resources. Addressing this gap requires examining school environments not only as sites of resource scarcity but also as contexts within which curriculum possibilities are actively negotiated.

2.4 Teacher Agency and Pedagogical Practices in CBC Enactment

Teachers are central to competence-based curriculum (CBC) enactment because they interpret curriculum prospects and transform them into classroom practice. Rather than executing policy routinely, teachers make professional decisions about instructional strategies, learning activities, assessment, and the use of available resources. Accordingly, curriculum enactment is molded not only by what teachers know but also by how they exercise professional judgement within particular school contexts (Sachs, 2016; Priestley et al., 2015).

CBC requires a pedagogical change from teacher-centred instruction to learner-centred approaches that promote inquiry, collaboration, problem-solving, and continuous assessment. Achieving this shift depends on teachers' pedagogical knowledge, confidence, and capacity to design meaningful learning experiences that connect curriculum content with learners' everyday lives (Voogt & Roblin, 2012). However, research across competence-based education systems indicates that teachers often negotiate competing demands, including curriculum coverage, high-stakes examinations, large class sizes, and limited instructional support. As a result, competence-based reforms frequently produce hybrid pedagogical practices that combine learner-centred and traditional teaching approaches rather than a complete transformation of classroom practice.

Studies in Uganda similarly identify inadequate professional development, uncertainty regarding competence-based assessment, and limited ongoing pedagogical support as significant challenges to CBC implementation (Mabonga, 2021; Nakawuki et al., 2025). While these studies have enhanced understanding of teacher preparedness, they have largely conceptualized teachers as recipients of reform rather than as active agents who interpret and adapt curriculum within diverse school contexts.

Emerging scholarship on teacher agency offers a more nuanced perspective by recognizing that teachers actively respond to contextual constraints through improvisation, collaboration, and professional judgement (Priestley et al., 2015). From this perspective, resource limitations do not simply restrict curriculum enactment; they also create conditions in which teachers develop context-responsive pedagogical strategies using locally available materials, learners' experiences, and community resources. Understanding these adaptive practices is particularly important in rural schools, where curriculum enactment depends as much on teachers' capacity to mobilize contextual resources as on the formal resources available. This study therefore examines teacher agency not merely as individual initiative but as a contextually mediated process through which competence-based curriculum is interpreted and enacted in everyday classroom practice.

2.5 Learner Experiences and Characteristics in Competence-Based Teaching and Learning

Competence-based curriculum (CBC) places learners as active contributors in the education procedure rather than inactive beneficiaries of knowledge. This orientation reflects constructivist perspectives, which argue that learners develop understanding by connecting new information with prior experiences, social interactions, and cultural contexts (Vygotsky, 1978). Consequently, learners' backgrounds, interests, abilities, and everyday experiences become important resources in curriculum enactment.

This perspective is particularly relevant in rural contexts where learners often possess practical knowledge acquired through participation in household activities, agriculture, local enterprises, and community life. These kinds of experiences serve as the basis of competence development through connecting classroom theories to practical applications. As stated in the experiential learning theory, meaningful learning takes place when learners undergo concrete experiences, reflect upon them, form concepts and apply their knowledge (Kolb, 1984). From this viewpoint, rural environments provide opportunities for competence development because learners interact regularly with practical situations that can enrich classroom learning.

However, the contribution of learners' experiences to CBC enactment depends on how effectively teachers recognize and integrate these experiences into formal learning processes. Where classroom practices remain dominated by textbook-based instruction, examination preparation, and teacher explanation, learners' existing knowledge may remain disconnected from curriculum activities. Effective competence-based learning therefore requires pedagogical approaches that value learners' cultural, linguistic, and experiential resources as legitimate forms of knowledge (Gay, 2018).

At the same time, rural learners may experience challenges that influence their participation in competence-based learning. Limited access to reading materials, language barriers, socio-economic pressures, and unequal exposure to educational technologies can affect learners' confidence, communication, and participation in interactive learning activities (UNESCO, 2020). These challenges demonstrate that learners' experiences function both as resources and constraints within curriculum enactment.

Although research on CBC in Uganda has increasingly examined teacher preparedness and resource limitations, less attention has been given to learners as active participants in curriculum processes. Understanding how rural learners' experiences, identities, and everyday knowledge are incorporated into classroom practice is thus crucial for enlightening how CBC is enacted beyond policy expectations.

2.6 Community Participation and Competence-Based Curriculum Enactment

Competence-based curriculum (CBC) emphasizes the connection between school learning and real-life contexts, making community participation an important dimension of curriculum enactment. Unlike traditional approaches that position schools as the primary sites of knowledge production, CBC recognizes that meaningful learning occurs through interaction between learners, schools, and their social environments. Consequently, communities can contribute not only material support but also knowledge, skills, experiences, and practical contexts that enrich competence development.

Existing literature on school-community partnerships demonstrates that communities can strengthen educational processes through collaboration, resource mobilization, and shared responsibility for learner development (Epstein, 2018). In rural settings, this role may be particularly significant because community members often possess practical knowledge related to agriculture, local enterprises, environmental practices, cultural traditions, and indigenous knowledge systems. When intentionally integrated into teaching and learning, such resources can provide authentic contexts for problem-solving, creativity, teamwork, and use of knowledge.

However, community participation in CBC enactment is not automatic. Effective engagement requires shared understanding among schools, families, and community actors regarding the purposes of competence-based education. Research indicates that many communities continue to associate educational success primarily with examination performance, creating tensions between traditional expectations of schooling and CBC's broader emphasis on skills, values, and practical competencies. Limited awareness of CBC objectives may therefore restrict meaningful community involvement.

In Uganda, existing studies on CBC have focused largely on teachers, instructional resources, and assessment challenges, with comparatively limited attention to communities as actors within curriculum processes. This creates an incomplete understanding of curriculum enactment, particularly in rural contexts where community knowledge and everyday experiences are closely connected to learners' lives. While schools may experience shortages of formal instructional resources, surrounding communities may provide alternative sources of knowledge and learning opportunities.

Understanding community participation through a curriculum enactment perspective therefore requires moving beyond the idea of communities as external supporters of schools. Instead, communities should be viewed as active participants in constructing learning experiences alongside teachers and learners. This study examines how community knowledge, skills, and relationships support or constrain CBC enactment in rural primary schools, contributing to a broader understanding of rural schools as adaptive educational ecosystems.

2.7 Theoretical Perspectives Guiding the Study

This study is based on Curriculum Enactment Theory, which is supported by the theories of Constructivist Learning and Experiential Learning. This combination helps to formulate the theoretical background that makes it possible to analyze the process of CBC enactment in rural primary schools.

2.8 Curriculum Enactment Theory

Unlike traditional approaches that conceptualize curriculum implementation as a linear process through which policy objectives are transferred from central authorities to schools, curriculum enactment views curriculum as a socially made procedure molded by the interpretations, decisions, and actions of educational actors within particular contexts (Priestley et al., 2015).

From this viewpoint, teachers are not inactive receivers of curriculum reforms but active curriculum makers who

exercise professional judgement in selecting teaching strategies, adapting resources, crafting learning events, and responding to learners' needs. Curriculum outcomes therefore emerge from interactions among policy expectations, school conditions, teacher agency, learner experiences, and community contexts (Sachs, 2016).

This perception is predominantly relevant to rural schools where CBC expectations encounter diverse realities, including limited resources, large classes, varying learner experiences, and community relationships. Rather than examining whether rural schools implement CBC according to policy prescriptions, Curriculum Enactment Theory enables this study to examine how actors negotiate curriculum possibilities within their everyday environments.

2.9 Constructivist Learning Theory

The constructivist learning theory supplements the curriculum enactment approach in terms of addressing the role played by the learners in the development of competence. According to the constructivist theory of learning, the learners construct their own understanding of information by relating their experiences and interacting socially (Vygotsky, 1978).

This approach is relevant since CBC demands participation from the learner in the construction of knowledge. In rural settings, learners bring experiences from household activities, agriculture, and community life that can serve as foundations for meaningful learning. Constructivism therefore supports analysis of how teachers incorporate learners' existing knowledge and experiences into competence-based teaching practices.

2.10 Experiential Learning Theory

Experiential Learning Theory further strengthens the framework by clarifying how practical experiences contribute to competence growth. Kolb (1984) claims that meaningful learning happens through engagement with concrete experiences, reflection, conceptual understanding, and application in new situations.

This perspective is particularly useful in understanding how rural environments and community resources become learning spaces. Activities such as farming, local enterprises, environmental interactions, and community practices may provide authentic opportunities for learners to apply knowledge and advance practical competencies.

2.11 Theoretical Integration

Together, these perspectives explain CBC enactment as an interactive process rather than a policy delivery mechanism. Curriculum Enactment Theory accounts for the overall

theory about how educational practitioners make sense of and construct curricular expectations. Constructivist Learning Theory accounts for how students engage in the process of constructing knowledge, whereas Experiential Learning Theory accounts for how local experience and community resources develop competence.

2.12 Literature Synthesis and Research Gap

The reviewed works reveals that competence-based curriculum (CBC) enactment is a complex process shaped by interactions among curriculum policies, school environments, teachers, learners, and communities. Contemporary curriculum scholarship suggests that reforms are not simply shifted from policy papers into classrooms; rather, they are understood, adapted, and reconstructed by educational actors within particular social and institutional perspectives (Priestley et al., 2015).

Existing studies has generated vital insights into the challenges related with CBC implementation. Studies across developing contexts highlight persistent concerns related to inadequate infrastructure, limited instructional resources, insufficient teacher preparation, and difficulties in implementing competence-based assessment (UNESCO, 2020; World Bank, 2018). Within Uganda, research has similarly focused largely on teacher readiness, resource constraints, and policy implementation challenges (Mabonga, 2021; Nakawuki et al., 2025). While these studies provide valuable evidence regarding barriers to reform, they tend to present CBC enactment primarily as a problem of insufficient capacity or inadequate resources.

However, emerging scholarship suggests that such deficit-oriented explanations provide an incomplete understanding of curriculum reform in rural contexts. Rural schools are not merely spaces where policy ambitions encounter limitations; they are also environments where teachers, learners, and communities mobilize locally available resources, experiences, and knowledge systems to create meaningful learning opportunities. This standpoint highlights the significance of examining how educational actors exercise agency and negotiate curriculum expectations within constrained environments.

Despite growing recognition of teacher agency and contextual learning, existing research has examined key dimensions of CBC enactment largely in isolation. Studies have commonly focused separately on teacher preparedness, instructional resources, learner participation, or parental involvement, with limited attention to how these elements interact within everyday school environments. Consequently, there remains insufficient understanding of CBC enactment as an ecological process involving relationships among school conditions, teacher practices, learner experiences, and community participation.

Furthermore, limited empirical evidence exists on rural primary schools in eastern Uganda, particularly contexts such as Namutumba District, where socio-economic conditions, community structures, and educational realities may shape curriculum experiences differently from urban and better-resourced settings. Findings from national-level or urban-focused studies may therefore not adequately explain how CBC unfolds within rural school environments.

This study addresses these conceptual and empirical gaps by examining CBC enactment as a negotiated process within rural primary schools. Guided by Curriculum Enactment Theory and supported by constructivist and experiential learning perspectives, the study conceptualizes rural schools as adaptive educational ecosystems where structural constraints and contextual resources coexist. It explores how physical environments, teacher agency, learner experiences, and community participation interact to shape the capabilities and limitations of competence-based curriculum enactment in rural Uganda.

2.13 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework presents the study's understanding of competence-based curriculum (CBC) enactment as a context-dependent and negotiated process. It illustrates how curriculum expectations interact with rural school conditions, teacher agency, learner experiences, and community knowledge to shape the ways CBC is interpreted and practiced in rural primary schools.

Competence-Based Curriculum Policy Expectations

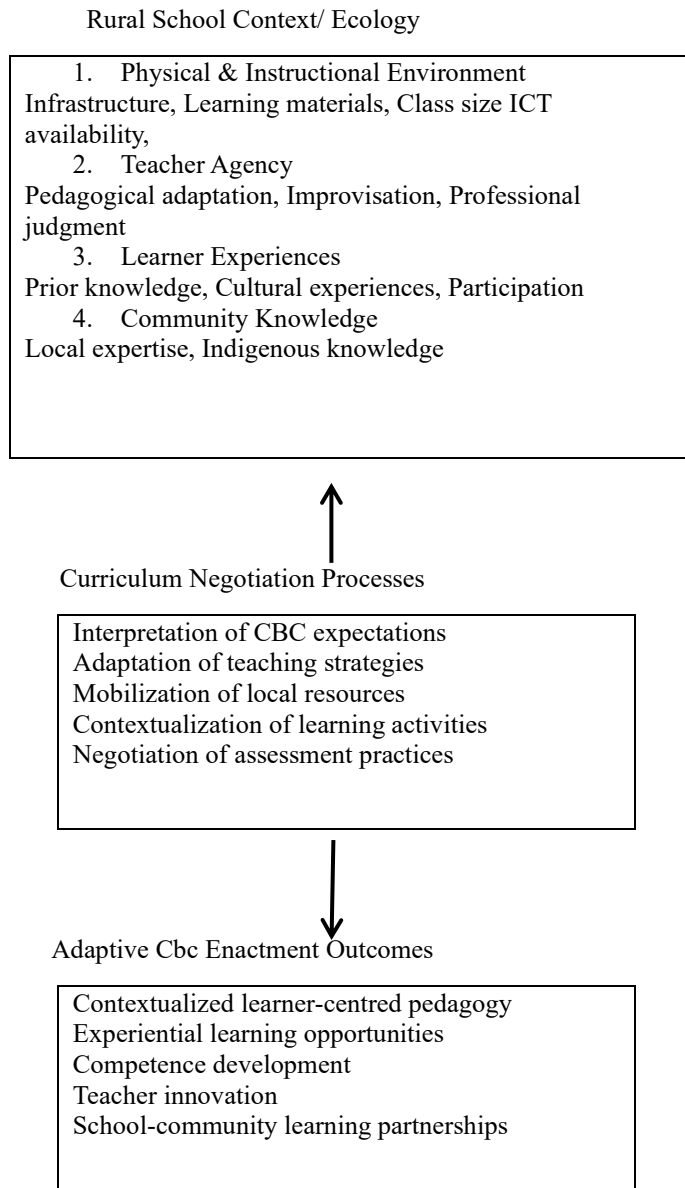


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework Illustrating Rural School Ecosystems and the Negotiated Enactment of Competence-Based Curriculum

Figure 1 presents the conceptual relationship among CBC policy expectations, rural school ecology, curriculum negotiation processes, and adaptive CBC enactment outcomes.

This study conceptualizes competence-based curriculum (CBC) enactment as a negotiated process shaped by interactions among curriculum expectations, rural school conditions, teacher agency, learner experiences, and community knowledge. Guided by Curriculum Enactment

Theory, the framework assumes that curriculum reforms are not simply implemented as prescribed but are interpreted and reconstructed by educational actors within specific contexts.

The framework positions rural schools as adaptive educational ecosystems where structural constraints and contextual resources coexist. It identifies four interconnected dimensions influencing CBC enactment: (i) structural and material conditions, including infrastructure,

instructional resources, class size, and technology access; (ii) teacher agency, reflected in pedagogical adaptation, creativity, and professional judgement; (iii) learner experiences, including prior knowledge, cultural backgrounds, and participation in learning processes; and (iv) community knowledge and partnerships, involving local expertise, indigenous knowledge, and community-supported learning opportunities.

The framework proposes that CBC enactment does not depend solely on the availability of resources but emerges through the ways teachers, learners, and communities negotiate curriculum expectations within their realities. Structural conditions create possibilities and constraints, while teacher agency, learner participation, and community resources mediate how CBC is experienced and practiced.

Thus, rural CBC enactment is understood as an adaptive process involving the interpretation, contextualization, and transformation of curriculum expectations into meaningful learning experiences. Figure 1 illustrates the relationship between CBC policy expectations, rural school ecology, curriculum negotiation processes, and adaptive CBC enactment outcomes.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Approach and Design

The research employed the design of qualitative multiple-case studies in order to analyze the influence of rural school settings on the implementation of competence-based curriculum (CBC) in primary schools in Namutumba District in Uganda. Qualitative research methodology was suitable for the study, since its aim was to interpret the meaning and experience of CBC implementation by teachers, learners, and other stakeholders in their educational environment.

The study was informed by a constructivist epistemological standpoint, which views educational realities as socially constructed through relations among individuals and their contexts. Accordingly, CBC enactment was examined not as a fixed implementation process, but as a negotiated practice shaped by policy expectations, school conditions, teacher agency, learner experiences, and community relationships.

Multiple-case study design was adopted due to the nature of the CBC implementation which has to be situated within a particular context. As per Yin (2018), the case study

methodology allows for detailed analysis of contemporary events where the relationship between the event and its context is highly intertwined. The adoption of two rural government-assisted primary schools permitted the comparison between cases and the determination of similarities and differences in CBC implementation.

3.2 Study Context and Case Selection

The study was carried out in Namutumba District, located in Eastern Uganda. The district was chosen because it represents a predominantly rural educational context where national curriculum reforms interact with diverse social, economic, and institutional realities. Primary schools in the district commonly operate within conditions characterized by limited infrastructure, constrained instructional resources, and strong connections between schools and surrounding communities. These characteristics provided an appropriate context for examining how rural actors negotiate the opportunities and challenges associated with CBC enactment.

The unit of analysis was the rural primary school, conceptualized as an adaptive educational ecosystem within which curriculum enactment occurs through interactions among teachers, learners, school leaders, and communities. Two government-aided primary schools were purposively selected from rural sub-counties in Bukono and Busiki counties. Purposive selection was appropriate because qualitative case studies require information-rich cases that offer detailed understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

The selected schools met three criteria: they were located in rural administrative areas, had experience implementing the competence-based curriculum, and provided access for sustained engagement with participants and school activities. To maintain confidentiality, the schools are presented as School A and School B throughout the study.

3.3 Participants and Data Sources

Participants were purposively selected based on their direct involvement in CBC enactment and their capacity to provide diverse perspectives on curriculum experiences within rural school contexts. The study involved 50 participants across the two case schools, comprising head teachers, classroom teachers, upper primary learners, and parents/community members.

Participant Category	School A	School B	Total
Head Teachers	1	1	2
Classroom Teachers	6	6	12
Upper Primary Learners	12	12	24
Parents/Community Members	6	6	12
Total	25	25	50

The inclusion of multiple participant groups enabled examination of CBC enactment from different perspectives. Teachers and head teachers provided insights into curriculum interpretation, pedagogical practices, and institutional conditions, while learners provided experiences of participation and competence-based learning. Community members contributed perspectives on school–community relationships and the role of local knowledge in supporting curriculum enactment.

Data were generated through three complementary methods: semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis. Interviews were conducted with head teachers, teachers, and community members to explore experiences, challenges, adaptations, and opportunities associated with CBC implementation. Classroom observations were undertaken to examine actual teaching and learning practices, including learner participation, use of instructional resources, practical activities, and assessment approaches. A total of twelve lessons were observed across the two schools. Documentary analysis involved reviewing lesson plans, schemes of work, assessment records, and instructional materials to examine how CBC expectations were reflected in planning and classroom practice.

The use of multiple data sources enabled methodological triangulation by allowing comparison between participants' accounts, observed practices, and documentary evidence. Data collection continued until thematic sufficiency was achieved, with recurring patterns emerging across interviews, observations, and documents.

3.4 Data Analysis and Trustworthiness

Analysis of data involved thematic analysis whereby the process of coding, categorizing, interpreting, and cross case comparison was followed. Familiarization was done whereby all the data from interviews, observations, and documents were read through to understand the general situation of the respondents and their schools. Codes were thereafter generated on issues like CBC implementation, contextual challenges, teacher adaptation, learners' involvement, and community involvement.

The related codes were then categorized into more general themes consistent with the research objectives, but leaving room for other observations to be drawn from the data. The emerging themes were later compared between the two case schools in order to find out common patterns and factors affecting the implementation of CBC. This cross-case analysis supported interpretation of rural schools as adaptive educational ecosystems where curriculum practices are shaped through interactions among structural conditions, teacher agency, learner experiences, and community resources.

The trustworthiness of the study was ensured using the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Credibility was enhanced through methodological triangulation involving interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis, as well as member checking of emerging interpretations with selected participants. Transferability was established through thorough documentation of the context of the research, its cases, and subjects in order to be able to make a judgment regarding the applicability of the findings to comparable rural communities. The credibility of the research was ensured through keeping an audit trail of all the processes involved in research including analysis and methodology used.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

Approval and permissions relating to ethics were sought from the appropriate institution and education bodies prior to the conduct of the research. The study was voluntary in nature, and consent was sought from all participants who were adults. Because learners formed part of the sample population, the following measures were adopted in respect to ethical considerations in this particular research setting.

Learners' assent and parental/guardian consent were sought prior to data collection, and the learners were assured of their voluntary nature and right to withdraw at any point in time without suffering any repercussions. Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured by use of pseudonyms for the learners and schools, as well as management of the data collected for research purposes only.

4. Results and Discussion

The study explored how rural school contexts shape the enactment of competence-based curriculum (CBC) in Namutumba District. Analysis generated four interconnected themes demonstrating that CBC enactment is neither determined solely by resource availability nor achieved independently of contextual conditions. Instead, rural schools negotiate curriculum expectations through interactions among material conditions, teacher agency, learner experiences, and community resources.

4.1 Negotiating CBC within Rural Material Conditions

The findings of the study reveal that the physical and pedagogical conditions at the rural primary schools greatly influenced the implementation of the CBC. Both School A and School B had challenges such as overcrowding in classrooms, lack of instructional materials, poor classroom facilities, and limited access to ICT materials. This greatly hindered teachers from practicing the methods stipulated in the CBC.

Classroom observations revealed that large class sizes limited learner movement, group work, and individualized teacher support. Although teachers recognized the importance of collaborative and participatory learning, they reported that overcrowded classrooms often compelled them to adopt whole-class teaching approaches to manage lessons effectively. As one teacher from School A explained:

“The classrooms are too small for the number of learners we have. When I try to organize group work, there is not enough space for learners to move around or work together comfortably.”

Document analysis further showed shortages of curriculum-aligned instructional materials, with teachers frequently relying on improvised teaching aids. Limited ICT infrastructure also reduced opportunities for integrating digital technologies into classroom instruction, despite the curriculum’s emphasis on interactive and learner-centred learning.

However, the findings demonstrate that resource limitations did not completely prevent CBC enactment. Instead, they influenced the forms through which competence-based learning was enacted. Teachers reported using locally available materials such as stones, sticks, plants, and the school environment to support practical learning activities. Community spaces and everyday rural experiences were similarly incorporated into teaching to contextualize learning and promote learner participation. These adaptations enabled teachers to sustain elements of learner-centred pedagogy despite material constraints.

These findings confirm previous studies showing that inadequate infrastructure, shortages of instructional resources, and overcrowded classrooms remain significant barriers to competence-based curriculum implementation in many low-resource education systems (World Bank, 2018; UNESCO, 2020). Similar challenges have been reported in Uganda, where limited teaching resources and large class sizes constrain teachers’ ability to implement learner-centred pedagogies and continuous assessment practices associated with CBC (Mabonga, 2021; Nakawuki et al., 2025).

Nevertheless, the study extends existing literature by demonstrating that material constraints do not solely determine curriculum outcomes. Rather, their influence is mediated by teachers’ capacity to mobilize locally available resources and contextual learning opportunities. As observed from the theoretical framework of Curriculum Enactment, the process of implementing curriculum is not one of policy compliance but an activity that is negotiated and involves the interpretation of curriculum expectations by the teachers (Priestley et al., 2015). The outcomes therefore, support the central argument of this study that rural schools should be understood not only as resource-constrained environments but also as adaptive educational

ecosystems where locally available resources can be transformed into meaningful opportunities for competence development.

4.2 Teacher Agency and Adaptive Pedagogical Practices

The study found that teacher agency was a critical factor mediating the relationship between structural constraints and competence-based curriculum (CBC) enactment. Although teachers worked in resource-constrained environments characterized by inadequate instructional resources, large class sizes, and inadequate professional support, they demonstrated considerable creativity in adapting curriculum expectations to local realities.

Interviews and classroom observations showed that teachers improvised teaching materials using locally available resources and designed learning activities that connected classroom content with learners’ everyday experiences. Examples included using school gardens to teach agricultural concepts, stones and sticks to support numeracy, community walks for social studies, and local stories to facilitate language learning. As one teacher from School B explained:

“I collect stones and sticks from the compound. Learners use them to understand numbers and operations. They enjoy this more than just copying from the board.”

These practices illustrate how teachers transformed locally available resources into authentic learning opportunities, enabling learners to link classroom knowledge with their lived experiences. However, teacher agency operated within important constraints. Most teachers reported receiving only brief orientation workshops on CBC, which they considered insufficient for developing competence in learner-centred pedagogy and competence-based assessment. One teacher remarked:

“The workshop gave us an overview, but it was not enough to really understand how to teach differently.”

Classroom observations further revealed that although teachers incorporated discussions, group work, and practical activities where possible, teacher-centred instruction remained common, particularly in overcrowded classes. Document analysis similarly indicated that written tests continued to dominate assessment despite the curriculum’s emphasis on continuous and competence-based assessment.

These findings suggest that teacher agency is both enabling and constrained. While teachers demonstrated professional judgement and innovation in adapting CBC to rural realities, their efforts were limited by inadequate professional development and unfavourable structural conditions. This finding is consistent with studies showing that successful

competence-based reforms require sustained pedagogical support rather than one-off orientation workshops (Mabonga, 2021; Nakawuki et al., 2025). It also backs up the claim by Priestley et al. (2015) that the teacher agency is constructed through the interplay between the professional capacity of teachers and their working conditions.

According to the theory of curriculum enactment, the results indicate that the teachers are not just agents of curriculum policy implementation, but they are actively involved in creating curriculum based on their understanding of the curriculum expectations. The findings extend existing scholarship by showing that, in rural Ugandan primary schools, teacher agency does more than mediate the effects of resource constraints; it enables the transformation of locally available materials, community resources, and learners' experiences into opportunities for competence development. This reinforces the central argument of the study that effective CBC enactment depends not only on the provision of resources but also on strengthening teachers' capacity to negotiate curriculum possibilities within their contexts (Priestley et al., 2015; Sachs, 2016).

4.3 Learner Experiences as Resources for Competence Development

The study found that learners' lived experiences constituted important resources for competence development within rural primary schools. Teachers consistently reported that learners brought practical knowledge, problem-solving abilities, and collaborative skills acquired through farming, household responsibilities, local markets, and other community activities into classroom learning. These experiences enabled learners to relate classroom concepts to familiar situations, thereby enhancing participation and contextual understanding.

One teacher from School A explained:

"Our learners are very practical. They know how to do many things at home—farming, cooking, and caring for younger siblings. When I relate lessons to these things, they participate actively."

Classroom observations supported this finding by showing that learners participated more confidently in discussions and practical activities when lessons drew on familiar community experiences. For example, science and agriculture lessons became more interactive when teachers used examples from local farming practices, while numeracy and problem-solving activities became more meaningful when linked to everyday market transactions. These observations suggest that learners' prior experiences provided authentic foundations for competence development rather than serving merely as background knowledge.

However, the study also identified factors that constrained learners' participation in competence-based learning. Teachers reported that some learners experienced difficulties expressing ideas in English, the language of instruction in upper primary, despite demonstrating practical understanding of concepts. Limited access to reading materials, irregular attendance associated with household responsibilities, and socio-economic challenges also affected learners' confidence and participation during classroom activities. Document analysis further indicated that classroom assessment continued to emphasize written responses, which often underestimated competencies demonstrated through practical participation and oral interaction.

These findings support constructivist perspectives that meaningful learning occurs when learners actively connect new knowledge with prior experiences and social interactions (Vygotsky, 1978). They also reinforce Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory, which views concrete experience as a foundation for developing higher-order understanding and transferable competencies. Similar studies have shown that contextualizing instruction around learners' lived experiences enhances engagement, relevance, and competence development (Gay, 2018; Avery & Kassam, 2019).

Nevertheless, this study extends existing scholarship by demonstrating that rural learners' experiences are not merely contextual background but constitute valuable pedagogical resources that can enrich CBC enactment. Rather than viewing rural learners primarily through the lens of educational disadvantage, the findings highlight how their practical knowledge, cultural experiences, and everyday interactions can strengthen competence development when intentionally integrated into teaching and learning. This suggests that effective CBC enactment requires pedagogies that recognize and build upon learners' experiential knowledge while addressing barriers related to language, assessment, and socio-economic disadvantages.

4.4 Community Knowledge as an Emerging Resource for CBC Enactment

The study revealed that rural communities represented important but underutilized resources in the enactment of competence-based curriculum (CBC). Community members contributed practical knowledge, skills, experiences, and locally available materials that complemented classroom learning. Unlike traditional perceptions where communities are viewed mainly as sources of financial or material support, the findings demonstrate that communities can function as extensions of the learning environment by providing authentic contexts for competence development.

Interviews with teachers and community members showed that local expertise was occasionally integrated into

classroom activities. Farmers supported agriculture-related learning by demonstrating farming practices, artisans shared practical skills related to construction and craftsmanship, while elders contributed cultural knowledge and local histories. Parents and community members also supported learning by providing locally available materials used in practical activities.

A community member from School B explained:

“I showed learners how to make chairs and tables. They were very happy because they learn practical skills that can help them in the future.”

Classroom observations confirmed that learning activities became more meaningful when connected to community experiences. For instance, lessons involving agriculture, environmental issues, and local practices provided opportunities for learners to apply knowledge beyond the classroom. These findings suggest that rural communities possess forms of social and cultural capital that can support CBC objectives when deliberately recognized and incorporated into school practices.

However, the study also found that community involvement remained largely informal and inconsistent. Many parents had limited understanding of CBC and continued to evaluate educational success mainly through examination results rather than broader competencies such as creativity, problem-solving, collaboration, and practical skills. A head teacher from School A observed:

“Parents still ask, ‘What did my child score?’ They do not understand that we are now assessing competencies.”

The findings indicate that limited awareness of CBC among community members may restrict meaningful school–community partnerships. Furthermore, socio-economic demands affecting rural households reduced the time available for some parents and community members to participate actively in school learning activities.

These findings align with Epstein’s (2018) perspective that effective school–community partnerships extend beyond parental involvement to include shared responsibility for learners’ development. They also support experiential learning theory, which emphasizes that authentic environments and practical experiences provide important opportunities for learners to develop transferable competencies (Kolb, 1984). Similar research highlights that indigenous knowledge, community practices, and local experiences can enrich learning when schools create mechanisms for integrating them into formal education processes (Avery & Kassam, 2019).

Nevertheless, this study extends existing literature by demonstrating that community participation in CBC should not be understood only as external support to schools.

Rather, rural communities represent knowledge ecosystems that can contribute directly to curriculum enactment. The findings suggest that successful CBC implementation requires deliberate mechanisms for transforming community knowledge into structured learning opportunities through partnerships between teachers, learners, parents, local experts, and community institutions.

4.5 Cross-Case Synthesis: Rural Schools as Constrained but Capable Spaces

Cross-case analysis revealed that CBC enactment in rural primary schools was shaped not only by the accessibility of resources but also by how schools interpreted, mobilized, and transformed available resources into learning opportunities. Although School A and School B operated within similar rural contexts characterized by limited infrastructure, inadequate instructional materials, and large learner populations, the nature and intensity of CBC practices differed across the two schools.

School B demonstrated relatively stronger enactment of CBC principles, characterized by more consistent use of learner-centred activities, greater teacher collaboration, stronger engagement with community resource persons, and more deliberate use of locally available materials. In contrast, School A showed greater reliance on teacher-directed approaches, partly due to similar structural limitations but weaker mechanisms for teacher collaboration and community involvement.

These differences suggest that structural conditions alone do not determine curriculum outcomes. Rather, the interaction between school leadership, teacher agency, collaborative cultures, and community relationships mediates how curriculum reforms are experienced at school level. Where school actors collectively interpreted CBC as an opportunity for contextual learning, resource limitations were more likely to be transformed into possibilities for innovation. Conversely, where support structures were weaker, constraints more directly restricted the range of competence-based practices implemented.

This finding challenges deficit-oriented explanations that portray rural schools primarily as disadvantaged spaces incapable of implementing ambitious curriculum reforms. Instead, the evidence demonstrates that rural schools are adaptive educational ecosystems where curriculum expectations are continuously negotiated through interactions among policy demands, school conditions, teachers, learners, and communities.

The results are in line with the ideas of the Curriculum Enactment Theory, which states that “curriculum reform policies are not just transferred into the classroom setting but reconstructed through processes of interpretation and action by educational actors” (Priestley et al., 2015). Furthermore, the results confirm the ideas of Sachs (2016),

who states that professionalism of teachers is related to their ability to make judgements and act creatively.

The study contributes to existing CBC scholarship by proposing that rural curriculum enactment should be understood through a capacity-within-constraints perspective. While investment in infrastructure, instructional resources, and teacher development remains essential, the findings demonstrate that sustainable curriculum reform also depends on recognizing and strengthening the adaptive capacities already present within rural schools. Rural schools therefore represent not merely sites requiring external intervention but active educational spaces where teachers, learners, and communities negotiate meaningful forms of competence development.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

The current research investigates how the rural school context influences the implementation of competence-based curriculum (CBC) at primary schools in Namutumba district of Uganda. The research shows that CBC implementation does not follow the linear process of following policy instructions; rather, it is an interactive process influenced by multiple factors.

The findings reveal a dual reality of rural CBC enactment. On one hand, rural schools operate within structural conditions that constrain the consistent application of competence-based approaches, including limited instructional resources, overcrowded classrooms, inadequate infrastructure, and insufficient professional support. On the other hand, rural schools possess important educational assets, including teachers' adaptive capacities, learners' experiential knowledge, and community-based resources that can support meaningful competence development.

The study's central contribution is the argument that rural schools should not be understood only as disadvantaged spaces where curriculum reforms encounter barriers. Rather, they are adaptive educational ecosystems where curriculum expectations are understood, negotiated, and reconstructed through interfaces between policy requirements and local realities. In this process, teacher agency, learner experiences, and community knowledge mediate the effects of structural limitations by creating alternative pathways for competence-based learning.

The findings therefore propose that effective CBC enactment requires moving beyond a narrow focus on resource provision toward a broader understanding of curriculum reform as a contextual and relational process. While addressing material inequalities remains essential, sustainable implementation also requires strengthening the capacities of teachers, recognizing learners' lived

experiences, and establishing meaningful partnerships between schools and communities.

5.2 Recommendations

1. Strengthening Context-responsive Teacher Professional Development

Teacher development programmes should move beyond short-term CBC orientation workshops toward continuous, practice-based professional learning. Professional support should focus on the specific realities faced by rural teachers, including managing learner-centred approaches in large classes, designing competence-based assessment strategies, integrating local resources into lessons, and supporting culturally and linguistically diverse learners.

2. Promoting Rural-responsive Resource Provision

Although teacher creativity enabled CBC practices under constrained conditions, improvisation should not become a substitute for adequate educational investment. Education authorities should provide resources that reflect rural school realities, including appropriate classroom infrastructure, CBC-aligned instructional materials, and accessible technologies. Resource allocation strategies should recognize variations among schools rather than applying uniform approaches.

3. Institutionalizing School–Community Knowledge Partnerships

The study highlights the potential of communities as contributors to curriculum enactment. Schools should develop structured partnerships with local experts, parents, cultural custodians, and community organizations to integrate local knowledge and practical experiences into teaching and learning. Such partnerships can transform communities from passive supporters of schooling into active contributors to competence development.

4. Recognizing Learners' Experiential Knowledge

CBC implementation should deliberately incorporate learners' backgrounds, experiences, and cultural resources as foundations for learning. Teachers should be supported to use contextualized approaches that connect curriculum content with learners' everyday realities while addressing barriers related to language, assessment practices, and unequal learning opportunities.

5. Contribution and Areas for Further Research

This study contributes to curriculum implementation scholarship by advancing a context-sensitive understanding of CBC enactment in rural African settings. It demonstrates that curriculum reforms are shaped not only by what schools

lack but also by how educational actors mobilize existing social, cultural, and environmental resources.

Future research should examine CBC enactment across diverse rural contexts in Uganda and other African settings to explore how variations in culture, language, leadership, and community structures influence curriculum experiences. Longitudinal studies would also provide valuable insights into how teacher practices and learner competencies evolve as competence-based reforms become more established.

References

- Avery, L. M., & Kassam, K. A. S. (2019). Pushing the boundaries of science education: Indigenous knowledge and rural learning contexts. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*, 56(3), 327–350.
- Balfour, R. J., & Mhango, N. (2019). Rurality and education: Understanding educational inequalities in rural contexts. *South African Journal of Education*, 39(2), 1–10.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Epstein, J. L. (2018). School, family, and community partnerships in social and emotional learning. In K. A. Schonert-Reichl & J. R. Zins (Eds.), *Handbook of social and emotional learning: Research and practice* (pp. 401–412). Guilford Press.
- Gay, G. (2018). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, and practice* (3rd ed.). Teachers College Press.
- Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. Prentice Hall.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. SAGE Publications.
- Mabonga, M. (2021). Teachers' preparedness and challenges in implementing competence-based curriculum in Uganda primary schools. *International Journal of Education and Research*, 9(4), 45–58.
- Ministry of Education and Sports. (2019). *The Uganda National Teacher Policy*. Ministry of Education and Sports.
- Ministry of Education and Sports. (2020). *Education sector strategic plan 2020/21–2024/25*. Ministry of Education and Sports.
- Nakawuki, P., Ssentanda, M., & others. (2025). Teachers' experiences and challenges in implementing competence-based curriculum reforms in Uganda. [Details require verification before submission].
- National Curriculum Development Centre. (2019). *National Curriculum Framework for Primary Education*. NCDC.
- Piaget, J. (1972). *The psychology of the child*. Basic Books.
- Priestley, M., Biesta, G., & Robinson, S. (2015). Teacher agency: What is it and why does it matter? In R. Kneyber & J. Evers (Eds.), *Flip the system: Changing education from the ground up* (pp. 134–148). Routledge.
- Sachs, J. (2016). Teacher professionalism: Why are we still talking about it? *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*, 22(4), 413–425. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2015.1082732>
- Snyder, J., Bolin, F., & Zumwalt, K. (1992). Curriculum implementation. In P. W. Jackson (Ed.), *Handbook of research on curriculum* (pp. 402–435). Macmillan.
- UNESCO. (2020). *Global education monitoring report 2020: Inclusion and education—All means all*. UNESCO.
- Voogt, J., & Roblin, N. P. (2012). A comparative analysis of international frameworks for 21st century competences: Implications for national curriculum policies. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 44(3), 299–321. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220272.2012.668938>
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Harvard University Press.
- World Bank. (2018). *World Development Report 2018: Learning to realize education's promise*. World Bank.
- Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case study research and applications: Design and methods* (6th ed.). SAGE Publications.