

# A Comprehensive Framework for Developing Teacher Education Curriculum in Kenya

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**Abstract:** This descriptive study explores the key areas that should be considered when developing teacher education curriculum in Kenya. Implementing the curriculum involves putting the officially prescribed curricula, syllabuses, and subjects into practice by systematically organizing what will be taught, who will be taught, and how it will be taught. With each component being able to interact and affect the other components, the curriculum development process entails assisting the learner in gaining experience and/or knowledge. As such, the learner takes centre stage in implementing the curriculum. Pursuant to this developing an effective and comprehensive teacher education in Kenya demands careful consideration of several key aspects. A comprehensive and well-designed teacher education curriculum must equip the teachers with the necessary skills, knowledge, and attitudes to meet the diverse needs of their learners and adapt to the evolving educational contexts.

**Keywords:** Teacher education, Teacher education curriculum, professional development, inclusivity and diversity.

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## 1. KEY ASPECTS OF TEACHER EDUCATION CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

### Teacher Education Aspects

In developing the teacher education curriculum, the curriculum developers must consider the aspects of teacher education, including whom (student-teacher), who (teacher-educator), what (content), and how (teaching strategies) (Kapur, 2018). Since the quality of the pre-service teachers and their use of pedagogical inputs depend on the professional competence of the teacher educator(s), the teacher education curriculum programs must ensure the teacher educators are adequately prepared. Aside, the curriculum should incorporate various teaching strategies and methodologies to engage student-teachers actively, with the content focused on both conceptual and theoretical frameworks essential for understanding the complexities of the teaching profession. The teacher education curriculum should carefully consider student-teachers' needs as prospective educators, the importance of quality teacher educators, the content covering theoretical and conceptual frameworks, and the utilization of effective teaching strategies (Katitia, 2015). By prioritizing these aspects, the curriculum can equip student-teachers with the necessary knowledge, skills, attitudes, and pedagogical approaches, ensuring they are prepared to face the challenges of the teaching profession and make a positive impact on their students' learning experiences.

### Positive Learning Environment

The teacher education curriculum should emphasize teacher training ensures that educators are equipped with the necessary skills and strategies to meet the individual learning requirements of their students. It should be able to help teachers create and safe learning environment that caters to the diverse needs of students. As such, the teacher education curriculum should cover classroom management techniques and give future teachers tips on controlling students' behaviour and creating an effective learning environment. It should cover differentiated instruction, proactive behaviour management, and conflict resolution. Emphasizing creating an encouraging and stimulating learning environment in the teacher education curriculum is crucial for fostering inclusive education, promoting student engagement and motivation, and enhancing overall learning outcomes (Kaplan & Bista, 2022). Teachers who are well-prepared to meet the diverse needs of their students contribute to a more supportive, positive, and effective learning environment for all learners.

### **Entry Behavior and Requirements**

The teacher education curriculum should strongly consider the entry behaviour and requirements of the pre-service teachers. Considering pre-service teachers' entry behaviour and requirements is crucial in the teacher education curriculum since acknowledging their prior knowledge, skills, and experiences, the curriculum can be tailored to bridge gaps, build upon strengths, and ensure a seamless transition to the teaching profession (Lewin, 2004). Addressing individual needs and readiness levels enables more effective and personalized teacher training, enhancing their preparedness and confidence to meet the diverse challenges of the education field.

### **Content Scope for Different Education Levels**

The teacher education curriculum should consider the scope of the curriculum content for each teacher education level, i.e., curriculum content for pre-primary education, primary teacher education, and graduate teacher education. Designing a teacher education curriculum that caters to specific content for each education level is vital as it ensures that pre-primary education focuses on foundational child development principles, primary teacher education emphasizes pedagogical skills, and graduate teacher education delves into advanced subject knowledge and research methodologies (Bagchi & Bairagya, 2021). Tailoring the content to match the unique demands of each level equips teachers with relevant expertise at every stage, allowing them to effectively support students' growth and learning needs in different educational settings.

### **Contextual Relevance**

The teacher education curriculum education in Kenya must consider the contextual relevance, i.e., relevant to the needs and realities of the Kenyan education system, taking into account the country's cultural, social, and economic diversity. That means the curriculum should align with national educational goals and policies and reflect the unique challenges teachers face in Kenya. This is vital because incorporating contextual relevance into the teacher education curriculum is crucial to producing competent and culturally sensitive teachers who can effectively meet the needs of Kenya's diverse learners and contribute positively to the development of the nation's education system (KICD, 2017).

### **Inclusivity and Diversity**

When developing teacher education, the developers should consider inclusivity and diversity. With the diverse nature of Kenyan society, the teacher education curriculum must address issues of inclusivity and diversity. Teachers should be prepared to work with learners from different cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic backgrounds and be sensitive to their unique needs. The sub-key areas that should be considered include inclusivity and diversity including culturally responsive teachers, inclusive classroom strategies, language inclusivity, culturally relevant content, gender awareness, professional development on inclusivity, community engagement, equitable access to education, discrimination and bullying, among others. Ideally, by addressing diversity and inclusivity issues when developing teacher education curriculum, the teachers will be better prepared to promote and uphold a positive and inclusive learning environment, cater to the unique needs of all students, and contribute to a more equitable and tolerant society in Kenya (Mugambi, 2017).

### **Inclusive Education Practices**

The curriculum should address inclusive education practices and provide strategies for differentiated instruction, accommodating students' diverse learning styles, abilities, and backgrounds, including those with disabilities and special educational requirements. The BECF calls for integrating students with special needs into the regular student body. It calls for teachers to develop an Individualized Educational Program (IEP) for each disabled student (Heto et al., 2020). One of the most efficient ways to educate people with disabilities has been to modify the curriculum and lesson plan to each student's needs. Beyond the classroom, Basic Education Curriculum Framework (BECF) special education requirements state that national examination bodies must accommodate candidates with disabilities.

### **National Development Plans**

The national development plans. The national curriculum framework and educational policies of Kenya should be closely reflected in the teacher education curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2017). Also, the national development goals for Kenya and the Sustainable Development Goals for 2030 should be reflected in the teacher education curriculum to ensure that teachers are adequately prepared to meet the educational needs of Kenyan students stipulated in the national goals and the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. Reflecting the national development plans, curriculum framework, educational policies of Kenya, and the Sustainable Development Goals for 2030 in the teacher education curriculum is vital in promoting a quality and coherent education system that addresses the country's needs, contributing to its sustainable development.

### **Ethics and Professionalism**

The curriculum should put into consideration ethics and professionalism. In achieving this, the BECF competencies interpret the Kenyan constitution and Kenya's Vision 2030 strategic plan distinctively and comprehensively to ensure that students should develop across all academic subject areas in order to become engaged, empowered, and ethical citizens and thrive in the 21st century (KICD, 2017). Also, the BECF adheres to all other recommendations, such as those in the Odhiambo Committee Report, and the rules in Kenya's 2015 Seasonal Papers (Heto et al., 2020). This implies that the teacher curriculum should emphasize ethical considerations and professional standards for teachers. It should address teacher ethics, professionalism, and the teacher's role as a positive role model for their students. The curriculum should instil a strong sense of responsibility, integrity, and respect in future teachers, cover ethical conundrums that instructors might face, and offer suggestions for handling them to aspiring instructors.

### **Pedagogies and Innovative Teaching Methodologies**

The curriculum should consider pedagogies and innovative teaching methodologies. It should equip teachers with the skills to create engaging and interactive learning environments and promote critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity in students (Guerriero, 2019). The curriculum should include instructional strategies and assessments that encourage the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills if these skills are emphasized in the national education goals. In addition, the curriculum should consider any recent educational reforms or initiatives in Kenya, such as changes in teaching methodologies or assessment approaches, to produce well-trained and quality teachers. The curriculum should comprehensively understand various teaching methods and strategies to promote pedagogical excellence. Ongesa (2020) argues that critical thinking is lacking in the Kenyan education system; thus, the teacher education curriculum in Kenya should provide aspiring teachers with the skills and strategies to create interactive and inclusive learning environments. It should equip them with various instructional techniques, teaching methodologies, and assessment strategies that foster student engagement and achievement. To those in service, the teacher education curriculum should consider continuous professional development by encouraging teachers to engage in lifelong learning, attend workshops and seminars, and pursue advanced degrees to improve their teaching practices continually. For instance, teacher education should factor in the changes advocated by new models as an approach to ensure the teacher-trainees have the know-how of the CBC pedagogical approaches and assessment techniques.

### **Educational Technology Integration**

Educational technology is also a key consideration in modern education, and the teacher education curriculum should incorporate training on effectively integrating technology into teaching and learning processes. The curriculum should prioritize helping teacher candidates develop their digital literacy skills to evaluate digital information confidently while encouraging responsible digital citizenship (Gichunge, 2020). The curriculum should also introduce aspiring teachers to a range of technological resources and programs that can improve instruction and involve students, including interactive whiteboards, educational apps, virtual reality, augmented reality, and online collaboration platforms. Teacher trainees should learn how to integrate these tools into their lesson plans to create dynamic and interactive learning experiences.

### **Continuous Professional Development**

While developing a teacher education curriculum in Kenya, the curriculum developer should put into consideration continuous professional development to ensure teachers stay current with the most recent findings in educational research, trends, and best practices (Padillo et al., 2021). The curriculum should be geared towards promoting a culture of lifelong learning that encourages teachers to pursue ongoing professional development throughout their careers. This involves encouraging teachers to engage in lifelong learning, attend workshops and seminars, and pursue advanced degrees to improve their teaching practices continually. Adding mentoring and coaching programs may also help new and inexperienced teachers by giving them helpful advice and support from more seasoned teachers, enhancing their professional development (Padillo et al., 2021).

### **Practical Experiences and Hands-On Learning**

When developing a teacher education curriculum, the curriculum developers should put into consideration a well-balanced teacher education curriculum that provides practical experiences, including teaching practicums, school placements, and opportunities for hands-on learning (Wrenn & Wrenn, 2009). Ideally, these experiences enable prospective teachers to apply theoretical knowledge in real classroom settings, fostering better classroom management and instructional skills.

Additionally, teachers should be encouraged to engage in reflective practices that critically evaluate their classroom experiences, identify areas requiring improvement, develop professional growth plans, and translate theory into practice.

### Partnership and Collaboration

When developing the teacher education curriculum, the curriculum developers should put into consideration partnership and collaboration between education stakeholders and training institutions. This is vital so as to create a seamless transition from pre-service training to in-service teaching (Samson, 2019). Teacher collaboration and community involvement should be emphasized in an effective teacher education program. Collaboration encourages teachers to work together, share knowledge, and gain from one another. The curriculum should give teachers the knowledge and skills to forge solid partnerships with families and community members to foster a warm and inclusive learning environment. The importance of cooperating with organizations, businesses, and governmental entities outside. Engaging with these external stakeholders allows teachers to understand the broader educational landscape, stay updated on educational policies and initiatives, and leverage additional resources to support their teaching practices.

### Research and Evidence-Based Practices

Teacher education curriculum developers should consider and encourage research and evidence-based practices in teaching and learning. The curriculum should be able to encourage teachers to participate in action research projects, conduct educational research, and use best practices supported by the latest scientific findings. This is vital to help equip teachers with the skills to critically evaluate educational research and apply relevant findings to improve their instructional approaches. Aside from networking and collaborative learning should also be emphasized in the development of teacher education since these activities give educators a place to interact with one another, have in-depth conversations, and share insights which can, in turn, improve their service delivery. Aspiring teachers should have the chance to participate in group projects, peer observation, and professional learning communities as part of the curriculum.

A comprehensive teacher education curriculum should include practical experiences, such as teaching practicums or internships, where aspiring teachers can apply their knowledge in natural classroom settings. These practical components are vital to allow the pre-service teachers to gain valuable hands-on experience, observe experienced educators, instructional delivery, student assessment, and practice their teaching skills under guidance. Undeniably, CBC is focused on moving from knowledge and skill acquisition to knowledge creation and application (Akala, 2021). Consequently, they can create efficient classroom management techniques like routines, behaviour management, and fostering a welcoming and inclusive learning environment.

## 2. CONCLUSION

Developing a teacher education curriculum in Kenya requires careful thought and consideration of various aspects that align with the needs of the education system and the teachers' roles. A well-designed curriculum can lay the foundation for a strong and competent teaching workforce that can positively impact the learning outcomes of Kenyan students. Collaboration and community involvement promote alliances, knowledge exchange, and stakeholder involvement, improving educational quality. Practical experience and classroom management provide aspiring teachers with hands-on training and skills to create effective learning environments. Ethical and professional standards promote integrity, professionalism, and decision-making among teachers. Implementing these critical areas in developing the Teacher Education Curriculum in Kenya will produce competent and ethically responsible teachers who contribute to improving education and positively impact students' lives.

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