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THEME: RE-ENGINEERING EDUCATION FOR
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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PROGRAM AND BOOK OF ABSTRACTS





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'Re-Engineering Education for Sustainable Development'**

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CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

THEME: 'Re-Engineering Education for Sustainable Development

Sub-themes:

- Enhancing quality in education
- Educational reforms and governance
- Research, innovation and knowledge transfer in education
- Application of ICT in education
- Resource mobilization and utilization in education

Competency-Based Education in Kenya: Contending With the Imperatives for Successful Implementation

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Abstract

It is now official; in response to the challenge of providing quality education for sustainable development, Kenya is switching from objectives-based curriculum to competency-based curriculum (CBC). The Cabinet Secretary for education has been saying this loud and clear. Surprisingly, however, the Cabinet Secretary's pronouncements have generated little, if any, discussion among education scholars or lay people. My objective in this paper is to open up discussion on this curriculum reform that is now underway. Proponents of competency-based education (CBE) argue that by focusing on competencies or what learners can do with the education they have received, competency based education is better suited to ensuring that education responds to the needs of society (and therefore of the Kenyan society as articulated in Kenya Vision 2030). Developing a competency-based curriculum therefore entails clearly identifying the competencies that learners will be required to attain at different points of their education. In this paper takes a historical perspective to CBE and demonstrate that (i) CBE has been around for a long time in countries such as the US and Canada and that its precursors are what pertains in Kenya today, (ii) while seemingly entailing not so radical curriculum change, CBE has far-reaching policy, practice and cost implications and therefore constitutes an educational reform in the league of educational reforms such as the 8:4:4 reforms of the 1980s. More importantly the paper discusses the policy and practice implications as well as the principles of successful implementation of curriculum innovations that we will need to pay attention to as we embark on CBE in Kenya.

Key words: Competency-based education; curriculum reform; education quality; curriculum innovation; curriculum implementation