

Curriculum Innovation in Kenya: a Case of the Introduction and implementation of Secondary School Integrated English in Nairobi county

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Abstract

This study analyzed the whole program of integrated English curriculum since its inception to its current state and practice in secondary schools. The specific objectives of the study were to: Find out the justification for initiation and introduction of secondary integrated English curriculum; Analyze the implementation process of secondary integrated English curriculum.; Find out the challenges facing effective implementation of the integrated English curriculum; and to explore how implementation of secondary integrated English curriculum can be improved. The study mainly used a qualitative approach in the form of a case study design and it employed questionnaire, interview and observation instruments to collect data from 101 teachers of integrated English and 20 head teachers in Nairobi North District area. Also, three heads of English – one from each of three Government agencies (KIE, MoE and KNEC) were interviewed. The researcher organized raw data collected from questionnaires, interview and observation schedules into significant patterns so as to easily interpret and understand the essence of the data. It was realized from the study that integrated English curriculum was introduced to enable teachers use integration as a teaching approach across the two disciplines and between and/or among their constituent parts. Despite this good intention, it was found that 57.4 % of the teachers of integrated English did not undergo any type of in-service training before they started the actual teaching of integrated English curriculum. Therefore, they started teaching the curriculum without proper understanding as regards the implementation of integrated English curriculum. Consequently, 55.5 % of teachers of integrated English and 80 % of their head teachers faced difficulties in the process of implementing integrated English curriculum. Due to these difficulties that they faced, most of the concerned teachers (86.1 %) taught English language and Literature as separate subjects. They did not exploit the complementary relationship between the two subjects to teach the integrated English curriculum. Even in instances where integration was attempted, there was no meaningful and significant integration between the teaching of English language and Literature. The study concluded that there has been no effective implementation of integrated English innovation in Nairobi North District as was/is intended by the curriculum developers. To ensure effective implementation of integrated English curriculum in secondary schools, the study recommends that proper and continuing professional support in the form of in-service training and other activities on the implementation of integrated English curriculum should be conducted by experts. This will assist teachers and their head teachers to acquire and develop necessary skills on how to integrate English language and Literature. Equally, the study recommends that pre-service training in colleges and universities should be reformed and an integrated approach adopted. This way,

teachers to-be will be familiarized with the integrated approach and their competence in handling integration developed. The teachers-to-be will eventually develop great interest in the approach and this will impact positively on their teaching and evaluation once they get to the field. It is also recommended by this study that adequate teaching and learning resources should be provided to teachers such that they can teach and evaluate integrated English as expected.

Keywords: curriculum, innovation, implementation, Kenya, integrated English, Secondary school

Fulltext: <https://ir-library.ku.ac.ke/handle/123456789/3646>