



# **Assessment of Curriculum-Based Challenges of Teaching History and Government in Secondary Schools in Ugenya Sub-County, Siaya County, Kenya**

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## **ABSTRACT**

It is the desire of all stakeholders in education that teachers and students achieve good results. However, in Ugenya Sub-County, the mean score for History and Government had declined in between the years 2014 and 2018. This trend implied that there were challenges with curriculum implementation which needed to be established with an intention of reversing the downward trend of the mean score in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE examinations). The purpose of this study was to assess curriculum-based challenges of implementing History and Government curriculum in Ugenya Sub-County. The objective of the study was to assess curriculum-based challenges of implementing History and Government curriculum. The study is significant because it identifies curriculum challenges of implementing History and Government curriculum in Ugenya Sub-County. This will help teachers and education officers to take necessary measures to revitalize the subject. This study was based on the context, Input, Process, and Product Model (CIPP) proposed by Stufflebeam and Coryn (2014). It identifies unmet needs that bar achievement of human needs. The theoretical framework was based on curriculum-based challenges which were the independent variables, while implementing of History and Government curriculum was the dependent variable. Data from teachers and students was collected through questionnaires. It was analyzed through descriptive statistics using frequency counts and means. The most serious challenges included inadequate field trips, large, content and inadequate assessment. The researcher recommends additional time needs to be created and testing be made regular teachers.

**Keywords:** Curriculum.

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## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 Background to the study**

Internationally, History and Government plays key role in the development of the society since it teaches knowledge of the past which helps to understand the present and foresee the future. The

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development of a standard-based curriculum in History can be related to the school reforms where performances are crucial. Performance emerges in connection with the students' discourse on grades and History which has an emphasis on reading, writing and doing homework to get better grades (Samuelsson, 2018). This statement sums up the predominant trend in international thinking about pedagogy which posits that teachers and students must improve their performance to be competitive in an increasingly globalized world. The school is a social institution that and must change to address the needs that arise in the society from time to time. This statement has an impact on the various needs of the subjects that are taught at school, which must also be taught in new and better ways in order to meet the needs of the learners (Fullan, 2014). Furthermore, arming students with enough historical background to be able to develop their historical understanding is crucial. This can only be achieved when History and Government is considered an essential subject in the school (Darling-Hammond, 2015). An increase in student's historical skills and background knowledge can only happen when a system recognizes the potential of History to improve students' learning in general. Providing teaching conditions and school environment that support and sustain student learning is a key aspect of education.

The Constituency Development Fund (C.D.F.) has led to the establishment of many new schools by various communities (Mwiria, 2010). This expansion has come with a quality cost. In addition to being understaffed, (most have one or two TSC teachers) the new schools lack basic infrastructure. According to Dr. Mwiria, the former Assistant Minister for Higher Education, the few teaching and learning resources in such schools adversely affect performance. This is coupled with other factors such as inadequate assessment, poor motivation and attitude. His observation narrowed challenges to matters of staffing, infrastructure and entry behaviour which may not be the only challenges. The study therefore was to assess the curriculum-based challenges of teaching History and Government in Ugenya Sub-County in Kenya

The mean score for students in History and Government in Ugenya Sub-County dropped between the years 2013 and 2017 from 6.23 to 4.51. The margin of decline between 2013 and 2017 was – 1.72. This indicated that implementation of History and Government curriculum faced challenges. This called for an assessment of implementation of History and Government curriculum through empirical study so that a solution could be found to help schools design a recovery plan for revitalizing the subject. The study was meant to assess curriculum-based challenges of implementing History and Government in Ugenya Sub-County. It is useful because it established challenges of implementation of History and Government curriculum in Ugenya Sub-County. This is important in guiding teachers to vary their teaching methodologies in order to meet the needs of the learners. It also encourages them to understand their students and to design the curriculum to meet their needs.

## 1.2 Theoretical framework

This study was based on the context, Input, Process, and Product Model (CIPP) proposed by Stufflebeam and Coryn (2014). This model helps to identify learning needs. It identifies unmet needs that bar achievement of human needs. In this study, these were curriculum-based challenges of teaching History and Government curriculum. These constitute independent variables. Teachers and students have objectives to meet which in this case is good performance that emanated from implementing History and Government curriculum. This was the dependent variables. The researcher took notice of the fact that unforeseen factors could come into play and influence performance of students in History and Government. These constituted intervening variables such as funding and nature of curriculum. These were controlled by picking public schools that got equal capitation from the government and were taught the 8-4-4 curriculum. The model can also help to prescribe a responsive model that can best address the identified needs. The researcher narrowed down to curriculum-based challenges. De Oliveira (2008) suggests that in order to have a clear understanding of curriculum challenges, one should analyse challenges in terms of teacher-based, student-based, resource-based and curriculum-based.

## 2. Literature review

In this chapter review of related literature is done under themes connected to the study objectives. This included content, teaching methods and assessment.

## 2.1 Content

According to Levin (2008), the term curriculum refers to the lessons and academic content taught in a school or a specific course or programme. It includes all the knowledge, skills, norms, values, cultural elements and beliefs to help develop a student fully with respect to the physical, spiritual, mental and emotional aspects. Overloaded curriculum has its challenges: lesson content is sometime repeated and unrelated, the syllabus contains too many items, teaching and learning is dependent on textbooks and this restricts the use of other teaching techniques. There are side effects. First, it has an effect on time management where teachers are rushing for content coverage before examination period. Time consumed in a week is not enough and teachers need to make extra classes in the weekends or after school just to complete the syllabus. This affects curriculum implementation.

Lage, Platt and Treglia (2012) state that students gain more knowledge, retain more information and perform far better when teaching styles match learning styles. However, because of time constraints, teachers are not able to apply interesting and effective teaching styles in the classroom. For this reason, teachers tend to teach more on theory and use traditional teaching styles where there is no or less contextual and practical learning involved among the students. Korea's National Council for Curriculum Assessment (2008) gathered information on curriculum in schools in two phases. In both reviews, teachers and principals identified time as one of the greatest challenges in implementing the curriculum. Both teachers and principals noted the challenge of insufficient time and the growing range of children's learning needs. Wide content should be supported with adequate time. Limited time leads to lack of timely completion of syllabus and puts pressure on both teachers and students. The focus for every school teacher must be how to meet the immediate needs of the learners taking into account the syllabus prescriptions. This poses a challenge to many teachers in terms of preparation and generally affects curriculum implementation.

## 2.2 Teaching Methods

Teachers are themselves perceived as competent to the extent that their schools perform with excellence in an average narrowing area (Darling-Hammond, 2010). Whenever teachers believe that their role is to ensure high test scores rather than to help students learn, they pressure themselves and in the process use controlling autocratic teaching techniques. Here control means emphasizing extrinsic reward, allowing students little choice for how they go about learning and threatening to withdraw emotional support as a means of punishment. Such regimen forces teachers to deemphasize topics not covered on standard tests. The researcher sought to find out whether teachers used various teaching methods in implementing History and Government curriculum in Uganda Sub-County.

Field trips refer to out of class learning in which learners come into contact with people, places, objects, animals and other things out of class environment (Noel, 2018). Field trips permit students to encounter the past at historic sites and museums. Field trips can help students to construct knowledge actively through interacting with historic places, experts and artifacts. It is worth noting that much as field trips have the ability to create a lasting impact on students' leaning processes, not all teachers organise them due to various factors. Teachers are rarely allowed to schedule field trips without justifying in writing how they will help in meeting the stated standards. The amount of subject matter they need to teach each year to meet the standards of the schools' mandated curriculum is so great that there is no time to schedule such visits. The schools' budgets are also so tight that it is nearly impossible to pay for buses to go for trips or get parents to pay for outreach programmes (Nespor, 2008). This can be a challenge to curriculum implementation especially if students cannot access learning items and relate them with what is taught in class.

Resource persons are people who lend real life experiences to help enhance an interactive lesson or class. Research indicates that supported teachers are in the best position to deliver effective education (United Kingdom, Department of Education and skills, 2017). There are agencies and resource persons in the community that have the expertise and knowledge to augment school education programmes. Interactions between students and adults from the community can have a positive effect on student learning and student attitudes. Resource persons may be available in the community but

what matters is their integration in the teaching-learning process. In this study the researchers first wanted to find out whether teachers of History and Government in Ugenya Sub-County were aware of their presence in the school neighbourhood. They also intended to find out whether they were called on some occasions to schools to help reinforce what teachers taught in classrooms. In considering use of an external person, the teachers should have a clear understanding of the curriculum need and how a resource person will satisfy the need. This means being clear about the desired learning outcomes before deciding who is best able to help achieve them. As well, resource persons need to be clear on their role in supporting your desired curriculum outcomes-this will require discussion and negotiation to ensure good curricular outfit. The researchers felt it necessary to establish availability and contributions of resource persons in enhancing the understanding of students in selected topics in History and Government.

Team teaching is another method of teaching. It means a group of two or more teachers working together to plan, conduct and evaluate the learning activities for the same group of learners (Goetz, 2012). Team teaching has two models. First is where one teacher, usually the lead educator, leads the instructional activity. The second model is where two teachers divide the content to be taught to the class between them. Each teacher delivers a portion of the lesson to a section of the class group and then students rotate between two teachers. The teacher in the support role observes, checks students' understanding, supports the work of individual students or manages behaviour. The primary challenge to team teaching appears to be time: the time required prior to implementation of team teaching partnership for professional development, the many meetings needed during the running of the programme as well as numerous impromptu chats that are bound to arise from such an endeavor. Much as teachers may be willing to conduct team teaching, time may not allow them. For this reason the researchers were interested in finding out whether teachers were able to plan for team teaching given the fact other teachers had other engagements. Prior to this study, the benefits of team teaching in History and Government in Ugenya Sub-County had not been explored. It was therefore intended to highlight benefits of team teaching.

Differentiation as a method of teaching is adapting instruction and assessment in response to differing student interests, learning preferences and readiness in order to promote growth in learning. They must use methods that tap into learning styles of their pupils and be flexible and creative (Tomlinson, 2018). Differentiation is not necessarily individualized instruction.

Differentiation requires much more lesson planning time for teachers who may already be strapped for time. It may require more resources for a school to implement (Logsdon, 2018). Lessons are not about treating everyone alike, but working to ensure that each student has the support he or she needs to produce an end-product that shows mastery of the concepts presented. Critics argue that there isn't enough research to support the benefits of differentiated instruction outweighing the added prep time. In this case, the study was meant to find out whether teachers of History and Government really understood their individual students' abilities and whether they planned their lessons taking care of such situation. Many teachers fail to practice differentiation because they feel it disrupts class and is impossible to implement. This means that they rarely take care of individual differences among learners and this could pose a challenge to curriculum implementation. Classes are made up of students with differing abilities, interest, skills and knowledge. For this reason, teachers face the challenge of meeting the variety of needs they are confronted with (Penny, 2009). Teachers always like to see pupils in terms of potentialities and challenge rather than constraints. From Penny's arguments it is worth noting that one is always working with and for the pupils and unless you clearly understand his or her limitations, you are bound to be disappointed. In light of Penny's assertions, the researcher sought to establish whether teachers took care of individual needs of their students and the challenges they face in the process of doing so.

### 2.3 Assessment

The challenge of assessment relates to the planning and programming phase, but it takes a step further. When it comes to time for report writing, assessment helps teachers to give more accurate overview of student performance and helps to determine grades with greater level of objectiveness (Penny, 2009). The challenge is in selecting assessment tools which allow students to best present

what they know and teachers to best present this data. While teachers are continuously assessing students-marking books, observing students at work, monitoring quizzes-there are key times when students' progress needs to be reported on and teachers are met by the challenge of providing tasks that will accurately determine student learning. Assessment remains the weak link in the chain. In a nutshell, we tend to assess far too much, yet not do it very well. We often end up measuring the things that are easy to measure, and sometimes do not actually measure directly enough the real achievement of intended learning outcomes. Too many classrooms ignore questioning as a learning model. They spend most of the class time providing information and then ask questions later in the form of a quiz, test or discussion. Too many students never learn this way. Lessons, units and topics are more motivating when they begin with a question whose answer students want to know. Not only do great questions generate interests, they also answer the question that so many students wonder about. There is a catch, though in using questions to begin your lesson. The question must be connected with the content, so that the following learning activities actually answer the question. The question must fit your students' ability and experience. In addition the question needs to provoke both thought and curiosity.

Nearly every student has suffered the experience of spending hours preparing for a major assessment, only to discover that the material that he or she has studied was different from what the teacher chose to emphasize on assessment (Guskey, 2009). This experience is common because many teachers still believe that they must keep their assessment secret. As a result, students come to regard assessments as guessing games. Classroom assessments that serve as meaningful sources of information don't surprise students. They reflect the concepts and skills that the teacher emphasized in class, along with the teacher's clear criteria for judging students' performance. These concepts, skills and criteria align with the teacher's instructional activities. Assessments must be followed by high-quality, corrective instruction designed to remedy learning errors the assessment identified. The researchers wanted to establish whether teachers helped learners revise tests that they administered. Assessment can be vital in our efforts to improve education. But as long as we use them only as a means to rank schools and students, we will miss the most powerful benefits. We must focus instead on helping teachers change the way they use assessment results, improve the quality of their classroom assessment and align their assessments with valued learning goals. It was hoped that this study would establish the assessment methods teachers of History and Government used with a view to shaping them to meet expectations of the students and to make them appreciate its importance.

### 3. Methodology and data

In this chapter, the researcher explains the methodology employed in the study.

This study was carried out through descriptive survey design. This research design involved the administration of questionnaires. It was easier to use questionnaire to reach out to many respondents. This design was intended to enable the researcher describe the performance of learners in History and Government and to provide solutions to the same. Descriptive statistics give a clear picture of opinions, attitudes and perceptions of groups of interest to the researcher.

The study population was 25 teachers and 1200 form four students of History and Government. The form four students were preferred because they had studied the subject for a longer duration and were deemed capable of identifying its attendant challenges. History and Government teachers were suitable because they teach the subject and could identify the challenges they encounter while teaching. The study sample was 22 teachers of History and Government in form four classes and 291 form four History and Government students. This was arrived at based on Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size estimation table. Simple random sampling was used to select the students. This was meant to enable the researcher get a good representation of the whole study population. Saturated sampling was used to select teachers. This is because the teachers were few.

Table 3.1

*Population and study sample*

Respondents	Population (N)	Sample (n)	%
Students	1200	291	24.25
Teachers	25	22	88

In each category of teachers and students samples, at least 10% of the respondents were used during piloting and therefore not included in the final study.

This study utilized questionnaire in collecting data. The use of the questionnaire was preferred because it is a faster method of data collection. It gave the researcher time to explain to the respondents why the information was being collected. It also provided a chance to explain the meaning of the questions to the respondents.

Before issuing out the questionnaires and engaging in data collection, the instruments were piloted. Test-retest of questionnaire was estimated by performing the same survey with three teachers and 30 student respondents at different times. This translated to 12% of teachers and 10.31% of students respectively giving a reliability coefficient 0.82 for student questionnaire and 0.84 for teachers. Respondents used during piloting were not used in the final study.

For the purposes of re-affirming the validity of the instruments, they were presented to experts in the Department of Educational Communication, Technology and Curriculum studies of Maseno University to study them and advise the researchers appropriately.

Data collected from teachers and students were analysed by use of descriptive statistics to yield means and frequency counts. Quantitative data was then presented using tables. A Likert scale was developed whereby responses were given scores. For instance 5 for strongly agree, 4 agree, 3 not sure, 2 disagree and 1 strongly disagree. The number of respondents ticking a particular score was then multiplied by the score for example if 33 chose 5 then the 33 was multiplied by that 5. This was repeated for all the responses. The results were then added and eventually divided by the sample size. The score was then rated on interpretation scale. This gauged the attitudes and opinions of respondents.

A scheme of interpretation was developed based on the level of seriousness of challenge and scores rated as indicated below:

- 4.1-5.0 Least challenge
- 3.1-4.0 Less challenge
- 2.1-3.0 Big challenge
- 1.1-2.0 Biggest challenge

#### 4. Results and discussion

The researcher sought to establish curriculum-based challenges from the teachers and students.

##### 4.1 Content

Table 4.1

*Teacher responses to the questions on content*

Question	SA	A	NS	DA	SD	MEAN
History and Government be completed within the time allocated	1	3	1	6	11	1.95
History and Government requires more lessons	12	5	1	2	2	3.00
Means response						2.48

Teachers were also asked whether History and Government content was not too large could be covered within the period provided. In this case 1 strongly agreed, 3 agreed, 1 was not sure, 6 disagreed while 11 strongly disagreed. This led to a mean response of 1.95. This means that they disagreed. They saw content as one of the biggest challenges to curriculum implementation. Teachers were also asked whether the subject required additional lesson. In response, 12 strongly agreed, 5 agreed, 1 was not sure, 2 disagreed while 2 strongly disagreed. The mean response here was 4.05. The teachers agreed in their response that they needed additional time to complete History and Government syllabus. Time that was allocated for the subject had been inadequate. The mean response confirms teachers' feeling that History and Government content was and as such a big challenge to teaching and learning. These findings agree with Korea's National Council for Curriculum Assessment (NCCA, 2008) which found out that content of History is wide and requires many lessons to be completed.

Table 4.2

*Student responses to the questions on content*

Question	SA	A	NS	DA	SD	MEAN
History and Government content be completed within the time provided	26	9	19	85	122	1.97
History and Government require more lessons	66	107	26	26	36	2.72
Mean response						2.35

The researcher also asked students whether History and Government content could be completed within the time allocated. In response 6 strongly agreed, 9 agreed, 19 were not sure, 85 disagreed while 122 strongly disagreed. The mean response was 1.97. This means that they disagreed. Students felt that the content of the subject was too wide to be covered within the stipulated time. This indicated that it was of the biggest challenge to curriculum implementation in History and Government. In connection with the question of large content, students were asked whether the subject needed additional lessons. In this case, 66 strongly agreed, 107 agreed, 26 were not sure, 26 disagreed while 36 strongly disagreed. This led to a mean response of 2.72. The findings show that students did not want the subject allocated additional time. It contrasted with the responses of the teachers who wanted more time for the subject. The responses could be attributed to students' attitude towards the subject. The mean response here was 2.35 which indicated that this was a big challenge to curriculum implementation.

## 4.2 Teaching methods

Teachers were asked questions about teaching methods. The results are presented on Table

4.3.

Table 4.3

*Teachers' responses to the questions on teaching methods*

Question	SA	A	NS	DA	SD	MEAN
I prepare professional records in time	9	8	0	3	2	3.86
I use my professional records to prepare my lessons	13	6	0	2	1	4.27
My schemes of work enable me to deliver your lessons easily and take care of differing needs	16	4	2	0	0	4.46
History and Government enable me to teach through various methods	9	13	0	0	0	4.41
I organise field trips for History and Government students	2	1	3	6	10	2.05
I call resource persons to give talks to students on various topics in History and Government	2	4	0	11	5	2.41
I employ team teaching in History and Government?	4	7	0	8	3	2.81
I take care of your students' differing abilities?	8	12	0	2	0	4.18
Mean response						3.56

The researcher wanted to know whether teachers prepared professional documents before teaching. In this case, 9 strongly agreed, 8 agreed, 3 disagreed while 2 strongly disagreed. The mean response here was 3.86. From the findings, teachers agreed that they prepared professional documents. It must be noted at this juncture that preparation of these documents alone does not translate into their use (TALIS, 2008). It was therefore imperative that the researcher probes further. The researcher further asked the teacher respondents whether they used their professional records in their lessons. To this end, 13 of them strongly agreed, 6 agreed, 2 disagreed and 1 strongly agreed. This generated a mean of 4.27 showing that they agreed and it was of the least challenge to curriculum implementation in History and Government. They were also required to state whether their professional records enabled them to deliver lessons easily and take care of differing needs in which case 16 strongly agreed, 4 agreed while 2 were not sure. This resulted into a mean response of 4.64 indicating that teachers did have a challenge using their professional documents for lesson preparation and actual teaching. This mean response suggests that teachers delivered their lessons easily whenever they used their professional documents. Teachers were required by the researcher to show whether History and Government allows them to teach using various methods. In response, 9 strongly agreed

and 13 agreed. Their mean response was 4.41. In this case, there was strong agreement among teachers that they could use various teaching methods to teach History and Government. The overall mean response to the questions about teaching methods was 4.25. This means that teaching methods was of the least challenge.

The researcher sought to know from teachers whether they guided students appropriately in order to understand all the topics. In this case, 8 strongly agreed, 12 agreed while 2 disagreed. The mean response here was 4.18 indicating that the question was of the least challenge. This means that teachers agreed that they guided students appropriately and therefore this did not pose a challenge to them. From this, teachers indicated that they took care of the learners' individual differences. This therefore meant that differentiation was less of a challenge. Tomlinson (2018) says that lessons are not about treating everyone alike but working to ensure that a student has the support he or she needs. However, it should be noted here that differentiation is not always easy to achieve due to class dynamics like average class population. For this reason some teachers could face the challenge of meeting a variety of needs they are confronted with.

Teachers were required to state whether they organized field trips for History and Government students. In response, 2 of them strongly agreed, 1 agreed, 3 were not sure 6 disagreed while 10 strongly disagreed. The mean generated was 2.05 showing that they disagreed. Based on the interpretation scale developed by the researcher, teachers reported that this was a big challenge to implementation of History curriculum. The mean response in this situation was attributed to the fact that majority of teachers did not take their students out for field trips. On the question of using resource persons, 2 teachers strongly agreed, 4 agreed, 11 disagreed, while 5 strongly disagreed. Their mean response was 2.41. With this response, teachers stated that they did not call resource persons. This was a big challenge to curriculum implementation in History. These findings concur with those of United Kingdom, Department of Education and skills (2017). The findings showed that interactions between students and adults from the community can have a positive effect on student learning and student attitudes. However, many teachers did not engage them.

The researcher wanted to know from the teachers whether they employed team teaching. In response, 4 strongly agreed, 7 agreed, 8 disagreed while 3 strongly disagreed. The mean response was 2.81. This response indicates that many teachers did not involve their colleagues in handling their classes. This was a big challenge to curriculum implementation according to teachers. From this response, many teachers did not practice team teaching and also failed to recognize the contribution that could be made by their colleagues. It also shows that there was little sense of collegiality among teachers and others were contented with the way they were teaching. This was a big challenge to curriculum implementation.

Table 4.19

*Students' response to the questions on teaching methods*

Question	SA	A	NS	DA	SD	MEAN
My teacher organizes field trips for History and Government students.	51	71	39	49	51	3.08
Resource-persons are usually called to give talks concerning History and Government in my class	56	60	50	43	52	3.10
Am at times taught History and Government by other teachers of the same subject	48	73	63	39	38	3.21
Mean response						3.13

The researcher also asked the students whether their teachers organized field trips for them. In this case, 51, strongly agreed, 71 agreed, 39 were not sure, 49 disagreed while 51 strongly disagreed. The mean response was 3.08. This means that they were not sure. This means that those students did not go for fieldtrips in most cases. However, based on the interpretation scale, the students indicated that this was of less challenge to curriculum implementation. Inadequate field trips posed a big challenge to curriculum implementation. The findings concur with those of Nesper (2008), who found out that the teachers rarely organized field trips these days because of various reasons. This situation was mainly caused by financial constraints and overloaded schedules. The amount of subject matter they need to teach each year to meet the standards of the schools' mandated curriculum is so great that there is no time to schedule such visits (Nesper, 2008). The schools' budgets are also so tight that it is nearly



impossible to pay for buses to go for trips or get parents to pay for outreach programmes (Nespor, 2008).

Students were asked whether resource persons were usually called to give talks to them concerning History and Government. In response, 56 strongly agreed, 60 agreed, 50 were not sure, 43 disagreed while 52 strongly disagreed. The mean response here was 3.10. This response shows that the students were not sure. It was of less challenge to them. It also reveals that resource persons were rarely integrated in the teaching process by the teachers.

Research however, indicates that supported teachers are in the best position to deliver effective education (United Kingdom, Department of Education and Skills, 2017). There are agencies and resource persons in the community that have the expertise and knowledge to augment school education programmes.

The researcher also asked the students whether they were at times taught by other teachers of History. Out of 261 respondents, 48 strongly agreed, 73 agreed, 63 were not sure, 39 disagreed while 38 strongly disagreed. The mean response was 3.21. This shows that students were not sure. It points to the fact that many students were not handled by other teachers of History and government. They contradicted their teachers because they reported that it was of less challenge. Based on the interpretation key, the question on team teaching was of less challenge to curriculum implementation History and Government. From the findings, team teaching was not practiced by many teachers. Goetz (2012) argues that team teaching may not be for everyone as some teachers prefer to be the only person in charge of their students' learning. Goetz (2012) discovered in his study that some teachers are a rigid personality type or may be wedded to a single method. Some simply dislike other teachers on their team; some do not want to risk humiliation and discouragement at possible failure. Other teachers are unwilling to share pet ideas or to lose total control.

### 4.3 Assessment methods

Teachers and Students were asked questions concerning assessment methods.

Table 4.20

*Teacher responses to the questions on assessment methods*

Question	SA	A	NS	DA	SD	MEAN
I ask students of History and Government questions in class?	16	6	0	0	0	4.73
I regularly test your students to find out their progress in the subject?	8	12	0	1	1	4.14
Tests administered help identify my History and Government students' weaknesses and address them	6	11	4	0	1	3.95
I revise History and Government tests you administer to your classes	9	8	0	3	2	3.86
I mark History and Government assignments in time	8	7	0	5	2	3.64
History and Government assignments and exams are important in preparation for KCSE exams.	16	6	0	0	0	4.04
Mean Responses						3.94

Teachers were also asked whether they asked students questions during their lessons. In response, 16 strongly agreed while 6 agreed. The mean response was 4.73. This showed means that they asked students questions in class. Teachers were also asked whether they tested their students regularly. In this case, 8 strongly agreed, 12 agreed, 1 disagreed while 1 strongly disagreed. The mean generated was 4.14. Teachers indicated that that they regularly tested their students. It was of the least challenge to curriculum implementation. The researcher also asked teachers whether they revised tests that they administered to their students. In their responses, 9 strongly agreed, 8 agreed, 3 disagreed while 2 strongly disagreed. This led to a mean response of 3.86. With this response, teachers agreed that they revised tests that they administered to their students. Teachers who develop useful assignments, provide corrective instruction, and give students second chance to demonstrate success can improve their instruction and help students learn (Guskey, 2009). Assessments must be followed by high quality, corrective instruction designed to remedy whatever learning errors the assessment

identified. On the same note teachers were asked whether they marked History and Government assignments in time. In response, 8 strongly agreed, 7 agreed, 5 disagreed while 2 strongly disagreed. This led to a mean of 3.64. Teachers in this case agreed that they marked students' assignments in time that was an issue of less challenge. The researcher also sought to know from teachers whether they felt that assignments and exams were important in preparation for the K.C.S.E exam. In this case 16 strongly agreed while 6 agreed. The mean response was 3.72. Teachers also agreed that assignments and exams were important in preparation for KCSE examinations.

Table 4.21

*Students' responses to the question on assessment*

Question	SA	A	NS	DA	SD	MEAN
I participate in answering History and Government questions in class	80	113	10	45	13	3.77
Am regularly tested to find out my progress in History and Government	104	93	8	27	29	3.83
Tests administered help identify my weaknesses in History and Government	127	73	8	34	19	3.98
My teacher helps me revise History and Government tests	64	97	7	29	64	3.26
My teacher gives History and Government assignments	18	21	4	53	165	1.75
History and Government assignments marked in time	60	47	21	67	66	2.88
History and Government assignments are important in preparation for KCSE exams	134	46	28	24	29	3.89
Mean response						3.34

The students were asked whether they participated in answering questions in class. In response, 80 strongly agreed, 113 agreed, 10 were not sure, 45 disagreed and 13 strongly disagreed. Their mean response was 3.77. With this mean response, the students agreed that they answered questions in class. This question was of the least challenge to curriculum implementation in History and Government. It should be noted that questions alone do not necessarily translate into good assessment. Curwin (2014), states that there is a catch in using questions. The question must be connected with the content, so that the following learning activities actually answer the question. The question must fit your students' ability and experience. In addition the question needs to provoke both thought and curiosity.

Students were also asked whether they were regularly tested to find out their progress, in which case, 104 strongly agreed, 93 agreed, 8, were not sure, 27 disagreed while 29 strongly disagreed. This led to a mean response of 3.83. In this case the students agreed that they were regularly tested. Students felt that it was of less challenge. The question was of less challenge to curriculum implementation in History. Assessment helps teachers to give more accurate overview of student performance and helps to determine grades with greater level of objectiveness (Penny, 2009). Nevertheless, teachers' responses here are reinforced by those of Guskey (2009) who argues that the best classroom assessments also serve as meaningful source of information for teachers, helping them identify what they taught well and what they need to work on.

Students were also asked to state whether test administered to them helped them identify their weaknesses. In their answers, 127 strongly agreed, 73 agreed, 8 were not sure, 34 disagreed while 19 strongly disagreed. The mean here was 3.98. Students agreed with their teachers about the quality of the test given to them. In this case, students agreed that the tests helped them to identify their weaknesses. Assessment of students needs to reflect concepts and skills that teachers emphasize in class along with the teacher's criteria for judging students. Teachers facilitate learning by providing students with feedbacks on their learning progress and help them identify learning problems (Guskey, 2009). Critics contend that this approach means teaching to test. However, if desired learning goals are the foundations of student's learning experiences, then assessment of student learning are simply extension of those goals.

The researcher also asked the students respondents whether their teachers revised tests administered to them. 64 strongly agreed, 97 agreed, 7 were not sure, 29 disagreed while 64 strongly

disagreed. The mean response was 3.26 meaning that they were not sure. This indicates that the students felt that it was of less challenge. The responses of students show that while some teachers revised the tests they administered, others did not do so. However, it was of less challenge to curriculum Implementation.

Students were also asked whether they liked doing History and Government assignments. In response, 18 strongly agreed 21 agreed, 4 were not sure, 53 disagreed while 165 strongly disagreed. The mean response was 1.75. In this case students strongly disagreed. This response emanated most likely from the fact that many teachers did not give assignments in the subject but waited until formal tests are lined up in the school termly programmes. It was a big challenge to curriculum implementation in History and Government. This can generally make students not to study their work on their own. Students were also asked whether History and Government assignments were marked in time. In their responses, 60 strongly agreed, 47 agreed, 21 were not sure, 67 disagreed while 66 strongly disagreed. The mean response here was 2.88 meaning that they disagreed. Students differed with their teachers. They saw it as a big challenge. Nothing we do to or for our students is more important than our assessment of their work and the feedback we give them on it (Brown, 2011). The results of our assessment influence our students for the rest of their lives and careers. Students benefit from timely feedback. The longer the students have to wait to get work back, the less likely that they will make constructive use of the teacher's comments (Brown, 2011). This implies that work should be returned quickly while students still care and while there is still time for them to act upon advice.

Students were also asked a similar question. In as much as they appreciated the importance of assignments, they were not keen on giving them to students In response, 140 strongly agreed, 52 agreed, 34 were not sure, 30 disagreed while 35 strongly disagreed. The mean response for the students was 3.89 meaning that they were not sure. Students could not identify the benefits of assignments in History and Government because they were not given. The teachers' and students' responses were similar in this situation. Both teachers and students indicated that this question was of the least challenge to History and Government curriculum. Assignments as Brown (2011) observed can direct students' learning behaviour by designing and implementing better assessment.

## **5. Conclusions and recommendations**

### **5.1 Conclusions**

Both students and teachers agreed that the content of History and Government curriculum was large. This was a big challenge. Both of them agreed that the subject requires additional time in the timetable. Teachers also failed in most cases to organize field trips for their History and Government students. This means that there was no connection between school works with the world. On the issue of resource persons, teachers did not involve them in their lessons and therefore could not understand their usefulness. In the same way, team teaching was not practiced and teachers had to deal with all the areas of the syllabus on their own without variation of teaching methodologies from their colleagues. This was also seen as a big challenge to curriculum implementation. Teachers did not give assignment to their students as confirmed in their responses. This was a big challenge considering the poor reading habits among the students.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

The study recommends various measures to be taken in order to reverse the downward trend in the performance of students in History and Government in Ugenya Sub-County.

- a) Content of History and Government needs to be revised with a view to reducing it or allocating more time for the subject.
- b) Teachers should organise for fieldtrips in order to make real whatever is taught in class.
- c) Students need to be constantly tested to monitor their progress in the subject. This should include assignments after every topic. Regular assignments should form part of the regular tests.

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