

In Search of Sustainable Science Education at the Basic Level of Education in Ghana: The Unintended Consequences of Enacting Science Curriculum Reforms in Junior High Schools

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Abstract : This paper documents an ongoing investigation which seeks to explore the consequences of repeated science curriculum reforms at basic level of education in Ghana. Drawing upon data collected through document analysis, semi-structured interviews and classroom observations linked with a study of teaching practices in Junior High Schools of educational districts that are well served with teachers and yet, produce poor students' achievements in science in the national Basic Education Certificate Examinations. The results emanating from the investigation highlight that the repeated science curriculum reforms at the basic level of education have led to the displacement of scientific knowledge in junior high schools in Ghana, a very critical level of education where the foundation for further science education to the highest level is laid. Furthermore, the results indicate that the enactment of centralised curriculum reforms in Ghana has produced some unpleasant repercussions. For instance, how the teachers interpret and implement the curriculum is directly related to their own values and practices as well as students feedback. This is contrary to the perception that external impetus received from donor agencies holds the key to strengthening reforms made. Thus, it is argued that without the right of localised management, curriculum reforms themselves are inadequate to ensure the realisation of the desired effects. This paper, therefore, draws the attention of stakeholders to the fact that the enactment of School Science Curriculum reform goes beyond just simple implementation to more complex dynamics which may change the original reform intents.

Keywords : basic education, basic education certificate examinations, curriculum reforms, junior high school, educational districts, teaching practices

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