

SUCCESS STORY

Faculty Training Improves Kenyatta University's Integration of Technology in Teaching

Syracuse University/Kenyatta University



Photo: Joanna Masingila, Syracuse University

Michael Waititu, faculty member at Kenyatta University, discusses using multimedia case studies in preparing teachers with Peter Rugano, doctoral student at Syracuse University.

Bernard Mugo, a faculty member in the Department of Educational Communication and Technology at Kenya's Kenyatta University (KU) didn't question his level of expertise until he spent a year at Syracuse University (SU) in New York to enrich his doctoral studies in special education. "I used to say that I am knowledgeable in technology in my department before I left for SU but I soon found out that I did not have any idea about interactive whiteboards or online teaching," said Mugo, who teaches courses on educating children with disabilities. Discovering and knowing how to integrate technology in teaching and learning at Kenyatta University was a challenge because of the limited training in new technologies. Courses there lacked the visually engaging qualities of multimedia and interactivity of online tools.

After completing his Certificate of Advanced Study course in Teaching and Curriculum at Syracuse University, as part of a USAID project, Mugo improved his English, learned to research using the Internet and developed course preparation materials. The project, managed by Higher Education for Development, allowed him to conduct part of his doctoral studies at Syracuse University while still enrolled at Kenyatta University. "Due to this exposure, I have now started helping other KU faculty members in integrating techniques in teaching and synchronizing information with assistive technology," he said.

Trainings are changing how teacher education faculty members at Kenyatta University instruct their students. In total, 40 faculty members have participated in professional development workshops to gain new skills for the improvement of courses and teaching methodologies. They have learned how to support all students and manage large classes through the use of technologies such as e-learning platforms, Internet resources, multimedia case studies, and simulations.

In addition, 11 lecturers spent two months at Syracuse University observing classes, learning more about how to integrate technology into classrooms, and participating and presenting at a conference in the United States. Faculty members now discuss methods to increase interactivity, even with the current configuration of large classes, as well as how to help all students through the integration of technology.

"I have never applied integration of technology in teaching and have never used simulations before this training," said Michael Waititu, a faculty member at Kenyatta University who teaches physics education courses and also spent a year at Syracuse University in the certificate program. "I was able to gain new knowledge in research methods and technology and was able to develop and defend my Ph.D. proposal successfully," he added. Waititu is collecting data for his dissertation study on gender equity in Kenyan secondary physics teaching. "I am particularly excited to use video clips from multimedia case studies filmed in Kenyan secondary classrooms in the methods course I teach to prepare physics teachers," Waititu said.

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Kenyatta University