

Competency-Based Teacher Education: Preparing Educators for the Future

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ABSTRACT

Competency-Based Education (CBE) is emerging as a crucial paradigm in teacher education, focusing on developing specific skills and competencies required for the 21st century. This paper explores the evolution of teacher education, emphasizing the shift towards a competency-based approach, which prioritizes practical, skill-oriented learning over traditional methods. It highlights key competencies necessary for future educators and discusses strategies for implementing CBE in teacher preparation and in-service training. Through an analysis of different case studies, this work provides insights into effective practices and the potential challenges in adopting CBE for teacher education. The conclusion underscores the need for a systematic approach to integrate CBE, ensuring that educators are well-equipped to meet the evolving demands of the education sector.

Keywords: Competency-Based Education, Teacher Education, 21st Century Skills, Pedagogy, Educational Reform.

INTRODUCTION

Education is a lifelong process of acquiring knowledge, values, habits, and skills. Educational techniques include storytelling, discussion, teaching, training, and directed research. Overall, education comprises various activities that enable individuals to acquire skills, knowledge, and values. These activities involve planned pedagogical actions that shape an individual's social behavior and capacities. The educational system plays a key role in determining how education is organized within a particular environment and what is taught. Education systems encompass a range of institutions, including schools, colleges, universities, and training centers, and also include educational standards and policy documents governing the delivery of knowledge [1, 2]. There are stage-formative formative-directive, conventional, and expert models of the educational system (traditional for this country). The competency-oriented educational system is based on the competence model. Competency-based education aims to reform education by enabling institutions to define competencies according to the needs of the school or vocational education. This approach emphasizes the setting of competence requirements at the level of the school by stakeholders (e.g., teachers, pupils, employers) and by establishing the teaching-learning strategy, organizing the assessment of pupils' performance, and obtaining evidence for the awarding of certificates and diplomas. Competency-based teacher education should focus on practical-based courses, skill-oriented teaching, and acquisition of subject specific skills and competencies relevant to 21st century challenges. There should be a movement towards online and semi-online modes of hybrid method teaching for teacher population [3, 4].

THE EVOLUTION OF TEACHER EDUCATION

Teacher education has undergone significant changes and development from the European Middle Ages to the Internet Age. The concurrent evolution of thoughts about teaching and learning paralleled epistemological developments from religious dogmatism to moral philosophy and, later, to behaviorism and connectionism. It consisted of an evolution of teaching methodologies as an expanding repertoire of teaching techniques to be employed in the more effective dissemination of academic content and modeling of skills [5, 4]. With the worldwide proliferation of normal schools and, later, of teacher's colleges, the

preprofessional education of elementary school teachers became more institutionalized. The teachings of John Dewey and other advocates of progressivism encouraged the further differentiation of teacher education from general education and scholarly training. The emergence of education as a profession was paralleled by the emergence of a body of knowledge about education as a field of inquiry [6, 7]. However, the shift from teaching as a profession to teaching as a vocation was accompanied by an increasing alienation of agricultural and industrial workers, African Americans, immigrants, and the economically disadvantaged. Within task environments of corporate expansion, the focus of teacher training was increasingly upon the schooling of socialized workers to be molded to fit preset expectations [8, 9].

FOUNDATIONS OF COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION

Competency-Based Education (CBE) is a dialogue used for a variety of educational developments, including a greater focus on outcomes in schooling, education and training, and qualifications offered in the schooling sector. 'CBE' is a widely divergent term used in relation to adult education. Initially, in industrial and occupational settings, it usually referred to 'functional' outcomes focus, that is, stated learning outcomes at competencies or profiles level for defined tasks, roles, or jobs, across specific periods of time. The explicit link between jobs and competencies grew in educational settings developing initial vocational education and training, largely by the OECD-led innovations. This was widely adopted in national systems and adopted as an educational norm in wider sectors. Since then, CBE has undergone many actual changes and extensions, often in divergent directions and ways. Hence, there are many unanswered questions around the nature of CBE. CBE, by definition, is a consensual agreement between the parties involved in the education and training of students or trainees to share a common understanding at competencies level of what is expected regarding the education/training to be delivered, the students or trainees to be educated/trained, and the investments made by parties to meet these expectations [5, 2]. In its broader sense, CBE has also come to include developments in, for example general orientation towards learning outcomes and competences and curricular and educational innovations dealing with these at implementation level, including more specific pilot-type curriculum and educational framework innovations, and the establishment of national/regional and increasingly broad transnational like the EU accreditation-type structures and systems. Funded mainly by the EU the latter are key developments that signal important structural changes and intensification of common understanding. CBE, as preventive and ameliorative or forward-looking growth movements, strives towards an educational norm which optimally fits the continued necessary growing individualization of man and woman and her and his needed qualifications regarding the documented quality, trustworthiness, and portability of the degrees and diplomas awarded. CBE as expected to be - broad higher set standards and projected desired increased opportunities for growth - fully depends on how (well) different educational systems, including both schooling and training systems, cope with these at compatible levels of interpretation meaning from schooling and training's expounded fundamental beliefs regarding the world and society in general and education and training in particular [2, 10].

KEY COMPETENCIES FOR FUTURE EDUCATORS

As the world continues to evolve, so do its needs and challenges. The twenty-first century holds tremendous opportunities but also unprecedented problems that need to be understood, and addressed. Education has an inevitable central role to play in preparing citizens for the future and helping them to address the consequences. No other profession will have as enduring an impact on the future of societies as that of teachers. Teachers are a vital professional group for the future of humankind. The future world of education will differ from today's in profound ways, which has dramatic implications for the teachers needed in the future [11, 12]. The demands of society will require new paths of learning, new learning environments, new and innovative use of technologies, new skills for learners, new roles for adults, new motivations for learning, new ways for educators to educate themselves, and new partnerships in the global lifelong learning society. Teachers are at the core of the education production function, mediating the relationship between inputs to the educational process (curricula, technologies, student backgrounds, parental involvement) and outputs (learning outcomes, student paths, lifelong learning). The fluctuating policy objectives on what student learning outcomes to pursue and the myriads of local contexts in which learning takes place all impose constantly changing demands on teachers [13, 14].

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES FOR COMPETENCY-BASED TEACHER EDUCATION

Future educators need to be skilled in a plethora of areas, from technological application to understanding psychological development. And with the rapid societal shift caused by the pandemic, needs have widened to include more soft skills, working better with diverse groups, and being more inclusive. Competencies are thus an increasingly popular answer among institutions and employers, especially with increasing requests for graduates to know things like flexibility and adaptability. However, among the literature, no clear answer is evident on how to enact competency-based education from teacher preparation to in-

service teacher training. Competencies must be identified, then the education and assessment processes aligned to work on said competencies, institutional supports arranged around the whole process, and all involved parties - departments, educators, and those completing education - are consulted and involved [15, 16]. This is a tall order. A big question becomes where to start, as it is a lot to take in. This work sought to describe individual approaches enacted in six different departments across two institutions and two countries. In laying out methods and outcomes, with input from interviews directly involved in implementation, inspiration and transferable parts were hoped to be provided for others looking to do the same. A competency-based design for teacher preparation and in-service training of educators is possible without the large, overarching ability to do a change by an institution or department. Creativity, dedication, and ingenuity can allow meaningful change and implementation as a grassroots movement [17, 18].

CONCLUSION

Competency-Based Education represents a forward-thinking approach to teacher education, addressing the growing demand for educators who are equipped with the practical skills and competencies necessary to navigate the complexities of modern educational environments. As the global landscape of education continues to evolve, it is imperative that teacher preparation programs adopt CBE frameworks that emphasize adaptability, innovation, and inclusivity. The successful implementation of CBE requires a concerted effort from educational institutions, policymakers, and educators themselves, fostering a culture of continuous learning and professional development. By aligning educational outcomes with the competencies needed in today's classrooms, we can better prepare educators to meet the challenges of the future, ensuring that they play a pivotal role in shaping the next generation of learners

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