

THE EMERGENCE AND DEVELOPMENT STAGES OF THE CONCEPT OF "COMPETENCE" IN EDUCATION

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Abstract

The concept of "competence" has become a key element in modern educational systems, emphasizing an individual's ability to effectively perform specific tasks based on knowledge, skills, and competencies. This paper traces the historical development of the concept of competence, its introduction into the educational sphere, and its subsequent evolution in pedagogical practice. Initially introduced in linguistics by Noam Chomsky in the 1960s, the concept of competence later expanded into educational theory and practice. The article explores the key stages of the development of competency-based approaches in education, from their theoretical foundations in the 1970s to their institutionalization in educational systems during the 1980s and 1990s. Furthermore, it examines the formation of competency-based educational models in the early 21st century, where emphasis shifted from theoretical knowledge to practical application. The paper also discusses the modern use of competency-based approaches in various educational contexts, focusing on disciplinary, social, and personal competencies, and highlights their role in shaping an individual's capacity to function effectively in society. The study concludes that competency-based education is instrumental in enhancing the quality and effectiveness of education, fostering lifelong learning, and preparing individuals to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing global landscape.

Keywords: Competence, competency-based education, educational systems, pedagogical practice, social competence, personal competence, 21st century education.

Introduction

The concept of "competence" in education has become a cornerstone of modern educational theory and practice. Over the past several decades, the focus of

educational systems has increasingly shifted from the traditional model of rote learning to one that prioritizes the development of competencies—broad, transferable skills that empower learners to navigate complex, real-world situations. This evolution is not merely a response to changes in educational priorities but a reflection of the dynamic nature of the global landscape. As economies become more interconnected, the demand for individuals equipped with diverse competencies—ranging from technical knowledge to social and emotional intelligence—has grown exponentially.

The traditional emphasis on acquiring factual knowledge has given way to a more holistic approach, where the goal of education extends beyond the mere acquisition of information to include the development of cognitive, social, and personal skills necessary for success in life (OECD, 2005). Competency-based education (CBE) focuses on equipping learners with the practical skills they can apply in various contexts, emphasizing outcomes over processes. The recognition of the need for this shift is due to the growing awareness that simply knowing facts is no longer sufficient in a rapidly changing world characterized by technological advancements and globalization.

The historical development of the competence concept traces its origins back to the fields of linguistics and psychology, later expanding to include education and professional training. Initially, competence referred to an individual's ability to execute tasks successfully, but over time, this definition evolved to incorporate a broader set of attributes, including critical thinking, communication, problem-solving, and emotional intelligence. As societies place increasing value on the adaptability and creativity of their workforce, the need for competency-based approaches in education has become more apparent.

The global educational reforms that advocate for competency-based education draw heavily from this understanding. They aim to address key challenges facing modern education, such as ensuring that students are not only equipped with the knowledge required for academic success but also prepared to thrive in an increasingly interconnected and unpredictable world. These reforms, seen in the work of international organizations such as UNESCO and the OECD, emphasize the importance of interdisciplinary skills that span cognitive, social, and emotional domains.

This article aims to examine the emergence and development of the concept of competence within educational contexts. It will explore how the notion of competence has evolved from its linguistic and psychological roots to become a defining feature of modern educational frameworks. Additionally, the article will discuss the role of competency-based education in shaping future curricula and how it addresses the demands of the 21st-century world, offering students the tools they need for lifelong learning and success.

Methodology

This article is aimed at analyzing the historical development of the concept of competence, studying the competency-based approaches introduced into education systems over time, and examining how these approaches have evolved in practice. The analysis is based on theoretical and practical materials, international educational standards, and the new approaches to teaching and learning in the field of education. The article draws on scholarly literature and real-world examples to illustrate the ongoing development of competency-based education.

Results

The Emergence of the Concept of "Competence"

The concept of "competence" was initially introduced in linguistics and pedagogy. In 1965, Noam Chomsky used the term "linguistic competence" to describe knowledge of grammatical rules and the ability to apply them correctly. Later, in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, the concept was widely adopted in the fields of education and psychology (Chomsky, 1965).

Stages of Development of Competency-Based Approaches

- I. Theoretical Foundations (1970s):** In the second half of the 20th century, research aimed at improving the quality and effectiveness of education spurred the development of the concept of competence. Pedagogical competence and professional training issues began to be studied.
- II. Implementation in Education Systems (1980s-1990s):** In the 1980s and 1990s, many countries began to introduce competency-based approaches into their educational systems. International organizations such as UNESCO and

OECD emphasized the importance of developing competencies in education (UNESCO, 1996).

- III. **Formation of Competency-Based Educational Models (21st Century):** By the early 21st century, competency-based approaches became an integral part of education systems. Disciplinary, professional, and scientific competencies were classified separately and reflected in various educational standards. The emphasis shifted from theoretical knowledge to practical skills and application (OECD, 2005).

Modern Competency-Based Approach

Today, competency-based approaches are widely applied in education at all levels, focusing on the following areas:

- **Disciplinary Competencies** – knowledge and skills specific to a particular field.
- **Social Competencies** – communication skills, teamwork.
- **Personal Competencies** – problem-solving abilities, creativity.

Discussion

The competency-based approach in education has become increasingly vital in the context of modern educational demands. Its application is not only a response to the rapidly changing needs of the global economy but also an effort to better prepare individuals for the complexities of social, professional, and personal life.

One of the key aspects of this approach is the shift from traditional education systems, which often emphasized the accumulation of theoretical knowledge, to a more holistic development of an individual's practical skills, cognitive abilities, and personal traits. This transition reflects the broader understanding that success in the 21st century is not solely determined by one's ability to recall information but by the ability to apply knowledge creatively, solve problems, work collaboratively, and adapt to new situations.

In particular, the integration of disciplinary competencies has been a central feature of this approach. By focusing on specific knowledge and skills required in a given field, competency-based education helps students develop expertise in their chosen areas of study. For example, in vocational training programs, learners gain hands-on experience that directly translates into their future careers. This approach allows

for greater alignment between the curriculum and industry needs, which has become crucial as industries evolve rapidly due to technological advancements. Moreover, social competencies such as communication, teamwork, and collaboration are increasingly emphasized. In a globalized world, where many professionals work in diverse and international teams, the ability to communicate effectively and work collaboratively is essential. These social competencies are being integrated into educational frameworks to ensure that students are prepared to navigate complex interpersonal and professional relationships in the workplace. Personal competencies, including problem-solving, critical thinking, creativity, and emotional intelligence, are also becoming central to the competency-based approach. In an era marked by uncertainty and rapid change, individuals who possess the ability to think critically and make decisions under pressure are highly valued. Educational systems that foster these personal competencies not only prepare students for specific career paths but also for lifelong learning and personal development.

One of the challenges in implementing a competency-based education system lies in the assessment of these competencies. Traditional testing methods, which focus primarily on memorization and recall, are not suitable for evaluating practical and social competencies. As a result, many educational systems have had to adopt alternative forms of assessment, such as project-based evaluations, peer reviews, and self-assessments, which provide a more accurate picture of a student's abilities. Furthermore, the implementation of competency-based education requires significant changes in teaching methodologies. Educators are encouraged to move away from teacher-centered instruction to more student-centered learning, where students are actively involved in their own learning process. This can include hands-on learning, collaborative projects, and real-world problem-solving activities. Teachers themselves need to be equipped with the necessary training and professional development to effectively implement this approach.

However, despite its many benefits, the competency-based approach also faces challenges, particularly in developing countries and regions with limited educational resources. The shift requires substantial investment in teacher training, curriculum redesign, and the creation of new assessment tools. Additionally, some critics argue that the focus on competencies could lead to a reduction in the breadth

of knowledge acquired by students, potentially narrowing their intellectual development.

Conclusion

The development of competency-based approaches in education is essential for enhancing human capital, improving the effectiveness of education, and preparing individuals to meet the demands of modern society. In the future, this approach is expected to further evolve, adapting to technological advancements and global educational trends. Competency-based education will continue to be a key mechanism for developing socially and professionally competent individuals who can succeed in an increasingly complex world.

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