



COMPETENCY BASED ENGLISH TEACHING AND LEARNING

Husenova Kumush

Bachelor's Degree Student of Bukhara State University

Husenovakumush1@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Competency-based education has been gaining popularity as an approach to teaching and learning that focuses on developing skills and knowledge needed to succeed in the real world. English language teaching has also embraced this approach, as it seeks to prepare learners for the challenges of communication in a globalized world. This article discusses the concepts and principles of competency-based English language teaching and learning.

KEY WORDS

Competency-based language learning, assessment, learner-centered approach

Introduction

Competency-based language teaching (CBLT) has gained considerable recognition as an effective approach to language instruction. With a focus on practical language skills and real-world application, CBLT offers a comprehensive framework for enhancing English proficiency. In this article, we delve into the principles and benefits of CBLT, highlighting how it can empower learners to communicate confidently and effectively in English.

Competency-Based English Teaching and Learning (CBETL) is an approach that focuses on developing specific skills and knowledge, known as competencies, in English language education. Here's an overview of the key aspects of CBETL: Competency-Based Education (CBE):CBETL is rooted in the broader concept of Competency-Based Education. In this approach, learning is centered around clearly defined competencies or learning outcomes. Competencies are specific, measurable skills or knowledge that learners are expected to acquire. Key Principles: Clear Learning Outcomes: CBETL emphasizes the importance of clearly defined and measurable learning outcomes, ensuring that learners know what is expected of them. Flexible Pace: Learners progress through the material at their own pace, focusing on mastering each competency before moving on to the next. Individualized Learning: CBETL recognizes that learners have different starting points and learning styles. The approach allows for personalized learning paths based on individual needs and abilities. Assessment and Feedback: Assessment in CBETL is frequent and directly tied to the defined competencies. It provides ongoing feedback to learners, helping them understand their strengths and areas for improvement. Assessments are often designed to be authentic and reflective of real-world language use. Integration of Skills: CBETL integrates language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) within the context of meaningful tasks or projects. Learners are encouraged to apply language skills in authentic situations, promoting practical language use. Technology Integration: Technology is often utilized to facilitate CBETL. Online platforms and digital tools can provide resources, assessments, and opportunities for interactive learning. Lifelong Learning Focus: CBETL aims to equip learners

with skills that are applicable beyond the classroom, emphasizing the development of lifelong learning skills and a continuous improvement mindset. Teacher Facilitation: Teachers in a CBETL environment act as facilitators and guides, supporting learners in their individual journeys rather than following a one-size-fits-all approach. Real-World Applications: CBETL often incorporates real-world applications of language skills, connecting classroom learning to practical situations learners may encounter in their personal or professional lives. By embracing Competency-Based English Teaching and Learning, educators aim to provide a more tailored and relevant English language education experience, ensuring that learners acquire the specific skills and knowledge needed for effective communication in various contexts.

What is Competency- based language teaching?

CBLT employs an interactive approach to language learning wherein language is considered as an instrument to attain both personal and social goals. In Competency-based education student is in a major role, monitoring their mastery of the target competences and to be able to transfer the skills they develop to a different context. Competency-based approach focuses on learning outcomes, as the driving force of teaching and curriculum. According to Professor Jack C. Richards "CBLT is often used in programmes that focus on learners with very specific language needs. In such cases, rather than seeking to teach general English, the specific language skills needed to function in a specific context is the focus". In this approach main aim is to apply the knowledge in real world situations.

Key features of competency-based language teaching:

1. A focus on successful functioning in society. The goal is to enable students to become autonomous individuals capable of coping with the demands of the world.
2. A focus on life skills. The students are taught just those language abilities required by the situation or context in which they will function.
3. Task or performance-centered orientation. The goal of teaching is what the students can do as a result of instruction.
4. Modularized instruction. Objectives are broken into narrowly focused sub-objectives so that both teacher and students can get a clear sense of progress and achievement.
5. Outcomes that are made explicit a priori. Outcomes are obvious for both teacher and students and specified in terms of behavioural objectives so that students know exactly what expected behaviours are required.
6. Continuous and ongoing assessment. Learning achievements are assessed based on test results that are objectively quantifiable.
7. Demonstrated mastery of performance objectives. Rather than the traditional paper-and-pencil test, assessment is based on the ability to demonstrate pre-specified and predetermined behaviours.
8. Individualized, student-centered instruction. In content, level, and pace, objectives are defined in terms of individual need. Instruction is not time-based. Students progress at their own rates and concentrate on abilities for which they lack competence.

Those features characterize implementation of competency-based language teaching. Through teaching students in this method, students' capability of thinking freely can be achieved. Because this method is consisted of life skills that let students making decisions themselves. The societies

are in need of personnels who are able to approaching critically and creatively. And in this teaching method assessment system is based on real life situations. For example, in language classes it is better to give authentic tasks in order to achieve the specific goal – teachers can give tasks that are related to daily conversations, like shopping, job interviews, and other stuff that help them to communicate easily in speaking part rather than simple instructions which is not intended to help them in real life. This teaching approach focuses on setting clear goals for students and assessing their progress based on specific behaviours. The instruction is broken down into smaller units, allowing both the teacher and students to track their achievements. The desired outcomes are clearly defined from the beginning, and assessment is ongoing and based on objective measures. Instead of traditional tests, students demonstrate mastery of predetermined behaviours. The instruction is tailored to individual needs, allowing students to learn at their own pace and concentrate on areas where they need improvement. Throughout the unit, the teacher continuously assesses the students' progress through quizzes and assignments that objectively measure their ability to perform these behaviours. Instead of a traditional written test, the final assessment requires students to solve real-world word problems involving fractions, demonstrating their mastery of the skills. The instruction is individualized according to each student's needs. Some students may need more practice with finding common denominators, while others may need extra support in simplifying fractions. The teacher provides additional resources and adjusts the pace of instruction based on each student's progress. This allows students to focus on areas where they lack competence and progress at their own rate.

At the beginning of a course in a competency-based framework the students have to go through an initial assessment, in which the teacher determines the current proficiency level of the individual student. After this the students are grouped on the basis of “their current English proficiency level, their learning pace, their needs, and their social goals for learning English”. Furthermore, a course based on CBLT is divided into three stages, which the students have to go through in order to successfully finish the course. At Stages 1 and 2 the learners deal with twelve competencies which are related to general language development. At Stage 3 the students are grouped on the basis of their learning goals and “competencies are defined according to the three syllabus strands of Further Study, Vocational English, and Community Access”.¹

Conclusion:

Competency-Based Language Teaching offers a contemporary and effective approach to language instruction, particularly in the context of English language learning. By prioritizing practical skills, authentic contexts, and personalized learning experiences, CBLT empowers learners to develop the language proficiency necessary for effective communication. Incorporating CBLT principles into English language teaching can contribute to more confident and competent English speakers in an increasingly interconnected world. All in all, this method is one of the most effective tools that can make students more professional in their field.

In conclusion, Competency-Based English Teaching and Learning (CBETL) represents a dynamic and learner-centric approach that redefines traditional language education. By placing a strong emphasis on clear, measurable learning outcomes and individualized progression, CBETL adapts

¹ 4. Richards, J. C., and Rodgers, T. S. 2001. *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*. p.147

to the diverse needs and abilities of learners. The integration of technology, real-world applications, and a focus on lifelong learning skills underscores its relevance in preparing individuals for the complexities of modern communication. CBETL not only transforms the role of educators into facilitators but also empowers learners to take ownership of their language development. The flexible pace and ongoing assessment foster a culture of continuous improvement, ensuring that learners master each competency before advancing. This approach acknowledges the uniqueness of each learner and provides a framework that aligns language education with practical, real-world language use. As education continues to evolve, Competency-Based English Teaching and Learning stands as a forward-looking methodology that aligns with the demands of the 21st century. Its adaptability, focus on practical skills, and commitment to personalized learning paths position CBETL as a valuable framework for equipping individuals with the language competencies needed for success in both academic and professional pursuits.

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