**ntroducing the CBA**

* **What is a competency?**
* **Why choose a competency-based approach?**
* [**View of learning**](http://eltalgeria-articles.webs.com/introducingthecba.htm#142347839)
* [**The learner’s role**](http://eltalgeria-articles.webs.com/introducingthecba.htm#142348052)
* **The programme recommends to:**
* **Conclusion**

**What is a competency?**

**Whenever the term competency is mentioned, a “know-how – to act” process is implied.**

**Because of its global and integrating characteristics, acquiring a competency requires learning in motor, affective and cognitive fields.**

**A competency is a system of conceptual and procedural parts of knowledge organised into operating schemes that, help identify a problem-task and its solution through an efficient action within a set of situations.**

**A competency involves the necessary knowledge and capacities that a given solution requires.**

**As it is possible to evaluate a competency through performance, then a competency is the final stage of a cycle, a period, and determines intermediate and long terms prospects of the learner’s development.**

**Why choose a competency-based approach?**

**Establishing a programme based on logic that is centred on competencies fits in a set of instructions commissioned by the Ministry of Education. These instructions are based on worldwide research that highlights the importance of the links between learning and context of use, thus helping the learners in making learning meaningful.**

**For several decades, competencies have been used in the educational field. Since emphasis is put on the learner’s social and personal development, the aim is to make him reinvest his knowledge while performing tasks at school level as well as at social and professional levels. The programme has been conceived with the purpose of ensuring sustainable and viable learning.**

**Although the competency-based programme is a novelty, its objectives are not new. Actually, educationists have always been interested in developing general “know- how” processes and in fixing knowledge acquired in class. This programme will allow the Algerian learner to develop his capacity to think and act according to a vision of a world that he will construct day by day. This logic has a series of pedagogical implications such as:**

**Making the school acquisitions viable and sustainable:**

**The school will help the learner give sense to knowledge acquired in class and teach him how to make beneficial and relevant use of it. His learning must be reinvested not only in school contexts, (that is to say from one situation to another or from one disciplinary context to another) but also in contexts outside the school.**

**Developing the thinking process of the learner:**

**To achieve this aim, it is vital to reinforce the cognitive function of school by establishing tight relationships between acquiring knowledge and developing thinking processes. The emphasis put on the development of competencies makes it impossible to focus exclusively on acquiring disciplinary knowledge, but enhances the development of thinking processes necessary for assimilating them and using them in real life.**

**Presenting learning contexts in relation to the needs of the learner:**

**The learner must grasp the usefulness of the resources he develops in relation to the problems he meets in everyday life. The competency-based approach makes it possible to link the development of personal resources and the meaningful situations, which call for such resources.**

**With this approach, the learner will acquire abilities to use the language for communication thanks to the interwoven processes of learning reading, listening, speaking and writing.**

**Since language is central to all forms of communication, its mastery is necessary and basic to all school learning as well as interpersonal relationships.**

**Thus, the learner becomes able to get in touch with schoolmates and the adults around him, to express his own vision of the world, to make his the others’ culture and transmit his own culture.**

**Putting an end to disciplinary barriers:**

**The programme recommends focusing on basic learning that the pupils will have to master during their course. This programme will take part in the setting of transversal competencies in various fields: intellectual, methodological, personal, social and communicational. It aims at developing competencies in various real life situations, appealing to various sources that are related to disciplinary fields, the decompartimentalization encourages and favours the development of transversal competencies. Going beyond the disciplinary field, these transversal competencies will be implemented in a gradually widening field as they get used and developed in various contexts.**

**Choosing a personalized pedagogy:**

**To facilitate the development of the learner’s competencies, it will be necessary to rely on the resources that have to be explicited, developed and enriched. To achieve this aim, various pedagogical approaches will be preferred, keeping individual differences in mind.**

**View of learning**

**Centred on the development of competencies, learning is favoured in complex and meaningful situations. As it is cognitive, affective and social process, learning fits in cognitive and sociocognitivist perspectives. It is a process that implies making laying foundation to new acquisitions through the reorganisation of the learner’s cognitive structure.**

**The programme determines learning that will call upon intellectual procedures and attitudes such as respect for differences, co-operation and team work. Communication thus, in this programme is a priority that takes into consideration the latest developments in the field of Second Foreign Language Teaching, communicative approach, cognitive psychology and socio-constructivism.**

**This programme is learner-centred and focussed on the construction of the learner’s knowledge. It aims at developing competencies that are regarded as essential for the learner of the new century. These competencies are the ability to interact orally, the ability to process oral and written texts and the ability to write texts.**

**The learner’s role:**

**Learning requires from the learner to go through a process of personal appropriation. Because of this conception of learning, the learner continually questions his own convictions. This permanent questioning leads the learner to revise his prior-knowledge and its scope to compare his own representations with those of his classmates, to search for information and validate it through consulting various sources of documentation or people in possession of information.**

**This presupposes that the learner creates situations of learning and assessment relating both to the process and the results. The interactions with his classmates and his teacher help the learner to:**

* **Make a representation of situations.**
* **Find various ways of performing tasks.**
* **Construct and call upon various resources.**
* **Proceed to an assessment of his progress during the activities and at the end of activities.**

**To do so, the learner will appeal to cognitive, affective and motivational strategies in order to set a balance between his previous knowledge and his newly acquired knowledge.**

**The reflection the learner will operate on his own learning processes will assure the quality of his acquisition and facilitate his retention.**

**Since learning is a challenging intellectual process, while accomplishing a task, the learner displays appropriate behaviours while doing a specific action. This is performance.**

**By focusing more on the learner, the teaching objectives facilitate the learning assessment. Thus, diagnostic, formative and summative assessments make it possible to redefine the globality of assessing act as well as the interdependence between the different moment when it takes place.**

**Besides, the pedagogical objectives insist on the principle that only what has been clearly stated can be assessed at the end of the learning process. Because he focuses his action on the learner and his learning process, the teacher determines the teaching objectives in terms of development, decides on the choice of appropriate methods, situations, assessment tools, ways of reinvesting pre-requisites and types of remedial work.**

**Thus the meaning of assessment changes: from being a final external sanctioning action(normative, summative and certificative), it becomes the driving force for learning.**

**It allows judgement and appropriation on one hand and motivation on the other hand.**

**Through making the learning objectives explicit, the teacher proposes to give the learner meaning to his task, and shows him that the result to reach is accessible.**

**The proper wording of these objectives clarifies the object of the learning process. It is only then that a great autonomy can be achieved.**

**Even if all the pupils do not achieve the same objectives at the same time, their formulation facilitates the organisation of a personalized pedagogy and gives new impulse to the learner’s involvement.**

**Mutual commitment between teacher and learner through a language comprehensible to both partners allows a better definition of the contract between teacher and learner, that is to say the result to be achieved by the learner.**

**It will also facilitate the identification of the different commitments of each partner, the final evaluation of the project and improve communication between the partners.**

**The programme recommends to:**

* **Put emphasis on what is essential in order to ensure the learner’s academic success, his personal development and his integration in society.**
* **Develop the cultural dimension by facing the learner with fundamental and universal values.**
* **Make sure that the learners will be thoroughly taken in charge; for that, it is necessary to specify the requirement the teacher must satisfy and propose a progression of the learning processes.**
* **Give each learner an appropriate and personalised answer to each particular need.**
* **Organise the teaching while taking into account the development of the competencies that require long lasting pedagogical operation and the rhythm of the pupil’s learning process while avoiding the risk of repeating the year.**
* **Integrate N.T.I.C that have become an absolute must, and stand for indispensable resources for learning and teaching. These technologies are not only means of consulting sources of documentation but also means of production. A sensible use of these techniques will allow the development of a transversal competency in a methodological field.**

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**Conclusion**

**The approach based on competency leads to a serious revision of the teacher’s profession. This implies a change in the teacher’s attitude toward knowledge and towards teaching. The teacher will have to:**

* **Do more than teaching as merely communicating knowledge.**
* **Make the learner learn.**
* **Quit his function of monitoring and evaluating in order to get involved in all activities.**
* **Create various means of teaching.**
* **Share his power, negotiate with the learners and accept their point their view.**
* **Work on projects, and to do so, he must have a perfect knowledge of the project procedures.**
* **Possess a complete knowledge of group dynamics.**
* **Be able to conduct discussions, to act as a mediator between the learners and analyse the group functioning.**
* **Clarify the processes, the ways the learners think and act; thus the teacher displays greater transparency.**
* **Encourage and guide the learner’s efforts by showing the learner that he is allowed to make errors and to have doubts.**
* **Enhance the value of co-operation between the learners.**
* **Proceed to formative evaluation in working situations.**
* **Open to other disciplines and have discussions with his colleagues about methods and interdisciplinary concerns**