

"A Bad Tree does not Yield Good Apples: How Proficient Teachers Can Yield Good Learners at Teachers' Training College"

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Over the last decade, there has been an introduction of competency based approach into English language teaching at all education levels which has been initially implemented for English learners. However, anecdotal evidence has shown that in-service teachers themselves do experience difficulties in teaching the program based on such approach, this is simply attributed to the fact that most teachers whose first language is Arabic are not highly qualified and not fully competent in English language and teaching as well and thus they are, subsequently, in urgent need of an intensive training. For this reason, in this paper we will attempt to provide a workable definition of competence in English language and English teaching and how we can consider a teacher competent, and then we will provide a program for training future or in-service teachers for they will be able to manifest a rich input to their respective learners and finally, we will come up with some recommendations and suggestions about how teachers can obtain the optimum results and make learners meet the objectives set behind the course.

What is Competence?

Competence in the field of teaching refers to the actual potential, either realized or latent. The level of competence refers to the degree of fit of the abilities demanded by the task and the actual abilities present.

According to Pickett (1998), competencies are the sum of our experiences and the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes we have acquired during our lifetime. Major variables which influence the competence level are experience, training, education and family background.

What is Qualification?

A prominent related term is the concept of qualification. Qualification can be defined as positions of a mechanically demanded performance in test environments in form of knowledge and skill positions. According to Erpenbeck and Rosonstiel (2003 cited in Brinckmann, 21, the main difference between competence and qualification is environment in which they are assessed. While competence is generally evaluated according to real-life or real-life simulations, qualifications are assessed in separate and standardized examination environments yielding certified outcomes of the present knowledge. This illustrates the academic relatedness of qualifications. In turn, competence not only includes academically acquired knowledge, but reflects largely practical acquired skills and knowledge.

Know-how, e.g. knowledge in a detailed sense, abilities; qualifications are not to be equated with competencies, they are not sufficient for competent acting. Competencies require skills, abilities and qualifications, while being much more than that.

Especially important is the relation between qualifications and competencies. Development of competencies requires a high level of qualification. Highly competent persons are always qualified at the same time. Nevertheless highly qualified persons might be fully incompetent. Competencies are founded on qualifications, they take them for granted and still are more than that and different.

Arnord (2000 cited in Ehlers and Pawlowski, 127) compares qualifications and competencies as follows:

Qualification	competency
Always intends to serve a given purpose	Includes the ability of self-organization
Limited to the compliance of concrete requests and/or requirements, therefore it is object-related	It is subject-related
Restricted to immediate activity related knowledge, abilities and skills	Refers to the entire person. Therefore a competency pursues a holistic demand

Relates to elements of individual abilities, which can be certified within a judgment context	Learning competencies open the possibility to issue-focused learning opposite to the necessities to arrange for the interposition of qualities. Competency includes the variety of all individual acting dispositions
Disorienting from the classical ideal of education by focusing on utilisable abilities and skills	It is orienting towards the classical ideal of education using a new, contemporary way

We understand competencies as evolutionary grown, generalized self-organization dispositions of complex, adaptive systems for reflexive, creative acting with the intention of problem solving focused on general classes of complex, selectively important situations (paths) Kappelhoff (2004 cited in Ehlers and Schneckenberg, 2010: 305)

An example shall illustrate this meaning:

When I was a teacher of grammar, I used to teach where to use definite and indefinite articles before nouns and names either singular or plural, when we arrived to means of transportation such as plane, car, taxi which are preceded by the preposition 'by' I asked them not to put an article either definite or indefinite, but I did not mention train and bicycle for example, the same practice was for the cheque. When starting exercises, I found that learners are still confused whether to make an article before car, train, plane and cheque. To resolve this I made up my mind by informing my students that before any means of transportation or means of payment that that preceded by the preposition 'by' no article is needed. In this situation my qualifications were not my aid, it was only a strategy to solve a problem and the possession of know-how.

Competency in English Education

A competency in English teaching-learning is the ability to act using a range of skills and knowledge in various situations that may differ from those in which they were learned. An individual's competency in a certain area develops over time. A competency is widely recognized as context-sensitive. In other words, students will

be prepared to use English effectively in real-life situations by drawing on and manipulating what they have learned in school.

Competency Based Approach (CBA)

For teaching English as a foreign language, the Competency Based Approach is among the latest methods of 21st century; it is an approach that started in Canada approach and which based on the competency in learning. Scholars uphold the contention that competency itself is a function of three core components a) attitude, b) skills, and c) knowledge.

If students take only one core component and ignores the other, they cannot be seen to have satisfactory mastered the competency. Williams and Mui Hua (1999) say in the subject : "a teaching staff engaged in a module fostering the competency of 'Planning and Design' will have to make explicit not just a knowledge of the principles of design, but also how these translate into the skills required for design and the necessary attitudes such as accuracy, quality and so on".

All in all, we can say that there is no space in this approach for the idea of the ideal teacher who is considered as a fountain of knowledge, by contrast the learner is the centre of the learning process. When the approach is applied correctly the students will be their own best teachers; and based on that they will acquire the spirit of innovation. It is now learner-centered approach which is moving to learning centered approach.

The Aim of CBA

CBA is an approach to respond to the world needs; that is as the world is developing particularly in science and technology, new jobs are required and then those jobs require new type of knowledge and new profile of the individual. This means that this requires new learners with new profile and then new teachers. The aim of this is to enable learners and teachers to cope with the new demands of the world. And so the aim is to form a learner who will serve his nation and so we produce useful people. In CBA knowledge which is important; i.e. knowledge which is not useful in reality is not the ultimate goal of pedagogy. That is to say, any kind of knowledge that helps learners to do things of worth in life. We need to know-how, if

we have knowledge we have to well exploit it. It refers to the capacity of integrating skills together: know how to act; it is a whole behaviour, this actually what we need nowadays.

CBA focuses also on capacity, without it we cannot do anything; integration of any intellectual knowledge or strategic knowledge, it's the capacity that comes from the individual itself. CBA takes care of time and needs appropriate materials and preparations; it is so demanding; its axiom is the skill and it is always synonymous with ability to manipulate things. CBA is the proficiency in any domain. It triggers the individual thinking simply because it is problem-solving based approach. CBA objectives are a) the learning of how to behave orally; interaction is given importance but written production is always emphasized, b) CBA insists on starting from the undemanding to complex situations.

CBA Curriculum

In the CBA curriculum, language is viewed as a set of interacting competencies. Therefore, the ability to use language as a speaker, listener, reader and writer is critical in the goals of the curriculum. The program is therefore always centered on the students and the development of their capacities in order for them to acquire, in the most effective way possible, competency in English. Competencies are linked to their in-school and out of school needs. Students learn to speak, listen to, read, write and re-use what they have learned in new situations. These skills are taught in an integrated way, since in real-life that is how they are used. It is no longer sufficient to dispense information to students, rather the aim is to help students to play an ever more active role in their own development and make them responsible for their own learning. In order to take this active role, students need opportunities to find the answers to questions arising from their own daily life and to become more responsible and autonomous. In this approach to learning students confront complex and significant situations; their personal process of adaptation relies on their cognitive and affective resources while also taking into account the influence of their social and cultural interactions with the world around them.

By framing the aims of the curriculum in terms of competency, the focus is on what learners can actively do in and with the language rather than on a discrete list of items they are expected to remember. Students are then in need to other kinds of competencies in order to accomplish the mission:

- Linguistic Competency
- Language Strategies

Linguistic Competency

Linguistic competency includes the learning and mastery of grammar, pronunciation and the vocabulary needed in a given context. There is a separate set of descriptors of linguistic competency for each grade level.

Language Strategies

Language strategies are ways that help students to acquire, remember, organize and use information on an ongoing basis. The language strategies are incorporated into the competencies, rather than listed separately.

Competent and Qualified Teachers of English at the Training College (ENS)

As far as qualification is concerned, it is preferable that higher education lecturers hold a high degree i.e. MA or PHD, simply because along with this qualification, teachers would be au fait with recent teaching methods, they can expect difficulties that may take place during the teaching-learning process such as anxiety, introversion of students, decrease of motivation...etc. High degrees can also help teachers to well assess the level of the students as far as grammar, vocabulary, speaking stress and intonation and writing style are concerned.

By competent teachers of English we may mean their strategy of making their teaching successful. The latter can be evaluated through learners' scores or through learners' achievement in informal assessments. Expecting learners to be competent is not legitimate if this quality is already absent in the teacher. Algerian teachers whose first language is Arabic generally tend to think and act in their mother tongue and thus this leads to a conflict between thinking and

realization in the foreign language within or outside the classroom walls.

Beneficial Training

We recommend training to teachers who hold only BA and they are responsible for training their learners to be future teachers as well. For this layer of teachers, we suggest to take a training course abroad where teaching techniques, strategies and methods are advanced and available at the hand of good experts in the field. In case travelling abroad cannot be afforded, we recommend that those teachers are to be trained by their fellow lecturers who are qualified and competent as well and who already went for training several times and thus gained much expertise and experience in the teaching field. Teachers of English who hold BA are not necessarily non-competent, they can be so in case they can make their learners meet their objectives by the end of any course.

Teaching English has to include two important aspects:

Proficiency in English language: knowing the whole language and in this context we can measure it by the scores got in a written or an oral test. By so doing, ENS teachers are advised to follow long-life learning. They are in need to improve their standard as in-service teachers by teaching and learning simultaneously.

Proficiency in language teaching: this comprises teaching strategies, techniques, methodologies... etc; that is to say, how to be a good teacher that makes learners understand and benefit from his or her courses delivered. Also, meeting the objectives of the course by the end is a proof that the teacher is proficient, qualified and competent as well.

Work Shops

They are of utility to teacher trainers; they push them forward to work and search and look for resolutions to the difficulties they may encounter. Workshops which are headed by a qualified and competent trainer are of a paramount importance to those who are interested in how to deal with students and teach new approaches that respond to what is going on at present in the world.

Observing Fellow Teachers

It is a technique used by smart teachers who are good observers and critics, they can learn a lot from others' teachings and get inspired in order to do better or create something newer to their respective students, either as far as the approach is concerned or concerning the language itself.

Teachers Self-Evaluation or Fellow-Evaluation

Teacher trainers are required to assess their level of teaching and to what extent they are knowledgeable and competent. Have they met their objectives by the end of the course or no? Are their students satisfied and can use English in the real life? They may also be required to follow a continuous assessment done by themselves or by their fellow teachers in the aim of improving their vision to teaching and learning as well. They may use a portfolio to gather a chronological progress of their achievement, and whether the quality of their teaching is improving.

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