

COMPETENCY BASED TEACHER EDUCATION (CBTE): A STRATEGY FOR PREPARATION OF TEACHERS

Article

ABSTRACT

Competency-based teacher education advocates pressing for consequence competencies as the most important measures of teacher effectiveness. They rely on the ultimate purpose of schools (Pupil learning) as the major rationales for their position. They would hold teachers accountable for pupil achievement, but would permit a wide range of teacher actions and teaching strategies.

CBTE is a systematic approach for preparing teachers. Its concepts are simple and straightforward. The CBTE approach brings about one other major shift from traditional programs. CBTE was developed with explicit goals and assessment systems, options for participants, prior knowledge of requirements and alternative instructional Programs, CBTE offered both individualization and personalization. Amid the worldwide thinking CBTE, it must be remembered that while the concept is sound and fundamental, the implementation is still primitive in terms of its inherent promise. Years of research and development are necessary for adequate testing of the concept.

INTRODUCTION

“Competent” is defined as “adequate for the purpose; suitable, sufficient”, or as “legally qualified, admissible”, or as “capable”. In a sense it refers to adequate preparation to begin a professional career. Competency-based teacher education emphasizes a minimum standard; it adds criterion levels, value orientations, and quality to the definition of the movement.

Competency-based teacher education advocates pressing for consequence competencies as the most important measures of teacher effectiveness. They rely on the ultimate purpose of schools (Pupil learning) as the major rationales for their position. They would hold teachers, accountable for pupil achievement, but would permit a wide range of teacher actions and teaching strategies. CBTE is a systematic approach for preparing teachers. Its concepts are simple and straightforward. The CBTE approach brings about one other major shift from traditional programs.

HISTORY OF COMPETENCY-BASED TEACHER EDUCATION (CBTE)

A growing demand during the 1960's for greater relevance in educational practice, a stronger explicit

conceptualization of teacher roles led the United States Office of Education (USOE) in 1967 to request detailed educational specifications that could be used as guides in developing sound teacher education programs.

Nine sets of specifications were developed during 1968. The following year, eight institutions conducted feasibility studies. Each project had unique educational assumptions upon which its program was based. Clearly definable trends permeated all of them. Each program included objectives, instructional components to meet the objectives, assessment procedures, a design for program management, an opportunity for co-operative interaction, and a systematic approach to comprehensive teacher education programs.

In the 1970's competency-based teacher education reflected the general cultural trends in the United States as well as specific educational goals. The CBTE movement, also referred to as performance-based teacher

Dr.M.S.TALAWAR

*Professor & Director-UGC-Academic Staff College,
Bangalore University, Bangalore-1*

T.PRADEEP KUMAR

*Research Scholar, P.G.Department of Education,
Bangalore University, Bangalore-56*

education (PBTE), supported by grants from federal, private and state sources, landed as the most effective process to prepare teachers, employed nominally for several years by over 400 institutions.

FIVE CLASSES OF COMPETENCIES

1. Cognitive-based competencies
2. Performance-based competencies
3. Consequence-based competencies
4. Affective-based competencies
5. Exploratory-based competencies

1. Cognitive-based competencies define knowledge and intellectual skills and abilities that are expected of the learner. (For example, "The prospective teacher can list and illustrate five levels of Questions")

2. Performance-based competencies define skills and overt actions. The learner demonstrates that he or she can do something rather than simply know something. (For example, "The prospective teacher leads a class discussion in which at least 50 percent of the students participate orally")

3. Consequence-based competencies: The person is required to bring about change in others. Thus, the criterion of success is not what one knows or does, but what one can accomplish. (For example, a teacher's competence is assessed by examining the achievements of pupils)

4. Affective-based competencies define expected attitudes and values, and are more difficult to assess than the first three types. (For example, the prospective teacher values the contribution of all students in a class discussion)

5. Exploratory-based competencies or Experience/ Expressive objectives: Activities that promise significant learning are specified. They provide opportunities for students to learn about teaching, but the specific nature of such learning is not defined. Experiences of the learner and the particular set of experiences in the activity largely influence the outcomes. (For example,

learner should work 30 hours in a community center, discuss schooling with three parents, or act as a teacher aid for four weeks)

It does not fit well with the four other types in the CBTE classification system. CBTE programs do not depend on exploratory competencies, but do employ them when precise outcomes have yet to be explicated. In CBTE, greater emphasis is placed on performance-based and consequence-based competencies than on cognitive-based objectives.

RESEARCH ON CBTE

1. Research basis for this position in psychology through incidental/ intentional learning studies, in experiments in mastery learning by **Benjamin Bloom**, **John Carroll** and their associates, and in the studies of behaviorally stated objectives.

2. Keller's Personalized System of Instruction (PSI) relied on precise objectives and standards for university science courses. The preponderance of studies tended to support the CBTE hypothesis: Students who know in advance the specific objectives of instruction achieve more than those unaware of the objectives. CBTE Applied this approach to professional training of teachers:

First- Objectives were based on the role requirements of teachers.

Second- Performance rather than knowledge alone was required for program completion.

3. Enos at San Diego State University

Enos compared elementary education graduates of a CBTE curriculum track with those of the traditional track, basing his study on the set of objectives the university had certified to the state of California as the basis for their program. He found that CBTE students had significantly greater knowledge about teaching and learning, significantly better verbal interaction with children, significantly greater use of individualized instruction and significantly higher ratings of their performance by children they taught.

4. In dozens of comparisons, made by research, CITE-trained teachers out-performed graduates of the traditional program.

5. Positive findings favoring CBTE were reported at the University of Nebraska, the University of Houston, Weber State University, Oregon College of Education, and the University of Toledo.

Such studies generally concluded that CBTE students felt more confident as they completed the program, were evaluated more highly by their supervisors, had a wider repertoire of teaching skills, and believed their preparation program was better than that of other prospective teachers.

OBJECTIVES OF CBTE

To meet at least the minimum standards for each and every competency required in the program, to relate achievement to present objectives, to create a list of competencies in teacher education, to improve the performance level of the teaching learning process, to facilitate human relations in all areas of professional responsibility, to plan and implement instruction effectively to meet the educational needs of the students, to evaluate the attainment of specified teaching competencies based on student achievement, to establish learning condition and learner response, to diagnose the learner's emotional, social, physical and intellectual needs, to identify or specify instructional goals & objectives based on learner needs, to design instruction appropriate to goals and objectives, to implement instruction that is consistent with plan, to design and implement evaluation procedures which focus on learner achievement and instructional effectiveness.

STRATEGIES OF CBTE

The identification of valid competencies based on practices of effective teachers, conceptualizations of effective teacher practice, to determine appropriate teacher-education curriculum and methods that would modify the behavior of trainees, determination of content and organization of Teacher Education, to include adequate assessment procedures to measure the changes in behavior, to consider what teachers should know,

be able to do and to accomplish, providing a systematic approach to handling educational complexity, which will lead to modernizing teacher education, acquiring master teaching skills and teaching competency objectives, to devote the needed resources to research and to refine competencies, programs, assessment and research.

EFFECTIVENESS OF CBTE

Despite the extensive rhetoric, publications and discussions related to CBTE, almost no basic definitive research was conducted to prove or disprove its effectiveness. Hundreds of publications recommended ways to design CBTE programs, outlined lists of competencies and included instructional units referred to as modules. Few reported research on the CBTE concept, competency validation or program effectiveness; carefully controlled experimental studies were conducted.

The decade of the 1970's marked the growth spurt of CBTE. Four national surveys traced this development. Throughout the decade, the number of institutions operating full-scale CBTE programs increased. By 1980, 80 institutions (13%) reported Full-Scale CBTE Programs, while 284 institutions were operating small scale programs.

The percentage of institutions with small scale programs remained relatively constant: 44% in 1975, 49% in 1977, 46% in 1980.

**Table 1
EXTENSIVENESS OF CBTE
IMPLEMENTATION**

Investment	Percentage of colleges responding ^a			
	1973 (n = 783)	1975 (n = 570)	1977 (n = 686)	1980 (n = 624)
Operating full-scale CBTE program	1	8	9	13
Operating limited CBTE program	15	44	49	45
Exploring or developing CBTE program	54	47	26	14
Not involved	29	17	29	41

^a Column totals may not total 100 percent due to overlap in categories of involvement.

In its search for ideal preparation for ideal teachers, the findings of one researcher or institution would be shared with others in a growing body of research evidence.

For example the research conducted by Enos at San Diego State University shows that CBTE students had significantly greater knowledge about teaching and learning, significantly better verbal interaction with children, significantly greater use of individualized instruction, and significantly higher ratings of their performance by children they taught. In dozens of comparisons, CBTE trained teachers out-performed graduates of the traditional program.

CONCERNS OF CRITICS

Humanistic educators attacked CBTE for its prespecified objectives. Their argument pivoted on whether the learner controlled his own learning or was controlled by some external system. Their view of education as developing free, self-determining, self-renewing, self-actualized persons was antithetical to the basic CBTE conceptualization. Others charged CBTE with being anti-intellectual with the emphasis in CBTE on performance. They noted that a naïve actor could fulfill requirements without the undergirding knowledge base. The specification of competencies was criticized because such lists atomized the teaching process. Teachers do not teach using independent competencies, but using in context and in an integrated fashion a number of skills and knowledge. The value of dissecting general competence into a number of specific and autonomous objectives was questioned. Since each competency was to be measured, the use of a single-variable procedure was considered inadequate. These critics opted for multivariate measures of the total integrated teaching process of a teacher.

Elam (1972, p 21) in his document on CBTE stated that "The overriding problem before which the others pale to insignificance is that of the adequacy of measurement instruments and procedures". Although hundreds of instruments have been developed and several conferences held on the topic, assessment persists as the major problem in CBTE as in all of teacher education.

No developmental sequence of studies in a comprehensive research program was undertaken.

Many conclusions were based on the feelings or perceptions of faculty or students. The lack of carefully controlled and constructed research on the effectiveness of CBTE and of specific competencies is a major weakness in the development of the movement.

CONCLUSION

Amid the worldwide thinking in CBTE, it must be remembered that while the concept is sound and fundamental, the implementation is still primitive in terms of its inherent promise. Years of research and development are necessary for adequate testing of the concept.

The temptation to continue with current programs and not experiment with new approaches must be dissuaded. Without the philosophical, pedagogical and psychological analyses that are the essence of CBTE, teacher education will flounder with global goals and complex unanalyzed variables. Only in continual, data based, thoughtful change will teacher preparation programs improve. The CBTE approach provides the conceptual frame to make that possible.

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