

DEVELOPING KEY COMPETENCIES IN PRIMARY EDUCATION

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Abstract

This article examines the theoretical and methodological foundations of developing key competencies in primary education. The study focuses on the role of a competency-based approach in shaping students' cognitive, communicative, social, and personal competencies at the early stages of schooling. Taking into account the age and psychological characteristics of primary school learners, effective pedagogical strategies and teaching methods for competency development are analyzed. The article also provides practical recommendations for teachers aimed at improving the quality and effectiveness of primary education.

Keywords

primary education, competency-based approach, key competencies, learning outcomes, teaching methods.

Introduction

In the context of modern educational reforms, the transition from a knowledge-based paradigm to a competency-based approach has become a global trend. Primary education plays a crucial role in laying the foundation for lifelong learning, personal development, and social integration. Therefore, the formation of key competencies at the primary level is considered a strategic objective of contemporary education systems.

Competency-based education emphasizes not only the acquisition of knowledge but also the ability to apply it effectively in real-life situations. In this regard, primary school teachers face the important task of creating learning environments that promote students' active participation, independent thinking, and problem-solving skills.

Theoretical Background of Competency-Based Education

The concept of competency is defined as an integrated set of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that enable individuals to perform effectively in various contexts. In educational theory, competencies are viewed as measurable learning outcomes that reflect students' readiness to apply acquired knowledge in practice.

In primary education, key competencies include:

- cognitive and learning competence;
- communicative competence;
- social and civic competence;
- personal and self-development competence;
- digital and information competence.

The development of these competencies ensures the holistic growth of learners and prepares them for further stages of education.

Age Characteristics of Primary School Students and Competency Formation

Primary school students (aged 6–10) are characterized by high learning motivation, curiosity, emotional responsiveness, and a strong tendency toward imitation. These developmental features create favorable conditions for competency formation through interactive and learner-centered teaching methods.

At this stage, competencies are developed not through abstract theoretical explanations but through practical activities, collaboration, reflection, and guided support from teachers.

Pedagogical Strategies for Developing Competencies in Primary Education

4.1. Learner-Centered Approach

A learner-centered approach places students at the center of the educational process. It encourages autonomy, responsibility, and active engagement in learning activities, thereby fostering cognitive and personal competencies.

4.2. Problem-Based Learning

Problem-based learning develops critical thinking and problem-solving competencies by engaging students in real-life or simulated problem situations that require analysis, discussion, and decision-making.

4.3. Collaborative Learning

Collaborative learning promotes social and communicative competencies through group work, peer interaction, and shared responsibility for learning outcomes.

4.4. Integrated Teaching

Integrated teaching connects different subjects and learning areas, enabling students to apply knowledge across disciplines and develop transferable competencies.

4.5. Reflective Practices

Reflection helps students evaluate their learning experiences, identify strengths and weaknesses, and develop self-regulation and self-assessment skills.

5. Practical Implementation: Sample Classroom Activities

Activity Type: Competency-oriented learning task

Grade Level: Primary grades

Objectives:

- to develop students' communication and collaboration skills;
- to foster independent thinking and creativity.

Activity Description:

Students work in small groups to solve a practical task related to everyday life. They discuss possible solutions, present their ideas, and reflect on the outcomes under the teacher's guidance.

6. Methodological Recommendations

Based on the analysis, the following methodological recommendations are proposed:

- design learning tasks aimed at developing multiple competencies simultaneously;
- use interactive and activity-based teaching methods;
- consider students' age and individual characteristics;
- integrate assessment with competency development through formative feedback;
- encourage self-assessment and reflection.

7. Conclusion

The development of key competencies in primary education is a fundamental requirement of modern educational systems. A competency-based approach ensures that students acquire not only subject knowledge but also essential life skills necessary for personal and social success. Purposeful and systematic implementation of competency-oriented teaching strategies significantly enhances the quality and effectiveness of primary education.

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