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Teachers' Perspectives on the Competency-Based Approach: Assessing Readiness for a New Educational Reform

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Abstract. This study re-evaluated the **Competency-based approach** (CBA) in Algerian schools, focusing on teachers' perspectives and **attitudes** towards this teaching methodology, initially implemented over eighteen years ago. Previous research suggested that the abrupt shift to CBA left many teachers struggling to grasp its core principles and deliver effective lessons. To assess the current situation, a questionnaire was distributed to 45 English language teachers across Algerian middle schools in diverse regions. The results indicated pervasive dissatisfaction with the CBA, with a preference for traditional teaching methodologies better suited to the Algerian educational context. Identified obstacles fell into six main categories: washback effect, lack of practical training, absence of clear **competency** performance criteria, heaviness of the curriculum, over crowdedness of classrooms, and scarcity of resources. Despite significant investment from the Ministry of Education in professional development seminars and in-service training, the desired outcomes for a better understanding and implementation of the CBA have not been achieved. This study posited the need for a new and a more strategic approach to reform, given the apparent shortcomings of the current methodology.

Keywords: Competency-based Approach; Competency; Attitudes

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1. Background of the Study

In 2002, the National Education Reform Commission (PARE) and UNICEF introduced the competency-based curriculum across primary, middle, and secondary schools in Algeria. The transition from content-based to outcome-based curricula demanded substantial pedagogical adaptations to both curriculum and teaching methods. Subsequently, since 2005, significant financial and human resources have been allocated to retrain and assist teachers, principals, and inspectors, developing necessary skills for effective competency-based education implementation (Bader, 2015; Bellour, 2017; Boukhentache, 2020; Cherairia, 2021; Djerouane, 2022).

Despite its merits, the competency-based approach (CBA) has faced criticism from Western academics and educationalists (Auerbach, 1986; Bowden, 2004; Preston, 2017). Preston (2017) presented the CBA not only as a threat to education but an existential menace. He posited that the CBA was not appropriate for the humanities field since education encompasses more than merely fostering skills for vocational sectors. He further contended that it encourages the "processes of the capitalization of humanity, the caging of human capacities in a digital frame... the transformation of humanity into a dystopian form of trans-humanity" (Preston, 2017, p.6).

In the Algerian context, the CBA has demonstrated multiple weaknesses. According to Mansour (2023), Bellour (2017) and Bader (2015), the educational reforms were not immune to criticism, and teachers' complaints have been increasing. This shift, as Bouhadiba (2015) and others have noted, "resulted in an abrupt transition for the teacher and the learner who were not prepared in a thoughtful and coherent manner" (p.14). Mansour (2023) and Bader (2015) stated that most teachers were unsatisfied with their students' overall performance and the inapplicability of the CBA principles, such as the key concept competence, which is neither well-defined nor teachable and learnable. Some researchers have even declared that the CBA has failed in Algeria (Bellour, 2017; Djerouane, 2022; Mansour, 2023).

The success or failure of any reform is contingent upon the teachers. If teachers do not accept, modify, and/or adapt their practices to align with the reform, even the most effective strategy will fail and remain an aspiration (AlAbri, 2022; Maqbali, 2019). Therefore, the purpose of this study is to determine the degree to which the CBA has been successful in the Algerian educational context from the viewpoint of English senior teachers. The following pertinent research questions guided the current study:

1. How do English language teachers perceive the CBA?
2. What are teachers' attitudes towards the CBA?

2. Review of the Literature

2.1. The Competency as a Construct

Whenever the term "competence" is mentioned, a "know how to act" process is implied. Competency is a system of conceptual and procedural parts of knowledge organized into operating schemes that help identify a problem or task

and its solution through efficient action within a set of situations. Mrowicki (1986, as cited in Weddle, 2006) defined competencies to consist of as set of skills, knowledge, and behaviours.

“Competencies consist of a description of the essential skills, knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors required for effective performance of a real-world task or activity. These activities may be related to any domain of life, though have typically been linked to the field of work and to social survival in a new environment” (p. 2).

Richards and Rodgers (2001) cite Docking (1994) Richards and Rodgers (2001) cited Docking (1994) to define competencies as:

“An element of competency can be defined as any attribute of an individual that contributes to the successful performance of a task, job, function, or activity in an academic setting and/or a work setting. This includes specific knowledge, thinking processes, attitudes, and perceptual and physical skills” (p. 145).

Conceptually, competency is composed primarily of knowledge (savoir), skill (savoir-faire), and behavior (savoir-être). In the context of English language classrooms in Algeria, the concept of competency refers to the ability to integrate language knowledge (savoir) and language skills (savoir-faire) with social skills (savoir-être) to use English aptly in various real-life situations (Boukhentache, 2020). Therefore, the ability to employ language as a speaker, listener, reader, and writer is crucial to the CBA. Learners' competencies relate to their in-school and out-of-school needs.

However, a substantial body of literature presents criticisms of competency-based education, the most significant being the imprecision and ambiguity of competence definitions. Additionally, there is notable uncertainty regarding the correlation between competence, knowledge, and performance. A more comprehensive understanding of how this strategy operates and can be implemented necessitates awareness of its different components (Djerouane, 2022). We hypothesized that the lack of a clear definition for this key concept adversely impacted teachers' understanding of this approach, subsequently affecting its implementation.

2.2 The Algerian English Competency-Based Framework

The Algerian English Framework (AEF) was established as a guide for facilitating the learning achievements of English language students from sixth to twelfth grades. This framework adopts the globally recognized Common European Framework but operates within the specificities of the Algerian context. It encourages a shift from traditional classroom roles where the teacher is viewed as the primary source of knowledge, and students are passive recipients to a model that defines learner end-of-year accomplishments in terms of competencies.

The AEF aids teachers in coordinating with each other and with authors of instructional materials, with the aim of assisting Algerian students in attaining English language proficiency. Such proficiency is required to meet the demands of communicating within the global community. Project work is pivotal within

the AEF and it promotes the socio-constructivist perspective of learning, as advocated by the framework. Through performing real-world tasks in group work, students can demonstrate the desired competencies. Additionally, assessment within the AEF is based on competency criteria (Boukhentache, 2020; Bader, 2015).

2.3 Teacher's Roles and Instructional Practices

In the context of the CBA, Sturgis and Patrick (2010), along with Griffith (2014), suggested that teachers must cultivate new competencies and instructional practices to implement the principles of the CBA effectively. The teachers' role transitions from being providers of information to facilitators, guides, and scaffolders who design interrelated lessons that sequentially progress towards short-term goals and long-term competencies. To achieve this, teachers must devise and contextualize tasks and activities that allow students to practice and enhance real-world reading, writing, speaking, and listening communication skills. Teachers also need to supplement and modify the textbook to plan tasks promoting cooperative, collaborative, and autonomous learning. As for assessment, teachers are required to regularly evaluate their students' learning through a diverse array of assessment activities. These activities should assess students' knowledge of language, performance, and competencies.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The present study utilized an explanatory sequential mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative techniques, for data collection and analysis. The primary aim was to examine teachers' perceptions of and attitudes towards the CBA. It was hypothesized that the reform will fail if teachers develop negative attitudes towards it. Hence, quantitative, and qualitative data were necessary for a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the perspectives of teachers on the CBA. Quantitative data allowed for the identification of correlations between teachers' perceptions and inappropriate implementation of the CBA, while qualitative data assisted in the interpretation of the quantitative results to investigate the underlying causes, determine the reasons for teachers' attitudes and pedagogical practices, and predict future occurrences. By providing an interpretive perspective, the study endeavored to generate comprehensive insights into the issue at hand, offering both quantitative and qualitative explanations.

3.2 Participants

In this study, all participants were experienced fourth-year middle school English teachers from various middle schools across Algeria. The sample consisted of 45 senior English teachers who were purposefully selected based on specific criteria: they each had a minimum of 18 years of teaching experience, had participated in several professional development trainings (PDTs), and could provide a comprehensive account of the Algerian CBA framework as well as a detailed evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the PDT seminars. These participants were expected to have developed the competencies required for effective implementation of the CBA. Informed consent was obtained from all

participants, who were actively involved in the research as member participants. Mirza et al. (2023) explained that “An informed consent letter needs to be sent to each participant” (p. 443). All participants were invited to sign a consent form to provide their written consent. The form provided participants with clear and comprehensive information regarding the study's purpose, procedures, potential risks and benefits, and duration. In addition, they were informed that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time. Participants were assured that their personal information and responses would be kept confidential, and that their data would be used exclusively for research purposes.

3.3 Data Collection Instruments and Procedures

To achieve the objectives of the study, an online descriptive Likert scale questionnaire was employed for data collection (appendix 1). The data was securely stored, Personal information and responses were kept confidential, and the data was used exclusively for research purposes. The questionnaire was piloted for reliability and validity purposes. The questionnaire comprised both Likert scale questions and open-ended questions. After piloting the questionnaire, the Cronbach's alpha value was found to be 0.887, signifying satisfactory internal reliability. In addition, two experts familiar with competency-based education and teacher perceptions reviewed the test. The CVI score of 0.87 indicated that content validity was strong. The set of questions was adopted from Schmidt et al. (2009), the Algerian Guide of Competencies and Assessment Rubrics, and were adapted queries from Djerouane's study (2022). The questions focused on teachers' comprehension and knowledge of the key concepts and principles of the CBA, their capability to apply this theoretical knowledge in their day-to-day teaching, their proficiency in designing competency-driven lessons and exams, the challenges they encountered, the opportunities for professional development, and their attitudes towards this approach. The open-ended questions were designed to collect qualitative data.

3.4 Data Analysis

Survey data was submitted to quantitative data. The statistical Software SPSS was used. Descriptive statistics were used to calculate frequencies. The responses to the open-ended questions were coded and analyzed using the triangulated and data-driven procedures of thematic analysis. The data was coded using qualitative data analysis software Atlas-ti. Subsequently, the codes were grouped into themes and categories.

4. Results

4.1 English Language Teachers' Perceptions towards CBA

4.1.1 Theoretical Knowledge of the CBA

The first section of the questionnaire was organized around five central themes: understanding of the language and learning principles as articulated by the CBA; comprehension of the key components of competency; understanding of the main roles of the teacher as prescribed by the CBA; and comprehension of the key aspects of competency-driven assessment.

Table 1: Theoretical Knowledge about the CBA

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
CBA believes in the functional view of language	80%	20%	0%	0%	0%
CBA believes in the structural view of language	0%	0%	0%	20%	80%
CBA draws on Behaviorism	0%	0%	0%	20%	80%
CBA draws on Constructivism	85%	15%	0%	0%	0%
CBA draws on Socio-constructivism	85%	15%	0%	0%	0%
Needs analysis is a key component of the CBA	90%	10%	0%	0%	0%
Competencies should be stated in specific behavioral terms/observable and measurable performance	80%	20%	0%	0%	0%
CBA should make extensive use of real-life materials contextualized by teachers	85%	15%	0%	0%	0%
Competency is the integration of knowledge, skills, and attitudes	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Competency is the know-how not the know what	0%	0%	0%	10%	90%
Competency is the know-what not the know-how	0%	0%	0%	10%	90%
Competency is a set of observable and measurable behaviors developed through habit formation process	0%	0%	0%	30%	70%
Competency is a set of conceptual and procedural knowledge	95%	5%	0%	0%	0%
I know the differences between conceptual knowledge and procedural knowledge	70%	30%	0%	0%	0%
Learners are empty recipients	0%	0%	0%	35%	65%
Teachers' role is to provide information	0%	0%	0%	20%	80%
Teachers are facilitators and scaffolders	85%	15%	0%	0%	0%
CBA believes that teachers should facilitate autonomous learning	80%	20%	0%	0%	0%
CBA emphasizes active learning	80%	20%	0%	0%	0%
CBA emphasizes the importance of habit formation	0%	0%	0%	20%	80%
CBA rejects collaborative learning	0%	0%	0%	20%	80%
Collaborative Knowledge construction is in opposition	0%	0%	0%	20%	80%

with the concept of competency as defined by the CBA					
CBA believes in Knowledge construction	90%	10%	0%	0%	0%
CBA posits that competencies are observable and measurable	90%	10%	0%	0%	0%
CBA posits that each competency has clear performance criteria for teaching and learning purposes	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
CBA posits that each competency has clear performance criteria for assessment purposes	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
CBA believes in the summative and continuous assessment of Competencies	80%	20%	0%	0%	0%

The results shown in Table 1 revealed that all teachers demonstrated a solid understanding of the principles underpinning the CBA. Regarding the linguistic and learning foundations of the CBA, teachers strongly agreed that the CBA relies on the concept of communicative competence, as it emphasizes the development of learners' ability to use language effectively in real-life situations. Furthermore, teachers concurred that the CBA aligns with constructivist and socio-constructivist views of learning, which center on fostering collaborative knowledge construction processes to enable learners to use language in real-world situations (Mirza, 2011).

In terms of the concept of competency, the results suggested that all teachers had a firm grasp of the essential characteristics and components of competency, viewing it as the integration of knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for performing real-world tasks. It appeared they understood what competency entails and could differentiate it from other educational concepts. Moreover, teachers demonstrated understanding of their new teaching roles and responsibilities, as well as how their instructional strategies should align with the goals and principles of the CBA. Lastly, the results indicated that teachers comprehended the fundamental principles of competency-driven assessment and the importance of using assessment data to guide instruction.

4.1.2. Instructional Practices

Table 2. Teachers' Actual Practices of the CBA

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I implement the CBA as I can demonstrate instructional strategies informed by the CBA	0%	0%	0%	5%	95%
I implement the CBA instructional strategies outlined	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%

in the Algerian Competence framework					
The lessons I plan are competency-based lesson.	0%	0%	0%	15%	85%
I conduct needs analysis prior to lesson planning.	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
I translate each competency's performance criteria into instructional strategies.	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
I teach competencies because they are articulated in measurable performance criteria and specific behavioral terms.	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
I teach all the competencies necessary for any specific situation	0%	0%	0%	20%	80%
I am capable of imparting conceptual and procedural knowledge.	0%	0%	0%	10%	90%
I move to the next competency only when the current one has been mastered by learners	0%	0%	0%	5%	95%
I assist students in developing the desired competencies regardless of time constraints.	0%	0%	0%	10%	90%
I do not cover most competencies as my focus is on covering the curriculum in a timely manner	95%	5%	0%	0%	0%
I do not teach competencies as they are neither teachable nor learnable	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
I create real-world materials in my classroom.	5%	95%	0%	0%	0%
I contextualize the textbook's provided texts.	90%	10%	0%	0%	0%
Most of students pass the year without mastering the target competencies.	95%	5%	0%	0%	0%
I teach for exams because official general exams are neither competency-based nor comply with the CBA principles.	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
I design competency-based examinations.	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
I provide my students with pre-made competency-based examinations.	0%	0%	0%	20%	80%
I do not assess competencies as they are neither observable nor measurable	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%

The results indicated in table 2 showed that the teachers had a low opinion of their actual implementation of the CBA instructional strategies. They unanimously agreed that the CBA had not been implemented. The teachers strongly agreed that the competencies as described by the Algerian CBA framework were neither teachable nor learnable due to the lack of well-articulated and measurable performance criteria for teaching and assessment purposes. Thus, teachers asserted that competencies were neither taught nor assessed. In addition, they asserted that neither the teaching materials nor the type of assessments were competency-driven, which is why they did not design competency-based lessons. Teachers strongly agreed that the textbook materials were neither authentic nor contextualizable. Furthermore, all teachers concurred that they prioritized covering the curriculum and teaching the types of assessments included in the Algerian official general assessments (BEM and Baccaalaureate), which did not align with the CBA principles.

4.1.3. Professional Development Training (PDT)

Teachers were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction with the PDT workshops.

Table 3: Teachers' perceptions about PDT

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
PDT workshops were Effective	0%	0%	5%	15%	80%
PDT was only concerned with the theoretical aspects of CBA.	95%	5%	0%	0%	0%
PDT emphasized the CBA instructional strategies	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
PDT provided opportunities for CBA practice.	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
The PDT prepared me to put into practice the CBA principles	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
There is a mismatch between theory and practice	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%

The results shown in table 3 indicated that, although all teachers had received training to implement the competency-based approach, they expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of the training provided. All participating teachers agreed that the workshops helped them understand the theoretical foundations of the competency-based approach. However, they reported that the training did not adequately equip them to translate this theoretical pedagogical knowledge into actual instructional and assessment practices.

4.2. Teachers' Attitudes towards the CBA

Table 4. Attitudes Towards CBA and Actual Challenges

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I prefer the CBA	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
I prefer the old approaches	95%	5%	0%	0%	0%

The current syllabuses in English textbooks meet the objectives of the CBA	0%	0%	0%	10%	90%
The textbooks contain real-world materials	0%	0%	0%	10%	90%
The resources provided by the schools meet the needs for the effective implementation of CBA	0%	0%	0%	10%	90%
The size of classes helps in the effective implementation of CBA	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
The CBA fits the Algerian educational context	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
The Algerian CBA is the most appropriate approach to enhance learners' English Proficiency.	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
The Algerian competency framework is successful in the Algerian context	0%	0%	0%	5%	95%
I believe that the right implementation of the Algerian CBA will ameliorate the education system	0%	0%	5%	10%	85%
The Algerian CBA framework does not fit language learning and teaching	0%	0%	0%	10%	90%
I recommend keeping the CBA and revising the Syllabus	0%	0%	0%	15%	85%
The CBA should be replaced soon	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%

The results shown in table 4 revealed that all teachers had negative attitudes towards the CBA and favored traditional methods of instruction over the Competency-Based Approach (CBA). They found the latter ineffective and incompatible with the Algerian educational context. The teachers unanimously agreed that the CBA should be supplanted by an approach more fitting for the unique circumstances of Algerian education. They indicated that the Algerian CBA framework was inadequately structured and inconsistent with the guiding principles of the CBA. Furthermore, teachers strongly concurred that the overcrowded classrooms, the nature and heaviness of the syllabus, and the lack of necessary resources impeded any substantial improvements and, consequently, the effective implementation of the CBA. Moreover, they expressed that their teaching experiences, coupled with their deep understanding of the CBA principles, led them to the conclusion that the Algerian CBA did not enhance the teaching-learning processes, making it unsuitable for language education.

4.3. Qualitative Analysis of the Open-Ended Questions

The thematic analysis of the open-ended questions resulted in the identification of two primary categories. The first category was related to teachers' attitudes, while the second category pertained to the factors to their attitudes towards the CBA.

4.3.1. Teachers' Attitudes

The results revealed a widespread dissatisfaction among teachers with the CBA, reflecting extremely negative attitudes towards it. They unanimously agreed that this approach should be replaced by another. Some teachers went as far as to label the CBA as a total failure.

"I have been teaching for more than 30 years now, and I can say confidently that this approach is a complete failure! I urge the stakeholders to replace it soon and stop wasting money and students' time"

"This is alarming, students are confused, teachers are confused, we are all cognitively overwhelmed, because of this approach, students hate schools now, something must be done, should not they listen to us now?"

"This framework is not working, I made a good deal of research, the Algerian Framework and many other CBA frameworks around the world are failing because the educational systems themselves cannot explain them, the competency is a concept which does not apply to language measurement, we are teaching language not business!"

"I prefer by far the old syllabus and our traditional teaching approaches, at least we knew what we had to teach."

4.3.2 Factors Underpinning Teachers' Attitudes towards CBA

This category delineated the principal challenges and factors that influenced teachers' attitudes, contributing to their resistance to implementing the CBA. Several themes were identified. The teachers appeared to believe firmly that the CBA did not align with the Algerian context for the reasons listed below.

Theme 1: Absence of Clear Competency Performance Criteria

All teachers contended that, despite their considerable efforts, their instruction was ineffective. They unanimously believed that competencies, as outlined by the CBA, were neither measurable nor observable. Consequently, they found themselves unable to translate these competencies into concrete, competency-based instructional practices.

"I raised this issue many times with inspectors, but I never had an answer, if they could not answer me, how do they expect it me to put this into practice."

"Competencies are simply impossible to be operationalized. The CBA does not provide us them with any valid procedures on how to teach or evaluate competencies."

"Competencies are ill-defined and unfunctional, I believe this is why the General exams do not assess them, because they cannot be assessed."

Theme 2: Needs Analysis

Competency-based education asserts that teachers should conduct a needs analysis prior to designing lessons, tasks, and exams. However, teachers in this study elucidated that they had never conducted such an analysis, due to their lack of training on how to perform it and the absence of specific performance criteria for each competency.

"I am willing to. Provide me first with the performance criteria and I will conduct needs analysis."

"We need more practical training, what is needs analysis ever?"

"To be honest with you, why should I do so if the competencies are already prescribed by the syllabus? I know we have to, but I do not know how either."

Theme 3: Professional Development Training

Teachers stressed that there remained a significant gap between the theoretical knowledge of the CBA, which they acquired through various PDT workshops, and the practical application of these principles in actual classrooms. They emphasized the need for more demonstrative or modeling practices to showcase how the introduced competencies are embodied and enacted in real school settings.

"I need to know how to teach these competencies not just to know the terminology used to describe them, but I cannot blame the trainers, the CBA itself is not teachable!"

"Always the same amount of theory against no practice, I am not interested anymore in attending these seminars."

Theme 4: Washback Effect

Teachers reported that the high-stake exams (BEM) did not adhere to the competency-based perspective and did not assess competencies. They further reported that both schools and parents exerted a great deal of pressure on them to align their teaching with the requirements of the general exams to adequately prepare learners. This pressure from external stakeholders significantly influenced their ability and willingness to implement the CBA.

"Exams are not competency-driven, and I am compelled to prepare the student for the exams, so I have to teach what will be in the exam, not competencies."

"I have either to stick to the curriculum or teach to the test, so I prefer helping my pupils to score high in exams."

Theme 5: Over Crowdedness of Classrooms

Teachers reported that the implementation of the main concepts of the CBA like project work and engagement of students in active learning was impossible due to classroom over-crowdedness.

"How can I give the chance to more than 45 students to perform and present their projects? No way!"

"Project education how? If I give the chance to every single student to present I will not finish one chapter of the book, classes are super super crowded and noisy."

Theme 6. Heaviness of the Curriculum and Time Constraints

Teachers expressed concerns about the extensiveness of the syllabus coupled with significant time constraints. They highlighted the immense pressure exerted by inspectors to cover the entire syllabus. In their view, it was virtually impossible to

sufficiently cover all competencies within the given timeframe. This situation often compelled teachers to proceed to the next competency without ensuring that learners had fully acquired the targeted knowledge and skills.

"We have to cover all the topics, or the inspector will harshly criticize us, anyway competencies are not teachable, so I focus on teaching grammar and vocabulary."

"What to do? Finish the syllabus, or teach competencies, the time is not enough to teach competencies."

Theme 7: Scarcity of Resources

The findings indicated that teachers considered the implementation of competencies to be compromised due to a lack of necessary resources. The content provided in the textbooks was viewed as irrelevant and not connected to real-world contexts. Moreover, teachers expressed the need for ICT tools to effectively contextualize the materials, a provision they found lacking in their current environment.

"The inspectors say that we must contextualize the text, how can I do so if the texts are not authentic and not real? How can I do so If we do not have computers and internet?"

"we need resources, I am spending my money to use some teaching apps."

5. Discussion

Contrary to the findings of Bouhadiba's study (2015), which suggested that teachers demonstrated a lack of understanding of the central principles of CBA in its initial implementation years, this current study revealed that teachers have managed to develop a solid understanding of the core principles and concepts of the CBA. Nevertheless, despite this solid understanding, and following two decades of CBA implementation, this study, in line with previous research (Bouhadiba, 2015; Bellour, 2017; Djerouane, 2022; Mansour, 2023), revealed that English teachers have developed considerably negative attitudes towards the CBA. They have increasingly expressed dissatisfaction with their students' proficiency levels and their achievements, and the CBA itself, due to a multitude of factors such as the inadequacy of the Algerian CBA framework, inadequacy of PDT, a lack of resources, the heaviness of the curriculum, overcrowded classrooms, and an ill-defined concept of competency which was deemed unmeasurable and unobservable, and washback effects (Shah Toti, 2022). These factors played a significant role in shaping teachers' negative attitudes towards, and resistance against, the CBA. Bader (2015) asserted that the CBA required a focus on measuring learning, regardless of time constraints, a practice that was practically impossible due to the overcrowded classrooms, a dense curriculum, and because courses in Algeria were time-based (Bellour, 2017; Djerouane, 2022). Additionally, the results demonstrated that the washback effect deterred teachers from implementing the CBA because the focus was shifted towards preparing students for the high-stake exams (BEM), which did not adhere to the CBA principles. Mirza (2023) and Boukhentache (2020) further emphasized that there was a discrepancy between the assessment practices for the Baccalaureate and the CBA principles outlined in the pedagogy of integration. In line with research conducted by Krinat (2022), Nouri (2021), Ben Yahia (2020), Boukhentache (2019),

and Bader (2015), the results showed that PDT failed to provide teachers with valid procedures for teaching and assessing competencies. Djerouane (2022) added that PDT seminars were often a hindrance as they primarily focused on theory rather than practice. Therefore, he argued, it was not surprising that many teachers continued to question the approach's suitability for their students.

Finally, this study as well as found that despite teachers beginning their careers in a period when the educational reforms of the 2000s were being implemented, they still preferred traditional teaching approaches and methods. Mansour (2023) Djerouane (2022), Boukhentach (2019), and Bellour (2017) also concluded that teachers preferred traditional methods. Furthermore, the studies revealed that teachers were pessimistic about the potential improvement of the current CBA framework and strongly advocated for its urgent replacement.

6. Conclusion

This research examined Algerian English Language teachers' perspectives on the CBA. The data, collected from a diverse group of teachers, shed light on their experiences and opinions of the CBA, offering a critical evaluation of its efficacy two decades post-implementation. The results underscored the dissatisfaction of teachers with the CBA, painting a picture of a methodology that is not only unimplemented but also viewed unfavourably. Teachers reported significant barriers that hindered the successful implementation of the CBA, such as the inadequacy of the Algerian CBA framework, insufficient professional development training, scarcity of necessary resources, burdensome syllabus, overcrowded classrooms, and the ill-defined and unmeasurable nature of the competencies. Teachers also urged educational authorities to consider replacing the failing CBA with an approach that better suits the Algerian educational context.

This study rather recommends a strategic re-evaluation of the current reform approach. This study offered a crucial starting point for this much-needed reconsideration. Rather than pouring resources into an approach that is already failing, it might be prudent for the Ministry of Education to reassess their strategy and initiate a reform more responsive to the educational needs of the Algerian context.

7. Recommendations

The CBA is not adequately and effectively implemented in Algerian schools. The CBA is not adequately and effectively implemented in Algerian schools. Djerouane (2022), Boukhentache (2020), Nouri (2021), Bellour (2017), and Bader (2015) recommended the provision of more hands-on, practice-oriented PDT seminars, lightening of the syllabus, provision of the necessary resources for CBA implementation, and the need to make the general exams competency-based. They also urged a review of the Algerian CBA framework to provide clear and measurable performance criteria for each competency, thereby making them learnable, teachable, and assessable. These recommendations would be reiterated here if the Ministry of Education had not already expended significant financial and human resources to improve the reform and to enhance regular in-service

training and continuing professional development seminars for a better understanding and implementation of the CBA. The attempts were unsuccessful. Therefore, we recommend a strategic re-evaluation of the current reform approach. Rather than pouring resources into an approach that is already failing, it might be prudent for the Ministry of Education to reassess their strategy and initiate a reform more responsive to the educational needs of the Algerian context. This study offered a crucial starting point for this much-needed reconsideration. We raise the following questions: is it prudent to continue investing in an approach that, according to the current literature and the opinions of Algerian teachers, is failing? Shouldn't we consider initiating a new reform in a more strategic manner? A word to the wise is enough!

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Appendix 1

Appendix Questionnaire

Dear teachers,

Please fill out the following questionnaire designed for a study on the Competency-Based Approach (CBA). The questionnaire is anonymous, and your responses will be kept strictly confidential and used for research purposes only.

Your contribution is highly appreciated.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
CBA believes in the functional view of language					
CBA believes in the structural view of language					
CBA draws on Behaviorism					
CBA draws on Constructivism					
CBA draws on Socio-constructivism					
Needs analysis is a key component of the CBA					
Competencies should be stated in specific behavioral terms/observable and measurable performance					
CBA should make extensive use of real-life materials contextualized by teachers					
Competency is the integration of knowledge, skills, and attitudes					
Competency is the know-how not the know what					
Competency is the know-what not the know-how					
Competency is a set of observable and measurable behaviors developed through habit formation process					
Competency is a set of conceptual and procedural knowledge					
I know the differences between conceptual knowledge and procedural knowledge					

Learners are empty recipients					
Teachers' role is to provide information					
Teachers are facilitators and scaffolders					
CBA believes that teachers should facilitate autonomous learning					
CBA emphasizes active learning					
CBA emphasizes the importance of habit formation					
CBA rejects collaborative learning					
Collaborative Knowledge construction is in opposition with the concept of competency as defined by the CBA					
CBA believes in Knowledge construction					
CBA posits that competencies are observable and measurable					
CBA posits that each competency has clear performance criteria for teaching and learning purposes					
CBA posits that each competency has clear performance criteria for assessment purposes					
CBA believes in the summative and continuous assessment of Competencies					
I implement the CBA as I can demonstrate instructional strategies informed by the CBA					
I implement the CBA instructional strategies outlined in the Algerian Competence framework					
The lessons I plan are competency-based lesson.					
I conduct needs analysis prior to lesson planning.					
I translate each competency's performance criteria into instructional strategies.					
I teach competencies because they are articulated in measurable performance criteria and specific behavioral terms.					

I teach all the competencies necessary for any specific situation					
I am capable of imparting conceptual and procedural knowledge.					
I move to the next competency only when the current one has been mastered by learners					
I assist students in developing the desired competencies regardless of time constraints.					
I do not cover most competencies as my focus is on covering the curriculum in a timely manner					
I do not teach competencies as they are neither teachable nor learnable					
I create real-world materials in my classroom.					
I contextualize the textbook's provided texts.					
Most of students pass the year without mastering the target competencies.					
I teach for exams because high-stake exams are neither competency-based nor comply with the CBA principles.					
I design competency-based examinations.					
I provide my students with pre-made competency-based examinations.					
I do not assess competencies as they are neither observable nor measurable					
PDT workshops were Effective					
PDT was only concerned with the theoretical aspects of CBA.					
PDT emphasized the CBA instructional strategies					
PDT provided opportunities for CBA practice.					
The PDT prepared me to put into practice the CBA principles					
There is a mismatch between theory and practice					
I prefer the CBA					
I prefer the old approaches					

The current syllabuses in English textbooks meet the objectives of the CBA					
The textbooks contain real-world materials					
The resources provided by the schools meet the needs for the effective implementation of CBA					
The size of classes helps in the effective implementation of CBA					
The CBA fits the Algerian educational context					
The Algerian CBA is the most appropriate approach to enhance learners' English Proficiency.					
The Algerian competency framework is successful in the Algerian context					
I believe that the right implementation of the Algerian CBA will ameliorate the education system					
The Algerian CBA framework does not fit language learning and teaching					
I recommend keeping the CBA and revising the Syllabus					
The CBA should be replaced soon					
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If you are not implementing the CBA, please explain. 2. If you are not satisfied with the PDT, please explain. 3. If you are pessimistic regarding the improvement of the Algerian CBA framework, please explain. 4. If you believe that the CBA should be replaced, please explain. 5. If you believe that Competencies cannot be taught and/or assessed, please explain 					