

**THE COMPETENCY-BASED APPROACH IN HIGHER EDUCATION:
PROBLEMATICITY & PERSPECTIVES**

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Abstract. *This research is aimed at analyzing modern problematicity of forming the competency-based approach's essence and perspectives in higher educational institutions within Ukraine; considering it as the modern learning innovative paradigm aimed at the conceptual learning renewal in higher education, its reorientation towards achieving integral learning outcomes (competencies), characterized by personal and social significance, as well as personal socialization and professionalization. For this purpose, the new corporate culture formation at the university, in which all links as well as all education participants are interested in improving the higher education quality, has been examined. To achieve the stated objective theoretical (comparative analysis, synthesis, generalization, modeling) and empirical (questioning) research methods were used. It had outlined three broad approaches applied regarding competence and professional development: 1) competence and behavioristic functionalism; 2) competence as integrated occupationalism; 3) competence as situated professionalism. The research has proved that throughout life as well as professional career, a person is constantly updating, deepening, and improving his three groups of competencies: 1) general (key, basic): personal, social, instrumental, 2) professional and 3) occupational. In the terms of our research, it has been specified that the perspectives of the competency-based approach implementing are to contribute to form the graduate's willingness to succeed in different areas, including foreign language proficiency.*

Key words: *competency-based approach, higher education, competence, professional competence, integral quality, competency-based curriculum.*

Introduction. The information society formation, characterized by increasing migration, labour market mobility, intercultural exchanges, and, most importantly, the objective need to learn to live together, preserving own identity, determines integrative tendencies and the education's key role in emerging and developing the new world community. In the market-economy environment, the situation has changed fundamentally due to the constant technology improvement, the market-oriented production, requiring a new formation of professionals, capable of adequately responding to market conditions, being initiative, creative and proactive as well. As a rule, individuals are allocated to jobs based on both personal characteristics and learning achievements and their own

profile of capabilities. Therefore, professional's learning should result not only in qualifications, but also professional competence, since it is competence that ensures professionally important qualities, a higher level of professional training, to become independent and competitive, to get domestic or global recognition or to master new skills.

The education quality is the social development's general indicator in a particular temporal progression, the social characteristic of a state. Therefore, the main objective of education is to make knowledge a component of the individual, its essence, the basis of life. The learning quality is determined by educational standards, quality of training, modern technical means of instruction, educational

and methodological support, etc. In accordance with the Law "On Higher Education", the main objective of state education policy is to create conditions for personal development and creative self-realization of each citizen of Ukraine, to update the education content and to organize the learning process in accordance with democratic values, market economy, and modern scientific and technological advances based on the competency-based approach.

In accordance with the NULES of Ukraine Development Programme for 2021-2025 "The Holosiiv Initiative – 2025", the main objective of education development in National University of Life and Environmental Sciences of Ukraine for 2021-2025 is to continuously improve the quality of education; to develop individual university curricula and programs corresponding to the production demand and the best foreign analogues of Bachelor's and Master's Degrees in forming individual modular disciplines; to reorient curricula, individual training trajectories to increase practical component, with large-scale introducing internship programs at production; to introduce international education programs, curricula and interactive information technologies, to create new specialties for training professionals in accordance with the European Educational Area requirements in order to obtain dual diplomas for students; to continue implementing gradual education via the students' integrated continuous selective systems as well as training according to the secondary school, lyceum – vocational college – university scheme. Mastering research, business, digital, social, speech and communication competences is extremely important for further professional activity, active social position, and constant self-improvement of modern professionals both presently and in the long term [3].

Thus, currently, a vital task of the state higher education modernization is to ensure the training of future professionals in compliance with international standards.

According to the analysis of pedagogical experience of the last decade, the competency-based approach in higher education has become a socially significant phenomenon, a priority in pursuing the Ukraine's education policy, in particular, the higher education's conceptual provisions, its essence and content. Therefore, a relevant strategy of public policy has become the acquisition of students' professional competencies.

Purpose. Is to examine the competency-based approach's problematization and perspectives in higher educational institutions, considering it as the modern learning innovative paradigm aimed at the conceptual learning renewal in higher education, its reorientation towards achieving integral learning outcomes (competencies), characterized by personal and social significance, as well as personal socialization and professionalization. For this purpose, the new corporate culture formation at the university, in which all links as well as all education participants are interested in improving the higher education quality, has been examined.

Methods. To achieve the stated objective, a system of the following research methods was used: theoretical: analysis of national and foreign researchers' scientific publications to determine the current status of the issue raised in pedagogical theory; comparative analysis of various definitions of the key concept "competence" to compare different researchers' views on the competency-based approach; generalization of modern teaching practices in higher education on the competency-based approach; modeling the structure and content of research competence by academic degrees; empirical: questioning lecturers and students, graduate students in order to identify their attitude towards the competency-based approach, professional readiness for designing integral learning outcomes in the context of the tri-cycle learning system in higher education.

Theoretical and applied foundations of the competency-based approach, its

problematicity and perspectives in higher education have been developed and substantiated in scientific papers of foreign and domestic researchers, such as A. Barman, J. Konwar (2011), R. Barnett (1994), S. Billett (2017), L. Holubnycha, I. I. Kostikova, O. Leiba, S. Lobzova, & R. Chornovol-Tkachenko (2019), U. Isopahkala-Bouret, T. Rantanen, K. Raji, E. Järveläinen (2011), S. Kachmarchyk, S. Khrystiuk, & L. Shanaieva-Tsymbal (2019), G. Klemp (1980), M. Mulder (2014), M. Mulder, J. Gulikers, H. Biemans, R. Wesselink (2009), D. McClelland (1973), O. Naboka, V. Davyskyba (2019), O. Poliakova, T. Kyrychenko, & T. Ridel (2019), J. Raven (1984), D. S. Rychen & L. Salganic (2003), C. Sturgis, S. Patrick, L. Pittenger (2011), Y. Tatur (2004), A. O. Vitchenko, A. Yu. Vitchenko (2019), A. Vitchenko, A. Vitchenko, N. Zamo-taieva, S. Khrystiuk, V. Nikolayenko (2022), S. S. Weng, Y. Liu, J. Dai, & Y. Ch. Chuang (2020), R. Wite (1959) and others.

Results. The competency-based approach debate started in the 1950s of the 20th century (Mulder et al., 2009), when “White (1959) defined competence as a basic motive for the acquisition of knowledge, mastery of skills, need for exploration, or competence as exploratory learning for “effectance”; McClelland (1973) stated that traditional testing needed to be changed; Gilbert (1978) made a link between competence and effective performance improvement; Boyatzis (1982) did large-scale studies on managers’ competence; Zemke (1982) expanded the competence application to all aspects of training and development; McLagan (1989) developed competence profiles for self-assessment and development; Prahalad and Hamel (1990) applied the concept of core competence at organizational level; in the 1990s, the concept of competence also became popular in European education” [12].

However, there are still considerable controversial points among researchers over competency itself. It is viewed as a set of certain skills, such as “1) reading, writing, and calculating skills, communication skills (McClelland, 1973); 2) human basic characteristics leading to effective results in the workplace (Klemp, 1980); 3) the ability (Rychen and Salganic, 2003; Holubnycha et al., 2019; Poliakova et al., 2019); 4) mastering large and complex skills; 5) a coordinated cluster of knowledge, skills and abilities (Mulder, 2014); 6) diversified set of individual and sociocultural resources, the integrity of cognitive, emotional and social dimensions; 7) a set of knowledge, skills, abilities, experience and behavior leading to implementing single acts effectively; 8) active combinations of knowledge, abilities, and intentions which enable people to successfully and responsibly respond to changing conditions (Weng et al., 2020); awareness” [16].

There are three broad approaches applied regarding competence and professional development (Mulder, 2014), such as “1) competence and behavioristic functionalism, stressing the importance to determine the discrepancies between actual and desired competence, leading to training of sometimes miniscule skills; an important pitfall of this approach is fragmentizing learning; 2) competence as integrated occupationalism, stressing that knowledge, skills and attitudes should be integrated in the curriculum, teaching, learning and testing; 3) competence as situated professionalism indicating that competence gets meaning only in a certain context; an important pitfall here is holism, when competence details are covered under generic expressions of individuals’ abilities, which may be sufficient in personal development, but not for professional certification purposes” [11].

In the competence-based education, competence means general knowledge, skills, and attitudes; competences can also be viewed as behavior-

based general competences and task-specific special (subject) competences. According to Billett, there are “three areas of expertise: canonical competence means societally produced entity that is explicitly expressed for example in curricula, situational competence means the way competences appear in various conditions such as in different workplaces, and personal competence that is the foundation of efficient action and ability to meet challenges at work” [5].

The competency-based learning process is not just timeless and placeless (Sturgis et al., 2011), but it is a competency-based model directed at students' needs in the learning process. Researchers also assert that “high-quality expertise is the competence-based education objective; students advance upon mastery; competencies include explicit, measurable, transferable learning objectives that empower students; assessment is meaningful and a positive learning experience for students; students receive timely, differentiated support based on their individual learning needs; and learning outcomes emphasize competencies that include application and creation of knowledge, along with the development of important skills and dispositions. If the aforementioned practices are realized appropriately, education should become equal and provide opportunity to reach good outcomes” [15].

Any educational program's effectiveness or efficiency depends on the curriculum design philosophy (Barmen et al., 2011). As researchers note, “competency-based curriculum aims to make students more competent through the acquisition of competencies and further development of the newly acquired or already held competencies, and summarizes academic and professional profiles, defines new objectives in the learning process, enhances learning environments and shifts the concept of learning as accumulation of knowledge to learning as a permanent attitude towards knowledge acquisition” [4].

A. Vitchenko & A. Vitchenko interpret competence as an “integral quality of the higher education applicant reflecting his willingness to successfully perform certain functions, provide self-instruction, continuous professional development and career growth to achieve both personal and socially significant results. The learning effectiveness in the competency-oriented higher education is determined by measuring the mastery of a specific competency or system of competencies characterized by outcomes of educational and professional learning”. The researchers note that throughout life as well as professional career, a person is constantly updating, deepening, and improving his three groups of competencies: 1) general (key, basic): personal, social, instrumental, 2) professional and 3) occupational, developed at the previous level of training, and point out that in designing a system of competencies for lifelong learning, it is necessary to take into account the leading activities for each age stage [1].

The competency-based approach is an attempt to match education and market needs, to mitigate the contradiction between academic and vocational activities (Naboka et al., 2019). In the system of vocational education, it is based on the society's study and analysis as well as labor market needs, development of effective methods and pedagogical technologies to achieve the main goal – students' key competencies development, such as: value-based, all-cultural, learning and cognitive, informational, communicative, socio-labour, personal improvement. Therefore, the competency-based learning shapes students' qualifications for vocational activity; the criteria and parameters for assessing educational outcomes are unified and expressed in terms and results that can be interpreted and taken into account in any educational institution in any country. The researchers also identify negative aspects of the approach: high bureaucracy; very assessment-oriented; it

can't integrate education with labour market; it runs counter to the principles of broad education; it masks differences between different colleges and universities. At the same time, they assert that key competencies help succeed in life; contribute to the quality of public institutions; correspond to the diverse areas of life [2].

The competency-based approach to foreign language learning is considered as a way of organizing students' learning and cognitive activities, ensuring the learning content mastering and thereby achieving learning objectives in solving certain problems, taking into account, that the main objective of foreign language learning is the communicative competence formation. National University of Life and Environmental Sciences of Ukraine pays considerable attention to foreign languages, the formation of International Relations students' foreign language communicative competence, by means of blended learning technology (Kachmarchyk et al., 2019). The mission of the NULES of Ukraine is "to train qualified specialists in International Relations who will have skills of professional and personal communication in native and foreign languages. Nowadays, future experts' proficiency in foreign language is considered an attribute of intellectual development that a person with higher education possesses" [8].

It's worth identifying higher education graduates' perspectives on competency-based higher education (Isopahkala-Bouret et al., 2011). The most critical are the following: "students 1) emphasize the importance of general studies; 2) stress the importance of receiving feedback for building professional identities that pertain to their own professional competence levels; 3) consider assessments necessary for building their professional identities; 4) need ways to assess and communicate their individual professional competences. University graduates expect to have a certain discipline-focused,

general perspective to understand dependencies among different phenomena; they seek to achieve a sound knowledge of the content in their areas of specialization" [7].

Thus, having analyzed lots of data on the issue raised, we may conclude that the competency-based approach focuses on integral learning outcomes, and the learning outcomes are not just information learned, but the ability to act in various problematic situations. Competent professionals with academic degree should have a unique modern scientific mindset, democratic principles, spiritual values, and multi-functionality. The perspectives of the competency-based approach implementing are to contribute to form the graduate's willingness to succeed in different areas, including foreign language proficiency.

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КОМПЕТЕНТНІСНИЙ ПІДХІД У ВИЩІЙ ОСВІТІ: ПРОБЛЕМАТИКА ТА ПЕРСПЕКТИВИ Христюк С. Б.

Анотація. Дане дослідження присвячено аналізу сучасної проблематики формування та перспектив розвитку компетентнісного підходу у вищих навчальних закладах України; компетентнісний підхід розглядається як сучасна інноваційна парадигма навчання, спрямована на концептуальне оновлення навчання у вищій освіті, його переорієнтацію на досягнення інтегральних результатів навчання, тобто не просто засвоєння інформації, а здатність діяти в різних проблемних ситуаціях; інтегральні результати навчання характеризуються особистісною та соціальною значущістю, а також соціалізацію та професіоналізацію особистості. З цією метою досліджено формування в університеті нової культури праці, в якій абсолютно всі ланки, всі учасники навчального процесу зацікавлені у підвищенні якості вищої освіти. Для досягнення окресленої мети використано теоретичні (порівняльний аналіз, синтез, узагальнення, моделювання) та емпіричні (анкетування) методи дослідження. В дослідженні окреслено три широкі підходи, застосовані щодо компетентності та професійного розвитку: 1) компетентність і біхевіористський функціоналізм; 2) компетентність як інтегрований професіоналізм; 3) компетентність як високий професіоналізм. Дослідження доводить, що протягом життя, а також професійної кар'єри людина постійно оновлює, поглиблює та вдосконалює свої три групи компетентностей: 1) загальну (ключову, базову): особистісну, соціальну, інструментальну, 2) професійну та 3) галузеву. В рамках нашого дослідження визначено, що перспективи впровадження компетентнісного підходу мають сприяти формуванню бажання випускника досягти успіху в різних сферах, у тому числі у володінні іноземною мовою. Компетентнісний підхід до вивчення іноземної мови розглядається як спосіб організації навчально-пізнавальної діяльності студентів, що забезпечує засвоєння змісту навчання і тим самим досягнення цілей навчання при вирішенні певних завдань, враховуючи, що основною метою вивчення іноземної мови є формування комунікативної компетентності.

Ключові слова: компетентнісний підхід, вища освіта, компетентність, професійна компетентність, інтегральна якість, компетентнісний навчальний план.