

Competency-Based Curriculum Development 1 June Training

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■ Competency-Based Curriculum Development

■ Terminology

■ Key differences between content-based and competency-based curricula

■ Embedding competencies

■ Relevance

■ Quality features

■ Minimising curriculum content load



Terminology

CONTENT

- **Various definitions:**
 - **Knowledge (only)... with possibly skills listed elsewhere**
 - **All that is to be taught (knowledge, skills, values and attitudes)**
 - **Subject matter**

COMPETENCY

- **An ability/Capability to apply what one has learnt**
- **Using knowledge, skills or attitudes in different contexts**
- **Cross-curricula...two or more subject areas**

Competency-based v Content-based

Key Differences

Content-focused curricula:

- **What students will learn**
- **Typically knowledge/concept/fact-based with skills, values and attitudes identified separately**
- **Assumes teachers know how to develop students' skills**
- **Tends to result in passive role for students**

Competency-based curricula

- **How students will learn and apply their learning**
- **Developmental (progressions)**
- **Embedded in content rather than separated from content**

Competency-based v Content-based

Embedding Competencies Step 1

- a) Specifying competencies (elements and sub-elements)
- b) Developing progressions for each competency based on a determined structure (by **grade or grades**; by age; by stage; level)
- c) Determining subject areas/learning areas; describing in broad terms (purpose and essential knowledge/concepts, skills, values and attitudes)
- d) Determining scope and sequence for each subject area/learning area in broad terms based on agreed structure (by **grade**; age; stage; level)
- e) Mapping competencies against each subject area/learning area to determine target level (ie high, medium, low)

Competency-based v Content-based

Embedding Competencies Step 2

For each writing team:

- Use high targeted competency progressions initially to obtain insight into how the competency is developed
- Select content items in turn considering the following:
 - What are students expected to do (this should be your starting verb eg selects, analyses, creates)
 - What is the context (what topic, concept) – what is the field of study; extent (eg simple; complex)
 - How are students to demonstrate what they have learnt (eg by presenting, reporting, performing)

Competency-based v Content-based

Embedding Competencies Step 3

Draft content writing (sample 1):

■ Competencies:

- Cognition – research procedures
- Communication – comprehending and producing information

■ Content/subject matter: Science (biology) – animal classification

Selects information about animals from different sources and identifies key features that distinguish animal classes
(*invertebrates, mammals, birds, fish, reptiles, amphibians*)

Competency-based v Content-based

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You might ask why engage in this when the teacher can simply tell the students the answer or in other words students listen and remember facts?

animal classification (invertebrates, mammals, birds, fish, reptiles, amphibians)

Ability/Skills/Capabilities developed:

- searching for information
- selecting appropriate sources of information (eliminating non-applicable)
- sorting and identifying key information
- hypothesising and determining conclusions
- choosing an appropriate form and style for presentation of findings
- animal classifications knowledge about (general and specific)

Competency-based v Content-based

Embedding Competencies Step 3

Draft content writing (sample 2):

- **Competencies:**

- **Communication – producing texts**

- **Content/subject matter: Lithuanian (language) – narrative**

- **Grades 3-4**

Produces extended narrative texts on both familiar and unfamiliar topics using different channels (*written, spoken, visual*), tools (*pen and paper; keyboard; oration/story-telling*) and textual features (*pictures, diagrams; headings and sub-headings; expression, emphasis, dramatic effect; facial gestures etc*)

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Relevance

“Natural Homes”

- **Communication (Languages; Mathematics; all subjects have language conventions and texts and terminology)**
- **Cognition (all subject areas)**
- **Social and Emotional (Humanities; Physical Education/Health; Languages)**
- **Civic (Humanities)**
- **Creativity (the Arts; Languages)**
- **Cultural (Humanities; the Arts; Languages)**

Quality Features of competency-based curriculum

- **Clear what students have to do to demonstrate understanding (knowledge) and skills... avoid using words such as “understands.... (instead use words that inform teachers how students are to demonstrate they understand)**
- **Clearly indicates how students are to be assessed (ie through a presentation; through a product; through a performance; in a written or oral response)**
- **Developmental – increasing levels of expertise (ie from familiar to unfamiliar; from simple to complex or extended; from concrete to abstract)**
- **Content items are concise – avoid overloading (ie and as well as... while and also...**
- **Clear – what students are learning about, what they are able to do and to the degree of expertise**

Minimising Curriculum Content Load

- **Ensure clear alignment to vision and broad goals**
- **Review all proposed content, traditional and new – justification against vision and broad goals... must learn over nice to learn**
- **Confirm what has to be included (politically)**
- **Determine what is to be included and what needs to be referred to eg**
 -including xxxx
 -, for example, xxxxx or(such as xxxxx)
- **Less is more – know what you have excluded and why**
- **Check across subject areas for overlap and eliminate**



Questions/Comments/Concerns