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Operationalization of Competency-Based Approach: From Competency-Based Education to Integration Pedagogy

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Abstract

Advocates of integration pedagogy such as Peysner et al. (2006) and Roegiers (2010) consider this instructional approach as a distinct pedagogical trend, while opponents of this view such as Hirtt (2009) regard integration pedagogy and competency-based education (CBE) as two sides of the same coin. In the view of this inconsistency and in order to help teachers and scholars have a well-informed idea on the essence of these educational movements, this article attempts to explore their similarities and differences and show how integration pedagogy has attempted to interpret the principles of competency-based approach (CBA). In so doing, the study traces back the origins of integration pedagogy in relation to CBE. This analysis of the historical and theoretical background of integration pedagogy indicates that this instructional approach is relatively different from CBE in that it has emerged in the 1980s as a late reaction to objective-based pedagogy, but as a concrete attempt to operationalize and simplify the broad principles of CBE, which evolved earlier in the US in the 1970s. Also, the results spell out the theoretical similarities and differences relating to these teaching approaches. Accordingly, teachers, researchers, and program evaluators are advised to approach integration pedagogy as a fairly different realization of CBA with distinct teaching guidelines.

Keywords: Bureau d'ingénierie en éducation et formation (BIEF), CBA, CBE, objective-based pedagogy, pedagogy of integration, school reforms.

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1. Introduction

CBE, which is applied in different parts of the world, might be falsely regarded as one single teaching framework that outlines teaching through competencies. The Algerian 2002 School Reform introduced CBE as the major ‘breakthrough’ for planning, implementing, and evaluating teaching targets; this reform has rested mainly on the pedagogy of integration, which differs significantly from the competency-based curricula implemented in Anglo-Saxon settings. The fact of the matter is that this pedagogy has its own terminology and incorporates distinct guidelines for implementing competency-based teaching. However, contemporary competency-based teachers and scholars (such as Hirtt, 2009) fail to recognize the differences between the Anglo-Saxon competency-based approach and the Francophone version of competency-based teaching- *integration pedagogy* or *pedagogy of integration*.

Also, through informal discussions with competency-based teachers, the author of this paper has noticed that most of them believe erroneously that there is one single approach called CBA. Still, his examination of competency-based research works carried out in the Algerian context indicates that most writers (e.g., Aouine, 2011; Chelli, 2010) draw on the literature of the Anglo-Saxon model of competency and use it to talk about CBA in Algeria. In fact, there are at least two major influential competency-based teaching models implemented in various parts of world using different curricular procedures: One is the English-speaking model and the other is the French-speaking version

More to the point, the review of the literature of the two different instructional models in question shows a clear lack of communications among their writers that few mentions are to be found in which advocates of one model discuss the proposals of their counterparts. A few researchers such as Hirtt (2009), Peyser et al. (2006), and Roegiers (2008) confront the claims of these competency-based teaching models, but these articles are mostly written in support of one of these approaches.

Therefore, this article will attempt to address misconceptions of uniformity surrounding CBE, showing integration pedagogy as both (1) a relatively distinct sub-part of CBE and (2) a concrete attempt to make CBE manageable. By doing so, this inquiry will equally (3) establish the missing link between CBE and integration pedagogy by specifying the theoretical and curricular claims of integration pedagogy relative to classroom feasibility. Ultimately, the study will culminate in (4) a definition of integration pedagogy in relation to broad CBE.

CBE is used in this study interchangeably to refer to the general competency-based model of teaching and to the American or Anglo-Saxon model, which in turn, has other sub-divisions within the Anglo-Saxon world. Also, CBA (competency-based approach or *approche par compétences*, in French-(APC), is used in a more general way. Actually, CBA is a common label used to refer to competency-based teaching in the Francophone competency-based literature. In addition to this, the acronym CBI (competency-based instruction) is used in a more neutral sense.

2. Background of Integration Pedagogy

The following discussion is structured round the background of the pedagogy of integration. We shall show that this innovative pedagogy has first come as another reaction to the

limitations of the pedagogy by objectives, and secondly as an effort to operationalize the broad principles of CBE.

2.1. An Alternative to Objective-Based Pedagogy

The pedagogy of integration has come as another response to the shortcomings of the objective-based pedagogy. This educational movement has been based on the works of De Ketele in the late 1980s (Roegiers, 2001). In the 1970s, De Ketele was still an active advocate of the American movement of the pedagogy by objectives that he tried to disseminate and popularize in French universities (De Ketele, 2000); nevertheless, he quickly perceived the limits of teaching discrete objectives. Consequently, in 1980, he suggested the concept of “Objectif Terminal Global”, which has later come to be termed as “Objectif Terminal d’Integration” (De Ketele, 1980 as cited in Roegiers, 2001, p. 84). The idea is to relate and integrate learning objectives at the end of a learning process than to teach and assess them in isolation.

The notion of terminal objective of integration has been operationalized by BIEF under the label *pedagogy of integration* (Roegiers, 2010). The BIEF team, attached to the Catholic University of Louvain-la-Neuve (UCL), has extended De Ketele’s (1980) proposal of the notion of terminal objective of integration, which seeks to coordinate the learned knowledge and skills at the end of an academic year or entire program of study (Roegiers, 2010, pp. 201-202). This initial intent has laid down the foundations of the pedagogy of integration.

Nevertheless, the concept of terminal integration objective is not novel in the literature of CBE; McCowan (1998, pp. 25-26) and Ainsworth (1977, p. 322-323) mention it as existing earlier in behavioural objectives of the 1960s. In his description of task analysis, Gagné (1965) underscores importance of articulating what he terms *terminal objective*, that is, the final performance-based task in which students are assessed at the end of a course of study (as cited in McCowan, 1998, pp. 25-26). Hence, the notion of terminal integration task had already been formulated earlier in the American competency-based model.

The rapid dissemination of the pedagogy of integration mainly in African countries (e.g., Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, Cameroon, Tanzania, and Madagascar) and Asian countries (such as Vietnam) could be accounted for by the fact that the experts of BIEF have worked jointly with the UN organizations of UNESCO and UNICEF and many other international organizations to reform the old African educational systems. The foundation of BIEF in 1989 and the financial assistance granted by UNESCO and UNICEF have encouraged the spread of the French-speaking version of CBI, rather than the Anglo-Saxon version in developing countries.

As UNICEF wanted to improve the quality of basic schooling conditions especially for young girls in developing countries (De Ketele, 2000), experts of BIEF who have readily accepted the challenge of a macro-level evaluation of national wide programs of some developing countries, have undertaken the task of counseling and monitoring school reforms based on the pedagogy of integration. One of the earliest pedagogical interventions of De Ketele was in Tunisia, where he regularly worked from 1984 to 1994 (De Ketele, 2000). After implementing the new pedagogy formulated by BIEF in Tunisia, other developing countries such as Algeria and Morocco have followed the lead.

The pedagogy of integration intervened and developed at times when most developing countries felt the urging need for reforming their old schools, which were deeply rooted in the teaching of behavioural objectives. Indeed, by the 1990s, as schools were called upon to take more and more functions, it has become conspicuous that the pedagogy by objectives does not fit the requirements of the globalized and globalizing world. Therefore, the concept of competency promoted by the pedagogy of integration has been very enticing as an alternative pedagogy to traditional objective-based teaching; it holds a special promise that all countries went ‘competency’.

Likewise, it is in this context that the Algerian educational authorities have espoused CBA in 2002 as a promising solution to make Algerian schools more responsive to the growing social, economic, and political demands of postmodern times. Toualbi-Thaâlibi (2005), for instance, points out that the major incentive for the Algerian School Reform has been to synchronize the teaching techniques with the new requirements of rationality and performance entailed by the ever-changing world; he explains that an agreement has been reached with the organization of UNESCO to put forward its technical support to achieve these ambitious educational objectives.

This innovative pedagogy is regarded by many African educational authorities as a pertinent solution for the inefficiency of educational systems and to functional illiteracy-incapacity to use language functionally- (Rajonhson et al., 2005), which has been perceived as an undeniable result of long years of schooling through objective-based pedagogy. In order to undertake this pressing school reform in a secure way, most African countries have readily accepted the methodological assistance suggested by BIEF and the technical and financial support of international organizations.

However, the assistance provided by the countries of the North to reform the old African schools in line with CBA might have disguised hidden motivations. According to Lenoir and Jean (2012), the financial and technical assistance supplied by powerful and influential international organizations has always been conditioned by the application of a given teaching approach. After recommending, if not imposing, the objective-based pedagogy in developing countries in the 1980s, the 1990s and the turn of the 21st century have witnessed the promotion of CBA as a ‘magic formula’ for combating the failures of African educational systems. CBE, which has evolved in developed North countries, is recommended as suitable to all learners despite their different backgrounds. This approach, which has more or less been applied in French-speaking countries such as Canada, France, Switzerland, and Belgium, has been imposed on many French-speaking African countries. Lenoir and Jean (2012) rightly point out that decisions to adopt this instructional pedagogy have always been made at the level of educational authorities and not at the level of national pedagogical meetings.

Enumerating some of the international donors who have endorsed applications of CBE in African countries will undoubtedly show the economic character that underlies this powerful teaching ‘doctrine’. For instance, in Benin, introduction of CBA in 1990 has been supported by many important technical and financial partners such as USAID; and in Mauritania, Djibouti, Gabon, and Rwanda, CBA has been sustained by international organizations of UNICEF, European Union, and World Bank.

Apart from the political and economic incentives that might have been disguised under the financial and even technical aids provided by international institutions, experimenting with CBE, which lacked at that time any empirical evidence as to its efficiency within national wide curricula, has undeniably served to promote, operationalize, and test the efficiency of CBA, namely, the pedagogy of integration.

To take up the view outlined above that considers integration pedagogy as a relatively distinct movement that has grown out of certain pedagogical and social concerns in French-speaking countries and African Francophone countries, it should be noted here that this line of argument is not without its critics. Hirtt (2009), for example, claims that the French-speaking version of CBE is “neither original nor new” (p.2.), that is, it is not based on the pioneering works of De Ketele (1980) and the educational experts attached to UCL. Accordingly, CBE had been developed in vocational training in Anglo-Saxon settings (e.g., America and Australia) during the 1970s, before it was extended to general education in 1990s.

Indeed, in his review of the background of the pedagogy of integration, Roegiers (2010) overlooks, as Hirtt (2009) specifies, the revolutionary works of Houston and Howsam (1971), Schmiedler (1973), and Burns and Klingstedt (1973), regarding CBE during the 1970s (p.2) . Instead, Roegiers (2010) makes a direct link between the objective-based pedagogy of Mager (1971) and Bloom (1971) with the works of De Ketele in the 1980s (p.61). Said another way, the pedagogy of integration is simply shown as an extension of the pedagogy by objectives. The way Peysers et al. (2006) introduce the evolution of the pedagogy of integration deserves to be quoted:

This evolution is the logical outcome — as demonstrated by a member of our team (ROEGIERS, 2000; 2nd edition 2001) — of several pedagogic trends that have influenced the teaching practices of the 20th century. In particular, educators have endeavored to respond to the main criticism to pedagogy by objectives which was that it disintegrates a subject matter into isolated objectives, a process some call - not without humor – the saucissonnage (slicing a sausage)-... p.1)

Although the quote above acknowledges that this innovative pedagogy has been influenced by a range of instructive movements, it claims that this pedagogy is mostly a reaction to the pedagogy by objectives; yet, this reaction has not been actually pioneering because since the inception of competency-based movement in the US in the 1970s, it has been built on the desire to improve on objective-based pedagogy. On this particular topic, Nunan (2007) states that CBE burgeoned as an alternative to objective-based pedagogy in the US in the 1980s. Accordingly, the major difference between them is that CBE has a more general approach in its competency statement to the behavioral objectives. In view of that, the French-speaking schools were late entry in CBI in comparison to American schools.

However, it is worth knowing that the American competency-based literature does not stress the rejection of objective-based learning as much as it shows it as the basis for the theoretical development of CBE. For instance Hodges’ (2007) account of the origins of competency-based training (CBT) presents CBT as simply an extension of objective-based pedagogy. From this regard, teaching through objectives and instructing through competencies formed a continuum culminating in performance-based teacher education, the first version of

CBE, in the 1970s. In fact, theoretically speaking, the American competency-based movement is shown in the literature as resulting largely from objective-based pedagogy (Hodge, 2007; McCowan, 1998; Nunan, 2007).

It cannot be denied that the pedagogy of integration is based on the objective-based pedagogy, but it is equally unjust to consider this response as revolutionary. The fact of the matter is that the Francophone countries have given a twist to the American competency-based movement to formulate their own model of CBI. Boutin (2004), an advocate of the French-speaking competency model, admittedly argues that the behavioural objectives of the world of industry exercised big influence on forming the first version of competency-based education that dominated American educational systems in the late 1960s. This earliest model had first been implemented in the US before it spread to Canada, Australia, and then Europe. The UK, Switzerland, and Belgium were among the first countries to follow in the implementation of competency-based reforms, and thereby moving from the teaching of specific objectives to the teaching of competencies.

It follows from the discussion above to say that CBE is primarily an extension of objective-based pedagogy that was initially formulated in the US in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Later in the 1980s, the French-speaking countries, particularly, the BIEF team of experts attached to UCL, formulated their own version of this broad movement of education. The credit of integration-based pedagogy lies in its attempt to substantiate competency-based principles in existing educational curricula, not in discarding objective-based education. This pedagogical endeavor (making instruction through CBE more concrete) is termed in this study as “the operationalization of CBA”, which will be the next point of discussion.

2.2. Operationalization of CBA

Although CBE is based on objective-based pedagogy, it has gradually moved away from precise specification of learning objectives. According to Richards (2006), this form of instruction almost does not care for the methodology being used inasmuch as it fulfills the learning targets. The focus is mainly on the outcomes of learning than on pre-specification of content or methodology.

In a similar line, Nunan (2007) draws attention to the high level of generality and imprecise language in which competency targets are described that, in his view, the proponents of behavioural objectives like Dick and Carey (1978) and Mager (1962, 1984) would have no patience at all if they ever read today’s formulation of competency statements (p.426). These inherent traits of CBE, as they were initially formulated in the United States in the 1970s, have rendered this approach less viable and less ‘users’ friendly’. By way of example, the difficulty of defining the concept of competency widely acknowledged even by its fervent supporters (Auerbach, 1986; Boutin, 2004; Roegiers, 2001, 2006, 2010; Spady, 1977) testifies the fuzziness of this teaching/learning approach. It is in response to this theoretical vagueness that the pedagogy of integration has equally intervened to make CBE more structured and implementable.

But, how is the process of learning through competencies simplified in integration pedagogy? In order to answer this question and illustrate how the pedagogy of integration and

the Anglo-Saxon competency-based model differ significantly in terms of methodological guidance, we shall first discuss two main integrative problem-solving models of teaching/learning and show which model is used for conducting teaching/learning of competencies in integrative pedagogy. Next, we shall compare between two integration-oriented schools of thought, the Anglo-Saxon and the Francophone schools. Upon doing so, the specificities of integration pedagogy will ultimately be identified and discussed in relation to the Anglo-Saxon CBE.

2.2.1. two major integrative teaching/learning models

In tracing the theoretical foundation of integration pedagogy and noting its superiority, Roegiers (2007, 2010) illustrates the major methodological differences between two chief integrative teaching/learning models currently in use: “situations-as-starting points” and “situations-as-end points” (Roegiers, 2010, pp. 77-78). The former is typically exemplified in the communicative teaching approaches such as problem-solving and project work, while the latter refers to the pedagogy of integration. The two models adhere to learning through complex tasks and problem-solving activities as opposed to teacher-fronted classroom practices.

2.2.1.1. situations-as-end points: integration pedagogy

According to Roegiers (2007, 2010) the pedagogy of integration is conceptualized round the integrative teaching/learning model called *situations-as-end points*. The latter task-based teaching approach suggests introducing complex situations at the end of a course of study in a form of a family of situations; but prior to tackling complex situations, the learner works on resources (knowledge and skills required by the complex situation) and carries out preliminary tasks. Simply said, resources relative to terminal tasks are, first identified; then taught and practiced separately in complex intermediary tasks; and, finally reinvested in a group of complex meaningful certification tasks.

2.2.1.2. Situations-as-starting points

Learning within this pedagogical framework starts with the presentation of complex end tasks right at the beginning of a course of instruction. In this instructional design resources are supposedly acquired through manipulating and experiencing with real life tasks without any prior explicit teaching of enabling skills and knowledge. Breen and Candlin (1980) communicative process syllabus reflects this pedagogical view in that the content of the course arises from the joint interaction among students while implementing authentic tasks. Although this view is supported by SLA research studies and it reflects the way people learn, it is hardly applicable in settings where students are not used to progressive teaching.

When outlining the above problem-solving model, Roegiers (2007, 2010) argues in favor of superiority of *situations-as-end points* and thus of the pedagogy of integration especially with regard to a more precise definition of the learner exit profile, evaluation of learning outcomes, and frequency of graded problem-solving situations. Moreover, although Roegiers (2007) acknowledges that the two models are two sides of the same coin, he underscores the fact that integration situations-as-end points model is more appropriate for developing countries that suffer from lack of teacher training and didactic materials.

2.2.2. *Two Schools of Thought*

Also, in presenting the development of the concept of integration, Peyser et al. (2006) identify two main integration schools of thought, the Anglo-Saxon and the Francophone. The major differences between these schools relate to the way they conceptualize skill integration and transfer. While the Anglo-Saxon pedagogical community argues that students cannot integrate skills and knowledge until they are fully mastered, the Francophone school holds that students can learn to integrate and transfer skills by solving similar tasks in different situations.

Plainly said, the Anglo-Saxon integration framework is based on the reconstruction of the already mastered skills and knowledge to perform a real world task at the end of instruction, the aim of which is to acquire real life and survival skills; whereas the Francophone model is built round on-going integration of skills through working on similar tasks in different contexts within the classroom. Peyser et al. (2006) further argue that integration model formulated in integration pedagogy equally departs from the Francophone school of integration in that it seeks to structure skill transfer and stresses more the act of integration through integration situations. In fact, Peyser et al. (2006) point out that in integration pedagogy “there is a structure to the learning path proposed and specific timing in which these integration situations appear” (p.3). In other words, the pedagogy of integration has worked out a network through which students can progress gradually to assimilate competencies in a more realistic and practical way; it incorporates precise and timed syllabus specifications and guidelines such as scheduling a week for skills integration after few weeks of ordinary learning (i.e., practice of resources).

Structuring learning through competencies is very crucial especially because students in developing countries are used to highly prearranged learning embedded in the objective-based pedagogy. In a way it can be said that integration pedagogy has been specifically designed mainly for students from less advanced countries. Probably, the experts of BIEF have sought rational procedures and have imposed rigid constraints that could guarantee an optimal climate for acquisition of competencies in ‘hard’ settings.

However, setting up time-honored integration practices runs counter the principle of time flexibility inherent to CBE. The latter underscores the primacy of outcomes over time (Spady, 1977). Since CBE is based on mastery learning and individualization of instruction, it is impossible to pre-specify and accommodate for scheduled weeks of integration because not all students will reach the prerequisite level of adequacy by this time. In essence, students in this instructional approach are not constrained by time; the only valid criterion for moving on from one unit of instruction into another or scheduling evaluation opportunities is mastery of outcomes. But, in their pursuit of practicability of CBE, experts of BIEF have sacrificed time flexibility for more opportunities for the practice of skill integration during the learning process. The usual tendency in the pedagogy of integration is to fall back on traditional classroom organization and practice.

The author’s experience in competency-based schools of secondary education indicates that teachers tend to distort integration situations and approach them as traditional production activities. Because of this operational problem related to teacher training in competency-based practices, experts of BIEF have perhaps sought to make integration activities ‘respectful’ and ‘legitimate’ classroom practices that teachers cannot avoid, hence, sensitizing teachers to the

significance of this invaluable assignment in integrative teaching models. Besides scheduling regular periods for skill integration, the pedagogy of integration proposes a copybook of integration that includes a sum of integration activities to strengthen the status of this pedagogical technique within curricular frameworks.

3. Fundamental Claims of Integration Pedagogy

On the basis of the above theoretical underpinnings (i.e., situations-as-end points and the Francophone pedagogical school of thought) that have informed the pedagogy of integration, the writer has identified five syllabus specifications instilled into the pedagogy of integration to structure and make easier and clearer the practice of competencies. These curricular guidelines are as follows: working on resources, maintenance of objective-based pedagogy, horizontal transfer, use of class of situations, and focus on integration skills. A comparative note is inserted when appropriate to show the place of these syllabus arrangements in the Anglo-Saxon CBE model.

3.1. Working on Resources

At least at early stages, integration pedagogy provides syllabus designers the opportunity to start with preliminary work on resources before inviting learners to solve complex tasks (Roegiers, 2010). Resources are introduced, structured, and practiced one after the other in carefully designed instructional sequences. This usually includes the study and practice of language basic skills and life skills relevant to a class of situations. The framework then permits students to practice skills and elements of a competency to reasonable levels of mastery through learning tasks before they are requested to perform target tasks.

Similarly, the Anglo-Saxon CBI applies a bottom-up approach to the practice of competencies. A review of the most influential English-speaking competency-based articles and books shows that this model is also a reductionist approach, that is, any domain of study is subdivided into specific objectives stated in terms of life skills (such as writing a check). From these life skills, basic skills such as grammar, pronunciation, listening, reading, writing, and punctuation are derived (Auerbach, 1986; Chappell, 1996; Hyland, 1997; Richards, 2006, 2014; Savage, 1993). These primary skills are taught in priori to equip the learner with the necessary tools to tackle survival tasks in the classroom. "Instruction first focuses on teaching the enabling skills in context and then on the application of the enabling skill to the life skill" (California CBAE, 1983 as cited in Savage, 1993, p. 20). This is to say that CBE equally starts with inculcating the basic tools of a given competency, rather than with performance-based tasks.

3.2. Maintenance of Objective-Based Pedagogy

Roegiers (2010) maintains that "the learning of resources can be introduced through the objective-based principles ..." (p.81). If students are not ready or accustomed to problem solving tasks, and if teachers are only used to traditional teaching practices; they can maintain their learning styles and teaching styles respectively. Nevertheless, these old practices should not be perpetuated complacently; instead, integration experiences at later stages should teach them to acquire problem-solving skills and the spirit of team work and thus get rid of transmission model and analytic/reductionist methods.

3.3. *Horizontal Transfer*

In integration pedagogy, learners can practice skills transfer horizontally through preliminary tasks before undertaking target problem-solving tasks. The frequency of complex situations during the learning process serves as milestones for gradual and secured transfer of integration skills. These intermediate tasks initiate students to problem-solving work; in Roegiers' (2010) view, they also consolidate skill retention and make learning gains more permanent. However, it should be noted that this procedure is temporary because, according to Roegiers (2010), students should progress during the learning process and get accustomed to skills integration. Later, they will be called upon to start solving problems right at the onset of instruction and learn resources while or after implementing the target task. Actually, Roegiers (2007) suggests a curriculum structured into two major phases: During the first stage, learners work on enabling skills before facing them up with complex situations; whereas, in the second stage, they start tackling complex tasks, and consequently acquire and master the skills and knowledge intrinsic to the target task simultaneously. In this way, this innovative curriculum framework combines in the long run both top-down and bottom-up learning/teaching processes.

With regard to the Anglo-Saxon competency-based framework, the concept of competency does not include its applications to novel situations; Auerbach (1986) and Collins (1983) note that CBE does not guarantee skill transfer because it is more a training program than an educational syllabus, though assumingly CBE expects students to transfer the skills they acquired for solving other tasks than those set up for them in the classroom. Although other advocates of CBE (such as Chappell, 1996) claim that a competency is not demonstrable on a single occasion and that it can be displayed in changeable contexts, this advocacy remains hypothetical because in actual practice there are no activities specifically designed to encourage skill transfer. As Ashworth and Saxton (1990) assert, it is likely to apply skills acquired in one context to another context, but this largely depends on the student personal capacities, not a product of the teaching framework. Therefore, they argue against this assumption indicating that a competency cannot be regarded as an isolated cognitive capacity detached from the context in which it acquired.

3.4. *Use of Class of Situations*

Unlike the Anglo-Saxon CBE, the integration pedagogy defines the student exit profile in terms of a *class of situations*, and therefore supplies competency-based students with various opportunities to transfer integration skills to similar tasks in different contexts during the learning process. Miled (2005) defines the concept of *family of situations* as a series of tasks of the same level, pertaining to a single competency or terminal integration objective. By contrast to the Anglo-Saxon approach, which targets to teach and assess a competency through the reconstruction of its elements in a *single or similar* task, integration pedagogy presents a class of situations, which belongs to one single competency. This syllabus component not only allows students to get various opportunities for the practice of skills integration and transfer within the confines of the classroom, but also familiarizes them with the type and nature of tasks they will face up for summative evaluation (Roegiers, 2010).

In a way the notion of a class of situation is a response to the criticism made to competency-based education with regard to students' ability to transfer integration skills acquired in the classroom to similar contexts outside the classroom. However, another important

criticism that could be raised here to this very concept of family of situations is that by organizing competencies into classes presupposes that human activities are well-organized and structured in compartmental categories and that each class employs about the same resources that could be identified and taught separately. Then, one wonders what happens to those strips of knowledge or skills that fail to fit into any of these target classes. It seems that the supporters of this approach are well aware of this weakness; and this is probably why they argue that assessment of a minimum of resources is justifiable, but it should not constitute the share of a lion in a competency-based test (Roegiers, 2005, 2010).

Nevertheless, unlike the Anglo-Saxon competency-based model, integration pedagogy has progressed in the operationalization of terminal integration objective through the use of similar intermediate tasks in varied situations within the classroom context, while CBE still operates at the level of terminal behavior objective level (Ainsworth, 1977). The latter further argues that CBE is the late materialization of behavioural objectives in that a competency consists of a sum of enabling objectives (sub-sets of a competency) practiced in isolation and displayed visibly in more inclusive tasks at the completion of instruction. Accordingly, innovation rests on the combination of discrete enabling objectives that were once promoted in behavioral objectives pedagogy.

3.5. Focus on Integration Skills

The concept of integration is considered in the integration pedagogy as the most important stage in the learning process (De Ketele, 1996; Roegiers, 2000, 2003, 2004; De Ketele & Gerard, 2005, and Miled, 2005 as cited in Roegiers, 2010, p. 81). It is when learners select on their own appropriate skills and resources and manipulate them in a novel way to solve challenging tasks that it could be stated that they are competent. This crucial phase is the ‘hard’ of integration pedagogy and a distinctive feature that makes it a step ahead of its antecedent pedagogy, i.e., objective-based pedagogy. Here what is important is not very much the knowledge and skills displayed as much as the ability to think critically and maneuver available data and existing knowledge and skills to deal with problematic situations that require various cognitive acts.

The term integration is also used in CBE; hence, it is not a distinctive feature of integration pedagogy. Even broad competency-based approaches are generally described as “integrated, holistic or relational” (Gonczi, 1997; Hager, 1995 as cited in Kerba, 1998, p.3). They also suggest reinvestment of the learned knowledge and skills in performance-based tasks. But, while the focus in English-speaking competency paradigm is on re-investment of specific behavioural elements of a competency, the integration pedagogy contends to tap more at the act of integration than on the product. Roegiers (2001) claims that the concept of integration was ‘formalized’ for the first time as a separate component of a curriculum by De Ketele (1980) through the notion of terminal integration objective (p.84). The latter has become a respectable occasion for integrating all the sub-competencies in a single activity by the end of a course of study.

4. What is Integration Pedagogy, Then? A more Realistic Pedagogy

The pedagogy of integration can be viewed as a simplified version of CBE in that it attempts to make concrete the broad principles of this American educational movement. In an

interview the researcher carried out with X. Roegiers who champions this teaching approach, Roegiers defines integration pedagogy in the following terms:

The pedagogy of integration is one way of viewing CBA; it is a methodological framework that substantiates CBA. CBA is initially a set of broad ideas that require a methodological framework to make them operational, then the pedagogy of integration provides an operational framework for a concrete application of CBA. This is how I define integration pedagogy.

CBA consists of broad principles; everyone introduces these principles somehow in his way, but in the past mostly not sufficiently operational.

(Personal interview, translated from French to English, January 11, 2016)

In other words, integration pedagogy is the application of the principles of CBE in a more concrete and doable way. The vague CBE's principles are carefully operationalized and structured to make learning through integration and complex situations carefully monitored and less 'risky', i.e., easily exploitable by its users.

5. Conclusion

This review of the history of integration pedagogy shows that this form of instruction has come as another strong reaction to the dysfunctional objective-based pedagogy, which seems outdated for the requirements of modern times; that is, integration pedagogy cannot pretend originality in its attempt to surpass and improve on performance-based objectives. The reexamination of the objective-based pedagogy had already been considered in the US educational sphere before it was undertaken in the French-speaking countries.

Besides, societal factors had also their bearing on the introduction of CBI in both sides of the Atlantic. CBE has always been considered the lever of school reforms throughout the world in modern times. In the United State, CBE has been regarded an alternative to the downfall of Audiolingualism since the Sputnik event (Soviet Union launching the first artificial satellite before the US); in the Francophone countries and later in developing countries, on the other hand, the adoption of CBE in the 1980s has been a response to societal needs and a solution to the dysfunctional educational systems.

Furthermore, this inquiry has shown that probably the principal contribution of the pedagogy of integration is, rather, its effort to structure learning through competencies by framing specific guidelines for implementation and evaluation of competencies through various syllabus specifications that can substitute to the lack of a clear learning methodological guidance. Amongst these syllabus interventions, the following salient characteristics deserve to be highlighted: defining the learner exit profile in terms of class of situations, use of transmission model of teaching as a transitory solution to the teacher and the learner unpreparedness for implementing complex tasks, and extended and careful practice of resources through intermediate learning task. It could be said then that this methodological design scaffolds students in progressing and getting the required skills to solve complex tasks even in the most difficult teaching contexts such as those in underprivileged setting in developing countries.

Finally, this study suggests for teachers, syllabus designers, program evaluators, and scholars to approach the pedagogy of integration as a distinct competency-based teaching model.

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