



## Preliminary Evaluation of the Core Competencies in the Curriculum of Undergraduate Elementary Education

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**ABSTRACT:** The main question in this research was the identification of core competencies in the field of elementary education in order to design and develop a competency-based curriculum. Order to identify core competencies and define the dimensions and elements of competencies for designing primary curriculum programs framework was used conceptual analysis method. In this study, academic resources, previous research, scientific databases and Internet search, reviewed and analyzed. The results showed that the set of moral, scientific, research, psychological, and management competences should be considered as a basis for formulating curriculum objectives of primary education. Competencies-based curriculum in the field of primary education, regardless of the set of core competencies, will have not the desired effectiveness to train professionals needed to improve education.

**Key words:** Elementary Education, Core Competencies, Competency-based curriculum, Higher Education.

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### INTRODUCTION

Teachers have a key role in the development of education. The most important factor is the quality of interaction that occurs between teachers and students. The elements of this interaction are, the teacher knowledge, skill and sensitivity on one hand and expectations of learning, socio-economic status and cultural characteristics of learners, on other hand to determine the success or failure of education. Therefore, to put the most capable and the most qualified individuals for the teaching profession is the most critical problem and critical than it is in-service training and teacher training programs with superior quality that provide the opportunity for teachers to enhance their knowledge and their skills during the tenure. The quality of education, ultimately, depends on the quality of its teachers (Rauf, 2000). Hence, it can say that one of the underlying things that make organizations effective is continuous development and improvement of human capital through education.

Latin root of the word competency is *competentia* that means merit in judgment and having the right to comment. Several definitions of competency is presented. Competency is a set of behaviors that reflect a unique combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes and relevant to organizational functioning (Shasti, 2010). Competency is a combination of skills, knowledge and attitudes required to perform such a role effectively (Weerayute and Anusit, 2007). Competency-based curriculum is a set of courses or contents that offered to students that Special emphasis on identifying and integrating competencies that are expected of students. And has a particular emphasis on identifying and integrating competencies that are expected of students. But the Competency model in education system can have different applications

Including educational needs assessment, preparation and evaluation of educational programs, evaluating the educational effectiveness and efficiency, and programming for individuals growth and development. Indeed, it can designed educational system based on competency. In this regard, Norton has been identified, five essential elements for competency-based training which include: 1- Determining and validating the goal competencies that should be reached on the program. 2- The criteria should be applied in evaluating progress. 3- Educational programs that should be used to foster individual and assessment each competencies. 4- Evaluation of competencies taught. 5- Assess the participant's progress through training programs which relying on their speed, which indicates a specific competencies (Shasti, 2010). Pavlina, et al. (2011) have done study as "Students' perceptions of teaching quality in higher education". The main objective of this research was to refine students' perceptions of teaching quality in higher education. Findings from this study showed that university teachers to prioritize their efforts to improve the quality of teaching in higher education, put the most important priority on their students. Also, the results showed that good communication strategy, is a vital factor in creating a quality education. And collaborative classroom management systems, has led to motivate students and improve the quality of teaching. Koster, et al. (2005), have divided the qualifications of teachers into five main categories and sub-categories including: 1- Professional knowledge include necessary information in the areas professional knowledge, developing and keeping it up to date; 2- Communications include: communicating with students having different backgrounds, directing tasks, analyze and clarify

students' perspectives. 3- Organizing, includes: determining student performance system, time management and curriculum planning in accordance with organizational goals. Pedagogy is based on four factors, which include: To help students and identify their learning needs, adjust the curriculum according to the needs of different students, Design activities to facilitate students' learning and growth, and the use of information technology in teaching. 5- Behavioral competencies include: a democratic approach, pre-action attitude, curiosity about the new things, integrity and honesty. Pavlina, et al. (2011) has done a study in Portugal as "research in higher education: the role of teaching and learning of students". The results showed that the quality of research in universities is an important component in teaching and presented procedures for evaluating the quality of research. In this study, are advised a set of good practices and indicators in the assessment of research quality, and the quality of teaching and learning. Finally, this study suggested that higher education needs to talk about the role of education and teaching, staff development, evaluation criteria and the impact of research has on student learning in different fields.

According to the above, it seems that the elementary education curriculum may have special concerns to the new educational requirements of teachers and consequently students. Obviously, this goal is achieved when the desired competencies have important attendance in the curriculum. In this regard, it is a question of competency-oriented curriculum in undergraduate Elementary Education, what are the features? The present curriculum, is able to meet the teacher's needs? In spite of research on teachers' skills it seems that little research has been done in the field of elementary education in the world and especially in Iran about formulation of curriculum. And therefore, this study is designed with this objective. In addition, in this research, prioritize and classify core competencies in the field of elementary education, has also been considered.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

In this study, to explain the concept of merit and competencies-based curriculum, conceptual analysis method was employed (Short, 2009). To clarify and determine the dimensions and elements of competencies and the factors, criteria and indicators for designing the basic framework was used scientific resources, previous research, teachers and subject specialists and search Internet databases and scientific information. Stages of the research were as follows:

- 1- A review of related theories and researches;
- 2 - Identification and selection of an appropriate set of competencies;
- 3 -Prioritization and classification of competencies.

## RESULTS

Question 1: What are the qualifications appropriate for the elementary education graduate students?

The review of previous resources, educational theories and models as well as some of the indicators provided by experts and scientific support of models and criteria laid, five components were identified and determined that had the highest frequency and had the highest share among existing models. These components are: 1-moral dimension, 2- scientific dimension, 3- research dimension, 4- psychological dimension, and 5- managerial dimension.

Question 2 - The competencies, how they are described and explained?

A: Moral competency: In a simple definition, the internal character of a man is called ethics that in thoughts, words and actions of a person becomes apparent. For a teacher, moral merit, is to acquire all the positive features of humanity, so that, his/her thoughts, words and actions in line with the majority of the scholarly societies. Intended competencies are given in the table 1.

**Table 1.** Moral competencies for graduates of elementary education

Components of moral competency	
Respect the rights of others	Commitment to accountability
Altruism	Flexibility
Fairness	Accepting Critique
Adornment appearance and inner	Humility
Hauteur	Being Social
Responsibility	Respect
Faithful and believer to God	Be trusted
Depositary	Patience

**B - Scientific competency:** Refer to those skills and capabilities that help the teacher in his professional growth and academic growth of students. Due to these capabilities teachers are able to plan the

mental model, analyze issues, expansion of general and specialized knowledge and applying rational principles in the educational process. Intended competencies are given in the following Table 2.

**Table 2.** Scientific competencies for graduates of elementary education

Components of the scientific competency	
Ongoing studies	Dominate the software
Familiar with needs assessment patterns	Innovation and initiative
Time management	Continuous evaluation
Familiarity with educational resources	Foster reflection
To be updated	Appropriate lesson planning
Mastering the methods of teaching	Selecting and organizing learning experiences
Applying acquired ideas	Preservation of culture
Participation in lesson's revision	Dominate the achievement tests codification
Dominate the design educational aids	Professional interaction with colleagues
Having skills in hold up exams	Creating equal opportunities for students
Determine individual and group assignments	Provide feedback to students

**C - Research competency:** To describe the components of competence in elementary education graduates using scientific methods are sought to achieve a new understanding of various issues and concepts. This scope includes the competence of teachers in the use of various instruments to observe the phenomena around us accurately and deeper. The

aim is to discover new facts and correct interpretation of facts, revision of the conclusions, theories and laws adopted in the light of the facts discovered and the practical application of conclusions, theories, and new laws. Competencies related to this aspect are presented in following Table 3.

**Table 3.** Research competencies for graduates of elementary education

Components of research competence	
Design and implementation of effective research	Collaboration with other colleagues to create motivations for collaborative research
Create research-based mind	Planning and design, research and scientific visits
Follow-up research topics	Ability to take initiative in research
Refer to professional journals and headlines	Support for research and discovery processes
Participation in seminars and scientific workshops	Having a critical attitude towards various issues
Efforts to promote science and research at higher levels	The ability to create and foster dynamic thinking and scientific curiosity in learners
The ability to recognize different ways of communicating with each other disciplines	

**D- Psychological competency:** Psychologists and educators know teacher as criterion of reality for child. In this dimension of competence, teachers are expected that examined and evaluated their usual activities based on the principles and criteria of mental health and to examine their attitudes, feelings, values,

and behaviors in one hand, and observing children and interpreting their behaviors and detect problems, on the other hand, re-organize educational success in a positive direction, either prevention or treatment. Desired competencies in this aspect, are given in the following table 4.

**Table 4.** Psychological competencies for graduates of elementary education

Components of psychological competency	
Self - restraint and avoid humiliating others	Ability to understand the feelings of learners
Self-control and lack of physical confrontation with others	Ability to understand the family background and social relations of learners
Ability to identify the causes of abnormal behavior of learners	The ability to withdraw from the monotony of classes with good humor droll and witty
To motivate the learners	Ability to raise the self-esteem of learners
The ability to consider individual differences	Create optimal emotional connection with learners
Ability to develop partnerships and engage the learner in the learning areas	Ability to solve Students' problems through counseling and guidance
Ability to strengthen healthy and constructive competition in the classroom	Ability to assist learners to achieve independence

Have a professional interest and internal motivation Ability to create a calm, challenging and supportive environment in the classroom	Ability to create joy and vitality in the classroom Considering the effect of color and proper use of that (psychology of color)
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**E- Managerial competency:** This kind of competence, entails which aids teachers to control the environmental variables affecting class handling; and help they in regulation of student guidance process and

efficient administration of educational environment. These competencies, mainly, in terms of behavioral patterns, can be crystallized. Desired competencies in this aspect are given in the following table 5.

**Table 5.** Managerial competencies for graduates of elementary education

Components of managerial competency	
Ability to avoid creating tension and friction	Ability to deal effectively with pupils with emotional and behavioral problems
Ability of leading the scientific engagement of learners in the right direction	Ability to use skill "cue points" in the class
Ability to calm the classroom and attract the students' attention.	Ability to communicate effectively with parents of students
Ability to prevent indiscipline and unrest in class.	Ability to collaborate with teachers to improve educational space management
Ability to accept students' mistakes	Ability to make timely and correct decisions
Attention to different perspectives and avoiding dictatorship	Ability to prepare learners for economic and social challenges
Ability to avoid unnecessary and boring comparisons	

**DISCUSSION**

The purpose of this study was to identify the core competencies in the field of primary education in order to devise and design a competency-based curriculum. The results showed that a set of moral, scientific, research, psychological, and managerial competences should be considered as a basis for formulating the objectives of primary education curriculum. According to survey conducted in Iran, it seems that the graduates of this course cannot take the skills learned in the college to classroom. Consequently, the need for new approaches, it is felt .In this context, the relevance of curriculum content to educational needs is very important. So, a homogeneous curriculum be prepared in partnership with students and their parents, teachers, and experts, and curriculum planners; and the provision of basic structure (physical, financial, etc.) to implement the curriculum, should be considered. This study, will enable those in charge to consider required competencies in developing and designing curricula of primary education field.

Given that, in identifying core competencies, have been considered educational requirements, it helps to create a common language among university faculty, and ministry of education, to prepare required manpower in various sectors in the future.

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