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From Definition to Structure: Reconceptualizing Competence in Subject Curriculum Design

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Abstract

This study addresses an epistemological and structural gap in the implementation of the Competence-Based Curriculum (CBC): the absence of a mechanism that systematically links the normative definition of competence to the organizing architecture of the subject curriculum. European policy documents define competence as the integrated configuration of knowledge, skills, and attitudes (K–S–A) mobilized in context; however, this definition is not consistently operationalized within the structural design of curriculum documents.

The study proposes a reconceptualization of competence as a term designating the student's functional and integrated use of K–S–A components in context. This functional use is positioned as the generative organizing principle of curriculum architecture. On this basis, the following functional structure is articulated:

Learning Outcomes ? Learning Situation ? Student Action ? Student Achievements (SAs) ? Assessment.

A structural analysis of the subject curricula Mathematics 1, Physics 6, and Physics 10–11 demonstrates the cross-curricular stability of the model. The proposed architecture is further analytically validated through these cases, showing its structural identifiability, coherence, and capacity to render visible the functional use of K–S–A. The study's contribution lies in the structural operationalization of the concept of competence and in advancing the debate on curriculum coherence within competence-based curriculum design.

Keywords: Reconceptualization of Competence; Competencebased-Based Curriculum; Subject Curriculum; Curriculum Architecture; Learning Outcomes.