

ТЕОРІЯ І МЕТОДОЛОГІЯ НЕПЕРЕРВНОЇ ОСВІТИ

THEORY AND METHODOLOGY OF CONTINUING EDUCATION

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CONCEPT OF COMPETENCE IN THE INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL CONTEXTS

This paper explores the problem of harmonization of educational thesaurus which requires urgent attention in the process of creating European Higher Education Area and developing of common educational standards. All policy documents, the reports of the European Council and guidliances contain key educational terms that require proper understanding and interpretation in both the member states and in countries that are at the stage of European integration. The paper also reviews the issue of the coordination of international educational thesaurus with the national one, what raises the question if it is possible to unify educational terminology in Europe and beyond? Besides, the authors make an overview of the genesis of the competence movement in the EU, the USA, Australia and Ukraine to evaluate this question. It has become evident that there is still considerable misunderstanding of the integrated approach to concepts of competence and competency. These definitions are found to be too broad, abstract and general and not unified for higher education both on international and national levels.

Key words: competence; competency; competent performance; educational contexts; knowledge; skills.

Introduction. The development in the last decade in Europe polyphonic educational area, harmonization of models of education and training at national levels with the requirements of European Higher Education Area, development a common

understanding of the content of qualifications at bachelor and master's degrees in terms of learning outcomes actualized the genesis of the competence movement in the EU, the USA, Australia and Ukraine. In the EU higher education much

attention is paid for the concept of competence. After the decision to create the European Higher Education Area by the European Council the Bologna process and the Copenhagen process aimed to support the achievement of the Lisbon goals to create a sustainable knowledge economy, based on the European social model of higher and vocational-technical education. For higher education, a process of harmonization is going on, which led to the implementation of the three-cycled structure in higher education. To support this, the Dublin descriptors were developed, which indicate the qualification needed at Bachelor, Master and PhD level, as well as the competence levels of these qualifications. In Ukraine the concept of competence is a core question of current researches which aimed at developing different models of competence and competent performance. So, an interpretation and definition of the meaning of competence has particular importance for regulatory documents and pedagogical discourse, taking to account the content of other well-established concepts of national educational area.

Methodology of Research. The purpose of this study is to make an overview of the genesis of the competence movement in the EU, the USA, Australia and Ukraine, and to evaluate the question as to whether the concept of competence is unified for higher education. This theoretical qualitative research has been made on the bases of the comparative analysis of the scientific literature of the EU, the USA and Ukraine.

The analysis of the scientific literature shows that the term «*competence*» is widely used in scientific pedagogical discourse of the EU (Slavík, 2008) and Ukraine, while «most of the theory of *competency* comes from the USA» (Mulder et al., 2008, p. 5). However, it should be noted that in American and Australian scientific literature both terms «*competency*» and «*competence*» are used as different concepts (Oliver, 1990; Hager et al., 1994; Allen, 2005; Mulder et al., 2008; Ott et al., 2014). Some researchers believe that the term «*competency*» is more accurate, adequate or more modern expression (Modeling and Measuring Competencies, 2013, p. 5). Such an incomprehensible situation with the terminology required to consult with the dictionaries. Thus, Longman Exam Dictionary defines the term «*competence*» along with «*competency*» (U) as an opportunity to do things properly. There are professional, linguistic, technical and others competences. The term «*competency*» (C) is defined as formal skills

needed to perform a specific job (Longman Exam Dictionary, p. 291).

As we can see, both terms «*competence*» and «*competency*» are widely used in the world pedagogical discourse, what raises a question whether these terms are defined in the same way in the European and American educational areas. The study of literature has shown that there are many definitions of the concept of competence and there is much debate about its international conceptualization in the world.

Concept of competence in the EU. In the EU educational area there are two different approaches to understanding the concept of competence. According to one approach, *competence* is seen as the ability to carry out the task successfully. This is the possession of a set of relevant knowledge and skills such as problem solving, analysis, communication, pattern recognition and appropriate relations. Slavík (2008) shares this idea. In his view, *competence* is also a set of different skills (excellent capability). It includes knowledge, skills, attitudes and experience, and the ability to perform tasks in a particular context, a high level of quality.

This view is held by Mulder and others. In their work «The new competence concept in higher education: error or enrichment?» (2008) competence is conceived of as:

- integrated abilities;
- consisting of clusters of knowledge, skills, and attitudes;
- necessarily conditional for task performance and problem solving;
- and for being able to function effectively;
- in a certain profession, organization, job, role and situation (p. 3).

From other approach, the term «*competence*» is the most adequate to describe the goals and learning outcomes. Targeting educational standards, educational programs and curricula in results (competence) facilitates comparison and transparency of qualifications, that person gets.

The concept of *competence* is linked to learning outcomes (Banta, 2001). At the EU level, Dublin descriptors together form a systematic integrity competences, which are important for Bachelor's and Master's programs:

- knowledge and insight;
- application of knowledge and insight;
- development of judgment;
- communication;
- learning skills.

They clearly indicate that the graduate should be able to do, differentiating levels of training bachelors, masters and doctors of philosophy (PhD) and be competent in what (Mulder et al, 2008, p. 8–9). In the Tuning Project (2008) the essence of the concept of *competences* is determined as an integrated approach that can be considered *competence* (their content) through a dynamic set of qualities that together provide competent activity (action) or is a part of the final product of the educational process.

The concept of competences tries to follow an integrated approach, looking at capacities via a dynamic combination of attributes that together permit a competent performance or as a part of a final product of an educational process (p. 28).

It should be noted that in the regulatory documents of the Republic of Poland the only term «learning outcomes» («efekty kształcenia» in Polish) is used to describe levels of education (descriptors) and the normative learning outcomes for each sector of higher education. The term «*competence*» is exclusively linked with personal and social competences («kompetencje personalne i społeczne» in Polish) (Rashkevych, 2014, p. 122).

Thus, in the EU pedagogical discourse the definition of «*competence*» is found to be too narrow and outcome-oriented. The concept of «*competence*» is widely understood both as a unity of knowledge and skills needed to perform professional tasks and as learning outcomes.

Concept of competence in the USA. Literature review of competency-based and competence-oriented education shows that in the USA educational contexts two terms «*competence*» and «*competency*» are widely used with different and sometimes confusing meanings. According to Mulder and others (2008, p. 5), this theory is based on an ongoing research program for the development of *competence*, which began in late 90-s of last century, while most of the theory of *competency* comes from the USA. Some researchers believe that the term «*competency* is more accurate, adequate or a more modern expression» (Modeling and Measuring Competencies 2013, p. 5).

It should be noted, that in the USA there is a trend to differentiate the concept of *competence* from the concept of *competency*, meaning by this behaviouristic nature of competency. Mulder and others (2008) view the following:

The concept of competence differs from the concept of competency, in approaches like competen-

cy-based training or competency-management, that competence is a more holistic concept, whereas competency is more behaviouristic (p. 3).

Studying the phenomenon of a competent teacher, Oliver (1990, p. 187) concludes that *competence* can be viewed as a behavior; as a set of skills or knowledge that can be selected and used depending on the learning situation. *Competence* can also be seen as the degree or level of opportunities that need to be evaluated. Also, as a quality of a person or his state of being. Supporting this idea, R. Shavelson describes *competence* as a complex ability, closely associated with the activities in real life situations (Modeling and Measuring Competencies, 2013, p. 30).

In his dissertation Choudaha (2008) describes the conceptualization of *competence* in several ways. He notes that *competence* is not meant to be an expert or skilled, because the competency-based curriculum should facilitate the transformation of students' training in the outcomes, based on performance. Also, it is assumed that the combination of value and performance is an integral part of the definition of *competency*. The content of *competency* is the knowledge, skills, or abilities, and the result – effective implementation of the expected standards (p. 41).

The opposite idea is stated in the Department of Education in the United States, which defines *competency* as «the integration of skills, abilities and knowledge that focus on a specific task». (Ott et al, 2014).

The concept of *competency* is directly associated with a specific professional sector and with the possibility of employment. Studying the design of competency-based education, Van der Klink and Boon (2002,) identify a *competency profile* as «an empirically validated, systematic description of professional activities within a certain professional domain». *Competencies* are contextual (depending on scope) and include a combination of skills, knowledge or relationship in the context of the application (p. 412). Sharing this idea, Allen and others (2005,) define the concept of *competencies* as an opportunity to learn and teach, the ability to perform a variety of human activities, such as work or school and be ready to change. They are also meant by «*competencies*» the characteristics of competent and employable graduates (p. 50).

Concept of competence in Australia. In Australia, the notions «*competence*» and «*competency*» are also tried to be differentiated. According

to Hager and others (1994), *competence* is understood as follows:

the capacity to perform successfully a series of discrete observable tasks; as possession of a series of desirable attributes including knowledge of appropriate sorts, skills and abilities such as problem solving, analysis, communication, pattern recognition, etc. and attitudes of appropriate kinds (p. 4).

D. Royce Sadler, a Professor at Griffith University in Brisbane, states that competency is often understood as the skill or practice. Competence, by contrast, is often seen as a set of «discrete competencies» that can be independently verified by objective means. *Competence* includes a choice of a number of competencies for a particular purpose in a particular context. «Competence involves being able to select from and then orchestrate a set of competencies to achieve a particular end within a particular context» (Modeling and Measuring Competencies, 2013, p. 5). It is «the capability to orchestrate knowledge and skill independently, in a range of contexts, on demand and to a high level of proficiency» (Modeling and Measuring Competencies, 2013, p. 26).

Concept of Competence in Ukraine. It should be noted that in the Ukrainian pedagogical discourse (as well as in Russian one) under the concept of *competence* researchers understand two notions – «*competence*» and «*competent performance*» («компетентність» in Ukrainian). Introduction of the English word «*competence*» to the Ukrainian scientific community caused a lot of discussions about the difference between the concepts of *competence* and *competent performance*, their semantic content and hierarchical subordination.

The new Law on Higher Education in Ukraine (2014) brings us back to the need for clear differentiation these concepts, as in the definition of higher education (as a «set of systematized knowledge and practical skills, ways of thinking, professional, philosophical and civic qualities, ethical values and other competences acquired in higher education institution...») and learning outcomes (as the «body of knowledge, skills and other competencies acquired by a person while training at certain educational and professional program that can be identified, assured and measured» (Law on Higher Education, 2014) provides the understanding of expert competence with higher education as a specific set of competencies that he acquires during the study in higher education.

In the new Law on Higher Education, the con-

cept of *competence* is defined as «a dynamic combination of knowledge, skills and practical skills, ways of thinking, professional, philosophical and civic qualities, moral and ethical values, which specifies person's ability to implement successfully professional and further training activities and is the learning output at particular level of higher education» (Law on Higher Education, 2014). Thus, according to the Law, higher education is considered as a kind of being competent and «other competences acquired in higher education in the relevant field of knowledge according to certain qualifications in higher education levels, which are more complex than the levels of complete secondary education» (Law on Higher Education, 2014).

Since the «*competence*» is a key concept of competence-oriented higher education, the question arises: What notion should this concept have in the national scientific discourse, as in the documents of Ministry of Education and Science (2007) and the new Law on Higher Education (2014) of Ukraine it is translated and interpreted in different ways?

In Great Dictionary of Modern Ukrainian «*competent*» person is defined as: 1) those who has sufficient knowledge in any field; who is knowledgeable in something, clever, qualified; 2) those who has certain powers, sovereign (Great Dictionary of Modern Ukrainian, p. 560). According to the dictionary, *competent performance* (awareness, credibility) is a property or an integrated quality, which a competent person has and that reflects his awareness and familiarity (knowledge, abilities, skills) authority, which is largely determined by certain skills, personal qualities and behavioral characteristics. Thus, the «*competent performance*» is personal and assessable characteristic of an individual, which is caused by the level and quality of education, experience and his personal qualities, ability to self-improvement and creative approach to his work. We should also note, that the *competent performance* as an integrated ability of personality is formed in the learning process, but its complete formation and development is happening while practicing and long life learning.

According to the Great Dictionary of Modern Ukrainian (2005, p. 560) «*competence*» is defined as: 1) good knowledge in something; 2) authority of any organization, institution or individual. The word «*authority*» is treated in the same dictionary as the right granted to someone to make some-

thing (Great Dictionary of Modern Ukrainian, 2005, p. 1000).

In addressing the problems of education, in our view, it is advisable to pay attention to the first meaning of *competence*. And even if we are talking about the *competence* of a person as a range of powers, here it is understood his awareness, knowledge, skills, etc., as another interpretation contradicts the meaning of «authority». In addition, in the educational context of *competence* cannot be regarded as person's authority within the meaning because it means «knowledge of something» that cannot be linked with the ability (or right) to sell his awareness.

Also it is necessary to refer to the Encyclopedia of Education (2008, p. 409), which states that the result of the acquisition of *competence* is *competent performance*, which unlike competence involves personal characteristics, attitudes to the subject of activity.

A. Hutorskoy (2003) states that *competence* is a sphere of relationships that exist between knowledge and action in practice, but *competent performance* is a person's possession of certain competences, including his own attitude to the subject and activities. *Competence* is interpreted as a set of interrelated personal qualities that are gained through a range of objects and processes that are necessary for productive activities in relation to them.

Considering *competence* as internal, potential, hidden psychological new formations, which are then found in the competent performance of a person, I. Zymnyaya (2004) highlights core competences, grouped by their type. The first group includes *competences* related to the individual as a subject of activity and communication, the second includes *competences* related to social interaction and social rights.

It should be stressed that higher education institution forms readiness for a certain type of professional activity, which level of development is determined by the level of formation of *competences* and their types. The formation and development of professional *competence* of an expert is only happened in the profession. Therefore the learning outcomes in modern educational programs have to describe the level or degree of *competence* formation. So, meaning of *competences* is the most adequate to describe the goals and learning outcomes. Targeting educational standards, educational programs and curriculum to outcomes (*competence*) facilitates comparison and

transparency of qualifications, that person gains.

Competence is a rate determined in relation to lifelong learning, which is set by educational standards and is used to create the requirements for learning outcomes. *Competent performance* is an integrated personal quality of a man (its capital), which is formed during education and training, finally formalized and developed in the practice and provides competent approach to solving professional problems. *Competent performance* is an assessable characteristic. It is a personal capital and learning outcomes in various forms of formal, informal and non-formal education. Therefore competence-based approach aimed at forming a competent person.

We believe that higher education should be seen, on the one hand, as the process of learning in high education institution, and on the other hand as a result of education and training in a particular educational level of qualifications. Also, in our opinion, it should be emphasized that a competent person is the capital (formed competence) and it can be used only through him. Here lies the fundamental difference between *competence* and *competent performance*. The distortion of the content of these concepts leads to a leveling of the competent person as an owner of certain competences.

Conclusion. The study and analysis of the literature on education allows us to make the following conclusions. In the international educational contexts both terms: «competence» and «competency» are widely used. However, the term «competence» is more common for the European Higher Education Area, while «competency» is typical for the USA. These terms are used to determine both similar and different concepts.

The term «competence» is widely understood as: 1) a set of knowledge, skills, attitudes and experiences that can be selected and used depending on the professional situation; 2) the ability to perform tasks successfully at a high level of quality, which should be evaluated; 3) the results of study in university; 4) the quality of a person or his state of being. According to our opinion Mulder's definition of «competence» as «integrated capabilities that consist of a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to perform tasks, solve problems and effective functioning in a particular profession, organization, work, roles and situations» can be considered the most complete.

The term «competency» is defined as: 1) integration of skills, abilities and knowledge that fo-

cus on specific tasks; 2) a combination of skills, knowledge or relationships in the application of a particular professional field; 3) the ability to perform a variety of human activities, such as work or school and be ready to change; 4) a practical implementation of skills and knowledge in a specific professional field.

The concept of competency is not perfect and has several interpretations and problems. These problems include: lack of specificity of competency, the absence of accurate and clear correlation and connection between education and profession, excessive emphasis on professional requirements that require continued determination to solve the problem of competency (Van der Klink and Boon, 2002).

In the EU pedagogical discourse the definition of «competence» is found to be too narrow and outcome-oriented. The concept of competence is widely understood both as a unity of knowledge

and skills needed to perform professional tasks and as learning outcomes. In the USA, there is a prompt to relate the concept of competence to education and the concept of competency to professional activity. In Ukraine there is also a trend to differentiate the concept of competence, related to learning outcomes from concept of competent performance, meant being competent at any professional field.

It has become evident that there is still considerable misunderstanding of the integrated approach to concepts of competence and competency. These definitions are found to be too broad, abstract and general and not unified for higher education both on international and national levels. We believe that the questions raised in this research would globally contribute to better understanding and development of the concept of competence in higher education.

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КОНЦЕПЦИЯ КОМПЕТЕНЦИИ В МЕЖДУНАРОДНОМ И НАЦИОНАЛЬНОМ ОБРАЗОВАТЕЛЬНЫХ КОНТЕКСТАХ

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В статье рассматривается проблема гармонизации образовательного тезауруса, которая требует неотложного внимания в процессе создания Европейского пространства высшего образования и разработки общих образовательных стандартов. Все политические документы, отчеты Европейского Совета и рекомендации содержат ключевые образовательные термины, которые требуют надлежащего понимания и толкования как в государствах-членах ЕС, так и в странах, находящихся на этапе европейской интеграции. В документе также рассматривается вопрос о координации международного образовательного тезауруса с национальным, что поднимает вопрос, можно ли унифицировать образовательную терминологию в Европе и за ее пределами? Кроме того, авторы делают обзор генезиса движения компетентности в ЕС, США, Австралии и Украине для оценки этого вопроса. Стало очевидным, что по-прежнему существует значительное непонимание комплексного подхода к концепциям компетенции и компетентности. Эти определения выявляются слишком абстрактными и общими, а не унифицированными для высшего образования как на международном, так и на национальном уровнях.

Ключевые слова: знания; компетентность; компетенция; навыки; образовательные контексты.

КОНЦЕПЦІЯ КОМПЕТЕНТНОСТІ В МІЖНАРОДНОМУ ТА НАЦІОНАЛЬНОМУ ОСВІТНІХ КОНТЕКСТАХ

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У статті розглядається проблема гармонізації освітнього тезауруса, яка вимагає невідкладного уваги в процесі створення Європейського простору вищої освіти та розробки спільних освітніх стандартів. Усі політичні документи, звіти Європейської Ради та рекомендації містять ключові освітні терміни, які вимагають належного розуміння і тлумачення як в державах-членах ЄС, так і в країнах, що знаходяться на етапі європейської інтеграції. У документі також розглядається проблема координації міжнародного освітнього тезауруса з національним, що піднімає питання, чи можна уніфікувати освітню термінологію в Європі і за її межами? Крім того, автори роблять огляд генезису руху компетентності в ЄС, США, Австралії та Україні для оцінки цього питання. Стало очевидним, що як і раніше існує значне нерозуміння комплексного підходу до концепції компетенції та компетентності. Ці визначення вважаються занадто абстрактними і загальними, а не уніфікованими для вищої освіти як на міжнародному, так і на національному рівнях.

Ключові слова: знання; компетентність; компетенція; навички; освітні контексти.

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АКСІОЛОГІЧНІ ОСНОВИ РОЗВИТКУ ГРОМАДЯНСЬКОЇ КОМПЕТЕНТНОСТІ МАЙБУТНЬОГО ПЕДАГОГА

У статті розглянуто аксіологічні основи громадянської компетентності майбутніх педагогів. Визначено, що розвиток особистості майбутнього педагога та формування його громадянської компетентності доцільно здійснювати на основі загальнолюдських, національних та європейських цінностей. Встановлено, що цінності визначають вектор розвитку людини, суспільства та держави, формують образ бажаного майбутнього. До аксіологічних основи громадянської компетентності майбутніх педагогів віднесено три групи цінностей: загальнолюдські, національні та європейські. Вказано на необхідність розробки вимог до організації та здійснення освітнього процесу на основі цінностей природних прав людини, верховенства права, сім'ї,