

Summary

Competences and competency-based approach to education

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This paper attempts to provide an overview of contemporary trends in education policy, research and theory related to the issue of competence and competency-based approach to education. It starts with an overview of various definitions and different theoretical approaches to the concept of competence. Educational policy is recognized as a major advocate of the competency-based approach to education, that is aimed at the identification and selection of key competencies that should be developed at all levels of the educational system, so as to enable their standardization and external evaluation. Based on a review of literature on the subject of competencies in education, both the literature concerning the concept of education in general (including all levels of the educational system), and the literature dealing with specific issues of teacher education, the author finds that the opinions of scientists about competency-based approach to education are deeply divided. On one hand we have the official or „mainstream” view that advocates the competency-based approach to education in accordance with the recommendations of international and national education policy. On the other hand, we encounter a critical attitude toward contemporary educational policy calling for the development of competencies and the creation of a standardized and competency-based curriculum. The main arguments of the opponents of the competency-based approach include the transfer of economic principles to education, its behaviourist orientation, its rigidity, simplicity and other negative implications it entails, as well as the deepening of social inequalities, both at the individual level, and at the level of society as a whole. Finally, the author suggests and makes a case for a possible reconciliation between the two opposing perspectives.

Key words: competencies, competency-based approach to education, educational policy, reconciliation.