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Investigating EFL Teachers' Main Hindrances with CBA Application:

The Case of Secondary Education EFL Teachers in El- Bayadh

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Master in Linguistics

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I dedicate this work to my dear parents, my wife, my children Riheb, Rajaa and Anes and my brothers, my sisters, and to all my family.

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Abstract

Despite the fact that the competency-based approach is applied in the Algerian middle and secondary schools, teachers encounter difficulties in teaching using this approach. Thus, this research work aims at investigating and exploring the major difficulties encountered by EFL secondary school teachers. In this sense, the research rational is to answer the question of what are the main problems encountered by EFL teachers while teaching through CBA. To answer this question, the researcher has opted for an exploratory type of case study for a randomly selected sample. To collect data, a questionnaire was administered to thirty secondary EFL teachers in El -Bayadh. This tool was supplemented with classroom observation. The research results revealed that the participants still rely on traditional methods mainly because they lack enough theoretical backgrounds concerning the competency-based approach and training in teaching the four skills under this approach, which requires a new conceptualization in teaching in addition to the discouraging conditions of the Algerian public schools that lack necessary materials, resources and strategies for a successful teaching and learning.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.

CBA: Competency-Based Approach.

CBE: Competency-Based Education.

CBI: Content-Based Instruction.

CBET: Competency-Based Education and Training.

CBT: Competency-Based Teaching.

CBLT: Competency-Based Language Teaching.

De Se Co: Definition and Selection of Competencies.

EFL: English as a Foreign Language.

ELT: English Language Teaching.

ICT: Information and Communication Technologies.

nº : Number .

TBI: Task-Based Instruction.

ZPD: Zone of Proximal Development.

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The widespread of English as the language of international communication and trade, the global informational technology and the impact of globalization are factors, which stand behind the growing need of future generations to master the language. The Competency-Based Approach, a socio-constructivist and cognitive design has been set with the purpose to install competencies in the learner. This new vision concerns not only English, but also education in general, and was the result of the influence of socio-constructivism and new life demands.

A number of countries, including Algeria, have adopted the Competency-Based Approach. In this perspective, teaching and training are considered as instruments for the development of autonomous individuals able to face challenges and to adopt critical positions in order to adapt to new situations, believing that the accent on the development of competent individuals necessitate a new conceptualization of teaching. For more precision, this approach has been implemented in both middle and secondary education to enable learners to reach an acceptable level of performance that allows them to communicate in a written or oral form whenever it is needed, especially in the era of globalization and job requirements.

Accordingly, Algeria as well as all the countries has responded to these global changes by reforming the educational system in 2003 and has adopted the Competency– Based Approach as a first step of change. The new approach aims to enhance learners' competencies in order to be used in their real life. Moreover, it focuses on learning and pupils' activities rather than the teacher’s role. However, Algerian secondary school teachers still fail to implement appropriately this new approach. Therefore, it was considered necessary to search for the reasons, factors standing behind such a failure, and find out the possible solutions to overcome the difficulties that hinder the application of CBA successfully.

To assess this problematic situation, this research project centers on three fundamental questions:

1. How do EFL secondary school teachers see CBA as an implemented teaching approach?
2. Why do they fail to implement CBA successfully in their classrooms?
3. What are their suggestions to overcome the problems faced in teaching under CBA?

For these research questions, the researcher hypothesised that:

1. Most teachers don't have enough knowledge about CBA.
2. Their failure in implementing it in class is due to the lack of training, materials, the nature of their learners and the size of their classes.
3. The need for in service training and the adaptation of the educational system to meet the objectives of teaching under CBA.

Therefore, through this investigation, the researcher intends to illuminate himself and the readers and provide a comprehensive picture of teaching English as a Foreign Language under the Competency-Based Approach. The research work addresses the following aims with a prospective view, which may serve future developments in Algeria and hopefully in other nations seeking further development.

1. To explore experiences of Algerian EFL secondary school teachers and their understanding of CBA as a teaching approach.

2. To gain awareness of the current conditions in Algeria and the kind of initiatives teachers in the field undertake and the factors which affect their teaching.

3. To provide teachers with the opportunity to voice their views on how CBA can be implemented successfully.

4. To create an awareness of all the above among teachers, the local community, and policy makers in order to consider the implications of the study for improving teaching in Algeria.

To accomplish these objectives, the researcher has opted for a mixed method in collecting quantitative and qualitative data which seemed appropriate for stating facts and investigating difficulties. So as to show that the assumption made in this study is built on solid ground and to accomplish the research objectives, a questionnaire for secondary school teachers was designed to know their views about the application of the Competency-Based Approach as a new one in Algerian schools. In addition, classroom observation was adopted as a tool for more objectivity in collecting data.

Due to the difficulty to carry out the research work on the whole population of secondary school teachers, a representative sample of thirty (**30)** EFL secondary school teachers in the academic year 2017-2018 was selected. They were chosen randomly from secondary schools in EL Bayadh. In this way, each member of the population has an equal chance of being selected.

Indeed, the present research is divided into two main chapters. The first chapter is divided into two main parts. Part one contains detailed information about the Competency-Based Approach as a new approach in Algeria. It is clarified by defining firstly CBA as an approach, and presenting background information of this approach. The second part deals with principles of teaching under the Competency-Based Approach showing teacher's role, learners' role, and teaching and learning activities. The second chapter deals with the research design procedure and data analysis and interpretation. In this chapter, the methodology used is explained in details and the obtained data are analyzed and interpreted.

This research work will provide some pedagogical basis for the development of teaching in our secondary as well as middle schools and help our colleagues in the different kinds of decisions they need to make in their daily class routine. It may also permit us to dig deeper on the core hindrances facing the implementation of CBA in ELT in Algeria, obtain a good understanding of this claim, and demonstrate those constraints that prevent CBE from developing basic competencies and life skills in school. Moreover, it will provide policy makers in Algeria with the necessary tools and mechanisms to overcome failure factors such as the lack of teaching and learning resources, difficult and abstract academic concepts, poor subject matter planning and time management, large class sizes, lack of financial resources, teacher attitudes, examination systems, and poorly-developed classroom assessment strategies.

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1.1. Introduction.

The field of foreign language teaching has known academic prosperity, with increasing numbers of books, magazines, articles and dissertations, which constitute a huge stock of knowledge. In this variety of topics, the Competency-Based Approach remains an area of great interest because it represents a new and dynamic topic.

This chapter provides researchers and teachers, especially the novice ones who face problems in implementing this new approach, with a clear presentation of the essential foundations of the Competency-Based Approach (CBA). First, the researcher started with its background and defined the terms Competency Based Approach, competence and competency. Next, the theoretical origins of CBA and its principles had been reviewed. Then, there was a shift to its application in Algeria. Finally, it was ended by stating the main requirements for its success.

There is a change in most of the educational systems in the world in terms of the implementation of new curricula and a new approach based on competencies. This is the case of Algeria in which the Competency-Based Approach was introduced in 2002 because of the educational reform in primary, middle and secondary education. New books were published for this aim for all the levels. CBA has been adopted in teaching English as a foreign language in order to prepare learners to be competent in real life tasks.

However, in spite of the government's plan for teacher development in the language, a large number of teachers are just using new books and ignore the theoretical aspects of the CBA and the objectives of using such an approach. Thus, we find it useful to shed light on its theoretical side, to trace its history and development and the reasons for its implementation in the Algerian educational system. The terms 'competence' and 'competency' should be clearly defined, as they are two confusing terms usually used interchangeably.

1.2. Competency Based Approach.

After having defined such concepts, 'the Competency-Based Approach' will be subject to scrutiny to understand its theoretical principles. There are different models of curriculum development, some focusing on knowledge transmission and assessment of such knowledge and others more on skills and personal development. The CBA is a very recent approach that focuses on outcomes of learning. Rodgers et.al (1995) argue that **"the broader general outcomes associated with education can be described in competency terms, measured and effected through learning experiences".** It addresses what the learners are expected to do rather than on what they are expected to learn about (Richards & Rodgers, 2001: 141). It consists of teachers basing their instructions on concepts expecting to foster deeper and broader understanding.

The CBA has become a privileged topic in curriculum discourse as it claims that learners should mobilize their values, knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviors in a personal and independent way to address challenges successfully. Challenges are present everywhere, and they can be academic, but also practical and life-oriented. The CBA in education and learning requires a focus not only on input but also on outcomes or results. Such results, however, do not pertain only to academic knowledge, as in traditional testing where rote memorization of pre-fabricated knowledge is required.

Competencies are not just skills as opposed to knowledge, but represent a complex articulation of knowledge, attitudes and skills that learners can use whenever they are needed not just in examination. The CBA curricula fostering learner-friendly teaching and learning strategies could engender a shift from sheer memorization to the development of higher order intellectual skills and life skills, including communication, social, emotional and other relevant skills. Competency-Based Education (CBE) focuses on outcomes of learning. **"It refers to an educational movement that advocates defining educational goals in terms of precise measurable descriptions of knowledge, skills and behaviors students should possess at the end of a course of study"** (*ibid.*).

CBE is a functional approach to education that emphasizes life skills and evaluates mastery of those skills according to actual learner performance. It was defined by the U.S. Office of Education as a performance-based process leading to a demonstrated mastery of basic life skills necessary for the individual to function proficiently in society (Savage, 1993: 15). We can simply say that the CBA is an outcome-based instruction, which is adaptive to the changing needs of students, teachers and the community. Competencies describe the ability to apply basic and other skills in situations that are commonly encountered in everyday life. Thus, CBE is based on a set of outcomes that are derived from an analysis of tasks typically required of students in life situations.

1.3. The Distinction between Competence and Competency.

Over the last decades, discourse around education and training has shifted towards the use a pseudo-commercial language of markets, investment and products. The interest in competence and competency has been part of this move. These two terms remain difficult to define in a satisfactory way and are often used interchangeably. The former is the quality of being adequately or well-qualified physically and intellectually, or the ability to do something well measured against a standard, especially the ability acquired through experience or training whereas the latter is seen as superior level in mastery and accuracy.

1.3.1. Competence.

The term competence focuses attention on learning outcomes. It is what people can do. It involves both the ability to perform in a given context and the capacity to transfer knowledge" (Harris *et. al.,* 1995: 16*)*. Competence indicates sufficiency (state of being good enough) of knowledge and skills that enable one to act in a variety of situations because each level of personality has its own requirements. A competency is defined simply as **"a combination of skills, abilities and knowledge to perform a specific task"** (US Department of Education, 2002: xii). Kouwenhoven (2003: 36) presents a comprehensive definition of competency, according to him:

"it is the capability to choose and use an integrated combination of knowledge, skills and abilities with the intention to realize a task in a

certain context, while personal characteristics such as motivation, self–confidence and will power are part of that context, and competence, is the capacity to accomplish up to a standard the key occupational tasks that characterize a profession."

In the same line of thought, De Se Co (2002; cited in Lobanova and Shunin, 2008: 47*)* defines competence as

"a system of internal and external mental structures and abilities assuming mobilization of knowledge, cognitive skills and also social behavioral components such as attitudes, emotions for successful realization of activity in a particular context".

In this respect, competence can be understood as a dynamic, organizing the structure of activity characteristic allowing a person to adapt to various situations based on gained experience and practice.

Competency refers to superior performance. It is a skill or characteristic of a person that enables him or her to carry out specific or superior actions at a superior level of performance. However, we can say that competency is not the same as performance, but it is what enables performance to occur.

Armstrong (1995: 49) supports this by saying that **"competence as a fully human attribute has been reduced to competencies – a series of discrete activities that people possess the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding to engage in effectively".** We can also add that the term competency varies from one school of thought to another. According to behaviorism, it is used to design an observation and measurable behavior resulting from a certain training while in constructivism it is used to illustrate the construction of capacities acquired from an interaction between individuals engaged in the same situation (Ertmer & Newby, 1993: 56)

Another definition has been provided about teaching English in Algeria which considers 'competency' as **"a system of conceptual and procedural parts of knowledge organized into schemes that help identify a problem task and its solution through an efficient action within a set of situations"** (Ameziane, 2005:12**).**

1.3.2. Competency.

In studying competency, one is faced by the lack of unified definitions, and this leads to confusion between terms such as competence, competency, competencies, and competences. For example, the *New Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (2005) defines competence as **"the ability to do something well"** (p. 294). Oxford further states that competence and competency are synonymous as are competences and competencies. This view is also shared by Dobson (2003) in his definition. **"Competency (Also competence) the ability to perform tasks and duties to the standard expected in employment"** (p. 62).

Attempts by researchers, such as Blakemore, to define the term competency have resulted in various definitions. Blakemore (2008) from his part coined the term of competency as follow: **"A competency is a skill performed to a specific standard under particular conditions".** Then, he describes Competencies as **"result from breaking down a job or role into the specific and observable skills that are needed to do it well"** (p. 2). We notice that the writer in his definition emphasizes about some key words which represent the main elements that distinguish between the two terms competence and competency which are specific and particular condition; therefore, we can consider the competency as superior level in mastery and accuracy to do thing in comparison to competence, also the competency can be realized in specific condition.

Another definition of competency is stated by The National Postsecondary Education Cooperative (2002) as follow: **"competency is the combination of skills, abilities, and knowledge needed to perform a specific task".** The National Postsecondary Education Cooperative (2002) believes that **"Competencies are the result of integrative learning experiences in which skills, abilities, and knowledge interact to form bundles that have currency in relation to the task for which they are assembled"** (p. 7). From this definition we can infer that competency consists of a set of components which are skills, abilities, and knowledge and the competencies as a collection of competency. Later, Quality Assurance Manual for Flight Procedure Design (2009) proposed a definition to Competency as **"A combination of skills, knowledge and attitudes required to perform a task to the prescribed**

standard" (p. xi). Then, he also describes its components from his view and defines them as follow: **"A skill is the ability to perform an activity that contributes to the effective completion of a task", "Knowledge is specific information required for the trainee to develop the skills and attitudes for the effective accomplishment of tasks, and", "Attitude is the person's mental state that influences behavior, choices and expressed opinions"** (pp. 2-22). All these definitions, enable us to have a clear idea about the concept 'competency' which involves being good at doing something.

1.4. Background of the Competency-Based Approach.

Differences in the values of various systems of education are what are worth exploring rather than historical details because we need to make values more explicit. Values are, however, relative things, and one person's construction of the inherent values of any educational system or curriculum offering may not ring true for another. The concept of the CBE is both an old and an evolving idea; details of which are still being worked out. The thought pattern that gave us CBE was Experimentalism. There are three fundamental ideas associated with experimentalism:

1) The world is in constant change.

2) Educational practice should be based on evidence provided by psychological data.

3) Man's psychological and social behavior is based on an economic and wellbeing motive (Richards, et. al., 1973: 9).

The notion of CBE was first introduced in the USA in the late 1960s and evolved through applications to other professional education programs in the USA in the 1970s, vocational training programs in the UK and in Germany and many others in the 1980s and vocational professional skills recognition in Australia in 1990s (Velde, 1999). It has been argued that the theoretical roots of the CBA lie in the behaviorists models of human psychology from the 1950s.This is based on the view that CBA is about making inferences about competency on the basis of performance.

The CBE has its roots in teacher education, later development extended applications of the idea to elementary schools, to minimum competency standards for high school graduation and vocational education (Burke, 1989: 10). The US Office of Education fueled the genesis of the Competency-Based Education and Training (CBET), as a distinct response to social changes, in 1968 when it gave ten grants to colleges and universities to develop training programs for the preparation of elementary school teachers. The experimentalists, among whom John Dewey (1960) stands as the central figure, believing that man is a biological animal and as such controlled to some extent by economic and well-being motives. These motives are the force behind one's sociological and psychological behavior.

The CBA developed in ways that were influenced by more than one narrow approach to learning. For example, Harris et al. (1995: 36), like Bowden and Master (1993), have argued that: "In the 1970s there were five approaches related to the design of CBE teaching. These were: mastery learning (Bloom 1974), criterion-reference testing (Popham, 1978), minimum-competency testing (Jaegan, 1980), competence in education (Burke et. al., 1975) and programmed learning (Skinner 1952)". These movements shared three things in common: modules design and assessment around a list of observable behaviors and the concept of mastery (cited in Harris *et. al.,* 1995: 396).

Although CBE has its roots in experimentalism, it is the latest educational approach, and is claimed by the extravagant to be the panacea of educational issues. Others who are driven by economic rationalism see it as the reform agenda that will lift the workforce to productivity levels of internationally competitive standards (*ibid:* 7). All countries which have introduced CBE in the last two decades have done so in the recognition that international economic competitiveness has shaped the need to have a well-educated innovative workforce at all occupational levels (Arguelles *et.al.,* 2000: 10).

1.5. Characteristics of the Competency- Based Approach.

The fact that society has changed its world views, values and norms urges educational institutions to search and establish the most suitable way to educate young people in a way that enables them to take responsibility for managing their own lives and acting autonomously. The CBA is considered as the panacea of educational issues because it is characterized by the following features,

- The CBA is action-oriented in that it gears learning to the acquisition of know how embedded in functions and skills. These will allow the learner to become an effective competent user in real- life situations outside the classroom.

- It is a problem-solving approach in that it places learners in situations that test/ check their capacity to overcome obstacles and problems, make learners think and they learn by doing.

- It is social constructivist in that it regards learning as occurring through social interaction with other people. In other words, learning is not concerned with the transmission of pre-determined knowledge and know-how to be reproduced in vitro, but as a creative use of a newly constructive knowledge through the process of social interaction with other people.

- Finally and most importantly, the CBA is a cognitive approach. It is indebted to Bloom's taxonomy (Bloom et al., 1964). They have claimed that all the educational objectives can be classified as cognitive **(to do with information)** and affective **(to do with attitudes, values and emotions)** or psychomotor **(to do with bodily movements …).**

According to them, cognitive objectives form a hierarchy by which the learner must achieve lower order objectives before he/she can achieve higher ones (Ameziane *et.al.,2005*: 12-13).

One of the most distinctive features of the CBA is its integration of the project work as part of the learning strategy. Over all, if CBA expands on the communicative approach, it is in the sense that it seeks to make the attainment visible; i.e., concrete through the realization of projects. It also makes cooperative learning a concrete reality and opens new avenues for action, interaction and the construction of new knowledge.

In short, it is only through carrying project work that we and our learners can live the basic principles of the CBA. In addition, the use of portfolio in assessing learners' development is widely used in teaching English under this approach.

After having presented the characteristics of the CBA in order to be acquainted with such an approach, we find it essential to examine the most important concepts seen above such as 'constructivism', 'Bloom's taxonomy', 'project', 'cooperative learning' and 'portfolio'.

1.6. Learning Theories Related to the Competency-Based Approach.

Before we start to expose the theories related to the CBA, we intended to give a brief look to behaviorism and Bloom's Taxonomy, Because of the strong relation between theories from one side, and the important role of Bloom's Taxonomy in education until now.

1.6.1. Behaviorism.

Behaviorism had a powerful influence on second language teaching. Its influence appears in the development of the Audio-lingual behaviorist theory as application to language learning (Light Brown & Spada, 1999, p. 34). This influence appears in that it dominates the field of teaching till now. **"In the behaviorist view language learning is seen like any other kind of learning, as the formation of habits."** learning is a behavior formed according to the notions of stimulus and response. The response to stimuli will be reinforced if successful outcome is achieved. Through the repetition of reinforcement the habit will be formed (Mitchell & Myles, 2004, p. 30). We found this way efficient when we want to learn anything by heart, so we cannot neglect this way of teaching in some cases.

When we learn the first language, the process is easy since new habits are acquired responding to environmental stimuli. However, in learning a second language the learner face the problem of interference between the old learned habits and the process of learning. If there are similarities between the first and second language the learning process happen easily, if there are differences learning will be difficult (Mitchell & Myles, 2004, p. 31). However, the reality proves the contrary, we find facility to learn two things different more than to learn two things approximately similar. **"A way to anticipate errors was to conduct a contrastive**

analysis, comparing and contrasting the students' native language with the target language" (Chelli, 2006, p. 32). This means this offers a way to identify and correct errors, therefore, prevent bad habit.

1.6.2. Bloom is Taxonomy.

Bloom's taxonomy refers to **" a classification of the different objectives that educators set for students"** (Chelli, 2010, p. 74). She added that **"this taxonomy tries to give a good classification of both levels and forms of learning. Bloom's taxonomy is "based on behavioristic learning theories"** (McMillan, 2007, p. 50). As mentioned in the Algerian educational syllabus *At the Crossroads* (2005), Bloom stated that all the teacher's objectives can be divided into three main domains cognitive, affective and psychomotor (p. 12). According to Bloom's Taxonomy, the learning is a kind of gradation from the lower level of learning to achieve the higher level. It aims to motivate teachers to focus on the three domains by creating a kind of harmony between them (Chelli, opicit, p. 74). McMillan (2007) pointed out that the cognitive domain encompasses six levels:

Knowledge: the learner recalls previous knowledge.

Comprehension: the ability to recognize and to understand the meaning.

Application: the ability to exploit new knowledge in order to solve problems so the learner implements new knowledge in new situation.

Analysis: the ability to divide information into parts and to examine them in order to achieve a good understanding.

Synthesis: the ability to construct new knowledge from collecting several parts of information.

Evaluation: the ability to judge new information. (p. 44)

The CBA is related to this taxonomy since it supports the idea of mobilization of knowledge and skills in gradual integration from level 1 (knowledge) to level 6 (evaluation) (Chelli, opicit, pp. 75-76). Within the Algerian educational syllabus, *At the Crossroads* (2005), the affective domain is also important in the development of "competencies'' (p. 12). This domain explains the people's emotional reaction to build awareness, attitudes, emotions and feelings. This domain is divided into five levels:

Receiving: student interests to attend in the class.
Responding: students respond to the learning process.
Valuing: students give value to what they are learning.
Organization: student collects information, values, and ideas and accomodate them according to his schema.
Characterizing: Students individualize their own behavior.(Chelli, opicit,p.77).

The third domain treated by Bloom's Taxonomy is psychomotor which describes the physical ability to manipulate things.

According to Bloom's Taxonomy the three domains reflect the three component of the learner personality and the activities found in the course book intend to promote all the sides of the learner personality, thus the teacher, in his task of teaching , cannot neglect some activities because this can affect the learner personality in negative way (Ouhida, 2007, p. 11). In order to realize Bloom's Taxonomy in the educational scope Farrell (2002) describes the purpose from setting the objectives as follow: written objectives is effective step in the lesson plan, since it is fruitful to both the teacher and the student .The written objectives describe the aim we want to achieve. That is, we identify what we want from our students to learn; this helps us to select the appropriate activities. In addition, the written objectives help the teacher to state effective evaluation to the student at the end of the lesson. Finally, written objectives help student to focus on what must to do (p. 32). He suggested some action verbs that fit each level, and which can be used by the teacher in stating the objectives, which represent the cognitive domain. For example, in the knowledge level the teacher can use these actions verb: tell, list, name define, identify, state, remember, and repeat. In the comprehension level, the teacher can use these verbs: transform, change, restate, describe, explain review, paraphrase, relate, generalize, and infer. In the application level the verbs needed are: apply, practice, employ, use, demonstrate, illustrate, show, and report. In the analysis level, the verbs are: analyze, dissect, distinguish, examine, compare, contrast, survey investigate, separate, categorize, classify, and organize. In the synthesis level, the verbs are: create, invent, compose, construct, design, modify

imagine, produce, and propose (p. 38). In the evaluation level the verbs are: judge, decide, select, justify, evaluate, critique, debate, verify recommended, assess.

1.6.3. Constructivism.

"Constructivism is basically a theory of learning that attempts to show that knowledge can and can only be generated from experience" (Steffe and Thompson, 2000: 6). It advocates that people construct their own understanding and knowledge of the world through experiencing things and reflecting on those experiences. It is claimed by Piaget and Garcia (1989: 252) that, **"what has not been acquired through experience and personal reflection can be superficially assimilated and does not modify any way of thinking"**. These constructivist views of learning inform us that there is a shift from knowledge transmission to knowledge construction by learners themselves. (Kanselaar *et.al.* 2000) supports this by saying that constructivism implies that learners are encouraged to construct their own knowledge instead of copying it from authority, be it a book or a teacher, in realistic situations instead of decontextualized**,** formal situations such as propagated in traditional textbooks and together with others instead of their own.

This means that learners should be encouraged to be autonomous. When they encounter something new, they have to reconcile it with their previous ideas and experience, may be changing what they believe in or may be discarding the new information as irrelevant. In any case, they are active creators of their own knowledge in context while interacting with others and receiving feedback from the teacher, their peers in the classroom or from other people.

Constructivist learning has emerged as a prominent approach to learning. It stems from the work of Dewey, Piaget and Vygotsky among others in cognitive psychology (cited in Danielson, 1996: 23). According to Dewey (1916: 188), **"No thought, no idea can possibly be conveyed as an idea from one person to another. Learners interpret new ideas in the context of their present interest and understanding if they are to have thoughts at all".** Therefore, constructivism is a view of learning based on the belief that it is not a thing that can be simply given by the teacher at the front of the room to students. Rather, knowledge is constructed by learners through active mental processes of development; learners are the builders

and creators of meaning and knowledge. Jonassen (1994: 95) proposed eight characteristics of the constructivist-learning environment:

1- They provide multiple representations of reality.

2- Multiple representations avoid oversimplification and represent the complexity of the real world.

3- They emphasize knowledge construction instead of knowledge reproduction.

4- They emphasize authentic tasks in a meaningful context rather than an abstract instruction out of context.

5- They provide learning environments such as real-world settings or case-based learning instead of predetermined sequences of instruction.

6- They encourage thoughtful reflection on experience.

7- They enable context and content- dependent knowledge construction.

8- They support collaborative construction of knowledge through social negotiation, not competition among learners for recognition.

According to the characteristics stated above, constructivism represents a paradigm shift from education based on behaviorism, relying on knowledge transmission to education based on cognitive theory, relying on knowledge construction by the learners themselves**.** Dewey (*ibid:* 46) asserts that **"Education is not an affair of telling and being told, but an active and constructive process".** Other authors confirm this such as Ines (2004: 1) who says that **"Constructivist views of learning include a range of theories that share the general perspective that knowledge is constructed by learners rather than transmitted to them".** According to Von Glasserfeld (1989: 12) **"children are not repositories for adult's knowledge, but organisms, which like all of us, are constantly trying to make sense and to understand their experience".** This shows that there is a tendency to shift from knowledge transmitted by the teacher to students though drilling and repetitions to construction of knowledge by the children themselves through problem solving and experience. Two main approaches to constructivism are well-known in the field of education: cognitive constructivism and social constructivism. The former is associated with the work of Piaget and the latter with that of Vygotsky. These two approaches are not mutually exclusive as both admit that learners construct their own knowledge.

However, the main emphasis in the two approaches is different as it will be shown below.

1.6.3.1. Cognitive Constructivism.

Piaget is considered as the pioneer and parent of the constructivist thought. **"The beginning of the constructivist approach is considered to be the work of Piaget which led to the expansion of understanding of child development and learning as a process of construction"** (Pritchard & Woolard, 2010: 5). His theory of cognitive development is based on the idea that children's active development with their environment leads them to the construction of meaning and to learning (Jordan et. al., 2008: 57).

According to Piaget (1965: 28), **"the development of human intellect proceeds through adaptation and organization".** He expressed this by saying that **"knowledge does not attempt to produce a copy of reality but, instead, serves the purpose of adaptation".** Piaget used the terms accommodation and assimilation to describe the interplay of mind and environment in the learning process (*ibid.)***.** Adaptation is a process of assimilation and accommodation, where, on the one hand, external events are assimilated into thoughts and, on the other hand, new and unusual mental structures are accommodated into the mental environment. In other words, learners use their cognitive structures to interpret the environment; and as a result, they assimilate new information only to the extent allowed by the existing one (Harris *et. al.*, 1995). This asserts that learning occurs by an active construction of meaning rather than by transmission. This gave rise to statements such as **"It's obvious after all, the children don't simply swallow all adult's knowledge, and they have to construct it"** (La Rochelle et.al., 1998: 4). Piaget (1970; cited in Jordan et. al., 2008: 57) says that**: "Children must go through the process of reconfiguration of their own mental schemes for themselves. Teachers must not interfere with this process by imposing their ready-made solutions because children will accept authority without making the knowledge themselves".** However, he adds that when learners encounter an experience or a situation that conflicts with their current way of thinking, a state of equilibrium is created (*ibid.).*

To do this, they make sense of the new information by associating what they already know, that is attempting to assimilate it into their existing knowledge. When they are unable to do this, they accommodate the new information to their old way of thinking by restructuring their present knowledge to a higher level of thinking. This evolution depends precisely on this progressive equilibrium of assimilation and accommodation (Piaget, 1971: 108). Piaget's cognitive theory contributed to the reformulation of educational perspectives based on learners' individual construction of knowledge.

1.6.3.2. Socio-Constructivism.

Vygotsky (1978) shared many of Piaget's assumptions about how children learn, but he placed more emphasis on the social context of learning. According to him, learning is greatly enhanced by the collaborative social interaction and communication; in other words, discussion, feedback and sharing ideas are powerful influences on learning. Vygotsky's view (*ibid*.) has been termed social constructivism to differentiate it from Piaget's view that is often called cognitive constructivism and is less concerned with language and social interaction. **"Like Piaget, Vygotsky claimed that infants are born with the basic materials/abilities for intellectual development. Eventually, through interaction within the socio-cultural environment, these are developed into more sophisticated and effective mental processes/strategies which he refers to as Higher Mental Functions"** (Pritchard & Woolard, 2010: 6). This informs us that cognitive constructivism is most concerned with the mechanism of intellectual development and the acquisition of knowledge and underestimates the effects of social factors on cognitive development.

1.6.3.3. Importance of Constructivism.

Many educators have agreed that constructivist pedagogies that are advocated in the reform vision of learning represent a synthesis of cognitive and social perspectives, where knowledge is seen personally constructed and socially mediated (Tobbin & Tippins 1993; Driver et.al., 1994; Shepherd 2000; cited in Le Cornu & Peters 2005). One component of the current redevelopment of all subject area curricula is the change of instruction from the transmission curriculum to the transactional curriculum. In a traditional classroom, a teacher transmits information

to students who passively listen and acquire facts. In a transactional classroom, students are actively involved in their learning to reach new understanding. Constructivism teaching fosters critical thinking and creates active and motivated learners. (Zemelman et.al., 1993) tell us that learning in all subject areas involves inventing and constructing new ideas. They suggest that the constructivist theory be incorporated into the curriculum and advocate that teachers create environments in which children can construct their own understanding. The constructivist approach is efficient in that it creates learners who are autonomous, inquisitive thinkers who question, investigate and reason. The act of teaching, according to Windschitl (2002: 135), is being reframed as **"co-constructing knowledge with students, acting as conceptual change agent, monitoring apprenticeship through the zone of proximal development and supporting a community of learners".**

1.7. Learning and Teaching activities under the Competency-Based Approach

Learning and teaching activities differ from one method to another. According to the CBT, learning tasks are similar to those of communicative language teaching. As Richard & Rodgers (2002) said that, the CBLT shares some concepts of the communicative competence, which considers the important elements to promote functional communicative skill of the learner (p. 143). Indeed, the CBLT has much in common with the previous approach of the communicative language teaching. In this respect, Harmer (2001) claims that **"The best lessons offer a variety of activities within a class period"** (Harmer, 2001, p. 309). This means the CBA is eclectic in that it requires the use of different methods and techniques.

According to Biolobrzeska (2006) the learning approach is a series of activities that learners are expected to do it in order to be competent in their life tasks. For him**, ''the learning cycle is some new activities which learners should respond to it (discussion of issues raised in the activity) and should give the reflection that lead them to do another new activity and so on"** (p. 96).

Nowadays, the Algerian textbooks contain a variety of the learner's tasks in or outside the classroom and all of them aim to develop his competence in the real life situation. The following types of activities mentioned by Richards (2006, pp. 19-20).

a) Information-gab activities: this refers to that students in the classroom go beyond practice of language forms and they use their linguistic and communicative skills in order to obtain information.

b) Task-completion activities: it is also called warm-ups tasks**.** These kinds of activities motivate and push the learner to interact during a lecture e.g. games, puzzles, and songs.

c) Information gathering activities: the role of the students is to conduct surveys, interviews and search to collect information they needed.

d) Information -transfer activities: it focus on mental use of language. Learners are expected to transfer information from text to graphic or putting sentence elements in sequence.

All the Algerian Educational syllabuses aim to promote the learner through doing a series of activities. Some of these activities can do it in the classroom and the other should do it outside the school and it can be do it individually or in groups. For example, a project work represents the practical part of a syllabus which should be prepared outside the class and then presented to the teacher.

1.8. CBA Teaching Principles.

Centered on the development of competencies, learning is favored in complex and meaningful situations. As it is cognitive, affective and social process, learning fits in cognitive and sociocognitivist perspectives. It is a process that implies making laying foundation to new acquisitions through the reorganization of the learner's cognitive structure. The programme determines learning that will call upon intellectual procedures and attitudes such as respect for differences, co-operation and team work. Communication thus, in this programme is a priority that takes into consideration the latest developments in the field of Second Foreign Language Teaching, communicative approach, cognitive psychology and socio-constructivism. This programme is learner-centered and focused on the construction of the learner's knowledge. It aims at developing competencies that are regarded as essential for the learner of the new century. These competencies are the ability to

interact orally, the ability to process oral and written texts and the ability to write texts.

1.8.1. Teacher's Role.

The common role of the teacher under the Competency Based Approach is the role of facilitator. In this context Dobson (2003) claims that Facilitator he is **"a person who helps learners learn by discovering things for themselves"** (p. 64). According to Harmer (2001) the role of the teacher changes according to the task, and an effective teacher knows how to choose the relevant role in the appropriate position, and he further said that the role of facilitator is wide in meaning .Thus; he suggested a set of precise roles that go in harmony with the term facilitator (p.57).

a) **Controller,** when teacher act as controller he expected act in different way in comparison to his role in the state where students are working in-group (ibid, 2001, p. 58). Davies and Pearse (2000) add some explanations about this role. He said that he transmits information, controls occurrence of activities from the front, and motivates to participate in the class with the correction of errors (p. 127).

b) **Organizer, "The teacher has to initiate students to collaboration through pair and group work "** (Bader, 2007, p. 47). The teacher has to organize students in pair or in group .He has to initiate, to explain the content of activities, and end tasks when time is finished (Harmer, 2001, p. 58).

c) **Assessor,** Dobson (2003) thinks that **"the Assessor A person qualified to carry out assessment"** (p. 62). Therefore, his role is to give feedback, correction, and grading to their students (Harmer, 2001, p. 59). He also informs the learners about their progress, trying to combine encouragement with honest evaluation and useful feedback (Davies & Pearse, 2000, p. 127).

d) **Prompter, "Prompter could refer to the teacher's role in helping a student to remember and formulate a point"** (Hedge, 2000, p. 29). Prompter supply students with a clarification question or information when they could no longer follow what are doing (Harmer, 2001, p. 60).

e) **Participant** Sometime the teacher chooses sharing his students some activities. When it goes well, students feel satisfied (ibid, 2001, p. 61).

f) **Resource "Person who provides students with materials beyond the textbook"** (Dubin & Olshtain, 1986, p. 48). According to Harmer (2001), Teacher source guides his students to look for information instead of providing them with the desired information (p. 61).

g) **Tutor** Teacher behave as tutor when he approach from his students in more personal contact ,thus the student feel supported and helped from their teacher. This usually occurs when students organized in-group and the teacher work with individuals and small group (ibid, 2001, p. 62).

h) **Observer** The teacher expects to use his ability to observe and listen to his students (Chelli, 2010, p. 26). In order to help the teacher to respect the learning styles of his students and to select to them the appropriate activities (Dubin & Olshtain, 1986, p. 48). We can infer that this entire role fit the application of competency based approach in teaching writing, since it help learner in realize autonomy learning ,and the teacher in this state only help the ongoing of the learning process.

1.8.2. Student's Role.

The CBA has a considerable impact on the role of students who must become self- motivated playing an active role in their own education. They have to demonstrate satisfactory performance and competency in order to fulfil the requirements of the curriculum; they cannot be regarded simply as receiver of information (Forest & Kinser, 2002: 127). As the CBA is based on socio-constructivism, the learner should go through a process of personal appropriation, questioning his own convictions. This leads him to revise his prior knowledge and its scope to compare his own representations with those of his classmates, to search for information and validate it through consulting various sources of documentation and people in possession of information. In doing so, the learner will appeal to cognitive, affective and motivational strategies in order to set a balance between his previous knowledge and his newly acquired knowledge. The reflection of the learner will operate on his own learning processes, assure the quality of his acquisition and facilitate his retention. It is essential to note that negotiation is an

important aspect of a constructivist classroom. It unites teachers and students in a common purpose. Another quality of a constructivist classroom is its interactive nature in that students interact either with their peers or with the teacher through dialogue in order to construct knowledge. Social interaction in learning facilitates and encourages the use of new skills to create meaning and build understanding through communication (Ashton & Pillay, 2010: 343).

Interaction with the teacher and peers helps students' develop self-reflection and positive attitude towards criticism. In addition, **"the collaboration and dialogic action with others is a key to developing awareness, experience and opportunities for reflection"** (*ibid.).*

According to the Algerian Partnership Schools Programs (2005) learners obtain and retain language best when the topic accumulate their interests and when they are active participants in their learning; for example, finding personal meaning, learning cooperatively with peers, and making connections to life outside of class (p. 4). At this level, Chelli (2010, p. 80) argues that this program is developed according to socio-constructivism and learners are responsible in their learning. She states that: the learner should go through a process of personal appropriation, questioning his own convictions. This leads the learner to revise his prior knowledge and its scope to compare his own representations with those of his classmates, to search for information and validate it through consulting various sources of documentation and people in possession of information.

1.9. CBA Application in Algeria.

The transformational processes observed nowadays in social life concern all fields of social activity and existence, in particular the field of education as a basic component of the formation of a person's world outcome. Over the last decades the requirements placed upon education systems have been influenced by rapid progression often unpredictable processes of public transformations, disintegration of states, changes in the geopolitical map of the world, scientific discoveries and their implementations.

Modern society is characterized by rapid changes in all spheres of life- a feature characteristic of societies in transition- changes take place especially quickly due to the factors which stimulate the economy and industrial development and which affect the development of international relations, global processes of migration, and especially when the impact of information usage and particularly the field of education. Information at the present time acquires the highest value and is a strategic product of states. Commentators who analyzed the phenomenon of modern societies undergoing such transformations states that the world which is being formed due to a collision of new values and technologies, new geopolitical relation , new life styles and communication requires brand new ideas and analogies, classification and frameworks. This concept reflects the modern paradigm of public life and is a basis for the re-formation of educational goals in both the developed and developing countries. It is why education at present is subject to great changes taking place in modern society. The development of education was influenced by such features of social development as globalization, democratization, disintegration of the union of the nuclear power blocs and the formation of a unified information space.

In this respect, first, students need to be able to use a wide range of tools for interacting effectively with the environment: both physical ones such information technology, and socio-cultural ones such as the use of language. Second, in an increasingly interdependent world, students need to be able to engage with others and since they will encounter people from a range of backgrounds, it is important that they are able to interact in heterogeneous groups. Third, students need to be able to take responsibility for managing their own lives, situate their lives in much broader social contexts and act autonomously.

Similarly, according to the general objectives assigned to the teaching of English in the Algerian Educational system, a socio-constructivist and efficient cognitive design has been set with the purpose in mind to install competencies in the learner. This is due to the failure of the communicative approach to enable the learners to reach an acceptable level performance, which allows them to

communicate whenever it is needed, especially in the era of globalization and job requirement. Thus, one should from now on, help the Algerian learner to:

- play an active role in his learning, make himself feel responsible for his training giving him opportunities to find answers to his questions resulting from his daily experiences.
- Adopt increasingly autonomous conducts and responsible behaviors (ELT articles: methodology).

The Algerian suggested program will allow the Algerian learner to develop his capacity to think and act according to a vision of a world that he will construct day by day.

This logic has a series of implications (Why choose CBA? pp.1-2):

- Making the school acquisition viable and sustainable.
- Developing the thinking process of the learner.
- Presenting learning contexts in relation to the needs of the learner
- Putting an end to disciplinary barriers.
- Choosing a personalized pedagogy.

To sum up educational experience in many countries shows that one way of updating the content of education is the orientation of the training programmes towards the competency-based approach. Scientists in European countries consider that knowledge, skills, working habits acquired by young people if transformed into competencies would enable intellectual development of an individual and the formation of the ability to quickly respond to the demands of the time. Thus, in order to integrate in the globalized world, Algeria underwent such a reform to enable young people to reach an international level in terms of required competencies.

1.10. Requirements for CBA Success.

In spite of the reform undergone in education in Algeria, there is no real change in English language teaching. However, if we examine the changes in other countries including European ones, we shall find that the competency-based approach causes a lot of interest among practitioners of education. Competency-based approach as an approach based on socio-constructivism which provides a shift from the traditional focus on teacher-centered delivery to learning outcomes and learner-centered educational objectives is appropriate to the purposes of the reform and to the new demands of life will be successful providing that it meets the following requirements.

1. All learning expectations are clearly and consistently communicated to students and families, including long-term expectations (such as graduation requirements and graduation standards), short-term expectations (such as the specific learning objectives for a course or other learning experience), and general expectations (such as the performance levels used in the school's grading and reporting system).
2. Student achievement is evaluated against common learning standards and performance expectations that are consistently applied to all students regardless of whether they are enrolled in traditional courses or pursuing alternative learning pathways.
3. All forms of assessment are standards-based and criterion-referenced, and success is defined by the achievement of expected standards, not relative measures of performance or student-to-student comparisons.
4. Formative assessments measure learning progress during the instructional process, and formative assessment results are used to inform instructional adjustments, teaching practices, and academic support.
5. Summative assessments evaluate learning achievement, and summative-assessment results record a student's level of competency at a specific point in time.
6. Academic progress and achievement are monitored and reported separately from work habits, character traits, and behaviors such as attendance and class participation, which are monitored and reported.
7. Academic grades communicate learning progress and achievement to students and families, and grades are used to facilitate and improve the learning process.

8. Students are given multiple opportunities to improve their work when they fail to meet expected standards.
9. Students can demonstrate learning progress and achievement in multiple ways through differentiated assessments, personalized-learning options, or alternative learning pathways.
10. Students are given opportunities to make important decisions about their learning, which includes contributing to the design of learning expectation.

1.11. Conclusion.

This first chapter conveyed detailed information about the Competency-Based Approach in teaching. It clarified concepts by defining firstly CBA as an approach, and presenting background information of this approach. It also highlighted the main principles of teaching under the Competency-Based Approach showing teacher's role, learners' role, and teaching and learning activities in addition to its application in Algerian schools and requirements for its success.

The following chapter will attempt to analyze in details the data obtained from each single research instruments, hoping that such data will provide a thorough analyses of the problematic leading the present dissertation.

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2.1 Introduction.

In this chapter, the research design, methodology and methods used to conduct this study are outlined. It defines the rationale for using an exploratory case study in this particular context and describes the process used to collect data through class observation and by the administration of questionnaires. The process for analyzing the data is also discussed. This chapter provides insights into the process for engaging participants, ensuring validity, being mindful of ethical considerations, as well as acknowledging the limitations of the work.

2.2 Research Design Procedure.

This chapter was solely devoted to the presentation of the research design and the employed instruments. The researcher has also purposefully placed some emphasis on clarifying the intended objectives of using every single research tool. The entry to the research was provided by the use of questionnaires addressed to EFL secondary school teachers. This latter was considered as the main instrument of data collection. It is hoped that interpretation of the main results of the questionnaire would provide a better understanding of the research procedure and a better clarification of the research main concerns. Conducting a whole research using only one research instrument would be subjectively oriented that is why the questionnaires were coupled with another investigation tool; a classroom based observation. It is expected that these latter would pave the way for a more thorough analyses of the case under study.

2.2.1. Case Study Research.

Most scholars agree that a case study is not a particular method but a strategy (Stoecker, 1991, Yin, 1994). Stake (2000) also argued that a case study is not so much a methodological choice but a choice of what is to be studied. Yin (1994) argued that a case study should not be confused with qualitative research. Gomm et al. (2000) argued that a case study implies collection of unstructured data and qualitative analysis of data. However, most case study researchers (Yin, 1994; Stake, 2000; Stoecker, 1991) explained that a case study can employ the best of both quantitative and qualitative methods. Yin (1994) explained that a case study is

a comprehensive research strategy that deals with situations "in which there will be more variables of interest than data points, **"relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to be converged in a triangulating fashion," and that "benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis"** (p. 13). Stoecker (1991) explained that Rhee, Yin. (2004).

Case studies allow researchers to explore different outcomes of general processes suggested by theories depending on different contexts. Ragin (1992) explained that in the social sciences, researchers seldom define what they mean by a case in case studies and that there is no agreement about what a **"case"** is. Ragin explained that in conventional **"variable-oriented"** comparative work, investigators begin by defining the problem in a way that allows examination of many cases. Data on specific variables are collected and the focus of the research process is on explaining relations among these variables. However, in **"case-oriented"** work, individual cases are the focus of research, not variables. On the other hand, Stake (1995) defined a case as "a bounded system" that has working parts. In this research, I take Stake's approach in defining the case. The participating organization is the bounded system of interest and the working parts that are of particular interest are the employees and members of community who engage in public relations processes.

- **Exploratory Case Study.**

Since the aim of this research, work is stating the facts and investigating the difficulties. The researcher found it appropriate to employ the use of a mixed methods exploratory case study. As Creswell articulates, **"Qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to social or human problems,"** (p.6) and was therefore chosen as the optimum design for this work. This case is identified as being exploratory (Arthur et al., 2012) as it aims at exploring the main difficulties encountered by EFL teachers in general and secondary school teachers in particular. This case is also "bounded" as it is conducted with a sample of teachers to **"understand an issue or problem using the case as a specific illustration,"** (Creswell, 2014, p. 73) and accomplish what

Timmons and Cairns (2011) contend is one of the greatest values of case study research—creating knowledge and understanding. The intent of using the case approach is to penetrate and garner a rich understanding of the knowledge shared and valued in a specific population. According to Yin (2009), **"a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in-depth and within its real world context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident"** (p.16-17)

2.2.2. Mixed Methods Approach.

The term "mixed methods" refers to an emergent methodology of research that advances the systematic integration, or "mixing," of quantitative and qualitative data within a single investigation or sustained program of inquiry. The basic premise of this methodology is that such integration permits a more complete and synergistic utilization of data than do separate quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis. The evaluation of CBE provide an ideal opportunity for mixed methods studies to contribute to learning about best practices in how to implement a CBA as well as its effectiveness in achieving the objectives of education in the country.

Mixed methods research originated in the social sciences and has recently expanded into the other fields. In the last decade, its procedures have been developed and refined to suit a wide variety of research questions (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011). These procedures include advancing rigor, offering alternative mixed methods designs, specifying a shorthand notation system for describing the designs to increase communication across fields, visualizing procedures through diagrams, noting research questions that can particularly benefit from integration, and developing rationales for conducting various forms of mixed methods studies.

The core characteristics of a well-designed mixed methods study in research include collecting and analyzing both quantitative (closed-ended) and qualitative (open-ended) data, using rigorous procedures in collecting and analyzing data appropriate to each method's tradition, such as ensuring the appropriate sample size for quantitative and qualitative analysis, integrating the data during data collection, analysis, or discussion, using procedures that implement qualitative and quantitative

components either concurrently or sequentially, with the same sample or with different samples and framing the procedures within philosophical/theoretical models of research, such as within a social constructionist model that seeks to understand multiple perspectives on a single issue.

Using a mixed methods study has several advantages including comparing quantitative and qualitative data for a better understanding contradictions between quantitative results and qualitative findings, reflecting participants' point of view ensure that study findings are grounded in participants' experiences, fostering scholarly interaction, providing methodological flexibility and adaptations in addition to the collection rich, comprehensive data than either method would alone. However, mixed methods studies are challenging to implement since they are complex to plan and conduct. They require careful planning to describe all aspects of research, including the study sample for qualitative and quantitative portions (identical, embedded, or parallel); timing (the sequence of qualitative and quantitative portions); and the plan for integrating data. Integrating qualitative and quantitative data during analysis is often a challenging phase for many researchers. Besides conducting high-quality mixed methods studies requires a multidisciplinary team of researchers who, in the service of the larger study, must be open to methods that may not be their area of expertise. Finding qualitative experts who are also comfortable discussing quantitative analyses and vice versa can be challenging in many environments. Mixed methods studies are labor intensive and require greater resources and time than those needed to conduct a single method study.

Finally, the integration of quantitative and qualitative data in the form of a mixed methods study has great potential to strengthen the rigor and enrich the analysis and findings of any investigation. By carefully selecting the mixed method design that best suits the research questions and meets its resource constraints, researchers can facilitate deeper, more meaningful learning regarding the effectiveness and implementation of CBA.

2.2.3. Population and Study Sample.

Due to the difficulty to carry out the research work overall population of secondary school teachers, a representative sample of population under study has been chosen randomly from secondary schools in EL Bayadh. In this way, each member of the population has an equal chance of being selected.

The population of the study consists of 30 EFL secondary school teachers in the academic year 2017-2018. The secondary teachers were chosen to be used in our study because they have great relation with the subject, as they can recognize the problems that face them in implementing the competency-based approach. This could provide teachers and students with better insight about the main problems that hinder the EFL teachers in their daily work.

2.2.4. Instrumentation.

To show that the assumption made in this study is built on solid ground and to accomplish the research objectives, a questionnaire for secondary school teachers was designed to know their views about the application of the Competency-Based Approach as a new one in Algerian schools. In addition, classroom observation was adopted as a tool since the researcher is a teacher.

We designed a questionnaire for secondary school teachers to know their views about the application of the CBA in EFL teaching. We submitted this questionnaire on 24 April 2018 to thirty (**30**) teachers in El- Bayadh. We should indicate that not all of the questioned teachers answered all the three sections. This fact reveals most of our teachers' refusal to take part and help us in our research study.

2.2.4.1. Teachers' Questionnaire.

''The questionnaire is a widely used and useful instrument for collecting survey information, providing structured, often numerical data, being able to be administered without the presence of the researcher, and often being comparatively straight-forward to analyze''(Wilson & McLean, 1994, cited in Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2005, p. 245). The questionnaire (see appendix I) was handed directly thirty (30) secondary school teachers in El- Bayadh. All of the questionnaires were

returned, a percentage of about (100 %). The questionnaire was answered anonymously. It was a mixture of closed and open questions. It consists of three main sections.

- **Section one:** this section contains questions from 1 to 3. Those questions aim to collect general information about teachers such as gender, their experience in teaching English at secondary school and the number of students in each class.

- **Section two:** it consists of questions from 4 to 15. This section is about teaching under the Competency-Based Approach. Those items aim to shed light on the fact of the implementation of CBA in the Algerian classroom.

- **Section three:** this section is about teachers' problems in teaching using the CBA. It contains 4 questions three among examine the difficulties teachers face in their classrooms and the main factors behind their failure while the fourth question is about teachers' suggestions. We gave teachers a chance to give their opinions and t suggestions about some solutions to these problems.

The aim of this questionnaire is to investigate the main problems that face secondary school teachers in teaching under the Competency-Based Approach. It also aims to know how to implement this new approach in order to enhance students' competencies to use them in real life. This questionnaire; therefore, helps the teacher to find out whether teaching under the CBA is really used in achieving learners' progress in learning English as a foreign language.

2.2.4.2. Classroom Observation.

Classroom observation is considered to be an efficient method that could reveal some additional information in completion to the data which have been gathered through the use of the other tool in this research.

"Observations are most often used to collect data on how learners use language in a variety of settings, to study language learning and teaching processes in the classroom, and to study teachers‟ and students‟ behavior" (Seliger & Shohamy, 2000:162)

The classroom observation was carried out during the third semester starting on April 1, 2018. The aim of this observation was to investigate how the competency-based approach is used in classroom and the different constraints facing both teachers and their students to achieve the goals set by the Algerian educational system. The information gathered from the observation is used to describe the findings. Because there were specific aims of the kind of observation to be conducted. The structured classroom observation was used in this research. In other words the observation form was designed in advance with checklist (see appendix II) so as to be used in the classroom during each session of the treatment during the sessions in the classroom aiming to find out any response from the field towards the application of Competency Based Approach.

2.3. Data Analysis and Results Discussion.

In this section the researcher tries to analyze the data collected and interpret it to approve or disapprove the hypotheses guiding this research through illuminating the main factors behind the existence of both teachers and learners difficulties in implementing CBA and failure to achieve its objectives. The evidence collected both instruments is analyzed and interpreted in a way that provides convincing answers to the research questions of this study. This evidence has been explored according to the hypotheses mentioned in this research in order to reach the research purpose. In fact, the classroom observations and teachers' answers and proposals have been the bases of the findings and the results of this current work.

2.3.1. Analysis of the Questionnaire:

After the questionnaire had been collected, all teachers gave back the answers. The questionnaire was answered anonymously and consisted of three essential sections.

Section One: General Information

Item 1. **Specify your Gender.**

Gender	Number of teachers	percentage
Male	8	27%
Female	22	73%

Table 1: Teachers' Gender.

Results showed that the percentage of female teachers is 73% whereas the percentage of male teachers is 27%. Therefore, the number of female teachers in secondary schools is higher than male teachers

Item 2. **How long have you been teaching?**

Teacher's Experience	Number of teachers	percentage
Less than 5 years	6	20%
Between 5 and 15 years	17	57%
More than 15 years	7	23%

Table2: Teaching experience.

As it is shown in the table, the majority (80%) of our informants are experienced teachers. This result shows that most of them are familiar more with teaching by objectives and they are unable to implement exactly the competency-based approach since they are obliged to change their method of teaching. The others about 20% are novice teachers who are well informed about the new approach in spite of the lack of experience.

Item 3. **The number of pupils in each class is:**

	Number of teachers	percentage
Less than 25 students	5	16%
Between 30 and 40 students	24	80%
More than 40 students	1	4%

Table 3: The Number of Students.

Concerning the number of students in secondary classrooms, the result shows that the majority of the teachers confess about the number of the students which is

between 30 and 40 students so the percentage is 80 % and a few of them select the third choice that represent 40 %. This leads us to conclude that classes are crowded in normal situation and there are cases where are overcrowded. This situation hinders the application of the competency-based approach. As we know that this approach supports group work but in such classes it is impossible. Also this approach considers the learner as an active participant and the teacher as facilitator; however, crowded classes do not help neither the student nor the teacher to enhance their task.

Section Two: Teaching Under the CBA

Item 4. Do you know what does "the competency based approach" mean?

	Number of teachers	percentage
Yes	23	76%
Not really	7	24%

Table 4: Familiarity with the Competency-Based Approach.

Most of the teachers 76% know the Competency Based Approach and what it means as a teaching method especially in the secondary school in Algeria while 24% lack enough information about its implementation.

Item 5. Do you set the objectives of your lessons?

	Number of teachers	percentage
Yes	29	96%
No answer	1	04%

Table 5: Setting the Objectives of Lessons.

This table shows that teachers set the objectives of their lessons. 96% of them agree that teachers should set objectives of their lessons before teaching. This may refer that all teachers want their students to know exactly what they will do. They said that they set these objectives to assess their success, to know where to go and what to practice and to let the students understand what they will do.

Item 6. Do you find problems in facilitating the topic to your students before you start the lesson?

	Number of teachers	percentage
Yes	18	60%
No	11	36%
No answer	1	04%

Table 6: Problems of Facilitating the Topic before Starting the Lesson.

This item is about the fact of facilitating the tasks. The majority (60%) of the respondents said that there is no problem since they have experience in teaching and facilitating these activities and lessons were taught in middle school. Whereas, 36 % claim that there are problems in facilitating the tasks. In their point of view, attracting students' interest is not an easy task because of the low level of their students. They also complain about the lack of motivation and engagement.

Item 7. Do you feel that the teacher's book meets your requirements?

	Number of teachers	percentage
Yes	11	36%
No	17	57%
Not always	02	07%

Table 7: The Importance of Teachers' Books.

36% of the teachers answered affirmatively because most of the activities were designed to meet their objectives and they are useful for fresh teachers. More than half of the respondents 56% argue that the book should be adapted to the real students' level. They assert that teachers should be creative. While 07% of the questioned teachers said that they sometimes use their own resources to meet the tasks requirements.

Item 8. Would you prefer more detailed instructions on how to use the textbook in class?

	Number of teachers	percentage
Yes	23	77%
No	07	23%

Table 8: More Detailed Instructions on Using the Textbook.

This is another point, which has a relation with the use of the textbook. Results had shown that 77 % of them did not prefer more instructions about using the textbook. In their opinion, because of their experience in teaching, they did not really require more instructions except if there are modifications in the syllabus. In addition, some of them insist on the teachers' creativity and they comment that they should not be book slaves since they can adapt, omit or add something else. In addition, they stated that the textbook is found to meet the learners' needs and includes all updated subjects so there is no need of detailed instruction. About 23 % of our informants support providing additional instruction especially for novice teachers since they lack experience.

Item 9. Do you find that the activities of the textbook are relevant to the students' level?

	Number of teachers	percentage
Yes	13	43%
No	12	40%
Not always	05	17%

Table 9: Relevance of the Activities of the Textbook to the Students' Level.

As the table shows, 43% of our informants answered positively, they think that the content and the activities had been seen the middle school. While 40% of them answered negatively. In their point of view, a high level is required for such book and the type of texts are authentic English so the students are not able to deal with certain themes. Others argue that there is a redundancy in some tasks. 17% of the teachers said that not all of the activities are relevant to their students' level.

Item 10. Are your students able to construct their own knowledge either in speaking or in writing?

	Number of teachers	percentage
Yes	14	47%
No	13	43%
Jus few of them	03	10%

Table 10: Students' capability to construct their own knowledge either in speaking or in writing.

In this item we wanted to know whether students are able to construct their own knowledge and understanding. 47 % asserted that their students are able to construct their own knowledge, 10% of them said that they will be able if we implement the CBA. Whereas43% answered negatively. Some of them argued that the level of the students is low and they are not well formed and informed. The others related the inability to the type of the stream, the students' lack of interest and motivation.

Item 11. In the classroom, your learners are:

	Number of teachers	percentage
motivated	13	43%
reluctant	11	37%
both	06	20%

Table 11: Learners' Reaction in Classroom.

The aim of this item was to check learners' motivation and engagement. 43 % of the teachers think that their students are motivated most of the time. 20 % said that they do their best to motivate their students, urge them to think, perform inside the classroom and improve their level through engagement and participation. Whereas the rest (37 %) argued that their students lack interest and motivation, they don't want to learn or they are always afraid of committing mistakes in front of their peers. They just come to school because they are pushed by their parents.

Item 12. How much do you let your students work together?

	Number of teachers	percentage
Always	10	33%
Sometimes	17	57%
Rarely	03	10%

Table 12: Students' Group Work.

In this item, the focus was on group work to see whether the teachers feel comfortable teaching in groups. The majority, about 90 %, were in favor of working in small groups since it is beneficial for both the teacher and the students to create a good and friendly atmosphere to encourage learners. They agree on making such groups but not always according to the type of the activity, which must be done in pairs or in groups. There are also some topics, which need different points of views to be shared between students so; it is used only when it is easy to control the activity. While 10 % said that, they rarely use the group work to ovoid disciplinary problems and noise especially in crowded classes.

Item 13. Do you think the time allotted to teach English is sufficient for your students to improve their competencies?

	Number of teachers	percentage
Yes	09	30%
No	21	70%

Table 13: The Sufficiency of Allotted Time for Teaching English.

The table above is about whether the allotted time is sufficient to improve students' competencies. For 70 % of the participants consider that the time allotted is not sufficient to enhance students' skills and competencies since the yearly programs are over loaded. They think that there are good learners and slow ones and they need a lot of time for interaction. Whereas 30% of them believe that allotted time is not the cause but the lack of resources and materials such teaching aids is the key for success.

Item 14. What kind of teacher do you consider yourself when you teach under the CBA?

	Number of teachers	percentage
Facilitator	22	73%
Conventional information-provider	04	13.50%
Others	04	13.50%

Table 14: Teachers' Role in the Classroom.

This question aims at highlighting the teacher's role in the competency-based approach. Teachers were to some extent unified in expressing their opinions about the role they play in implementing the CBA. Statistically, 70% of the teachers said that their principle role is that of facilitator; that is, they help, check, correct their students and give them freedom to learn and work collaboratively to achieve goals. According to them, teachers are not spoon feeders.13.50% of them said they play multiple roles such as observer, advisor, guide, and controller. They let their student work together. While four teachers (13.50 %) said that their role is just providing information since learners do not give much importance to their learning**.**

Item 15. Does the textbook help the learner to work in pairs or group?

	Number of teachers	Percentage
Yes	22	73%
No	08	27%

Table 15: The Textbook and the Learners' Work.

After asking our informants about the role of the textbook in the progress of the students' learning skills, then we asked them about its assistance in a group work. 73 % answered positively. This reveals that it contains activities that help learners to work either in pairs or groups. For instance, at the end of each unit the teachers asked their students to make groups and work on a specific topic. Whereas 27% of them asserted that the textbook does not suit group work. They claim that most of the activities do not require group work except some of them.

Section Three: Problems of Implementing the CBA in Classroom.

Item 16. How do you find the new syllabus after the implementation of CBA?

	Number of teachers	percentage
Complicated for the learners	13	43%
Suitable for the learners	08	27%
interesting	09	30%

Table 16: Learners and the Application of the New Syllabus under CBA.

This question had attracted the teachers' attention since most of the comments revolve around the length and the complication of the syllabus. In here, about 43% of the informants thought that the syllabus for English language teaching is hard for the pupils at the three levels, 27% of them viewed that it is suitable and 30% found it interesting since it focuses on teaching the four linguistic skills and promoting language proficiency. In fact, most of the teachers shared the point that the ministry has to think again about the new syllabus and its shortcomings.

Item 17. What are the difficulties that face you in presenting a CBA lesson?

	Number of teachers	percentage
Lack of sample CBA lesson plans	22	73%
Lack of materials	30	100%
Overcrowded classes	30	100%
Complicated text books	07	23%
Lack of the needed techniques.	12	40%

Table 17. Difficulties Facing Teachers in presenting a CBA lesson.

All teachers, especially the experienced ones admitted that the Ministry of National Education has applied important reforms in improving the teaching/learning situation in the Algerian educational context; however, this approach suffers from many hindrances. They further highlighted that the central reasons revolve around over-crowded rooms, a very long and hard syllabus, lack of

models for lesson planning, lack of teachers' training and a very complicated textbook.

As solutions to overcome these difficulties, most teachers suggested planning seminars and study days to train them to apply the CBA approach through providing them with essential techniques and methods to enhance the teaching process. They also confirmed that they also need a special training on how to design lessons for the three levels.

Item 18. What are the difficulties that your pupils encounter in learning English through implementing the CBA?

	Number of teachers	percentage
The inability to use English knowledge either orally or in writing.	24	80%
The difficulty of relating meaning with structure	27	90%
Low communicative skills.	30	100%

Table 18. Difficulties Encountering Pupils in Learning English through CBA.

As it is shown in the table above, most of the informants believed that ELT are facing many problems after the implementation of CBA. They declared that the inability to use their language knowledge in writing or speaking is the central constraint that pupils suffer from. They added that their learners encounter problems at the level of their linguistic background (grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation …etc.). They added that their pupils are weak in understanding texts in their textbooks due the lack of linguistic knowledge. Moreover all of them observed that their pupils are suffering from weaknesses at the level of the four linguistic skills, although all efforts are made to develop the learners' linguistic competence and develop their performance speak and write English effectively, accurately and fluently.

Item 19. Please what do you suggest as solutions to these problems.

The last question in this section chief aim was to make teachers provide suggestions and recommendations to overcome the problems of implementing the competency based approach. Teachers' suggestions varied from one to another, but most of them agreed on the following suggestions:

* Time adaptation through giving more time for teaching English.
* Content adaptation according to the real level of the students.
* Raising teachers 'competency.
* Preparation of the matter before presenting it.
* The teacher must be friendly sometimes but not always.
* Reduction of the number in classrooms.
* Equipping classrooms with the necessary materials such as audio visual aids. .
* Intensive collaborative efforts between teachers and inspectors to implement the CBA in language teaching process successfully.
* Motivating and encouraging students to learn English language.
* More in teachers 'in service training.
* Use of ICTs in teaching.

2.3.2. Analysis of the Classroom Observation Checklist.

The checklist of the classroom observation contains five (05) main items, which are supposed to provide more information about the atmosphere in the classroom under the Competency-Based Approach.

Table 1.Physical Setting/Classroom Environment.

A. Classroom Facility	Class n°01	Class n°02	Class n°03	Class n°04	Class n°05	Class n°06	comment
Classroom adequate size for student number.	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Adequate storage for resources/materials/equipment.	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Furnishings allow for competency-based instruction.	–	–	–	–	–	–	–

Student Seating. Rows … pairs ……. small groups ……other ……	row	row	row	row	row	row	row
Room size will accommodate activities.	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Flat top surfaces are sufficient for investigations, projects, displays, etc.	+	+	–	–	+	+	+
B. Classroom Environment	Class n°01	Class n°02	Class n°03	Class n°04	Class n°05	Class n°06	comment
Language displays/posters promote learning	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Core curriculum materials evident	–	–	+	+	–	–	–
Language student work displayed	+	+	+	–	–	–	–
Adequate resources available for hands-on lesson (as appropriate)	+	+	–	–	–	–	–
C. 21st Century Tools	Class n°01	Class n°02	Class n°03	Class n°04	Class n°05	Class n°06	comment
ICTs available - type	–	–	Data show	–	–	Data show	–
Interactive Whiteboard	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Number of computers available to students /teacher.	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Projection system	–	–	+	–	–	+	–
Document camera	–	–	–	–	–	–	–

The table shows that the classroom environment is inadequate in most times in addition to the lack of necessary tools and facilities that enables teachers to work appropriately.

Table 2. Lesson Effectiveness.

A. Major Instructional Resources Used.	Class n°01	Class n°02	Class n°03	Class n°04	Class n°05	Class n°06	comment
Textbook	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Recordings.	+	–	–	–	–	–	–
Other print materials	+	+	+	–	–	–	–
Computer to collect/analyze data	–	–	–	–	–	–	–

Pictures /posters/stickers	+	+	–	–	–	+	–
Computer to practice a skill	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
CD/DVD	+	–	–	–	–	–	–
Computer to access Internet	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
B. Content Focus.	**Class n°01**	**Class n°02**	**Class n°03**	**Class n°04**	**Class n°05**	**Class n°06**	**comment**
Listening/speaking.	+	+	+	+	–	–	+
Reading/ writing.	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Grammar	+	+	+	+	+	–	+
Vocabulary.	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Phonetics/phonology.	+	+	–	–	–	–	–
C. Content Delivery	**Class n°01**	**Class n°02**	**Class n°03**	**Class n°04**	**Class n°05**	**Class n°06**	**comment**
Instructional resources used appropriately and effectively	+	+	–	–	–	–	–
Content presented is accurate	+	+	+	–	–	–	–
Use of real world context	+	+	+	+	–	–	+
Focus on problem solving	–	–	–	–	–	+	–
Students solved one or more non-routine, or open-ended problems	–	–	–	–	–	+	–
D. Competency-Based Lesson Design	**Class n°01**	**Class n°02**	**Class n°03**	**Class n°04**	**Class n°05**	**Class n°06**	**comment**
Pre-task phase	+	+	+	+	–	+	+
Task phase	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Post task phase.	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
E. Grouping Arrangement(s) Used	**Class n°01**	**Class n°02**	**Class n°03**	**Class n°04**	**Class n°05**	**Class n°06**	**comment**
Whole Group	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Small groups working on same task	–	–	+	+	+	+	+
Small groups working on different tasks	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Individuals working on same task	+	+	–	+	+	+	+
Individuals working on different tasks	–	–	–	–	–	–	–

Grouping arrangements were appropriate for the instructional goal and activity.	–	–	–	+	+	+	
F. Teacher and Student Behaviors Observed	**Class n°01**	**Class n°02**	**Class n°03**	**Class n°04**	**Class n°05**	**Class n°06**	**comment**
Teacher Behaviors							
Setting up and guiding students through meaningful real-world problems	–	–	+	+	+	+	+
Moving around the room monitoring/questioning	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Encouraging students to consider multiple ways to solve problems/test solutions	–	+	+	+	+	+	+
Guiding students in the use of manipulative/technology	–	–	+	+	+	+	+
Promoting student use of inquiry/creativity through questioning/collaboration	–	–	–	+	+	+	
Facilitating discussions about problem-solving processes/ efficiency/effectiveness	–	–	+	+	+	+	+
Leading students through discussions/journaling of their understanding	–	–	–	+	+	+	–
Student Behaviors							
Interacting with others	–	–	–	–	+	+	–
Working alone	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Working in groups to solve problems.	–	–	–	+	+	–	–
Working in teams to challenge and defend solutions	–	–	–	+	+	–	–
Using knowledge to real situations.	–	–	–	+	+	–	–
21st Century Information and Communication Skills							
Sharing solution processes and listening to others share their thinking.	–	–	–	–	+	+	–
Defending solution processes' efficiency and usefulness.	–	–	–	–	–	+	–
Communicating ideas: demonstrations, models, and arguments.	–	–	–	–	–	+	–
Helping to clarify each other's learning through discussion/modeling.	–	–	–	–	+	+	–

G. Instructional Strategies	Class n°01	Class n°02	Class n°03	Class n°04	Class n°05	Class n°06	comment
Connection to prior knowledge	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Provides differentiated instruction	+	+	+	–	+	+	+
Teacher modeling	+	+	–	+	+	+	+
Collaborative grouping	–	+	–	–	–	+	–
Opportunities for students to justify answers.	–	+	+	+	+	+	+
Incorporate varied assessments.	–	+	+	+	+	+	+

In this table, results show that teachers depend on the available resources to and students to design their lessons, organize the content and manage their classes successfully since their instructional strategies were effective to an extent in spite of the negative reactions and behaviors of their students.

Table 3 .Questioning Strategies.

	Class n°01	Class n°02	Class n°03	Class n°04	Class n°05	Class n°06	comment
Wait Time I □ Wait Time II □ No/limited wait time	I	II	I	II	II	I	Wait time well managed
Questions were higher-order and stimulated broad student responses	–	–	+	+	+	+	+
Questions were lower-cognitive and stimulated narrow student responses	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
No questions were asked by the teacher or posed through the activity being conducted	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Teacher used strategy to ensure all students had opportunity to respond	–	–	+	+	+	+	+
Teacher asked probing follow-up questions based on students' understanding (individuals, small group, whole class)	+	–	+	+	+	+	+
Students are encouraged to ask questions of each other and of the teacher	–	+	+	+	+	+	+
Teacher provided specific praise	–	–	+	+	+	+	+
Teacher provided general praise	–	+	+	+	+	+	+

Teacher provided no praise	+	–	–	–	–	–	–
The questioning strategies checked for student understanding of apparent instructional goal	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	+

As shown in the table, most of the questioning strategies were used positively by the teachers so as to provide a suitable atmosphere for the students to achieve understanding and meet the goals of the lesson.

4. Classroom Climate.

A. Student Involvement	**Class n° 01**	**Class n° 02**	**Class n° 03**	**Class n° 04**	**Class n° 05**	**Class n° 06**	**comment**
Majority of students demonstrated interest/were engaged and on task.	–	–	–	–	+	+	–
Most students take initiative in classroom discussions.	–	–	–	–	+	+	–
Majority of students uninterested or apathetic.	+	+	+	+	–	–	–
Majority of students were frequently off task.	+	+	+	+	+	–	–
B. Classroom Management	**Class n°01**	**Class n°02**	**Class n°03**	**Class n°04**	**Class n°05**	**Class n°06**	**comment**
Classroom orderly, no disruptions that impaired learning environment	–	–	–	–	+	+	–
Classroom generally orderly, but some disruptions impaired learning environment	+	+	+	+	–	–	+
Classroom disorderly, frequent student disruptions seriously impaired the learning environment	+	+	+	+	–	–	+
The climate was generally positive	–	+	+	–	+	+	+
The climate enhanced learning	–	+	+	–	+	+	+
opportunities for students	–	+	–	+	+	+	+

The classroom climate as described in this table was generally positive despite of the disruptions which impaired the learning environment. Pupils are bored to study and motivation does not exist at all. Only 7 or 10 learners are motivated. They also show no interest in pair work or using the linguistic skills to develop their

communicative competence and interact in classroom.

Table 5. Development of Higher Order Thinking Skills.

A. Check all skills that were introduced and/or developed in the observed lesson.	**Class n°01**	**Class n°02**	**Class n°03**	**Class n°04**	**Class n°05**	**Class n°06**	**comment**
Making observations.	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Reciting/recalling facts.	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Classifying	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Estimating	–	+	+	+	+	+	+
Choosing appropriate strategies	–	+	+	+	+	+	+
Measuring	–	+	+	+	+	+	+
Collecting/recording data	–	–	–	–	–	+	–
Comparing/contrasting	–	–	+	+	+	+	+
Organizing and displaying data	–	+	+	+	+	+	+
Drawing conclusions	–	–	+	+	+	+	+
Interpreting and analyzing data	–	–	–	–	+	+	–
Making predictions	–	–	–	+	+	+	+
Selecting problem-solving strategy	–	–	–	+	+	+	–
Justifying/verifying solutions/strategies	–	–	–	–	+	+	–
B. Learner Attitudes Demonstrated.	**Class n°01**	**Class n°02**	**Class n°03**	**Class n°04**	**Class n°05**	**Class n°06**	**comment**
Dependent on others	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Cooperation	–	–	–	+	+	+	–
Persistence	–	–	–	–	+	+	–
Responsibility	–	–	–	–	+	+	–
Confidence	–	–	–	–	+	+	–
Enthusiasm	–	–	–	–	+	+	–
Objectivity	–	–	–	–	+	+	–
Accuracy	–	–	–	–	+	+	–
Critical thinking	–	–	–	–	+	+	–
Self-directed	–	–	–	–	+	+	–
Curiosity	–	–	–	–	+	+	–

Teachers find themselves obliged to introduce activities, songs and poems to motivate their students. They do not take into account all of the tasks listed in the textbook. They face also problems in reading comprehension since the texts do not suit the pupils' level.

3.3.3. Data Interpretation.

After having observed classes for several sessions and analyzed the questionnaire addressed to EFL secondary school teachers in El Bayadh, we admit that participants were helpful through their contributions. Therefore, most of them responded to most of the questions given to them. They also agreed with us that there are difficulties in teaching under the CBA. So, there are problems which should be solved. They argued that teaching under the CBA is a hard task. In addition, the teachers confessed that these problems touched them and they fell unable to overcome them because they lack sufficient knowledge, materials and resources to implement successfully the CBA in their classes.

Teachers are considered as field practitioners who have direct contact with learners. Therefore, they are the ones who are truly aware about their learners' needs and wants. Indeed, their status as teachers who are required to apply the teaching methods in their daily instruction allows them to adequately assess the syllabus, the used approach and the reality of its implementation.

According to the participants' responses to the questionnaire, many of them think that the syllabus of English is interesting but hard for learners. In fact, the way the syllabus is designed has a major impact on both teachers and learners and may either increase or decrease their motivation. For this reason, it is preferable to take into account the level, the capacities, and the needs of learners when designing the syllabus. In addition, many teachers point that their learners like the English language but they face some obstacles and problems such as the type of texts included in their textbook or the way the courses are segmented and presented.

Furthermore, the Competency-Based Approach which is applied to the teaching of English is considered by many EFL teachers as a useful method but its

application with learners is not an easy task. As for the problems that may impede its adequate application, some participants relate them to the competencies of learners while some others think that the number of hours devoted to English is not sufficient, and some others claim about the lack of the adequate material and the high number of pupils in class . Some teachers point that the CBA can be useful for some learners and useless with others. Besides, the EFL teachers' questionnaire includes questions about the areas of language that learners meet difficulties.

According the responses of the participants, most of them focus on the inability to use English knowledge either orally or in writing, while others emphasize the difficulty of relating meaning with structure and Low communicative skills. In all cases, it can be said that all language skills are important and complement one another because these skills are interrelated and cannot be taught separately.

As for the teaching and the assessment of reading comprehension, teachers' views are different and various. In fact, they use different techniques and strategies in presenting and assessing their courses. More importantly, no one of them denied the use of his or her own techniques because the application of CBA results in failure of teaching to achieve high learning standards since the existing circumstances do not allow its success.

Certainly, one can say that the use of CBA techniques is part of the teaching strategies because they are all interrelated and should be interwoven in a way that improves the teaching outputs and the learning outcomes. The main obstacle that causes learning failure, according to EFL teachers, is that learners do not possess enough and adequate knowledge that helps them achieve a good understanding .This fact is expressed by all teachers who gave their proposals about the ways and the strategies that may improve both teaching and learning.

More importantly, teachers' views reveal that they need to gain autonomy in classroom for the reason of selecting the adequate content and using the appropriate instruction in order to meet learners' needs. In fact, they are bound by the curriculum requirements which cannot always address learners' real needs. Therefore, they should make a link between the syllabus and the learners' real level in order to provide a constructive classroom instruction.

In addition, EFL teachers put significant suggestions concerning the development of ELT in Algeria. In fact, many of them stress the importance of seminars, meetings, and the training sessions in the field of foreign language teaching. These meetings are essential and necessary because they provide the opportunity to exchange ideas and assess the teaching –learning process. Moreover, the participants emphasize the need to include teachers in designing the syllabus and the importance of giving them more autonomy to act freely with their learners not only in assessing and teaching, but also in using multiple approaches and techniques that are dictated by learners' needs.

From the analysis of both teachers' questionnaire and classroom observation form, we deduced that most teachers use the Competency-Based Approach in teaching English as a foreign language because they agree that the CBA is more beneficial for learners though the lack of enough knowledge about .Besides their failure in implementing it in class is due to the lack of, materials, the nature and level of their learners, the overloaded syllabus and the size of their classes. As a solution to this problem, more in- service training and the adaptation of the educational system to meet the objectives of teaching under CBA are seen as more than a necessity.

Conclusion

In this chapter, the applied methodology seemed suitable since it is used by most researchers in similar cases of study. We have begun the chapter by describing the methodology and the population on which the research is based. Then, we presented a description of the data collection methods and tools, which we have used, including: teachers' Questionnaire, Classroom Observation.

In the second part of the chapter, the researchers discussed the results obtained from the collected data used in this study. We have started by the analysis of the questionnaire which obtains the information we need it from the teacher about their opinion about the Competency Based Approach and if it helps their students to improve learning; then, the classroom observation which helped us to observe the teaching process under the Competency Based Approach and how it is carried out in the classroom.

The present study aimed at investigating the main problems that face teachers when they teach under the Competency-Based Approach. Its chief purpose was to investigate exactly why secondary English teachers fail to apply the Competency-based approach appropriately. Therefore, this study was conducted to find out what these problems are and how can they be reduced in secondary school classes.

This dissertation includes two chapters. The first theoretical part is an overview of the Competency-Based Approach, its characteristics, principles and adoption in the Algerian educational system while the second one is the practical part represented in secondary school teachers' questionnaire and classroom observation. These two instruments were successful to an extent to shed light on the main problems of EFL teaching under this new approach.

The analysis of the teachers' questionnaire and classroom observation form allowed us to know the main problems of applying the CBA in Algeria. The findings show that teachers are really facing problems which affect the development of competencies of both the teacher and the students. Some of these problems are crowded and noisy classes that hinder the application of CBA, lack of resources and materials needed to implement an over loaded syllabus designed to meet the changing demands of the 21st century education in most of secondary schools, insufficient time allotted to teaching English in addition to the absence of a serious in service training on the implementation of CBA.

From the theoretical part of this research study which is about teaching under the CBA and from the result of the teachers' questionnaire and the classroom observation, we suggest the following pedagogical recommendations to improve teaching and learning according to this approach:

Time: Time allotted to teach English in secondary school classes is not sufficient for improving students' competencies. Like the other languages (Arabic and French), teaching English language should be given more time to allow students to learn effectively and achieve proficiency in different skills.

Creativity of the teacher: The syllabus is too long and detailed. Sometimes appears over the level of the learners abilities. The teacher must be creative by selecting the appropriate activities and adapting the course book activities.

Students' self-learning: the competency-based approach aims to build and develop learners' abilities in order to use it in real life. To realize this aim, teachers should be aware of how he can help his learners to construct and to enhance their own knowledge and understanding of the world around them. Therefore, the teacher in this approach plays the facilitator role inside the classroom by motivating and helping his students in their learning process.

Teachers' seminars: The inspector can organize more than four or five conferences in one year. Moreover, s/he should shed light on the issue of teaching and learning in each unit. Planning for such seminars provides the teacher more detailed instructions about teaching.

Teaching Portfolio: The portfolio is the vital integrated part in implementing the competency-based approach. It also helps both the teacher to assess students' work and help the learner to improve his task (self-assessment). Despite its importance, some secondary school teachers do not know what is portfolio and how it can be used. Hence, teaching portfolio should apply it in order to reduce some problems in implementing this approach in the Algerian secondary schools.

Students' number: According to the questionnaire's result**,** we observe that most of the classrooms include more than 30 students in each class. However, applying the competency-based approach entailed classes that involve between 23 and 25 students. The crowded classroom is one of a major problem which makes the teacher unable to apply exactly the competency-based approach. Moreover, group works in such classes are impossible since they give the chance for the students to increase noise, carelessness, and irresponsibility of doing their tasks.

Selection of the topic: Teachers should select topics that treat contemporary teenagers' life and interests which encourage them to express their own views and motivate them in the class.

Collaborative Learning: Teachers must focus on activities which encourage collaborative learning since it helps students to generate more ideas and interaction.

Furthermore the implementation of CBA should lead to a serious revision of the teacher's profession. This implies a change in the teacher's attitude toward knowledge and towards teaching. The teacher ought to:

- Do more than teaching as merely communicating knowledge to make the learner learn.
-Quit the function of monitoring and evaluating in order to get involved in all activities.
-Create various means of teaching.
-Share his/her power, negotiate with the learners and accept their points of view.
-Work on projects, and to do so, s/he must have a perfect knowledge of the project procedures.
-Possess a complete knowledge of group dynamics.
-Be able to conduct discussions, to act as a mediator between the learners and analyze the group functioning.
-Clarify the processes, the ways the learners think and act; thus the teacher displays greater transparency.
-Encourage and guide the learner's efforts by showing the learner that s/he is allowed to make errors and to have doubts.
-Enhance the value of co-operation between the learners.
-Proceed to formative evaluation in working situations.
-Open to other disciplines and have discussions with his/her colleagues about methods and interdisciplinary concerns.

Finally, we would like to say that the implementation of the Competency-Based Approach may be challenging at first on the grounds that the learners and teachers were accustomed to the traditional teacher-oriented instruction. However, if teachers attend workshops and training sessions and encourage their learners to take on their roles appropriately in the different stages of learning, the CBA can be successful and rewarding for both agents of the learning process. Hence, gaining a stimulating and an authentic learning experience for teachers and learners alike, developing learners' social and cognitive skills, improving their language and content knowledge and increasing their sense of autonomy in learning as well.

It is worthily to mention that this research is conducted because of the importance of the CBA for a successful education. However, the topic is vast and requires more investigations to keep the door open for further researches.

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APPENDICES.

Appendix I

TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear teacher,

This questionnaire aims at investigating the main problems that face secondary school teachers in implementing the Competency-Based Approach in EFL classroom. Therefore, your answers and suggestions will be very helpful and useful in our research project. Please tick the appropriate box or write full statements when necessary.

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

SECTION ONE: General Information

1. Specify your Gender :

Male	
Female	

2. How long have you been teaching?

Less than 5 years	
Between 5 and 15 years	
More than 15 years	

3. The number of pupils in each class is :

Less than 25 students	
Between 30 and 40 students	
More than 40 students	

Section Two: Teaching Under the CBA

4. Do you know what does “the competency based approach” mean?

Yes	
No	

5. Do you set the objectives of your lessons?

Yes	
No	

6. Do you find problems in facilitating the topic to your students before you start the lesson?

Yes	
No	

7. Do you feel that the teacher's book meets your requirements?

Yes	
No	

8. Would you prefer more detailed instructions on how to use the textbook in class?

Yes	
No	

9. Do you find that the activities of the textbook are relevant to the students' level?

Yes	
No	

10. Are your students able to construct their own knowledge either in speaking or in writing?

Yes	
No	

11. In the classroom, your learners are:

Motivated	
Reluctant	

12. How much do you let your students work together?
    Always Sometimes Rarely
13. Do you think the time allotted to teach English is sufficient for your students to improve their competencies?

Yes	
No	

14. What kind of teacher do you consider yourself when you teach under the CBA?

Facilitator
Conventional information-provider
Others……

15. Does the textbook help the learner to work in pairs or groups?

Yes	
No	

Section Three: Problems of Implementing the CBA in Classroom.

16. How do you find the new syllabus after the implementation of CBA?

……
……

17. What are the difficulties that face you in presenting a CBA lesson?

……
……
……

18. What are the difficulties that your pupils encounter in learning English through implementing the CBA?

……
……

19. Please what do you suggest as solutions to these problems.

……
……

APPENDICES.

Appendix II

Classroom Observation Checklist.

Teacher: ……
Level/Class: …….
Number of Students:……..
Lesson's Title:……..

1. Physical Setting/Classroom Environment. (Mark all that apply.)

A. Classroom Facility.

- □ Classroom adequate size for student number.
- □ Adequate storage for resources/materials/equipment.
- □ Furnishings allow for competency-based instruction.
- □ Student Seating. Rows … pairs … small groups …other …
- □ Room size will accommodate activities.
- □ Flat top surfaces are sufficient for investigations, projects, displays, etc.

B. Classroom Environment.

- □ Language displays/posters promote learning
- □ Core curriculum materials evident
- □ Language student work displayed
- □ Adequate resources available for hands-on lesson (as appropriate)

C. 21st Century Tools.

- □ ICTs available - type _____
- □ Interactive Whiteboard
- □ Number of computers available to students ____ teacher ____
- □ Projection system
- □ Document camera

2. Lesson Effectiveness. (Mark all that apply.)

A. Major Instructional Resources Used.

- □ Textbook
- □ Other printed materials
- □ Pictures
- □ CD/DVD
- □ Document Camera
- □ Recordings.
- □ Computer to collect/analyze data
- □ Computer to practice a skill
- □ Computer to access Internet

B. Content Focus.

- □ Listening/speaking.
- □ Reading/ writing.
- □ Grammar
- □ Vocabulary.
- □ Phonetics/phonology.

APPENDICES.

C. Content Delivery.

- Instructional resources used appropriately and effectively
- Content presented is accurate
- Use of real world context
- Focus on problem solving
- Students solved one or more non-routine, or open-ended problems

D. Competency-Based Lesson Design.

- Pre-task phase.
- Task phase.
- Post task phase.

E. Grouping Arrangement(s) Used.

- Whole Group
- Small groups working on same task
- Small groups working on different tasks
- Individuals working on same task
- Individuals working on different tasks
- Grouping arrangements were appropriate for the instructional goal and activity

F. Teacher and Student Behaviors Observed.

Teacher Behaviors .

- Setting up and guiding students through meaningful real-world problems
- Moving around the room monitoring/questioning
- Encouraging students to consider multiple ways to solve problems/test solutions
- Guiding students in the use of manipulative/technology
- Promoting student use of inquiry/creativity through questioning/collaboration
- Facilitating discussions about problem-solving processes/ efficiency/effectiveness
- Leading students through discussions/journaling of their understanding

Student Behaviors .

- Interacting with others
- Working alone
- Working in groups to solve problems.
- Working in teams to challenge and defend solutions
- Using knowledge to real situations.

21st Century Information and Communication Skills.

- Sharing solution processes and listening to others share their thinking .
- Defending solution processes' efficiency and usefulness.
- Communicating ideas: demonstrations, models and arguments.
- Helping to clarify each other's learning through discussion/modeling.

APPENDICES.

G. Instructional Strategies.

- □ Connection to prior knowledge
- □ Provides differentiated instruction
- □ Teacher modeling
- □ Collaborative grouping
- □ Opportunities for students to justify answers.
- □ Incorporate varied assessments.

3. Questioning Strategies. (Mark all that apply.)

- □ Wait Time I □ Wait Time II □ No/limited wait time
- □ Questions were higher-order and stimulated broad student responses
- □ Questions were lower-cognitive and stimulated narrow student responses
- □ No questions were asked by the teacher or posed through the activity being conducted
- □ Teacher used strategy to ensure all students had opportunity to respond
- □ Teacher asked probing follow-up questions based on students' understanding (individuals, small group, whole class)
- □ Students are encouraged to ask questions of each other and of the teacher
- □ Teacher provided specific praise
- □ Teacher provided general praise
- □ Teacher provided no praise
- □ The questioning strategies checked for student understanding of apparent instructional goal Yes □ No □

4. Classroom Climate.

A. Student Involvement .

- □ Majority of students demonstrated interest/were engaged and on task.
- □ Most students take initiative in classroom discussions.
- □ Majority of students uninterested or apathetic.
- □ Majority of students were frequently off task.

B. Classroom Management.

- □ Classroom orderly, no disruptions that impaired learning environment
- □ Classroom generally orderly, but some disruptions impaired learning environment
- □ Classroom disorderly, frequent student disruptions seriously impaired the learning environment
- □ The climate was generally positive
- □ The climate enhanced learning opportunities for students

APPENDICES.

5. Development of Higher Order Thinking Skills.

A. Check all skills that were introduced and/or developed in the observed lesson.

- ☐ Making observations
- ☐ Reciting/recalling facts
- ☐ Classifying
- ☐ Estimating
- ☐ Choosing appropriate strategies
- ☐ Measuring
- ☐ Collecting/recording data
- ☐ Comparing/contrasting
- ☐ Organizing and displaying data
- ☐ Drawing conclusions
- ☐ Interpreting and analyzing data
- ☐ Making predictions
- ☐ Selecting problem-solving strategy
- ☐ Creating/formulating patterns/equations
- ☐ Justifying/verifying solutions/strategies

B. Learner Attitudes Demonstrated.

- ☐ Dependent on others
- ☐ Cooperation
- ☐ Persistence
- ☐ Responsibility
- ☐ Confidence
- ☐ Enthusiasm
- ☐ Objectivity
- ☐ Accuracy
- ☐ Critical thinking
- ☐ Self-directed
- ☐ Curiosity