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REPRESENTATIONS OF THE COMPETENCY-BASED APPROACH IN AFRICA: WHAT COHERENCE WITH TEACHING METHODS?

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to assess the relevance of the representations of secondary school teachers in Benin, West Africa, on the meaning of the Competency Based Education, CBE, the indicators of its implementation, and the coherence of the teaching practices of this approach in the classes, by means of a questionnaire survey and a collection of life experiences. It emerges from this an almost general tendency of the subjects to assimilate the CBE to the active teaching method, and to teach by means of a stereotyped and inconsistent strategy with regard to the diversity of the types of objects and learning objectives, and in particular the needs of developing the skills of the learners. The study demonstrates that the teaching method adapted to acquire the skills, which are the heart of the competences, is the transmissive method, essentially through the linked processes of demonstration/observation- imitation, and deduced from this observation, that the adequate psychological theory as a basis for the Competency-Based Approach, is more the theory of social learning, or sociocognitive, of Bandura, than constructivism. Finally, research highlights the need in Africa for initial or continuing pedagogical training, intended to correct the erroneous representations of the CBE, and especially to make teachers more competent in teaching methodology, through the ability to intelligently use teaching methods and processes, depending on the types of objects and learning objectives.

Keywords: skills-based approach, representations, teachers, coherence, teaching methods.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Since the 90s of the 20th century, a new vogue for school education has developed in general education, at least in French-speaking countries of the world, designated by the concept "Skills-Based Approach", or Competency Based Education, called in French language Approche par Compétences, APC, with which technical and vocational education was familiar, already in the 70s, (Leclercq, D. et al., 2009; Loosli, 2016). This vogue will sweep across Africa very early on, whose educational systems will try to convert to the new language and its practical implications in the early 2000s. Benin will not remain on the sidelines of this general movement of appropriation and domestication of the CBE in its education system, both in general education and in the sub-sector of technical and vocational education.

Nearly a quarter of a century after the adoption of the educational trend known as CBE by the Beninese educational system, the time seemed to have come, to us and some collaborators of the Laboratory of Pedagogy and Didactics of the Humanities of the Ecole Normale Supérieure de Porto-Novo, to carry out an evaluative analysis of the understanding of the said trend by

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education stakeholders, as well as the implications of this understanding for their professional practice. The objective of this approach is to assess the degree of relevance of the understanding of the APC, with regard to its general acceptance in the scientific literature, as well as the level of rationality of pedagogical practices, both in relation to the understanding of the CBE concept, and in relation to the meaning that this concept universally has. At the same time, we will question the validity of constructivism as a psychological foundation of the Competency-based Approach.

This is the purpose of the research that this article reports on, starting by presenting the conceptual framework, before presenting the methodological choices made, then the main results obtained.

2.0 PROBLEM AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

2.1 Research question and hypothesis

The central question that structured the research presented here is the following: to what extent do teachers' representations of the CBE correspond to relevant, valid and coherent knowledge and pedagogical practices?

The general working hypothesis retained is that, in general, the representations of the subjects concerned on the CBE, not only rest on a confusion between ends and methods of educational action, but also do not predispose them to a coherent choice of pedagogical methods to teach by the semantic implications of the CBE.

2.2 Reference theories of research

This research draws its foundations, on the one hand, from the theoretical perspectives of social representations, and on the other hand, from the fundamental didactic questioning model, proposed by the great French psychopedagogue Gaston Mialaret, in his famous work Les sciences de l'éducation, first published in 1976.

As for the theoretical perspectives of social representations, it is on the one hand the cognitivist perspective of representation, and on the other hand the sociological theory of social representations.

For cognitivism, representation appears as an information processing system through which the individual receives, memorizes, manipulates information, and by means of which he solves problems, decides and communicates. (Meunier, 2002). An organized set of opinions, attitudes, beliefs and information about objects, situations or beings, representation corresponds to a cognitive pattern of evolution, which supports adaptation, (Jodelet, 1989; Piaget, 1957). In doing so, representations function as reading grids and action guides by means of which the individual interprets reality, (Meunier, 2002).

As for the sociological theory of social representations, it is more precisely a psycho-sociological theory, which we owe to the work of authors such as Moscovici (1961), Abric (1994). Their perspective postulates that representations have a socially constructed character, particularly when they relate to social objects such as language, politics, profession, religion,

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family, or the Competency-Based Approach in the Beninese educational system. Social actors develop them by participating in interactions and activities in their society, community, group, and corporation. At the same time, they are the ones that allow them to be active members of this society, by shaping their actions and words, allowing them to live and act together, (Moscovici, 1989). One could not explain otherwise, the links between the representations of the APC on the one hand, and on the other hand, the relevance or coherence of the pedagogical choices of teachers.

The other theoretical foundation of the present study is the fundamental didactic questioning model of Mialaret (1976). According to the French educational psychologist, didactic reflection and evaluative research of teaching activities should start from the following five fundamental questions:

- For what purposes do we give or should we give the teaching?
- What should or should this teaching focus on?
- Who is or should they said teaching be aimed at?
- How is or should teaching be done?
- What are the results of this teaching?

This fundamental didactic questioning thus concerns, respectively, the ends or objectives of teaching, its contents and therefore its programs, the learners, the teaching methods, and the results obtained, which touch on evaluation issues. In the mialarian model, these are dimensions so interdependent that one cannot be conceived outside of the other or others: for example, the how is a function of the ends, the what, the who, etc. As a result, this model can be very useful for assessing the coherence between the representations of the CBE among teachers, and their teaching practices, in particular the use of teaching methods.

2.3 Definition of concepts

The main concepts whose semantic clarification or operationalization was essential in this work are: representations, Competency Based Education, skills, pedagogical coherence, representations of the competency based education, teachers, and teaching methods.

2.3.1 Competency Based Education

The concept of Competency Based Education, CBE, was introduced into educational discourse and practice by American Professor George D. Kuh in the early 1970s (Morcke et al. 2013). The goal then sought by the academic was to articulate the teaching and learning processes with the real-world employment process by promoting the development of real- world skills in learners with a view to their future employment. It was therefore quite natural that, as soon as it appeared, the first initiatives to appropriate the concept were observed in technical education and vocational training. It was much later, particularly in the 1990s, that the Competency Based Education would become an almost global trend, also investing in general education, particularly in French-speaking African countries. Since this expansion of the concept, a multitude of definitions have been given, some focused on the world of technical and vocational training, others adapted to the general education sector; some proposed by authors from the North, others from educational bodies in the South, particularly from Africa

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Among the definitions of the Competency Based Education seen by authors from the North, let us mention two: one that comes from Canada, one of the first poles of expansion of the CBE in the world, and the other that comes to us from Europe.

The Canadian meaning is that proposed by the Ministry of Education of Quebec, and which considers the CBE as an approach consisting essentially of defining the skills inherent in the exercise of a profession, and formulating them into objectives within the framework of a study program. This definition then conceives of competence as an integrated set of knowledge, skills and attitudes that allow one to successfully accomplish an action, or a set of actions, for example a task or a job, (Quebec, 2002). A little later, the Canadian academic Tardif, will summarize the concept of competence, to a complex knowledge of how to act, which is based on the effective mobilization and combination of internal and external resources, within a family of situations, (Tardif, 2006). Among the definitions of the CBE that have been proposed in Europe, let us retain the one given by Xaviers Roegiers, a Belgian academic and one of the main experts on these issues, during a conference at the University of Lorraine in France, in 2020. From his presentation, it emerges that the Competency Based Education is a model for developing a curriculum, based on:

- The definition of the learner's exit profile in terms of integrated and meaningful acquisition of skills;
- A choice of pedagogical and didactic methods;
- A choice of methods for assessing acquired skills;
- And the search for coherence between the learner's exit profile, the pedagogical methods, and the assessment of acquired skills, (Université de Lorraine, 2020).

In this conception of the CBE, Roegiers considers three different meanings of competence, even if his preference goes to the third meaning:

1. Competence as a non-complex, assessable know-how: for example, being able to agree the verb with the subject, or being able to dribble an opponent in football;
2. Competence as a complex, transversal quality, difficult to assess: for example, being able to show initiative, or being able to be creative, or rigorous;
3. Competence as the potential to be able to deal with a complex situation independently, a complex but assessable acquisition: for example, being able to translate a type of text into another language, prepare and manage a class project, (Université de Lorraine, 2020).

As for the African acceptance or acceptances of the Competency-Based Approach, an evaluation commissioned by the French Development Agency at the end of the first decade of implementation of the CBE in Africa, identifies as the main characteristics of this educational trend in the countries evaluated: a priority given to skills seen as knowledge of how to act, a strong involvement of learners, a teacher seen as a mediator of knowledge, a contextualization of knowledge and progressive and integrative evaluations, which facilitate the transfer to other situations, (AFD, 2010).

"In the countries studied, the CBE ... is displayed in official texts as a method articulating the teaching-learning process around a core of skills (basic for some, disciplinary and transversal for others) relating to general areas of training. Claiming to be based on (socio)constructivist

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principles, it advocates learning in action based on complex, significant and contextualized situations allowing learners to develop a set of sustainable skills that can be used in varied contexts. », (AFD, 2010, 24)).

At the same time, these AFD evaluators highlight the great gap between official prescriptions and their implementation through the representations of the actors, often linked to a lack of knowledge of the characteristics of the CBE. This results in indecisive, inconsistent teaching practices, revealing a clear divide between what teachers believe they are doing and consider typical of the CBE, and what they do. For many teachers, teaching according to the CBE means changing the organization of the classroom by putting the tables and benches in a U shape, or in small squares, since in their CBE, learners must work in small groups; it is also to use in a stereotypical way, a teaching strategy that can be summed up as the triptych individual work-group work-plenary work, (AFD, 2010)

In Benin, the Normative Guide for the Development of Technical Education and Vocational Training, considers the CBE as a model for designing, developing, implementing training programs and assessing learning, in line with the demand of the labor market. The authors define competence as "an integrated set of knowledge, skills and attitudes, resulting in observable and measurable behavior, when performing a task or work activity, according to a pre-established performance threshold", (République du Bénin, 2015, 9).

The authors of this official Beninese document, retain as main characteristics of the CBE, in particular, that this pedagogical model:

- affects the entire training system, in a systemic approach;
- leads to the use of an active and innovative pedagogy centered on the acquisition of skills by the learner in his environment;
- promotes the development of learner autonomy;
- is based on the evaluation of skills in their dimension of accomplishment of a work activity.

In summary, whatever the geographical and academic context in which the CBE is defined, and considering the fundamental didactic questioning model of Mialaret (1976), the concept mainly relates to the central question of said model, that of the purposes for which one should educate, or teach, and incidentally, of the "what", the object or content of teaching. Thus, the CBE is understood above all as a model for developing study programs, which defines learning objectives in terms of skills, skills being abilities that can be deployed in specific situations; at the heart of these abilities are the skills, which summarize them. Thus, strictly speaking, the CBE concept does not designate a teaching method, nor should it be confused with the definition of strategies, pedagogical methods, or the type of pedagogical intervention to be implemented to effectively achieve said objectives in the form of developing the learner's skills (Leclercq et al. 2009). As Monchatre (2009) points out, the CBE seems to leave open the question of the pedagogies required for this purpose. Undoubtedly, some specialists, concerned with concordance or pedagogical coherence, have sought to invest the CBE, in addition to the purposes of the teaching-learning process, with content relating to the pedagogical practices most likely, in their eyes, to lead to the development of skills in learners. Hence sometimes, in certain meanings of the Competency Based Education, the additional idea that this pedagogical

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model places the student at the center of learning, the learner becoming the artisan of his own knowledge and skills, the CBE automatically merging with the active teaching-learning method, in which the teacher is only a mediator, a facilitator. This semantic confusion is all the more understandable, since the first specialists in the CBE found no other psychological foundation for it than constructivism, or its Vygotskian variant called socioconstructivism, the principle of which is that the learner personally constructs his knowledge. As we will show later, this confusion of the APC with the active method in pedagogy, and its immediate linking to the constructivist current in psychology, are perfectly debatable and not very valid from a scientific point of view.

2.3.2 Pedagogical coherence

We understand this concept of pedagogical coherence, in the sense of concordance, of the link of necessity that exists between the pedagogical practices in the classroom, and the teaching-learning objectives. Coherence refers to the extent to which the classroom practices of teachers, in particular the procedures, the pedagogical methods that they use, are in line with the types of learning objects to be acquired by the learners, depending on whether they are knowledge, skills or attitudes. This is the degree to which these teaching methods actually allow learners to achieve the learning objectives defined for them, by making them competent.

2.3.3 Representations of the CBE, teachers

The concept of representations of the competency-based approach means in this study, the meaning that teachers give to the CBE, that is to say what the Competency Based Education means or designates according to them, how they think that the CBE is concretely operationalized in the education system at the national level, and the way in which they teach according to the CBE in their classrooms.

As for the term teachers, it refers to middle and high school teachers, of both sexes, of any age, of any seniority and of any specialty, who practiced their profession in public general secondary education establishments in Benin, during the 2019-2020 school year.

2.3.4 Teaching method

Also called pedagogical method, the teaching method can be defined as a codified organization of techniques and means aimed at facilitating educational action; In other words, it is a coherent and conscious way of applying given procedures and means to facilitate learning for the pupil or student (Raynal and Rieunier, 1997).

There are several typologies of teaching methods, some based on the degree of activity of the pupils and students, others based on the degree of autonomy of the learner, and still others that take as a classification criterion, the inventors or designers of said methods. But the majority of teachers increasingly agree today to divide teaching methods into two, three or four major categories. Thus, American pedagogues classically distinguish two types of teaching methods: direct instruction and indirect instruction, (Elliot, S. N. et al. (2000), which can be translated into French by the expressions direct method of direct teaching, and indirect method of teaching. The direct method is centered on the action of the teacher, who explains, demonstrates, is the main person responsible for the progression of the course, by adapting the

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activities to the age and abilities of the learners. As for the indirect method, it is centered on the action of the learner, who learns by himself, by seeking knowledge, by solving problems in a classroom environment set up for this purpose by the facilitator teacher. As for Raynal and Rieunier (1997), they distinguish three types of teaching methods: the expository method, which can be assimilated to the direct instruction of the Americans, the interrogative method, and the active method, which is similar to indirect instruction of Americans.

An example of a quadrimodal typology of teaching methods is that proposed by Tilman and Grootaers (1994, 2006), who distinguish: the transmissive method characterized by processes such as lecture, demonstration, observation-imitation, impregnation, execution-repetition, systematic training, videoscopy, etc.; the interrogative method which results in the use of interactive tutorials, Socratic dialogue, etc.; the active method characterized by techniques such as role play, documentary research of synthesis, panel, case study, project pedagogy, investigation, cooperative learning, problem solving; and finally the non-directive method.

For our part, we share with Raynal and Rieunier (1997), the idea that teaching methods can be summarized in three main types. Thus, taking as a classification criterion, the main source of the student's learning, we distinguish:

- the transmissive method, if we consider that it is the master or the professor who is the main source of what the student learns, and this method includes most of the processes already indicated by Tilman and Grootaers (1994);
- the active method, when it is the student himself who is primarily responsible for what he learns, by means of the techniques identified by Tilman and Grootaers;
- the interrogative method, if the responsibility or the source of learning is shared between the teacher, who asks questions, and the learner, who provides the answers; this method is deployed through techniques such as interactive tutorials, Socratic dialogue, and also pedagogy through guided learning, or Method of Teaching Knowledge according to Hounmènou, MECH, as defined by Hounmènou (2017, 2020, 2024)

3.0 METHODOLOGICAL CHOICES OF THE RESEARCH

If for theoretical needs, this work had a relatively important documentary dimension, it is mainly of an empirical type. Thus it consisted for a large part of a questionnaire survey, supplemented by the collection of life experiences in a classroom situation.

3.1 Questionnaire survey

The questionnaire survey was conducted on a sample of 200 teachers in the Porto-Novo region, the capital of Benin, in the southeast of the country, and in the Abomey-Calavi region in the northwest of Cotonou, the metropolis, at a rate of 100 subjects per region, during the months of April and May 2020. The questionnaire used for data collection consisted of two sections: a first section composed of pre-formed questions intended to capture the socio- professional characteristics of the subjects, and the second, composed of three open-ended questions relating respectively to the meaning they give to the concept of CBE, their perception of CBE indicators in the national education system, and their personal practice of teaching according to CBE. At the end of the survey, the responses to the open questions were subject to a content analysis

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using the propositional analysis technique, in order to identify the main representations of the skills-based approach, while the responses to the preformed questions were classified into a few broad categories. The results thus obtained were then subjected to statistical processing aimed at revealing the central trends and relationships between certain key variables, in particular between the meaning given to the CBE and teaching practice according to the CBE.

3.2 Collection of life experiences in a classroom situation

The technique of collecting life experiences was used twice, as an introduction to a Common Core course on Teaching Methods, respectively with two groups of trainee teachers contracted by the State, already having at least ten years of practice in middle and high schools, and whom the Government of Benin had sent for training in the teaching profession at the Ecole Normale Supérieure de Porto-Novo, in the last quarter of 2022. Each of the class groups had a number of 180 learners.

These learners, experienced adults, were first asked to give, in no particular order, examples of knowledge they possessed. Then, the learners were asked to say how they acquired or learned this knowledges.

In a second phase of the collection of life experiences, learners were asked to propose examples of things they could do, then to indicate how they acquired or learned these skills. Finally, the results of this collection of experiences were recorded in a table, crossing the types of learning objects (knowledge vs. skills), with the methods by which they were acquired in real life.

The lessons learned from this experience should make it possible to assess the coherence of teaching practices in teaching according to the CBE, and to question the validity of constructivism as a foundation, or sole foundation, of the Competency Based Education.

4.0 RESEARCH RESULTS

4.1 Representations of the Competency Based Education 3.1.1- Meanings of the Competency Based Education

Three kinds of representations emerge, regarding the meaning given by teachers to the concept of Competency Based Education.

The dominant representation by far in the sample surveyed, considers the Competency Based Education as a way of teaching, which places the learner at the heart of learning, making him the main craftsman of his knowledge. In simple terms, the CBE is simply assimilated to the active teaching method. 155 subjects out of 200, or nearly 78% of the teachers concerned, think this way.

Then come two visions of the concept, which are carried by almost the same proportions of teachers. One, expressed by 23 subjects, or 11.50% of the sample, presents the CBE as a pedagogy of integration, aimed at acquiring skills, that is to say being able to act and mobilize a set of resources to solve problems. The other, supported by 22 subjects, 11% of teachers, sees the CBE as a model of study program aimed at building know how in order to carry out a set of complex tasks, and which places the learner at the center of learning.

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These results show that barely a quarter of the teachers surveyed have a roughly relevant vision of what the CBE concept designates. And still half of this minority have a representation that directly confuses the purposes of teaching and its methodology. The vast majority of teachers have a completely erroneous conception of what the Competency Based Education is, purely and simply assimilating it to the active teaching method.

4.2 Representations of the indicators of implementation of the CBE

When asked how one can recognize that the CBE is effectively implemented in the education system, teachers were divided into 3 main types of responses.

The majority response sees the effectiveness of the implementation of the CBE in the education system in Benin, through the teaching-learning strategies used in classes, including individual work, group work, collective work, the way of arranging learners in class and the method of assessing learning. This representation is observed in 124 subjects out of 200, or 62% of teachers.

The second largest group, which constitutes 23% of the sample, sees proof of the implementation of the CBE in the education system, in the skills, aptitudes, know-how, autonomy, and adaptability demonstrated by learners at the end of their school studies.

Finally, the third group, which includes 12% of the subjects, indicates as indicators of the implementation of the CBE in Benin, the good academic performances recorded and the training-employment adequacy.

On analysis, the configuration of these responses seems to almost cover that of the representations of what the CBE is: a dominant response only sees the operational translation of the CBE through a teaching methodology, while the rest of the teachers, a little more than a third, see the implementation of this pedagogical option, from the angle of the ends and significant results of education.

4.3 Personal practices of the CBE in the classroom

The survey results on the way these middle and high school teachers teach in their classes according to the Competency Based Education, amplifies the general tendency to confuse the CBE with a way of teaching in a teaching-learning situation. For the overwhelming majority of them, 85%, the implementation of the CBE in class results in the systematic use to carry out a learning situation, SA, of the official teaching strategy by the individual work-group work-collective work sequence. The other types of personal pedagogical practice of the CBE, which concern the remaining 15% of subjects, are: the focus on the good results of the learners and the skills they demonstrate in the face of life situations; the structuring of the courses in Teaching Units and Learning Situations, as well as the adoption of a progression going from activities to reinvestment.

4.4 Lessons from the analysis of teachers' representations of the CBE

It emerges from this summary analysis of these teachers' representations of the meaning of the CBE, the indicators of its implementation, and especially their way of applying the

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Competency Based Education in the classroom, that this pedagogical model is for most of them, only the active teaching method. Similarly, almost all of these middle and high school teachers believe that they teach according to the CBE by mechanically using the strategy that has been officially prescribed to them: individual work-group work-collective work.

However, the said strategy is confusing and imprecise from a pedagogical point of view, since we do not know exactly what the content is or even what the probable purpose of the work carried out or requested from learners is. Then, it lacks discernment regarding the diversity of types of objects and learning objectives: knowledge or skills, abilities, skills, and attitudes, as if it were a magic formula that can be used everywhere, to carry out any type of learning, and achieve any learning objective. Consequently, and above all, this famous and mechanical strategy presents almost no adequacy, no coherence with the development of skills, which is the fundamental reason for the pedagogical model that is the Competency Based Education.

At most, it can allow learners to acquire some knowledge that could be resources for demonstrating skills. In any case, this is not how individuals acquire skills, the ability to do, in real life.

4.5 Methods of acquiring knowledge and skills in real life

The collection of life experiences from contract teachers in vocational training made it possible to record examples of both knowledge and skills already acquired during their life course by the interested parties, as well as the ways in which they had succeeded in these different types of learning.

As for the knowledge or skills mentioned, we can remember for example: the Pythagorean theorem, the countries of the African continent, the recipe for a dish, the history of such a kingdom, the symptoms and the agent of such a disease, such a method for doing such a job, such a theory, such a cooking recipe, etc. The common point of these answers is that they all designate learning objects that can be restored verbally, from memory. And as for the way in which this knowledge was acquired, the answers collected were summarized in the following formulas: thanks to information transmitted or given by a teacher, or a knowledgeable adult or peer; through personal research, exploration and reading.

As for examples of things that the subjects knew and could definitely do, the answers were for example: teaching, driving a car, sewing a garment, reading a text, writing, speaking a foreign language, speaking one's mother tongue, doing a person's hair, playing the guitar, driving a car, plowing the land with a hoe, preparing amiwo, a corn paste with fat, using a mobile phone, swimming, dancing to a local rhythm, solving mathematical equations, giving a speech in front of an audience, using a computer, etc. All these answers designate skills and ultimately competencies. As for the way in which the subjects became capable or competent in the areas mentioned, it can be summed up in four formulas: the main one is observation- imitation of someone who demonstrated this skill; then, there is training by an expert, impregnation or immersion in the environment in which the said skill is deployed, and finally self-training through trial and error.

What lessons can we learn from this experience?

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First, we remember that knowledge and skills are acquired by means of either information transmitted or given by someone (transmissive method), or by means of personal reading and research (active method). As for intellectual, technical or professional skills, they are acquired, especially through repeated observation-imitation of the demonstration, or the exemplification of the skill in question by an expert (transmissive method), through systematic training by an expert (transmissive method), through impregnation (transmissive method) and sometimes through self-training by trial and error (active method). We then remember, and above all, that few skills can be acquired by means of the active method, and that, in terms of developing skills in a learner, the transmissive method appears to be the most pedagogically necessary, relevant and coherent, whether they are intellectual, technical, practical or professional skills. No ordinary learner can become competent in areas such as swimming, preserving one's life at the seaside or on a cliff, dismantling, repairing and assembling a milling machine, laboratory chemistry experiment, or surgical operation, animal dissection, oral and written communication in a foreign language or in one's family language, etc., by means of self-study, or learning by trial and error, or working in peer groups of the same initial level. That is to say, if there is a teaching method compatible, adequate and coherent with the CBE, it is the transmissive method. The active method can be used especially for the acquisition of resource knowledge, and perhaps for the improvement of acquired skills.

4.6 Social Learning Theory: the true psychological basis of the CBE

If, as has just been shown, it is the transmissive method that proves to be the most relevant and coherent for the development of skills that are at the heart of competencies, with its key techniques of demonstration/observation-imitation, systematic training, impregnation or immersion which itself is based on demonstration/observation-imitation processes, it goes without saying that the psychological basis of the CBE cannot be primarily constructivism, but the theory of social or sociocognitive learning, formulated in 1971 by the American neo-behaviorist psychologist Albert Bandura.

Indeed, an American psychologist of Canadian origin, Bandura (1925-2021) belongs to the neo-behaviorist movement, characterized by adherence to Stimulus-Response psychology, but tinged with cognitivism, by the importance given to mental structures in explaining behavior. As such, his theory of sociocognitive learning (Bandura, 1977), explains the mechanisms by which the transmission of behaviors, skills, competencies, attitudes is done in human societies. It postulates that the information that we process mentally from the observation of other people, things and events, influences our way of acting. Because, in all cultures, children learn and develop by observing experienced people engaged in important cultural activities. This observational learning is of particular interest for the classroom, because children do not just do what adults tell them to do, but rather what they see adults do, and which they integrate into their behavioral repertoire through the processes involved in modeling. Thanks to these modeling mechanisms, teachers can therefore constitute a potential force in shaping the behavior of their students, through their pedagogical behavior in the classroom. Learners will be all the more likely to imitate the behavior of teachers and professors, since as models, these teachers are perceived as prestigious, powerful, and competent. According to Bandura, this shaping of learners' behavior by modeling is done through four processes: attention, retention, motor reproduction, and motivation. Attention is the first process involved, because simple exposure to a model does not guarantee the acquisition of behavior. The learner-observer must

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carefully follow and recognize the salient features of the behavior of the model who is the teacher. Then there is retention, because learning by observation-imitation, supposes the observation by the learner of the behavior of the model, and the acquisition of this behavior in the form of representations, without simultaneously producing the responses. Consequently, the learner must solidly memorize the verbal or non-verbal signals emitted by his trainer.

Motor reproduction is the third process involved in modeling. It represents the stage where the teacher must have the students demonstrate the recorded behavior as soon as possible, by reinforcing the correct reproductions, and by readjusting the inadequate ones, thus closing the loop of the learning mechanisms, namely: stimulus-cognition-response-reinforcement.

The last process necessary in modeling is motivation, which will create the favorable conditions for learners to be inclined to produce the behavior they have learned by observation-imitation. This motivation is triggered by the reinforcement of the learned behavior, in another person, in the learner's immediate environment. This is therefore an indirect motivation.

According to Bandura, this is how sociocognitive learning, or learning by observation-imitation, takes place, the central place of which in the acquisition of skills we have already shown above. This theory therefore appears to us as the most natural psychological foundation of the pedagogical model called the Competency Based Education.

5.0 CONCLUSION

The analysis of the representations of secondary school teachers in Benin, West Africa, on the meaning of the CBE, the indicators of its implementation, and their way of applying the Competency Based Education in the classroom, confirms the initial hypothesis of this study. For almost all of these high school and middle school teachers, the CBE is equivalent to the active teaching method. And they believe they are teaching according to the Competency Based Education, using the stereotypical strategy that has been officially prescribed to them: individual work-group work-collective work. However, the said strategy lacks discernment regarding the diversity of types of learning objects and objectives: knowledge or skills, abilities, skills, and competencies, and consequently, this methodology presents almost no adequacy, no coherence with the development of skills that are at the heart of competencies, the fundamental reason for the pedagogical model that is the Competency Based Education.

Indeed, daily experience teaches us that the teaching method that really allows learners to acquire skills, and therefore competencies, is the transmissive method, essentially through the linked processes of demonstration/observation-imitation. Life teaches us that most intellectual, technical, practical and professional skills are acquired according to this principle of transmission. It follows that if we had to look for a psychological theory as an adequate basis for the Competency Based Education, it would be the theory of social, or socio- cognitive learning theory by Bandura (1977). Then, the main implication of the results of this research is the need in our countries for initial or continuing pedagogical training, intended to correct the erroneous representations of the CBE, and especially to make teachers more competent in teaching methodology. Such training should enable teachers to be able not only to identify the various types of teaching methods that exist and their characteristic processes, but also to use these teaching methods and processes intelligently, depending on the types of learning objects and objectives. The effectiveness and quality of our teaching depend on this.

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