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# Primary School Teachers' Use of Selected Modern Teaching Methods within the Competency-Based Approach :An Exploratory Descriptive Study of a Sample of Primary School Teachers in Selected Municipalities of El Oued Province

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## Abstract

This study aimed to examine the extent to which primary school teachers use and vary modern teaching methods within the competency-based approach. It also examined their reasons for choosing these methods, the criteria used in applying them, and their need to learn new methods. The study used an exploratory descriptive approach. A questionnaire was administered to 273 teachers in primary schools in Debila, Magrane, and Hassi Khelifa, El Oued Province.

The results showed extensive use of modern teaching methods, especially problem-solving (86.45%), play-based learning (85.71%), and the project method (67.40%). In addition, 93.04% of teachers used more than one teaching method. Addressing individual differences among pupils was the main reason for varying methods. Teachers based their choice of methods first on the nature of the lesson and its content. Pupils' levels and abilities came next, followed by learning objectives and target competencies.

The results also showed positive attitudes toward the contribution of modern teaching methods to achieving competencies. They revealed a strong need for training and professional development. A total of 92.31% expressed a desire to learn new teaching methods.

**Keywords:** Teaching methods; Primary school teachers; Competency-based approach; Competency.

## Introduction

Primary education plays a fundamental role in shaping pupils' personalities and developing their knowledge, skills, and abilities. Improving teaching practices is therefore essential to the quality of learning. In contemporary educational thinking, teachers do more than transmit knowledge. They

organize learning situations, guide pupils, and help them construct and apply what they have learned. This role requires the careful selection of teaching methods that suit the learning task and pupils' characteristics. Teaching methods may be defined as the approaches teachers use to organize the learning situations and experiences through which they guide pupils so that pupils can meet the intended objectives. They also refer to the systematic means by which teachers convey subject matter and help pupils attain the competency specified for a lesson (Zarzoura, 1018, p. 288).

The competency-based approach places the learner at the center of the educational process. It emphasizes the ability to mobilize and apply knowledge and skills in meaningful situations. This approach calls for a reconsideration of the roles of teachers and pupils. It also requires the selection of methods that fit the learning situation, the target competency, and pupils' characteristics (Haji, 2005, p. 10).

Competency-based teaching also requires varied methods. Such variation promotes pupil participation, links knowledge to real-life situations, and takes individual differences into account.

Teaching methods are the practical means through which curriculum objectives become classroom activities. Appropriate methods help structure learning, stimulate pupil engagement, and support educational goals. Differences in content and learner characteristics make it necessary to vary methods and strategies according to the teaching situation (Mar'i & Al-Hilah, 2005, p. 30).

Methods that encourage active pupil participation include discussion, problem-solving, cooperative learning, and role-play (Al-Adwan & Qatami, 2016, p. 20).

In Algerian schools, implementing the competency-based approach requires a shift away from rote instruction. Teachers are expected to use more active and flexible practices. These practices allow pupils to participate, think, and apply their knowledge. Teachers must also vary their methods and choose those that best fit the activity and the intended objectives and competencies (Haji, 2005, p. 55).

Against this background, it is important to examine how primary school teachers use and combine modern teaching methods within the competency-based approach. This study considers their frequency of use, the reasons for their selection, and teachers' views of their contribution to competency development. It also examines the criteria for choosing methods and the perceived need to learn new ones.

## 1. Research Problem

Education has moved beyond an exclusive focus on knowledge transmission. It now seeks to develop learners' capacities and enable them to apply what they know in different educational situations. This shift is consistent with the competency-based approach, which places pupils at the center of learning. It also requires teachers to possess a range of teaching methods and select them according to the learning task, pupil characteristics, and target competencies.

Haji (2005) likewise stresses that competency-based teaching requires mastery of effective teaching methods. It requires attention to individual differences and learning situations that allow pupils to apply their knowledge.

Discussion, problem-solving, project-based learning, play-based learning, and pedagogical contracting are among the methods that encourage pupils to take an active role in constructing their learning. Their

use, however, varies with the content, pupils' levels, and the objectives and competencies to be achieved. These factors shape the choice of an appropriate method (Mar'i & Al-Hilah, 2005).

It is therefore useful to examine how primary school teachers use these methods, why they choose them, and how they judge their contribution to competency development. The study also explores the variation of methods, the criteria used to select them, and their need to learn new teaching methods. It focuses on primary schools in selected municipalities of El Oued Province.

## 2. Research Questions

Main question: What is the current state of primary school teachers' use of selected modern teaching methods within the competency-based approach?

Four related questions guide the study:

**1.** To what extent do primary school teachers use selected modern teaching methods within the competency-based approach, and what motivates their use?

**2.** In teachers' views, how successful are these methods in helping pupils achieve the target competencies?

**3.** To what extent do teachers vary their teaching methods, and what main criteria guide their choice of a method for a lesson?

**4.** Do teachers feel a need to learn new and more effective methods, and what other methods do they use in their teaching?

## 3. Research Objectives

This study examines the use of selected modern teaching methods by primary school teachers within the competency-based approach. It explores teachers' perceptions of these methods' effectiveness in achieving target competencies. It also examines how teachers vary their methods and the criteria guiding their choices. Finally, it identifies teachers' need for new methods and the additional approaches they use in practice.

## 4. Significance of the Study

This study has both educational and research value. It describes how primary school teachers use and vary modern teaching methods within the competency-based approach. It considers how well these methods fit existing classroom practices and identifies strengths and areas that require further training. The findings may inform the design of in-service professional development programs. They may also support the use of methods adapted to pupil characteristics and target competencies. In addition, the study may encourage further research on teaching methods and contemporary approaches to primary education.

## 5. Operational Definitions

**1.** Teaching methods. Teaching methods are the procedures and activities carried out by a teacher within a learning situation to help pupils achieve learning objectives (Al-Hilah, 2008, p. 45).

In this study, the term refers to the instructional approaches and pedagogical procedures that primary school teachers use to organize learning and achieve educational objectives. The questionnaire covers lecturing, discussion, the project method, problem-solving, play, and pedagogical contracting. It also covers other methods chosen according to pupils' needs and the lesson content.

**2.** Primary school teachers. A teacher is responsible for instruction and for sharing knowledge, experiences, and ideas with learners. The role is not limited to knowledge transmission. It also includes pupils' moral, spiritual, social, and psychological education (Abu Sha'irah, 2008, p. 94).

In this study, a primary school teacher is an educational professional responsible for teaching, educating, and preparing pupils at the primary level. The teacher implements official curricula and develops pupils' basic competencies. The term refers to teachers in the study sample who work in selected primary schools in the municipality of El Oued.

**3.** Competency-based approach. This pedagogical approach seeks to develop the learner's profile and characteristics in line with curriculum aims at a given stage of education. It places learners in situations that encourage activity, observation, analysis, interpretation, practice, synthesis, and scientific problem-solving. Its purpose is to help learners acquire the competencies, characteristics, and mechanisms that allow them to act effectively in their environment (Hannash, 2007, p. 65).

In the present study, the competency-based approach refers to the pedagogical framework adopted in the Algerian education system. It emphasizes pupils' ability to apply knowledge and skills to different learning situations. Its presence in teaching practice is assessed through teachers' use of methods intended to develop the target competencies.

**5.** Competency. Competency is an integrated set of resources, including abilities, knowledge, and skills, that can be mobilized appropriately to address different educational problems or situations (Toubi, 2006, p. 66).

For this study, competency means a pupil's ability to draw upon acquired knowledge, skills, and attitudes when facing new learning situations. Teachers judge this ability through their perceptions of how well the teaching methods used help pupils meet the stated learning objectives.

## 6. Methodological Procedures of the Field Study

### A. Method Adopted in the Study

The study used an exploratory descriptive design, which was suited to the nature of the topic under study. This design made it possible to examine how primary school teachers use teaching methods within the competency-based approach. It also helped identify the methods employed, the reasons for using or avoiding them, and teachers' views of their contribution to target competencies.

The exploratory descriptive approach was chosen because it does more than describe an existing practice. It allows researchers to collect information about a topic that has received limited attention in the local setting of El Oued. The purpose was to explore its characteristics and identify general patterns.

### B. Research Instrument

A questionnaire was used to collect field data. The instrument was drawn from the study by Jari and Jedidi (2022). It was designed to investigate primary school teachers' use of different teaching methods within the competency-based approach. It also examined the extent to which teachers relied on these methods and the factors behind their choices and their perceptions of how these methods contribute to pupils' target competencies.

The questionnaire contained both closed- and open-ended questions. The first section collected participants' background information. The second addressed the use of lecturing, discussion, the project method, problem-solving, play, and pedagogical contracting. It also asked why teachers did or did not use these methods and whether they believed the methods helped achieve the intended competencies.

The authors of the original study also used an exploratory descriptive approach. They developed the questionnaire and verified its validity through expert judgment. The instrument was therefore **considered suitable for collecting data on the topic of the present study.**

**C. Study Sample**

Initially, 450 questionnaires were distributed to primary school teachers in Debila, Magrane, and Hassi Khelifa, El Oued Province. A total of 380 questionnaires were returned. After screening and excluding responses unsuitable for analysis, 273 valid questionnaires remained. These formed the final study sample.

The schools were selected purposively because contact with teachers was possible and the schools were accessible. A comprehensive survey was then carried out within the selected schools. It included all primary school teachers employed at the schools covered by the study.

**Table 01. Distribution of Participants by Academic Specialization**

| Academic specialization | Number | Percentage of 273 |
|---|---|---|
| Arabic literature | 125 | 45.79% |
| Psychology | 26 | 9.52% |
| Law and administrative sciences | 15 | 5.49% |
| Commerce and economics | 28 | 10.26% |
| History | 20 | 7.33% |
| Biology | 16 | 5.86% |
| Islamic studies | 16 | 5.86% |
| Physics | 18 | 6.59% |
| French | 09 | 3.30% |
| **Total** | **273** | **100%** |

Arabic literature was the largest specialization, with 125 teachers (45.79%). It was followed by commerce and economics, with 28 (10.26%); psychology, with 26 (9.52%); and history, with 20 (7.33%). Physics accounted for 18 teachers (6.59%). Biology and Islamic studies each accounted for 16 (5.86%). Law and administrative sciences accounted for 15 (5.49%). French was the least represented specialization, with 9 teachers (3.30%).

**First: Analysis of Part One (General Information)**

**Table 02. Distribution of Participants by Educational Qualification**

| Qualification | Number | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Doctorate | 04 | 1.47% |
| Master's degree | 56 | 20.51% |
| Bachelor's degree (Licence) | 191 | 69.96% |
| Technological institute | 22 | 8.06% |
| **Total** | **273** | **100%** |

**Table 03. Distribution of Participants by Years of Teaching Experience**

| Years of teaching experience | Number | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| 3 years or less | 36 | 13.19% |
| Between 3 and 10 years | 135 | 49.45% |
| More than 10 years | 102 | 37.36% |
| **Total** | **273** | **100%** |

**Table 04. Distribution of Participants by In-Service Training**

| In-service training | Number | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Received training | 235 | 86.08% |
| Did not receive training | 38 | 13.92% |
| **Total** | **273** | **100%** |

**Table 04. Extent of Use of Modern Teaching Methods**

| Teaching method / response | Number | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Problem-solving | 236 | 86.45% |
| Project method | 184 | 67.40% |
| Play-based learning | 234 | 85.71% |
| Discussion | 252 | 92.31% |
| Use of more than one method | 254 | 93.04% |
| Need to learn new methods | 252 | 92.31% |
| Study sample: 273 | | |

Using more than one method was reported by 254 of the 273 teachers (93.04%). Discussion was used by 252 teachers (92.31%), followed by problem-solving among 236 (86.45%) and play-based learning among 234 (85.71%). The project method was used by 184 teachers (67.40%). Pedagogical contracting was the least frequently used method, reported by 114 teachers (41.76%). In addition, 252 teachers (92.31%) stated that they needed to learn new teaching methods. These findings indicate extensive reported use and variation of modern methods. They also point to an ongoing demand for professional development.

**Analysis and Discussion of Findings**

**1. Analysis and Discussion of the Results for the First Research Question**

First question: To what extent do primary school teachers use selected modern teaching methods within the competency-based approach, and what motivates their use?

The findings show that primary school teachers use modern teaching methods to varying degrees. Discussion ranked first (92.31%), followed by problem-solving (86.45%), play-based learning (85.71%), and the project method (67.40%). Pedagogical contracting was the least used method (41.76%). Overall, the results suggest high reported use of modern methods, especially those that involve interaction, participation, and the application of learning. The frequency of use nevertheless differs across methods.

The frequent use of discussion may be explained by its flexibility. It can be included in different subjects and teaching units without specialized equipment. It allows teachers to stimulate pupils' ideas and assess their understanding. This result is consistent with Hantit and Laoubi (2022). Their study of teaching within the competency-based approach found that primary school teachers consistently used discussion and cooperative learning. They also consistently used problem-solving and project-based learning.

Problem-solving was also frequently used (86.45%). This may reflect its close connection to the competency-based approach. Problem-solving requires pupils to apply knowledge and skills to situations that involve reasoning and a search for solutions. The finding is consistent with Kitfi and Soltani's (2010) study of mathematics instruction through problem-solving in primary schools. It also agrees with Weiss (2022), who examined intellectual and social skills in relation to learning strategies. Both studies highlighted the value of problem-solving for primary school pupils' skill development.

Play-based learning was used by 85.71% of participants. This high proportion may reflect the suitability of play for the age and developmental characteristics of primary school pupils. Play can simplify concepts, attract attention, strengthen motivation, and encourage participation. It is also consistent with the competency-based approach when it is used purposefully to develop knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

The project method was used by 67.40% of participants. This is a substantial proportion, though lower than the rates for discussion, problem-solving, and play-based learning. Project work may require more planning, organization, time, resources, and supervision. Nevertheless, its use by more than two-thirds of the sample reflects an emphasis on pupils' active role in constructing learning. Oubah (2017), in a study of teaching methods and strategies, with project pedagogy in the second year of primary school as an example, also emphasized the place of projects within the competency-based approach.

Pedagogical contracting ranked last, at 41.76%. Its comparatively limited use may reflect the need for advance planning and clear responsibilities. Teachers' familiarity with the method may also be relevant. Large classes and the difficulty of regular follow-up are other possible factors. These explanations remain tentative, however. They cannot be confirmed without direct evidence from the participants' responses.

The reasons teachers gave for using each method also varied. For discussion, explanation and simplification ranked first (27.11%). Encouraging pupil participation followed (25.64%), then achieving the target competency (21.25%) and developing verbal and intellectual communication (18.32%). Discussion therefore served more than a question-and-answer function. It was also used to make content easier to understand and involve pupils in learning. This finding is consistent with Makki (2021), whose

study of teaching strategies in primary education under the competency-based approach emphasized the importance of teaching methods in education.

The main reasons for using problem-solving were stimulating pupils (22.71%) and training them to apply their knowledge (21.98%). Developing creative ideas followed (13.19%). Teachers thus used this method to engage pupils and move them beyond recalling information. It encouraged them to apply what they knew in situations requiring thought, analysis, and inquiry. This is consistent with the nature of the competency-based approach.

For play-based learning, the leading reason was to make abstract concepts easier to understand (21.25%). Suitability for pupils' age came next (18.32%), followed by the development of creative thinking (15.38%). These findings suggest that teachers recognize the developmental needs of primary school pupils. They also see the value of presenting content in engaging and age-appropriate ways.

For the project method, teachers most often cited the promotion of group work (20.51%). Developing research and inquiry skills followed (13.19%), along with cognitive, practical, and affective competencies (10.26%). These responses highlight the collaborative and investigative dimensions of project work. Project pedagogy encourages pupils to participate in meaningful tasks, as Oubah (2017) also observed.

Teachers who used pedagogical contracting mainly sought to develop responsibility (16.85%) and discipline (10.26%). Although this method was used less often, its reported purpose was closely linked to pupil behavior, personal responsibility, and self-discipline during learning.

The first research question therefore reveals a clear tendency to use modern teaching methods, although their use is uneven. Discussion, problem-solving, and play-based learning were the most common, while pedagogical contracting was the least common. Teachers' choices were mainly linked to participation, knowledge application, thinking skills, pupil characteristics, and target competencies. These priorities broadly reflect the principles of competency-based teaching.

**2. Analysis and Discussion of the Results for the Second Research Question**

Second question: In teachers' views, how successful are modern teaching methods in helping pupils achieve the target competencies?

Participants generally expressed positive views about the contribution of modern teaching methods to target competencies. Their assessments differed by method. Discussion received a positive rating from 96.92% of respondents, followed by problem-solving (95.89%), play-based learning (87.34%), and the project method (78.70%). Among those who answered the question about pedagogical contracting, 57.80% gave a positive response. Nonresponse was relatively high for this method, which was also used less often.

**First: The Discussion Method**

Among teachers who responded to this item, 96.92% believed that discussion helped achieve the target competency. Only 3.08% disagreed. This high level of acceptance may reflect the interactive nature of discussion. It allows pupils to participate, express opinions, and explain ideas. These features are

consistent with a competency-based approach that makes learners active participants in constructing their learning.

Discussion is also flexible and easy to use across subjects and learning situations. It does not require special equipment. Teachers can use it repeatedly to introduce content, check understanding, and address learning difficulties. Mami Zerarqa and Zaaboub (2018) similarly emphasized active methods based on participation, group work, and problem-solving in competency-based teaching. Discussion may therefore be valued because it brings together interaction, feedback, and opportunities to assess pupils' understanding.

**Second: The Problem-Solving Method**

Problem-solving ranked second in perceived effectiveness. A total of 95.89% of respondents believed that it helped pupils achieve the target competency, compared with 4.11% who disagreed. This result is consistent with the competency-based approach. The approach goes beyond the possession of knowledge and emphasizes its application in meaningful situations that require thinking, inquiry, analysis, and solutions.

The positive assessment is also consistent with the method's reported use (86.45%). Teachers' reasons for selecting it included stimulating pupils, encouraging knowledge application, and developing creative ideas. This suggests agreement between classroom use and perceptions of effectiveness. Hallouch (2024) studied the development of primary school teachers' lesson-planning competencies through a problem-solving strategy in science and technology. That study identified training needs and reported positive results for a competency-based training program. The present findings likewise suggest that teachers value problem-solving because it helps pupils move from receiving information to using it.

**Third: Play-Based Learning**

A total of 87.34% of respondents believed that play-based learning helped achieve the target competency. The remaining 12.66% disagreed. This represents a strongly positive assessment. Play is well suited to the age and developmental needs of primary school pupils. It may also create a more attractive and interactive learning environment and make some abstract concepts easier to understand.

This finding agrees with Zakour Mohamed (2018), who examined the effect of play-based learning on mathematics achievement among second-year primary school pupils in Ouargla. That study reported statistically significant differences in favor of pupils taught through play. It also found differences between pretest and posttest scores in the experimental group. Zilal et al. (2025) also reported a positive effect of play-based learning on motor coordination among primary school children. They highlighted its role in motivating pupils to participate. These findings are consistent with the present study, in which teachers cited the explanation of abstract concepts, age appropriateness, and creative thinking as reasons for using play.

**Fourth: The Project Method**

A total of 78.70% of respondents believed that the project method helped achieve the target competency, while 21.30% disagreed. There were also 57 unanswered questionnaires for this item. Teachers thus

expressed a generally positive view, although support was lower than for discussion, problem-solving, or play-based learning.

The project method requires planning, organization, ongoing supervision, coordination, role allocation, and assessment at different stages. Its implementation may therefore be more demanding than that of some other methods. The relatively high nonresponse rate may reflect limited use or experience. It should not automatically be interpreted as a negative assessment. Oubah (2017) examined project pedagogy in the second year of primary school and described it as a learner-centered strategy within the competency-based approach. The lower rating in the present study may therefore reflect practical difficulties in implementing projects fully and consistently, rather than a lack of educational value.

**Fifth: Pedagogical Contracting**

Responses concerning pedagogical contracting differed from those for the other methods. A total of 63 teachers answered yes, and 46 answered no. Another 100 teachers did not respond. Among those who answered the item, 57.80% gave a positive response and 42.20% gave a negative response. Teachers' assessments were therefore positive overall, but less favorable than for the other methods.

This result may be explained mainly by the limited use of pedagogical contracting. In the full sample, 58.24% did not use this method. The high nonresponse rate is therefore understandable. It should not be interpreted as rejection of the method. Instead, it may reflect teachers' lack of sufficient direct experience to judge its effectiveness. The study by Rahem and Mallawi (2021) on pedagogical contracting supports this interpretation. It showed that the method organizes interactions between teachers and learners, defines their roles and obligations, and gives learners an essential role in constructing learning. It is also linked to formative assessment and the treatment of learning difficulties.

In this study, lower ratings of pedagogical contracting appear more closely related to limited use and experience than to any demonstrated inability to develop competencies.

Overall, teachers believed that modern teaching methods helped achieve target competencies. Positive responses were highest for discussion (96.92%), problem-solving (95.89%), and play-based learning (87.34%). The project method followed (78.70%). Pedagogical contracting received the lowest positive rating, at 57.80% among respondents to that item. These assessments are broadly consistent with competency-based teaching, which emphasizes learner activity, knowledge application, interaction, problem-solving, and the construction of learning in meaningful situations. Lower scores for project work and pedagogical contracting may reflect limited use, implementation conditions, and teacher experience. They should not be treated as definitive evidence of low pedagogical effectiveness.

**3. Analysis and Discussion of the Results for the Third Research Question**

Third question: To what extent do teachers vary their methods, and what criteria guide their selection of a method for a lesson?

**First: Variation in Teaching Methods**

Of the 273 teachers, 254 (93.04%) reported using more than one teaching method during a teaching sequence or unit to meet pupils' needs. Only 6.96% reported not varying their methods. This finding

suggests that variation is widespread. Teachers appear willing to move between approaches in response to teaching requirements and learner characteristics.

Pupils differ in comprehension, ability, readiness, motivation, and learning pace. A single method may not meet these diverse needs. Arar and Taiba (2024), in a study of pedagogical responses to errors among primary school teachers in Mila Province, highlighted individual differences through pupil grouping and varied activities. Ben Krima (2022) also found substantial attention to individual differences in mental abilities during lesson delivery. The extent of this attention differed, however, between planning, implementation, and assessment.

Thus, variation appears to be common among the sampled teachers. In some cases, it may represent an immediate response to differences that teachers observe while delivering a lesson.

**Second: Reasons for Varying Teaching Methods**

Addressing individual differences was the leading reason for varying methods, reported by 76 teachers (27.84%). This result suggests that teachers adjust their approaches to differences in comprehension speed, abilities, interests, and readiness. Changing the method may help them respond to pupils' needs.

Habri (2026) examined individual differences among primary school learners and the teacher's role in achieving educational balance. The study emphasized the importance of flexible teaching strategies for improving outcomes and supporting learners' holistic development. Khelifi and Hamzaoui (2024) examined the move from uniform teaching to learner-centered education through differentiated instruction. They emphasized that adapting teaching to individual differences is a key principle of learner-centered education.

The prominence of individual differences may therefore indicate that teachers recognize the practical need for varied instructional approaches in diverse classrooms.

**Third: Improving Understanding and Achievement**

Improving comprehension and academic achievement ranked second among the reasons for varying teaching methods. It was cited by 50 teachers (18.32%). Variation allows teachers to present content through explanation, discussion, problem-solving, group activities, and educational games. These alternatives may help pupils overcome difficulties that arise when only one method is used. They also provide different opportunities to understand and apply information. Teachers therefore appear to view variation as a way to improve learning, comprehension, and achievement, not simply as a formal requirement of the competency-based approach.

**Fourth: Lesson Characteristics and Achievement of Objectives**

The nature of the lesson accounted for 13.92% of the reported reasons for variation. Another 9.52% referred to achieving the intended objective. Other reasons included the annual subject plan and the number of pupils. These responses show that method selection is influenced by the teaching situation. A method suited to a theoretical concept may not suit a task that requires problem-solving or practical work. This view fits the competency-based approach, which exposes pupils to varied situations in which they apply their learning resources instead of merely receiving information.

**Fifth: Criteria for Selecting Teaching Methods**

The nature of the lesson and its content was the leading selection criterion. It was mentioned by 148 teachers (54.21%). Content was therefore the strongest reported influence on teaching choices. Pupils' levels and abilities ranked second (35.90%), highlighting the importance of individual differences. Learning objectives and target competencies followed (29.30%). Available teaching resources and teachers' experience were each reported by 17.58%. These results suggest that teachers prioritize content and learner characteristics, followed by objectives and competencies. Material resources and professional experience were less prominent in their responses. This pattern is consistent with Algerian educational literature, including Ben Mansour and Mrayhi (2021), which emphasizes adapting teaching to tasks, content, individual differences, and target competencies.

The third research question therefore indicates widespread variation in teaching methods. A total of 93.04% used more than one method, while 6.96% did not. The main reason was to address individual differences (27.84%). Other reasons were to improve comprehension and achievement (18.32%), respond to the nature of the lesson (13.92%), and achieve its objective (9.52%).

The leading criterion for method selection was the lesson and its content (54.21%). Pupils' levels and abilities followed (35.90%), then objectives and target competencies (29.30%). Available resources and teacher experience were each cited by 17.58%.

These findings are consistent with Arar and Taiba (2024), Ben Krima (2022), Habri (2026), Khelifi and Hamzaoui (2024), and Ben Mansour and Mrayhi (2021). These studies emphasize individual differences, instructional adaptation, and varied activities suited to learners, content, and objectives.

The results point to a clear tendency toward flexible and adaptive teaching. Yet variation should not automatically be taken as evidence of high-quality instruction. It is better understood as an indication that teachers are willing to modify their methods in response to pupils, content, learning situations, and target competencies.

**4. Analysis and Discussion of the Results for the Fourth Research Question**

Fourth question: Do teachers feel a need to learn new and more effective teaching methods, and what other methods do they use?

**First: The Need to Learn New Teaching Methods**

Of the 260 teachers who responded to this item, 240 (92.31%) expressed a need to learn new teaching methods. Only 7.69% did not report such a need. This is one of the study's most notable findings. Despite their experience and use of varied approaches, most respondents saw a need to expand their pedagogical knowledge. Competency-based teaching requires flexibility and continuous renewal to meet diverse pupil needs and changes in instructional practice.

Kandouz and Tabshi (2012) similarly argued that in-service training is necessary throughout a teacher's career. Knowledge, teaching methods, and pupil needs continue to change. Hallouch (2022) also emphasized the role of in-service training in developing teachers and the education system. The study stressed modern approaches to professional development and self-directed learning. A strong desire to

learn new methods can therefore signal professional motivation. It does not necessarily mean that current teaching practices are weak.

**Second: The Relationship Between Learning Needs and In-Service Training**

The background data show that 235 teachers (86.08%) had previously received in-service training. Nevertheless, the reported need to learn new methods remained very high (92.31%). Previous training therefore does not necessarily meet all professional learning needs. The findings support a view of teacher development as a continuous and evolving process.

Sheikhi and Al-Shayeb (2018) studied in-service training among primary school teachers in Ghardaia and found that teachers rated its content as moderate. This finding indicated a need for improvement and development. Sayed Nawal and Tabbaa Farouk (2019) examined teacher training in relation to second-generation competency-based curricula. They concluded that the content, duration, resources, and methods of training had not prepared teachers sufficiently for the new curricula. Continued demand for new methods may therefore be related to limitations in previous training, including its content, duration, or practical focus.

**Third: Other Methods Used by Teachers**

A total of 150 teachers (54.95%) used methods beyond the five approaches examined in the study. The remaining 45.05% did not report other methods. This is consistent with the third research question, which found that 93.04% of teachers used more than one method. The additional responses suggest further diversity in classroom practice.

Cooperative group work ranked first among these additional methods (21.98%), followed by brainstorming (12.45%). Drama and role-play, as well as learning through integrated situations, each accounted for 7.33%. These methods encourage pupils to take an active role through teamwork, idea generation, performance, and the application of knowledge in complex situations. They are broadly consistent with competency-based teaching.

**Fourth: The Importance of Cooperative Group Work**

Cooperative group work was the most frequently mentioned additional method (21.98%). It allows pupils to work in groups, share roles, exchange ideas, discuss tasks, and complete assignments together. These features support learning through activity and participation.

This finding is particularly relevant to the results for the project method. Promoting group work was one of the main reasons teachers used projects. Group work therefore appears to be a recurring feature of teaching practice rather than a marginal activity.

**Fifth: Brainstorming, Drama, and Integrated Learning Situations**

Brainstorming ranked second (12.45%). Teachers may use it to stimulate pupils and give them opportunities to generate and express ideas. Drama and role-play were reported by 7.33%. These activities may suit certain primary school topics because they attract attention and encourage interaction.

Learning through integrated situations was also reported by 7.33%. This method is closely linked to the competency-based approach. It requires pupils to mobilize their resources and apply prior learning to

complex situations. Together, these methods suggest a partial shift from knowledge transmission toward activity, interaction, and application.

The fourth research question reveals a strong need for professional development. Of those who answered, 92.31% wanted to learn new methods and 7.69% did not. In addition, 54.95% of the full sample reported using methods beyond those examined in the questionnaire. These included cooperative group work (21.98%), brainstorming (12.45%), drama and role-play (7.33%), and learning through integrated situations (7.33%).

The fact that 86.08% had previously received in-service training did not remove the desire to learn new approaches. Professional training should therefore be treated as an ongoing process. Kandouz and Tabshi (2012), Hallouch (2022), Sheikhi and Al-Shayeb (2018), and Sayed Nawal and Tabbaa Farouk (2019) all underline the importance of continuing education. The findings also point to possible shortcomings in the content, duration, and methods of training.

The findings thus indicate a clear interest in professional development and greater variety in teaching practice. Such efforts may help teachers respond to pupils' needs, adjust to different learning situations, and apply the principles of active teaching within the competency-based approach.

**Discussion and Analysis of the Findings for the Main Research Question**

The main research question is: What is the current state of primary school teachers' use of selected modern teaching methods within the competency-based approach?

Taken together, the findings show that modern teaching methods are widely used, although their reported use varies. Problem-solving was used by 86.45% of teachers, play-based learning by 85.71%, and the project method by 67.40%. Pedagogical contracting ranked last. Approximately 114 teachers used it, while 159 did not (58.24%). In addition, 93.04% reported using more than one teaching method during a sequence or unit.

These findings suggest an inclination toward varied and flexible classroom practices. This is consistent with the competency-based approach, which places pupils at the center of learning and encourages teachers to select methods according to the learning situation, target competencies, and learner characteristics.

**First: Patterns in the Use of Modern Methods**

Problem-solving showed a high rate of use (86.45%). This may reflect its compatibility with the competency-based approach, as it encourages pupils to mobilize knowledge and skills to address educational problems and situations.

Play-based learning was also widely used (85.71%). This may be related to the distinctive needs of the primary school stage and the potential of play to capture attention, clarify concepts, and develop thinking and creativity.

The project method was used by 67.40%. This is a substantial proportion, but lower than the rates for problem-solving and play-based learning. Project work may demand more time, planning, materials, supervision, and division of responsibilities.

Pedagogical contracting ranked last, with 58.24% reporting that they did not use it. Its limited use may be related to the planning, organization, and follow-up it requires. It is also less common in everyday teaching practice than other methods.

Modern teaching methods are therefore not used equally. Their adoption varies according to their features, practical requirements, and classroom conditions.

**Second: Method Variation as a Key Feature of Teaching Practice**

One of the main findings is that 93.04% of teachers reported using more than one method. This suggests flexibility and a willingness to avoid reliance on a single approach. Teachers mainly varied their methods to address individual differences. They also sought to improve understanding and achievement and respond to the nature of the lesson.

Bezkarrari and Joual (2017) reported a similar pattern in their study of competency-based teaching among primary school teachers. They found that teachers used varied teaching methods, moved away from traditional methods, and adopted different instructional approaches.

**Third: Consistency with the Competency-Based Approach**

The findings are broadly consistent with the competency-based approach. This approach does not prescribe a single fixed method. Instead, it calls for varied strategies that fit learning situations and pupils' abilities. Shaabani (2013), in a study of the implementation of the competency-based approach in higher teacher education schools, stressed the need to design methods suited to learners' abilities and skills. The study also emphasized understanding the approach's requirements for effective implementation.

The present findings support this view. The lesson and its content ranked first among selection criteria (54.21%). Pupils' levels and abilities followed (35.90%), then objectives and target competencies (29.30%). Teachers therefore appeared to adapt their methods to the lesson and the learner rather than follow a fixed routine.

**Fourth: Frequent Use Does Not Necessarily Demonstrate Competency Achievement**

High rates of method use cannot, by themselves, provide objective evidence that pupils achieve the intended competencies. The effectiveness results reflect teachers' perceptions. Discussion was considered effective by 96.92% of respondents, problem-solving by 95.89%, play-based learning by 87.34%, and the project method by 78.70%. Pedagogical contracting received positive assessments from 57.80% of those who answered its item.

These results indicate that teachers generally had positive views of the effectiveness of most methods. They do not, however, establish their actual effects on learning achievement or competency acquisition. In this context, the study by Al-Eid (2016) on primary school teachers' competence in competency-based teaching is relevant. It found that most teachers had above-average professional competence and were able to teach according to the competency-based approach.

**Fifth: Continued Development Needs Despite Frequent Method Use**

Another important finding is that 92.31% of respondents felt a need to learn new teaching methods. Teachers may use varied approaches yet still consider their skills in need of further development. Competency-based teaching requires continued learning, experimentation, and adjustment to differences among pupils, content areas, and learning situations.

This finding is supported by Hantit and Laoubi (2022), who examined the use of modern teaching methods by primary school teachers within competency-based pedagogy. Their study found that teachers used modern methods regularly, especially discussion, cooperative learning, problem-solving, and project-based learning.

Overall, modern methods were widely reported among the sampled teachers, but rates of use differed. Problem-solving was used by 86.45%, play-based learning by 85.71%, and the project method by 67.40%. Pedagogical contracting was the least common; 58.24% did not use it. In addition, 93.04% reported using more than one method. This variation was mainly associated with individual differences and the desire to improve understanding and achievement. Teachers selected methods primarily according to lesson content (54.21%), followed by pupils' levels and abilities (35.90%) and the intended objectives and competencies (29.30%). At the same time, 92.31% expressed a need to learn new methods, indicating continuing professional development needs.

The central finding is that the sampled teachers tended to use modern methods flexibly and in combination. They adjusted their choices to the learning situation, pupil characteristics, and target competencies. They nevertheless continued to report a need to strengthen their professional skills and acquire new teaching methods and strategies.

**Conclusion and Recommendations**

This exploratory descriptive study examined primary school teachers' use and variation of modern teaching methods within the competency-based approach. It included 273 teachers from selected primary schools in El Oued Province. The results revealed both diversity and differences in the frequency of method use. Problem-solving was widely used (86.45%), while 234 teachers reported using play-based learning. The project method was used by 67.40%, and pedagogical contracting had the lowest reported level of use. Moreover, 93.04% used more than one method during a teaching sequence or unit. This indicates a preference for variation rather than reliance on one fixed approach.

The reasons for using these methods were mainly pedagogical. Teachers sought to address individual differences, develop pupils' abilities, improve understanding and achievement, strengthen participation and interaction, and support target competencies. Method selection was influenced first by the lesson and its content, then by pupils' levels and abilities, and finally by objectives and intended competencies.

Teachers generally held favorable views of the contribution of discussion, problem-solving, play-based learning, and the project method to competency development. Pedagogical contracting was less frequently used, and many respondents did not assess its contribution. The study also identified substantial professional development needs. A total of 92.31% of respondents expressed a need to learn new methods. Moreover, 54.95% reported using additional approaches, including cooperative group work, brainstorming, drama and role-play, and integrated learning situations.

Teaching practice among the sampled primary school teachers thus appears to be moving toward greater flexibility and variation. Teachers adapt methods to content, pupils' characteristics, and target competencies. Yet this tendency is accompanied by a clear need for continued training and the acquisition of new strategies. The importance of the findings lies not only in the reported use of modern methods. It also lies in the shift toward more adaptive teaching and the continuing need to support teachers' professional growth.

Based on these findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

**1.** Strengthen continuous professional development for primary school teachers in modern teaching methods. Training should emphasize practical implementation and varied strategies suited to the competency-based approach and pupils' needs.

**2.** Train teachers to select methods according to the nature of the lesson, its content, pupils' levels, and target competencies. Encourage them to avoid fixed or mechanical choices.

**3.** Promote the use of different methods within lessons, teaching sequences, and units. Link this variation to objectives and competencies, and address individual differences during planning, instruction, and assessment.

**4.** Support the wider use of active methods, especially problem-solving, play-based learning, discussion, group work, brainstorming, and integrated learning situations. Clarify their conditions of use and practical limitations.

**5.** Provide the teaching materials and pedagogical resources needed to implement varied modern methods effectively in the classroom.

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