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# Viewpoint: Kansas and competency-based education

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Viewpoint

# Kansas and competency-based education

First off I want to make it clear that I'm not opposed to competence, but before the State of Kansas and its educators accept the methodologies included in competency-based education (CBE) they should consider the following questions:

1. Do the promoters of competency-based education mean to exclude all non-behavioral objectives in formal schooling? That is, do they mean by "behavioral objectives" only those publicly observable? They are not clear on this point.
2. How will a competency be defined, and by whom? Which competencies will be included in the curriculum? Which not? Why?
3. Are administrators prepared to assume the role of assessing competencies? Where are they going to find the time to carry out these tedious evaluations? Will we have to create another level of administrative bureaucracy in order to oversee the CBE program?
4. Will teachers who have not been trained in CBE techniques be given adequate opportunity to acquire that training before they are evaluated in the use of CBE methods?
5. What will be the criteria for the "successful performance" of a given teaching behavior? Who will determine these criteria? How will a behavior be assessed to determine if it meets these criteria?

Proponents of CBE in Kansas will argue that these questions have been satisfactorily answered by those working in states that have mandated this educational elixir. Nothing is further from the truth. Many states have simply superimposed the rhetoric and some CBE practice over the existing system. This combination has created general confusion and good money for consultants. Also, CBE has proven to be very time consuming and expensive. These massive expenditures of time and money offset some of the proposed reasons for CBE in the first place.

As of this time, there is no evidence that proves CBE to be superior to traditional practice. Let's not kid ourselves, CBE is another attempt to move the responsibility of educating youth from the community to the national state. CBE allows state and federal authorities to specify what children will learn and how that learning will be measured.

**Charles Litz**  
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