



Competency Based Education 101

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What is this?

Competency-based education is a system in which:

- Assessment is a meaningful, positive, and empowering learning experience for students that yields timely, relevant, and actionable evidence.
- Students progress based on evidence of mastery, not seat time.
- Students learn actively using different pathways and varied pacing.
- Strategies to ensure equity for all students are embedded in the culture, structure, and pedagogy.
- Rigorous, common expectations for learning are clear, transparent, and measurable.

(“What is Competency-Based Education?,” Aurora Institute, <https://aurora-institute.org/our-work/competencyworks/competency-based-education/>)

You've already tried it

- In your courses, haven't you:
 - Allowed a student to work ahead of peers?
 - Allowed a student to make up work for a variety of reasons?
 - Allowed a student to edit, rewrite, and re-submit an assignment based on your feedback?
- You've already dipped your toe into the water.

What if that became your default?

- Consider a CBE-based course
 - You move at your usual pace
 - Students are free to move through your coverage, materials, working and re-working their way through assignments that demonstrate proficiency
 - Some will move rapidly and need little to no support
 - Some will move slowly and need reinforcement and guidance
 - While accommodates different student learning styles and needs, it requires administrative support

Administrative Issues

- Variable timelines to completion
 - Fast students: complete assignments, get grades, move on
 - Top of the curve students: their assimilation and demonstration of proficiency matches the non-CBE course pace
 - Slower students: take multiple attempts, need more feedback, and time to complete assignments; these students needs more time allocated for course completion (registrar's office allows time before course closure, etc.)

Advantages & Problems

- Variable timelines to completion
 - Fast students: move on – but are impatient to tackle next course, which may be limited by administrative constraints
 - Top of the curve students: standard course pace and completion
 - Slower students: course must remain active for your feedback, assessment, and grading for an extended period which delay ability of students to move through course sequence
- Can cause workload & compensation headaches / adjunct issues

A Question for You ...

Changing Mindsets

- It is not about attendance and class participation
 - Not “butts in seats”
 - Not grading on class presence & engagement
 - You are providing a service; they have choices
- It is about student success
 - At their own pace and accommodating issues of learning differences, concepts & understanding, life issues, etc.

Do you object?

- If the student never shows up for class?
- Competency = proficiency
- Threshold for progression through course and program is clear (mixed control over threshold)
- Do faculty have justification to complain about:
 - Workload issues?
 - Courses that never seem to end?
 - Administration support?
- Administration Issue: Federal Attendance Rules

Thank You!

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