



Scribe Template - OLC Collaborate-Kansas City

General Session Topic	Competency-Based Education	Date:	Feb. 24, 2015
Break Out Session Question	Is Competency-Based Education right for your students?	Number of Attendees:	27
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What things would have to change to become a Competency-Based Education? LMS Systems? How would you retro-fit to make Competency-Based Education work at your institution?

Angie Besendorfer, Western Governor’s Association Chancellor, answered questions from the group:

Q: What kinds of things can I look at to make a graduate from your program at WGU equivalent to applicants from my programs? How can I be fair for the students who have a GPA and not penalize the WGU grads?

Angie: We establish that B “grade” for every competency. This is because of financial aid ramifications--it;s hard enough to get through financial aid, etc. I would suggest on the application from WGU for a student applying for the doctoral program, etc, there would be the reference of their student mentor. The mentor would know how the student scored. The course mentor and student mentor will know whether they had to or did not have to take a lot of assessments--or retake. They are free to share that information. It’s similar to a letter of reference. Students don’t repeat a course at WGU. *Do they perform at a high level at WGU? Where would you rank them compared to other WGU students?* These are examples of fair assessment that doesn’t say whether they failed or not. It may be time for us to change and determine a different way of measuring the quality of graduate--rather than measuring the GPA.

Q: How do you get beyond Carnegie Units? Are there any other hoops to jump through if you wanted one course to become a competency-based course?

Angie: Get rid of time. Competency-based is what you know and how quickly you can prove how much you know. If I can prove it up front, why do I have to take the course over again? All our students are full-time students. You can get more than 12 credits, but not less. It is a 6-month term. You can’t carry a course over.

Q: Does this go back to accreditation from the Commission of Higher Learning?

Angie: There was a bill passed unanimously at the federal level to help us with competency-based education. We're confident that it will also pass on the other side.

Q: If a learner can prove they know how to take an impression--as a dental assistant--they can move on.

Angie: We can do that before, as well. We can do a pre-assessment on making an impression; the student can take an assessment that illustrates you know how to do it.

Q: For financial aid, you have to have so many months of school.

Angie: You're not skipping a competency, you're proving it.

It's all online. When we accept you as a student, we lay out a buffet, and lay out all these competencies and you can eat the competencies as often as you can.

One man earned MBA in 9 months while working full time.

Prove what you know and move forward.

Q: Can you give examples of what type of competencies? Is it testing over knowledge? Skill sets?

A: It's not an assessment or just one way we do assessment. We do online tests, do a lot of written work--capstones, theses--a variety of things to prove competencies.

Angie recommended the participants view their website for more information.

With 7-10 minutes remaining, scribe will ask the following questions of attendees:

What things would you have to change for competency-based education?

Major shift in philosophy in institution. Most higher education institutions are scholarly-based as opposed to skills-based. Is skills-based easier to teach than knowledge-based?

Have to have the will to design the course. If you don't have course objectives, assessments, etc in alignment then how are you going to know you can prove what needs to be proved?

How do we know if we have a well-designed course? Team-based design, competencies listed, shift focus who designs our courses--taught by content experts--there is a huge shift that has to happen. Must have the resources to support the web design. You need to work with Instructional Designers. Just because you have a content expert and can teach it doesn't mean you can tell someone how to teach it.

We're nurses who have become educators. We don't have formal training in teaching and learning and objectives. 90% of my colleagues, when teaching course, order a text they like, and the course objectives come from the chapters.

How hard is it to change in a traditional environment? Most prominent competency-based education providers aren't trying to do both--they are not asking traditional faculty and Instructional Designers to do this in their spare time. It's too early to say it's the only way. They're starting new instead of trying to change their entire structure and faculty. Direct assessment and indirect assessment--types of competency-based education. There are 11 other community colleges who have implemented competency-based education through grants--they are listed on the WGU website. Each one looks different. Some had to start from scratch. How do you fit it in and how do you start it?

Differences--WGU's average student is 37years old--they have a lot of distractions out of the way. Ours are 18-22--they would push it off--they are given more freedom and they don't take advantage of it like a 37-year-old would. Not their money, etc.

WGU mentors have weekly contact with students--you have to keep making progress. If you stop there, it is considered the last day of attendance. If they're not making goals, they're dropped.

In a regular university, 1 out of 4 students see their advisor. We don't have enough boots on the ground--could end in chaos.

Describe the shift necessary in how we view the students. Are we going to view the student in CBE differently than in a traditional setting? What attributes in CBE does a student need to have in order to be successful?

- Self-starter, motivated, organized, like an adult learner--self directed, comes with knowledge in the field.
- Goal-oriented, most attributes are the attributes you want for all students.
- Attributes of adult students.
- How to get an 18-19 year old student to become successful in CBE?
- We need to start a movement--How to get these students prepared so the students are ready for competency-based education in 2025.

Key Takeaways:

- It might be hard.
- It might be possible.
- Student-centered, learner-centered
- Students take responsibility--how to demonstrate that
- Competency-Based Education isn't right for every learner. Broad-based learning is not for everyone.

What Else is Important to Capture Here?:

- Concern for grad program--students who excel in these arenas exhibit characteristics the employers desire, graduate programs desire. They know how to manage time, work hard, be accountable.

- If someone never learned online and have a traditional bachelor's degree, they may be at a huge disadvantage.
- You need to be a professional learner to be an online student.
- Produce scholars? Also need non-scholars. Where is your school placing their bets? Where is your mission?

Questions for Follow Up in Facebook Group:

Next Steps: