

PROCEEDINGS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA CBE SUMMIT 2017

Edited by Michelle Lowe Solér

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EDITED BY

Michelle Solér

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA SYSTEM

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Preface

By giving students a chance to earn credit based on mastery rather than class time, we can welcome more veterans and working adults, more distance-learners and non-traditional students. We can help students from all backgrounds earn a degree or a credential at a pace that fits their needs.

—Margaret Spellings, President of the University of North Carolina

Participants at the 2017 University of North Carolina Competency-Based Education (CBE) Summit were given small Rubik's Cubes that symbolized how much of a puzzle modern education can be: while it might be simple to complete one side, to solve the entire puzzle is much more difficult. For the three hundred participants at the summit, the sessions focused on how broad the challenges are to implement competency-based education into a collegiate system. CBE allows students who have professional experience to earn academic credit based on their competency in certain fields. For example, a nurse with years of experience in a hospital or other healthcare environment could earn an advanced degree based on skills in which he or she can demonstrate proficiency.

Even though many educators think that CBE represents the future of education, universities face challenges in the academic arena when trying to award credit to students for CBE courses. For instance: How is competency assessed? How are competencies reflected on a transcript?

Beyond the classroom, universities face other challenges, such as how CBE students are enrolled, how they qualify for financial aid, and how they obtain university services. In addition, universities must also work with accrediting agencies and the US Department of Education (USDOE) to determine how CBE credit will work. All of these topics, and others, such as new technologies, were discussed at the CBE Summit, held at the University of North Carolina's Friday Center and funded by a grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

"The summit was very valuable," said Joel Lee, assistant vice chancellor of enrollment services at Winston-Salem State University. "We've got two CBE programs (bachelor of science in nursing and master of health care administration) coming in the fall and I still learned a lot. This was a really good chance to talk with other schools. We were able to compare notes with other two-year and four-year colleges."

Throughout the day, one of the main themes in support of CBE was the changing face of education. Michelle Weise, executive director of the Sandbox Collaborative at Southern New Hampshire University, gave the morning's keynote address and stated that 74% of college students display at least one characteristic of "non-traditional students." Weise noted that in 2009, employers sought 178 skillsets from potential employees; that number rose to 924 skillsets in 2012, and universities are struggling to keep up with the demand. CBE is one way to help students get credit for those skills necessary to get employment in the modern workforce.

"CBE is not some sort of fad," said Weise, who has written about disruptive innovation theory and how CBE can do that for education. "It's not going anywhere. There's just too much common sense to CBE."

Charla Long, the executive director of the Competency-Based Education Network, gave the lunchtime keynote address and observed that ultimately CBE can increase access to higher education for students across the nation. Talking about the "iron triangle" of education—quality, affordability, and accessibility—Long said many educators believe that when using traditional methods, only two corners of the triangle can be achieved at any one time, with the third corner having to be sacrificed. But CBE is a way to achieve all three by increasing access and removing barriers to education.

UNC president Margaret Spellings supports the summit's goals, noting that more people across the state must be educated at far higher levels if the state is

to thrive in the years ahead. “Competency-based education holds great promise in helping achieve that vision,” Spellings said. “By giving students a chance to earn credit based on mastery rather than class time, we can welcome more veterans and working adults, more distance-learners and non-traditional students. We can help students from all backgrounds earn a degree or a credential at a pace that fits their needs.”

Michelle Solér, director of competency-based education and assessment for UNC General Administration, said the summit exceeded her expectations because colleagues made connections while learning. “We had both seasoned experts and people who had never heard of CBE who were able to get something out of the summit,” said Solér. “I think we did something right.”

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SCRIP—Expanding CBE Course Credit Programs

Emerging Practices for Accreditation

MYK GARN, PH.D.

University System of Georgia

EDWIN RUGG, PH.D.

University System of Georgia

JON SIZEMORE, M.ED.

University System of Georgia

MICHELLE SOLÉR, PH.D.

The University of North Carolina System

Authored and edited in collaboration with SCRIP members from the University System of Georgia, system institutions of the University of North Carolina, Tennessee Board of Regents, Wake Technical Community College, and Miami Dade College. Published in collaboration with colleagues at Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges. Sponsored by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Abstract

The Southeast CBE Regional Innovation Partnership (SCRIP) is a diverse and representative collective of competency-based education (CBE) advocates in higher education from four southern states who formed a partnership in 2016 to examine, refine, articulate, and promote policies and procedures for the design and expansion of CBE program innovations. Since some forms of CBE are considered to be substantive changes that can affect institutional accreditation and eligibility for federal financial aid, SCRIP members engaged key officials of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) during this project for the purpose of clarifying fed-

eral and regional accrediting policies and requirements for the review and approval of institutional initiatives to implement competency-based education programs. The results of those collaborative engagements with SACSCOC officials and with others familiar with SACSCOC policies and procedures are incorporated into this report to provide important guidance to CBE faculty and program developers, institutional administrators, accreditation liaisons, and others about relevant accreditation standards, requirements, policies, guidelines, and substantive change reporting procedures.

Keywords

competency-based education, CBE, SACSCOC, direct assessment, accreditation, course credit, mastery

Executive Summary

Although the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) has detailed policies and procedures to be followed for competency-based education (CBE) direct assessment programs to demonstrate compliance with accreditation requirements, little guidance exists for the acceptable design and implementation of CBE course credit programs since they do not constitute a substantive change as a delivery modality from other forms of educational course credit programs currently in existence. The SCRIP project and this report address that void and present SCRIP's recommendations for "Emerging Practices in the Design and Implementation of CBE Course Credit Programs." The SCRIP members and SACSCOC collaborators who share the authorship of this report trust that these recommended emerging practices will facilitate high-quality expansion of CBE course credit programs at accredited colleges and universities in the southern region in the future. This report is intended to address accreditation concerns of CBE faculty and program developers, academic administrators interested in CBE expansion, accreditation liaisons, peer evaluators of CBE programs for accreditation, and other stakeholders in higher education who want to know more about educational innovation involv-

ing the mastery of well-defined competencies by college and university students and graduates.

SACSCOC recognizes two forms of CBE programs. One form, the CBE course credit model, emphasizes the mastery of well-defined competencies that are embedded in or associated with a conventional curriculum of courses, the completion of which yields earned credit hours toward the awarding of a specific degree or credential. Because this form of CBE is packaged and transcribed in courses that award credit hours, it is not considered by SACSCOC to be a substantive change from other existing course credit educational models such as those delivered in a traditional face-to-face mode, an online or distance learning mode, or a combination of those two modes, and that are also packaged and transcribed in courses that award credit hours. Curriculum developers are free to incorporate CBE elements that emphasize mastery of competencies, self-paced learning, and expanded learning resources into the course credit curriculum of currently authorized degree and credential programs without prior review and approval of the CBE modality by SACSCOC. Such CBE innovations are typically delivered in online courses and programs because that instructional mode serves the objectives of CBE well. All course credit programs, including the CBE course credit model, are eligible for federal financial aid, which is course and credit-hour driven.

The CBE direct assessment model is the other form of CBE recognized by SACSCOC and the federal government. SACSCOC has published its “Direct Assessment Competency-Based Programs Policy Statement” aimed specifically at this CBE model. In CBE direct assessment programs, earned credit hours and credit courses are not used to determine degree or credential completion. Instead, degrees and credentials are awarded solely on the basis of the direct assessments of the student’s mastery of an identified set of competencies. Once half or more of a previously authorized degree program or credential is initially delivered through CBE direct assessment, it must have prior review and approval by SACSCOC as a substantive change because it is not based on earned credit hours in a course credit model. Furthermore, CBE direct assessment programs are not eligible for federal financial aid without prior approval of the US Department of Education. The procedures for gaining such federal approval, which involve SACSCOC reviews in our region, are being tested presently in the Experimental Sites Initiative (ESI) for

competency-based education at SACSCOC member institutions. This report does not address the status of ESI or its possible implications for future revisions of SACSCOC policy on CBE direct assessment.

CBE direct assessment programs can be challenging to defend to SACSCOC and the US Department of Education for their approvals. Preparing substantive change prospectuses and securing approvals for CBE direct assessment programs from SACSCOC are complex tasks that can take a year or two to complete. They typically involve a two-stage evaluation process involving a prospectus review by the Commission's Board of Trustees and a subsequent visiting Substantive Change Committee's review of the implemented program's compliance with accreditation requirements. Pursuing federal financial aid eligibility for such programs entails further review and approval from the US Department of Education.

Presently, expansion of CBE innovations in collegiate educational programs can be accomplished more easily and quickly through the CBE course credit model than the CBE direct assessment model. There are numerous benefits to pursuing expansion of CBE course credit programs, and such innovations could serve as an important stepping-stone toward the development and defense of CBE direct assessment programs in the future. This report advocates for the expansion of CBE course credit programs and provides guidance to facilitate such expansion in the context of SACSCOC accreditation requirements.

The Southeast CBE Regional Innovation Partnership SCRIP Project

The Southeast CBE Regional Innovation Partnership (SCRIP) is a diverse and representative collective of CBE advocates in higher education from four southern states who formed a partnership in 2016 to examine, refine, articulate, and promote policies and procedures for the design and expansion of CBE program innovations. SCRIP members include representatives of the University System of Georgia, Tennessee Board of Regents, the system institutions of the University of North Carolina, Wake Technical College, and Miami Dade College. SCRIP's current project and final report entitled, "Expanding CBE Course Credit Programs: Emerging Practices for Accreditation," are funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. SCRIP is indebted to the Gates Foundation for their generous support of this project.

Since some forms of CBE are considered to be substantive changes that

can affect institutional accreditation and eligibility for federal financial aid, SCRIP members engaged key officials of SACSCOC during this project for the purpose of clarifying federal and regional accrediting's policies and requirements for the review and approval of institutional initiatives to implement competency-based education programs. The results of those collaborative engagements with SACSCOC officials and with others familiar with SACSCOC policies and procedures are incorporated into this report to provide important guidance to CBE faculty and program developers, institutional administrators, accreditation liaisons, and others about relevant accreditation standards, requirements, policies, guidelines, and substantive change reporting procedures. Most important, this collaboration has produced valuable insight into the need for explicit articulation of emerging practices for the design and implementation of CBE course credit programs that are consistent with SACSCOC *Principles of Accreditation* and related policies.

From the beginning of this project, SCRIP members were intent on exploring ways to lessen and remove the barriers to innovative CBE program development, especially with regard to securing SACSCOC approval for CBE programs. After consulting with SACSCOC officials, SCRIP members discovered that not all forms of CBE are subject to substantive change reporting, review, and approval processes, which can be challenging and complex to navigate. Clearly, seeking approval for CBE direct assessment programs from SACSCOC and the US Department of Education is an arduous and time-consuming process. However, SCRIP members were pleased to learn that CBE course credit programs are typically exempt from substantive change reporting, review, and approval processes because they share many common characteristics with other forms of existing non-CBE course credit programs. The most important of those common characteristics are a reliance on credit course completions and earned credit hours, which are the basis for Title IV financial aid eligibility.

As long as CBE course credit programs meet the same *Principles of Accreditation* and Commission policies as other non-CBE course credit programs, substantive change is not a factor. This instructive finding should dispel commonly held misconceptions about perceived barriers to CBE development if the CBE course credit program model is pursued. The CBE course credit model can free CBE advocates to expand CBE curricular innovations quickly and efficiently, without having to undergo substantive change reporting and approval processes with SACSCOC.

It should be noted that the Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions (C-RAC, 2015) issued a statement in 2015 indicating that CBE course credit programs and CBE direct assessment programs would be expected to undergo substantive change reporting and review. However, that statement also indicated that further federal direction would be forthcoming. When SACSCOC subsequently clarified its substantive change policies pertaining to CBE consistent with federal direction, the expected reporting and review of CBE programs were restricted to the CBE direct assessment model, and CBE course credit programs were typically not considered to be substantive changes.

Guidance on how to design and implement CBE course credit programs in ways that satisfy common accreditation expectations for course credit programs is lacking, however. SACSCOC has developed and published guidance for the design of distance education, which has relevancy to CBE course credit programs that are delivered online. Those documents include the Commission's (2000) "Best Practices for Electronically Offered Degree and Certificate Programs," first published in 2000, and the (2014) "Distance and Correspondence Education Policy Statement," first published in 2012. SCRIP's recommended "Emerging Practices for the Design and Implementation of CBE Course Credit Programs" fills a void in guidance relative to meeting accreditation requirements and complements these published Commission guidelines related to online course credit programs. These emerging practices for CBE course credit programs will be formally presented in this, the final report of the SCRIP project, at the University of North Carolina's CBE Summit 2017 conference in Chapel Hill in May 2017.

The SCRIP team is indebted to its accreditation consultant and report editor, Dr. Ed Rugg, who provided extensive editing of this report's preliminary draft and helped sharpen its focus on emerging practices for the expansion of CBE course credit programs in the context of accreditation standards. His extensive experience in SACSCOC accreditation and as a university faculty member and chief academic officer were invaluable assets for the completion of this report. In addition, the information, clarification, and feedback the SCRIP team received from SACSCOC officials, especially Dr. Kevin Sighler, director of Substantive Change, and Dr. Larry Earvin, a SACSCOC vice president involved in CBE direct assessment program reviews, were highly instructive and much appreciated. Dr. Judith Sebesta also significantly contributed to this document.

Definitions of Key Terms in CBE

To better understand the principal components of this report, the following definitions of key terms are offered below.

Competency: SACSCOC policy (2016) defines a competency as “a clearly defined and measurable statement of the knowledge, skill, and ability that a student has acquired” (1). Competencies provide common and unambiguous instructions for what the learner must know and be able to do in order to progress. CBE program competencies draw a full picture of what the proficient and prepared graduate looks like. This means competencies cover the specialized and technical aspects of a field of work or study, along with cross-cutting abilities needed to navigate the complexity and change of the real world. In a thriving CBE program, competencies are clear, precise, and easy to understand (Public Agenda, 2015).

Competency-based education (CBE): The Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions (C-RAC, 2015) defined CBE as an outcomes-based approach to earning a college degree or other credential in which students progress through educational programs by demonstrating specified competencies. The Competency-Based Education Network (C-BEN) provided a more detailed definition when it stated that CBE has come to encompass a broad spectrum of theoretical, pedagogical, and technological approaches to the design, development, and deployment of higher education programs. Competency-based education combines an intentional and transparent approach to curricular design with an academic model in which the time it takes individual students to demonstrate competencies varies, but the expectations about learning (i.e., competencies) are held constant. Students acquire and demonstrate their knowledge and skills by engaging in learning exercises, activities, and experiences that align with clearly defined programmatic outcomes or competencies. Students receive proactive instruction, guidance, and support from faculty and staff. Learners earn credentials by demonstrating mastery of competencies through multiple forms of assessment, often at a personalized pace (C-BEN, 2017). Competency-based models allow a learner to set and change deadlines and adjust their pace as their

changing circumstances and abilities warrant. This student-driven flexibility is a key advantage of competency-based models that no other model provides. This individually controlled and variable pacing has a significant impact on the pedagogical approach to CBE. SACSCOC policy (2016) notes that a CBE program “may be organized around traditional course-based units (credit or clock hours) that students must earn to complete their educational program, or may depart from course-based units (credit or clock hours) to rely solely on the attainment of defined competencies” (1). That distinction reflects the key difference between CBE course credit and CBE direct assessment programs.

CBE course credit model: In this curriculum model, the demonstration of competencies is embedded into or associated with a conventional curriculum comprised of courses to be completed to earn credit hours toward the award of a degree or credential. CBE course credit programs generally enroll students in traditional academic terms and award credit hours for courses successfully completed during each term. However, students receive credit for a course once they have demonstrated mastery of the competencies associated with the course. In the CBE model, a student is not obligated to complete a course in a specific time period or the same time period as other students. Consequently, students in this model may accelerate their learning, competency demonstrations, and course completions at their own pace, and the number of courses completed and credit hours earned in a term can be much more variable from student to student than for traditional course credit programs that are more tightly controlled by prescribed weekly schedules of clock hours. CBE students may work on demonstrating mastery of the competencies for several courses simultaneously, or the mastery of competencies sequentially in a ladder curriculum, or both. Typically, no single pathway to learning is prescribed by the instructor of record in this model as is more often the case in a traditional course. Instead, a variety of different pathways to achieving competency mastery may be pursued by students and proactively facilitated by the instructor on an individualized basis. What distinguishes the CBE course credit model most from the CBE direct assessment model is the former’s tight alignment of demonstrated competencies with completed and transcribed courses

and earned credit hours, which are the commonly recognized units of learning at accredited institutions and considered acceptable for Title IV funding of federal financial aid for students.

CBE direct assessment model: This curriculum model shares many of the same self-paced, competency mastery characteristics of the CBE course credit model, except that the demonstration of defined competencies stands alone and is not embedded in conventional courses or earned credit hours toward degree completion. This is an educational program that utilizes direct assessment of student learning in lieu of credit hours or clock hours as a measure of student learning. It relies solely on the attainment of defined competencies and may recognize the direct assessment of student learning by others. For Title IV eligibility, the institution must obtain approval for the CBE direct assessment program from the Secretary of Education under 34 CFR 668.10(g) or (h) as applicable. As part of that approval, the accrediting agency must: (1) evaluate the program(s) and include them in the institution's grant of accreditation or pre-accreditation; and (2) review and approve the institution's claim of each direct assessment program's equivalence in terms of credit or clock hours (USDOE, 2017).

Hybrid CBE direct assessment model: The SACSCOC direct assessment policy (2016) references a hybrid CBE direct assessment model. The hybrid CBE program combines course-based competencies that are embedded in or associated with awarded course credits and credit hours with direct assessments of competencies that are not associated with awarded course credits or credit hours. This report treats such programs as a subset of the CBE direct assessment model, as does SACSCOC policy, and assumes that the same substantive change obligations apply whenever the thresholds are crossed of the hybrid program's reliance on CBE direct assessment at the 25% and 50+% levels.

Traditional course credit model: The traditional curriculum of collegiate educational programs is composed of a prescribed set of courses that have assigned credit-hour values (typically 3–4 semester credit hours each) in which students are expected to have a minimum of one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and two hours of out-of-class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks per semester credit hour earned. An equivalent minimum amount of

student work is expected if the course is configured as another form of academic activity such as a lab, internship, practicum, studio, and so forth, or is offered in an alternate delivery mode other than a semester “lecture” mode (e.g., shortened term, hybrid model for class meetings, totally online, etc.). In this traditional non-CBE model, the amount of student work expended over time is emphasized more than the achievement of specific student learning outcomes or the mastery of defined competencies. Students are often graded on a normative basis in reference to each other’s performance instead of evaluated on an individualized competency mastery basis as in CBE. Such traditional courses are typically not self-paced by students, but follow instead a uniform pace set by the instructor for all students to progress and complete the course at the same time. The traditional course credit model follows federal regulations that define a credit hour as outlined in SACSCOC policy (2012).

Clock hour: This term is synonymous with credit hour, the definition of which is provided above under the “Traditional course credit model” Definition. The federal and SACSCOC definitions of credit hour rely heavily on the amount of time that a student devotes each week or semester to a course of study, both inside and outside the classroom, expressed in hours.

Mastery of competency: To be “competent” by common definition is to be well-qualified, capable, fit, sufficient, adequate, or able. To be a “master” or perform a competency at the level of “mastery” is to be highly or greatly skilled, very knowledgeable, or an expert. Rigorous CBE programs aspire to have students and graduates perform in their competency assessments at high levels of competence or mastery. C-RAC (2015) observed that competencies that are anchored to employer expectations generally require students to demonstrate those competencies at a very good or excellent level—that is, at the mastery level.

Terms Not Considered to Be Synonymous with CBE

Credit from prior learning assessment (PLA): PLA and CBE are not synonymous. PLA refers to learning that occurred prior to a student’s initial enrollment in the institution’s educational program. Learning

associated with a CBE program refers to competency gains achieved while in the institution's CBE program. An institution may not include for Title IV purposes learning or mastery of competencies that occurred prior to enrollment in a CBE program or from tests of learning that are not associated with substantial educational activities overseen by the institution.

Correspondence courses: CBE credit courses are not correspondence courses. SACSCOC (2014) defines correspondence education as “a formal educational process under which the institution provides instructional materials, by mail or electronic transmission, including examinations on the materials, to students who are separated from the instructor. Interaction between the instructor and the student is limited, is not regular and substantive, and is primarily initiated by the student; courses are typically self-paced” (1). Although CBE credit courses are self-paced, the academically qualified instructor of record and other student support personnel are regularly and actively engaged with the student, at their initiative as well as the student's, and a broader array of instructional materials and learning resources are available to facilitate learning and competency achievement.

Substantive Change Reporting to SACSCOC for CBE

Do all CBE programs require substantive change reporting to SACSCOC? The SCRIP members have learned from SACSCOC staff that the answer to that question is, “NO!”

The good news for CBE program developers is that they have a relatively wide range of innovative CBE adaptations to course credit programs that can be implemented without triggering the need for a substantive change notification, prospectus review and approval, or visiting committee review involving SACSCOC. Unless the degree program in question is new and substantively different from others at the institution or relies heavily (at least 50%) on the use of CBE direct assessment as defined by the US Department of Education and SACSCOC Policy on “Direct Assessment Competency-Based Educational Programs” (2016), there are virtually no substantive change expectations for the development and deployment of credit-hour programs that incorporate CBE elements of educational delivery. However, the SACSCOC *Principles of Accreditation* (2011), as well as the related SACSCOC Policy State-

ments and Guidelines, apply to all educational programs of an institution, including those that fall into the CBE course credit or CBE direct assessment categories, without exception.

CBE course credit programs are not considered to be substantive changes since they typically represent another acceptable variation on how an institution awards its credit hours, course credits, and degrees. Furthermore, most CBE course credit programs are offered online, which is a delivery mode that readily supports self-paced learning. Institutions with blanket approval from SACSCOC to expand their online program delivery within the course credit model may do so for CBE course credit programs without being concerned about reporting such expansion as a substantive change. As long as CBE elements of a course credit program are linked and aligned with an institution's policies on acceptable use of credit hours and the use of course credits for degree completion, CBE course credit programs are not regarded as substantive changes from other existing forms of course credit programs at the institution. Again, all of an institution's course credit educational programs are expected to operate in compliance with the SACSCOC *Principles of Accreditation* (2011), as well as the related SACSCOC Policy Statements and Guidelines, especially those on Credit Hours (2012), Distance Education (2014), and Faculty Credentials (2006).

CBE direct assessment programs, on the other hand, do constitute a substantive change, because they are not aligned with the institution's existing awards of credit hours or course credits for degree or credential completion, but rely instead solely on assessed mastery of defined competencies for the award of degrees or other credentials. The direct assessment of competencies is a substantive change from the use of earned credit hours to define student learning for degree or credential completion. Consequently, the current SACSCOC Policy Statement on "Substantive Change for SACSCOC Accredited Institutions" (2016) includes in its list of defined substantive changes, "initiating a direct assessment competency-based program" (7).

That specific reference to CBE direct assessment programs as a substantive change directs the reader to another SACSCOC Policy Statement, "Direct Assessment Competency-Based Educational Programs" (2016). That nine-page policy statement on CBE direct assessment programs provides extensive detail on substantive change reporting and institutional compliance obligations for such programs. It states that once an institution begins to offer 25% of a degree program or credential through CBE direct assessment, it must notify

the SACSCOC president in writing. It also states that SACSCOC approval is required before an institution initiates a degree program or credential in which 50–100% of the program relies on CBE direct assessment.

Such approval requires written notice of the SACSCOC president six months in advance of program initiation, submission of a substantive change prospectus, and review and approval of that prospectus by the SACSCOC Board of Trustees. Upon approval, a substantive change committee visit will typically be authorized to confirm continuing institutional compliance with SACSCOC accreditation requirements and policies once the program is operational (5–6). That substantive change reporting and approval process for CBE direct assessment is only expected to be done once. If successful, it allows further expansion of CBE direct assessment programs without further substantive change reporting or approval, as long as the subsequent programs in question do not represent a significant departure from existing programs. It is also important to note that current federal government concerns about the application of Title IV funds for student aid in CBE programs, and the ongoing ESI for CBE are focused principally on CBE direct assessment programs since they do not align with commonly accepted and aid-eligible credit hours and course credits for the award of degrees and credentials.

CBE Direct Assessment Is Challenging to Defend to SACSCOC and USDOE

Preparing substantive change prospectuses and securing approvals for CBE direct assessment programs are complex and arduous tasks as the excerpts cited below from the SACSCOC Policy Statement, “Direct Assessment Competency-Based Educational Programs,” suggest. Furthermore, once such approvals are gained, pursuing federal financial aid eligibility for CBE direct assessment programs entails additional review and approval by the USDOE. SACSCOC has a central role in that federal review as well and will soon be completing its second year of engagement with the ESI for competency-based education. At the conclusion of the ESI, additional SACSCOC guidance and policy revisions can probably be expected affecting CBE direct assessment programs. In the near term, CBE program developers are likely to find easier and quicker routes for pursuing the advancement of CBE if they make use of a CBE course credit model rather than a CBE direct assessment model when designing and implementing their programs. CBE course credit programs can

serve as an important stepping-stone toward the development of Title IV–eligible CBE direct assessment programs in the future. They also can serve as a useful crosswalk for demonstrating comparability of degrees and credentials earned through CBE course credits compared to those same degrees and credentials earned through CBE direct assessment.

Verbatim Compliance Excerpts from SACSCOC Policy on Direct Assessment CBE Programs (2016)

Institutional Obligations: The Commission’s requirements, policies, processes, and procedures are predicated on the expectation that an institution operates with integrity in all matters, including the maintenance of academic quality in the establishment of direct assessment competency-based educational programs. An institution is responsible for the academic quality of any credit- or clock-hour unit or any competency-based unit recorded on the institution’s transcript, whether applied to a direct assessment or a hybrid program. In determining whether to approve a direct assessment or hybrid program, the Commission expects that the institution will comply with the following practices and procedures: (1) adhere to initial obligations and an expected framework; (2) ensure compliance with appropriate SACSCOC requirements and standards outlined in the *Principles for Accreditation* and with Commission policy; and (3) follow procedures for the notification and approval of the substantive change.

1. Adherence to Initial Obligations and an Expected Framework

Report the initiation of direct assessment and hybrid programs. The institution has an obligation to notify the Commission and seek approval for the offering of such programs. Once approved, the direct assessment and hybrid programs will be included in the institution’s award of accreditation. To secure federal financial aid, the institution must also seek approval from the USDOE—only if the entire program is a direct assessment competency-based program.

Identify institutional contributions. The institution offering the direct assessment is able to identify and articulate the educational contribution it provides to students in this program. Such contribution may take the form of modules, engagement with faculty, exercises, assessment of student learning, or other activities that either expand the student’s knowledge beyond any prior learning that the student may have demonstrated upon entry into the direct

assessment or hybrid competency-based program or that assist the student in documenting how prior learning translates to the attainment of competencies required for receiving academic credit.

Ensure the integrity of accreditation and awards. Because SACSCOC accreditation that has been awarded to a member institution is not transferable—either in actuality or appearance—SACSCOC prohibits the use of its accreditation to authenticate courses, programs, or awards offered by organizations not so accredited. If the SACSCOC-accredited institution has contracted with an external organization to provide part of or the entire direct assessment program, including course materials provided to students, the institution ensures that it retains sufficient control of the development and implementation of the program. The Commission’s policies require the institution to seek approval of the contract at the same time it seeks approval to initiate a direct assessment and a hybrid program.

2. Compliance with Appropriate SACSCOC Requirements and Standards

Requirements and standards in the *Principles of Accreditation* that affect direct assessment and hybrid programs are listed below. They should be considered when developing contracts, completing the substantive change prospectus, and demonstrating compliance. In addition, the prospectus template for approval of this substantive change refers to Commission policies that are applicable to competency-based programs.

Institutional Mission. The institution has a clearly defined mission and philosophy undergirding its direct assessment and hybrid programs. It has clearly defined goals and a framework for its programs that ensure an appropriate design for quality and learning, as appropriate for higher education (CR 2.4).

Information to Students. The institution provides clear information to students outlining the structure and expectations of the direct assessment and hybrid programs, tuition and fees, and academic policies that apply to students in the programs. This information is clearly communicated to students prior to their admission to the direct assessment and hybrid programs (FR 4.6).

Structure and Coherence of the Program. The institution outlines the structure of the direct assessment and hybrid programs and establishes clearly defined competencies related to the program and the learning outcomes that students must attain to be awarded the credential appropriate to higher education. The program has a clearly defined beginning, middle, and end, and

the institution has a mechanism for monitoring student progress toward acquisition of competencies and attainment of the credential being awarded at the end of the program. In undergraduate degree programs, the institution requires the successful attainment of competencies of a general education component at the collegiate level that is a substantial part of the degree, ensures breadth of knowledge, and is based on a coherent rationale. The institution clearly defines expectations for student work and the means for assessing the learning and competencies acquired through that work. The competencies required for the program build a unified body of knowledge that is consistent with a program or career path; that is, they are not taken as merely discrete units (CR 2.7.2, CR 2.7.3, FR 4.2, and FR 4.4).

Student Admissions and Eligibility. The institution has an appropriate mechanism for determining prior to admission in the direct assessment program whether a student has the capacity to complete an educational credential within the program and, therefore, is eligible to enroll in that program. Even an open admissions institution should have such a mechanism for direct assessment competency-based alternatives (CS 3.4.3).

Assessment of Programs and Student Learning. The institution regularly reviews its direct assessment and hybrid programs in light of its mission in order to ensure that it identifies any areas of weakness in the programs and implements timely improvements (CS 3.3.1.1).

The direct assessment and hybrid programs rely on a strong foundation for assessment established by the institution, with demonstrated capacity to evaluate student work at the course and program level in general education and in the major or concentration. At all levels, assessment supports academic improvement. The comprehensive student learning outcomes in the academic program area are reviewed regularly and reflect concepts generally agreed on by the related academic program(s) (CS 3.3.1.1, CS 3.5.1, and CS 3.5.3).

The institution has a mechanism for determining how modules and competencies in the direct assessment program are equivalent to traditional courses and credit or clock hours in a conventional course-based program, and how the modules and competencies are related to accepted expectations of academic achievement and rigor, as based on the following principles:

- Student work performed in courses/units comprising direct assessment and hybrid programs (e.g., demonstrated mastery of tasks, assignments, competencies, etc.) are equivalent to student work performed

in traditional courses (e.g., successful completion of tests, assignments, projects, etc.)

- Student learning outcomes and program outcomes in direct assessment programs offered by the institution are equivalent to student learning outcomes defined by the academic program in a traditional academic program.
- The application of student learning assessments (e.g., examinations, portfolios, projects, capstone presentations, and other recognized demonstrations of mastery, etc.) in direct assessment and hybrid programs are equivalent to the outcome assessments that are used in traditional courses.

These strategies will be responsive to the complexity of learning and the accumulation and integration of knowledge expected for the educational degree or credential (CR 2.7.1, CS 3.4.6, and FR 4.1).

Faculty. Faculty or instructors with subject-matter expertise in the student's academic program and in general education play a formative role in the competency-based student's academic program. While qualified faculty with subject-matter expertise design the competency-based program's curriculum, this faculty or other similarly qualified faculty or instructors also regularly engage with students during the course of the program, provide expert assistance and support to students in the program, and have a meaningful role in directing and reviewing the assessment of competencies. Program faculty are well suited for this role by qualifications and experience and receive appropriate professional development and support from the institution in executing this role. While mentors or counselors may have an important role in competency-based programs in supporting or assisting students, they do not replace faculty or instructors with subject-matter expertise. In addition, the number of mentors and counselors assigned to the competency-based program is sufficient to work with enrolled students and qualified to advise students at the college level (CR 2.8, CS 3.4.1, CS 3.4.10, CS 3.4.11, CS 3.7.1, and CS 3.7.3).

Institutional Responsibility for Awarding the Credential. The institution offering a direct assessment program is able to identify and articulate the educational contribution it provides to students in this program. Such contribution may take the form of modules, engagement with faculty, exercises, assessment of student learning, or other activities that either expand the student's knowl-

edge beyond any prior learning that the student may have demonstrated at matriculation or that assist the student in documenting how prior learning translates to the attainment of competencies required for receiving academic credit. For an undergraduate program, the institution demonstrates its contribution to be at least 25% of the academic program; for a graduate program, it demonstrates a contribution of at least one-third of the direct assessment program (CS 3.5.2 and CS 3.6.3).

Application of Academic Policies. The institution determines how its already-established academic policies in such areas as academic discipline, probation, and suspension apply to students in the direct assessment program, and it makes appropriate amendments to its academic policies where appropriate. It is clear how the institution determines when a student in the program is not making sufficient progress and should be moved to a traditional course-based format to complete his or her academic program or when other disciplinary action should be taken. The institution develops policies that address SACSCOC and/or federal requirements, including credit-hour definitions, transcript recording and reporting, the assessment and award of credit for prior learning, and the roles of faculty members and other educational professionals (CS 3.4.5 and 3.4.6).

Acceptance and Awarding of Credit or a Unit of Competency. The institution demonstrates that students in the direct assessment or hybrid competency-based program are achieving at least the same outcomes and at the same academic rigor as in traditional programs and courses offered by the institution. The institution prepares and maintains a transcript for each student documenting both the competencies earned and the equivalent courses or credit hours based on expectations noted above. The transcript is prepared and updated during the course of the student's academic program so that it is available in the event that a student transfers to another institution or drops out prior to completing the competency-based program. Such equivalencies are also available at the program level for state and federal agencies and for the Commission in their review of the program. In addition, the transcript provides clear and sufficient information for other institutions and employers to understand the student's accomplishments (CS 3.4.6 and FR 4.9).

The direct assessment programs provided by the institution are clearly distinguished from assessment of prior learning that may take place at the outset of the program. When students demonstrate competencies at the beginning of a program on the basis of prior learning, transcripts and other documents

should make clear that these competencies are awarded as “prior learning credit.” Once the institution has identified prior learning credit for each student, other competencies should be awarded only after the student has completed the modules that form the program or demonstrated mastery of the competencies defined by them (CS 3.4.4 and CS 3.4.6).

Contractual Agreements. The institution provides notification to SACSCOC of agreements involving direct assessment programs, providing signed copies of agreements, and providing any other documentation or information required by SACSCOC policies and procedures for review. In addition, the member institution ensures that SACSCOC has timely access to its contracted external organization’s materials and accreditation-related activities (CS 3.4.7).

Student Support Services and Access to Academic Resources. The institution offers student support services that appropriately guide students in these competency-based programs. In addition, the institution is prepared to assist students in a timely manner who drop out of these programs in making the transition back to a traditional course-based format so as to ensure that those students can continue to progress toward a degree or certificate (CR 2.10 and CS 3.4.9). The institution provides and supports student and faculty access and user privileges to learning resources consistent with the competency-based academic programs (CR 2.9).

Fees and Compliance with Title IV Funding. While the institution may charge a fee for its assessment of a student’s prior learning as well as its transcription of competencies, the institution charges tuition only for those courses, modules, components, and services that the institution contributes in the development or formation of the student or for the term in which the student is enrolled in the direct assessment program. Similarly, the institution assists students in seeking Title IV student aid funds for those courses, modules, or components of the academic program that the institution contributes to the development or formation of the student. It develops policies that address the disbursement of financial aid and tuition charges and refunds (FR 4.3 and FR 4.7).

3. Procedures for the Notification and Approval of Direct Assessment and Hybrid Programs

Before initiating direct assessment or hybrid competency-based educational programs (degree, diploma, and certificate), an institution must seek prior approval when the programs have either of the following characteristics:

- the entire program is direct assessment and relies exclusively on measured achievement of competencies rather than student learning through credit or clock hours, or
- at least 50% of the competency-based program is direct assessment.

Time of Notification. An institution offering direct assessment or hybrid competency-based educational programs must provide written notification of the change to the president of SACSCOC when it begins to offer 25% of a direct assessment program; that is, when a student can earn 25% of an educational credential (e.g., degree, diploma, certificate) based on measured achievement of competencies rather than credit or clock hours. The institution seeking approval to offer an entire program that is direct assessment or where at least 50% of the competency-based program is direct assessment must notify the president of SACSCOC six months in advance of the initiation of 50% of the educational credential based on measured achievement of competencies rather than credit or clock hours.

Submission of a Prospectus. An institution seeking approval of a direct assessment competency-based program or a hybrid direct assessment program should complete the screening form available on the SACS-COC website. After Commission staff have reviewed the document, the institution will receive a response either asking it to complete a full prospectus for approval of the proposed program or notifying the institution that the program does not constitute either a direct assessment or hybrid direct assessment competency-based program.

If the institution is directed to complete a prospectus, it must be submitted by March 15 for consideration at the June meeting of the SACSCOC Board of Trustees, or by September 1 for consideration at the December meeting of the SACSCOC Board of Trustees to allow ample time for review and approval. The institution will be provided a link to the appropriate prospectus form when it is sent the SACSCOC letter requesting a prospectus. Four copies should be submitted to the president of SACSCOC as a print document, or an electronic device (e.g., flash drive, CD, or DVD). Upon receipt of the prospectus, it will be forwarded to the SACSCOC Board of Trustees for review and approval at its next scheduled meeting in either June or December.

Options of the Committees on Compliance and Reports Following Review of the Prospectus

The Committee on Compliance and Reports, a standing committee of the SACSCOC Board of Trustees, will review the prospectus and any additional material submitted and will take one of the following actions:

1. accept the prospectus, recommend approval of the program, and authorize a substantive change committee visit. A committee visit is required within six months after the initiation of the program,
2. defer action and seek additional information, or recommend denial of approval and continue the institution's accreditation. The reason for denial of
3. approval may have been caused by an institution's current non-compliance with a standard or policy. Consequently, denial may be accompanied by monitoring or imposition of a sanction.

SCRIP Recommends Emerging Practices for Ensuring Accreditation of CBE Course Credit Programs

Although CBE course credit programs are not considered to be substantive changes from other course credit forms of educational programs, there are CBE elements of those programs that warrant special consideration if we are to ensure the quality, effectiveness, and student success of those CBE programs. In the absence of guidance from SACSCOC as well as the CBE literature in that regard, the SCRIP project has generated a list of recommended emerging practices for the design and implementation of CBE course credit programs that take into account SASCOC accreditation concerns.

There are clear advantages to blending certain qualities of traditional course credit models with key elements of CBE to create CBE course credit programs. Transferability of credits and courses, eligibility for federal financial aid, ease of adaptation in existing information systems, constituent familiarity with credit hour/course credit curriculums and transcripts, and speed of program review and approval are just a few of such advantages. There are many others. The challenge is to blend some of the best features of CBE with features of contemporary versions of course credit program delivery to generate quality CBE course credit programs that provide effective learning experiences

for college and university students. SCRIP members and collaborators trust that the following recommended list of emerging practices will facilitate the achievement of that objective and help ensure compliance with SACSCOC requirements.

Emerging Practices for the Design and Implementation of CBE Course Credit Programs

Because most CBE course credit programs will rely on online program delivery, CBE developers and accreditation liaisons are encouraged to consult SACSCOC's "Best Practices for Electronically Offered Degree and Certificate Programs" (2000) and the Commission's "Policy Statement on Distance and Correspondence Education" (2014) as supplements to the following recommended emerging practices for the design and implementation of competency-based education course credit programs. Although the SACSCOC Policy Statement "Direct Assessment Competency-Based Educational Programs" (2016) does not give much explicit attention to CBE course credit programs, many of the institutional obligations cited in that policy and excerpted for the previous section of this report have applicability to CBE course credit programs as indicated below. Readers of the following list of emerging practices are also reminded that CBE course credit programs are, like all other forms of course credit program delivery, subject to compliance with the SACSCOC *Principles of Accreditation* as well as relevant Commission Policy Statements and Guidelines.

Distinguishing CBE Course Credit Programs from CBE Direct Assessment Programs. When referencing competency-based education programs, it is important to recognize the distinctive characteristics that exist between a CBE course credit model and a CBE direct assessment model in matters of curriculum design and implementation. The two models diverge in substantive ways, the most important being the CBE direct assessment model's singular focus on assessing mastery of defined competencies that are not embedded in or associated with credit courses and do not earn credit hours or traditional grades toward degree completion. The CBE course credit model also relies on assessing mastery of defined competencies, but does so in the context of completing credit courses and earning credit hours for degree completion. As far as the federal government and SACSCOC are concerned, initiating a CBE direct assessment program represents a substantive change from existing course

credit models, but initiating a CBE course credit program does not constitute a substantive change because it is simply another variation of the course credit model. Some additional distinguishing characteristics between these two CBE curriculum models are referenced in more specific terms below.

Defining Competencies for CBE Credit Courses and CBE Course Credit Programs. The CBE course credit curriculum associates its identified competencies with credit courses similar to those of traditional course credit programs. At the course level, the CBE program may have one or several competencies identified for a particular course in which demonstrated mastery would yield course credit. Such competencies should be clearly defined, measurable, and inclusive statements of the knowledge, skills, and abilities that a student should master in that course component of the degree program or credential. At the end, or in the capstone course, of the degree program or credential, a number of key competencies are typically identified for assessment that reflect the cumulative knowledge, skills, and abilities that a program graduate should master. Those too should be clearly defined and measurable, as well as inclusive of the competencies that internal and external stakeholders expect to see in program graduates. Competency statements are typically richer, more multidimensional, and more comprehensive than the lists of narrow and specific course objectives or student learning outcomes that are commonly found in traditional credit course syllabi or for traditional course credit programs, although all such expected outcomes are related to one another to some degree.

Justifying Credit-Hour Awards in CBE Course Credit Programs. In CBE credit courses and CBE course credit programs, compliance with the federal definition of a credit hour and the SACSCOC policy statement on “Credit Hours” is expected since credit hours are awarded. Fortunately, those credit-hour policies are flexible and permit justifications of compliance based on reasonable equivalencies of the amount of student work associated with each earned credit hour. CBE courses and programs should have no difficulty justifying the minimum amount of student work typically expended by students to master particular competencies and earn the associated credit hours for that mastery. Credit-hour policies aim to ensure course and program rigor, and CBE courses and programs are typically very rigorous, with comparable learning outcomes to traditional course credit models for the same educational program.

CBE Course Credit Programs in Catalogs and Transcripts. Comparability of earned course credits and credit hours, regardless of the mode of instruction,

is important to students, stakeholders, and accreditors. Course descriptions in university catalogs and course listings in student transcripts typically do not reflect identified differences between traditional and online modes of instruction for those courses, and that should also be true for CBE course credit modalities. When CBE's emphasis on competency mastery is packaged in course titles, course descriptions, credit hours, and program completion requirements that are similar to those of traditional course credit programs, transferability of CBE course credits is facilitated for students, and stakeholders are ensured that traditional and CBE course credit programs are comparable. When such comparability is present, it is also easier to justify the quality and coherence of CBE course credit programs for meeting accreditation requirements. Having comparability of CBE credit courses with traditional credit courses is especially important for program graduates in professions requiring transcript review for licensure. It can be very challenging to map a CBE direct assessment program's and transcript's listing of mastered competencies to expected completed courses and earned credit hours required for licensure.

Accommodating Self-Paced Learning for Mastery of Competencies. In traditional course credit programs, the pace and schedule of course and program completion is rather uniform. The instructor of a traditional credit course typically sets a common schedule for progress in and completion of the course that applies to all students in the course. Students who could progress more quickly toward course completion are often held back by those who cannot or will not progress as quickly, or by other factors, including the instructor's discretion. In CBE credit courses and CBE course credit programs, each student has substantial control over scheduling his or her progress toward demonstrating competency mastery and completing CBE courses. Each student also has substantial control over his or her rate of progression through the overall program. The CBE model is heavily self-paced and individualized in that regard, and the policies, procedures, and systems supporting such courses and programs should adequately accommodate and facilitate such distinctive CBE features of student control over the pace of completion. Competency mastery velocities vary widely among CBE students. Institutions have been surprised at how quickly some students progress through their CBE programs. Consequently, institutions need to have systems in place to not only deal appropriately with students who are not making satisfactory academic progress in

CBE programs, but also to serve students in a timely manner who progress exceptionally quickly through these programs.

Accommodating Mastery of Competencies. Traditional credit courses frequently put an emphasis on one-shot, high-stakes assessments where achievement levels are often graded on a normative scale that can put greater emphasis on how each student performed relative to other students in the class, rather than on how much was learned. True mastery of a competency often requires students to practice and undergo repeated formative assessments before a summative assessment demonstrating mastery of a competency is attained. CBE credit courses and programs need to be designed to permit and facilitate such criterion-oriented, mastery-learning processes where repeated attempts to achieve mastery of a competency, sometimes through alternate learning pathways and assessments, may be needed and are appropriate for student success.

Providing a Multitude of Relevant Learning Resources and Alternative Learning Pathways to Help Students Achieve Mastery of Competencies. The CBE curriculum model provides students, who have different learning styles and interests, access to a wide variety of learning resources beyond the assigned textbooks, library resources, and recorded lectures of the instructor in traditional credit courses. The information technology represented by the Internet and the World Wide Web is particularly useful in that regard. As a result, students in CBE credit courses may customize and pursue, under the regular guidance and direction of their academically qualified instructor of record, one or more different learning pathways toward the achievement of competency mastery. CBE credit courses need to be appropriately configured and technologically supported to facilitate access to a multitude of relevant learning resources and to accommodate the many alternate learning pathways and learning styles that can lead to student success in competency mastery.

Appropriate Screening of CBE Program Applicants and Course Registrants. As is often the case in asynchronous online courses and programs, students are expected to have substantial commitment and ability to be disciplined, independent, self-directed, and technology-oriented in order to successfully complete either CBE course credit programs or CBE direct assessment programs. Although CBE program instructors are expected to proactively and regularly engage and support their students, there is less direction and control over learning provided by those instructors than is the case in traditional

course credit programs. Appropriate student screening mechanisms should be in place for CBE programs and courses that direct program applicants and course registrants who do not have the requisite qualities for CBE program success into other instructional models in which they would be more successful. In addition, communications with prospective students should be detailed and clear about the distinctive characteristics and expectations of CBE courses and programs compared to traditional courses and programs so that students may elect to steer themselves to other learning environment options in which they might be more likely to succeed academically.

Policies and Procedures for Transitioning Students Out of CBE Programs. When students in CBE programs discover that other pedagogical options such as those in traditional course credit programs might be more suitable or preferred, there should be policies and procedures in place to facilitate the transitioning of students out of a CBE program to other options as seamlessly as possible and with minimal penalties. Likewise, when the institution or a CBE program determines that a student is not making sufficient academic progress to remain in good standing, policies and procedures should be in place to transition students out of the CBE program and/or the institution. In general, transitioning students out of CBE direct assessment programs will be more complicated and difficult to do than transitioning students out of CBE course credit programs. The greater difficulty exists when mastered competencies do not map readily to credit courses. In a related matter, policies and procedures should also be clearly stated for the determination of a CBE student's satisfactory academic progress and good standing.

General Academic Policies and Procedures That Accommodate CBE. The scope of revision required in all academic and administrative policies and procedures when CBE programs are first initiated should not be underestimated, especially when CBE direct assessment programs are offered. All general academic policies and procedures should be inclusive and specific enough to address and accommodate CBE course credit programs appropriately. This should be true for CBE direct assessment programs as well, if offered.

Providing Regular and Substantive Interaction with Faculty. CBE credit courses are not expected to operate like correspondence courses in which there is minimal faculty/student interaction, and when it occurs, it is usually initiated by the student. SACSCOC policy for CBE direct assessment programs explicitly calls for regular and substantive faculty/student interaction, initiated by faculty members who are appropriately credentialed matter specialists, to

ensure sufficient student, course, and program oversight by well-qualified faculty. Similar expectations for regular and substantive faculty/student interaction apply to subject-matter specialists and instructors of record in CBE credit courses and CBE course credit programs as well.

Roles of Academically Qualified Faculty. CBE programs assign different roles to the instructor of record than those typically assumed by faculty teaching traditional credit courses. The instructional role of faculty in traditional credit courses typically features a major “lecture” function that is sometimes characterized as “sage on the stage.” In CBE, that function is often replaced with a subject-matter facilitator role that supports active and self-directed student learning, sometimes referenced as “guide on the side.” In addition, CBE developers often speak of unbundled or disaggregated faculty roles that separate the instructional functions that are mostly assumed by the instructor of record in traditional credit courses and assign those unbundled functions to different individuals (e.g., to an instructional designer, assessment developer, instructor, assessor, mentor/coach, tutor, advisor, etc.). In reality, some of those functional roles are also unbundled for traditional courses as well, but have been labeled with different terms such as common course syllabus, teaching assistant, supplemental instruction, subject-matter labs, tutors, and so forth.

Regardless of how the faculty roles are bundled or unbundled in course credit programs, there are fundamental characteristics of the CBE course credit curriculum that SACSCOC expects to see for compliance purposes. Those are (1) that the degree program’s curriculum is developed, coordinated, assessed, and improved by subject-matter specialists who have appropriate faculty credentials, consistent with SACSCOC guidelines on “Faculty Credentials” (2006); (2) that the instructor of record in credit courses has appropriate subject-matter expertise and faculty credentials; (3) that the institution and its appropriately qualified faculty have sufficient control over the quality, content, and delivery of all credits accepted for degree completion in compliance with SACSCOC standards and policies and directly provide at least a quarter of the credits for an undergraduate degree and at least one-third of credits for a graduate degree; and (4) that the subject-matter experts and qualified faculty are ultimately responsible for ensuring the integrity and validity of the assessments of competency mastery.

Measurable Evidence of Competency Mastery. As with all other educational programs, CBE programs are expected to be regularly assessed as to the extent to which their expected outcomes are being achieved. Assessment re-

sults should focus on the collection of measurable evidence of the students' mastery of identified competencies. Uses of the analysis of those assessment results to improve the expected outcomes of CBE course credit programs should be recorded and tracked.

Competency Mastery and Grades. CBE direct assessment programs often do not involve the award of grades. CBE course credit programs not only align with courses and credit hours, they may also involve the award of grades reflecting different achievement levels in competency assessment. However, the definitions of letter grades in CBE course credit programs are expected to be different from normative grading scales often present in traditional programs. The former should reflect commonly understood differences between being competent (a "C"), highly competent or masterful (a "B"), or exceptionally competent or an expert (an "A"). Just as many traditional undergraduate programs require at least a "C" grade for course credit to count toward program completion, CBE course credit programs should expect at least a competent level of performance in their assessments before course credit is awarded. However, rigorous CBE course credit programs should expect mastery of competencies before course credit is awarded.

Faculty Development and Administrative Support for CBE. Online program delivery has expanded rapidly in recent years, in part because institutions have invested in new and expanded academic support services to facilitate their online program growth and related faculty development initiatives. Making similar investments for expanding CBE is advisable and consistent with accreditation expectations. When investing in support services for CBE program expansion, it is vital to maintain a commitment to having academically qualified faculty directly responsible for coordinating the development and implementation of CBE course credit programs in compliance with accreditation requirements.

Student and Academic Support Services for CBE Programs. Effective CBE course credit and CBE direct assessment programs are reinforced by student and academic support services that specifically and appropriately assist students in successfully navigating completion of their programs, changing direction if needed, and finding suitable placements after graduation. Such expected student and academic support services include providing adequate access to library and learning resources.

Flexible Systems for CBE Program Enrollment and Fee Payments. Traditional systems of registering and paying for enrollment in educational courses at the

beginning of a term do not always serve self-paced CBE students well. Acceptable practices in support of CBE programs are those that have incorporated flexibility for on-demand access to CBE program components and managed enrollment and fee payments in ways that do not penalize students unfairly or undercut the student's financial aid eligibility. Required fees and fee payment schedules are expected to be clearly defined and published for students in all CBE programs.

Adapting to Changing Technologies. Learning management systems (LMSs) have been widely adopted to enhance and support course credit programs of all types, including traditional programs, online programs, and CBE programs. Expansion of CBE has spawned recent developments of an enhanced form of LMS called LRM—Learning Relationship Management Systems. LRMs have features that are especially relevant for CBE students and CBE program management. The LRMs are relatively new developments in technology that should continue to evolve and could soon replace LMSs. As proven technology evolves in support of educational program delivery and student learning, CBE programs should adopt such advances for improved efficiency and effectiveness.

The Future of CBE Course Credit Programs

Over the last thirty years, there has been an increasing emphasis in SACSCOC accreditation requirements on outcomes assessment, especially student learning outcomes assessment. Federal interest in learning outcomes assessment has grown substantially during this time as well. The national conversation on student learning outcomes years ago initially focused on what students at the end of their educational programs should know, be able to do, and be like behaviorally and attitudinally. Over the years, application of the concept of student learning outcomes assessment spread from the overall or end of an educational program to the course level and components of educational programs, including the general education component in undergraduate programs. In 2004, SACSCOC initiated an institution-wide five-year Quality Enhancement Plan requirement that focuses on improving student learning outcomes at any stage of educational delivery that is identified as needing improvement.

Competency-based education is a natural outgrowth of such national and regional attention on learning outcomes assessment. In many ways, CBE

could be described as a student learning outcomes model on steroids. CBE course credit programs require the identification of competencies to be mastered at every level and for every credit course in an educational program, including the end-of-program capstone experiences. Rather than focus on a small group of narrowly defined student learning outcomes, CBE focuses on a comprehensive and substantive set of competencies for every aspect of an entire program of study. Furthermore, expecting mastery of competencies to earn course credits instead of clock hours or seat time in traditional courses generates authentic learning outcomes. As the national movement toward student learning outcomes assessment continues to grow, it becomes more like CBE. Consequently, CBE course credit programs are in a leadership position for innovation and advancement of learning outcomes assessment in higher education. The future of the CBE course credit model as a leader in quality higher education is bright.

The future of CBE course credit programs is also bright because such educational models can be more efficient and cost-effective than traditional course credit programs. Ever-evolving advances in information technology make learning resources more accessible, convenient, and affordable than ever before. The self-paced and 24/7 nature of CBE course credit programs allows the individual student to accelerate his or her learning and complete course credits and degree requirements in less time and at less cost than in traditional course credit programs. With the costs of higher education rising sharply, along with crushing accumulated student debt, such efficiency and cost-effectiveness matter to more and more students and their families.

The rising tide of interest in learning outcomes assessment represents a sea change for the future of educational delivery in higher education. Catching the wave of CBE course credit program expansion can be exciting and rewarding in that regard. Adhering to SCRIP's recommended emerging practices for designing and implementing CBE course credit programs in the context of regional accreditation should keep CBE course credit programs riding high on the crest of a great wave of educational innovation.

SCRIP Members and SACSCOC Collaborators

University System of Georgia

Tristan Denley, Executive Vice Chancellor and Chief Academic Officer (formerly
Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Tennessee Board of Regents)

Jon Sizemore, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Distance Education

Rob Anderson, Vice Chancellor for Educational Access and Success
 Myk Garn, Assistant Vice Chancellor for New Learning Models
 Marci Middleton, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Academic Programs
 Ed Rugg, Accreditation Consultant and Reports Editor
 University of North Carolina, General Administration
 Michelle Solér, Director of Competency-Based Education and Assessment
 Kimberly Van Noort, Vice President for Academic Programs
 Junius Gonzales, Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs
 Tennessee Board of Regents
 Randy Schulte, Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
 Greg Sedrick, Associate Vice Chancellor—TN eCampus
 Miami Dade College
 Barika Barbosa, Director of Learning and Program Evaluation
 Jacqueline Hill, Associate Provost, Academic Affairs
 Lenore Rodicio, Executive Vice President and Provost
 Eduardo Padron, President
 Wake Technical Community College
 Stephen Scott, President
 Sandy Dietrich, Vice President and Chief Academic Officer
 SACSCOC
 Michael Johnson, Senior Vice President and Chief of Staff
 Larry Earvin, Vice President
 Kevin Sightler, Director of Substantive Change

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PRINCE HCY BULL, PH.D.

North Carolina Central University

GERRELYN PATTERSON, PH.D.

North Carolina Central University

YOLANDA DUNSTON, PH.D.

North Carolina Central University

GRETCHEN WILBUR, PH.D.

DePaul University

CHERESA SIMPSON, PH.D.

North Carolina Central University

Abstract

With declining enrollment of traditional students in teacher education, the survival of teacher education programs rests on attracting non-traditional students to their credentialing as teachers. Competency-based education programs provide the platform for the credentialing of non-traditional students. An understanding and implementation of C-TACK provide the framework for teacher education programs to design and implement successful CBE programs to reflect the needs of the adult learner. The juxtaposition of the principles of CBE, andragogy, and the learning outcomes of the content with appropriate learning technologies holds the promise to increase credentialing of teacher and instructional assistants across the nation. CBE holds several benefits for students including, but not limited to, the following: the opportunity to use transfer credits to complete their education; mastery of competencies at their pace and time; and online delivery of courses anytime and

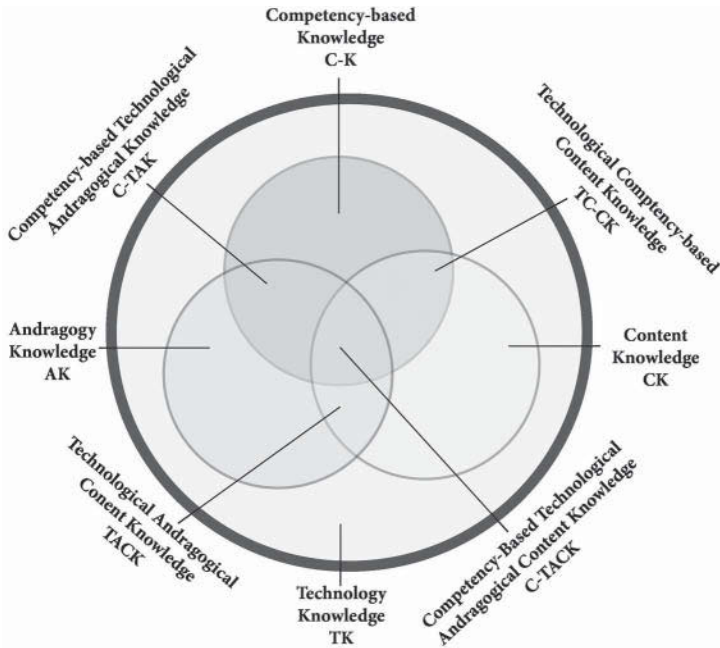
anywhere. Students will draw upon their prior learning and experiences to be successful in the program; students progress only by successful demonstration of competencies; students will have clear expectations and learning outcomes; and the competencies assessed are relevant to real-life job experiences, making CBE a good fit for non-traditional learners. Students will work with highly qualified, trained, and experienced faculty coaches and mentors with online delivery of courses.

Keywords

competency-based education, andragogy, digital literacy, online delivery, learning technologies, Quality Matters, asynchronous delivery

As the national teacher shortage widens, teacher education programs continue to explore and devise innovative practices for supply to meet demand. According to Sutcher, Darling-Hammond, and Carver-Thomas (2016), “Between 2009 and 2014, the most recent years of data available, teacher education enrollments dropped from 691,000 to 451,000, a 35% reduction. This amounts to a decrease of almost 240,000 professionals on their way to the classroom in the year 2014, as compared to 2009.” It is clear that traditional undergraduate students are not enrolling in high numbers in teacher education programs. With this declining enrollment, school districts and teacher education programs have embarked on short- and long-term enrollment strategies to increase credentialing. One strategy employed focuses on attracting non-traditional students, especially teacher/instructional assistants or adults interested in changing careers to pursue teacher credentialing. The overarching question is: How can we address the needs of non-traditional students to faster credentialing? Many universities have implemented accelerated programs such as eight-week courses, online courses, weekend programs, and distance-education programs. However, most of these initiatives are time-based credit hours that require students to fulfill a defined time in the course to gain credits. These accelerated programs are built around the traditional credit-hour structure. With time as a constant within the traditional structure, the path to credentialing is longer and frustrates non-traditional students, which can contribute to program incompletions.

To ensure that the needs of non-traditional students are met and that adults with college credits are motivated to return to complete credentialing,



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Figure 2.1 Competency-Based Technological Andragogy Content Knowledge Framework

teacher education programs must implement more innovative and robust programs focused on learning outcomes as constant with time as a variable. Non-traditional students also need self-paced programs supported by learning technologies aligned with real life experiences and task-oriented programs focused on differentiation. This new dimension of learning feeds into the new frontier in higher education, competency-based education (CBE).

The C-TACK Framework

The C-TACK (competency-based technological andragogy content knowledge) framework provides a dynamic interaction to guide teacher education programs to create functional, competency-based, digital learning environments from the andragogy perspective (see Figure 2.1). From the C-TACK perspective, delivering a functional competency-based instruction requires the interplay of four major knowledge components: competency-based education knowledge, andragogy knowledge, content knowledge, and technological knowledge. The

interaction between well-defined competencies, an understanding of andragogy strategies, knowledge of how to create functional content resources, and technological knowledge will inspire and engage more non-traditional students to pursue credentialing through competency-based degree programs.

Technology Knowledge (TK)

Technology is the vehicle driving the C-TACK framework and has redefined teaching and learning in the twenty-first century. Technology knowledge includes a clear understanding of how to integrate learning technologies and appropriate use of hardware, software, and devices used by the institution and students to support task-oriented instruction within the C-TACK framework. From the institution's perspective of instruction, technology includes the enterprise system, learning management system, use of designing software, communication and mentoring software, and all technologies used to support learning. From the student's perspective, technology includes the computers, Wi-Fi, devices, and designing technologies used to support learning. The knowledge also includes best practices on how to integrate technology in teaching and learning. One such best practice is Quality Matters (QM), a faculty-centered, continuous improvement model for assuring the quality of online courses through peer review. The University of North Carolina system joined QM in the beginning of 2015 as a strategy to improve student outcomes in online learning throughout the system (www.northcarolina.edu).

Competency-based Education Knowledge (C-K)

According to the Competency-Based Education Network (C-BEN), "Competency-based education combines an intentional and transparent approach to curricular design with an academic model in which the time it takes to demonstrate competencies varies and the expectations about learning are held constant. Students acquire and demonstrate their knowledge and skills by engaging in learning exercises, activities, and experiences that align with clearly defined programmatic outcomes. Students receive proactive guidance and support from faculty and staff. Learners earn credentials by demonstrating mastery through multiple forms of assessment, often at a personalized pace." Key components of CBE include differentiation and pace of learning.

The key knowledge in the C-TACK model is competency-based education knowledge. According to the C-BEN, an effective and efficient competency-based knowledge is guided by eight elements that make up the Quality Principles and Standards released on October 20, 2016. The eight elements include the following:

- Coherent, competency-driven programs and curriculum design
- Clear, measurable, meaningful, and complete competencies
- Credential-level assessment strategy with robust implementation
- Intentionally designed and engaged student experiences
- Collaborative engagement with external partners
- Transparency of student learning
- Evidence-driven continuous improvement processes
- Demonstrated institutional commitment to capacity for CBE innovation

Andragogy Knowledge (AK)

Since CBE programs are designed mainly to address the needs of non-traditional students, an understanding of andragogy theorized by M. Knowles (1984) is a core component of C-TACK. According to Knowles, andragogy is based on six assumptions about the adult learner. Knowles theorized that adults typically choose the when, how, and what they want to learn. Also, the adult learner, by design of his or her prior knowledge and experiences, contributes to the richness of the learning environment and provides valuable resources for learning through collaboration. For the adult learner, real life application of learning is a motivating factor. When adults experience real and intrinsic application of learning, they are motivated to engage and pursue learning to the end. This real life application usually is aligned with a career goal, health, or conditions to improve the self.

The six assumptions underlying andragogy, as theorized by Knowles, are self-concept, experience, readiness to learn based on need, problem-centered focus, internal motivation, and the need to know why one needs to know something (Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007). The six assumptions are represented in Knowles's four principles of andragogy and show a stronger alignment with competency-based education:

Involved adult learner. Self-concept addresses how the adult becomes more independent, self-regulated, and motivated to learn. Since the adult is driven to choose what he or she wants to learn, when he or she wants to learn it, and how he or she wants to learn, programs should be designed to promote collaboration and provide a learning environment based on mutual respect. The adult learner invariably seeks learning opportunities due to some external motivators, but the more potent motivators (self-esteem, better quality of life, self-actualization, etc.) are internal.

Experience of the adult learner. Prior knowledge and wealth of experience are key assets that the adult learner brings into new learning experiences. These assets should be tapped and integrated as a part of any new learning experience to add richness to the class discussions and to provide valuable resources for learning from and with each other. However, as a caution, programs must devise ways to filter prior knowledge and experiences to eliminate biases or misinformation that may pose barriers to the new learning environment.

Relevance and impact to learners' lives. The desire for an adult learner to engage is based on what he or she needs to know in order to deal with life situations. When faced with crisis, adults tend to seek new knowledge (e.g., health issues, how to complete a task or perform functions, or the desire to learn new skills for a job or career enhancement). The adult learner needs to know how the new knowledge will solve a problem or be immediately helpful when seeking employment.

Problem-centered focus. For the adult learner to engage fully, it is important to delineate a clear alignment between learning and application in real life. For this reason, the adult learner seeks learning opportunities to help solve problems, seek new job opportunities, and obtain the knowledge to cope with situations.

Content Knowledge (CK)

The content knowledge is the core subject matter the adult learns as part of the instructional process designed and delivered by knowledgeable experts and instructional designers and supported by knowledgeable coaches and

mentors within the C-TACK framework. Different disciplines require different forms of knowledge to support instruction. However, there are six basic principles of content knowledge as it relates to the C-TACK model:

Content Standards. Each content discipline is supported by a set of standards or principles developed by supporting professional organizations to address the knowledge the content purports to deliver. These professional standards are the foundation for building the competencies in the C-TACK model.

Accreditation. Collectively the content delivered must meet accreditation standards with supporting data for continuous improvement.

Instructional Materials. The content is delivered via different types of instructional materials, including (but not limited to) videos, textbooks, audios, pdfs, and field observations. The instructional materials are designed to support the adult learner and the learning outcomes.

Highly Qualified Personnel. Instructors, mentors, facilitators, and/or coaches support the content knowledge. By accreditation standards, these personnel must meet and demonstrate minimum academic and professional requirements to perform instructional, coaching, and mentoring functions. The quality and effectiveness of the delivery of instruction rest on highly qualified personnel.

Technology Support. The content is delivered via a learning management system and other learning management systems. Delivery could be synchronous or asynchronous. An effective delivery of content knowledge must be supported by a well-designed technology support structure.

Assessment. Content knowledge is evaluated through well-defined assessment structures. There are different types of assessments: performance-based assessment, field experience, and objective-based assessment. The type and combination of the assessments is based strictly on the content knowledge. The assessment structure must be supported by rubrics to ensure objectivity and inter-rater reliability.

Support. Guidelines, procedures, structures, policies, and programs must be in place to support the learner.

Table 2.1. Components of C-TACK Framework

Technology Knowledge	Competency-based Knowledge	Andragogy Knowledge	Content Knowledge
Communication software	Curriculum design	Involved adults	Standards
Support systems	Competencies	Experienced adults	Accreditation
Learning management system	Assessment	Relevance to adults' lives	Instructional Materials
Digital devices	Engage students	Problem-centered	Qualified Personnel
	External partners		Technology
	Transparency of learning		Assessment
	Continuous improvement		Support
	Institutional support		

The C-TACK framework yields four dynamic interactions between the four major components, with technology being the constant in all interactions:

Competency-based Technological Andragogy Knowledge (C-TAK)

C-TAK addresses how learning outcomes interplay with Knowles’s theory of andragogy and the C-BENs’ eight principles of competency-based education in a dynamic technological environment. This interplay addresses Knowles’s vision of engaging the adult learner in the process through well-defined learning outcomes supported and delivered with various technologies. This transformation is best achieved when programs, through the effective use of universal design for learning (UDL), use differentiation to represent and adapt instructional materials to deliver instruction and also to reflect the adult’s prior knowledge and experiences in a collaborative learning environment. C-TAK ensures that competency units aligned with technological activities

are task-oriented, self-paced, and personalized. It is important that programs provide opportunities for non-traditional students to learn how to integrate learning technologies and have access to technical support within a defined structure.

Competency-based Technological Content Knowledge (C-TCK)

C-TCK addresses how technology plays a significant role in delivering competencies to adult learners within a defined content. The C-BEN principles of competency-based education ensure differentiation, self-paced instruction, and task-oriented practices of the content. This interplay provides an effective structure for the adult learner to gain skills necessary for skill acquisition or credentialing through technology.

Technological Andragogy and Content Knowledge (TACK)

TACK addresses how technology is used to support how the adult learner engages with the content. It requires a deep understanding of what the adult knows about the content and technology, how well the adult learner adapts to digital content in both synchronous and asynchronous learning environments, and the effectiveness of the support structures in place to help the adult learner.

Competency-based Technological Andragogy and Content Knowledge (C-TACK)

C-TACK is the comprehensive interplay of four major knowledge components: competency-based education knowledge, andragogy knowledge, content knowledge, and technological knowledge. The design of the outcome-based curriculum delivered via synchronous or asynchronous delivery takes into consideration the what, how, and when of what the adult learner needs to know about the content driven by various technologies. In general, CBE programs (designed with differentiation to take into account issues of accessibility and self-paced instruction, and focused on outcomes as a constant and with time as a variable) are more likely to lead to higher rates of completion and higher levels credentialing.

CBE at North Carolina Central University

Declining enrollment in teacher education programs in the School of Education (SOE) at North Carolina Central University (NCCU) necessitated innovative and effective recruitment practices to support the need to credential highly qualified teachers for North Carolina's public schools. A comprehensive review of enrollment and program completion data indicated that non-traditional students were successfully completing the teacher education program. In particular, students who had experience working in public schools as teacher/instructional assistants completed the program at higher rates and indicated stronger instructional effectiveness once obtaining licensed teaching positions. Consequently, the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, under the leadership of the department chairperson, Prince Bull, implemented the Teacher Assistants to Teachers Program (TA2TP). This initiative involved actively recruiting current teacher assistants who had undergraduate or associate of arts degrees for enrollment in the unit's elementary or middle grades education programs. Program courses were offered online in either sixteen- or eight-week sessions. Students also had the option of attending campus meetings on Saturdays for eight weeks. Advising support and campus orientation sessions were also offered to all students.

This initiative was successful in increasing enrollment; however, one issue was constantly noted as an area of concern for the students enrolled in the TA2TP—time for program completion. In short, the students wanted to be able to complete the program at their own pace and they wanted credit for the rich experiences and knowledge they already had regarding the education field. Due to the urgent need to license teachers based on declining numbers and legislative mandates, the implementation of CBE using the C-TACK framework provided a resolution to this imperative.

The CBE Process at NCCU

The NCCU CBE team is comprised of several members, including NCCU stakeholders from various offices and departments on our campus (Offices of the Chancellor and Provost, dean of the School of Education, Registrar's Office, Financial Aid Office, Information Technology Services, and Distance Education), nine faculty from the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, two SOE supplemental staff members (director of University-School Partner-

ships and the Supplemental Instruction coordinator), three adjunct faculty/public school partners, and two administrative assistants. Additionally, the NCCU team collaborated with a CBE consultant from DePaul University, a UNC General Administration liaison, and the CBE pilot team from Winston Salem State University.

The team, with the exception of the NCCU stakeholders, committed to meeting on several Saturdays in the School of Education beginning in January, for 4–5 hours each session. The Saturday meetings were designed to be working sessions, often with tasks to complete prior to the meeting so that work could progress as efficiently as possible in the interim. As a method of accountability, team members would often submit work to the project lead or a team lead a few days prior to meeting, either for a quick review or so the work could be compiled ahead of time for sharing with the larger group.

To begin the process of transforming our undergraduate programs in elementary and middle grades education for CBE delivery, the team began with an accreditation crosswalk activity to ensure that concepts identified in the newly adopted Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) Standards were also present in the final product. In particular, CAEP Standard 1: Content and Pedagogical Knowledge, was reviewed. The standard states: “The provider ensures that students develop a deep understanding of the critical concepts and principles of their discipline and, by completion, are able to use discipline-specific practices flexibly to advance the learning of all students toward attainment of college- and career-readiness standards.”

With regard to developing a CBE delivery model, which is based upon competencies that demonstrate a deep understanding and application of content and pedagogy, specific focus was given to Standard 1.1, Student Knowledge, Skills, and Professional Dispositions, which states: “Students demonstrate an understanding of the 10 InTASC standards at the appropriate progression level(s) in the following categories: the learner and learning; content; instructional practice; and professional responsibility.”

Since it was clear that CAEP Standard 1.1 was distinctly aligned with the InTASC Standards, the team then focused on verifying the alignment between the InTASC Standards and the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards (NCPTS), which detail what teachers need to know and be able to do to teach students in twenty-first-century schools, as determined by the North Carolina Professional Teaching Standards (NCPTS) Commission. NCPTS addresses six standards (and multiple indicators for each standard), which

are the basis for teacher preparation, teacher evaluation, and professional development. The team participated in a gallery walk, in which each of the ten InTASC Standards was written on chart paper and placed on the walls around the department. In pairs, team members visited each standard and added to the chart any standards from NCPTS that matched. Once the gallery walk was complete, a matrix was created that showed that every part of the NCPTS was addressed, often multiple times across InTASC Standards.

Following the completion of the matrix, the team developed the competencies that would comprise the model for the first half of the program (initially eight courses). Content designers were assigned to lead the work for courses they had taught and/or were currently teaching, and provided the student learning outcomes (SLOs) for those courses to the CBE team. In two breakout groups, each consisting of a team lead, the content designer, and half of the CBE team, the SLOs were reviewed and grouped, and then clustered based on similar themes. These clusters of SLOs were then used to develop the first draft of the competencies for each course. Team leads, who were also coordinators for the elementary and middle grades programs, served as facilitators for review of the competencies. As coordinators, the team leads were familiar with the standards and expectations for program completion in their respective areas, and they were able to provide a comprehensive outlook for the CBE model's final presentation.

Bloom's revised taxonomy was a critical resource throughout the process. When developing competencies for the CBE pilot, content designers and their corresponding teams were careful to select appropriate skill levels, paying close attention to nuances in levels expected within and across the traditional courses in the program. For example, content in the early courses often provides the foundation for learning in future courses; therefore, a skill might progress from understanding in earlier competencies to application and evaluation in subsequent competencies. By thinking of the competencies this way, the team was able to express the depth of knowledge that students would demonstrate over the course of the program.

To ensure an unbiased and comprehensive review, teams then switched competencies and repeated the process, noting any questions, missing information, or other items needing attention. Again, team leads facilitated this process, providing unbiased leadership by not participating in group work that focused on review and revision of their own competencies. Instead, they served as a new perspective on the content and expectation. Once the teams

were satisfied with their revision, the competencies were presented to the larger CBE team for a final conversation before moving forward.

Each content designer then sent the draft of the competencies to the CBE consultant for review and recommendations. This process was repeated for all eight courses, along with an additional course that was ready for review. Feedback from the consultant occurred between Saturday sessions, during which time content designers were encouraged to review and revise their competencies as needed. Additionally, revisions with consultant feedback were forwarded by email to team leads. When the full CBE team reconvened, the newly revised competencies were shared again in unbiased teams, given a final review and revision, and submitted to the larger CBE team for a vote. As each set of competencies was approved, they were compiled sequentially into a larger document that would eventually become the NCCU CBE delivery model.

In addition to Saturday work sessions, content designers worked independently by using a template to develop the instructional materials (e.g., textbooks, articles, web documents, videos), and assignments (e.g., practice activities, read and respond activities, etc.). The materials and assignments were required in the sense that they supported learning for the competency; however, a student with prior knowledge and experience in a particular area would have the option to move forward when appropriate.

Content designers also developed assessments that corresponded to the competencies. The assessments, rather than the materials-based assignments, would serve as indicators of whether or not a student passed a particular competency. Because assessments needed to clearly match the competencies, teams met again to review and confirm this connection. The teams reviewed three different types of assessments that could be part of each competency, including: objective assessments (e.g., quizzes and tests), performance assessments (e.g., products such as papers, projects, video presentations, etc.), and field assessments (e.g., journals, reflections, logs, and cooperating teacher evaluations).

Content designers also provided rubrics that corresponded to each competency and assessment. The rubrics, which were derived from a template developed by the project lead, promoted continuity across all competencies in the program, and the team determined consistency with rubric integration to be critical for student success with the CBE delivery model. All rubrics used a four-point scale with levels of emerging, developing, proficient,

and accomplished. In the NCCU CBE delivery model, a student would be required to meet the proficient level for each competency, which requires a minimum score of 80%, in order to move forward to the next competency. This condition eliminates the possibility of a student excelling in some (but not all) areas, and still passing a class, which is a current limitation of the traditional delivery model. The CBE model ensures that a student is proficient on every competency upon program completion. A student who chooses to omit the readings and assignments and also does not meet proficiency on the assessment attempt, will be directed back to the instructional materials and allowed opportunities to connect with a CBE coach/advisor for clarification of any of the content.

CBE—Moving from Course to Competencies

The UNC System joined Quality Matters (QM) to increase online teaching and learning effectiveness. As part of this initiative, NCCU invited a pilot group of faculty to begin developing courses toward QM certification. The QM evaluation is a rigorous process, and it is beneficial in providing instructors with the skill set needed to develop effective and efficient online courses across disciplines. CBE team members who are QM evaluators or who have had courses QM certified provided advanced insight in the development of the CBE delivery model. Utilizing the QM experience, in conjunction with other members of the team who have a high level of technology knowledge (TK), ensured that content knowledge (CK) was not lost within an inefficient or ineffective online delivery method. Ultimately, discussions during the work sessions allowed the team the opportunity to discuss and engage content designers to shift paradigms from courses to competencies through online delivery. Without question, this was a challenging process. For example, some content designers assigned to a course in the traditional classroom setting struggled with the transition from designing and revising a course to creating competencies. Faculty resisted addressing SLOs that needed to be met under the competency and remained focused on specific readings and supplemental activities for courses. This desire to keep all course activities, along with faculty passion and ownership of the course, necessitated that a model be used to support content designers in making the paradigm shift from courses to competencies.

The team decided to use the elementary methods course, *Healthful Living for Education in Elementary Schools*, because it was already considered a challenging course to teach in the current online format. To revise the course using a competency-based approach seemed impossible to many team members because the course is designed to introduce pre-service teachers to the study of the healthful living curriculum in elementary schools. Emphasis is placed upon the application of basic concepts of healthful living and physical education in terms of its importance/impact on the role of education. In the traditional course setting, students participate in tasks such as modeling movement integration activities, supervising recess for an elementary class of students, and creating and implementing indoor recess activities. The course also requires fifteen hours of field experience. After a review of the accreditation crosswalks and SLOS, focusing on required outcomes and aligned assessments assisted the content designer in revising the course to competencies (see Table 2.2).

The *Healthful Living in Elementary Education* course helped faculty to conceptualize what the team eventually coined the “cake-baking approach.” This approach involved utilizing the analogy of baking a cake to completing competencies. Faculty understood that if a student knew how to obtain the correct ingredients, mix them in the correct order, prepare them in cake pans, operate the oven, and then bake the cake, there was no need to spend weeks on assessing mixing techniques or how to operate an oven. They began to understand that the competency was whether the student could “bake the cake,” and how beneficial it was to the student who was able to use existing baking skills to move quickly through a competency. When a faculty member showed resistance in making the shift toward competencies, another faculty member would gently remind the team, “Remember, the goal is for the student to bake the cake.” Consequently, the “cake-baking approach” served as the reminder the team needed that the students, who will be comprised of teacher assistants, have much of the background knowledge necessary to be successful with the CBE delivery method. Ultimately, the team made the paradigm shift necessary for the content designers to focus on critical outcomes to be assessed and successfully shifted their courses to competencies.

Table 2.2 Healthful Living for Education in Elementary Schools Course to Competencies

Competency	Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)	Assessments
<p>1. Can identify and create appropriate movement concepts and activities for healthful living in the elementary setting.</p> <p>Subcompetencies Identify appropriate movement concepts. Create appropriate movement concepts. Identify appropriate activities for healthful living. Create appropriate activities for healthful living.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the concept of healthful living education as currently defined by the profession and define their role in providing healthful living education for their students. • Explain the value of healthful living education programs in the elementary grades. • Describe the characteristics of a quality elementary healthful living education program. • Identify motor development and motor learning concepts applicable to the teaching of physical education. • Identify developmentally appropriate practices and activities for teaching movement to children. • Name and describe the components of the movement map. • Participate in activities from the various movement forms. • Identify fitness concepts and activities appropriate for K–6 students. • Develop strategies to integrate students with special needs into the movement activities of the elementary school. • Identify and discuss equity issues relevant to the movement setting. • Discuss the benefits of recess to the elementary school children and construct quality recess time for students. • Self-assess societal forces that have affected students in terms of how they view themselves as moving human beings. 	<p>Objective (Quizzes/Test)</p> <p>Field Observations (Submission of Field Notes/Reflections)</p>

(continued)

Table 2.2. (Continued)

Competency	Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)	Assessments
2. Model healthful living concepts in the learning environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in activities from the various movement forms. • Develop strategies to integrate students with special needs into the movement activities of the elementary school. • Develop lesson plans and unit plans for teaching subject content through movement. • Implement various teaching strategies and organizational techniques when teaching movement. • Integrate movement into subject areas taught in the classroom and understand the benefits of doing so. • Understand and apply the concepts involved in motivating students to be physically active. • Understand and apply the concepts involved in teaching and assessing social skills in the movement setting. 	Performance Rubric (Video Recording)
3. Create, implement, and evaluate a service-learning project that demonstrates leadership and collaboration and addresses a healthful living education concept and a critical need in the school community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a school district curriculum guide to develop a healthful living education curriculum. • Develop lesson plans and unit plans for teaching subject content through movement. • Understand how to organize activities, provide feedback on skill performance, and help students choose responsible behavior when teaching movement. • Implement various teaching strategies and organizational techniques when teaching movement. 	Performance Rubric (Video Recording) Field Observation (Submission of Field Notes/Reflections)

(continued)

Table 2.2. Healthful Living for Education in Elementary Schools Course to Competencies
(Continued)

Competency	Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)	Assessments
Subcompetencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate movement into subject areas taught in the classroom and understand the benefits of doing so. • Understand and apply the concepts involved in motivating students to be physically active • Understand and apply the concepts involved in teaching and assessing social skills in the movement setting. • Identify and discuss equity issues relevant to the movement setting. • Discuss injury prevention, first aid care, and legal liability issues relevant to situations where students are physically active. • Identify current “best practices” in instruction that lead to a safe movement environment. • Identify resources helpful in providing quality healthful living education (professional organizations, websites, books and journals, etc.). 	
Create a service-learning project that addresses a healthful living education concept and a critical need in the school community.		
Evaluate a service-learning project that addresses a healthful living education concept and a critical need in school community.		
Demonstrate leadership through the creation and implementation of a service-learning project.		
Demonstrate collaboration during creation of the service-learning project.		

The Role of the Consultant

During the proposal development stage, the department chair of Curriculum and Instruction contacted Dr. Gretchen Wilbur to be a mentor for CBE program development and assessment. She is an associate professor and director of assessment for the more than forty-five-year-old competency-based education program at DePaul University's School for New Learning. Having also a background in teacher education as a scholar-practitioner, she was able to advise and guide NCCU's transitions from a course-based to a competency-based teacher education curriculum. Her approach as a mentor-guide is symbolized by a Moebius strip where what NCCU programs already do well can be leveraged and reconnected in ways that emphasize competency-based learning. The Moebius, a continuous surface from inside to outside to inside again, represents a flow of core knowledge, skills, and dispositions on the part of faculty and their students. As a consultant, the initial role is to *listen* to and *question* what currently exists within NCCU's particular *context* to tease out concepts and factors that illuminate competences. In so doing, the highly qualified team members—experts in their fields of scholarship and teaching—reconnect core outcomes within a competency framework. During the transition steps described above, the consultant is *feed(ing)back* to faculty designers questions and recommendations for *infusing* and *aligning* within their emerging competence statements a focus on higher level, performance-based knowing and doing outcomes.

Her approach to process consultation *engages* and honors the diverse *voices* of faculty designers as they reconnect their intended outcomes for their students, with a goal of differentiation (i.e., engaging and honoring learners' diverse voices) as they demonstrate core competences. Thus, the flow along the Moebius provides mentored guidance for faculty to re-envision engaging their students' learning, which in turn engages and aligns differentiated learning of the candidates who will ultimately participate in the pilot CBE program.

During the development of competence statements, identification of criteria for developing and assessing competence simultaneously occurs. Since competences define what learners know and can do within particular contexts, the role of the consultant probes designers to express criteria that developmentally scaffold proficiency. That is, the steps needed to demonstrate mastery can be articulated using levels of Bloom's taxonomy, which then serve as measurable, developmental benchmarks. As this development progresses,

alignment of learning activities, assignments, and assessment indicators necessarily unfold, creating an ongoing cycle of teaching, learning, and assessment.

Since learning can happen anywhere anytime in competency-based education, then the competency statements, criteria, and assessment tools form essential components for teaching, learning, and assessment. Four characteristics can serve as checks for appropriate CBE program development and learning assessments. These have been validated through the School for New Learning's assessment practice and learning portfolio research (Wilbur, Marienau, & Fiddler, 2012) and provide focused, yet non-content-specific, guidelines of clarity, flexibility, empathy, and integrity. A CBE consultant asks questions, listens, and gives feedback based upon evidence for:

- **Clarity:** stresses communicating clear expectations by articulating criteria for the demonstration of competency.
- **Flexibility:** promotes assessment of learning through multiple forms of evidence. Multiple ways of knowing and learning are honored in demonstrating competency.
- **Empathy:** embraces individual perspectives and the context of their learning. It respects the multiple voices that inform experience, reducing the privileged position of the academic authority. It recognizes and seeks to integrate the social, emotional, and intellectual dimensions of learning.
- **Integrity:** focuses on applying transparent criteria and indicators of quality in assessing learning in an honest, accurate, and constructive manner. Integrity relies on informed expertise for assessment and critically examines who and how the expert is identified.

These four characteristics not only guided what was produced for the NCCU CBE program, but they also drove the mentoring process used by the consultant. Consequently, the consultant's guidance through listening, questioning, and providing feedback honors multiple perspectives and transparency as the Moebius flows among program standards, course outcomes, and student learning outcomes and re-connects them into competency-based education.

Implications for CBE at NCCU

The implications for the delivery of the elementary and middle grades programs using a competency-based education approach for current teacher/

instructional assistants are significant. To date, NCCU's School of Education has an established partnership with Chapel Hill–Carrboro schools to support a cohort of teacher assistants with certification. The school system recognized the critical need to prepare highly qualified teachers and valued the work and expertise of its population of teacher assistants. Through a competitive application process, and in collaboration with NCCU's Department of Curriculum and Instruction, they identified a group of teacher assistants and committed to paying for their enrollment within the elementary or middle grades education program. These teacher assistants, although enrolled in the traditional online delivery method, highlighted the need for a pathway that took into account experiences that could be used to streamline program completion through a CBE approach. Once the pilot CBE program is launched, the goal will be to offer this delivery mode to teacher assistants, who have significant educational expertise, across North Carolina. Essentially, CBE at NCCU will afford many who are already dedicated and committed educators in the classroom a faster pathway to meeting state licensure requirements.

Due to the collaborative nature of the CBE work sessions, the undergraduate teacher education programs, regardless of delivery mode, will be strengthened. An unintended consequence of the work sessions is that they highlighted areas of overlap and disconnect within courses. Unfortunately, faculty often work in “silos” within the academy; the Saturday work sessions provided a comprehensive view of all courses. Indeed, the team recognized how many courses had deviated from required SLOs and how faculty interests or passions often superseded course goals. However, the emphasis on competencies and the group work sessions focusing on CBE delivery also served to revise the traditionally delivered courses. Unquestionably, this comprehensive review process has made the undergraduate teacher education program return to a stronger alignment with state and accreditation standards.

Faculty also described increased feelings of collegiality with colleagues. Because the project lead, team leads, and consultant took a nonjudgmental consensus approach to the meeting, faculty felt valued regarding their content and technological expertise. Moreover, when faculty were uncomfortable making paradigm shifts or disagreed with feedback, group discussions were held until consensus was reached. In the beginning, this was a time-consuming process. However, as faculty became more comfortable receiving feedback and using the “cake-baking approach,” the process was more expedient.

CBE affords non-traditional students a twenty-first-century approach to

education by leveraging their experiences with a delivery mode that moves at their pace. This approach will impact teacher education by increasing enrollment, providing faster completion rates, and producing more qualified candidates for needy classrooms. Until the perception regarding the profession of teachers takes a more positive turn, the fate of teacher education programs may unavoidably rest upon attracting non-traditional students to obtain credentialing as teachers. CBE provides an opportunity for faster credentialing, while maintaining rigorous program outcomes aligned with state and accreditation standards. NCCU's undergraduate teacher education programs seek to utilize the C-TACK framework to implement a successful CBE program to leverage principles of CBE, andragogy, and the learning outcomes of the content with appropriate learning technologies to increase credentialing of teacher and instructional assistants across the nation.

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Pathway to Practice

A Competency-based Lateral Entry Collaborative

ALISON C. WINZELER, M.ED.

North Carolina State University

MICHAEL MAHER, PH.D.

North Carolina State University

DIANA LYS, PH.D.

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Abstract

North Carolina has seen a shortage of teachers for more than a decade. The state has routinely relied on both in-state and out-of-state prepared teachers as well as lateral entry teachers; there is little to suggest this will change. Aggressively addressing the current shortage provided an opportunity for NC State and UNC to potentially change the landscape for alternative teacher preparation throughout North Carolina and nationally. We are developing a high quality, competency-based teacher preparation program specifically designed for the needs of lateral entry teachers. The program, Pathway to Practice, supports current classroom “second-career” teachers who have content knowledge and career experience, but need the pedagogy, coaching, and support of an education program. The CBE model engages these teachers from across the state to become highly qualified teachers through a self-paced program in online community.

Keywords

competency-based education, CBE, teacher shortage, teacher quality, alternative licensure, lateral entry, licensure, second-career teachers, teacher support programs

Program Need and Background

A critical teacher shortage is now among the most pressing needs for our state as North Carolina has simultaneously experienced growing K–12 enrollments and declining teacher preparation enrollments. In an effort to fill classroom vacancies, Local Education Agencies (LEAs) are increasingly hiring individuals who meet content requirements but lack teacher preparation. According to a recent NC Department of Public Instruction report, these lateral entry teachers are less effective teachers and leave the profession at a greater rate than traditionally prepared teachers, most notably at the fifth year of experience.

Provided our position as two of the universities in the UNC system with research missions, UNC and NC State are challenged to meet the needs of children and schools throughout North Carolina. Due to our relatively close proximity to each other, the NC State College of Education (NC State) and UNC Chapel Hill School of Education (UNC) share a geographic service area (NC State Board of Education District 3). According to the 2016 North Carolina teacher turnover report there were more than 4,300 lateral entry teachers in North Carolina, with more than 850 located in the NC State–UNC service area. The overall attrition rate for teachers is 15%, but the attrition rate for lateral entry teachers is 24%—which is 79% higher than that for non-lateral entry teachers.

North Carolina has been a teacher shortage state for more than a decade. The state has routinely relied on both in-state and out-of-state prepared teachers as well as lateral entry teachers; there is little to suggest this will change. Aggressively addressing the current shortage provides an excellent opportunity for both of the aforementioned institutions of higher education and our partner LEAs. Both NC State and UNC are recognized as among the most effective teacher preparation programs in the state, and a collaborative endeavor could potentially change the landscape for alternative teacher preparation throughout North Carolina and nationally.

To this end, we are developing a high quality, research-based teacher preparation program specifically designed for the needs of lateral entry teachers. This collaborative effort between the NC State College of Education and the UNC School of Education would meet employment and preparation needs of LEAs, while bolstering teacher production at each constituent institution.

Most importantly, the program would meet a pressing need for highly qualified and highly effective teachers in every North Carolina classroom, regardless of their pathway to licensure.

The plan to develop and administer a joint NC State–UNC lateral entry teacher preparation program began in early 2016. Initial conversations were held between Dean Mary Ann Danowitz (NC State), Assistant Dean Michael Maher (NC State), Associate Dean Deb Eaker-Rich (UNC), and Assistant Dean Diana Lys (UNC) in the spring and early summer of 2016. With the appointment of Dean Fouad Abd-El-Khalick (UNC), the project was prioritized and planning meetings began with Drs. Maher and Lys taking the lead. At the start of the 2016 academic year, meetings were held with faculty from both NC State and UNC both separately and jointly. A decision was made to develop a full competency-based education program. A CBE licensure pathway offered supportive, affordable, high-quality lateral entry teacher training. Such a program aimed to meet the professional needs of the second-career teacher currently in the classroom.

Program Development

The project timeline includes several major milestones extending from June 2016 through fall 2017. Pilot participants will begin enrolling in the fall of 2017, with rolling admissions thereafter. We have set a conservative estimate at fifty pilot participants. In 2016, our combined service area public schools employed nearly nine hundred lateral entry teachers. More than two hundred of those teachers were employed in just eight districts in licensure areas in which we are proposing to offer a program. There were nearly two thousand laterally licensed teachers in those same areas statewide in 2016. The pilot program will offer middle and high school math, science, social studies, and English/language arts in the pilot year, with the intention of creating a special education pathway for future cohorts.

In June 2017, instructional teams created the competency modules based on the InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards, a consortium of state education agencies and national education organizations dedicated to teacher preparation and state licensing (CCSSO). The program is structured into four overarching sections: Learner and Learning, Content Knowledge, Instructional Practice, and Professional Responsibility. After meetings developing our con-

ceptual framework and programmatic structure during the spring of 2017, we moved to constructing modules with individual competencies, application exercises, and artifacts. The competency-based instruction modules will be aligned with edTPA competencies as well as content-specific professional organizations. Modules were completed at the end of June 2017.

Next steps included the platform development in partnership with D2L, our contracted learning management system, and facilitator training. We followed up with on-site consulting with D2L organizers, designers, and managers and have virtual meetings weekly. Our needs assessment further prioritized our next steps based on our success criteria. Implementation Strategies, Technology Integration, and Communication Strategies have been worked into the overall CBE development plan. The launch is planned for October 2017.

Next Steps

Evaluation metrics for Pathway to Practice include short-, medium-, and long-term outcomes. Short-term outcomes that have been met include the establishment of a project implementation team and the establishment of instructional teams of faculty and doctoral students from both campuses. These teams are developing the standards-aligned competencies and migration of content to the D2L platform. Medium-term outcomes are directed by the implementation team and include conducting focus groups, meeting with partner school districts, and working directly with the campus change implementation teams. Long-term outcomes include program completion metrics such as time-to-completion, teacher effectiveness as determined by the NC Department of Public Instruction and principal evaluation, and teacher retention rates.

Table 3.1. 2016 Lateral Entry Hires for Regions 1 and 3 LEAs

LEA (Partner LEAs Highlighted)	Elementary	Middle Grades (6–9)	Secondary (9–12)	Special Education	Grand Total
Beaufort County Schools	1	6	1	1	9
Bertie County Schools	2	4	5		11
Camden County Schools				1	1
Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools	3		1	1	5
Chatham County Schools		2	3	9	14
Currituck County Schools		1	2	1	4
Dare County Schools		2	1	1	4
Durham Public Schools	20	34	33	28	115
Edenton-Chowan Schools			3	1	4
Edgecombe County Public Schools	5	18	3	5	31
Elizabeth City-Pasquotank Public Schools	2	7	7	2	18
Franklin County Schools	1	9	4	7	21
Gates County Schools			3	1	4
Granville County Schools	8	10	10	4	32
Halifax County Schools	4	10	2	4	20
Harnett County Schools	8	20	26	14	68
Hertford County Schools	1	6	4	1	12
Hyde County Schools	1		1		2
Johnston County Schools	5	29	10	20	64
Lee County Schools	1	5	5	4	15
Martin County Schools			2	2	4
Nash-Rocky Mount Schools	14	23	13	7	57
Northampton County Schools	4	8	7	3	22
Orange County Schools			5	4	9
Perquimans County Schools	1			1	2
Person County Schools	1	6	4	3	14
Pitt County Schools	12	22	16	16	66
Roanoke Rapids City Schools	2	1	1	2	6
Vance County Schools	5	10	11	4	30
Wake County Schools	6	21	25	51	103
Warren County Schools	7	8	13	2	30
Washington County Schools	1	2	3		6
Weldon City Schools	4	6	11		21
Wilson County Schools	4	11	5	4	24
Grand Total	123	281	240	204	848

Table 3.2. 2016 Lateral Entry License Statewide

Content Area	Middle Grades (6–9)	High School (9–12)
English/Language Arts	232	208
Math	245	195
Science (all areas)	259	407
Social Studies/History	217	197
Total	953	1007

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RamVision

Transformative Curriculum Design

ALFREDA HARPER-HARRISON, ED.D, MSN, RN, CLNC

Winston-Salem State University

SHERRI Y. MURRELL, MSN, RN

Winston-Salem State University

LORRIE R. DAVIS-DICK, MSN, RN-BC

Winston-Salem State University

NATASHA M. OHENE, M.ED.

Winston-Salem State University

Abstract

This chapter discusses the Winston-Salem State University RN-BSN CBE development team's introduction of the RamVision transformative curriculum design. On a national platform, the modernization of the traditional postsecondary education curriculum is an emerging priority. Competency-based education is a growing buzz term in higher education that emerged more than four decades ago. The baccalaureate-granting degree institutions play a crucial role in developing global citizens of tomorrow, specifically in RN-BSN programs. It is imperative to confirm that university infrastructure concerns are addressed to ensure a successful CBE program implementation. In the RamVision curriculum redesign, unique competencies identify as the Competency Domains. Moreover, selecting the best learning management system that helps the institution support its academic curriculum is imperative for the students, faculty, and administrators. Higher education holds a responsibility to stay congruent with today's student who requires new and innovative learning pathways.

Keywords

competency-based education, CBE, mentor-faculty roles, backward design, RN-BSN

Competency-based education (CBE) is a growing buzz term in higher education that actually emerged more than four decades ago. CBE is transforming traditional higher education models in nursing programs with a shift toward student-centric curriculum and processes by focusing on real-world learning using student mastery as the metric of success. A deconstructive model and vision provides the learner with the expectations to progress in their respective program upon mastering evidence-based concepts (Brandman University, 2016).

Adult learners who adopt the competency framework may pay a set price for a program subscription, move through courses at a personalized pace, and create a customizable learning experience. Current CBE models allow the learner to transport prior work and life experiences to unlimited access to academic content. Learners earn degrees by showing mastery through completion of complex competencies. These competencies are completed by means of a scaffolded design. CBE offers flexibility, integration of student-focused technology platforms, and robust formative and summative assessments. The new inclusion of the program option in nursing education allows the learner control to accelerate a learning path at a personalized pace (Brandman University, 2016).

On a national platform, modernization of a traditional postsecondary education curriculum is an emerging priority. In 2015, the White House hosted a symposium on emerging trends in higher education with the Domestic Policy Council, National Economic Council, and the US Department of Education present. Dr. Laurie Dodge, then-chair of the Competency-Based Education Network (C-BEN), presented on CBE's scalability, quality, and innovation. Dodge discussed the theories, principles, and research that make CBE a future staple in higher education (Brandman University, 2016).

CBE and the Adult Learner

It is not a surprise that the average age of the student who enters and completes a four-year college education is rising, with little evidence that this trend will reverse. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2017),

between 2004 and 2014 the average age of an undergraduate student increased by 16%. By 2025, the Center projects an 18% increase of students age twenty-five or older who enter a degree-granting institution. Specifically, students pursuing degrees in health-related fields are higher, as these students navigate toward healthcare jobs as a second career choice (NCES Fast Facts, 2017).

The RN-BSN CBE Connection

The baccalaureate-granting degree institutions play a crucial role in developing global citizens of tomorrow, specifically in RN-BSN programs. The Institute of Medicine (IOM) charges that all nurses in the United States hold at least a bachelor's degree in nursing by the year 2020. According to the North Carolina Board of Nursing (2017), out of the 105,628 diverse nursing roles, nurses hold 69,130 staff positions. As of 2017, there are 41,704 registered nurses in North Carolina who hold an associate degree in nursing. This statistic is noticeably higher than the number of nurses with baccalaureate degrees in the state (Licensure Statistics, 2017).

Winston-Salem State University, a long-established HBCU (historically black college/university) in North Carolina, is centrally located in Forsyth County where there are currently 6,548 registered nurses in the area (Licensure Statistics, 2017). In addition, recent research discusses the changing face of the HBCU with the enrollment of more diverse students originating from non-minority ethnic/racial backgrounds (Gasman, 2017).

RamVision— Transformative Curriculum Design

The flexible CBE platform provides a personalized option that allows post-licensure nursing students to capitalize on experience and progress through the baccalaureate program spending minimal time reviewing concepts previously mastered. This type of curriculum redesign transforms how the nurse with an associate's degree builds on current knowledge, skills, and abilities to demonstrate a level of competence that meets the nursing profession's expectations of the baccalaureate-prepared nurse. The traditional curriculum is built on courses with specific objectives, which students are expected to achieve to receive credit for completion. Assignments in the courses are designed to measure a student's knowledge about the course-related content. An average of scores from the course assignments determines the level of success

in the course but does not necessarily measure competence with relation to the desired objectives. The shift to competency-based education is a logical move that incorporates the current knowledge and skill proficiency of the registered nurse.

RamVision curriculum redesign encompasses multiple components that work together in a non-linear fashion over four phases to form a student-centered personalized learning pathway. The term *RamVision* was coined to represent the process used to redesign the RN-BSN curriculum at WSSU in Winston Salem, North Carolina. RamVision is the combination of key terms such as *determination, action, strength, initiative, and leadership* used to describe the essence of the WSSU ram with a forward-thinking perception for future developments. As the first professional program in the UNC system to offer a complete competency-based curriculum in the RN-BSN, RamVision is both scalable and student-focused.

Some may say a learning curve should be expected when trying something new. The process of transforming a traditional curriculum to a CBE curriculum may feel more like a learning curve that turns into a right angle. The redesign process for RN-BSN programs is transformational because it forces faculty to rethink how and what information is essential—based on the needs of the nursing profession, students, and other stakeholders. The learning outcomes are expressed through action words rather than nouns, allowing students to demonstrate concepts like *critical thinking* and *creative problem solving*.

The backward design curriculum model is frequently used in the development of CBE curriculum. There are three stages to backward design: identify the desired result, determine acceptable evidence of learning, and design learning experiences and instruction (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). However, the traditional backward design model does not take into account the intricacies required to incorporate a crosswalk of concepts to meet the demands of multiple accrediting agencies. When transitioning from a traditional curriculum model that is based on accreditation standards to a CBE model, it is essential to start the crosswalk from the accreditation requirements to the newly developed competencies from the onset of the redesign. Therefore, when redesigning the RN-BSN curriculum, the accreditation agencies' requirements were used as the driving force to identify the basic competencies all students are expected to achieve prior to receiving the baccalaureate degree. In the RamVision curriculum redesign, these basic competencies are identified as the competency domains.

Competency domains are brief descriptions used to categorize specific learning outcomes or competencies. To ensure a cohesive crosswalk between the traditional and CBE options, individual courses in the traditional curriculum should be dissected using the course objectives to develop program-specific subcompetencies. During the development of subcompetencies, multiple course objectives might be combined into one subcompetency. The newly developed subcompetencies should then be mapped back to the appropriate competency domain to eliminate duplication of competencies that may have been identified in the courses across the curriculum to ensure all essential accreditation requirements are met.

The next step in the process is to develop criteria to measure each competency prior to the development of the assessment. The criteria should help to determine the method and type of assessment used to evaluate student competence. According to Wiggins and McTighe (2005), learning experiences should be planned with the final assessment in mind. Therefore, learning activities should be curtailed toward the competency and assessment. A detailed rubric is an essential tool used not only to evaluate student performance but to guide students and provide essential feedback for performance improvement.

Selection of a Learning Management System

The teaching and learning process is consistently evolving (García-Peñalvo & Forment, 2014). The evolution is linked to context and persuaded by technological, pedagogical, or sociological trends (García-Peñalvo & Forment, 2014). One of the most common tools used in eLearning is the learning management system (LMS): 100% of the universities have at least one LMS (García-Peñalvo & Forment, 2014). Selecting the best LMS that helps the institution accomplish its academic curriculum is imperative for the students, faculty, and administrators (Wright, Lopes, Montgomerie, Reju & Schmoller, 2014). While preparing to select an LMS platform, we had many questions: Which LMS do we choose? What do the terms mean? How will the LMS best benefit our program? How much will it cost? Will the LMS collaborate with our infrastructure? Is the LMS student friendly? Who needs to be involved with this process? From these questions, we came up with a model to assist us with selecting the best LMS platform to meet the needs of the RN-BSN CBE option. The LMS is a vital component of the CBE program's efficiency and connection with the program outcomes. The selection model we incorpo-

rated included the following actions for stakeholders (including IT personnel, faculty, and academic staff):

- Collaborate to assist with the decision making and selection criteria.
- Review the institution's infrastructure.
- Identify program needs.
- Create the timeline for the selection process, training, and testing phase.
- Perform analysis of LMS software advantages and disadvantages.
- Evaluate the LMS features and functions.
- Review LMS immediate and sustaining costs.

Infrastructure

When implementing any new academic program, making sure the proper infrastructure is in place is key to ensuring success. Because CBE is such a new endeavor within the higher education landscape, making sure that infrastructure concerns are addressed is tantamount to a successful implementation.

Initially, the CBE redesign team consisted of the RN-BSN faculty and grant investigators. It became evident very quickly that additional essential members would need to be added to assist with the implementation process. With the assistance of UNC General Administration, a consultant was hired as the CBE project manager to oversee the following initial tasks: facilitate identification of the LMS for the CBE pilot, develop a project plan and timeline, assist with the marketing plan, manage meetings with WSSU key stakeholders to discuss enrollment management infrastructure, assist faculty with curriculum redesign meetings, and serve as the coordinating liaison for the LMS, UNC General Administration, and WSSU faculty and staff.

At the outset, the main focus was the curriculum redesign and choosing a learning management system. As time progressed, questions arose such as: How much will we charge for tuition? How will billing and course registration work? How will financial aid work? How will we market and recruit students? As a result of these questions, a team of key university stakeholders was assembled. We started the WSSU CBE Change Implementation Team, whose members include faculty/staff from the following departments: enrollment management, admissions, financial aid, registrar, finance, information technology, faculty development, marketing, and UNC General Administration.

Our CBE Change Implementation Team meets on a monthly basis to discuss issues/concerns and to make decisions. Bringing key university stakeholders together brought up more questions that needed to be answered such as: What is our implementation timeline? How will SAP (Standard Academic Progress) be determined? What will the academic transcript look like? What academic policies need to be updated for CBE students? Answers to these questions are not easily applicable to all but should be individualized to meet the needs of the students and institution. It is important to work directly with the departments whose workflows will be impacted by implementation decisions. This also helps to get buy-in from important university stakeholders.

No program or software implementation is without challenges, and implementing a new RN-BSN CBE academic option has presented many. Some of those challenges include: gaining buy-in from key university stakeholders, finding time to come together as a group (CBE Change Implementation Team), finding time to have subcommittee meetings as needed, and establishing how billing and financial aid will work. Working together has enabled us to problem-solve and make effective decisions as a holistic unit.

Implementation Lessons and Timelines

The biggest takeaway from implementing a new CBE program is the importance of having a timeline. Making sure everyone is on board with the timeline and implementation plan is a major key to success. A project manager who can manage day-to-day operations, assist faculty, and maintain project timelines is essential. The timeline is a way to keep everyone informed of what needs to be accomplished, by whom and by when. While the obvious point of the timeline is to keep a detailed list of tasks and due dates, it is important to remain flexible and to be prepared for and expect changes.

Faculty workload is another important aspect of CBE program implementation for which we may not have adequately planned. When planning a CBE program, it is important to appropriately estimate the enormous amount of time needed to develop the curriculum, work with the LMS to upload curriculum content and learning resources, and to do LMS testing and training. These are specific items of a CBE implementation that faculty are a key part of and therefore faculty workload plays heavily into making sure these items are completed on schedule.

Mentor-Faculty Roles

The restructured student support role is emerging as a six-letter word: mentor. The RN-BSN student transition to a CBE program may be influenced with regard to a formally implemented mentorship support model. In other CBE programs that we benchmarked, mentors are employed with the institution full time and require a master's degree or higher with recent experience in their respective discipline. Students are assigned a student-mentor, who is the lifeline for the student throughout the program trajectory. As experts in the program's academic requirements, a student-mentor provides day-to-day support with students via diverse educational platforms. A student-mentor is able to navigate students toward graduation as evidenced by their proficiency in the program's academic requirements.

Additional roles in CBE program planning are that of content expert and course mentor. Both of these roles may hold terminal degrees and are subject-matter experts. The course mentor manages assigned courses and supports students using integrative technology software and processes. The course mentor role is not to be blended with the role of the evaluator, a content expert who exclusively is involved in the assessment's evaluation. Student contact with mentors are expected to hold consistency and mirror the anticipated student to faculty conversations in higher education. Additionally, the US Department of Education rules for federal aid eligibility require regular and substantive interaction with undergraduate and graduate students in distance education programs (Brandman University, 2016).

Recruitment and Retention

Recruitment and retention of nursing students is an ongoing concern. The issues involved with recruiting a student and keeping that student engaged in the program must be continually monitored. There are many reasons for student attrition—work schedules, negative experiences with courses, inability to manage the rigor of course assignments, financial hardship, and dissatisfaction with the institution to name a few. The importance of a smooth and effective transition into the academic setting requires due diligence on the institution's behalf. From admissions, to the registrar, to financial aid, to student billing and receivables, nursing faculty and staff all play an integral role in setting a positive and rewarding experience for the student.

In an effort to increase the number of baccalaureate-prepared nurses in the workforce to 80% by the year 2020, we have identified the following recruitment and retention strategies for the RN-BSN CBE option.

Recruitment

- Create Interactive Eligibility Model (located on the institution's website) to assist the student in determining if they are eligible to apply to the CBE option.
- Attend community colleges, hospitals, and nursing organizational events (NCNA, ANA, etc.) that target prospective students. If possible, offer scheduled transcript review and a personalized plan of study during the visit.
- Complete a complementary transcript review and personalized plan of study on a specific day of the week.
- Keep a database of prospective students on a shared system; do frequent follow-throughs with prospective students who have either received transcript reviews and/or expressed interest at a recruitment event.
- Make transcript review results and personalized plans of study available on a shared system, so other faculty can communicate with the student.
- Provide non-monetary incentives to current students who refer five or more peers to the regional coordinator for a transcript review
- Provide clear communication of the program, such as a program flyer outlining the benefits, cost, admission requirements, curriculum, and contact information.
- Advertise on your institution's website, the institution build board, and the North Carolina Bulletin and network with other community college and hospital colleagues.

Retention

- Provide timely and consistent communication from admission to graduation.
- Provide strong student advisement.
- Provide academic and technology support.
- Provide interactive orientation to CBE.
- Facilitate relationship-building activities between students and faculty.

- Create a newsletter outlining achievements, opportunities, motivational points, and program-specific topics to assist the student with learning.
- Provide resources for financial assistance, housing, and so forth to meet any unmet needs that would hinder the student in being successful.

As a program, we have to show and maintain interest in assisting the nursing student to “enter to learn, depart to serve” in a rewarding and timely fashion.

Summary

More than six hundred colleges and universities plan to or already have developed CBE programs (NCES, 2017). Today higher education is meeting new innovative technology platforms, faculty perspectives, and the state of today’s learners. Higher education holds a responsibility to stay congruent with today’s student who requires new and innovative learning pathways. Faculty and student inquiry of the CBE model is rising and includes a call for more cohesive and coherent learning systems. Furthermore, this student-centered model is receiving high acclaim on a national stage. The WSSU RN-BSN CBE Ram-Vision model will transform higher education’s approaches toward curriculum design, the role of the faculty, and student-empowered learning.

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A Coaching Model in Response to Disruptive Education

ELIZABETH G. BENTLEY, MBA

Walden University

Abstract

CBE practices are disrupting education in multiple ways. This chapter presents educators, college administrators, and anyone in higher education with an innovative approach to supporting CBE students effectively and efficiently by coaching students to identify, enhance, and develop intrapersonal competencies. This chapter presents a simple and integrative coaching model for educators. The coaching techniques and suggestions of this model are meant to be integrated into current models and practices to promote student learning outcomes, improve student persistence, and increase retention and graduation rates.

Keywords

CBE, coaching model, student success, student retention

If you were in attendance at the UNC Competency-Based Education Summit 2017, you heard the keynote address presented by Michelle Weise. Weise (2017) mentioned the word *disruption* quite a few times. What we learned from her speech was that disruptions lead to innovation. She illustrated how disruptions in the marketplace had changed markets in the past. Simply put, disruption changes current strategies and creates new markets within or outside of existing ones.

Competency-based education (CBE) represents, in essence, a new market in education. The drivers behind CBE are students' economic need for affordable, flexible, and job-relevant education. It is important to understand that CBE is not only disruptive to curriculums but pedagogical practices and student support services as well.

This chapter presents educators, college administrators, and anyone in higher education with an innovative approach to supporting CBE students effectively and efficiently by coaching them to identify, enhance, and develop intrapersonal competencies. Coaching, in general, helps an individual improve and become the best version of themselves. The coaching model presented here aligns with the call to action the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine recently published.

The National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine (National Academies) recently released a study titled "Support Students' College Success: The Role of Assessment of Intrapersonal and Interpersonal Competencies" (National Academies, 2017). National Academies organized a committee tasked to perform a literature review to "assess intrapersonal and interpersonal competencies in higher education" (National Academies, 2017, 1). The committee found and recommended that colleges and universities should perform research and further analysis into how a student's intrapersonal competencies play an integral role in persistence and college completion.

According to the National Academies the malleable competencies that impact student success are:

- a sense of belonging
- a growth mindset
- utility goals and values
- behaviors
- academic self-efficacy
- intrinsic goals and interests
- pro-social goals and values
- positive future self (National Academies, 2017, 4–5).

The coaching model for educators presented here trains educators on how to coach students to develop or improve these competencies. It is not meant to replace current pedagogical practices or current student support models. It is intended to enhance them. Some institutions have developed independent student-facing coaching departments. For example, the University of North

Carolina at Chapel Hill Learning Center offers academic coaching as one of their student-centered support services (UNC at Chapel Hill, 2017).

In contrast, other institutions have begun integrating coaching models and practices with their academic advising and teaching models. For example, the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) has created an interest group charged with developing an integrative advising and coaching model. According to NACADA, “Coaching does not have to be an alternative to advising; coaching and advising can be intertwined to increase the chances for students to be successful—in college and in life!” (NACADA, 2017, para.1). The coaching model I present here can be integrated into professional development for faculty and staff or used to develop a coaching division.

EduCoaching Model for Educators and Student Support Professionals

Below I present a simple and integrative coaching model for educators. The coaching techniques and suggestions of this model are meant to be integrated into current models and practices to promote student learning outcomes, improve student persistence, and increase retention and graduation rates. Educators contribute to students’ success through coaching specific competencies (National Academies, 2017).

This coaching model entails four main focus areas.

1. The first focus area is the skills of the coach. It will teach the skills and practices that coaches use to build relationships and trust with students. It is a coaching practice defined by integrity, ethics, and professionalism.
2. The second focus area is the students’ agenda. Here we focus on changing the traditional direction of information that usually flows to the students from educators. Instead, this model suggests reversing the flow of information from the student to educators when working to overcome obstacles and developing intrapersonal competencies.
3. The third part of this model is the students’ commitment. It focuses on teaching educators the necessary coaching skills to gain commitment from students.
4. The final part of the model is the students’ execution. It focuses on training educators how to coach students to master their learning environment, execute on their goals, and persist through to graduation.

Skills of the Coach

Integrity: Strong ethics define the field of coaching. Any professional with coach training must act with ethics and integrity. Faculty and staff demonstrate integrity to students by doing what they say they are going to do, showing fair and equitable treatment, and modeling positive behaviors.

Building trust: It is important to know that the role of a coach is a trusted and professional one. Gaining the trust of the students is a priority in coaching. Through this process, students will see that you are genuinely interested in their success and they learn to trust you. The result of building trust is a relationship in which you can both grow.

Relationship building: Building a connection with students is the primary task of any coaching professional. The goal at the beginning of the relationship between coach and student is to generate a connection. Coaches do this by asking genuine and thought-provoking questions.

The Student's Agenda

The student's agenda is at the core of coaching. It connects the adaptable competencies to student-designed actions. Bringing the student's agenda to the forefront creates a link between the student and what internally drives them. Some students may not even know what their internal motivations are, but that is the best part of coaching, it allows them the space to figure it out.

Many of us attempt to support students by focusing on the problem at hand. This coaching model suggests you coach the student and not the problem. The coach's goal is to assist the student without trying to fix them.

Each time a student sits in your chair or has a phone conversation with you, they are telling you their story. Listen to their stories, get to know them and how their experiences have shaped who they are, and be curious. Coaches demonstrate curiosity, genuineness; they get to know their students through active listening and reflection.

The Student's Commitment

This area focuses on how to gain buy-in and commitment from the student. Giving a student a grade or a pat on the back does not motivate a student internally. Internal motivations are long term whereas external motivations

fizzle out quickly. One way to have the student develop internal motivation is through the process of powerful questioning. Powerful questioning is the core to any successful coaching model.

According to Stolfus (2008), we ask questions because the student has all of the answers. An essential mindset for educators in this model is to look at the student as a whole human without deficiencies. When you master this mindset you can then ask powerful questions. Asking powerful questions through conversation with students will “create buy-in, empower, develop leadership skills, and create authenticity” (Stolfus, 2008, 9) within the student. So, now that the student has identified their internal motivations, goals, values, and who they truly are, they move on to executing actions that move them closer to their goal.

The Student’s Execution

The purpose of the educator in this step is to create actions, habits, and long-term positive behaviors that will lead students toward persistence. Coaching a student with executory skills guides the student toward a plan of action that develops new and lasting habits. Dr. Ivan Joseph recently gave a TEDx talk on the power of repetition (Joseph, 2012). He ascertains that repetition builds a path toward confidence. The coach not only asks powerful questions that lead the student to design their path to persistence, but they also assist students in removing barriers, blocks, and boundaries that may impede persistence in their education.

Summary

Disruption leads to innovation which leads to opportunities. Regardless of the approach colleges and universities take to support students, disruptions in education are a chance to innovate in new and exciting ways. Wildly poetic Tom Robbins wrote, “Disorder is inherent in stability. No matter how thoroughly they control a system, disorder invariably leaks into it. True stability results when presumed order and presumed disorder are balanced. A truly stable system expects the unexpected, is prepared to be disrupted, waits to be transformed” (Robbins, 1976).

Developing CBE programs is an opportunity to improve upon current models that will meet the needs of a new demographic of students. In truth,

every student can benefit from teachers, facilitators, and student support professionals who are trained coaches. Through my experiences, CBE students primarily benefit in programs that are self-paced, flexible, and require a high level of connection to previous experiences.

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The Future of CBE

Workforce Development and the Global Learner

EMILY DUSTIN M.ED., DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

Motivis Learning

GERRY DIGIUSTO PH.D., VICE PRESIDENT OF STRATEGY

Motivis Learning

Abstract

Recent studies of public and employer attitudes show deep and widespread dissatisfaction with the cost and outcomes of US higher education. Efforts to innovate are often stifled by a complex patchwork of enterprise technologies and the processes they impose. The education technology market is replete with fantastic tools to enhance curriculum, support students, and analyze data. In addressing these problems one-by-one, however, we only add to the complexity and interoperability problems that are impeding our ability to make more significant progress toward serving today's students. Rather than making our systems more complex, we need to simplify and focus on the essential factors that drive student success and durable learning.

Keywords

CBE, learner relationship management, student success, useable data, learning technology

It is increasingly clear that education is not keeping pace with student and societal needs and expectations. Recent studies of public and employer attitudes show deep and widespread dissatisfaction with the cost and outcomes of US higher education. Similarly, surveys of recent graduates demonstrate that their investments in education are not yielding the skills they need

to succeed. As schools seek to address these concerns, they are not finding the technologies they need to drive student success or effective teaching and learning. The result is a sector in crisis, with more than 40% of higher education institutions in financial distress.

Therefore, mere reform is insufficient to address the challenges facing higher education. With 65% of jobs likely to require a postsecondary degree by 2020, the system needs to transform to meet the needs of today's students—many of whom are low-income, non-traditional, or first-generation college students. These students and their needs are vastly different than those the higher education system has evolved to meet. To rise to this challenge while continuing to make education accessible, the US higher education system must provide all students with the opportunity to follow more individualized learning pathways throughout their lifetime. As Sir Ken Robinson said, “The key to this transformation is not to standardize education, but to personalize it.”

Many colleges and universities are already tackling this challenge, bringing more personalized approaches, such as competency-based education (CBE) programs, to serve their students. Yet these efforts to innovate are often stifled by a complex patchwork of enterprise technologies and the processes they impose. Designed largely to meet administrative and transactional needs, key technologies like the student information system (SIS) and learning management system (LMS) end up creating silos that make data inaccessible and obstruct the ability of faculty, student success coaches, administrators, and students themselves to personalize their learning journey. Rather than facilitating continuous improvement in teaching and learning and the student experience, the enterprise tools all schools rely on end up preventing necessary progress.

To date, most schools have tried to solve this problem by finding additional technology solutions. The education technology market is replete with fantastic tools to enhance curriculum, support students, and analyze data. In addressing these problems one-by-one, however, we only add to the complexity and interoperability problems that are impeding our ability to make more significant progress toward serving today's students. Rather than making our systems more complex, we need to simplify and focus on the essential factors that drive student success and durable learning.

The literature on student success identifies a host of factors that lead to positive student outcomes, as well as institutional obstacles to implementing an effective student success infrastructure: prioritizing teaching quality; cultivating and supporting student relationships with faculty, peers, and mentors;

focusing curriculum on relevant outcomes, including career goals; and using data effectively to identify issues early and deploy appropriate resources to address them. Given the importance of these four factors for student success, we have made them the core of our Motivis Learning Relationship Management (LRM) platform. Instead of building connections and bridges among the point solutions that address individual pieces of the student success puzzle, we have taken a comprehensive approach to eliminate the data silos that are inevitable in using disparate tools. LRM places the student at the center of all activity, compiling all data on a single student record. It prioritizes the relationships that are essential to supporting and guiding students throughout their learning experience, both inside and outside the classroom. With this extensive, accessible, and readily usable data visible to all the right people, it becomes possible for institutions to personalize their academic programs and the student experience in ways that are not otherwise possible.

With an emphasis on student engagement and success, today's educational technology must deliver on a level to which consumers have become accustomed. Contemporary learners are used to interacting with the global community (read: Google) when they learn—how do colleges and universities compete with the unlimited access to information and subject-matter experts around the world? Institutions must change the way they think about teaching and offer a more robust learning experience that breaks down the traditional walls and modules of classrooms both brick and mortar and online.

Learning technology can no longer afford to be transactional in nature but must be transformational. Technology shouldn't be "one more thing" students and instructors have to do, it should enhance the learning experience to such a degree that it seamlessly wraps around the needs of each individual learner delivering a personalized and meaningful learning experience.

Truly transformational technology provides opportunities for personalization throughout the learning continuum. Great learning technology must enable educators to meet students exactly where they are—measuring prior learning and experience as well as assessing unique learning needs—the coordinates, so to speak, of where students are as they start their learning journey.

Equally important to understanding a student's starting point is knowing a student's goals or endpoints. Often these endpoints are tied to career goals and can be used in conjunction with the start points to plot a personalized learning pathway that is custom made for each student. Using a series of formative and summative assessments, we can clearly see what a student needs in

order to be successful and a learning management system that is well-designed utilizes this data to surface learning activities and assessments reflective of each learner, their needs as well as their goals.

By creating personalized learning pathways for each learner that are reflective of unique learning needs, we provide enormous opportunities for success as student engagement, intrinsic motivation, and generative practices become prevalent and are delivered fluidly to learners. Modern learners, as we know, are used to engaging in a global community to share ideas and to evaluate products and establishments. In the same way, students as consumers have gotten used to driving their learning, but when they are venturing into new, uncharted territory, or looking to expand an existing career, a roadmap to follow is quite helpful and important. Even more important for contemporary learners is the ability to know the main path to take and all of the related alternative routes. Consumers and students are used to having options and choosing the pathway that is best for them.

As we continue our drive to improve the educational experience for each individual learner, we must think in terms of transformational experiences. By learning incredible and highly valuable new skills, gaining knowledge, and strengthening abilities along the way, the student participates in a truly amazing experience that stays with them long after the learning activities and assessments are completed and evaluated.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Elizabeth Bentley, MBA, is the Founder of EduCoaching, LLC and has been working in higher education since 2001. She also has more than ten years' experience working in business as an accountant and consultant. She received a Bachelor of Business Administration in 2010 and a Master of Business Administration in 2013 at the military-family-friendly Baker College in Flint, Michigan.

In 2015 she began her journey toward a Ph.D. in Educational Technology at Walden University. She is also a member of the International Coaching Federation (ICF) and is an Associate Certified Coach (ACC) (an earned ICF credential for professional coaches).

Elizabeth is currently researching educational technology as defined by the Association for Educational Communications and Technology and their impact on student persistence and success in higher education.

Prince Hycy Bull, PhD, is a full-professor in the Allied Professions Department at North Carolina Central University. Dr. Bull is a 2012 recipient of the North Carolina Central University Excellence in Teaching Award, and is listed on the Online Schools North Carolina website as one of the Top 20 Educators in North Carolina. Dr. Bull has authored and co-authored more than 50 book chapters, peer-reviewed articles, refereed conference proceedings, and books that highlight digital education, competency-based education, course redesign, online teaching and learning, and innovative practices. The principal investigator for the NCCU competency-based education pilot project, Dr. Bull earned his bachelor's degree from the University of Sierra Leone, a master's degree in Educational Leadership and a master's degree in Special Education from North Carolina Central University, and his doctoral degree in Curriculum Instruction with a specialty in Instructional Technology from North Carolina State University.

Lorrie Davis-Dick, MSN, is on the faculty at Winston Salem State University in the Division of Nursing. Mrs. Davis-Dick is embarking on her third decade in nursing and her 10th year in higher education. Mrs. Davis-Dick serves as a member of the RN-BSN Competency-based Education Course Development Team and Coordinator of Mental Health Nursing. Mrs. Davis-Dick received her BSN in Nursing from North Carolina A & T State University and her MSN in Nursing from the University of Phoenix, and she is currently working on her Doctorate in Nursing Practice at

Gardner Webb University. Mrs. Davis-Dick holds certification by the American Nurse Credentialing Center in Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing. Her teaching strengths are inclusive of teaching on-campus, online, and via a nationally competency-based online nursing program. Mrs. Davis-Dick supported a premier competency-based online nursing program for more than 4 years in the areas of pre-licensure, post-licensure, and graduate program curriculum development and instruction. Mrs. Davis-Dick's most notable publication includes her chapter contribution and mentoring model, "It Takes a Village to Raise a Nurse," in the highly praised nursing education international anthology *Transforming Nursing Education: the Culturally Inclusive Environment* (published by Springer). Mrs. Davis-Dick's model of mentoring minority-nursing students is from a holistic perspective. Her nursing education poem "Dance Professor Dance" is a recommendation for course development and co-curricular design and is published in more than 109 countries, most recently in the 2016 book *Teaching in Nursing: A Guide for Faculty, 5th Edition*.

Gerry DiGiusto, PhD, has worked in higher education, both in the U.S. and in Europe, for more than 20 years as a teacher, researcher, strategist, and consultant. He is currently Motivis Learning's Vice President for Strategy, overseeing the company's research and go-to-market planning. Previously, he was Director of Consulting Services at Pearson Education, where he built and launched Pearson's first strategic consulting team to focus on student experience, teaching and learning innovation, and revenue growth for colleges and universities. Prior to joining Pearson, he was Managing Vice President, Research & Data at Eduventures, an information services and consulting firm serving clients in higher education. Earlier in his career, he was a professor of political science and international relations at Bowdoin College and Princeton University. He earned his AB at Bowdoin College and his MA and PhD at Duke University.

Yolanda L. Dunston, PhD, has more than two decades of experience in education in the state of North Carolina. She earned a BA in Elementary Education, an MEd in Special Education—Literacy Studies, and a PhD in Literacy—all from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Her focus is effective teaching, particularly in the areas of literacy and online learning. She has taught at the pre-school and elementary levels, provided literacy consulting for struggling middle and high schoolers, and taught undergraduate and graduate courses at UNC-Chapel Hill and North Carolina Central University. She has prepared instructional materials for Pearson Prentice Hall, is a contributing author for the text *Aftermath of Hurricane Katrina: Educating Traumatized Children Pre-K through College*, and is a co-author for *The Ultimate Student Teaching Guide*. Currently, she is an Associate Professor at NCCU in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction in the School of Education.

Emily Dustin, MA After spending two decades as a K-12 Educator and School Administrator moving schools to Competency-Based Learning models, Emily has spent the past 2 years with Motivis Learning, working extensively with schools across the country in their transition to Competency-Based Learning. In her writings “From the Field” and the soon-to-be-released CBE book *Transforming Education*, she examines the challenges facing schools that implement student-centered, personalized learning and the most important steps necessary for schools to clear the path for successful design and implementation of competency-based, student-centered learning environments.

Myk Garn, PhD, leads college and system redesign, development, and deployment of new instructional and educational operations models for the University System of Georgia. He focuses on competency-based, student-driven, advancement-by-mastery models. Specialties include strategic planning, affordability, emerging trends, disruptive innovation, quality standards, governance, fast failure, and accessibility of Internet-based instruction and services.

Garn holds a PhD in Educational Policy and Evaluation from the University of Kentucky, an MA in Educational System Design from Michigan State University, and a BA in Underwater Photographic Technology from the Brooks Institute of Photographic Arts and Sciences.

Alfreda Harper-Harrison, EdD, is an Associate Professor and Director of the Advanced Nurse Educator Option at Winston Salem State University. She began her educational journey at Albany State University where she received her BSN. She later received her MSN at Georgia College and State University and her Doctorate at The University of Georgia. With more than 26 years of nursing experience and 18 years of academic experience she has developed a strong background in curriculum development and adult education. Her research interests include classroom facilitation using innovative teaching strategies, curriculum and program design as well as research among African American women.

Dr. Harper-Harrison has received awards for education and training nursing students including the Distinguished Master Teacher Certificate, The Center for HBCU Media Advocacy, Inc. Female Faculty of the Year, and the Albany State University 50 under 50 award. Her contribution to science has been to increase the potential pool of nurse researchers through education and training at the undergraduate and graduate levels, serving as primary advisor for more than 20 master’s level scholarly projects. She uses her broad nursing expertise to cover content in 17 courses across the traditional pre-licensure, accelerated, and masters level nursing courses. Dr. Harper-Harrison has a combined 8 peer-reviewed book chapters and journal articles focused on various components of nurse education.

Dr. Harper-Harrison served as interim director of the RN-BSN program for 2 years during which she secured and functioned as primary investigator of a Competency Based Education (CBE) grant to redesign the RN-BSN traditional curriculum into a Competency Based Education curriculum option. As a result of work in this area, Dr. Harper-Harrison was invited to present and discuss experiences associated with the development and implementation of the first CBE RN-BSN option in the University of North Carolina system at the CBE-UNC Adult Learner Convening, UNC CBE Summit, North Carolina Central University Education Tech Conference, and the 2nd Annual NC Statewide Competency-Based Nursing Education Conference.

Dr. Harper-Harrison is an active member of the National League of Nursing and Pi Lambda Theta International Honor Society and Professional Association in Education and serves as the president of the Rho Lambda chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing.

Diana Lys, PhD, serves as Assistant Dean for Educator Preparation and Accreditation in the School of Education at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where she leads program assessment and accreditation efforts. Prior to joining UNC, she was a faculty member at East Carolina University, serving as the Director of Assessment and Accreditation in the College of Education. Dr. Lys played a pivotal role in implementing edTPA at East Carolina University and across the state. Dr. Lys continues to be a key partner in research linking edTPA data to graduate outcomes in the field, including student achievement scores and principal evaluations. Dr. Lys shares her experiences as a keynote speaker on edTPA implementation and serves on many state and national efforts to improve educator preparation. Dr. Lys has been published in the *Journal of Teacher Education* and *Teaching and Teacher Education*, and was recently elected chair of the Accreditation, Assessment and Program Evaluation in Educator Preparation special interest group of the American Educational Research Association.

Michael Maher, PhD, is the Assistant Dean for Professional Education and Accreditation at NC State University. He serves as the President-elect of the North Carolina Association of Colleges and Teacher Educators (NCACTE) and is an active member of the American Association of Colleges and Teacher Educators (AACTE). Dr. Maher is a former North Carolina high school science teacher. He also serves and has served on various state committees in North Carolina including the State Superintendent's Ethics Advisory Panel and the North Carolina Teacher Effectiveness Workgroup. On a national level, Dr. Maher serves as the state representative for North Carolina on the Advisory Council of State Representatives (ACSR). Dr. Maher's research and service interests include teacher education policy, new teacher mentoring and induction, and teacher preparation program accreditation and continuous improvement. His cur-

rent projects include alternative teacher preparation and the use of micro-credentials in teacher preparation. Dr. Maher received a Doctor of Philosophy in Curriculum & Instruction: Curriculum Development & Supervision from North Carolina State University; a Master of Education in Curriculum & Instruction: Curriculum Development & Supervision from North Carolina State University; and a Bachelor of Science in Biology with a minor in Secondary Education from Belmont Abbey College

Sherri Y. Murrell, RN, MS, is Regional Coordinator and Faculty member of the Division of Nursing RN to BSN Option at her alma mater, Winston-Salem State University. She received her Bachelor's and Master's degree in Nursing Education from Winston-Salem State University and her Bachelor of Arts degree in Human Services from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. For 10+ years she has served as a clinical nurse, 8+ years as a nurse educator, and 4+ years within a nursing leadership role. Ms. Murrell has served in clinical nursing roles at Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center and Cone Health–Annie Penn Hospital. She has also served in faculty roles at Forsyth Technical Community College and the Breckinridge School of Nursing at ITT Technical Institute. Ms. Murrell served as Chair of the Breckinridge School of Nursing prior to joining Winston-Salem State University, where one of her focuses was Instructional & Curriculum redesign.

Ms. Murrell continues to show her sincere passion for nursing education by focusing on the areas of empowerment of student success, student/faculty engagement, and curriculum revision and implementation to increase the number of students pursuing their Baccalaureate of Science in Nursing degrees. Ms. Murrell has been a key player in the RN-BSN CBE curriculum revision at Winston-Salem State University over the past year. Ms. Murrell and colleagues presented CBE work at several conferences this past year, such as The UNC Adult Learner Convening, UNC CBE Summit 2017, NCCU Education Tech Conference, and the Second Annual Statewide Competency-Based Nursing Education Conference.

Ms. Murrell is affiliated with Chi Eta Phi Sorority, Inc. of the Chi Chi Chapter and Sigma Theta Tau International of Rho Lambda Chapter.

Natasha Ohene, MEd, is Program Manager/Student Mentor for the RN-BSN and Master of Healthcare Administration CBE pilots, as well as Adjunct Faculty for the Healthcare Management program, at WSSU. Ms. Ohene previously served in a consultant role for the WSSU CBE pilots with UNC General Administration. Prior to WSSU she worked for the Massachusetts General Hospital Institute of Health Professions as Clinical Education Placement & Systems Associate for the School of Nursing. Ms. Ohene is originally from Boston, MA where she has held positions at the Brigham & Women's Hospital, Boston Medical Center as well as the Boston Teacher Residency Program. Ms. Ohene holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Sociology from Boston

University and a Masters of Education degree in Higher Education Administration from Northeastern University.

Gerrelyn C. Patterson, PhD, is an Associate Professor in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at North Carolina Central University. She earned a BA in English Literature from North Carolina Central University, an MEd in English Education from the University of Virginia, and a PhD in Curriculum, Culture and Change from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She has more than 18 years of P-12 and postsecondary experience as a literature and composition instructor and teacher educator. She has taught undergraduate and graduate methods courses, with an emphasis on instructional planning and classroom management, to pre-service teachers. She also conducts research in best practices with instructional strategies and the utilization of service-learning pedagogy to prepare culturally responsive teachers.

Ed Rugg, PhD, has a career in higher education as a faculty member and university administrator spanning 44 years, 30 of which were at Kennesaw State University. During his 16-year tenure as Vice President for Academic Affairs, KSU evolved into a large, comprehensive, and innovative metropolitan university in the Atlanta suburbs. For 20 years, he served on or chaired more than two dozen SACSCOC visiting committees and was periodically a special reader for the commission's C&R Committees. Dr. Rugg retired in 2010 from his full-time role at KSU, but has been engaged by the University System of Georgia's System Office since 2012 as an accreditation consultant to assist system and institutional personnel successfully navigate SACSCOC requirements for institutional mergers and consolidations. To date, seven institutional consolidations have been approved by SACSCOC with no recommendations and two more are presently underway. As an Accreditation Consultant and Reports Editor, Dr. Rugg is in high demand. In that capacity, he has assisted more than 40 colleges and universities to achieve their goals for compliance with ever-changing SACSCOC accreditation requirements. In 2017, the SCRIP team engaged him to serve as their accreditation consultant, and he has served as a principal writer and editor of the SCRIP report. He earned his MA and PhD degrees in psychology from Peabody College of Vanderbilt University with an emphasis in social and educational research and statistics.

Cheresa G. Simpson, PhD, is an assistant professor in the School of Education at North Carolina Central University where she teaches undergraduate diversity courses and elementary methods course in arts integration, social studies, and healthful living toward culturally responsive teaching. She is very engaged in several P-12 schools within the university community relating to service by way of providing assistance with strategies on how to increase parent involvement/engagement programs, developing/reestablishing school safety patrol programs, and fundraising to support student hun-

ger programs. She has presented at several conferences on many levels and is published on such topics related as teacher education, multicultural education, inquiry-based learning, parent involvement, teacher leadership, technology engagement, and team-building.

Jon Sizemore, MEd, is assistant vice chancellor for distance education for the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia. He is responsible for directing the System's strategic planning and implementation of distance education initiatives. Sizemore has worked on a number of grant projects in the field of distance learning, particularly in relation to bringing technology to rural areas. He has served on various USG committees and task forces and conducted workshops in Georgia and nationally related to distance education.

On two occasions while at Darton College, Sizemore's leadership resulted in the college's selection in 2003 and 2004 by the American Association of Community Colleges as a "Top 10 Digital Community College."

Sizemore earned bachelor's degrees in mathematics and secondary education-mathematics, as well as a master's of education in instructional technology, all from Valdosta State.

Michelle Solér, MBA, PhD, is the research and development lead for competency-based education for the University of North Carolina System. Her work helps to clear the path for institutions across UNC's 17 campuses as faculty and staff consider, design, and implement competency-based degree programs, certificates, and other credentials. Solér provides assessment strategies, business modeling assistance, communication and program development support, and curricular redesign strategies toward the successful launch and implementation of campus programs investigating student mastery of learning objectives at a personalized pace. She assists staff and faculty across the system in support of online and alternative learning pedagogies. Solér earned a BA in Journalism from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, an MBA from Wake Forest University School of Business, and the PhD in Education, Educational Leadership, and Cultural Studies from the School of Education at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. She is a past fellow in the Institute for Emerging Leadership in Online Learning co-sponsored by Penn State World Campus and the Online Learning Consortium, and also a past fellow for the Educational Policy Program, Institute for Educational Leadership in Raleigh, NC and Washington, DC.

Gretchen Wilbur, PhD, is an associate professor and assessment director at DePaul University. She is a scholar-practitioner who has developed, implemented, and researched innovative programs for educating students, teachers, and adults in schools and universities for more than 30 years. Dr. Wilbur's areas of scholarship and practice

often intersect and include equity education, reflective practice, and assessment of learning and teaching. In her academic work, as in her life, Dr. Wilbur aims to build and improve educational equity by creating a culture where learners' needs are valued, their interests are nurtured, and their goals are achieved. A culture of equity is fundamentally a community of learning, diversity, and discovery where all members have power to pursue their curiosities and find meaning and happiness. An equity culture unmask power relations exposing how they can silence and oppress if diverse perspectives are not valued and each voice is not heard. Each and every voice matters in a culture of equity.

Alison Winzeler, MEd, serves as the Alternative Licensure Director for NC State's College of Education. For the past ten years, she has served as program director for NC TEACH at NC State, a face-to-face Lateral Entry support program. In addition, Alison is the Program Coordinator for Pathway to Practice NC, a Competency-based Education program meeting the needs of Lateral Entry teachers across the state. Alison is a former high school English teacher and is interested in course design and delivery for new teacher preparation, specifically in CBE. She obtained her Master's degree in Secondary English Education from Wake Forest University and her B.A. in Literature and Education from the University of North Carolina at Asheville. She is finishing her doctorate in Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis at NC State and is studying the impact and experiences of participants in the College of Education's Beginning Teacher Institute.