Competency-Based Education as a Strategy to Promote College and Career Readiness for All

September 15, 2016

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Today’s Presenters

- **Jenna Tomasello**, Policy Associate, American Youth Policy Forum
- **David Blumenthal**, Content Expert, College and Career Readiness and Success Center at AIR
- **Chanda Robinson**, Director of Workforce Initiatives, Our Piece of the Pie
- **Rodney Powell**, Principal, OPPortunity Academy, Hartford Public Schools
- **Steve Brown**, Director of Community Partnerships, College for America at Southern New Hampshire University

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Today’s Moderators

- Jennifer Brown Lerner, Deputy Director, American Youth Policy Forum

- Ellen Cushing, Deputy Director, College and Career Readiness and Success Center at AIR
Framing the Conversation
## CCRS Center

**Who?**
- State Department of Education Agencies

**What?**
- Build SEA capacity to implement college and career ready policies

**How?**
- Provide technical assistance, including universal, targeted and intensive support

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What is CBE?

“...[refers] to educational approaches that prioritize the mastery of learning objectives regardless of how long it takes”

-Le, Wolfe, & Steinberg, 2014
What is CBE?

Traditional Education Model
- Time is the constant—learning is the variable
- Primarily whole-class instruction
- Students earn credit and advance based on course completion-seat time

Competency-Based Education Model
- Learning is the constant—time is the variable
- Instruction is personalized to the learner
- Students earn credit and advance based on demonstrated mastery

Mastery
Pacing
Instruction

Le, Wolf, & Steinberg, 2014

Surr & Rasmussen, 2015
Why CBE?

55 million jobs

65% require postsecondary training

5 million unfilled

Judgement  Decision-making  Communication  Analysis  Administration

Center on Education and Workforce, 2014

2020
Today’s Conversation

- Develop a shared understanding and context for CBE
- Share resources that can inform and support CBE implementation
- Learn about and from a program using CBE
Using Competency-Based Education to Support Overage, Under-Credited Students

Jenna Tomasello
Policy Associate, American Youth Policy Forum
September 16, 2016
Ask the CCRS Center Brief

1. Who are overage, under-credited (OA/UC) students?

2. Why use competency-based education (CBE)?

3. State policy examples

4. Programmatic examples

5. State recommendations
Who are OA/UC Students?

“Students who do not have the appropriate number of credits for their age and intended grade and who are at risk of falling behind, dropping out, or aging out of school.”
Why CBE for OA/UC Students?

- Student-centered system of instruction, assessment, and academic reporting

- Core elements are **mastery**, **pacing**, and **personalized instruction** (Blumenthal & Rasmussen, 2015)

- One educational strategy to support OA/UC students
Why CBE for OA/UC Students?

Adapted from Sturgis et al, 2010

- Personalized, Self-paced Learning
  - Provides Alternatives to Repeating Full Courses

- Demonstration of Mastery
  - Accelerates Student Advancement

- Personalized Learning Goals
  - Addresses Potential Student Motivation or Connection

Adapted from Sturgis et al, 2010
State Policy Examples

- Nontraditional classrooms/programs
- Competency-based examinations
- Project-based assessments
State Policy Recommendations

- Develop **knowledge and capacity**
- Adopt **seat-time and school design flexibility**
- Promote **student retention and credit recovery**
- Provide **targeted supports**
References


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Designing Competency-Based Articulation Agreements

Considerations for States Aligning CBE with Postsecondary Education

David Blumenthal
Content Expert, College and Career Readiness and Success Center
September 16, 2016
The Challenge: Aligning CBE Between Secondary and Postsecondary Education

Learning Targets
- Explicit, rigorous CCR standards
- Approaches to obtaining and demonstrating mastery negotiable

Measurement of Learning
- Course credit awarded on assessment results (instead of seat time, attendance, etc.)
- Multiple assessments used to demonstrate mastery

Instructional Supports
- Customized assessments and instruction
- Individualized learning plans

When and Where Learning Takes Place
- Extended learning opportunities, independent study, etc.
- Online and/or blended learning

Assessment Strategies
- Frequent formative and summative assessments
- Alternative assessments (e.g., performance, portfolio, etc.)
- Retaking assessments without penalty

Pathways and Progressions
- Extended learning time to finish a topic, unit, or to demonstrate mastery
- Advancement to the next topic, unit, or competency

Adapted from Haynes et al., 2016

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What is an Articulation Agreement?

- Formalizes the process of transferring course credits between educational institutions
- Aligns course sequencing so that students take non-duplicative courses
- Sets graduation requirements such that entrance into higher levels of education is guaranteed at the receiving institution

Source: Gorka, Miller, & Yoas, 2014
Designing Competency-Based Articulation Agreements

- Facilitator Guide
- PowerPoint Slides
- Handouts
Designing Competency-Based Articulation Agreements

- Available on the CCRS Center website [www.ccrscenter.org](http://www.ccrscenter.org)
- Feedback encouraged!
- Contact David Blumenthal at [dblumenthal@air.org](mailto:dblumenthal@air.org) or (312) 283-2310

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OPP’s relationship-centered approach ensures young adults (ages 16-24) have individualized strategies to address their unique needs and cultivate their innate talents.

We advocate for equal access and offer the right mix of services, guidance and support to youth as they navigate systems (i.e. education, workforce, judicial, state, etc.) while promoting self-confidence, self-empowerment and self-sufficiency.
OPP History

1975-2000: Incorporation & Leadership
• 1975: Southend Community Services (SCS) founded.
• SCS provides services to meet community needs, such as a preschool childcare center, programs for elementary and high school students, summer youth employment, adult job placement, and companion to elderly programs.
• 1994: Bob Rath becomes Executive Director.

2000-2005: Rebranding
• 2000: $28-million awarded to Hartford from the US Department of Labor to become a Youth Opportunity! (YO!) site; SCS becomes directing org in 2002.
• 2004: Edna McConnell Clark Foundation invests in SCS through Youth Development Fund.
• 2005: SCS agency changes its name, mission and focus to support only under-served population of urban youth, ages 14-24 -- becoming Our Piece of the Pie (OPP).

2006-current: Effective Data Use
• 2006: Implement Efforts to Outcomes™ case management software and a Research and Org Performance department.
• 2009: National Youth Employment Coalition awards OPP with the PEPNet Award in promising practices. UConn completes a formative evaluation, indicating that the more at-risk the youth, the more they benefit.
• 2010-2014: Formative evaluation completed with Metis Associates; Evaluation Advisory Committee developed.

2009-current: Growth
• OPP in High Schools: School model for over-age, under-credited youth developed.
• 2009: Opportunity High School
• 2012: Learning Academy at Bloomfield
• 2014: Path Academy Windham
• OPP in Communities: OPP refines relationship-centered model in Hartford and plans for expansions.
• 2012: New Youth Center in Eastern CT
• 2012: Pathways to Careers Initiative, connecting to post-secondary programs to labor market industries.
OPP Service Model – In the Community

Youth Development Services
- Sustained Relationship with Caring Adult (Youth Development Specialist or YDS)
- Individualized Success Plan / Goal Setting
- Personal Development (i.e. Social & Emotional, Life Skills & Leadership Development)
- Barrier Identification & Reduction
- Connection to Internal of External Supports

Academic Supports & Services
- After-School Activities, Tutoring & Homework Help
- Report Card Monitoring (Grades & Attendance)
- Post Secondary Support, Exploration, & Research (i.e. Planning, Tours, FAFSA Assistance, etc.)

Workforce Development – Pathways to Careers
- Career Competency Development Training
- Career Assessments and Counseling
- Internships, Job Placement Assistance & 1 Year Post Placement Retention
- “Stackable” and Industry-Specific Credentials
- Post-Secondary and Private Sector Partnerships
OPPORTUNITY ACADEMY HARTFORD

AT OUR PIECE OF THE PIE®, INC. (OPP®)

Rodney Powell
Principal & Director of Academics
September 2016
OPPortunity Academy Mission

To re-engage over-age, under-credited students in education, supporting them through mastery of the critical skills necessary for success in college, career, and community.
Journey to Graduation

Decide.

CHANGE.

Succeed.
Ingredients

- **Relationships**
- **Relevance**
- **Respect**
- **Rigor**
# Anchored Support & Planning Services

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<th>Youth Development</th>
<th>Postsecondary Preparation</th>
<th>Job Readiness</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Relationship with staff</td>
<td>• College major exploration</td>
<td>• Career interest inventory</td>
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<td>• Develop plan for future success</td>
<td>• College tours</td>
<td>• Job Skills Training</td>
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<td>• Attendance outreach</td>
<td>• College &amp; Financial Aid workshops</td>
<td>• Competency Development</td>
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Innovative Education Strategies

Blended Learning
- Combine computer-based & teacher-led instruction

Mastery-Based Progression
- Demonstrate learning to move forward
- Always move forward

Project-Based Learning
- Active learning
- Practice & combine skills in projects
College for America is radically expanding access to and improving the quality of higher education through low-cost, competency-based college degrees and credentials designed to drive success in the workplace.
What is different about College for America?

Students gain personal and professional skills, instead of credit hours and grade points.

- **No traditional classes and lectures;** students develop skills through projects
- The student defines her own schedule and is supported by personal learning coaches
- Students can advance **based on what they know and can do,** and move **faster through areas they already know** (taking extra time where needed)

Curriculum aligned with labor market needs.

- Dedicated Workforce Strategy team mines **labor market information** to determine the types of skills and competencies needed in the workplace
- Subject matter experts integrated in the curriculum and assessment development team
Building Broadly Applicable Skills Across Degree Programs

The three pillars of our curriculum

**Foundational skills**
- Communication skills
- Critical and creative thinking
- Quantitative skills
- Digital fluency and information literacy

**Personal and social skills**
- Personal effectiveness
- Ethics and social responsibility
- Teamwork and collaboration

**Content knowledge**
- Business essentials
- Science, society, and culture
- Degree-specific competencies
- Concentration competencies
Providing 360° Personalized Student Support

Project reviewers:
• Hold advanced degrees in relevant subject areas
• Deeply trained in evaluation rubrics and projects
• Review project submissions and provide in-depth personal feedback

Community partners help students:
• Understand if and when CfA is the best choice for them
• Overcome obstacles (personal and academic)
• Navigate the program
• Understand and apply reviewer feedback
• Build confidence and celebrate success
• Move into or ahead in career track employment

A commitment to continuous improvement:
• Consulting coaches from CfA work with partner organizations to develop, run, and improve their programs
• CfA manages a network of community partners to enable continuous learning and improvement
Audience Q&A

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