COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION FOR UNDERPREPARED LEARNERS

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JOBS FOR THE FUTURE
Our Mission
Jobs for the Future (JFF) works to ensure that all lower-income young people and workers have the skills and credentials needed to succeed in our economy.

Our Vision
The promise of education and economic mobility in America is achieved for everyone.
“A TALE OF 2 LISAS”
THREE ACTS

ACT I: A traditional developmental education story

ACT II: A CBE developmental education story

ACT III: Competency-based education (CBE) at Sinclair College
COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION

Learning held constant, while pace can vary.

Advancement based on mastery, not seat time.

Mastery demonstrated through assessments.
ACT I: TRADITIONAL PATHWAY
MEET LISA

Philadelphia, PA

Working mom of two young kids

High school diploma from 2012

First-generation college student

Source: Crisp et al. 2013, Graham et al. 2015
ENTERING COLLEGE

AccuPlacer Entrance Exam

Like upwards of 66% of community college students, qualifies for developmental education

The college has a compressed developmental education design

Enrolls in ENGL 098/099, 6 credits, not transferable

At this point, Lisa has a 28% chance of earning a credential within eight years

Sources: Bailey, 2009; Rutschow & Schneider, 2012; CCA, 2012
CLASS BEGINS

Traditional format class

20 students, several academic levels, 1 instructor

Feels like high school, where Lisa did not thrive

Generic assignments

Harms Lisa’s academic self-concept

ACT I

ENTER TROUBLE

Lisa’s son gets sick

Lisa misses 2 days (4 classes of content)

Tutoring center hours are limited

Unsure of research methods, Lisa is in danger of failing the class
Lisa passes ENGL 098/099 with a 2.3 GPA

Next semester she enrolls in the ENGL 101 gateway course and developmental math, but has trouble with research methods

She falls behind in ENGL 101

Discouraged, she decides to stop out and take a second job instead

One year later, she has not returned to college
Source: Rassen et al. 2013
WHAT IF WE COULD TELL A DIFFERENT STORY?
ACT II: A CBE DEV ED STORY
SAME LISA

Philadelphia, PA

Working mom of two young kids

High school diploma from 2012

First-generation college student

Source: Crisp et al. 2013, Graham et al. 2015
ENTERING COLLEGE

Assigned a Success Coach immediately
Holistic assessment, including meta-academics
Co-requisite model, so Lisa enrolls in a credit-bearing section of ENGL 101 right away

Improved odds of completion:

Baltimore: 36% higher pass rates for ENGL 101
Tennessee: pass rates for college writing 31% → 59%

The course design is “hybrid” in many ways:

- Continuous coaching
- Contextualized course content
- Flexible pacing
- Mastery as the new minimum

Transparency in both content (“why”) and progress (“by how much”).
THE RESULTS

Lisa takes longer to master research methods, but completes ENGL 101

Mastery inspires confidence

The path from ENGL 101 through the credential is clear

Lisa’s writing assignments reflect real-world expectations

One year later, Lisa has already earned a phlebotomy certificate
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Risk</th>
<th>Traditional Strategies</th>
<th>CBE Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>FLEXIBILITY</strong></td>
<td>Learners may become ‘stuck’ or procrastinate</td>
<td>Skills advising Student success courses</td>
<td>Pace charts, real-time engagement data, just-in-time support.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>CUSTOMIZATION</strong></td>
<td>Loss of synchronous peer group benefits.</td>
<td>Group tutoring</td>
<td>Virtual or in-person workshops organized around competencies</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>MASTERY</strong></td>
<td>No “fudge factor”</td>
<td>Self-regulated learning techniques</td>
<td>Room to re-do assessments, granular feedback</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TRANSPARENCY</strong></td>
<td>Road to completion appears daunting.</td>
<td>Coaching for growth mindset; Differentiated advising</td>
<td>Contextualized developmental content</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ACT III: CBE AT SINCLAIR COLLEGE
THE “WHY” OF CBE AT SINCLAIR

1 million+ adult learners in Ohio with some college, no degree

Most community colleges students study part-time, take longer to complete degrees

65% attainment goal by 2025
## Changing Paradigm

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional Mindset</th>
<th>Changing Mindset</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Credit-Hour</td>
<td>Competency-Based</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on Teaching</td>
<td>Focus on Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time is Constant, Learning is Variable</td>
<td>Time is Variable, Learning is Constant</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
CBE AT SINCLAIR

11 programs (+2 in development)

40+ courses

Continuous enrollment and completion

Specialized, data-driven academic and career coaching, from admissions to graduation

CBE programs deployed first use of faculty-coach partnership in the classroom, for teaching and student support
ACT III

THE MODEL

Market and Employer Needs

Program Development

Master Courses

Delivery Logistics

Sections

Learner Support

Faculty

Academic Coach

Data-informed
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Traditional Model</th>
<th>CBE</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CURRICULUM</td>
<td>Arranged by <strong>topics</strong>, organized to accommodate weeks in a semester</td>
<td>Bundled into <strong>units</strong> for acceleration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INSTRUCTION</td>
<td>Instruction is <strong>standardized</strong></td>
<td>Instruction is <strong>customized</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADVANCEMENT</td>
<td>Students advance based on <strong>time</strong></td>
<td>Students advance based on <strong>mastery</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PACING</td>
<td>Students move at pre-determined, <strong>standardized</strong> pace. Even if they do not</td>
<td>Students progress at <strong>different paces</strong> in different areas of the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>master course content, the classroom moves on.</td>
<td>course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIME</td>
<td><strong>Fixed</strong> entry and exit into courses; standardized weekly assignments and</td>
<td>Entry and exit are <strong>flexible</strong>, and learning time is flexible and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>deadlines</td>
<td>designed to support students' needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUPPORT</td>
<td><strong>Student initiates</strong> support</td>
<td>Faculty and academic coach <strong>proactively collaborate</strong> to customize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>the classroom experience</td>
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ACT III

CBE
OUTCOMES

885 students educated, 1,800 CBE courses completed successfully
68% of CBE students are adult learners
Average age of CBE student: 32 years old

Course success rates average 15% higher in CBE sections

Average time to completion in courses is 35% faster than a traditional semester
CBE OUTCOMES

Students credential at twice the rate of non-CBE students in the same programs.

CBE students finish degrees 35% faster than a student who pursues full-time studies for an associate’s degree.

CBE students are ten times as likely to take an internship—and internship-to-hire rates are 90%.
CBE is not a course development project—it’s building a college within a college

Strategy and Planning
Employment and Workforce
Curriculum and Course Development
Program Delivery
Student Support

Requires: executive sponsorship, a “champion,” and faculty buy-in
Some CBE practitioners believe they are already serving this population.

There are emerging quality standards and evidence.

CBE could align with well-supported dev ed reforms such as corequisite remediation.

Yet risks for underprepared learners are real.
FOR DISCUSSION

What does this surface for you as practitioners?

What is not believable about the stories we are telling?

What have we left out?

What are the risks?

“One idea I have from similar work in our context is . . .”