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Understanding Competency Based Learning Badge
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1.Define CBL, including a formal definition and also including an example that demonstrates understanding of CBL.

Competency Based Learning is a learning technique where each skill is broken down into a competency. People work to master that skill, and once they master that skill, they move onto the next skill. Competency based learning allows the learner to learn at their own pace. Ultimately the premise is that just because a student spends X number of hours in the classroom does not mean that they actually learn the material or "master" the information. Competency Based Learning instead rewards true mastery of the skill. One major example of Competency Based Learning is what is happening at Western Governors University, where students pay $3,000 for six months. They move through the skills at their own pace and after taking various assessments they are awarded credit for what they master. Most students at Western Governors University completes their bachelors degree within 2 years (instead of the typical 4 years).

2. Compare and contrast the CBL model with the "time- or credit hour-based" model.

Competency Based Learning Model	Credit Hour Based Model
Cost Efficient	Expensive (Tuition increasing)
Values Prior Learning	Often Ignores Prior Learning
Allows Students to Study at their own Pace	Requires a student to follow prescribed syllabus
Focuses more on Mastery	Summative Evaluation
Allows for "hands-on" learning	Already being done (internships, engaged scholarship, etc)
No Faculty, Lectures, Textbooks, etc	Requires Textbooks, Lectures and faculty
Complete Flexibility for working learners	Hard because Students are required to be in the classroom at set times.

3. List other terms that are often used to represent models similar to "Competency-based" learning and indicate which label you prefer and why.

Direct Assessment
Outcomes-Based Education
Competency Based Education
Flexible Option Programs
*I prefer competency based learning because I think that it sums up the concept nicely and is self explanatory. Competency is based upon your level of mastery. You are competent or not competent when it comes to a skill, so the whole purpose of CBL is to focus on mastery (not just the amount of time you spend in the classroom) but actual mastery of the concept.

4. Define and discuss the related concept of "Prior Learning Assessment." Explain its connection to CBL, how it is viewed by advocates, and how it is viewed by opponents.

- Prior Learning Assessment basically means that students should be awarded credit for their real life experiences that can relate to college credit. Prior Learning Assessment is a term used to describe learning gained outside a traditional academic environment. Put another way, it's learning and knowledge your students acquire while living their lives: working, participating in employer training programs, serving in the military, studying independently, volunteering or doing community service, and studying open source courseware. In short, PLA is the evaluation and assessment of an individual's life learning for college credit, certification, or advanced standing toward further education or training.

Since CBL is all about mastery of concepts, PLA is important to CBL. If a student fully understands and can master teamwork, and that is part of their job and life experiences why not give them credit for it.

Many people that advocate prior learning assessment say that it helps to speed up the time it takes to earn a degree and thus makes it cheaper. It is also beneficial because people can earn credit for what they have done in their life experiences (which is really helpful) for people who are full-time workers and don't have time to dedicate more time for class.

The opponents have a lot of mixed feelings. First, how do you measure prior learning and where does it fit in. Also, schools that give degrees have a reputation based upon that degree so how can you accurately assess and measure a specific prior learning competency, vouching for the learners knowledge, especially if the institution wasn't responsible for assessing or monitoring the work.

5. Describe the U.S. Department of Education's current position on CBL.
- The US Department of Education is on board. They just recently gave the go ahead (March 2013) to Capella's direct assessment program and the College for America earned the green light from their regional accrediting institution. The US Education Departments final approval now means that colleges can receive federal financial aid for such programs. Obama's Higher Education plan stated,

"To promote innovation and competition in the higher education marketplace, the President's plan will publish better information on how colleges are performing, help demonstrate that new approaches can improve learning and reduce costs, and offer colleges regulatory flexibility to innovate. And the President is challenging colleges and other higher education leaders to adopt one or more of these promising practices that we know offer breakthroughs on cost, quality, or both – or create something better themselves."

6. Name and briefly describe (one or two paragraphs) at least three organizations that are currently functioning models of CBL.

- Western Governors University – Students pay $3,000 for a six month period. They can take as many assessments as they can during that six month period and they work at their own pace. If they can master a skill quickly, they can move on, but if they need to take some more time for a more difficult skill, they can take all the time they need. Currently there are 30,000 students enrolled with Western Governors University. WGU was founded by 19 US Governors and is an online-based school that caters to flexible schedules and the needs of the learners. WGU has been around for 14 years and has over 16,000 alumni.
- Northern Arizona University's personalized learning programming is an online-based educational system that also models Competency Based Learning. Students pay a flat fee of $2,500 for six months. NAU awards students with credits that transfer in as well as awards credit for what the student already knows based upon completing assessments. In the program at NAU, students work through competencies on their own time, at their own pace. There are currently three programs offered and they are a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Computer Information Technology, Liberal Arts and Small Business Administration.
- Lipscomb University in Nashville Tennessee's CORE (Customized, Outcome-Based, Relevant Evaluation http://www.cael.org/CAEL_Lipscomb_Case_Study) program uses competency based learning. In this program, learners take an 8 hour assessment and can earn up to 30 credits towards a degree based upon competencies that they can demonstrate. Their assessment centers were accredited in December 2013. The program allows for students to complete the final 66 credits of a 126-credit based Bachelor's degree in professional studies in organizational leadership or a bachelor of arts or science in integrated studies. Currently, studies show that there is a 36% cost-savings benefit to this program through a normal BA program. These competencies can be transcripted through a system of electronic badges that document four levels of mastery for each competency. The badges can be used to demonstrate competencies to an
- employer, or they may be converted to credit hours and applied towards a bachelor's degree at Lipscomb. The competencies assessed are:

- Active Listening
- Communicativeness
- Presentation Skills
- Problem-solving and decision making
- Assertiveness
- Conflict Management
- Relationship Building
- Team Player
- Change mastery
- Influence
- Organizing and planning

Badge example:
Relationship building , level 2

- Composure
- Initiative
- Results Orientation
- Drive and Energy

7. List at least three major obstacles that universities face in moving to a CBL model.

1) Implementation Complexity. Most institution structures, financial aid structures, etc are catered towards the credit-hour based system. Because of this, it is hard to determine what competencies should count for credit. It becomes even harder to track when a student is taking competency based courses and credit-hour courses.

2) Faculty and Institution Resistance. Faculty members do not like to change. Education has been very static, so moving to a new system, one that could jeopardize faculty employment and involvement is going to raise concerns. If students no longer need to spend all that time in class taking at least 120 credits, this could negatively effect faculty employment, funding for institutions, etc.

3) Assessment. There is a lot of conversation about Competency Based Learning programs, however one major weakness for CBE programs is the assessment. It is hard to truly assess a deep understanding of learning. Learning and education requires students to grow, reflect on their experiences, encourage curiosity of different views, etc which is hard to assess.

8. Describe a potential path a university might follow to move from time-based programs to competency-based or performance-based programs.

In order to implement Competency Based Learning, institutions would first have to develop a plan. This plan would have to come up with how to address the following:

1) What to do with Prior Learning. How do you measure it? How do you accept it? What does this look like?
2) Come up with a specific plan of competencies that students should know for a specific program, major, etc. How do these specific competencies relate to learning and the degree? For instance, the Assessment Center for Lipscomb allows you to earn credit based upon "Team Player," "Assertiveness," and "Presentation Skills." These are all importance competencies, but how do they relate to credit that you would earn for a class, or go to a degree?
3) Develop the learning activities or modules. How are students going to learn the materials? Through videos? Through activities online? Through readings or practical, hands on implementation?
3) Develop Assessments. This is going to be extremely important because CBL completely relies on assessment to determine mastery. So figuring out how to assess? Do

you use badges? Are there levels of mastery?

9. Predict the potential success or failure of CBL and defend your prediction.
I think that Competency Based Learning is an interesting concept and I think that overall it will find success in higher education, but I also don't think that it will be as disruptive as people make it out to be. And there are several reasons. First off, to do these assessments, they are labor intensive to develop these assessments. At Capella, they work better with smaller classes, but at large institutions like Penn State, Ohio State, Michigan, it would be extremely hard to get small enough classes, clusters, etc to do this type of assessment. Capella talks about hiring more people to help with these assessments, which would make costs rise at large institutions.

Furthermore, I think it is extremely hard to put a "tag" on prior learning and how that relates to classes. When I was in college I had to complete 126 credits. When you look at Lipscomb, if you go through their 8 hour assessment you can earn credits for lots of different competencies, and granted the classes that I took to meet those 126 credits did require knowledge and mastery of those competencies, but it also required so much more knowledge and learning outside of just those competencies.

So I think that we are going to see changes in education and we are going to see CBL become more of a reality, but I don't think it is going to take over education. I do think we are going to see a hybrid that mixes traditional curriculums with that of CBL.

10. Write a solid, competency-based learning outcome and an assessment to go with it. Develop a badge based on that learning outcome.

Outcome: After watching the Ted Talk, "Danger of a Single Story," participants will be able to reflect upon a time when they made an incorrect stereotype about a person.

Assessment: Brief paragraph where participants will answer the following questions:
1)) Why do you think people create stereotypes?
2) What was the stereotype you created about that person?
3) How did you feel when that stereotype was proven wrong?
4) What did this teach you about creating stereotypes?

The badge is called "Breaking Stereotypes" and is on the L3 PSU Badge system. There are two steps, they are as follows:

1) In order to complete this step, please go online to the link below and watch the video by Chimamanda Ngozi about Single Stories. After watching the video, please briefly explain, in your own words, what is meant by "The Danger of a Single Story." Video Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9Ihs241zeg.

2) In order to complete this step, please reflect upon a time when you inaccurately created a stereotype about a person. Without using any specific identifying information about this

person, briefly answer the following questions: 1) Why do you think people create stereotypes? 2) What was the stereotype you created about that person? 3) How did you feel when that stereotype was proven wrong? 4) What did this teach you about creating stereotypes?