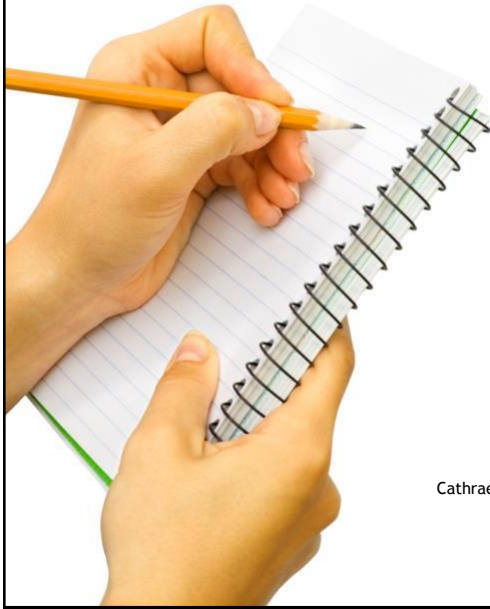


UNDERSTANDING THE ESSENTIALS OF DIRECT ASSESSMENT

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UNDERSTANDING THE ESSENTIALS OF DIRECT ASSESSMENT

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LEARNING OUTCOME

After participating...

you will be able to distinguish between “direct assessment” (DA) and competency-based education (CBE) and make informed decisions regarding their possible implementation at your institution



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■ AGENDA

- What is “direct assessment” (DA?)
- What is competency-based education (CBE?)
- What is the Title IV “Direct Assessment” regulation?
- How are DA and CBE related?
- What is the role of accreditation in DA and CBE?

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WHAT IS DIRECT ASSESSMENT?



POLL

What is direct assessment?

- a) Term of art in educational testing
- b) Synonym for Competency-Based Education (CBE)
- c) Provision of Title IV (Financial Aid)

WHAT IS DIRECT ASSESSMENT?

YOU'RE RIGHT!

- ✓ Term of art in educational testing
- ✓ Synonym for Competency-Based Education (CBE)
- ✓ Provision of Title IV
 - Allows instructional programs that use direct assessment of student learning in lieu of credit hours or clock hours to be eligible to offer federal financial aid

DIRECT VS. INDIRECT ASSESSMENT

INDIRECT ASSESSMENT

- Example: NSSE
- Asks students about their perceptions of their learning, rather than measuring it directly

DIRECT ASSESSMENT

- Portfolios
- Exams
- Projects
- Performance-based assessments

DIRECT ASSESSMENT AS SYNONYM FOR CBE

CBE

- Makes explicit what a student should know and be able to do
- Does not define learning by time

FINANCIAL AID REGULATION



Title IV of the HEA provides that:

Instead of using credit hours or clock hours as a measure of student learning, **instructional** programs may use **direct assessment** of student learning.... Examples of direct measures include projects, papers, examinations, presentations, performances, and portfolios.



QUESTIONS

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WHAT IS COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION (CBE)?



WHY CBE?

“Credit hours were never intended to measure learning, but because they are easy to measure and understand, they have become the basic building blocks of higher education for scheduling classes, determining faculty loads and meeting graduation requirements.”

~Amy Laitinen, “Cracking the Credit Hour”



WHAT IS CBE?

- Outcomes-based approach
- Emphasis on what you can do with what you know, not just what you know
- Curriculum structured around specified competencies
- Students progress by demonstrating competencies

UNBUNDLING TRADITIONAL FACULTY ROLE



ONE FACULTY MEMBER

- Advises students
- Provides subject matter expertise
- Designs curriculum
- Instructs students
- Develops assessments
- Evaluates student work

FACULTY ROLES IN CBE



DEDICATED EXPERTS

- Coach students
- Provide subject matter expertise
- Design curriculum
- Curate instructional resources
- Develop assessments
- Evaluate student work

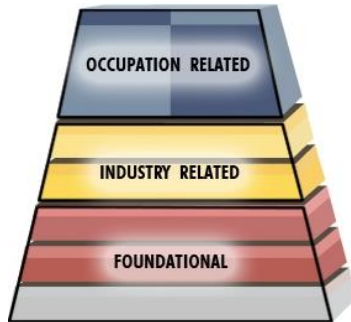
CBE RESOURCES

**COMPETENCY-BASED
EDUCATION NETWORK**

<http://www.cbenetwork.org/>

- CBE Design Planner
 - Interactive Tool
 - 5 Stages
 - Research
 - Design
 - Development
 - Implementation
 - Evaluation & Evolution

DOL/ONE-STOP COMPETENCY MODELS



- A great resource for building CBE programs, especially for industry-facing programs
- www.careeronestop.org/competencymodel/

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WHAT IS THE DA TITLE IV REGULATION?

FINANCIAL AID REGULATION



Title IV of the HEA provides that:

Instead of using credit hours or clock hours as a measure of student learning, **instructional** programs may use **direct assessment** of student learning.... Examples of direct measures include projects, papers, examinations, presentations, performances, and portfolios.



YOU STILL HAVE TO TRANSLATE BACK TO CLOCK HOURS OR SEAT TIME.

The school's application must "specify the **equivalent number of credit or clock hours** for a direct assessment program" and "explain how it determined the equivalent number of credit or clock hours for the program, i.e., its **methodology** for determining these equivalencies."

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM?



- The regulations constrain CBE
 - Focus on measuring seat time, not learning
 - Focus on inputs, not outcomes
- No aid for Prior Learning Assessment (PLA)
- Hybrid programs not eligible

“DEAR COLLEAGUE” LETTER CLARIFICATION

**ISSUED DECEMBER 19, 2014
AND ADDRESSES IN A Q&A FORMAT:**

1. The distinction between credit hour competency-based education and direct assessment
2. Requirements for establishing credit hour equivalencies in direct assessment programs
3. Requirements for regular and substantive interaction between students and faculty

“DEAR COLLEAGUE” LETTER CLARIFICATION

ISSUED DECEMBER 19, 2014
AND ADDRESSES IN A Q&A FORMAT:

4. Prohibitions on paying Title IV aid for credit earned through prior learning assessments
5. Satisfactory academic progress
6. Return of Title IV Funds provisions
7. Accrediting agencies’ roles in reviewing competency-based education programs



APPROVAL UNDER DIRECT ASSESSMENT

Very few schools have been approved under the Direct Assessment provision



BOTTOM LINE



This is (mostly) uncharted territory. It is essential to work closely with your Financial Aid office from the beginning, as soon as you start to design your CBE/DA program.

HOW ARE DA AND CBE RELATED?

- All Direct Assessment is Competency-Based Education
- BUT....
- Not all Competency-Based Education is Direct Assessment



QUESTIONS

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WHAT IS THE ROLE OF ACCREDITATION?



POLL

- Is your school regionally accredited?
- If your school is regionally accredited, which is your regional accrediting body?

DIRECT ASSESSMENT APPROVAL

- “Institutional accreditor” must approve
 - Direct assessment application
 - Methodology for determining equivalencies between direct assessment and clock/seat hours
 - Some regional accreditors have their own forms

C-RAC GUIDELINES

JUNE 2, 2015

FRAMEWORK FOR COMPETENCY-BASED PROGRAMS

- C-RAC represents all the regional accreditors
- Two approaches:

COURSE/CREDIT-BASED

DIRECT ASSESSMENT

C-RAC GUIDELINES

JUNE 2, 2015

COURSE/CREDIT-BASED APPROACH

- CBE embedded in conventional curriculum
- Acceleration of learning possible
- Credit received when summative assessment passed

C-RAC GUIDELINES

JUNE 2, 2015

DIRECT ASSESSMENT APPROACH

- Disregards conventional courses
- Bases both the **evaluation** of student achievement and the **award** of a degree or credential solely on the demonstration of competencies

11 C-RAC MUSTS

Whichever approach you pick...

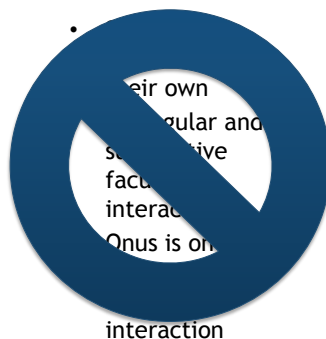
1. Administrative capacity and significant expertise in assessment
2. Performance over knowledge
3. External referencing of competencies
4. “Regular and substantive” faculty interaction and appropriate student services
5. Coherence between competencies and institution’s claims for graduates

11 C-RAC MUSTS, cont'd

6. Degree-level appropriateness of competencies
7. Demonstration of competencies at/near “excellent” level
8. Demonstration of each relevant competency
9. Good assessment/measurement practices
10. Competencies are authentic demonstrations
11. Quality of program validated

REGULAR AND SUBSTANTIVE

CORRESPONDENCE COURSE



DIRECT ASSESSMENT

- Robust support from various sources
- Student has regular and substantive interaction with faculty
- Not exclusively student-initiated



TAKEAWAYS

- If your CBE program uses credit hours, you do not need to apply for “Direct Assessment”
- BUT if you are regionally accredited, you need to follow C-RAC guidelines for any CBE programs
- Both CBE approaches require clarity about what you want your graduates to know and be able to do



QUESTIONS



EVALUATION

Thank you!

Please remember to complete the event evaluation.
Your comments will help us continually improve the
quality of our programs.

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