



Competency-Based Approaches

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Basic Features of Competency-Based Education (CBE)

- Students Awarded Degree on the Basis of Demonstrated Achievement of Competencies
- Governed by a “Competency Framework” of Some Kind
- Seat Time Plays No Role (e.g. no “Credit Hours”)
- Can Be Either Synchronous or Asynchronous
- Transcripts Organized by Competencies Attempted and Achieved, Not Courses Taken and Passed





Advantages of CBE

- Clarity of Goals and Objectives
- Flexibility Across Different Modes of Provision
- Allows Comparisons of Performance Across Populations, Treatments, and Settings
- Supports Establishment of Portable Credentials Across Institutions and Jurisdictions





Pitfalls of CBE

- Definitions of Outcomes [Conceptual and Operational]
- Legitimacy Among Traditional Academics
- Fractionation: Losing a Sense of the Whole with Respect to Complex Abilities
- Loss of Serendipity Because Not All Important Outcomes May be Specifiable in Advance





CBE and Accreditation: Questions

- What to Review: What Should Accreditation Standards Look At?
- Can Peer Review be Used? Who are Peers?
- What Kinds of Evidence Should Enter a Review?





The CHEA Competency Standards Project: An Example

- Standards Focus on the Competency Assessment Process (How Competencies are Developed, Measured, Applied, and Credentialed)
- Applied in a Pilot Study to Western Governors University (WGU)

