

# Competency Based Solutions:

Recognizing Prior Learning for Increased Persistence



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# AGENDA

- **Background**
- **Overview**
- **Advising Scenarios (small group)**
- **Brainstorming (whole group)**
- **New Content Areas**
- **Questions**



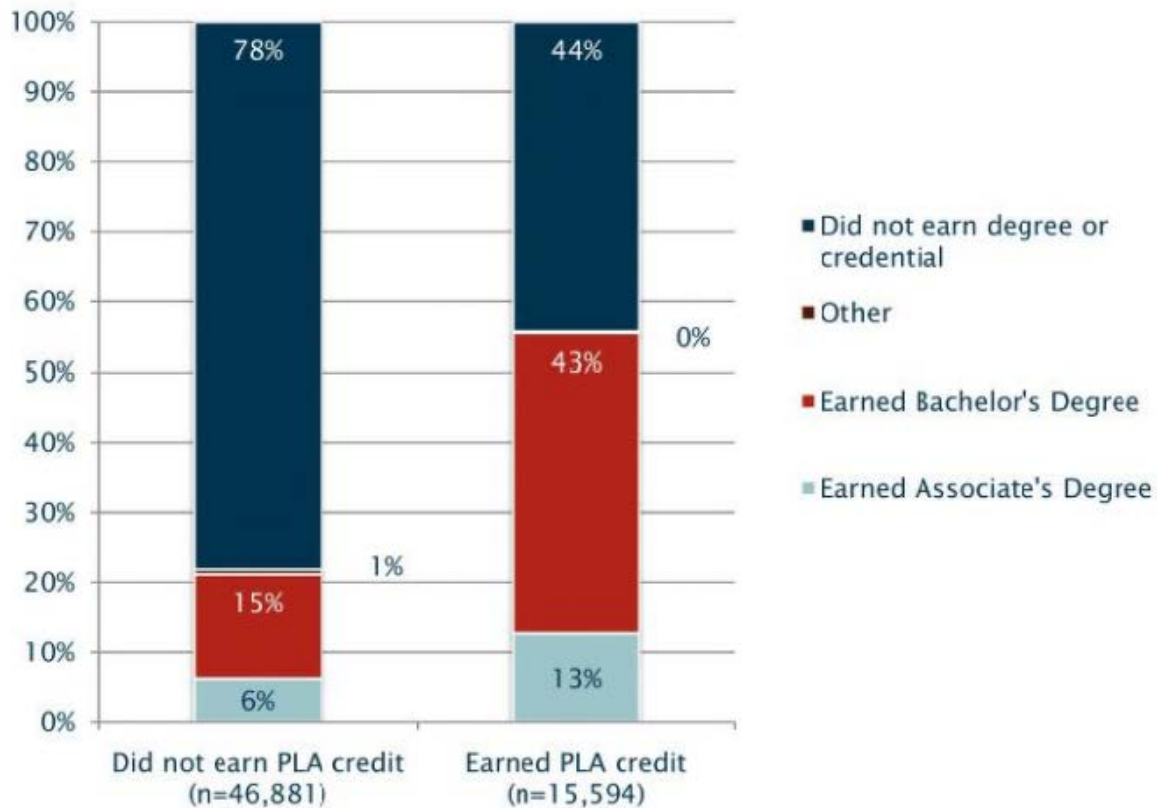
# COMPETENCY BASED EDUCATION

"Competency-based education (CBE)... is a term used for programs that focus more on what students have learned, rather than where or how long the learning takes place. Instead of evaluating student progress primarily on the amount of time spent in a classroom (using the credit hour, which is the default standard for measuring progress), **students receive college credit based on their actual demonstration of skills learned.** Because many competency-based education (CBE) programs have been designed to allow students to learn and progress at their own pace, **students with learning from life and work experience can save considerable time in earning a degree.** In addition, some of the newest CBE models have leveraged technology in order to lower the cost. But above all, CBE programs are **designed to improve the quality of higher education by putting the focus squarely on demonstrated learning outcomes.**"

Tate, P. & Klein-Collins, R. (2015). PLA and CBE on the Competency Continuum: The Relationship between Prior Learning Assessment and Competency Based Education. Retrieved from <http://www.cael.org/>



# WHY PLA AND CBE?



**PLA Students**  
**pursuing an A.D.**  
2x as many  
complete their  
degree

**PLA students**  
**pursuing a B.A.**  
almost 3x as many  
complete their  
degree



# COMPLETION AGENDA

**National Goal – 60% by 2025**

**Vermont Goal – 70% by 2025**

- Will not get there with traditional students alone
- +60,000 Vermonters (25-64) with some college, but no degree
  - Working, underemployed and unemployed

**PLA provides leverage to  
engage this population.**

For more details visit: <http://70x2025vt.org/>



# COURSE CHALLENGE



## Manual of Policy and Procedures

| Title                   | Number | Page    |
|-------------------------|--------|---------|
| <b>COURSE CHALLENGE</b> | 110    | 1       |
|                         | Date   | 3/22/02 |

### PURPOSE

The VSC has established this policy to provide qualified students with the opportunity to earn a limited amount of college credit toward a degree program for documented learning acquired outside the college classroom through life experience or achievement. The Course Challenge policy supports the VSC's mission to provide affordable, high quality, student-centered and accessible education.

### STATEMENT OF POLICY

The Vermont State Colleges offer students the opportunity to challenge specific courses required in their degree programs, up to a maximum of 12 credits. To participate in the Course Challenge process, a student must:

1. be currently enrolled in a degree program at one of the Vermont State Colleges;
2. be challenging existing courses in their specific degree program; and
3. be granted approval to participate in the process by a designated academic officer of the college.

Each of the Vermont State Colleges may develop and publish an institutional process for Course Challenge, to include the steps students must take, the cost to students, an explanation of how credit is awarded or denied, and an appropriate appeals process.

The Course Challenge process is not designed to replace the VSC's Assessment of Prior Learning program. Generally, students who have a significant amount of prior experiential learning and/ or who are unsure of their degree plans should be advised into the Assessment of Prior Learning program.

Signed by: Robert G. Clarke  
Chancellor



# BACKGROUND

**VSCS Biz Buds**

**and**

**Prior Learning Assessment**

**teamed up to create streamlined**

**Competency Based Pathways**

**for students to demonstrate**

**their college-level learning**



# GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Measure experience *already obtained* against course outcomes
- Collaborate across VSCS institutions
- Standardize courses: Quality
  - Utilize few integrated assignments
  - Define passing
  - Communicate clear expectations
- Leverage Moodle
  - Provide common layout and design
  - Employ OER content
  - Access college resources
  - Facilitate faculty communication
  - Promote advanced grading features





# SOLUTIONS

## Competency Based Pathways

- ACC-1010 Computerized Accounting
- BUS-1010 Introduction to Business
- BUS-2020 Principles of Management
- BUS-2230 Principles of Marketing
- CIS-1430 Spreadsheets

Developed by faculty with multiple institutions represented in each course.



# ADVISING SCENARIOS

## STUDENT

1. 40-year old student in your Intro class, 20 years experience in workforce over multiple jobs
2. 20-year old student, runs own small business started in high school
3. 30-year old stay-at-home mom returning to work force, work experience is 6 years old



# SMALL GROUPS

**In groups of 4-6 (10 minutes):**

- Describe a student you had in your course that may have benefitted from this solution.
- Knowing what you know now, what will you do differently in the future?

**Report Out (5 minutes):**

- One person from each group, share brief scenario, including curriculum area and outcome.



# ADVISING RESPONSES

| STUDENT   | VSCS RESPONSE   |
|---|---|
| 1. 40-year old student in your Intro class, 20 years experience in workforce over multiple jobs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Encourage review of Program Evaluation</li></ul>                                      |
| 2. 20-year old student, runs own small business started in high school                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If course titles match with experience, review objectives/learning outcomes</li></ul> |
| 3. 30-year old stay-at-home mom returning to work force, work experience is 6 years old         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Consider alternative ways to demonstrate learning</li></ul>                           |



# NEW CONTENT AREAS

Where should we focus next?

Are there particular pockets?



# BRAINSTORMING

**How can we best support our  
non-traditional students?**



# TAKEAWAY POINTS

1. Course Challenge exists
2. Faculty play a role in endorsing students
3. Reach out to Prior Learning Assessment to get started



# QUESTIONS?

Please contact us!

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