Adults and the Changing Environment of Higher Education

CAEL
Linking Learning and Work
CAEL’s Overarching Goal:

Meaningful Learning, Credentials, and Work for Every Adult

For more than 40 years, CAEL has been linking adults’ lifelong learning with credits and careers
Prior Learning Assessment is the process for evaluating knowledge and skills to award college credit for learning from:

- On-the-job training
- Independent Study
- Military and Volunteer Service
- Training Courses and/or Certifications
- Work Experience
What is Competency-Based Education (CBE)?

- Awards credits based on demonstration of mastery of competencies required in an area of study
- Only need to be taught or guided to resources to fill gaps
- Often modularized and online

- Time, source of knowledge, and pace are irrelevant
- Not credit hour based. Usually flat fee.
- Typically significantly faster and cheaper
- Easier to demonstrate value to employers
- Easier to fit into busy schedule
Changing the Formula

\[ \text{Time} \times \text{Fixed} = \text{Learning} \times \text{Variable} \]
The CBE-PLA Continuum
Why do PLA and CBE?

- Better performing students
- Reduced costs and time
- Closer workforce alignment
- Higher demand for courses
Graduation and Completion

2.5X

Baccalaureate students are 2.5X more likely to persist to graduation.

Associates students are 2X more likely to persist to graduation.
Why do PLA and CBE?

• Target adult students
• Attract adults back to education
• Financing consideration
Examples

• PLA
  – Arkansas
  – Colorado
  – Idaho
  – Minnesota
  – Montana
  – New Hampshire
  – North Carolina
  – Ohio
  – Tennessee
  – Texas
  – Utah
  – West Virginia
  – Wisconsin

• CBE
  – Kentucky
  – Indiana
  – Minnesota
  – Missouri
  – Texas
  – Washington
  – Wisconsin
Why adults matter in numbers

- **36,174,067**  
  - 21.76%

- **43,843,773**  
  - 26.37%

- **80,017,840**  
  - 48.13%

- **54,876,000**

- Number of adults in US with some college, no degree

- Number of adults with only high school diploma

- Combined Total

- Total K12 Enrollment
Enrollment

87% of Americans think students should be able to receive college credit for knowledge and skills acquired outside the classroom.

75% would be more likely to enroll in higher ed if they could receive credit for what they already know.

Lumina Gallup Poll: America’s Call for Higher Education Redesign - Feb 2013.
What else is different about adult and non-traditional programs?

- More flexible
- More career-focused
- Values experience and maturity
- Minimal frustration
- Adult-specific supports
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