

# CompetencyWorks

Maximizing Competency Education  
and Blended Learning:  
*Insights From Experts*  
with Susan Patrick and Chris Sturgis

Thursday, June 10, 2015

2:00-3:00 PM ET



## Experts: What do we mean by Technical Assistance Providers?

- Technical assistance (TA) has long been an overarching strategy for assisting states, institutions, and practitioners with building capacity for services and systems change.
- *CompetencyWorks* brought together 23 TA providers to examine their catalytic role in implementing next generation learning models, share expertise about blended learning and competency education, and discuss next steps to move the field forward with a focus on equity and quality.

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Maximizing Competency Education and Blended Learning

*Thanks to the Experts*

<p><b>Judy Bauernschmidt Perez</b> Colorado eLearning Collaborative</p> <p><b>Jane Bryson</b> Education Elements</p> <p><b>Kim Carter</b> QED Foundation</p> <p><b>Rose L. Colby</b> Competency Based Learning Specialist</p> <p><b>Justin de Leon</b> Education Elements</p>	<p><b>Joe DiMartino</b> Ctr for Secondary School Redesign</p> <p><b>Kristin Floreno</b> Matchbook Learning</p> <p><b>Julia Freeland</b> Clayton Christensen Institute</p> <p><b>Bruce Friend</b> Ignite Learning Partners</p> <p><b>Liz Glowa</b> Education Consultant</p>
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Maximizing Competency Education and Blended Learning

*Thanks to the Experts*

<p><b>Anna R. Hall</b> Springpoint</p> <p><b>Alison Hramiec</b> Boston Day and Evening Academy</p> <p><b>Akili Moses Israel</b> Diploma Plus, Inc.</p> <p><b>Samantha Olson</b> CO Legacy Foundation</p> <p><b>Linda Pittenger</b> Ctr for Innovation in Education</p>	<p><b>Amanda Poole</b> The Parthenon Group</p> <p><b>Allison Powell</b> iNACOL</p> <p><b>David Ruff</b> Great Schools Partnership</p> <p><b>Tom Ryan</b> eLearn Institute</p> <p><b>Rick Schreiber</b> Re-Inventing Schools Coalition</p>
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## What is the goal of the research?

- By building the knowledge and networks of Technical Assistance providers, these groups can play an even more catalytic role in advancing the field.
- The objective of the convening was to help educate and level set the understanding of competency education and its design elements, as well as to build knowledge about using blended learning modalities within competency-based environments.

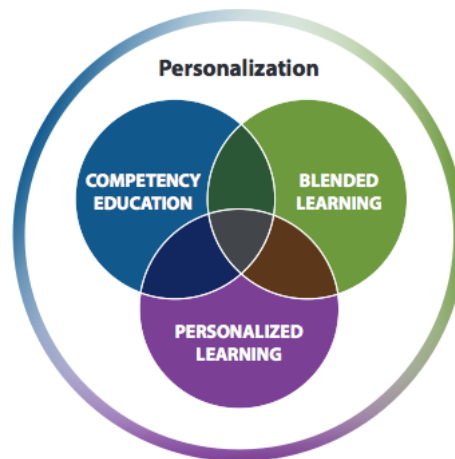
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## Overview of Learning Goals

- To understand and be able to analyze the differences and commonalities between personalized learning, competency education, and blended learning.
- To understand the primary equity concerns and emerging issues in creating a personalized, competency-based, blended system.
- To become familiar with considerations for to districts integrate competency-based structures, personalized learning, and blended learning.
- To become familiar with recommendations for moving forward.

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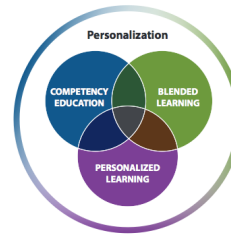
## Differences and Commonalities: Personalized Learning, Competency Education, and Blended Learning?



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### Think about them as....

- **Personalization**
  - As the overall system goal as compared to a factory model
- **Competency Education**
  - A structural foundation designed to ensure students are learning and progressing
- **Personalized Learning**
  - Meeting each students' needs, with voice and choice in how, what, where, and when they learn based on interests; an approach to ensure students are engaged and getting the instructional opportunities and supports they need to be successful
- **Blended Learning**
  - An instructional delivery system -- using both online and face-to-face instruction -- as a powerful delivery system that can be used to enable competency education and personalized learning



## Personalized Learning

- May be used as inclusive term or for specific practices
- Big idea is tailoring learning to student strengths, needs and interests – “per person” pathways and supports
- Not all online and blended is 100% personalized
  - Blended can provide flexibility in pacing, options for instruction, and detailed information on student learning
- Not all personalized is competency-based and vice versa
  - Competency-based requires advancement on demonstrated mastery, personalized levels of support and pacing. It also provides structure to ensure equity in personalized systems.
- Equity concerns
  - Different expectations?
  - Adequate monitoring and supports?

## Competency Education: Working Definition

- Students advance upon *demonstrated* mastery.
- Competencies include explicit, measurable, transferable learning objectives that empower students.
- Assessment is meaningful and a positive learning experience for students.
- Students receive timely, differentiated support based on their individual learning needs.
- Learning outcomes emphasize competencies that include application and creation of knowledge, along with the development of important skills and dispositions

## Competency Education

- Structure or systemic approach
- Misconceptions and Misunderstandings
  - Variable supports vs self-paced
  - Standards vs competencies
  - Standards-referenced grading and standards-based grading
- Equity
  - Designed to produce greater equity...
  - Fear that children will be entirely self-paced
  - Risk that standards can produce linearity and checklists
  - We need to
    - Provide flexible responses
    - Track pace and progress
    - Ensure deeper learning
    - Rethink equity in terms of pace, progress, depth of learning and student agency

## Blended Learning

- Formal education program in which a student learns at least in part through online learning with some element of student control over time, place, path and/or pace.
- Students learn in part in a brick/mortar away from home.
- Integrated learning experiences
  - Horn and Staker

## Blended Learning

- BL  $\neq$  educational technology
- Includes adaptive software and/or online curriculum
  - Adaptive technologies can support goals of personalization
- Can enable personalization and differentiated instruction but may have qualities that are not personalized.
- Equity issues in poor quality implementations:
  - Lack of access
  - Students in front of computers all day with low level content
  - May reduce choice in pathways
  - Support social emotional learning

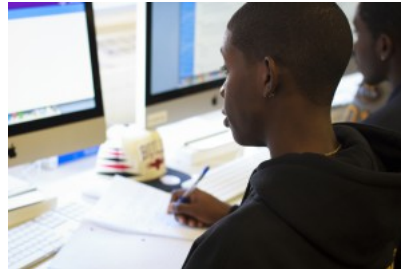
QUESTIONS?

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## Equity Considerations

### *Lack of access*

- To schooling
- Foundational skills
- Online learning
- Deeper learning
- Advanced studies



### *Expectations*

- Different expectations
- Attribution error
- Different learning opportunities
  - Enriched learning opportunities or digital low level content
  - Linearity and checklists
  - Different levels of agency, voice and choice
  - Not taking into consideration ELL, SPED and ULD

## Equity Considerations

### *What We Need in Place*

- Systems to support calibration
- Provide flexible responses
  - Within school day
  - Over the year
  - Preparation as well as intervention
- Timeline tracking pace and progress
- Ensure deeper learning

### *Rethinking How We Monitor Equity?*

- Accountability
- Pace
- Progress and depth of learning
- Student agency



# QUESTIONS?

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## Integrating Competency-Based Structures, Personalized Learning, and Blended Learning

- Start with a strong pedagogical philosophy
- Hold tight – the competency-based infrastructure
  - Shared goals of what you want students to know and be able to do (standards/competencies)
  - Rubrics for expectations of what a student knows and shows
  - Systems of assessments to support learning goals.
- Let loose – school autonomy and instructional strategies
  - School-wide strategies to provide flexible responses when students are struggling
  - School and educator autonomy on instructional strategies

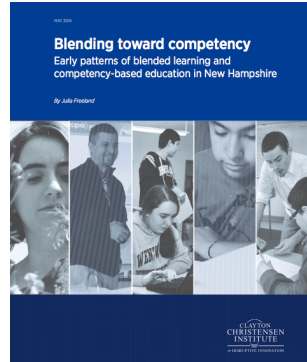
## How Can Competency-Based Districts Maximize Learning Through Blended Approaches?

### *Why Use Blended?*

- Best of both worlds
- Bloom's Level 1 & 2
- Boost skills
- On-demand data for I & A
- Advanced students
- Managing choice
- Teacher time

### *Best Model?*

- Design for your students
- From Julia Freeland's research at Christensen Institute:
  - More time-based → Flipped Classroom and Station Rotation will work
  - More flexible and personalized → Individual Rotation, Flex and A La Carte.



## How Can Competency-Based Districts Maximize Learning Through Blended Approaches?

### *Digital Content?*

- How does it fit into your overall pedagogical philosophy?
  - Benefits come from creating an integrated experience
- Questions to ask yourself:
  - What role will it play?
  - How well designed for SPED and ELL?
  - In what way is it adaptive and/or assignable?
  - How can it help inform educators on students, progress and challenges?

## How Can Competency-Based Districts Maximize Learning Through Blended Approaches?

### *Concerns About Digital Content*

- In what way is it personalized and what are the implications for student engagement/motivation?
- How transparent are the learning objectives?
- How is proficiency determined and at what depth of knowledge?
- Is it designed with the principles of Universal Design for Learning?

QUESTIONS?

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## How Can Blended Districts Integrate a Competency-based Structure?

### *Why do they want to?*

- Want students to have more agency and able to be independent learners
- Time-based practices are obstacles
- Have greater personalization or wider range of learning opportunities but need an infrastructure in place to support equity
- Move to students demonstrating evidence, e-portfolios, deeper learning

## Recommendations for Blended Districts

- Invest in leadership – adaptive or distributed
- Revisit the mission and vision – shared purpose
- Assess strength of learning culture and growth mindset
- Calibrate proficiency
- Nurture student agency through transparency
- Advance students based on demonstrated mastery
- Design for not yet proficient
- Plan for application and knowledge utilization

## QUESTIONS?

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### Recommendation to Strengthen Capacity of TA Providers

- Joint site visits
- Fellowships and exchanges
- Joint network meetings
- Learn from others online
- Level setting terminology

## Recommendations for the Field to Move Forward

- Improving the Human Capital Pipeline
- Comprehensive Resources
- Supportive Policy
- Data Infrastructure and Technology Ecosystem
- Community Engagement and Public Will

QUESTIONS?

## Partners



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**FOR MORE INFORMATION  
AND SHARE IDEAS**

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