Making Mastery Matter
Empowering Educators to Learn & Teach in New Ways

Meghan Cureton
Mount Vernon School
@meghancureton

Stephen Dunn
Nueva School
@stphndnn

Eric Hudson
Global Online Academy
@ejhudson

Hannah Nelson
Watershed School
@experienscience
Hello!

I’m Eric Hudson

I believe competency-based learning is a way to prioritize agency, equity, and transfer in the design of learning experiences.
6 Myths about CBE

1. This is about grades.
2. It’s about reporting out and transcripts.
3. We need to adopt the right tool(s) before we begin.
4. Wait until everyone is ready before you begin.
5. Moving to Competency means we lose content.
6. It’s JUST the teacher’s job.
A Note on Terms...

Moving to mastery in schools is most often associated with a few different terms:

- Competency-based education/learning
- Mastery learning
- Personalized learning
- Proficiency-based learning
Myth: This is about grades.
Competency-Based Learning

Competency-based learning (CBL) is a system that aims to mirror how people learn, work, and succeed in the world. A CBL environment is one that promotes...

**Agency**
Students have voice and choice in what, when, where, and how they learn. Students collaborate with educators to design learning pathways suited to them.

**Equity**
All students are known deeply, empowered to learn, and provided the support they need to meet high expectations.

**Transfer**
Transfer is the ability to extend what has been learned from one context to another. Diverse, relevant learning experiences and assessments in school and beyond give students opportunities to transfer knowledge to new contexts.
Agency

“We can create environments that support noncognitive development — schools and spaces where students feel their work is meaningful, where they know adults believe in their ability, and where they genuinely believe in their own capacity to learn, grow, and succeed."

—University of Chicago Consortium on School Research, “The Role of Noncognitive Factors in Shaping School Performance”
“We keep thinking schools that once worked got broken at some point, and now we need to fix them. The reality: These systems are doing exactly what they were designed to do from the beginning, which is to churn out inequitable outcomes that create racial stratification in terms of who is college—and career—ready. This is a hard truth that many people don’t want to acknowledge when we start having the ‘equity conversation.’”

-Zaretta Hammond, “A Conversation About Instructional Equity”
Transfer

“Mastery is effective transfer of learning in authentic and worthy performance. Students have mastered a subject when they are fluent, even creative, in using their knowledge, skills, and understanding in key performance challenges and contexts at the heart of that subject, as measured against valid and high standards.”

–Grant Wiggins, “How Good is Good Enough?”
What does this look like?

1. Students are empowered daily to make important decisions about their learning experiences, how they will create and apply knowledge, and how they will demonstrate their learning.
2. Assessment is a meaningful, positive, and empowering learning experience for students that yields timely, relevant, and actionable evidence.
3. Students receive timely, differentiated support based on their individual learning needs.
4. Students progress based on evidence of mastery, not seat time.
5. Students learn actively using different pathways and varied pacing.
6. Strategies to ensure equity for all students are embedded in the culture, structure, and pedagogy of schools and education systems.
7. Rigorous, common expectations for learning (knowledge, skills, and dispositions) are explicit, transparent, measurable, and transferable.

Aurora Institute, "What is Competency-Based Education: An Updated Definition"
Empowering Teachers

“It turns out that relentless focus on people, on developing everyone in the organization, leads to an organizational culture designed for adaptive change. In this sense, culture is strategy... The most common mistake organizations and their leaders make is to try to meet adaptive challenges with technical means.”

—Robert Kegan and Lisa Laskow Lahey, An Everyone Culture: Becoming a Deliberately Developmental Organization
Five Shifts for Competency-Based Learning

- From Content-Driven to Skills-Driven
- From Time-Based to Performance-Based
- From Lessons to Experiences
- From Grading to Feedback
- From Teacher-Designed to Co-Designed
**Competency-Based Professional Learning**

Agency, Equity, and Transfer for Adults

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**Applying Knowledge to Novel Problems**

Present an authentic problem. Create the time, space, and support educators need to explore and address that problem deeply.

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**Leading Their Own Learning**

Ask educators to articulate their ideas, defend them with evidence, and receive feedback from colleagues.
Professional Learning at GOA

| Five Shifts for Agency, Equity, and Transfer | • From Content-Driven to Skills-Driven  
|                                          | • From Time-Based to Performance-Based  
|                                          | • From Lessons to Experiences  
|                                          | • From Grading to Feedback  
|                                          | • From Teacher-Designed to Co-Designed  
| CBL Offerings | • In person: The Learning Design Summit (June 28–July 1)  
|              | • Online: Competency-Based Learning: From Theory to Practice (July 27–August 21)  
|              | • Design Tool for Educators: The Competency-Based Learning Toolkit  

globalonlineacademy.org/professional-learning
Hello!

I am Meghan Cureton

I believe in competency-based system where learners are unleashed to create impact in their communities and solve wicked problems.
Myth: CBE is about reporting out and transcripts.
Strategies to ensure equity for all students are embedded in the culture, structure, and pedagogy of schools and education systems.

Rigorous, common expectations for learning (knowledge, skills, and dispositions) are explicit, transparent, measurable, and transferable.
Chapter 3
Page 61: The bottom of page 61 lists the different expectations of "emerging" or "proficient" on a grading scale. This is a debate that we at the Upper School have had on multiple occasions. Acknowledging that there currently is no consensus, let's debate this! If we did want to reach consensus, what are the steps we need to take, the users we need to include, to reach it?
Myth: We need to adopt the right tool or LMS before we begin.
Students are empowered daily to make important decisions about their learning experiences, how they will create and apply knowledge, and how they will demonstrate their learning.

Assessment is a meaningful, positive, and empowering learning experience for students that yields timely, relevant, and actionable evidence.
So...what have we been doing to address this shift at Mount Vernon?
A brief overview of our journey...

- **August**: Drafted grading and assessment philosophy
- **October**: Self-assessment and action plan on growth toward philosophy
- **December**: Workshopping on Assessment in IBL Model
- **February**: Assessment tuning protocol
- **March**: Revisit grading & assessment philosophy and self-assessments on our own practice
Grades are separate from Academic behaviors

Academic behaviors should not be included in a grade - blending academic behaviors with academic evidence is not indicative of what the student knows and is able to do, Grades should reflect current learning.
Grades are used to communicate growth in specific skills and content understanding, not to motivate or punish. Grades describe students’ progress toward a set of long-term learning targets that students and families are aware of at the outset of instruction.
July
Established Essentialized LO for courses

October
Revisited CBE definition in conjunction with PBL, IBL and DT

November
Reviewed student work and discussed Mastery

January
Reviewing revised definition of CBE. Small group PLCs forming.

August
Pilot established with Altitude Learning

What's Now?
★ Breaking w Tradition book club
★ Student work review
★ Excerpts from On your Mark
★ Rubric design workshops
Transformation is a process not an event.

- John Kotter
Hello!

I’m Hannah Nelson

I believe competency-based learning allows for greater opportunities for real world learning experiences; it allows students to try, fail, and try again, building resilience and adaptability.
Myth: Wait until EVERYONE is ready.
Watershed’s Portrait of a Graduate (2016)
### PoG Draft #1

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Curious learners and caring, committed global citizens

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## Portrait of a Graduate: Draft #2

**Curious learners and caring, committed global citizens**

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Skills:
- Communication Skills
- Information Fluency
- Quantitative Reasoning Skills
- Tech Skills
- Stewardship/Ownership
- Entrepreneurial Spirit
- (Agency/Initiative/bias toward action)
- Emotional Intelligence
- Empathy
- Courage
- Gratitude
- Adaptability
- Cultural Fluency
- Systems Thinking
- Problem Solving Skills
- Craftspersonship
- Leadership/Change Skills
- Collaboration Skills
## Portrait of a Graduate: Draft #2

### Curious learners and caring, committed global citizens

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|                  |                                 | Adaptability         | }
Truth: *Change can happen at any level*

- Individual Teacher/Classroom
- Discipline Team
- Grade level
- Individual Students
Myth: If we move to competency we lose the content
Interdisciplinary Projects and Assessments

8th Grade course: The Power of Bicycles

Communicator
Creative Problem Solver
Critical Thinker
Work strategically and collaboratively with peers of differing perspectives and skills.
Persist in the face of setbacks and take ownership for your ideas, behaviors, and skills.
**Truth:** When you allow for real world learning experiences, you are able to go deeper and develop not just content skills and abilities, but character.
Hello!

I am Stephen Dunn

I believe in competency-based movement because I want students to experience the most authentic learning possible.
Myth: It’s just the teacher’s job.
Nueva Competency Areas and Mastery Credits
Nueva Competency Areas and Mastery Credits

1. Social and Emotional Analysis: Students demonstrate an understanding and application of social skills, including emotional awareness, empathy, and problem-solving in a variety of contexts, fostering healthy relationships and civic engagement.

   a. Understanding others' feelings and intentions in social interactions.
   b. Using and expressing emotions appropriately in a variety of situations.
   c. Resolving conflicts in a respectful and constructive manner.
   d. Participating in community service and leadership roles.


   a. Developing strategies for effective time management and planning.
   b. Managing stress and anxiety through mindfulness and relaxation techniques.
   c. Improving memory and concentration through exercise and nutrition.
   d. Enhancing creativity and innovation through art and music.

3. Information Literacy: Students demonstrate the ability to search for and evaluate information from a variety of sources.

   a. Identifying the purpose and intended audience of a text.
   b. Recognizing the reliability of sources and analyzing for bias.
   c. Summarizing and synthesizing information from multiple sources.
   d. Creating presentations and written materials that effectively communicate findings.

4. Critical Thinking and Decision-Making: Students demonstrate the ability to analyze complex situations and make informed decisions.

   a. Identifying assumptions and questioning underlying beliefs.
   b. Evaluating evidence and arguments critically.
   c. Considering multiple perspectives and alternative solutions.
   d. Applying logical reasoning to arrive at well-reasoned conclusions.

5. STEM Integration: Students apply interdisciplinary approaches to solve real-world problems.

   a. Applying mathematical concepts to solve scientific problems.
   b. Using computational tools to analyze data and model systems.
   c. Integrating engineering principles into design projects.
   d. Conducting experiments and analyzing results to draw conclusions.

6. Creativity and Innovation: Students develop and execute projects that demonstrate creativity and originality.

   a. Identifying a problem and designing a creative solution.
   b. Using design thinking to develop innovative products or services.
   c. Creating and presenting a proposal for a new initiative.
   d. Developing a entrepreneurial mindset and taking calculated risks.

7. Global Awareness: Students demonstrate an understanding of global issues and perspectives.

   a. Analyzing the interconnectedness of global systems and events.
   b. Recognizing the impact of cultural and social diversity on global issues.
   c. Participating in international collaborative projects.
   d. Understanding the role of technology in international communication and collaboration.

8. Communication Skills: Students demonstrate effective communication in various contexts.

   a. Speaking and listening in public speaking engagements.
   b. Writing clearly and effectively for a variety of audiences.
   c. Collaborating with others to achieve a common goal.
   d. Navigating diverse communication styles and practices.

9. Health and Wellness: Students demonstrate an understanding of health and wellness practices.

   a. Analyzing the impact of nutrition and exercise on physical health.
   b. Identifying strategies for mental health and stress management.
   c. Evaluating the role of technology in health and wellness.
   d. Conducting research and presenting findings on health-related topics.

10. Physical Health: Students participate in physical activities that promote health and fitness.

    a. Participating in a variety of physical activities.
    b. Monitoring and maintaining physical fitness levels.
    c. Developing and following a balanced nutrition plan.
    d. Understanding the importance of rest and recovery.

11. Social Action: Students engage in social action projects that address community needs.

    a. Identifying a community need and developing a project.
    b. Collaborating with others to execute a project.
    c. Evaluating the impact of a project on the community.
    d. Reflecting on personal growth and development through social action.

12. Environmental Sustainability: Students demonstrate an understanding of environmental issues and practices.

    a. Analyzing the impact of human activities on the environment.
    b. Identifying strategies for reducing environmental impact.
    c. Participating in environmental conservation projects.
    d. Reflecting on personal and community actions that promote sustainability.

13. Financial Literacy: Students demonstrate an understanding of financial concepts and practices.

    a. Understanding the role of money in personal and community life.
    b. Analyzing financial statements and budgets.
    c. Developing and following a personal budget.
    d. Reflecting on personal financial decisions and goals.

14. Art and Design: Students demonstrate an understanding of art and design concepts.

    a. Analyzing the elements and principles of art.
    b. Creating works of art that demonstrate personal expression.
    c. Evaluating the impact of art in society.
    d. Reflecting on personal growth and development through art and design.

15. Media and Digital Literacy: Students demonstrate an understanding of media and digital concepts.

    a. Analyzing the role of media in shaping public opinion.
    b. Evaluating the impact of digital technologies on communication and society.
    c. Using digital tools to create and share multimedia content.
    d. Reflecting on personal and societal implications of digital technologies.

16. Social Entrepreneurship: Students demonstrate a capacity to innovate and solve problems.

    a. Identifying a problem and developing a solution.
    b. Creating and executing a social enterprise.
    c. Evaluating the impact of a social enterprise.
    d. Reflecting on personal growth and development through social entrepreneurship.

17. Career Readiness: Students demonstrate readiness for future education or employment.

    a. Identifying personal strengths and interests.
    b. Conducting research on academic and career options.
    c. Developing a plan for future educational or career opportunities.
    d. Reflecting on personal growth and development through planning and preparation.

18. Student Involvement: Students participate in school and community activities.

    a. Joining and participating in extracurricular clubs and organizations.
    b. Volunteering for community service.
    c. Serving as a peer leader or mentor.
    d. Reflecting on personal and community growth through involvement.

19. Student Achievement: Students demonstrate achievement in academic and personal areas.

    a. Reaching personal and academic goals.
    b. Participating in community service and volunteer work.
    c. Reflecting on personal growth and development through achievement.
    d. Identifying personal strengths and areas for improvement.

20. Student Well-being: Students demonstrate a commitment to personal and emotional health.

    b. Participating in activities that promote physical, emotional, and social well-being.
    c. Reflecting on personal growth and development through self-care.
    d. Identifying personal strengths and areas for improvement.

21. Student Leadership: Students demonstrate leadership and civic engagement.

    a. Participating in student government and leadership roles.
    b. Organizing and participating in community events.
    c. Reflecting on personal growth and development through leadership.
    d. Identifying personal strengths and areas for improvement.

22. Student Collaboration: Students demonstrate collaborative skills.

    a. Participating in team projects and group discussions.
    b. Reflecting on personal growth and development through collaboration.
    c. Identifying personal strengths and areas for improvement.
    d. Identifying personal strengths and areas for improvement.
Competency Areas and Mastery Credits

1. **Social and Emotional Acuity**: Students demonstrate an understanding and awareness of both self and others, with a view to respecting, protecting, and advancing shared values intrapersonally and across a diverse community.

2. **Mind-Body Performance**: Student can plan and execute a mind-body program that actively targets areas of personal growth; student can plan and complete a program that transforms their mind and body for long-term gains.

3. **Citizenship and Decision-Making**: Students demonstrate social and political responsibility, and an ability to work with others to meet the interests of all.

4. **Communication and Self-Expression**: Students demonstrate an ability to convey complex ideas with maximum impact through multiple mediums, languages and disciplines.

5. **Problem-Solving and Critical Analysis**: Students demonstrate a capacity to conceptualize problems, find unique solutions, and modify those solutions to positive real-world effect.

6. **Quantitative, Technical and Scientific Fluency**: Students demonstrate a deep grasp of the skills and knowledge traditionally associated with the fields of math, engineering, and science, and are able to utilize those skills and knowledge in real-world applications.

7. **Social, Cultural and Historical Fluency**: Students demonstrate a deep grasp of the skills and knowledge traditionally associated with humanities and the social sciences, and are able to apply those skills and knowledge to generate new understandings of the world.
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- **PK/K**: Kindergarten to Primary School
- **Yr 1 to 8**: Years 1 to 8
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Citizenship and Decision-Making:

1. Social Mobilization (Advanced): Student can motivate others to engage positively and effectively with social and political challenges in their communities.

2. Consensus Making (Advanced): Student can generate meaningful and lasting agreement among a large group of constituents from outside of the student’s community.

3. Delegation and Coaching (Advanced): Student can manage complex projects by delegating to a team and motivating them towards the achievement of communal goals.

4. Community Leadership (Advanced): Student can serve as an effective leader within their community over an extended time period, with measurable and positive effects on the community as a whole.

5. Leadership Cultivation (Advanced): Student can plan and initiate a program that creates and guides new leaders to effect positive change within their communities.
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Parent Engagement

Problem Solving

Social and Emotional Acuity

Citizenship and ethical decision making

Communication and Self-Expression

Quantitative, technical and scientific literacy and reasoning

Social, cultural and historical literacy and reasoning

Habits of Learning

- Quest project creates space for true self-direction
- Advisors already discuss this a lot so they could help

- Spending more time learning scientific content will be a great challenge and a process/empowerment/design etc.
- Standardize and focus on creative and fun ways to demonstrate and teach concepts through exploration.
- Core concepts should be taught very explicitly and in almost checklist way. This is especially important for science.
- Very easy to consider because this is my kid's strength.
- (b) If more systematic support can be gained to support students who explore deeply, it will be a plus.
- (b) - "understand, apply, and extend digital technologies."

- Allow creativity in projects of all subjects. Nueva nurtures creativity. WHERE DOES THE SHOW-UP ON THESE CREDITS?
- Students could describe their own background and how it influences them and discuss.
- (a) Global historical literacy
- (b) Be able to teach material to younger students
- Individual needs have already been taken into account to formulate a plan specific for the students
- Humanities Fair - similar to STEM fair for original research

- Language classes bring in a lot of cultural and social literacy, eg. native speaker speakers
- (a) Guest projects
- (b) Cultural days and fairs that include visual and performing arts
- (c) STARTUP
- Thorough and extensive work throughout the grants have produced positive results
- (d) Visual art effectives: photography, music design and production
- (e) Silk road projects and presentations
- (f) The debate program really helps students to help exercise this skill
- (g) Israel/Palestine trip is an outstanding example to highlight
- (h) In doing web-based research, evaluate websites for factual information, curated content versus opinion and fake news
- Paper assignments are generally very good, but require integration and synthesis
- Good, informative rubric

- Concrete, practical practices that students can try
- Check on learning behaviors or what behaviors

- Historical:
  - Sa. Guest projects on complex math
  - Sa. Econ research project on political fund raising
  - Sh physics' coin research
  - Sh physics' coin competition
  - This is always enjoyable and great. Most classes are geared to show this and that
  - Sh. Legos integrated in all classes except physical education
  - Some coding class taught as a requirement
  - The social emotional learning has made such a great positive impact on my child. Both the faculty and students are so awesome. The trip also sounds amazing
  - Sh. Music design and production class
  - Sh - Japanese project to build eco-friendly residential house incorporating learning from biology class.
  - (d) Great examples: Future Problem Solving + Engineering. To solve real issues
  - (e) Class examples where students leverage 3D skills
Dana is an interdisciplinary learner deeply curious about literature, philosophy, religious studies and the environment. She is a growing social justice advocate, passionate about community leadership and dialogue across boundaries.

**Featured Credits**

- Community Leadership: Advanced
- Critical Literary Analysis: Advanced
- Social-Scientific Analysis: Advanced

Quick Links

- Counselor Recommendation
- Another Message
Nueva Competency Areas and Mastery Credits
CBE: What’s Next For You?

Where am I now?  Where do I want to go?  How will I get there?
6 Truths about CBE

1. It's about agency, equity and transfer
2. Establish a culture of learning and growth
3. Begin where you are
4. Celebrate the wins of your early adopters
5. Content and Competencies are not mutually exclusive
6. A shift to CBE involves all stakeholders
Meghan Cureton, Mount Vernon School
@meghancureton

Stephen Dunn, Nueva School
@stphndnn

Eric Hudson, Global Online Academy
@ejhudson

Hannah Nelson, Watershed School
@experienscience

Thanks!