

It's Not a Matter of Time: Investing in Competency-Based Learning Innovations

WEB SEMINAR
Monday March 14, 2011
1 - 2 pm ET

grantmakers^{for}education 

Youth Transition Funders Group
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Web Seminar Highlights

Introduction to Competency-Based Learning

- ✓ What are competency-based approaches?
- ✓ Why is it important for serving vulnerable students?

Highlights from Competency-Based Learning Summit

- ✓ What are the key issues that will need to be addressed to transform our education system into competency-based ?
- ✓ What are examples of policies?

Investment Opportunities

- ✓ What is an example of a funder's strategy?
- ✓ What are opportunities for investments ?

Meet Our Speakers

Chris Sturgis

MetisNet

Strategic Advisor to YTFG



Susan Patrick

**International Association of K-12
Online Learning (iNACOL)**



Charles Toulmin

Nellie Mae Education Foundation



Chris Sturgis



Chris Sturgis is principal of MetisNet, a consulting firm that specializes in supporting foundations in strategy development, coaching and rapid research. MetisNet specializes in bridging together local and expert knowledge.

Sturgis has consulted to the U.S. Department of Education, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and regional foundations including Donnell-Kay and Skillman. Prior to that she worked in state government, human service organizations, campaigns, and managed grantmaking strategies at Charles Stewart Mott Foundation and Omidyar Foundation. She is co-founder of the YTFG.

Susan Patrick



Susan Patrick is the President and CEO of the International Association of K-12 Online Learning (iNACOL). iNACOL is the international K-12 nonprofit association representing the interests of practitioners, providers and students involved in online learning worldwide.

She is the former Director of the Office of Educational Technology at the U.S. Department of Education. Prior, Patrick worked in Arizona on e-government and e-learning initiatives and served as the legislative liaison for technology issues for Governor Jane Dee Hull.

Charles Toulmin



Charles M. Toulmin is Nellie Mae Education Foundation's Director of Policy. He was previously Senior Policy Analyst in the Education Division at the Center for Best Practices employed at the National Governor's Association (NGA). While at the NGA, he led the Center's efforts on strengthening science, technology, engineering and math (STEM).

Toulmin has previously served at the state level including Deputy Director of Charter Schools for the Massachusetts Department of Education and School Finance Analyst for the Wisconsin State Legislature.

Context



- It all started at a GFE meeting
- Different entry points
 - iNACOL: Competency is top policy priority
 - Nellie Mae: Key element of student-centered
 - YTFG: Over-age, under-credited students, high mobility
- Building knowledge and networks
 - Move beyond different labels
 - Scan of the field:
 - *When Success is the Only Option: Designing Competency-based Pathways for Next Generation Learning*
 - *Clearing the Path: Creating Innovation Space for Serving Over-Age, Under-Credited Students in Competency-Based Pathways*
 - Competency-based Learning Summit

Polling Question

Have you ever experienced or visited a competency-based learning environment, class, or school?



Yes



No

From Time-Based to Learning-Based System



In a proficiency system, failure or poor performance may be part of the student's learning curve, but it is not an outcome

-- Proficiency-Based Instruction and Assessment,
Oregon Education Roundtable

Competency-based Approaches



- Broader Context: Next Generation Learning
 - * Student-centered
 - * Competency-based
 - * Anytime Anywhere
 - * Deeper Learning
- Working Definition (in process of refinement)
 - Students advance upon mastery
 - Explicit and measurable learning objectives that empower students
 - Assessment is meaningful and a positive learning experience for students.
- Approach students holistically
 - Academic and efficacy competencies

Lessons Learned from the Scan



- Empowered by Technology
- Rapidly Growing Demand
 - * Online
 - * Graduation crisis
 - * Budget deficits
 - * School turnaround
- Role of State Policy
 - Feds allows CBA; state role to provide policy support
 - Baseline: Waiver
 - Advanced: Policy framework & supportive TA
- “Teachers Flourish as Much as Students”
 - Chugach: 55% - 12% annual teacher turnover
- Culture of Continuous Improvement
- Protect High Levels of Proficiency and Quality

Pockets of Innovation



- State Reforms

 - Oregon: Enabling legislation with proficiency pilot program

 - New Hampshire: Eliminate Carnegie unit for high schools

 - Ohio: Credit flexibility

 - Alabama: Credit recovery and acceleration flexibility

- District Reforms

 - Chugach Alaska

 - Lindsay Unified, California

 - District 15 Maine

- School Models

 - *Diploma Plus * Highland Technical High, Anchorage

 - * Carpe Diem, Yuma * Florida Virtual School

Importance for Vulnerable Students?



- Time is a resource not a constraint
 - Over-age and under-credited students accelerate credits
 - Ability to build skills through expanded learning opportunities (work, online, volunteering)
- Environment and instructional model dedicated to students success
 - Explicit, transparent, and rapid interventions
 - High engagement and motivation through multiple ways to demonstrate proficiency
- Educational continuity for highly mobile students
 - Foster care, juvenile justice, religious and community responsibilities, parenting, supporting families

Questions & Discussion

Highlights from Competency-Based Learning Summit



- New Understanding of Education
 - Learn anywhere, educator facilitates, guides, assesses, responds when students are stuck
 - Not fewer teaching jobs, different kinds of jobs
- Customer-driven or Student-centric system
 - Stronger supports
 - Modular units of learning
 - Greater choice and flexibility
 - Student voice
- Student-centered Assessments
 - When students have mastered skills
 - Real-time, on-demand
 - Modular

Highlights from Competency-Based Learning Summit



- Infrastructure of student-centered business models
 - Tools to support student progress - learning maps, evidence of learning, monitoring growth
 - Credentialing of students and adults
 - Align funding and resource allocation around outcomes
- Accountability from the ground up
 - Continuous improvement over time
 - Real-time evidence
 - Embedded assessment
 - Modular
 - Growth model, not top-down punitive

Highlights from Competency-Based Learning Summit



- Critical Partnerships
 - Higher Education
 - Admissions
 - Teacher education
 - Silo'd budgets
 - Assessment Consortia
 - ESEA policy conversations
- Synchronize Innovations in Policy and Practice
 - Policy focused on student-learning
 - Enabling policy required to create space for CBA
 - Infrastructure supports learning

Highlights from Summit: Examples of Policies



- Credits to competencies
 - NH: Eliminate Carnegie unit; competencies within course structure
 - Alabama: Expanded from credit recovery to acceleration
 - OR & NH: Collaborative support to districts and schools is essential
- Expand learning opportunities
 - Online -- 24/7
 - Afterschool, work, volunteer -- teacher certifies attainment of skills
 - Able to take college-level courses when ready (silo problem)
- Re-think systemic schedules
 - Learning takes place year round
 - Take summative assessments at the time students mastered skills
- New language capturing expanded roles
 - From teacher to educator
 - From school to learning environment
- School and Educator Compensation?

Questions & Discussion

Nellie Mae Education Foundation support for this work



- A focus on Student-centered learning, including CB
- Strategic Initiatives
 - District Level Systems Change
 - Seven planning grants out to work on SCL including CB
 - State Level Systems Change
 - *iNACOL: Scan and Summit on Competency-Based*
 - *Policy advisory group*
 - *ESEA: work with other education funders*
 - Research and Development
 - *Jobs for the Future: Building the knowledge base of SCL*
 - *Proficiency-Based Pathways: deepen understanding of sector*
 - Public Understanding

Opportunities for Investments



- Strengthen and expand proof points
 - * Continuous improvement
 - * Evaluation
 - * Documentation
 - * Tours /site visits
- Dramatically expand TA and PD support
 - * Reinventing Schools
 - * New Hampshire
 - * Oregon Proficiency Project
 - * ED schools
- Build infrastructure for knowledge, networking and communication
 - * Shared platform for learning
 - * R & D
 - * State and national networks
 - * Briefings & blogs
- Increase influence and leverage
 - * Engage Critical Leaders
 - * Advocacy

Questions & Discussion

How can I learn more?



YTFG's Connected by 25 Blog
cby25.blogspot.com

Oregon Proficiency Project
www.k-12leadership.org/news/oregon-proficiency-project

iNACOL www.inacol.org

- *When Success is the Only Option: Designing Competency-based Pathways for Next Generation Learning*
- *Clearing the Path: Creating Innovation Space for Serving Over-Age, Under-Credited Students in Competency-Based Pathways*
- Upcoming papers
- wiki under construction



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