**WorkforceGPS**

**Transcript of Webinar**

**Competency-Based Education Webinar Series**

**Part 1: Effective Strategies**

**Friday, September 16, 2016**

*Transcript by*

*Noble Transcription Services*

*Murrieta, CA*

LAURA CASERTANO: Again, I want to welcome everyone to the competency-based education webinar series. It's a part one, "Effective Strategies," and I'll turn things right over to our moderator today, Cheryl Martin who's the program manager for TAACCCT grants, the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration. Cheryl?

CHERYL MARTIN: Thanks, Laura. Hi, and welcome, everybody. It's great to see names of people I recognize and some TAACCCT grants of course that we recognize and others that we don't yet. So that's great.

Glad you could join us this Friday afternoon or morning. I'm seeing some folks in the Midwest, and we have insider information from one of our presenters that there's some weather out that way. So hope that that all – hope that you can all stay online throughout that, especially our presenters.

So I just wanted to start with a little bit of an orientation to where we are on the group of the many entities that you might receive technical assistance from about TAACCCT. So you've got the Department of Labor. We work with Jobs for the Future. We have a contract with them to provide technical assistance, and they also work with Maher & Maher and American Association of Community Colleges.

DOL also works with CalState/MERLOT on the SkillsCommons website. And who you're hearing from today is a Jobs for the Future technical assistance kind of webinar and combined with Department of Labor, but of course you're hearing from grantees – from TAACCCT grantees as well who are working on competency-based education, and we're really excited about that.

In addition to Department of Labor, National Science Foundation does some of its own technical assistance through its ATE centers for TAACCCT grantees. And then there's some other non-federal providers of TA that you might run into in terms of providing technical assistance, Creative Commons, CAST, and the Transformative Change Initiative. So just in terms of all of the players out there, that's who they are and where we are today.

I wanted to mention a few upcoming webinars. Part two of today's webinar – so today you're going to be hearing from Sinclair and from others about competency-based education more generally, but a really important aspect of that for the schools, the colleges that are looking to implement it has to do with financial aid and the barriers that can be there around that. So we'll be focusing on that piece of competency-based education in part two on September 29th.

We also have in September coming up our September consultancy call, which means that one brave grantee goes out in front of everybody else with a challenge that they're having. And those on the call can learn from the responses to that, the answers to that, or add your own responses and thoughts to the group conversation. It's a popular format that we've used at some of our meetings and we decided to try it online and it works there too.

We've also got another webinar that we're looking forward to coming up in October 4th which is from one of our grantees. We have a number of grantees who are working on telling the TAACCCT story, and this is the first of them, the Northeastern Resiliency Consortium. Thanks. And finally, we have another – some of you might have been on the performance reporting webinar that we had yesterday, and we'll be doing another one on October 27th.

I wanted to take a moment to introduce who's on the call today before I turn it over to them. Erica Acevedo from Jobs for the Future will be our facilitator today, and our presenters are Christi Amato from Sinclair, which is a round two grantee for at least a little bit longer. And Jessica Stumpff is continuing the CBE efforts at Sinclair with a round four grant, and she has joined us today as well. So we're really excited about that.

And in addition, we are also really delighted to have Stephanie Krauss on. She's with Jobs for the Future and is a subject matter expert in this area of competency-based education. But let me turn it over to Erica, and we'll let most of the time be taken in listening to our experts here. Thank you.

ERICA ACEVEDO: Thank you, Cheryl. Again, this is Erica Acevedo, and I'm with Jobs for the Future. And before we get started with the bulk of today's presentation, I wanted to go back quickly for those of you that have logged in and dialed in after we got started. We had a couple of polls going here, and so we want to just get a sense of who is on the call with us today.

So these two questions, you should see them up here on your screen. Just click on the button that reflects where you are at, what round you represent. Is your TAACCCT grant currently implementing a CBE model, and what is your current role in the grant, just so we get a sense of, again, who's on the call? And if in that main chat you can answer the question, what are you looking to get out of today's webinar, that would be great. So we're just going to give you maybe 30 seconds or so to answer that.

I see folks are furiously typing away. So I see here we have a lot of round four. Well, a mixture too of folks that have multiple rounds, which is great. Round two. Let's see here. Let's see where folks are at with CBE. So it looks like the majority are curious about CBE. Well, not majority. It's pretty even across all of them, but I'd say, yeah. For the most part folks are interested in starting a CBE program, and we have a good number that have already implemented CBE programs. So we'd love to hear from you in the chat. And we mostly have project managers here.

And, folks, – (inaudible) – now, I see a comment that it says – (inaudible) – a little low. Information. OK. We're having problems with faculty who think CBE is not accurate or valid education. I'm sure that Sinclair can probably talk a little bit about the – their challenges with faculty and how they've been able to get them on board. Helpful hints, tips. Yes. Great.

OK. So I think we have a good sense of who's on the call today with us and kind of what you're hoping to get out of today's call. And so we're going to move on to the presentation so you guys can start to hear all the great resources and information that the grantee and our subject matter expert have to share. Let's see. OK.

So here's a quick run through of the agenda today. We just did our welcome and introductions. Stephanie's going to be doing a good overview of what competency-based education is and the approaches there, and then this is when we'll hear from Sinclair on what does it really take to implement CBE models.

And so they'll be sharing what approaches and what process they've taken in their round two and round four. We'll do some question and answers, and then lastly we'll wrap up with what will it take to implement a CBE program at your institution, if that's the path that you decide to go down.

And with that I'm going to hand it over to Stephanie who's going to do the overview of competency-based education. Stephanie?

STEPHANIE KRAUSS: Thanks, Erica, so much. And, Erica, I'll use you as my litmus test. Can you hear me okay?

MS. ACEVEDO: Yes. Perfectly.

MS. KRAUSS: OK. Fantastic. So really grateful to be here today. I've had a chance to engage with a couple of TAACCCT grantees over the last few years, particularly those who are designing and starting to delivery competency-based programs. I think that if I'm successful in the next couple of minutes, my goal for you, instead of giving you a really thorough or precise definition of competency-based education, is actually just to put in some guardrails and parameters for what we mean when we talk about CBE because the field is so emergent.

It's super-nascent. It's growing and changing really rapidly. It's hard to sort of put the nail on the head and say, this is competency-based education, and this is not competency-based education. So where we'll start today is looking at why competency-based education may be a better way to do learning and assessing and credentialing.

So I saw in the chat box that one of the questions was, how do we get people to believe that this is real education, that this is not academic light, that this in fact is a better way to do teaching and learning? And one of the ways that we do this is to try and understand what this is addressing. So we've seen competency-based education come up in different forms and called different things every decade or so since the 1900s.

There are a couple of good pieces. Jobs for the Future actually put out a piece called "The Past in Promise of Competency-Based Education" that tracks the history of the movement – (inaudible) – of different proxies. Sometimes it's called mastery-based learning or performance-based learning, but the idea is, as we'll see on the next page, that it's addressing this issue of time being used as a measure of learning and as the sort of primary metric by which we move students ahead through an academic program.

So in terms of just at the most basic level, why we need competency-based education is that at this point in postsecondary education across the nation, very, very often we have these three proxies that you see on the screen playing in where somebody moves ahead through a credentialing program based on the time spent in that program, based on completing a certain number of tasks or assignments at a level that can sometimes be pretty arbitrary, and we award a credential that has a stronger relationship to the time spent in a program rather than the mastery of specific knowledge and skills.

Now, it doesn't always happen that way, but in terms of how we allocate funding, in terms of how we award and pay our faculty, what their course load is, the things that we sort of hold up as really important and hold institutions accountable for often fall back on time.

So this first proxy is the access as proxy for quality really just speaks to the fact that folks are sometimes limited. They think that they're taking an MBA or they're getting a business degree and that access to having that credential or being in that program will lead to the quality experience of having the competencies, knowledge, and skills that they need to do what comes after, what they should be appropriately qualified for.

And then those other two proxies I sort of explained, but this idea that time is easy to measure. The History of Time has actually shared a link that may be posted in the chat box, the history of the Carnegie, and it's really interesting. It has to do with faculty tensions, and it has nothing to do with how we learn and how we achieve and develop.

So going to the next slide then, the question is, well, what is competency-based education? And some of you may have heard this before, but the – at the basic level competency-based education is moving from a system of higher education where we have time as the constant and the learning of folks being variable to learning being the constant and how much time that takes for somebody to complete and move forward being variable.

So you're personalizing around the learner, and they move ahead when they're ready. So I kind of call this the standard car model. Lots of different programs and universities or networks have come up with way more sophisticated definitions of what competency-based education is, but in its most basic form the idea is that somebody is focused on the knowledge and skills and competencies that are associated with a credential and that as they master them, they learn them, they practice, and as they master it, then they can move ahead through the program.

We'll look in a little while at what that can look like for different programs, but that's that base. You move ahead when ready. So this map I'm showing to you all for information. I actually used it to help advise a group who were interested in what changes to state policy would need to happen in order to support folks like you all in designing and starting competency-based programs.

So unfortunately it's not a map for sharing and it's not accompanied by a larger document, but I think that it's helpful. And it just kind of gives you this thermal read on where competency-based education programs and supportive policies are across the United States. So what you're looking at right now has to do with the physical placement of competency-based ed programs. So for instance, Sinclair being in Ohio, and you'll see Ohio is a green state. They've got policies that support Sinclair and the work that they're doing. I'm sure Sinclair would tell you not all the time but more than other states, and they've got programs there.

What we don't really know, because so many competency-based programs are online or blended and serving folks across the country or across the world, is what a similar map would look like if you're focused on students. But we do know at this point that many of the students in competency-based education are working adults who are returning to school to upskill or change professions. That might change as the competency-based education programs grow.

So what we also know and there's a research brief and an ecosystem document, both of which will be shared with you, that sort of articulate this a little bit better than I have time to do but is that the growth of competency-based education is super rapid. So back in 2010 there were only about 20 known programs that were competency-based, and then it bloomed to about 200 in 2012.

In a recent survey supported by the Gates Foundation last year, which is the research brief I mentioned, had as many as 800 programs that identified that they were somewhere in the process of designing or delivering a competency-based ed program. And some of you may have participated in that survey.

So the last thing that I'll provide for you is really just to give you an anchor to one of the other files that is being shared with you, and that is that that Gates-funded project by Public Agenda included within the survey of competency-based education programs trying to dig a little deeper into programs who seem to be having some early wins with their learners, learners who are doing well and graduating and staying engaged. And I was part of that team, and we were trying to figure out, well, what's the same across these programs?

So we're not quite to the level of quality assurances yet, but we feel pretty strongly that these – and it's hard to see but you can get the report and pull it up as one of the files – that these are the 10 elements that programs are doing well right now share. And in that document there's actually sort of a cataloging of specific practices. So lots of you are program managers. Very specific things that programs can do and be designed to do that enact, for instance, flexible staffing roles and structures. So what does that look like?

So somebody asked what was the survey again? So it was a survey put out by Public Agenda trying to look at the state of competency-based education programs across the U.S. If any of you were in Colorado last year for the CBE for community colleges conferences – I know it was sent out to the attendees there and some of the other TAACCCT folks, but I would definitely encourage downloading those couple of documents shared and poking around a little bit more.

And with that, Erica, I'm going to turn it back to you, and I will talk to you all again at the end of the presentation.

MS. ACEVEDO: Thank you, Stephanie. That was really great. I mean, I'm just really – the number that you mentioned now of colleges or institutions that are starting or have CBE programs and the growth there, it's pretty impressive. And so I think it makes it even more – this subject and topic even more important for us at TAACCCT.

MS. KRAUSS: Yeah. Absolutely.

MS. ACEVEDO: Great. And with that, yes. Let's get to the how – what does it take? What are the steps needed and what – an example among our fellow grantees of what it was that they did to get this going? And we have Jessica and Christi from Sinclair Community College who are going to share with us their experience with CBE. Christi or Jessica?

CHRISTINA AMATO: Thanks, Erica. I'm Christi Amato, and I'm the project director for Sinclair's round two TAACCCT grant. And I'm here today with Jessica Stumpff who also worked on our round two TAACCCT grant and works on a round four TAACCCT grant at Sinclair as well. And we're going to tell you a little bit about our story of CBE at Sinclair.

Our story begins with a round two TAACCCT grant that we were awarded in 2012. The goal of that grant was to adopt and adapt IT curriculum to CBE format. We were partnered with Austin Community College and Broward College, and Western Governors University was our consultant. And we were charged with focusing on adult learners, veterans, displaced workers, and creating new programs for them.

We created 11 stacked programs with 25 courses in IT fields, and the diagram on the right shows you what we developed. The goal was basically to create some very simple stackable certificates beginning with industry certifications, which are along the bottom of that diagram. And then we created an IT fundamentals associate's certificate which was another short-term certificate allowing a student to take six core classes that applied to all information technology programs at Sinclair.

And then building in stair stepping up to completion of an associate's degree in IT in the programs that you see along the top, network engineering, software development, and secure systems administration. Additionally, we were charged with creating an enhanced student service platform to prepare and support CBE students, which if any of you have started to – down the CBE path on your own, you know this is a very important component of CBE programs.

I'm going to talk a little bit today about our project framework for our round two TAACCCT grant, which has become the project framework for all CBE projects at Sinclair. And basically, what we began with was an evaluation of market and employer needs, and in the past this typically involved working with advisory boards to define some programs and set the competencies.

But it was expanded and a lot more robust with our round two TAACCCT grant. We worked with trade associations in the region, chambers of commerce, used labor data, and we pooled all of that together and then came to our advisory boards and created programs that would suit not just what we need today in IT in the Dayton region but what we'll need five years from now and beyond.

So once we worked with our employers, we developed programs based on the feedback and our state standards. Those programs were converted into master courses. We do use a master course model at Sinclair, which means we develop a single course, and that is the universal course that is replicated using a standard template. We then worked on how we were going to deliver these courses in a flexible format and finally how we were going to support learners in the classroom using data.

So this was the big picture, and I'll talk a little bit more about each of the pieces as well. But one key I think early very important thing that we did in our project was we assigned subject matter experts to each of these line items in our project framework and had them assemble their own teams and really create that component to work with the other parts of the project. So we were able to assimilate and get off the ground much more quickly than we would have otherwise.

So the first two boxes that I talked about before, this is basically what they look like in more detail. I mentioned before that we worked with state standards, regional employers, our trade associations, our regional workforce boards.

Once all of that flowed down into the advisory board, we took the advisory board review and developed out those competencies and programs, and we mapped them to specific programs and courses using that master template model I mentioned before. We developed the courses. We deliver our programs and courses, and then we continuously assess them, which is really important in the IT field because it changes so often. So this is on a cyclical and continuous process that never really stops. We're doing this all year long every year.

Delivery was one of the most difficult things that we worked with. Really delivering CBE courses, the cornerstone of competency-based education from the student perspective is that flexibility piece. We were charged with developing 25 flex-paced online courses and finding a way to allow learners to move through those courses at a more flexible pace.

Our early goal was really to have a very open semester system where students could come in and out at any point in the semester, and for pretty obvious reasons like financial aid and dealing with our state subsidy and census base, that became readily apparent that we were not going to be able to do it the way we wanted to.

What we settled on was a system in which we created six sections that were offered bi-weekly through week 12 of our 16-week term. So a student can register at almost any point in the term using those six sections that you see running along the top, 801 through 806. Those are just our registration sections that correspond to different points of the term so that the student has a six start date, and that satisfies the really important regulations we have for financial aid and registration.

Once a student enrolls, no matter what section they enroll in, they are dropped down into a single teaching section. So that's where the faculty member lives. There is one teaching section for all of those sections, which makes it a lot easier for the faculty, and it was a lot easier to get faculty buy in to teach, not having them have to check multiple sections each term.

So it required some pretty complicated back-end coding of our student information system and our learning management system, and it took us about a year to work out those kinks. But it functions pretty smoothly today, and we're running this across about 35 courses at the college.

For learner support I'm going to turn it over to Jessica, and she's going to talk a little bit about what we did for our student support.

JESSICA STUMPFF: So what you see on the screen is our big picture overview of what our student support model looks like at Sinclair. And we were able to develop this based on what we already know worked well for our online students and just expand it so that it could also be used for our CBE students.

So as you can see, the students enter the circle at the point of recruitment and go through these five learner phases of admit, enroll, retain, transition, and complete, and exit the circle at the point in which they get a job, a promotion, or a transfer.

And then within and across all of these five phases, our CBE academic coaches are delivering these wrap-around services for students, which include coordinating student services, providing academic advising from integrated career coaching, and some progress monitoring and motivation, which is really the bulk of where the student support takes place.

And if we dive a little deeper into those learner phases, you can see that we were able to map out what the milestones or activities are that you need to complete during each phase so that a student can move through the program successfully. And so it's more than really just doing basic things in each of these phases. So it's more than just in the admit phase picking a program.

It's more than in the enroll phase in registering a student for classes, and it's more in the transition and compete phases than just getting a student a new resume so they can get a job. I do want to highlight in the retain phase that this is where, again, most of the work is taking place for our students. As an academic coach, we are responsible for monitoring students' progress from term to term and from course to course. So we're able to provide performance interventions for these students using data which Christi will talk about a little bit in a couple slides.

And so a major part of our student support model is this big piece of admit. So when we are in the admit phase for a student, we realize right away that we wanted to make a connection with our students at the point of recruitment. And when we are recruiting students, we knew that we needed to be recruiting right-fit students, and for us right fit meant a student that was going to be successful in a CBE program.

And so that meant a student with maybe a 3.0 GPA or above or a student with previous experience in online courses and usually even a student that has field experience in their program of study. And so if a student is not able to meet those conditions that we lay out, we do offer some remedial pathways for those students. So some examples might be referring the student to a more traditional version of their chosen program. It might be allowing that student to take one online course before we send them into the CBE modality.

But if a student is deemed to be a good fit for a CBE program, how do you prepare that student for classes? And to do that we use something called accelerate orientation, and it's essentially an orientation to CBE and it's an online tutorial that we deliver in our learning management system. And it covers things like an introduction to what CBE is and how to use flex pacing and acceleration to their advantage. It covers some basic college know-how, introduces some career planning activities for the student, asks them to complete a computer literacy assessment, and also teaches them how to navigate our LMS.

So I will turn it over to Christi, as I mentioned, to talk a little bit about that data component that I mentioned.

MS. AMATO: So before I move on to talk about data, I see that there's a question on financial aid. And while we are no financial aid experts, what I can tell you is that we worked one to one with our financial aid department to determine how we would package these students. So we are on a standard 16-week term at Sinclair, but we also have eight- and 12-week mini terms.

And having those in place was really critical for us to be able to package students that were then picking up courses in the middle of the term for CBE as well. So basically, when a student comes into a CBE course, they will be rolled up and packaged into the closest mini term date that they fall into. So we've been able to find a workable solution based on the fact that we have 16-week terms but also some shorter terms.

So with that I'll talk a little bit about our case management of our CBE students. This is a really critical component for CBE at Sinclair. A student, when they enroll, they are assigned to an academic coach who carries a case load. That case load is typically between 85 and 100 students per one full-time coach, and that coach's job, as Jessica mentioned before, is to really monitor the student's progress. So how do we do that?

For us it's the weekly case load report, and you see a sample report just populated with some sample data. It's not real data, but this is what's delivered to our academic coaches on a weekly basis for their entire case load of students. It looks for performance and engagement data within the learning management system. So this is a live poll of how's a student doing in the classroom.

We're looking at are they logging in? Are they participating? Have they failed an assessment recently? Are they communicating with their faculty member? And if they have several risk factors that stack up, they will – the report triages to put those students towards the top of the case load report so the coach knows it's time to intervene. Interventions are a shared collaborative between faculty and coaches at Sinclair.

So if there is an issue that arises in a classroom related to a student not understanding content and maybe performing poorly on an assessment, it's the faculty member that will engage with the student in an intervention. If it's other things like generally not logging in or having some issues with student services, it's the coach that performs that intervention. So this has been one really key successful piece of our student support platform for CBE students.

Finally in student support, I'm going to talk a little bit about our career coaching model. I added this one in because we had a really important realization at the beginning of the TAACCCT grant that we were probably with our online students in general engaging career conversations much too late in their experience at Sinclair.

For our adult learners that are coming into these CBE programs, the career conversation is so important at the very beginning. We need to know why they're here, and we need to have some basic milestones and benchmarks set up along the pathway for them to be the most successful and to remain motivated in their programs here. So we did the same thing that we did with the learner support map you saw earlier.

We looked at the admit, enroll, retain, and transition phases and asked ourselves, what are the basic milestones that a student should be meeting from a career perspective? Are we asking them the right questions? Are we connecting them with faculty members or people in the field that might be able to help them with career-related questions? And what it's done is it's allowed us to really retain a strong focus on the student's end goal, which is getting a job or getting a promotion or moving on from Sinclair.

We've had some really significant outcomes and impact from our round two TAACCCT grant. The first is that across all CBE sections, including our gen eds that have been developed, we have a 76 percent course success rate. That's important because it's about 13 percent higher than the standard companion classes that are online and face to face. Our students are completing their CBE courses between 60 and 80 days.

So they are completing it in less than a semester, and this is an important distinction because we do have both flex paces and accelerators in our classroom. And what I mean by that is we assume that everyone coming into these programs would be here to accelerate, and we had some surprises along the way to find out that many students are in this classroom because of the flexible pace. They don't necessarily intend to accelerate, but they need a more flexible classroom due to work or family constraints.

We've had a 70 percent year-to-year retention rate, which is about 10 percent higher than students in companion programs receiving none of the traditional supports that we have for our CBE students. And really importantly, our accelerate students are credentialing at three times the rate of students in companion programs.

So these are students that are getting the exact same curriculum as our CBE students but our CBE students are finishing faster and much more successfully. And finally, our accelerate students are 10 times more likely to take an internship, and our internship to higher rate is 90 percent, which has been a huge accomplishment for our program.

The impact is that we have two additional CBE projects in development, and we have about three more that are proposed at this point and preparing to go into development. We've been able to scale our best practices from student support beyond the project and into the college at large. And beginning in October when I complete with the TAACCCT grant, I will be moving on to CBE program management for the college with the express intent of expanding CBE to the right programs at Sinclair, which was a huge win for us and we were really happy about that.

So moving on to our round four project, I'm going to let Jessica take that over and tell us a little bit about what some of our other projects at Sinclair are doing.

MS. STUMPFF: So after we started developing our successful practices and we began to see some great outcomes from the round two grant, we were awarded a round four TAACCCT grant with the goal to create accelerated pathways to careers in advanced manufacturing. And the goal of this grant was to develop CBE hybrid curriculums with online lesson and hands-on lab, and this was a slight deviation from what we did in the round two because all of our round two courses were online.

And the round four TAACCCT grant embraces two programs, one in industrial maintenance, which is a non-credit program, and one in basic machining, which is your traditional for-credit program. So one of the really unique things about the round four TAACCCT grant is that it is one of the rare opportunities at Sinclair for the workforce development non-credit division and the academic for-credit division to come together and to work on a project collaboratively with similar goals.

And just to tell you a little bit about the curriculum for these two programs, the basic machining skills short-term certificate is just a series of five courses that can be completed sequentially or concurrently and are preparatory for either an entry-level career as a machinist or for a more advanced certificate or a degree in CNC technologies or precision machining.

And the non-credit program, which we call SkillsTrac, is in industrial maintenance, and it's a series of stackable certificates that get progressively more difficult as you move up from the green to the blue level. And it covers things like mechanics, electricity, PLCs, all the way up to the automation of systems.

So while we were developing these programs we were able to maintain, as Christi mentioned, a lot of the best practices from the round two, which made our jobs a lot easier because we weren't starting from the ground up. We sort of had a foundation to work upon and just alter for our needs. So we continued with the rolling registration. So we do offer classes every other week all the way up through week 12.

We are still developing unit-based courses so that our CBE students are able to take a pretest at the beginning of each unit in their course, and that offers them the opportunity to test out of what they already know and so they're only spending time on things that they do not know. And we talked a lot about our student support model, and obviously we were able to maintain that as well.

But some of the special considerations that our CBE hybrid program did sort of challenge us with were, number one, transitioning away from the traditional cohort model. Our instructors, with a good argument, are sort of attached to the cohort model for I guess I would say two reasons, number one being safety. They are concerned about their students in the labs doing work independently on dangerous machinery and equipment, and so this is a struggle for them to sort of send people off on their own and tell them to go do their work.

Also, it's a really big challenge for instructors to do demonstrations for students on equipment that are at all various levels of proficiency. So a student comes in and knows how to do work on the machine but then a new student comes in five minutes later and he needs a complete new tutorial. So it's a lot of work for the instructors to juggle.

So we've also been trying to work on our delivery of our flex gates of our flexible, open labs because it's sort of a non-traditional model to say anyone can come into a machining lab at any point in the course and you're all doing different things. So we're still working on that, and we're actually considering using a online scheduling tool called Appointment Manager to let students schedule their labs in advance so the instructors know who's coming and what they need to do.

Another thing we struggle with is securing employer support for our online or hybrid courses, and this is because a lot of tuition reimbursement programs don't actually allow for online or hybrid courses to be taken by their employees. Additionally, it's been a struggle to sort of sell the CBE or hybrid model because employers sometimes, like faculty members, think that CBEs could be inferior.

And the last thing to consider is that we do have some additional screening components that we need to consider with our hybrid program. For manufacturing especially, the physical capabilities of students and also their field experience really come into play. Students need to be able to stand for long periods of time and lift certain amounts of weight and also need to definitely have experience in the field or they're going to come in and they could definitely get hurt in their courses.

So even though we are only in our third semester, we have had some early successes. Our students are able to earn a national credential as part of their curriculum, the National Career Readiness Certificate or the NCRC. During our first two pilot semesters our CBE machining students were actually completing courses an average of two and a half weeks faster than students in traditional sections of the same courses.

And we've actually had several students who completed 16-week courses in as few as three weeks. And lastly, a big one is that students who are working 40 or more hours a week are now enrolling at Sinclair due to the flexible scheduling opportunities offered by the CBE programs.

So what does the future of CBE look like at Sinclair? Christi mentioned that we had some more CBE programs on the horizon, and one that is currently under development is actually an NSF grant. And they are aiming to develop a new CBE certificate in aerial sensing data analytics.

And so they are converting six courses to CBE and actually developing four brand-new courses that don't exist at Sinclair yet in any shape or form. And it's a 17-credit-hour certificate that leads to an associate of applied science degree in unmanned aerial systems or one in geographic information systems. And they're scheduled to pilot their first courses in the fall of next year.

MS. AMATO: So we're just going to really briefly talk about some challenges in CBE because, well, if we had the time, we could talk about these all day. But really what are the challenges? Obviously, there are some evolving HLC accreditation requirements, particularly related to regular and substantive interaction, which has not really been well-defined for us yet so that it's something that we're monitoring.

I know there have been some questions on financial aid today. Financial aid is a big deal. We have unique program requirements and considerations, as Jessica mentioned, and we talked a little bit about trying to figure out how to integrate into semester systems. It's a huge challenge. All of these challenges on this list can be overcome by involving faculty, staff, and affected departments early and often in conversations.

We started these conversations very early and set up path course teams and committees to address the types of things that are on this list. And we would not have been able to offer programs and get to where we are if we had not done that.

And finally, we had one last set of thoughts that we wanted to leave everybody with. These are what we feel are the important considerations for all CBE programs, regardless of how you're thinking of rolling it out, hybrid, online, what types of programs you're considering. There's an exhaustive list here, but the big ones are, who is the executive sponsor?

There has to be somebody at the top of your institution at the provost or presidential level that issues a statement of priority on CBE. You also have to have a champion, so somebody who's going to be in the trenches working one to one with faculty and staff to get this implemented.

And finally and really importantly, maybe the most important, do you have faculty buy in? Do you have faculty willing to experiment, try different things, learn, fail, try again, do something different? So these are what we feel are the big considerations.

MS. ACEVEDO: Great. Thank you, Jessica and Christi. What we want to do now is, for those of you that are on the – still with us here, for those of you that are – and have already engaged in – down the path of trying to implement a CBE program, wwhat have been some of those challenges or roadblocks that you've encountered? And while we wait for folks to answer here, there were a couple of questions for you, Jessica and Christi, while you were walking through your presentation regarding some of the things that you were mentioning around your students and the time. And so should we answer some of these?

Let's see here. I'm trying to scroll to find them. Well, here's an interesting one. It's, "Are you experiencing differences between younger and older students in respect to participation, completion, and accomplishment? And if so, what do you do to address these differences?" Christi or Jessica?

MS. STUMPFF: Sure. This is Jessica. I'll try to tackle that. So in general I think we would both say that older students tend to seem more motivated to finish quicker and to stay on top of their assignments and try to finish faster. And to sort of mediate for that all we can say is that's where academic coaching comes in.

So maybe your older students don't need to be bugged or advised as much as the younger students do, but sometimes older students might need the same sort of motivation that younger students do.

And largely, I think that it's really all about what is motivating the student. If the student has a strong internal motivation to finish this program, they're going to do it no matter what age they are. So I think we see some variance in performance between older adults and younger adults.

MS. ACEVEDO: Great. And I think Stephanie wanted to chime in a little bit here on that question.

MS. KRAUSS: I just very quickly wanted to rip off of what Jessica's saying. So I mentioned earlier in the presentation that we are seeing CBE programs really being designed for and best serving these working adults who are the new traditional college student but not who we would typically think of still as that 17 to 21-year-old.

I think so many of you all representing community colleges that, if you think about serving your entire student body, looking at Sinclair's model of student support, I just can't underscore enough what they've mentioned we're seeing across the country, which is that these navigational supports, these services being built around the students who may be motivated but not have necessarily the learning the learn skills become really critical.

Otherwise, we'll bump up into some real equity issues and potentially exacerbating inequities that CBE has the potential to solve. So it's important in your curriculum to be asking what learning to learn skill or readiness skills do you also need to be building in.

MS. ACEVEDO: Yeah. Thank you. So another question that was here is around just in general, "Do your students take one course at a time or several?" for Jessica and Christi.

MS. AMATO: This is Christi. We have all sorts of combinations. What it mostly depends on is how the student is funded because, obviously, if they are financial aid funded, they have to hit a minimum credit hour threshold. So most of our students take at least two classes per term, but there are situations where there's an employer pay scenario and a student might just take one, complete one, move on to the next one, so taking one at a time. So really it varies.

MS. ACEVEDO: Yeah.

MS. STUMPFF: Yeah. And I wanted to add to that as well. Sorry. This is Jessica.

MS. ACEVEDO: Sure.

MS. STUMPFF: In addition to a variance in the number of courses that students take, we also have students that are not strictly CBE students. So we allow them to do a blended schedule, if they wanted to take traditional courses alongside their CBE courses.

MS. ACEVEDO: OK. And I know that there was a question from – (inaudible) – actually. "Why do CBE students intern at 10 times the rate?"

MS. AMATO: That one is pretty easy. We know why it is. Because they're under case management, the academic coach is mapping them at the beginning of their program to an internship. We discovered that students will not take internships on their own unless we push them to do it. There are a couple barriers to them taking it.

One is that it requires a signature, and any course that requires a signature a student will generally self-select away from that course. And also they have a lot of misconceptions about the internship, who gets one, are they owed one or do they have to earn it. So having those conversations and knocking down the barriers really early has enabled us to present the internship as mandatory and something that all students should do.

MS. ACEVEDO: OK. I think this might be a follow up to that actually. "How does that work since we were told we can't be a blend of CBE and non-CBE programs – (inaudible)?"

MS. AMATO: I think it depends on – this is Christi. I think it depends on how your CBE program is structured. We are not a direct assessment program. We are a credit-hour-based, course-based CBE program. So we maintained three-credit-hour courses that look just like the three-credit-hour courses for our students in traditional and online sections, and that has created a certain kind of ease around financial aid packaging.

MS. ACEVEDO: Great. Thank you. And with that, I mean, I see a lot of the challenges that are coming up here are around financial aid and faculty buy in. As we mentioned the very beginning of the presentation of the webinar, that we – the second part of this webinar series will be on financial aid. So we hope that you all will be on that webinar, and that one is September 29th.

But I want to now – (inaudible) – to move on. I know we're getting close to the end here for Stephanie to just kind of give us a few pointers on what is it going to take for folks to move to effectively implementing CBE programs as you see it.

MS. KRAUSS: Sure. Thanks, Erica. I'm going to just move us very quickly a little preview here. We've just got two slides, and so we'll end with plenty of time. But I want to bring us back to these 10 design elements.

So these issues of financial aid, sort of reconstructing the curriculum, student support services are all really critical. I think if – with the risk of being redundant, that in order to protect our time and really just strongly anchor, my number one suggestion would be actually to download this workbook of these design elements and emerging practices and to go through it and go through the exercise with your team if you're thinking about – and I know lots of you are from the questions – thinking about designing competency-based education.

Maybe you're in the process of designing a competency-based ed program, and you're struggling with how to articulate it to key stakeholders and really looking at almost like a dropdown menu. OK. So we need our technology systems to talk to each other. How do we get our financial aid system to talk to our student management system to talk to our learning management system and opening up this workbook and just seeing, well, what are other programs doing and what does this look like and begin doing a little bit of a – almost a modularized design exercise.

If we look at the 10 here, I just want to flag that some of these really have a lot to do with mindset shifts, how we think about a program, how we think about the role of faculty. So being learner-centered rather than that – (inaudible) – on the stage that we often hear of. Some of that we really need to shift. Same with flexible staffing roles.

So do you have staff who can plug in and play in advising and navigating roles, even if in another space they're content experts? Can you hire within a program of study people who serve purely to be content experts, to design curriculum, to design assessments, and then have lecturers or facilitators of different projects? The newer adjusted financial models, only because we have so many questions around financial aid, I'll flag that in the workbook. And again, this is Public Agenda.

This is a project that was funded with Gates and worked with the Competency-Based Education Network. They list out how, like Sinclair describes, folks are starting to tackle if they don't have direct assessment through the federal government, how to do tuition models and financial models.

Some of these are something like all-you-can-eat buffet, as I think Southern New Hampshire University College for America calls it, where you pay a certain amount for a particular number of months, and then you can take as many or as few classes as possible. That's what Northern Arizona University does as well. So you've just got a real rich set of content here.

And then I just want to bring us up a level as we're wrapping up to give you some strength and encouragement for those of you trying to make the case on your campus that competency-based education, I mentioned this rapid growth, growing from 20 to 800 programs, still growing. Our current undersecretary, Ted Mitchell, has called competency-based education the single most important innovation of our time.

So being able to see that this actually is situated within a broader agenda for credentialing, that competencies are becoming sort of a uniformed currency for individuals to carry with them within education and employment, making that more solid case that this is a credentialing issue. This is a learning issue, not just a model type. And with that, Erica, I'm going to swing it back to you.

MS. ACEVEDO: Thank you, Stephanie. And before everybody logs off – and I know we're right at the hour – I want to thank Stephanie and Christi and Jessica for joining us today and sharing all of your experiences and wealth of information when it comes to CBE. I'm going to quickly – and I'm asking folks to just stay on with me for another minute or two.

At the end of the presentation you'll see there's some slides here. This one is a slide that just has a – the resources that Stephanie mentioned but some other resources around CBE. There's a brief in there that is about the work that Sinclair has been doing and that's the Adopting and Adapting Competency-Based Education Brief and just a couple of others that we thought would be really useful for you all as you engage and continue to pursue this work.

The next one is just a reminder about that part two webinar that's going to happen on the 29th, and if you click on that link there in the presentation, it will take you to the registration page and that will be with David Musser from the Department of Ed.

And then lastly, as the year is coming up to an end and there's a couple of conferences where the TAACCCT Learning Network will actually be at, the team, and that one of those that's coming up next month is NCWE in Atlanta. And then we're actually having a TAACCCT private meet-up at WDI this year in Newport Beach in January.

So please take a look at all of that in the presentation, and I think that Laura has a couple of just wrap-up polling questions for you all. And again, we thank you for joining us this Friday afternoon. Laura?

(END)