Competency-based Education

Pascack Valley Regional High School District – Developing a Vision Collaboratively

How does your organization define competency-based education?

Using subject-area standards as the criteria to which student's skills and knowledge are evaluated and feedback given.

Contributors

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URL

http://digitalpromise.org/cbe_resource/pascack-valley-regional-high-school-district-school-developing-a-vision-collaboratively/
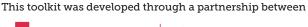
Overview

As part of the reflective process, one of the realizations that we have come to is that we tried to "reverse engineer" competency-based education (CBE) through district logistics, such as eliminating a formal midterm and final exam period, moving from 4 marking periods to two semesters, and encouraging "redos" on assessments. This was done without a centralized effort to adjust mindshifts regarding CBE.

However, the depth of CBE implementation has been largely departmental-based, with small pockets of innovation occurring in different departments at different rates. In February 2017, a meeting was held with departmental supervisors to have them share their departmental assessment visions and create a district assessment vision from their individual visions.

Beliefs

We put together a District Assessment Philosophy Draft, in February, 2017, working with our departments to ask three questions: What do we assess? When do we assess? How do we assess?

Why and how do we assess in the district? To check for understanding and/or competency of curriculum standards using a balance of methods that give useful feedback to inform growth.

What does assessment lead to? Leads to a summative grade which is an evaluation of competency.

Outcomes

At the time of publication, we were at the very early stages of development of departmental visions.

Surprises

We give leadership to our supervisors to move their departments forward, as long as they are using a vision to do so in conjunction with the district vision. However, there are less teachers engaged in our CBE pilots than we expected. About 8% of the faculty are engaged and they are all doing different things.

Trade-offs

While we like to encourage innovation and pilots by faculty, we cannot have 15 different pilots going on, especially in the same departments.

Considerations

Begin with a vision. Get mind-shift and full faculty buy-in before changing logistics. Do not try to "reverse engineer" without starting with that vision.

Artifacts

Departmental visions