Learning in a Competence-Based World Institute: Mindsets, Models and Methods

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November 10\textsuperscript{th} and 11\textsuperscript{th}, 2014

On November 10\textsuperscript{th} and 11\textsuperscript{th}, 2014 DePaul University’s School for New Learning, Center to Advance Education for Adults (CAEA) hosted 21 adult learning professionals representing universities and colleges, non-profits and businesses around the country to learn and explore a range of perspectives and approaches to competence-based learning (CBL).

The Institute was designed to help participants learn to:

- create conditions to enhance individuals’ learning, performance, and self-efficacy
- help learners in CBL contexts to:
  - extract learning from experience through various reflection strategies
  - collaborate on criteria (benchmarks, rubrics, indicators) and products/outputs that demonstrate learning
  - apply learning in specific contexts
- construct competence ‘statements’ (target outcomes) that inspire and guide the development and demonstration of new learning

This Institute was designed and facilitated by:

- **Catherine Marienau, Ph.D.**, DePaul University, School for New Learning (SNL) Professor, CAEA Leadership Team, and co-author of *Assessing Learning*
- **Pamela Meyer, Ph.D.**, Director, Center to Advance Education for Adults (CAEA), author of three books on innovation, learning and change
- **Russ Rogers, Ph.D.**, DePaul University, Director of SNL Graduate Programs, leading change management and workplace learning consultant
- **Donna Younger, Ph.D.**, Assoc VP of Higher Education, Council for Adult & Experiential Learning (CAEL)
- **Kathryn Wozniak, M.A.**, SNL Writing Faculty, CAEA Leadership Team
- **Jill Archer**, Graphic Facilitator, mapped the key themes, burning questions and insights that emerged during our the Institute (see below)
November 10, 2014
After brief introductions in which participants shared what CBL looks like in their organizations, participants engaged in a reflective activity led by Pamela Meyer to co-create the landscape and identify the various perspectives and values that underpinned their work and commitment to CBL. Meyer then shared the “Developing Competence” framework below to reflect the dynamic process of competence development across practice settings as an organizing model for the Institute.

![Diagram of Developing Competence]

Led by Russ Rogers, participants then generated responses to the prompts: “A competence is . . .” and “One challenge to CBL is . . .” Responses to these questions and the themes that emerged from the opening inquiry are captured in the map below and can also be downloaded at: http://caecommcon.ning.com/group/learning-in-a-competence-based-world
The second half of the morning included presentations and discussion about historical trends and distinctions in CBL in higher ed (Catherine Marienau), in university and business partnerships (Donna Younger), and in organizational settings (Russ Rogers). Participants then created a visual representation of their own competence-based world and where they and their learners “lived on the map.”

During the afternoon, Donna Younger introduced participants to several strategies to help learners identify their existing competencies and craft competence statements, including strategies informed by Behavioral Interviewing. Russ Rogers then shared a performance-based framework for identifying activities to help learners develop specific competencies and to determine specific deliverables as evidence of competence.

Day one concluded with an assignment to draft a competence statement that a learner might develop and be assessed on in their setting.
Day Two: November 11, 2014

The second day of the Institute focused on specific strategies that participants might use to help their learners develop and/or assess competence. After brief presentations of each strategy, participants were invited to come “play in the sandbox” to experiment with or adapt the idea for their setting.

Kathryn Wozniak introduced the process of using meta-cognition (Akyol & Garrison, 2011; Ottenhoff, 2011) for competence development and asked participants to role-play as learners in competence-based learning contexts:

Meta-process for developing competence

From Amy Marin Carlson’s webpage “Metacognitive Strategies”, Education-Portal.com
Pamela Meyer and Kathryn Wozniak shared the latest trends and best practices in using badges and micro-credentialing to motivate and enhance competence development.

**Trends and Examples**

- **Informal Learning**
  - Digital Youth Network
  - Ex Library literacy
- **Higher Ed**
- **Workplace**
  - Performance Dev – formal & informal
  - BadgesforVets.org
- **Professional Development:**
  - Conferences
  - MOOCS
  - CAEA

Catherine Marienau used the lens of backward design (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005) to help participants think about the “who”, “How?,” “When?” and “How often?” of competence assessment.
What are the Big Ideas?

The afternoon of day two, began with an experiential activity inviting participants to identify the “big ideas” that are embedded in our various perspectives and practices of CBL. The map below depicts an overview of the morning’s sandbox practices, as well as many of the group’s findings, as well as those compiled and shared by the facilitators (see attached bibliography). A pdf of this map can also be downloaded at: http://caeacommcon.ning.com/group/learning-in-a-competence-based-world

World Café (J. Brown & Isaacs, 2005) provided the framework for the final experiential learning activity of the Institute, in which participants were invited to write several topics of interest and burning questions on large post-it notes. These topics were then grouped into five categories around the room that participants were invited to gather around for further discussion and action-planning by holding generative conversations to develop and refine strategies (What, So What, Now What?). These theme groups and their questions are represented in the map below and can also be downloaded at: http://caeacommcon.ning.com/group/learning-in-a-competence-based-world
We invite you to download a pdf of all of the maps created during the Institute, find links to additional resources and join the conversation by visiting: 

What Are the Big Ideas?
In (and around) Competence-Based Learning

**Backward design** (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005)

**Brain-compatible Learning** (Bransford, 2000; Edelman, 2006; McNearny, 2011; Zull, 2002, 2011)

**Social learning** (Bandura, 1977)

**Cognitive apprenticeship** (Clark, 2008; Collins, Brown, & al., 1989; Pratt & Associates, 1998)

**Communities of practice** (J. S. Brown & Duguid, 2001; Easterby-Smith, Snell, & Gherardi, 1998; Lesser & Storck, 2001; Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002)

**Embodied Learning** (Barry & Hazen, 1996; Freiler, 2008; Hoover, Giambatista, Sorenson, & Bommer, 2010; Meyer, 2012; Yorks & Kasl, 2002)
Experiential Learning (Boud, Cohen, & Walker, 1993; Dewey, 1925, 1934; Fenwick, 2001; Kolb, 1984)

Learning Agility (De Meuse, Dai, & Hallenbeck, 2010; Eichinger & Lombardo, 2004; Jaeggi, Buschkuehl, Jonides, & Perrig, 2008; McCall, Lombardo, & Morrison, 1988)

Meta-Cognition (Akyol & Garrison, 2011; Ottenhoff, 2011)

Micro-Credentialing: http://www.ala.org/acrl/publications/keeping_up_with/digital_badges


Situated/Informal Learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Livingstone, 1999; McCauley, Ruderman, Ohlott, & Morrow, 1994)


Bibliography


