

Competency-based Education

Pascack Valley Regional High School District - Leveraging Survey Data

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

Names: Erik Gundersen, Barry Bachenheimer

Emails: egundersen@pascack.org, bbachenheimer@pascack.org

URL

http://digitalpromise.org/cbe_resource/pascack-valley-regional-high-school-district-studentfamily-input-play/

Overview

We recently completed a comprehensive survey of students, parents, and faculty on areas relating to our assessment policies. There was a very high rate of return and the data will be used to adjust district practices in assessment and professional development for next school year. We have also been visiting various high schools that employ and do not employ, competency-based education. Furthermore, we have or will visit eight different universities this year that a bulk of our students apply for to see how students are assessed in post-secondary education.

Beliefs

We developed surveys to test if administrative beliefs were mirrored by community and stakeholder beliefs. We also consider them for a needs assessment to see what areas are a priority.

Rationale

We feel if we are not involving all stakeholders in our decision-making process by giving them an opportunity to provide feedback, we are being short-sighted.

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Outcomes

We wanted to test the value that students, faculty, and parents place on traditional mid-term and final examinations, and found stark differences at each level. We found that 53% of students agreed or strongly agreed that taking mid-term and final exams were an important part of getting prepared for college, compared with 64% of teachers and 74% of parents.

Additionally, we gathered input on how students and teachers feel about demonstrating proficiency. We found that 71% of students and 91% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that it is more important to students to have proficient skills than just receive a good grade.

Trade-offs

We originally thought that we could eliminate the focus on midterm and final exams by simply getting rid of the exam period. We did not put a strong focus on a) the mindshift needed to make the shift and b) that most universities still utilize midterms and finals as a measure of student achievement.

Considerations

Other organizations should consider taking the time to visit universities that your students will apply to and attend to see what their assessments are for freshmen and sophomore students. We found that very few universities are using CBE systems and most still utilize traditional midterm and final exams.

Artifacts

Copies of our student, faculty, and parent survey questions can be shared on request.

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