

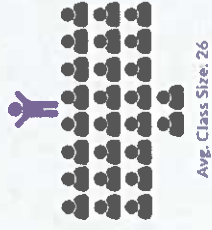


GRAND VALLEY  
STATE UNIVERSITY

# COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION

21,648  
Total Students

145  
Degrees Offered



4,000+  
Study Abroad Programs



400+  
Student Organizations



137,928  
Alumni



25%  
Students participate in  
research with faculty



# Competency-Based Education Builds Talent

- As we find ourselves footed firmly in the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), for Michigan to thrive, for companies to advance and grow, our citizens need the roadmap to become the talented workforce in technology, healthcare, manufacturing and more.
- They need credentials – badges, certificates – that provide meaningful, timely, workforce-relevant skills that can be immediately applied as they progress towards a larger degree, such as a bachelor's or master's degree. They need industry partners that are prepared to provide workplace experiences and professional pathways.

# The Two CBE Bedrock Principles

There are two key principles that comprise competency-based approaches to education:

- Competencies measure what you know and can do
- Learning can be constant if time is variable

These two philosophies can generate a variety of educational approaches in degree and style across a continuum of Competency-Based Education (CBE).

# COMPETENCIES MEASURE WHAT YOU KNOW AND CAN DO

CBE is an approach to education that:

- (1) defines competencies,
- (2) assesses learning against those competencies, and
- (3) awards credit for successful attainment of that learning.

Competencies express both the knowledge **and** the skill required to demonstrate successful attainment of learning through application.

# LEARNING CAN BE CONSTANT IF TIME IS VARIABLE

There are two factors present in every educational setting and approach are learning and time.

- In “traditional” educational models, time is constant which makes learning variable.\*
- In the CBE model, these are flipped: if time is variable, learning can be constant.

*\*A degree of variable time exists in traditional models. Students choose the time to spend writing a paper or studying for a test; however, with a finite amount of time to learn, there is an acceptance that student learning will be variable.*



## Take the following example:

There is a 3-mile trail around a small lake and the goal is for a group of ten people to demonstrate their ability to follow it from start to finish:

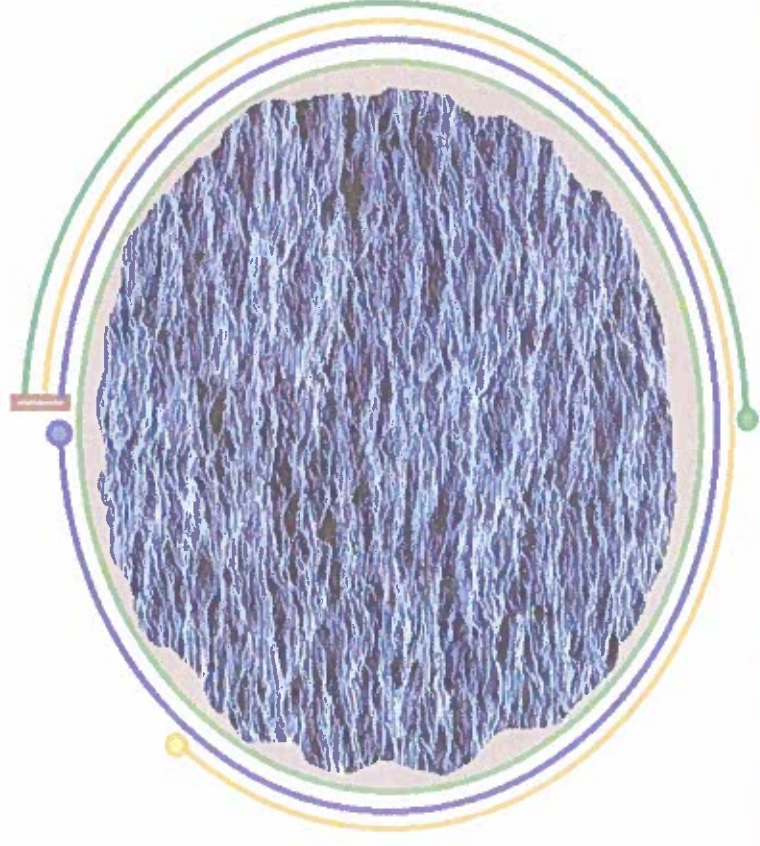
*Competency: complete a three-mile circumnavigation of the lake.*

# First Instance: Time is Constant

The ten people are told they have thirty minutes to spend on the task.

- The runners' pace is 8 minutes/mile, so they will get around the lake with six minutes to spare.
- The joggers, clocking in at 12 minutes/mile, will be short a half-mile.
- The walkers, taking in the scenery at 20 minutes/mile, will hit the halfway point.

*Result: When time is constant, some participants will not achieve the goal.*







## **Second Instance: Time is Variable**

The ten people are simply told to make their way on the trail around the lake. The runners will still come in at 24 minutes, the joggers around 35-40 minutes, but the walkers are all going to get around the lake, too. It is just going to take them an hour.

*Result: When time is variable,  
all participants can achieve the goal.*



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Adult learners often have both:

- More foundational knowledge and life experience.
- More time and financial barriers.

Creating learning spaces where they can accelerate when able puts applicable workforce-ready skills and credentials in their hands.