IITG Project Outcomes Form - Update Outcomes

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IITG Project Title
2016-ESC-Travers-Designing Competency-based PLA Pathways to Scale Up Completion and Learner Success

Access Keywords: Enrollment, Diversity, Capacity, Affordability
Project focus is to develop PLA pathways at the undergraduate level using competencies. This approach allows us to create and provide additional opportunities for our learners to accelerate time to degree, saving time and money. By incorporating CBE into existing PLA processes, we will scale up PLA by making it more appealing and accessible to a wider number of learners within our institution and across SUNY. This directly supports persistence, transfer, and completion in that it serves as a pathway to degree access and completion for those learners for whom access to HE has been fraught with barriers. Via competency-based language, we will also refresh PLA paradigm to include PLA as a part of stackable credentials, a current strategic initiative for SUNY.

Completion Keywords: Completion, Persistence, Transfer, Retention
This project provides greater access, completion and success for at-risk, academically disadvantage, marginalized, and adult learner populations by using known high impact practices. We envision greater access to academic programs through online assessment strategies that recognize and credential what students know and identify skills gaps using PLA and CBE strategies. The assessed learning relates directly to academic expectations, preparing students and providing credit recognition for verifiable college-level learning. The results are measurable: Research indicates that prior learning assessment increases students' persistence and completion rates, as much as 2 times for associate degrees and 2.5 times for bachelor's degrees (Klein-Collins, 2010) and has even higher rates within marginalized populations (Klein-Collins & Olsen, 2014). Competency-based education (CBE) provides clear expectations of what a student needs to know and links that knowledge to academic programs and workplace learning. As indicated by Tate and Klein-Collins (2015) "both CBE and PLA [are] seen as important strategies for supporting degree completion, particularly for the nontraditional (e.g., adult, independent, working) learner" (p. 1).

Success Keywords: Applied Learning, Student Supports, Financial Literacy, Career Success
Faculty teams are charged with creating a minimum of one CBE PLA; thus far, teams are on track to create more than one. Teams are charged with three areas: SUNY Transfer Path areas of Business, Computer Science, and Criminal Justice/Criminology (top PLA areas); developmental skills in the areas of basic communications (reading and writing) and mathematics (aligns with SUNY General Education learning outcomes); workplace learning acquired through employment in the area of Human Services/Human Services Management.

This project builds upon previous work with PLA and e-portfolios, which has shown success for students to achieve their PLA credits.

Inquiry Keywords: Scholarship, Discovery, Innovation, Mentoring
The inquiry engaged in this project is focused more on the faculty. There are 6 faculty team, each with 3 members and an 8-member faculty and professional staff steering committee. Most of the faculty have never worked with competencies before. They all have worked with PLA before. The faculty attended an initial professional development opportunity on writing competencies and have been provided additional background literature. In addition, faculty are learning how to engage through an online space through OneNote. These are all new skills for the faculty, which can impact how they work with students in the future.

Engagement Keywords: START-UP New York, Commercialization, Workforce Development, Alumni/Philanthropic Support, Community Service.
In many ways, PLA provides a reverse engagement with the community and workforce development. Instead of providing opportunities for students to engage beyond the classroom, PLA brings the engagement that the

students are already doing into the academic setting. Faculty indicate that working with students with PLA is the best professional development they could engage because they learn so much about the workplace, new directions in particular fields, and what is happening in the community. The faculty integrate this information into their courses.

In this case, as faculty develop stronger skills in developing competencies, we anticipate that there will be even easier ways to make these connections. Especially with workplace competencies.

This project builds upon other work:

1) Global Learning Qualifications Framework (Lumina Grant $250,000)
2) 2014 IITG ($60,000)
3) Connecting Credentials (Lumina Grant - ESC has had a series of subgrants totaling $70,000)

File One Upload and Brief Description

This work is underway, but one of the outcomes will be professional development materials that can be used with other faculty to develop competencies and competency-based PLA.