Competency-based Approaches to Occupational Licensing

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Policy Goal

Consider competency-based alternatives to licensing

Competency-Based Education (CBE) + Competency-Based Assessment (CBA)

Important Note: These tools have applications in many other settings
Creating Qualified Workers - The Theory

Inputs
- Preparation
- Education
- Training
- Experience

Outputs
- Competence
- Knowledge
- Skills
- Abilities

Created by Shastry from News Project
The Hours + Testing (H+T) Model

In this model, the focus is primarily on **measuring the inputs**, supplemented with some form of testing.

**Inputs**
- Hours
- Credits
- Courses

**Proficiency Exam**
- Written Test
- Practical Demonstration
The Effect of Focusing on Inputs

Diagram: A bell curve showing the relationship between % of students achieving mastery and hours of instruction or experience. The x-axis represents hours of instruction or experience, and the y-axis represents % of students achieving mastery. The curve peaks in the middle, indicating a sweet spot for optimal mastery. Fast learners achieve mastery with fewer hours, while slow learners require more hours.
Drawbacks of the H+T model

Focus on Input Measurement
- No guarantee of mastery
- Punishes fast learners
  - Delays opportunity to work
- Disadvantages workers that perform poorly on tests
- All-or-nothing format

Proficiency exams
- At best are “spot checks”
- Minimum passing scores
  - “Cs & Ds get degrees”
- Don’t replicate real-world
- Wasted effort to learn specifically for the exam

Logically inconsistent to require both Hours and Testing
### Review of Research Findings: NCSL experts' general conclusions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hours Requirements</th>
<th>Apprenticeships (leading to licensure)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Increase costs to consumers</td>
<td>1. Better pipelines for skilled industry professionals</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Limit Practitioners and competition</td>
<td>2. Reduce costs of the service to consumers</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Don’t have a clear impact on quality</td>
<td>3. Improve the quality of service provided</td>
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There is a Better Way:
The application of CBE model to licensing

CBE Program Design
Acquire Knowledge, Skills and Abilities at your own pace

Competency-based Assessment
Document mastery as it occurs
What is Competency Based Education?

- Measures *Learning* instead of *Time*
- Students progress by *demonstrating* competence
- Students study and learn at their own pace
- Can be ideal for adult students who are looking to “upgrade”
- Adult learners come to the program already knowing different things and learn at different rates
Creating Competency Based Programs

- Industry experts advise training programs to define necessary competencies - what does the student need to know? What do they need to be able to do?
- Assessment ensures that the right things are being measured
Competency Based Programs

- Learn theory - lectures, assignments, activities
- Demonstration of hands-on skills
- Practice performing skills
- Pass off the skills
- Re-teaching is done until student is 100% proficient
- Internship can also be utilized
- Students receive timely, differentiated support based on individual needs
What does a Competent Employee Look Like?

How can competence be

Identified?

Assessed?

Documented?
Using Technology to Assess Competency

- It is possible for **independent assessment of competency**
  - Video clips, documents, and other information
- Technology allows a student to develop a portfolio of competencies
- Defensible evidence of skills and abilities - Proof that they know what they are doing
Competency Based Licensure

For students seeking license or certification:

- Must demonstrate competencies that correspond to industry standards
- Competencies include explicit, measurable, transferable learning objectives
- Prior learning and experience are recognized
- Students demonstrate competency as they learn (not all at once)
- A full license requires competency in a comprehensive list of areas
- This approach bases licensing on outputs instead of inputs
Competency Based Licensure

- Competence in performing the tasks is more important than the length of the training
- Would allow for partial or continuum licensure - Allow you to get paid to do what you know how to do, as you learn and progress
- May be more of a political problem than a practical problem
Utah’s new law – HB226 Occupational Licensing Revisions

- Authorizes the Division of Occupational and Professional Licensing to waive hours requirements for a competency based training program
- What were the politics like?
  - Technical Colleges
  - Skilled Trades & Licensed Occupations
Implementation of Competency Based Licensure

- What will happen now?
- We need to find a training program to be first
- The program will need a CBA tool