

# Direct Assessment Competency-Based Education

At the heart of California Community Colleges' Vision 2030 is a **commitment to transform access** — to build a system that actively reaches learners instead of waiting for them to come to us. Today 6.8 million Californians have a high school education but no college degree. Direct Assessment Competency-Based Education is a powerful way we can meet learners where they are by offering flexible, rigorous, and **inclusive pathways that remove barriers to completion and advance Vision 2030's equity goals.**

Direct Assessment Competency-Based Education is a flexibly paced learning model that allows learners to demonstrate mastery through meaningful assessments that apply learners' skills, knowledge, and abilities in real-world contexts. This model creates the space, support, and structure for more learners to reach their goals. It honors what learners already know, focuses on what they need to learn, and helps them move forward at the pace that's right for them.

**“** *Direct Assessment Competency-Based Education allows us to reach learners who are currently being left behind by offering flexible pathways designed to fit their lives and schedules.*

— Randy Beach, professor of English and education, Southwestern College Competency-Based Education faculty co-lead, Southwestern Community College

Direct Assessment Competency-Based Education honors the knowledge, life experiences, and skills that learners bring. Through this model, learners develop competencies in consultation with employers, educators, and subject-matter experts to align with both transfer requirements and in-demand workforce skills. **This approach expands access for learners**, such as working adults, caregivers, and returning learners, whom traditional learning models often overlook, making higher education more equitable, attainable, and supportive of learners' goals.

Through embracing this flexibly paced learning model, we can increase graduation rates, reduce time to completion, and open doors for learners currently not captured in the current system or pathways offered. Direct Assessment Competency-Based Education can serve as a catalyst for equity, innovation, and excellence across our system — a model for what's possible when we lead with values and design with learners in mind.

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