



# VLACS



Learning Pathways



# Agenda

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- Competency Based Education
- Pathway Overview
- Courses Pathway
- Teams Pathway
- Projects Pathway
- Experiences Pathway

# What is a Competency?

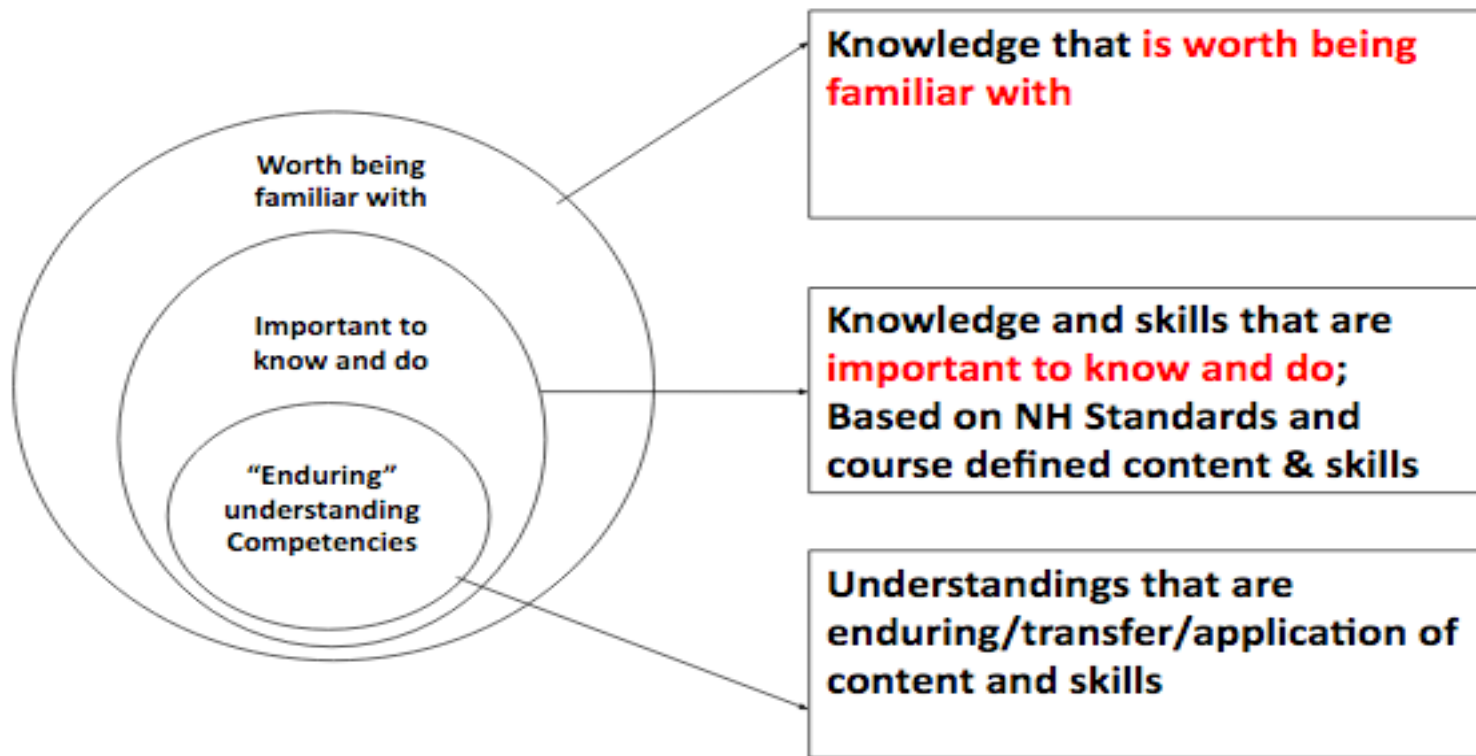
- Big Ideas - Concepts
- Enduring Understandings
- The ability of students to apply skills and concepts

# What is a Competency?

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Competencies are the big ideas in a course. They should represent what students will know and be able to do when the competency is mastered. We also refer to these as the enduring understanding, which are the concepts and skills students will retain over time.

# Establishing Priorities





# Competency Curriculum Design

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There are multiple ways to create competencies.

1. Some use global skills and concepts such as problem solving, complex thinking, effective communicator, and self-directed learner.
2. Others use discipline concepts and skills to define competencies.
3. Others use a combination of one and two above.

At VLACS, our competencies are discipline specific. This is most helpful for schools and students as they can identify specific skills and/or concepts students need to master and have them target these specifically.

# Competency Mastery Options

Competency

Competency

Competency

Competency

Competency

Competency

Competency

Competency

Competency



# Competency Mastery Options

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The way we have designed competencies, students can learn an individual competency, a small group of competencies or an entire competency group (ie. course). They can also mix and match competencies from various courses.

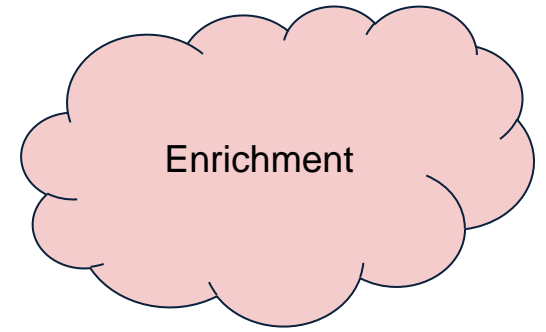
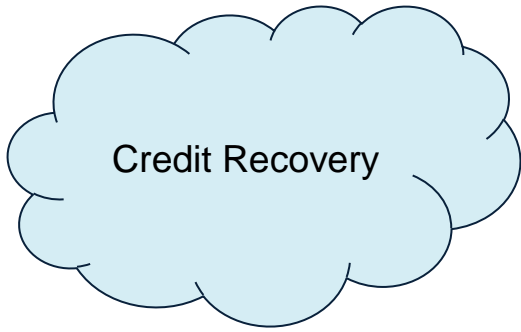
# Pathways for Meeting Competencies



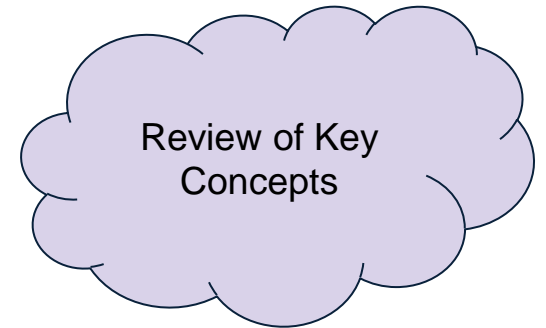
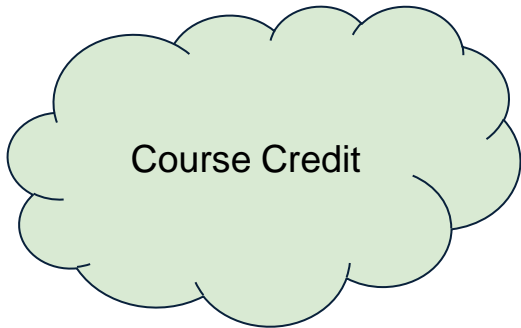
# Pathways for Meeting Competencies

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There are three pathways VLACS offers for mastery of competencies: courses, projects and experiences. Each will be discussed in future slides.



# When or Why Individual Competencies?





Student is doing an ELO at a local hospital and will have the opportunity to master 5 of 8 biology course competencies.

# ELO to Meet Biology Competencies

Competencies Met Through VLACS

Heredity  
Ecology  
Evolution

Competency Group Required Competencies

Scientific Skills  
Cell Functioning  
Cellular Reproduction  
Heredity  
Ecology  
Evolution  
Classification of Organisms  
Human Systems

Competencies Met Through ELO

Scientific Skills  
Cell Functioning  
Cellular Reproduction

Classification of Organisms  
Human Systems

Course Work or Projects

# ELO to Meet Biology Competencies

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Traditionally, when a student does an ELO, such as working in a hospital, the student may meet several competencies from a given course. In the case of a hospital, this may be biology, but the student may only meet 5 of the 8 biology competencies, thus the student receives a half elective science credit. By working with VLACS, the student can meet the missing 3 competencies and receive credit for Biology, thus meeting a core course requirement for graduation.

# How do I find competencies?





# Who selects competencies?



# Finding and Selecting Competencies

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**Finding Competencies:** All VLACS competencies can be found in our learning catalog at [www.vlacs.org](http://www.vlacs.org). You may click on any course title in the learning catalog and it will take you to a course description. To the right of the course description, the competencies are listed.

**Selecting Competencies:** Students are welcome to enroll in any individual competencies they wish. If they are hoping to earn credit that will be listed on their transcript, the student should work with their local guidance counselor. In the case of an ELO, the student will work with the ELO coordinator and the classroom teacher to make sure all competencies are being met. Most likely, the local guidance counselor should be involved as well.

# Competency Enrollment

- 1. ID Needed Competencies:** ELO coordinator, student and teacher
  - a. ID Comps Mastered thru Experience:** Teacher, ELO coordinator, and student
  - b. ID Missing Comps for Full Credit:** ELO coordinator and student
  - c. Find Missing Comps at VLACS:** ELO coord and student
2. Student creates account and enrolls in competencies - projects or courses
3. Parent approves enrollment
4. Student is assigned a VLACS instructor
5. Student and parent receive Welcome Email
6. Student schedules Welcome Call with parent and instructor
7. Welcome call completed and student begins work

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# Courses



- Over 140 middle and high school courses
- 15 AP Courses
- 28 College Courses (SNHU & eStart)
- [www.vlacs.org](http://www.vlacs.org) learning catalog

# Courses

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- Over 140 middle and high school courses
  - more being added each year
  - over 20 early college courses
- Courseware providers
  - Florida Global, eDynamics Learning, Carone Fitness
- Aligned to Common Core State Standards and/or national curriculum standards

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# Instructional Support

- Video, email, chat, voice offerings to check in one on one
- Monthly Check Ins with parent and student
- Academic Help Desk Technical HelpDesk
- Partnership Training available for school representatives

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# Teams



0.5 credit courses, typically elective credit, 4 competencies  
16-18 weeks

Start on specific date, have periodic due dates throughout and targeted ending date

Work with an instructor and outside experts

Work together with your peers on a common project

Work individually on final product or component of the final product

Team will collectively identify roles

Team will meet virtually for scheduled meetings

# Teams Competency Overview

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## 2 Content Competencies

Students will demonstrate a technical understanding of relevant content knowledge by the ability to make functional connections to the real world qualifications coupled with the appropriate self management practice to succeed in the field.

## 1 Teamwork Competency

Students will demonstrate an understanding of <experience title>industry teamwork skills and practices by utilizing these skills and practices with their team to identify, plan and complete a team project.

## 1 Career Competency

Students will demonstrate an understanding of <experience title> related careers by exploring various professions and utilizing career related skills to solve a real world problem.



# Team Phases and Cycles

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Estimated Completion Time: 2 cycles /16-18 weeks

Cycle 1 : (Approximately 6 weeks)

Getting Started

Topic 1: Design & Development 1

Topic 2: Work Sprints 1

Topic 3: Deliverable 1

Cycle 2: (Approximately 12 weeks)

Topic 4: Design & Development 2

Topic 5: Work Sprints 2

Topic 6: Deliverable 2

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# Team Example Alternative Energy

Jan 25th, 2017 start date



# Alternative Energy Teams

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In this team experience, you will work with your team to understand the various energy sectors, energy options within each sector, and the pros and cons of various energy options. Based on your learning, your team will explore specific energy options within various sectors and make decisions and recommendations for short and long term energy practices.

You and a group of peers will be collaborating with energy experts as your team investigates current energy issues and opportunities. Through live webinars with experts and individual research on current energy practices and alternative energy options, your team will examine current energy practices and emerging technologies and options to develop recommendations for future energy practices for your region of the country.

# Projects

Allow students to demonstrate **mastery of competencies** by working through and completing **projects** that are linked to **real-world careers** and **real-world deliverables**.

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In Learning Through Projects, students assume the role of a person in a particular career and solve problems that these professionals face everyday, while also showing mastery of an academic comp. Student learning is independent but guided by a VLACS trained instructor.



**one real world project = one competency**

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We are developing projects for every high school and middle school competency. There are about 4 comps in a ½ credit course and 8 comps in a full credit course. A student would need to complete several projects to earn credit. Each project is designed to take 4 weeks.

We currently have 50 live projects representing 8 high school courses. We will have another 25 live at the beginning of the year.

In LTP, student learning is...



- Independent
- Guided
- Supported



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The objectives and outcomes of Learning through Projects is to offer students the opportunity master competencies by engaging in in-depth independent research, application of this research and connecting this learning to a real-world problem.

The projects are not designed to be a traditional course in that the student is not given the content. Instead, the student pursues independent research in order to acquire the competency skills and content while also solving this real world problem. The research and learning is guided with prompts throughout the project and suggested research sources. The design of the project workflow, and, of course, the instructor also guide and support students in their learning.

# Sample Projects

<b>English</b>	<b>Persuasive Writing</b>	<b>Real Estate Agent</b>	<b>Open House presentations</b>
<b>U.S. History</b>	<b>Artistic trends reflect and influence ideas/values</b>	<b>Set Designer</b>	<b>Set Design proposal for director</b>
<b>Algebra 1</b>	<b>Polynomial Factors &amp; Functioning</b>	<b>Agricultural Manager</b>	<b>Plans for variable sized fields</b>
<b>Earth Space Science</b>	<b>Earth's Oceans</b>	<b>Marine Navigator</b>	<b>Determine fastest, safest, cheapest shipping route</b>

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There are descriptions of the projects in the VLACS Learning Catalog. For any discipline that has projects, you will see a blue button next to the course name. You can click on the course name and then click on projects to see the projects associated with this course.

There are approximately 4 competencies per ½ credit and 8 competencies per full credit. Within each competency grouping, we have designed projects that simulate real-world situations and we have varied the type of job and the deliverable.

For example, in the US History competency grouping, the eight careers are:

Business strategist, Stability Operations Specialist (military), Futurist (Economic projections), Set Production Design, Travel Writer, Political Consultant, Photojournalist, and Non-profit administrator.

# Experiences

Allow students to demonstrate mastery of competencies through a variety of experiences.

- internships
- travel
- service learning
- entrepreneurship
- independent study

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In Learning Through Experiences, students may master competencies from all discipline areas. They may choose competencies within one particular competency group (i.e., English 1 or Economics) and/or competencies from two or more discipline areas.

Students work with a VLACS instructor to design and refine the Experience, identify the competencies that will be met, and develop work products that will demonstrate mastery of each competency.



## Any competency from any discipline

- All the competencies for a particular competency group (i.e., course)
- Competencies from two or more discipline areas
- **Work with HQT** to define, refine, and complete experience

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Students enroll in the competencies they anticipate meeting. They may choose competencies from any competency group. They will receive credit for mastering each competency, and, if they have mastered enough competencies from within a particular competency group, they will receive credit for that competency group.

For example, a student may have an internship at a science center in which they will master competencies in English, Web Design, and Biology. The student will choose these competencies when they enroll, and then work with their VLACS instructor to refine their experience and determine their work products to show their mastery. Depending on the number of competencies within each competency group, the student may earn a  $\frac{1}{2}$  (4 competencies) for full credit (8 competencies).



# Example: Web Design Internship at a Science Center

## Biology Competencies Met

Scientific Skills
Ecology
Classification of Organisms

Student does not earn ½ credit. Student can master competencies through courses or projects to earn ½ or full credit.

## English Competencies Met

Explanatory Writing
Research Using Technology
Reading Informational Sources
Writing Arguments

Student earns ½ credit. Student can master remaining competencies through courses or projects to earn full credit.

## Web Design Competencies

Page Design
Web site media
Web site navigation
Website Production

Student earns ½ credit. Student can master remaining competencies through courses or projects to earn full credit.



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In the example on the previous slide, the student has worked with a VLACS instructor to create a learning plan for their experience. The learning plan establishes assignments and deliverables for which the student will show mastery of these competencies. Student will work with a mentor and an HQT to verify this mastery. In this example, the student earns ½ credits for English and Web design and competency credit for Bio.

## Any kind of experience...

- Internships
- Travel
- Independent Study
- Service Learning
- Entrepreneurship

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No matter the type of experience VLACS Learning Through Experience students can earn academic credit. In each case-- internship, travel, independent study, service learning, entrepreneurship-- students will choose academic competencies, work with a teacher, complete agreed upon tasks, achieve their learning goals, and earn credit. In addition, in each type of experience, students will work with a mentor to ensure the authenticity of the experience.

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# Common Across Pathways

- Instructional Support
  - Highly Qualified Teacher
  - Video, email, chat, voice offerings to check in one-on-one
  - Monthly Check-Ins with parent and student
  - Academic Help Desk, Technical HelpDesk
  - Partnership Training available for school representatives  
(Jan 24 (snow date Jan 26), March 28 (snow date March 30))
- Assessments
  - Competency
  - Discussion Based Assessments
  - Rubrics

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# Thanks You All for the Great Work You are doing with Students!

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