Instruction is based on clearly-stated learning objectives that are: a) observable and measurable, and b) communicated in writing to learners before instruction begins.

Instruction is aligned with the stated learning objectives.

There is a learner evaluation system that is: a) criterion-referenced, and b) aligned to the learning objectives and the curriculum.

There is an observable management system of cognitive skill practice that provides for, promotes, and documents mastery learning.

There is an observable management system of psychomotor skill practice that provides for, promotes, and documents mastery learning.

Skill Mastery records are maintained for each learner, and learners have access to and make use of these records to monitor their skill acquisition.
Instruction is based on clearly-stated learning objectives that are: a) observable and measurable, and b) communicated in writing to learners before instruction begins.

Learning objectives drive CBE. Objectives are the “competencies” that learners must achieve. Each objective must clearly state what learners must do to demonstrate acquired skill or knowledge. Verbs in learning objectives are active and precise, stating the exact performance expected of learners. The objectives should also specify the standard or level of performance required. Objectives can be at any level of Bloom’s Taxonomy and can include the cognitive, psychomotor, and affective domains. Higher-order cognitive skills should be included.
Instruction is aligned with the stated learning objectives.

In CBE, the objectives specify what is taught. “Content” should relate to one or more objectives. The curriculum should cover all objectives with relevant information.
There is a learner evaluation system that is:

a) criterion-referenced, and
b) aligned to the learning objectives and the curriculum.

In CBE, the aim is to bring the performance of all learners up to a pre-defined standards and competencies. Learners work on each competency until they achieve “mastery”; the evaluation system should test and record this mastery. Learners can restudy and retest as often as needed. Specific remediation activities should also be available to learners when needed. The evaluation system focuses on what each student has achieved, not on what the instructor has “taught.” The “constant” in CBE is student performance; the “variables” are time and resources. (This differs from traditional systems where learners get one chance at mastery; some succeed and some fail. In such systems, time and resources are constant and student achievement is variable.)

If an evaluation is criterion-referenced, successful learner performance is defined by (or referenced to) mastery of pre-set objectives and standards (or criteria): there must be a careful match (or alignment) between what the student should master (objectives), what is taught (curriculum), and what is tested. Objectives, curriculum, and evaluation system must all match.
There is an observable management system of cognitive skill practice that provides for, promotes, and documents mastery learning.

For both cognitive and psychomotor skills, a CBE program must have a system of maintaining records of which skills and activities each learner has completed, which ones are in progress, and which ones have not yet been completed. Completion means “mastery”; no skill is completed until the learner has achieved the mastery level.

The record system should promote feedback on student skill attainment to both instructor and learners, provide for remediation as needed, and encourage reevaluation of learner performance until mastery is achieved. Appropriate remediation strategies often should consider learning styles and other individual differences among learners.

Learners should work on skills and activities until they achieve mastery. They should not be “passed on” without mastery. While learners may move ahead and work on other skills (i.e. those for which all prerequisite skills have been mastered or those without prerequisites), work should also continue on the skills still requiring mastery. Students should not attempt higher-order skills until all prerequisite skills are mastered.
There is an observable management system of psychomotor skill practice that provides for, promotes, and documents mastery learning.

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Records should clearly indicate the skills each learner has mastered. One such record should profile or list the competencies that have been mastered and those to be mastered. Other performance indicators can be added and kept in a portfolio for each learner. Learners should have ready access to their portfolios to monitor their own progress in skill mastery and competency attainment.
What is the CIMC? We are the Curriculum and Instructional Materials Center, a division of the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education. The CIMC has existed since 1967 to produce competency-based instructional materials for career and technical (formerly vocational) education. We are a state education agency which also produces, prints, and distributes curriculum materials across Oklahoma and throughout the United States. The CIMC is located in Stillwater, Oklahoma.

Who uses CIMC products? High school programs, area technology centers, junior and community colleges, proprietary schools, and government agencies are users of CIMC products. Business and industry customers are also learning of the training and cost advantages of using CIMC instructional systems. Several industry groups and trade associations have participated in the development of our products and services.