

ACADEMIC BANK OF CREDIT: REVOLUTIONIZING HIGHER EDUCATION CREDENTIALING AND LEARNING PATHWAYS

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Abstract:

This paper explores the concept of the Academic Bank of Credit (ABC) as a transformative model in higher education credentialing and learning pathways. The ABC is envisioned as a dynamic system that goes beyond traditional transcripts, allowing students to accumulate and transfer credits seamlessly across educational institutions. It also shows the framework of the Academic Bank of credit, its benefits, Global perspective and implications of implementing an ABC system and proposes strategies for its successful integration into the higher education landscape.

Key words: *Academic Bank of Credit, Multidisciplinary Education*

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Key Themes:

Conceptual Framework of the Academic Bank of Credit:

The Academic Bank of Credit (ABC) is a conceptual framework that revolutionizes the traditional approach to higher education credentialing and learning pathways. It envisions a dynamic and comprehensive system designed to enhance the flexibility, transparency, and mobility of academic credits within and across educational institutions. The ABC goes beyond the conventional transcript model by providing a digital repository for recording and managing a student's academic achievements, competencies, and credentials throughout their educational journey.

Digital Credentialing:

The ABC relies on digital credentials, utilizing blockchain or other secure technologies to ensure the authenticity and integrity of academic records. Each academic accomplishment, such as completed courses, competencies gained, and assessments passed, is securely stored in a decentralized and tamper-resistant manner.

Competency-Based Learning:

The ABC embraces a competency-based learning approach, shifting the focus from seat time to the mastery of specific skills and knowledge. Students earn credits not only for completing courses but also for demonstrating proficiency in defined competencies, allowing for a more granular and personalized assessment of academic achievements.

Seamless Credit Transfer: A fundamental aspect of the ABC is its ability to facilitate seamless credit transfer among educational institutions. The system allows for the transparent and efficient recognition of credits earned

at one institution when a student transfers to another, mitigating challenges associated with credit transfer and ensuring that learning achievements are fully acknowledged.

Learner-Centric Approach:

At the core of the ABC is a learner-centric philosophy. The system focuses on meeting the unique needs and preferences of individual students. Learners have access to a comprehensive record of their academic accomplishments, which they can share with employers, other educational institutions, and stakeholders to showcase their skills and knowledge.

Recognition of Prior Learning:

The ABC recognizes and values prior learning experiences, including work-based learning, certifications, and informal learning. Students can receive credits for competencies acquired through practical experiences, enabling a more holistic assessment of a learner's capabilities.

Global Recognition and Mobility:

Designed to transcend geographical boundaries, the ABC facilitates global recognition of academic achievements. Students can seamlessly transfer credits across institutions and even across international borders, promoting educational mobility and collaboration on a global scale.

Continuous Learning Record:

The ABC serves as a continuous learning record that remains accessible throughout an individual's academic and professional journey. This lifelong learning record captures achievements beyond formal education, supporting ongoing professional development and upskilling.

How ABC differs from traditional credit systems and its potential to reshape the landscape of higher education.

The Academic Bank of Credit (ABC) differs significantly from traditional credit systems in higher education, offering a transformative model that has the potential to reshape the educational landscape. Here are key distinctions between the ABC and traditional credit systems, along with insights into its potential impact:

1. Granularity and Competency-Based Learning:

Traditional Credit System:

Typically relies on a fixed credit hour system, where credits are awarded based on the time spent in a classroom, regardless of mastery of content.

Learning is often measured in broad terms, emphasizing the completion of courses rather than specific competencies.

Academic Bank of Credit (ABC):

Embraces a competency-based learning approach, awarding credits based on demonstrated mastery of specific skills and knowledge.

Allows for a more granular assessment of learning, acknowledging that students may progress at different rates and emphasizing the acquisition of competencies over time spent in a traditional classroom setting.

2. Seamless Credit Transfer and Accumulation:

Traditional Credit System:

Credit transfer can be cumbersome, with differences in curricula and credit structures between institutions often leading to challenges.

Students may face difficulties in transferring earned credits when moving between institutions, leading to potential delays in graduation.

Academic Bank of Credit (ABC):

Facilitates seamless credit transfer, allowing students to transfer earned credits transparently across institutions. Recognizes and values prior learning experiences, supporting a more flexible and mobile educational pathway for students.

3. Personalized Learning Pathways:

Traditional Credit System:

Typically follows a fixed curriculum structure with limited flexibility for students to tailor their learning experiences.

Emphasizes a one-size-fits-all approach to education.

Academic Bank of Credit (ABC):

Enables personalized learning pathways, allowing students to choose courses and competencies aligned with their interests, career goals, and learning styles.

Empowers students to take ownership of their educational journey and engage in learning experiences that resonate with their individual aspirations.

4. Global Recognition and Mobility:

Traditional Credit System:

Transferability of credits between institutions, especially across international borders, can be challenging due to differences in credit systems and curricula.

Recognition of credentials may vary globally, affecting the global mobility of students.

Academic Bank of Credit (ABC):

Facilitates global recognition of academic achievements, allowing for seamless credit transfer across institutions and international borders.

Promotes educational mobility and collaboration on a global scale, opening up opportunities for students to engage in diverse learning environments.

5. Recognition of Prior Learning:

Traditional Credit System:

Recognition of prior learning experiences, such as work-based learning and certifications, may be limited or inconsistent.

Students may not receive credits for skills acquired outside formal educational settings.

Academic Bank of Credit (ABC): Recognizes and values prior learning experiences, providing credits

for competencies acquired through practical experiences.

Promotes a more holistic assessment of a learner's capabilities, acknowledging diverse learning pathways.

Empowering Learners:

The Academic Bank of Credit (ABC) system empowers learners by providing them with greater control and agency over their educational journey. Here are several ways in which an ABC system contributes to learner empowerment:

• **Personalized Learning Pathways:**

Flexibility in Course Selection: In an ABC system, learners have the flexibility to choose courses and competencies based on their interests, career goals, and learning styles. This enables them to tailor their educational experience to match their unique preferences and aspirations.

Competency-Based Learning: ABC embraces a competency-based learning approach, focusing on the mastery of specific skills rather than traditional credit hours. Learners can progress at their own pace, ensuring a more personalized and meaningful learning experience.

• **Transparent Learning Records:**

Comprehensive Record of Achievements: The ABC system provides learners with a comprehensive and continuously updated record of their academic accomplishments. This includes details on completed courses, competencies gained, assessments passed, and other learning achievements.

Accessible Anytime, Anywhere: Learners can access their learning records anytime and anywhere through secure digital platforms. This transparency empowers them to track their progress, understand their strengths, and identify areas for further development.

• **Lifelong Learning and Upskilling:**

Continuous Learning Record: The ABC system serves as a continuous learning record that remains accessible throughout an individual's academic and professional journey. This record captures achievements beyond formal education, supporting ongoing professional development and upskilling.

Adaptability to Changing Career Paths: Learners can adapt their educational journey to changing career paths or evolving interests. The ABC system encourages a mindset of lifelong learning by acknowledging and documenting achievements that extend beyond the traditional academic setting.

• **Agency in Goal Setting and Planning:**

Goal-Setting Opportunities: With a clear understanding of their achievements and competencies, learners can set informed educational goals. They have the agency to define their academic objectives, whether focused on career advancement, specialization, or personal enrichment.

Self-Directed Learning Plans: The ABC system encourages learners to take a proactive role in developing their learning plans. Learners can identify areas for improvement, seek out specific competencies, and design self-directed learning paths aligned with their aspirations.

In summary, the Academic Bank of Credit system empowers learners by placing them at the centre of their educational journey. Through personalized learning pathways, transparent records, recognition of prior



learning, and the seamless transfer of credits, learners gain greater control, flexibility, and adaptability in shaping their academic and professional futures. The integration of technology ensures that learners have accessible and secure tools to navigate their educational records and make informed decisions about their learning paths.

Global Perspectives on ABC:

Various countries have implemented initiatives and frameworks that share similarities with the principles of an ABC system, aiming to facilitate the recognition of credentials and promote international education mobility. Here are a few international examples and initiatives:

European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS):

Region: European Union (EU) member countries and participating non-EU countries.

Overview: ECTS is a system designed to facilitate the recognition of study achievements and student mobility within Europe. It uses a credit-based system, allowing students to transfer and accumulate credits across participating institutions. ECTS promotes transparency in learning outcomes and facilitates the comparability of degrees across European higher education systems.

Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF):

Country: Australia.

Overview: The AQF is a comprehensive national framework that classifies and sets the standards for qualifications in the Australian education system. It includes qualifications from vocational education and training (VET) to higher education. The AQF enables international recognition of Australian qualifications, supporting mobility and credit transfer for students studying in Australia or seeking employment globally.

African Union's Continental Qualifications Framework (CQF):

Region: Africa.

Overview: The CQF is an initiative by the African Union to create a standardized framework for qualifications across the continent. While still in development, it aims to enhance the recognition and comparability of qualifications, support student mobility, and contribute to the harmonization of education systems across African countries.

Academic Credit system in US

In the U.S students receive their credit hours semester wise. And they are based on the contact hour which are gathered in each semester. In each semester student will have to take 5 courses, in this each course is worth 3 semester credit hours, which is equivalent to 45-48 contact hours.

How Global Collaboration Facilitates Recognition of Credentials and Promotes Mobility:

Standardization of Qualifications:

Global collaboration allows countries and regions to work together on standardizing qualification frameworks. This standardization makes it easier to understand and recognize the value of qualifications obtained in different educational systems.

Mutual Recognition Agreements: International collaboration enables the creation of mutual recognition

agreements between countries or regions.

These agreements facilitate the acknowledgment of qualifications across borders, supporting the mobility of students and professionals.

Shared Quality Assurance Practices:

Collaborative efforts in quality assurance practices ensure that educational programs meet certain standards. When countries agree on common quality benchmarks, it becomes easier to trust and recognize the credentials issued by institutions in different parts of the world.

Credit Transfer Systems:

Initiatives like ECTS provide a standardized method for credit transfer across European countries. Similar global systems or collaborative efforts can simplify credit transfer processes, allowing students to move seamlessly between institutions and countries.

International Accreditation:

Collaborative accreditation processes contribute to the international recognition of institutions and their programs. Institutions that meet globally accepted accreditation standards are more likely to have their credentials recognized internationally

In summary, international examples and collaborative initiatives demonstrate efforts to create systems that align with the principles of an Academic Bank of Credit. The concept of ABC will boost the efficiency of students learning and also aid students in embracing the multidisciplinary educational Approach. Also, Global collaboration enhances the recognition of credentials and promotes international education mobility, supporting the free movement of students and professionals across borders.

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