

# Acceleration in Developmental Education

Game Changers Series



COMPLETION  
BY DESIGN

# Acceleration in Developmental Education

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WestEd, a research, development, and service agency, works with education and other communities to promote excellence, achieve equity, and improve learning for children, youth, and adults.

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**About the Cover:** The design concept utilizes the idea of different pathways or programs of study, focusing on accelerating forward with the reform process. The breaks in the paths signify velocity as well as loss points. The design makes the shapes move toward the reader from the horizon, representing how students jump over loss points and move forward rapidly on a solid path to their individual goals.



Completion by Design is an initiative of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's Postsecondary Success Strategy.

**Suggested Citation:** Nodine, T., Dadgar, M., Venezia, A., & Bracco, K. R. (2013). *Acceleration in developmental education*. San Francisco: WestEd.



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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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I. Overview.....	1
II. Examples.....	3
III. Implementation.....	6
IV. Engagement.....	11
V. References.....	15

This is one of a series of “Game Changers” documents for use by colleges to generate discussion about innovative models for increasing completion rates substantially. Each topic is addressed through five sections within each report—an overview, examples in practice, implementation challenges, sample engagement questions, and references. The sections are intended to be used separately or as a whole, depending on the audience and needs. Each report is available at <http://www.WestEd.org/bookstore>.

# OVERVIEW

Acceleration in developmental education is a strategy used by community colleges to reduce the amount of time students spend in remediation and allow them to enroll more quickly—or immediately—in courses leading to certificates or degrees. Acceleration requires rethinking the content to be taught, in addition to the time frame in which the learning occurs.

## *Why is acceleration important?*

The more developmental education courses that students are required to take, the less likely they are to complete a degree (Jenkins, Jaggars, & Roksa, 2009; Bailey, Jeong, & Cho, 2008). Also, students who commit early to a program of study may be more likely

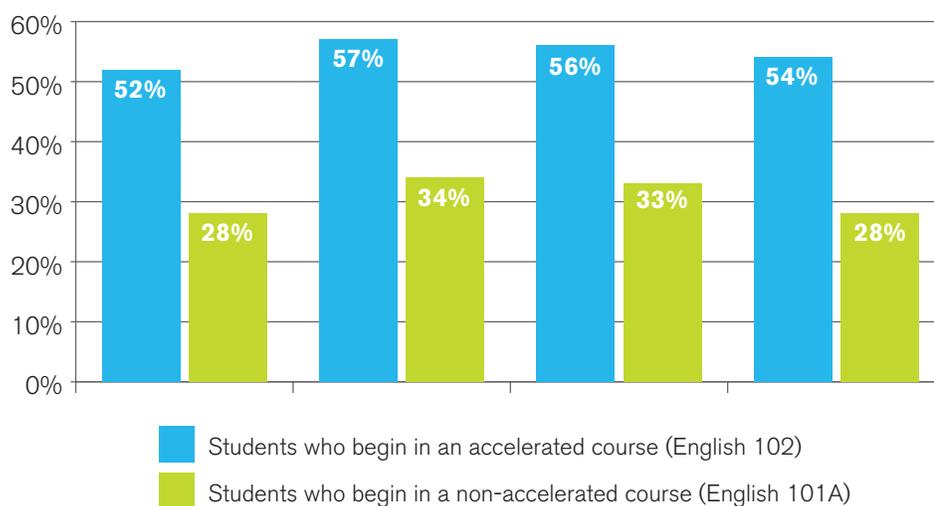
to complete a degree (Jenkins, 2011). Some acceleration models help more students catch up quickly in basic academic skills and begin earning credits toward a credential sooner, while others help students catch up while they earn credits.

## *How does acceleration fit within an overall strategy to raise completion rates?*

In a traditional series of developmental education courses, there are multiple “loss points” at which large numbers of students tend to drop out. For example, many students pass one or more courses in a developmental series but fail to enroll in the next course.

## COMPLETION OF TRANSFER-LEVEL ENGLISH (ENG 1A) WITHIN 3 YEARS

At Chabot College, students who begin in the accelerated course complete transfer-level English at much higher rates.



*Notes:* English 102 is a one-semester accelerated course (4 units) that leads directly into transfer-level English (Eng 1A). English 101A is the first semester of a two-semester, non-accelerated developmental sequence (8 units) that likewise leads to Eng 1A. Students can self-place into either option. Students were followed for three years from first enrollment in English 101A or 102, and tracked for all subsequent enrollments in English. Completion rates include students who passed Eng 1A within three years (first attempts and repeats). N = 1,605 accelerated students; 1,996 non-accelerated students.

*Source:* Katie Hern, Chabot College. Data from the Basic Skills Cohort Tracker, Data Mart, California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office.

Acceleration models seek to reduce the number of loss points as well as minimize the time required for students to get college ready, so that more students earn a certificate or degree and in a shorter period of time (Hern & Snell, 2010; Edgecombe, 2011).

### *Key principles of acceleration*

- ◇ Help students avoid developmental education whenever possible (for example, by weighting high school grade point average more heavily in the placement process).
- ◇ Revise the developmental education curriculum to shorten the sequence, align it with transfer-level and career technical coursework, and make it more rigorous.
- ◇ Provide additional student supports that are integrated with coursework.
- ◇ Provide remediation simultaneously with courses that lead to credentials.
- ◇ Customize and contextualize remediation along multiple academic and career pathways so that students learn math or language arts concepts based on their specific needs and on their desired instructional programs.
- ◇ Monitor progress at regular intervals based on demonstrated competency rather than on seat time.

## PROMISING STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

**Plan for a large-scale transformation.** In implementing an accelerated approach, some colleges may need to begin with a limited number of sections; others may be able to start by transforming the entire sequence of developmental education. For those starting small, be sure to get early buy-in from leadership (for example, through budget commitments) on a concrete plan for scaling up in regular phases.

**Use data to help make the case.** Some educators can be convinced of the need for change if they become familiar with their college's own success rates across the developmental sequence: Of the students who begin in developmental education, how many make it through the first transfer-level course in English and math? These numbers can be improved.

**Consider different models of acceleration, but the overall goal the same.** The goal is to reduce the length of English and math sequences, and eliminate the exit points where students drop out along the way, so that more students pass transfer-level English and math.

**Keep curriculum change at the heart of the work.** As faculty members consider various approaches for acceleration, it is crucial to ensure that the curriculum in remedial courses provides students with what they need to succeed in transfer-level courses. Approaches that mainstream students and provide additional support, such as the Accelerated Learning Program at the Community College of Baltimore County, have shown promising results.

### *More information about getting started*

The California Acceleration Project has several webinars and data tools available to assist colleges that are developing accelerated approaches to developmental education. You can access the tools at: <http://cap.3csn.org/getting-started/>.

# EXAMPLES

## Three Models of Acceleration in Developmental Education

In seeking to accelerate student learning in developmental education, colleges are drawing from a combination of models, based on local contexts, subject matter, and student needs. In developing and implementing any of these models, it is essential that:

- ◇ Faculty (working across departments) redesign curricula to shorten developmental education sequences and to offer students more challenging literacy- or math-related tasks associated with and leading to their desired programs of study.
- ◇ Faculty, staff, and administrators work together to ramp up student support services and integrate them with instruction.

**I. Simultaneous enrollment in courses leading to a credential (mainstreaming).** Students bypass one (or more) courses in a developmental education series and enroll in either (a) transfer-level courses with additional support or (b) courses leading to stackable certificates that may not require remediation immediately.

- a. *Direct enrollment in transfer-level courses.* Students who are assessed as needing remediation will likely require additional support to complete these credit-bearing courses. This can include combinations of:
  - » A transfer-level course paired with a course that provides additional academic support
  - » Substantial tutorial support integrated with class assignments and instruction
  - » Extra class sessions or study each week with the same instructor

### ACCELERATED LEARNING PROGRAM, COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF BALTIMORE

Students placed into the highest level of developmental writing are “mainstreamed” into transfer-level English classes that include students placed directly into that course level. The Accelerated Learning students also enroll in a companion course taught by the same instructor.

**Resources:** <http://alp-deved.org/>

**Research:** <http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/Collection.asp?cid=67>

- b. *Direct enrollment in courses leading to stackable certificates.* Some occupational programs offer short-term certificates (of one year or less) that are sequential and that can lead to a degree.
  - » Courses may be particularly appropriate for adult basic education students, English language learners, and others with substantial remedial needs who have clearly identified career interests.
  - » After students experience success in earning a certificate, they may be in a

### I-BEST, WASHINGTON STATE

Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST) is designed for low-skill adult students. Classroom teams of ESL, adult basic education, and professional/technical instructors co-teach an integrated course of language and vocational skills training (with two teachers in the classroom simultaneously). I-BEST also offers advising, tutoring, and mentoring, and seeks to eliminate common barriers such as lack of child care and transportation.

**Resources:** [http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu/college/\\_e-ibest-createyourownprogram.aspx](http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu/college/_e-ibest-createyourownprogram.aspx)

**Research:** <http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/Publication.asp?UID=695>

better position to succeed in transfer-level courses that are customized to their desired academic program.

*Concerns:* This approach requires effective career and educational planning so that students understand how their program coursework prepares them for various career options. Certificate programs should prepare students for clearly identifiable transfer-level programs.

**2. Compression and sequence redesign.** Curriculum is redesigned to reduce redundancies, particularly through alignment with the requirements of specific fields of employment, and be better aligned with what faculty believe students should know and be able to do. This can include significantly changing course content, combining courses in existing sequences, pairing courses, and providing students with additional support.

- ◇ Sequence redesign can significantly change the content of traditional courses. This can be achieved through "backwards design," of remedial preparation that engages students in the same content, skills, and habits of mind that they will need in the specific college-level course they will take. For example, backwards design is different for a student on a statistics path than for a student in a STEM major who need algebra in preparation for calculus.
- ◇ Curricular reforms enable two semesters of previous course design to be combined as one semester. This approach can include simultaneous enrollment.
- ◇ Students receive additional supports, such as additional instructor time, learning communities, and online access.
- ◇ Technology may be useful to assist in providing instruction, feedback, and support for developmental coursework.

## FASTSTART, COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF DENVER

FastStart compresses remedial learning (math, reading, and writing) for those who are more than one level below transfer-level academic work, and provides remediation simultaneously with transfer-level classes for those who are one level below. Students also participate in an additional hour of study per week with instructor and peers.

**Resources:** <http://www.ccd.edu/ccd.nsf/html/WEBB87UAA8-FastStart+at+CCD>

**Research:** [http://www.ccd.edu/ccd.nsf/html/WEBB88T8FG/\\$FILE/CCD\\_BT\\_report\\_9+20+09.pdf](http://www.ccd.edu/ccd.nsf/html/WEBB88T8FG/$FILE/CCD_BT_report_9+20+09.pdf)

## PATH2STATS, LOS MEDANOS COMMUNITY COLLEGE, CALIFORNIA

Path2Stats is an open-entry, one-semester accelerated course that prepares students for transfer-level statistics. The program is too new to have definitive findings, but early findings show that students in the cohort were 3 to 7 times more likely to successfully complete transfer-level statistics than students with comparable placement into the traditional developmental math sequence. Path2Stats is for students who are not interested in majoring in a STEM program.

**Resources & research:** <http://cap.3csn.org/developing-pilots/pre-statistics-courses/>

## STATWAY™, CARNEGIE FOUNDATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF TEACHING

Statway™, like Path2Stats, is designed for students who are not interested in majoring in a STEM program. Statway, a one-year pathway that culminates in college-level statistics, provides arithmetic and algebraic concepts taught and applied in the context of statistics. The program was inaugurated in August 2011.

**Resources:** <http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/developmental-math>

**3. Modularization.** This model divides traditional semester-long developmental courses into discrete learning units, or modules, that are designed to improve a specific competency or skill. Students are required to pass customized interventions consisting of only the modules they need and no more.

- ◇ Diagnostic assessments identify the specific learning needs for each student.
- ◇ Progress can be based on demonstrated competency rather than seat time.
- ◇ The numbers and types of required developmental modules may depend on the field that a student is interested in pursuing; for example, math requirements are higher for a STEM-related field of study than for a non-STEM major.
- ◇ Early efforts in modularization are focusing on math. Modularization may not be appropriate for language arts.
- ◇ Technology may be useful for assistance in instruction, feedback, and supports.

*Concerns:* Self-paced modules may not be appropriate for students who do not have good time-management skills. For some students, modularization may make the curriculum too disjointed and insufficiently contextualized. In addition, these models often assume that the discrete subskills of the modules are the most essential knowledge and skills that students will need to be college ready. In English Language Arts, there is traditionally a focus on sentence-level skills and decontextualized reading activities, but the demands of college-level academic literacy require higher-order knowledge and skills. A global issue is to ensure that the models increase the numbers of students succeeding in college-level gateway courses.

### **MATH MODULES, VIRGINIA'S COMMUNITY COLLEGES**

Students can complete math preparation in a single semester through a sequence of nine one-unit modules—or in a single year if they are in a field that requires more math background. Students only take the modules they need, based on their assessment and their chosen field of study.

**Resources:** <http://www.vccs.edu/Academics/DevelopmentalEd.aspx>

**Research:** [http://www.vccs.edu/Portals/0/ContentAreas/AcademicServices/The\\_Critical\\_Point-DMRT\\_Report\\_082010\\_.pdf](http://www.vccs.edu/Portals/0/ContentAreas/AcademicServices/The_Critical_Point-DMRT_Report_082010_.pdf)

### **SMART MATH, JACKSON STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE, TENNESSEE**

Students complete up to 12 modules based on their assessed needs and their selected career path. Modules are paired with on-demand individualized assistance, monitoring, and feedback.

**Resources:** <http://www.jscc.edu/smart-math>



# IMPLEMENTATION

## Implementation Goals and Challenges

This section provides examples of challenges and opportunities that some colleges have experienced as they have implemented accelerated approaches in developmental education. The information in this section is from interviews. As Peter Adams from Baltimore's Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) states:

*One of the key barriers [for us] was skepticism. But now, people are aware of the poor outcomes in developmental education, so it's hard for anyone to say, "I won't let you try it." And we eventually got over the skepticism with data. We ran the data over five years. We had results, much better results. That matters to faculty.*

### Curricular change at the heart of the work

As Katie Hern from Chabot College states:

*The most essential principle is for faculty to rethink the content of the developmental education sequence. On the English side, I question the way we've typically broken out our curriculum—such as teaching grammar first, then the sentence, then you step it up to work on paragraphs for a semester, then personal essays. There are assumptions that academic*

*literacy can be broken into a linear subscale—that leads to a terrible curriculum.*

Developmental education instructors at Chabot require students to practice the same skills and learn the same knowledge that college-level English requires, but the students are given additional support as they seek to master these skills. Students read challenging books, use higher-order thinking skills, and write complex essays. Chabot's philosophy is that students in developmental education should feel like they are in a college-level English class and they are learning how to succeed in that environment. The main distinguishing feature of developmental education is that, as students become ready for college-level work, they receive additional supports.

### Faculty and staff engagement

To start the reform process, Rob Johnstone from the Research and Planning (RP) Group in California suggests talking first with the "green-lighters" on campus: those who are supportive of change. These are faculty and staff who likely know that the status quo is not working and are ready to try something new. Getting influence makers and people who are critical linchpins behind the work can help create a collaborative environment that can encourage the yellow-lighters—those who have concerns but are willing to consider making changes—to get behind the work as well.

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## INTERVIEWEES

The following individuals were interviewed for this report:

- Peter Adams, Director, Accelerated Learning Program, Department of English, Community College of Baltimore County, Maryland.
- Michael Collins, Associate Vice President, Postsecondary State Policy, Jobs for the Future, Massachusetts
- Katie Hern, English Instructor, Chabot College, and Director, California Acceleration Project, California
- Rob Johnstone, Senior Research Fellow, RP Group, California

## MAKING PROGRAM ADJUSTMENTS OVER TIME

The logistics of adopting an accelerated model often need fine-tuning over time. For example, Baltimore's ALP is still experimenting with the right numbers of students and credits. In the ALP model, small numbers of developmental education students are mainstreamed into transfer-level classes in writing, and the developmental education students meet with the same instructor for an additional support class after the transfer-level course. Traditionally, ALP worked with groups of eight developmental education students, but this has been a challenge because of a college policy to cancel three-credit classes that have fewer than 12 students in the class. ALP staff found a work-around for that policy, but that involved reducing the credit hours to two, which in turn reduced the pay that instructors received for teaching these classes, even though the classes still met for three hours per week. The reduced pay has been particularly burdensome for adjunct faculty, so ALP leaders are considering increasing the numbers of students in the courses in order to bring the instructors' pay up to the standard level for three-hour courses.

Key people to include in discussions include the chief academic officer, deans, and department chairs, as well as student support services staff. Johnstone urges campus leaders to provide forums for people to discuss relevant data and make plans based on the data. Such groundwork will help create support for the changes. As Johnstone cautions:

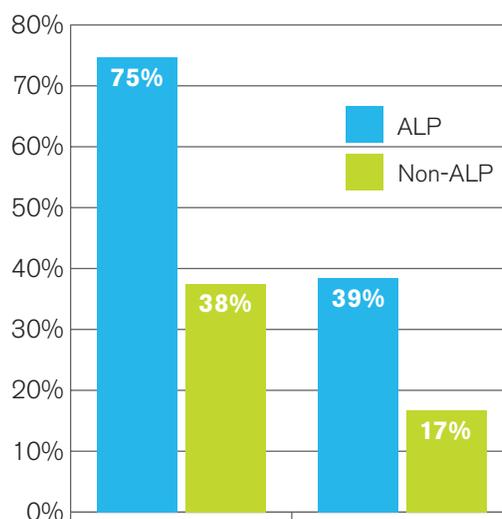
*You'll probably never get the red-lighters who are unwilling to change no matter how strong the evidence. True organizational change in our world comes from bringing along the yellow-lighters.*

Faculty members need support throughout development and implementation. Hern suggests creating a community of practice for faculty involved in accelerating their courses, and meeting several times each year during implementation. As well as needing training for their own classes, early initiators also need support in becoming team leads for other faculty, in order to scale the reforms across the college and to other colleges. Hern says that for faculty involved in acceleration in California, online spaces have not provided the meaningful professional exchanges that in-person opportunities have created.

### Starting with clear plans for growth

The decision about starting large versus starting small depends on campus culture. Some colleges start small to "work out wrinkles" and gain support over

Completion of Transfer-Level English (Eng 101/102) at the Community College of Baltimore County: Advanced Learning Program (ALP) vs. Traditional Developmental Education, through Fall 2011



Note: Includes all cohorts (including summer) from fall 2007 to fall 2011. The non-ALP cohorts took Eng 052.

Source: Sung-Woo Cho 2012.

time. Hern cautions against going from “0 to 120 in year one,” but she also suggests that project leaders develop a plan for scaling up steadily and quickly. At ALP, leaders decided to begin their reforms with half a dozen sections, but started with a plan for steady growth. In 2011–12, ALP had 160 sections, and planned to add 80 sections in 2012–13. According to Peter Adams from ALP:

*From the get-go you have to make sure that you design it to grow. That means getting support right away from the top to do it at a larger scale, even though you might have to bring on faculty a few sections at a time.*

Johnstone suggests that for colleges interested in starting big, using data to demonstrate the need for change can help gain faculty support. For example, Foothill College in California started over, at scale, with a significantly redesigned approach called Math My Way. The Virginia Community and College System is also changing at scale.

#### *Using data to identify the need for change*

In examining student outcomes for developmental education sequences, the key measure to look at is not the success of students in individual courses, because many students drop out of college between

## THE STRUCTURAL INEVITABILITY OF ATTRITION IN LONGER SEQUENCES

Data for Fall 2006 cohort, at Chabot College, California:

### Two-Semester Developmental Sequence

Starting two levels below, students face five loss points before completing the transfer-level English course:

1. Do they pass the first course? **66%**
2. If they pass, do they enroll in the course? **93%**
3. If they enroll, do they pass the second course? **75%**
4. If they pass, do they enroll in the transfer-level course? **91%**
5. If they enroll, do they pass the transfer-level course? **78%**

The completion rate for the transfer-level course is calculated by multiplying the percentages together:

**$(0.66)(0.93)(0.75)(0.91)(0.78) = 33%$  completed the transfer-level English course from two levels below.**

### One-Semester Accelerated Course

In the accelerated path, students face only three loss points before completing the transfer-level English course:

1. Do they pass the first course? **74%**
2. If they pass, do they enroll in the transfer-level course? **90%**
3. If they enroll, do they pass the transfer-level course? **85%**

The completion rate for the transfer-level course is:

**$(0.74)(0.90)(0.85) = 57%$  completed transfer-level English from the accelerated course.**

Note: In addition to reaching transfer-level English at significantly higher rates, students taking accelerated developmental courses slightly better in the transfer-level course than students engaged in the longer developmental sequence.

Source: Hern, 2011.

## MORE INFORMATION ABOUT HIGH ATTRITION RATES IN DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION

In *The Case and Practical Tools for Accelerated Developmental English and Math*, Katie Hern explains in detail how high attrition rates are structurally inevitable in long developmental education sequences: <http://www.rpgroup.org/resources/accelerated-developmental-english-and-math>.

courses or fail to register for the next course in the sequence. Rather, the most illuminating data come from following a cohort to identify the percentage that passes the transfer-level English or math class at the end of the sequence. For many faculty members, when they look at the small share of students who complete the traditional developmental education sequence, that can help them to consider making changes, particularly when they compare completion rates with the results in some accelerated programs (see “The Structural Inevitability of Attrition in Longer Sequences” on page 8).

### *What is known about cost?*

There is not extensive information about the costs of different acceleration models. An ALP staff member describes the program as expensive on the front end, partly because instructors are assigned to small classes. According to research, however, the overall cost per student completion of transfer-level English is lower as a result of ALP, since more students reach that threshold in ALP than in the traditional developmental education sequence (Jenkins et al., 2010). The research found that ALP provides a substantially more cost-effective route than the status quo for students to pass the English 101 and 102 sequence required for an associate degree (\$2,680 per student for ALP versus \$3,122 per student for the status quo). In addition, the cost benefits to the college—and to students—increase after students complete transfer-level English. According to Peter Adams, “One year out, twice as many ALP students compared with other developmental education students accumulate at least 15 credits.”

Another cost issue involves the reallocation of resources from developmental education to other courses. As Hern said:

*A lot of this is about reallocation—not about reduction of overall offerings. If you are offering multiple levels of remedial coursework and losing students, you need to offer new remedial courses [that are more successful] and then offer a lot more college-level courses because more students will get there. A challenge is sometimes people teaching developmental education are not credentialed to teach college-level courses, so that needs to be ironed out, but it doesn't need to mean a loss of offerings.*

Johnstone also said that the success of accelerated options will likely lead to reductions in traditional developmental education sections for some departments, but that the college as a whole can benefit because students who are successful in becoming college-ready will end up taking more courses across all departments. A critical belief underlying acceleration is that colleges will be better off having students succeed in developmental education, but the model will lead to some faculty, including part-time instructors, losing sections. As Johnstone said:

*That's a real issue, but it seems to me that a desire to not rock the boat isn't ultimately a great reason to maintain the current system when we have emerging evidence that the alternative may lead to much higher levels of student completion. Note, too, that when more*

*students complete, the overall cost per completer to the college may drop markedly.*

### ***Policy implications***

The ability to develop accelerated options in developmental education may depend on pertinent state and local policies. For example, this work requires the ability to adapt course curricula and sequencing, which may be restricted by state or local policies regarding articulation, course numbering systems, or learning outcomes. In terms of the implications of this work on state and local policies, Michael Collins from Jobs for the Future suggests that states, community

college systems, and colleges “make sure their assessment systems are sophisticated enough to place students into appropriate courses.” Appropriate placement is necessary to ensure that the courses meet students’ needs. Collins also suggests that, as a matter of institutional policy, colleges may want to examine whether acceleration options can be connected to instructional fields or programs. The effectiveness of accelerated models, he says, are also affected by credit cap policies and financial aid, since students have to take a certain number of credits to get a Pell grant. Colleges should track those requirements in case acceleration models change the number of credits students earn.



# ENGAGEMENT

## **Engaging Faculty, Staff, and Administrators on Acceleration in Developmental Education: Engagement Planning Overview and Discussion Questions from Public Agenda**



The following planning overview and discussion questions were designed to engage faculty, staff, and administrators in small-group discussions and other dialogue approaches around developmental education. Please adapt the following discussion questions, based on your needs.

For more in-depth resources and tools to support the practices of effective engagement—e.g., facilitating discussions, recording and reporting results—see, for instance, “Internal Stakeholder Engagement Workshop Toolkit” and “Stakeholder Engagement: Faculty Buy-In.” Student Voices resources are available at <http://knowledgecenter.completionbydesign.org/binder/423/student-focus-group-resources>.

### **Engagement Planning Overview**

Community college faculty, staff, and administrators are dedicated professionals, and it is difficult to overestimate the importance of the work they do every day. In a climate that combines shrinking resources and greater need than ever, these vital internal stakeholders are stretched thin, weary and wary of reforms or changes that could mean a dramatic departure from their everyday work. Yet their knowledge, expertise, and commitment are critical to

overcoming the challenges to student success and completion. We highly recommend that anyone planning reforms or changes think carefully about the current and potential role of internal stakeholders from the very beginning. The following questions will help you get started:

- ◇ What are the key challenges you face as you work to more effectively and efficiently support student success in developmental education?
- ◇ Who are the actors/stakeholders who can best inform your efforts?
- ◇ Who will play a major role in implementing needed change?
- ◇ Who can endanger your efforts if they feel railroaded rather than engaged as partners?
- ◇ What do you hope to accomplish through stakeholder engagement, and how will the methods and strategies you employ set you up for success?
- ◇ What are the best-case outcomes that you are hoping to achieve, and what is the single most important thing you can do to bring them about?
- ◇ What is the worst case scenario coming out of a round of stakeholder engagement, and what can you do during the planning, execution, and follow-up phases to mitigate the chances of this outcome?

### **Discussion Questions**

#### **Objectives:**

- ◇ Assess the current developmental education policies, practices, and success rates.
- ◇ Highlight the barriers and enablers to persisting through developmental education to transfer-level courses.
- ◇ Identify strategies to improve success rates, including acceleration options.

- ◇ Identify key stakeholders, barriers, enablers, trade-offs, and information needs central to implementing developmental education acceleration strategies.

### **What does developmental education look like at our college?**

- ◇ What classes are offered? When are they offered?
- ◇ How is the process for entering and moving through developmental education set up?
- ◇ What do faculty, staff, and administrators think of developmental education at our college (e.g., efficacy, importance, structure, etc.)?

### **What are the characteristics of students in developmental education in math or English (e.g., age, number of developmental education courses required)?**

#### **How do students move through developmental education?**

- ◇ Of the students who begin a developmental education class in math or English at our college, how many successfully complete the first transfer-level course in that sequence?
- ◇ How do results differ for students who begin one level below the transfer-level course, two levels below, and three levels below?

#### **At which point(s) are students most likely to fall off the pathway to transfer-level courses?**

- ◇ In other words, what are the barriers to persistence through developmental education and why do they exist?

#### **At which point(s) are students most likely to persist through to transfer-level courses?**

- ◇ In other words, what are the enablers to persisting to transfer-level courses, and why do they work as enablers?

### **How does our college currently support students in catching up academically?**

- ◇ What, if any, college or departmental policies and practices encourage students to persist through developmental education, or deter students?
- ◇ What, if any, college-wide strategies have been tried to improve success rates for students in developmental education sequences?
  - » In what ways have these efforts been successful? In what ways have they fallen short?
- ◇ Are there any college-wide strategies in place to accelerate developmental education? For example, are we:
  - » Helping students avoid developmental education whenever possible (for example, by reducing reliance on placement tests or allowing for self-placement)?
  - » Revising the developmental education curriculum to shorten the sequence, align it with transfer-level and career and technical coursework, and make it more rigorous?
  - » Providing additional student supports that are integrated with coursework?
  - » Providing remediation simultaneously with courses that lead to credentials?
  - » Customizing and contextualizing remediation along multiple academic and career pathways, so that students learn math or language arts concepts based on their specific needs and on their desired instructional programs?
  - » Monitoring progress at regular intervals based on demonstrated competency rather than on seat time?

- ◇ In what ways have the acceleration strategies been successful? In what ways might they be improved?

**How can our college better support students in catching up academically and moving to transfer-level courses?**

- ◇ Which of the strategies to accelerate developmental education would work well for our college?
  - » Are there other strategies not listed that would make sense for our college/context?
- ◇ According to Katie Hern, Director of the California Acceleration Project, “The most essential principle is for faculty to re-think the content of the developmental education sequence.” What do you think about this?
- ◇ Given our priorities for improving developmental education at our college, which, if any, of the models of acceleration in developmental education make the best sense for our students:
  - » Simultaneous enrollment in courses leading to a credential?
  - » Compressed learning?
  - » Modularization?
  - » A combination of the above?

**Which strategy/strategies should the college focus resources on and invest time in?**

- ◇ What are the highest-impact, quickest strategies that we can implement immediately? In other words, where is there low-hanging fruit? How will these solutions help students move along the pathway?
  - » Are there any trade-offs involved in implementing these strategies immediately?
- ◇ What are the high-impact, medium- or long-term implementation solutions that will need more planning and capacity building? In other words, what

solutions should we begin investing in and planning for now so that they can be implemented in coming years? How will these solutions help students move along the pathway?

- » Are there any trade-offs involved in implementing these strategies?
- ◇ How should the college choose, sequence, and prioritize solutions?

**What is needed to implement strategies to accelerate developmental education?**

- ◇ What support systems need to be in place for students to succeed in the accelerated sequences of developmental education that we are considering? For example, do students need:
  - » Diagnostic assessments for course placement?
  - » Self-placement into courses?
  - » Better use of multiple measures, such as GPA, in course placement?
  - » Better information about assessment and placement?
  - » Integrated college and career planning based on student performance and on student choices?
  - » Mandatory tutorial support that is integrated with instruction?
  - » Monitoring of performance?
  - » Early alerts based on performance?
- ◇ How can we be sure to engage developmental education faculty, student support personnel, and core academic faculty in our strategies to accelerate student success?
- ◇ Who else needs to be at the table in order for implementation strategies to be successful?

- ◇ What are the key barriers to implementation of an accelerated approach (including in specific departments, in specific college functions, and across departments/functions)? How can we plan to overcome these barriers?
- ◇ What are the key enablers to implementation of an accelerated approach (including in specific departments, in specific college functions, and across departments/functions)? How can we use them to catalyze and sustain change?
- ◇ What additional information do we need to move forward in implementing strategies to improve and accelerate students' success in completing their first transfer-level course in math and English?



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**COMPLETION  
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