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# **Remediation Transformation: Remedial Courses & Student Support Strategies as a Corequisite - Not a Prerequisite or Optional**

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Alarming, the majority of remedial students taking traditional developmental courses will never enroll in, let alone complete, gateway courses in math and English. Nationally, more than 50% of students entering community colleges are placed in remedial classes. Only 17% will graduate. The more levels of remediation courses a student must pass through, the less likely that student will ever complete college English or math. In California, just 7% of students placed three or more levels below college math go forward and complete a transferable course within three years. For the remainder of this Research Brief, remediation and developmental is used interchangeably; reflecting the interchangeable use throughout literature. Remedial courses are one of the single largest intervention strategies implemented, seeking to improve outcomes for underprepared college students at a cost of \$7 billion nationally (Acceleration Strategies that Produce Powerful Results, 2015; Bailey, 2009; Clayton, Crosta & Belfield, 2012; Corequisite Remediation, 2016; Remediation: Higher Education's Bridge to Nowhere, 2012).

## **Review of the Literature**

Bailey (2009) concluded that traditional community college developmental education has not been effective in overcoming a students' lack of college-level academic skills. In a 2006 study, for those colleges participating in the Achieving the Dream initiative, 60% of students had taken at least one developmental education course during their community college journey. Those numbers have increased at many colleges. Vandal (2014) concluded that more students quit than fail. Further explained that even after passing a previous developmental courses, students end up not enrolling in the next course of their remedial course sequence. Attrition is inevitable.

One of the most dominant themes identified in a study which visited developmental education classrooms within community colleges, was the commitment that faculty had to their students. Across the country, basic skills faculty demonstrated a genuine respect for students and a love of teaching. However, this classroom study found that the majority of these faculty were utilizing a remedial pedagogy teaching approach lacking what research has identified as key components of effective learning. Those components are: active student participation in learning, development of critical thinking skills and connections to the outside world. The standard remedial pedagogy approach routinely fails to spark student interest, leaving them disenchanting and disengaged. The applied pedagogy or constructivist approach has shown to be increasingly effective in strengthening student engagement, preparing students with foundational content as the instructor takes on the role of coach. Through these teaching methods, basic skills is placed in context, applying new information to other themes in advanced courses. Implementing a corequisite remediation model is one of three recommended high leverage strategies for increasing student completion of transferable, or college-level English and math courses (A Guide to Transforming Basic Skills Education in Community Colleges, 2013; Acceleration Strategies that Produce Powerful Results, 2015; Higher Education's Bridge to Nowhere, 2012).

### **Key Required Components for Effective Implementation and Characteristics.**

One form of a corequisite model is when students assessed at below college level courses in English and/or math are allowed to enroll in college level courses alongside the developmental education course with required additional concurrent support. The corequisite enrollment saves the students from at least a semester of stand-alone remediation, reducing their prospective drop out opportunities. Structured Assistance Programs provide students who previously required remedial courses with additional support in learning labs while they are enrolled in gateway college-level courses. Many of the redeveloped remedial programs at community colleges have discovered that students do not do optional or recommended. Intensive college orientation workshops are frequently required as well as mandatory one to three unit college success courses. Another form of a corequisite model is when students are provided with mandated support services within the curriculum of existing basic skills courses. The mandated support activities implemented within basic skills curriculum strengthens student engagement and persistence (A Guide to Transforming Basic Skills Education in Community Colleges, 2013; Acceleration Strategies that Produce Powerful Results, 2015; Best Practices in Retention at Community Colleges, 2014; Jones, 2014).

### **Examples.**

- Ivy Tech Community College, Indiana. Ivy Tech is part of a statewide institutional governance system. They had been challenged with very low gateway success and completion rates. Ivy Tech chose to implement a corequisite remediation intervention strategy after evaluating several methods. In addition, they customized their diagnostic assessments with Accuplacer. Early in the restructuring Ivy Tech held a basic skills summit for faculty, and professional development was ongoing. Ivy Tech partnered with the Dana Center to restructure their Math sequences. All math is now pathway driven with many visuals. There are three pathways: 1 - Applied Technology Math; 2 - Quantitative Reasoning (transfer level); and 3 - Algebra Calculus. Students are required to take a minimum of one college success and survival course of one credit along with the

corequisite remediation. The corequisite strategies were identified as a superior model. Once Ivy Tech implemented the changes, there were immediate beneficial results for students. After two years, completion rates increased from a baseline of 30% in English to 64%. An increase of 34% which was more than double the previous rate. Over the same time period, completion results in math were even more impressive with an increase to 64% from a baseline of 29%, an increase of 35% (Corequisite Remediation, 2016; S. King, Personal Communication, February 1, 2016).

- Community College of Baltimore County, (CCBC) Maryland. In 2007 CCBC launched the Accelerated Learning Program (ALP). Students designated as unprepared, who placed into the highest level of developmental writing, and who elect to participate in the ALP program are enrolled into a college-level English course. CCBC then requires these students to simultaneously enroll in a companion course meeting immediately after the college level course, taught by the same instructor, with a maximum class size of eight students. ALP results are impressive. Although there were initial scheduling challenges, studies show that the ALP project has a positive impact on student outcomes in both the developmental course and the college-level course (Best Practices in Retention at Community Colleges, 2014; Cho, Kopko, Jenkins & Jaggars, 2012; Coleman, 2015; Jaggars, 2015; Nodine, Dadgar, Venezia & Bracco, 2013).
- Citrus College - Both Math 020 Arithmetic Fundamentals and Math 029 PreAlgebra FAST TRACK will be taught in a traditional classroom setting (instead of a computer lab). Each class day (except for exam days) will start with splitting the class into smaller groups, working with the instructor or a lab assistant in each of the following four groups: 1. Daily lecture; 2. Practice problems from the day's lecture; 3. Review problems from the previous day's work or take a weekly quiz; and 4. Discussion of a Winning at Math topic such as math or test anxiety and study skills. The 4<sup>th</sup> group involves corequisite student support strategies that are key to helping many students who would not routinely seek out a study group. Especially if the study group is only recommended or optional and not a required component of the curriculum (Core Principles for Transforming Remediation, 2015; Hayward & Willet, 2014; V. Dominguez, February 8, 2016).

## Methodology

Definitions and limitations: The remedial data reviewed for this Research Brief, is for first-time entry full-time and part-time students and does not include non-first-time students and students who enroll in a remedial course after their first academic year. The researcher for this literature review research brief found a total of 16 publications which focused on researching or discussing research results for remediation transformation through corequisite requirements. The researcher examined peer reviewed publications, studies released by research entities such as the Research & Planning Group for California Community Colleges (RP Group), the Center for Applied Research, Hanover Research, and the Community College Research Center; publications released by National organizations such as Achieving the Dream, American Association of Community Colleges, Complete College America and Completion by Design; relevant state and federal websites, and articles discussing the applicable research of corequisite remediation.

In addition to the literature review, the researcher interviewed individuals involved with the implementation, evaluation or administration of corequisite remediation on community college campuses. Findings and conclusions for this research brief are drawn from the conclusions of the literature reviewed and the individuals interviewed.

### **Findings and Conclusions**

One extensive study concluded that picking and choosing small-scale intervention strategies that nibble at the edges of student's remediation education pathway does not result in any real lasting transformation of outcomes for these basic skills students. Traditional remediation is badly broken. However, it should not be eliminated altogether as was done in Florida when remediation was made optional by legislation, with negative impacts. Remediation should be transformed to ensure that more students succeed. Community college transformation efforts are most effective when renovation of remediation program structures are designed to create streamlined and cohesive learning pathways. Although there are detractors who insist that the corequisite model may not be the best remediation option for every student, corequisite remediation combined with mandatory student support services, is doubling and tripling gateway college course success in half the time or better (A Guide to Transforming Basic Skills Education in Community Colleges, 2013; Corequisite Remediation, 2016; Smith, 2016).

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