

Reforms to Developmental Education: A Synthesis of the Evidence

MLC Annual Meeting, July 23, 2024

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Agenda

- Background on developmental education (also known as remedial education or “dev ed”) and the state of the field
- What the research says about reforms to developmental education
- Additional resources

Traditional Developmental Education

- Intention: Help academically underprepared students acquire the skills they need to perform college-level work
 - Prerequisite, multi-sequence courses in reading, writing, & math
 - Students typically placed using a single, standardized test
- Reality: Descriptive and causal studies showing that traditional dev ed is a hindrance to academic success
- Students of color disproportionately referred to dev ed

Rapidly Changing Landscape

**In developmental
education research,
policy, and practice**

The Research on Dev Ed Reforms

- **Multiple Measures**
- **Co-requisite Remediation**
- **Comprehensive student supports**

Multiple Measures Assessment and Placement

Multiple Measures Assessment

- Single-test placement systems do a poor job of accurately determining students' need for dev ed
- Multiple measures assessment (MMA) provides a more holistic picture of students' academic preparation by relying on a broader set of measures
 - High school GPA, course-taking patterns, noncognitive assessments

Studies Show Positive Impacts of MMA

- RCT in Wisconsin & Minnesota (Cullinan & Biedzio, 2021)
 - Increased completion of college-level courses (11-16 pps) and credit accumulation (1.4 credits)
- RCT in New York (Kopko & Daniels, 2023)
 - Increased completion of college-level courses and credit accumulation
 - Small impact on degree attainment or transfer: 2pps
 - Reduced costs by \$140 per student
- Outcomes similar across racial/ethnic groups and for Pell/non-Pell students

Implications

- MMA should be used to **expand access to college-level courses** by giving many more students college-level placements.
- Colleges should use a form of MMA that is **relatively easy to adopt** and that mitigates the risk of lowering any student's placement
- **HS GPA is the best observable predictor of success** in college-level math and English courses without additional supports.

Co-Requisite Remediation

Corequisite Remediation

- Students directly placed into college-level courses with a concurrent support course that may incorporate:
 - just-in-time supports
 - one-on-one instructor support
 - review of foundational concepts

Corequisite Remediation Findings

- Multiple studies show positive outcomes on students
 - Large increases in completion of college-level math and English courses
 - One study showing that math co-reqs (with contextualized math) increased accumulation (4.4 credits) and graduation rates (8.1 percentage points)
- Additional research underway to understand the interaction between MMA and co-reqs

See Miller et al., 2022; Logue et al., 2019; Douglas et al., 2022

Comprehensive Approaches to Student Success

Comprehensive and Sustained Supports

- Reforms help students make progress in college; yet, to date, few increase long-term outcomes (e.g., credential attainment and transfer)
- Need for comprehensive supports throughout college (financial, academic, nonacademic)
 - Example: ASAP model **doubled graduation rates** for students in developmental education in Ohio and New York. In Ohio, ASAP **increased earnings** after six years.
- Greater up-front financial resources

Five Principles for Reforming Developmental Education

1. Grant more students access to college-level coursework
2. Provide targeted and tiered academic and nonacademic supports
3. Employ contextualized curriculum and student-centered pedagogy
4. Use equitable approaches for design and implementation
5. Pair developmental education with comprehensive, sustained supports

Additional Resources

Visit the CAPR website:
[postsecondaryreadiness
.org](http://postsecondaryreadiness.org)

CAPR Multiple Measures Assessment Toolkit

Slides, data guide, FAQs, and more tools for:

- Building Your Knowledge
- Making the Case
- Planning Your MMA System



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Five Principles for Reforming Developmental Education

A Review of the Evidence

*Susan Bickerstaff, Katie Beal, Julia Raufman, Erika B. Lewy,
and Austin Slaughter*



- More information on the principles discussed
- Tables summarizing the impacts different reports



Thank you!

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