An overview of Colorado’s collaboratively redesigned system and how it is leading America’s movement to increase the number of developmental education students succeeding in college and careers.

A state government-championed initiative of CCCS with funding from Complete College America and the U.S. Department of Labor.

www.cccs.edu/developmental-education/
The Problem

Historically, Community College developmental education has involved spending up to two years preparing students, who assessments have indicated are not ready for college-level English and Math, for success in those college courses.

As America began its journey toward dramatically increasing the number of college graduates data indicated only a small fraction of our country’s community college-aspiring (i.e. developmental education) students ever completed a certificate or degree or transferred to a baccalaureate-granting institution (e.g., only 17% of those starting at the lowest levels of English/Reading and only 8% of those starting at the lowest levels of Math).

The Solution

The Colorado Community College System convened a taskforce of 35 of the top minds in developmental education from two-year colleges across the state to review/analyze how policy and practice should be soundly reformed to promote greater student success using data-informed, evidence-based, best practices, demonstrating effectiveness in Colorado and across the nation.

Through a “bottom-up” process, these 35 practitioners incorporated innovative and successful strategies to redesign long-established structures in developmental education to address barriers to student success (e.g., accelerating the time required for completion).

Historically, developmental education had been designed to remediate English/Reading and Math skills that are taught in high school. Under this new approach, the taskforce based the redesigned developmental education curriculum specifically on what students need to know to be successful in gateway college-level English and Math courses.

To implement this transformative solution, a comprehensive faculty and staff support program is being deployed at each campus.
National developmental education research indicates that shortening the time it takes students to complete the developmental education they need to be ready for college-level courses, increases the likelihood they will earn a degree, certificate, or transfer. A recent Community College Research Center Brief stated, “The more levels of developmental courses a student needs to go through, the less likely that student is to ever complete college English or math.”

Importantly, national research was incorporated into this reboot of Developmental Education and proven practices piloted over six years at three Colorado Community College System institutions were also incorporated into the redesign. By combining what has worked best nationally with what has proven successful close to home, the taskforce has designed a system that is expected to significantly increase the numbers of developmental education students who complete college-level courses and eventually complete certificates, degrees or transfer.

EVIDENCE SUPPORTING REDESIGN

STUDENT EXPERIENCE BEFORE AND AFTER

BEFORE

Under the old system, it could take students two years or more to complete a college’s developmental education program before they could attempt college-level courses. For instance, students testing in the lowest remedial level of Math had to complete four courses (13 credits over four semesters).

All students had to prepare for to take College Algebra.

Students support services designed to assist developmental education students throughout their time at a community college were not mandated.

AFTER

Students testing at the lowest remedial level of Math/English can become ready for gateway 100-level college Math/English courses by taking just two courses.

Many, students can begin college studies immediately while concurrently being supported in a developmental education labs and support courses corresponding to the college course they are enrolled in.

Depending on what credential/career a student is pursuing students, they will be advised to take algebra, statistics, or career math courses that are more relevant to their academic and career goals.

Intentional student support services willa be provided to developmental education students along the continuum of all their coursework. As such, colleges will help students identify career pathways to engage them in the process of completing an academic program that will prepare them for their job goal.
To address barriers to student success, retention, and completion, colleges will be encouraged to strategies such as: academic advising, career coaching, case management, orientation, goal setting and academic planning, prohibiting late registration, first year experience, student success courses, tutoring, supplemental instruction, and/or other data informed best practice strategies.

CCCS colleges will provide students with access to academic success strategies, college readiness skills, and career counseling aimed at helping them through their accelerated developmental education coursework.

Each college will adopt a plan that addresses planning for success, initiating success, and sustaining success for developmental students using effective student support strategies.

The Colorado Community College System Developmental Education Redesign was a multi-year initiative that reengineered the state’s developmental education process that will be continuously monitored and improved using relevant outcomes metrics. Specifically: the curricula was reworked, adapted and enhanced; the anticipated time for students to complete their remedial studies was accelerated; and, the diagnostic assessment system is being improved.

All of these measures are being implemented to increase the number of students who successfully complete each college’s developmental education program and then enroll in gateway college-level courses. To achieve the goal of increasing each college’s number of degree and certificate earners as well as transfer students. This initiative is also instituting enrollment-to-completion student support services for these students to engage them in completing academic programs that correspond to career goals each college will help students identify.

Increasing the numbers of Coloradans benefiting from college coursework not only helps meet the skilled-workforce needs of business and industry it also prepares our citizens to earn higher wages to return to local economies while improving their quality of life and that of their families.
Colorado’s community colleges will offer the following accelerated model that provides students with the opportunity to enter a 100 level class no later than their second term in enrollment.

**Soft Landing** - Colleges may offer a non-credit option for students who test at the lowest remedial levels to prepare to reassess. Method of delivery is an institutional decision and may include, but is not limited to, referral to Adult Basic Education programs, boot camp, Core Skills Mastery, Assessment preparation, My Foundations Lab (MFL), Aleks, MOOC’s, or tutoring, all leading to reassessment for placement.

**College Reading and Composition (CCR) Lab (CCR 091)** - Co-requisite credit-based support for CCR coursework.

**CCR (CCR 092)** - Integrated reading and writing across the disciplines. Prepares students for college-level courses.

**CCR (CCR 092) + Lab (CCR 091)** - Integrated reading and writing across the disciplines with co-requisite lab. Colleges may enroll students who test at the median remedial level directly in CCR with a co requisite lab experience. This is designed to be a one semester experience that prepares students for college-level courses.

**Studio D (CCR 093)** - is an integrated reading and writing lab for students needing modest remediation concurrently taken with co-requisite

100-level courses within one or more of the four discipline strands.

**Studio 121 (CCR 094)** - Is a co-requisite integrated reading and writing support lab for students only needing modest remediation taken concurrently with ENG 121.

**Discipline Strands** - Discipline specific content taken in lieu of ENG 121 that would allow colleges to use reverse design to any of four groups of courses i.e. Communication, Arts and Letters, Social Sciences, and Science depending on student’s completion goals.

**Placement and transition** - If students have taken any 100-level course in the 4 (four) discipline strands and passed it, they are finished with REA/ENG sequence. If they have taken and passed ENG 121, they have also completed their needed developmental courses. Students who have completed neither must take the appropriate CCR course based on their Sentence Skills score, or they can retest.
Colleges will offer students pathways to 100 level Math courses. Students will choose their path based on their career or major area of interest. Students should receive advising to help them choose the appropriate path and initial math course for their career and/or transfer goals.

Orange squares as standalone courses are for students who do not need remediation. Students with high placement scores or who are in need of fewer items will place in the co-requisite lab courses.

**Assessment Prep and Skill Refresher** - Students who test at the lowest remedial levels of math should be offered non-credit options for improving their Assessment score that might include and are not limited to referral to Adult Basic Education programs, boot camp, Core Skills Mastery, Assessment preparation programs, Aleks, MOOC’s, My Foundations Lab (MFL), or tutoring. Additionally, students with any developmental placement score have the option to do this same kind of preparation and re-test into the appropriate class.

**Quantitative Literacy** - Students who test at the median to high remedial level of math, who are interested in taking a 100 level Non-Transfer or Non-Algebra math course, should enroll in Quantitative Literacy. This course will be reverse designed to include only content necessary for success in Non-Algebra and Non-Transfer math courses. It is possible that a student who successfully completes this course may change their mind from a non-Algebra or non-transfer path to a Algebra path. If that is the case, the next course they should enroll in is the Algebra prep course after successful completion of the Quantitative Literacy course.

**Algebra Prep** - Students who test at the median to high remedial level of math, who choose the Algebra pathway, should enroll in this course. Algebra Prep will be reverse designed to include only content necessary for success in MAT 121 and MAT 123.

**Non-Transfer Math** - Students who test at the median to high remedial level of math may enroll in MAT 103, 107, 108, 109, or 112.

**Non-Algebra** - Students who test at a high remedial math level may enroll in MAT 120, 135, 155, or 156.

**STEM** - Students who test at a high remedial math level may enroll in MAT 121 or MAT 123.

**Math Learning Support Co-Req** - Colleges may decide to offer a co-requisite learning support class for students who test at the median remedial level of math pursuing in Algebra Prep and Non-Transfer pathway or testing at a high remedial level if pursuing a Non-Algebra and Algebra pathway. This learning support co-requisite provides additional structured support to students who are close to the placement score and would like to enroll in the next course.

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