Remediation

Nearly half of full-time freshmen who enroll in an Illinois community college are placed in remedial coursework in at least one subject.1 These courses cost thousands of dollars in tuition and fees, but don’t count as credit toward a degree. Few students who start in a remedial course go on to complete their introductory (college-level) course, and in Illinois, only 14 percent will graduate.2 This is particularly acute for low-income students and students of color who are more likely to be placed in remedial coursework.

**Policy Priority:**

What happens when students are placed into remedial courses in Illinois?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enroll in remedial math course</th>
<th>Complete introductory (college-level) course</th>
<th>Graduate with an associate degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20,256 students</td>
<td>3,444</td>
<td>2,836</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16,812 students</td>
<td></td>
<td>608</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Do not complete an introductory math course

Do not graduate

Full-time students at Illinois 2-year colleges, graduation within 3 years. Source: Complete College America, Spanning the Divide, 2016

**Proposed solutions**

**Multiple measures of readiness**

There is a growing body of evidence that current remedial education placement measures, including entrance exams and standardized test scores, are poor indicators of student success in college-level math and English. As a result, many students who would otherwise succeed in college-level coursework are being funneled into developmental classes -- and many aren’t making it out. Thankfully, there are better ways to measure college readiness.

Nationwide, colleges and universities are providing students with multiple entry points ("multiple measures") to college-level math and English. California and North Carolina, for example, require their public colleges use multiple measures of readiness; and in 2018, Illinois’ community colleges voluntarily committed to employ multiple measures statewide. The Partnership will leverage our practice work to support Illinois’ colleges as they implement a multiple measures approach, and will leverage policy as necessary to increase momentum to scale across the state.

**Scaling co-requisite models**

Traditional remediation models were designed to provide a gateway to college-level coursework for students who need additional supports. While well-intentioned, in practice traditional remediation practices are rarely effective, and at worst, create an impassable barrier to college completion.3

In response, institutions are implementing evidence-based models that help students progress towards graduation quicker and with less debt. The most widely used and oft-studied approach is co-requisite remediation, which places all students in college-level courses from day one and provides additional supports to those who need them, typically in the form of an additional course or lab. This approach advances the original goals of remedial education while significantly improving introductory-course passage rates. The Partnership will work with engaged state agencies and policymakers to ensure Illinois employs best practices in remediation reform efficiently and with urgency.

1. Women Employed, “Fourth Year Sophomores?: Improving Remedial Student Outcomes in Illinois.”