

## **Alternative Structural Models for Basic Skills**

(Adapted from Hern and Snell PowerPoint and Edgecombe CCRC Brief)

### **Avoidance**

Programs and policies that help students skip levels, such as

- Changing cut scores to advance students in sequence
- Creating easy mechanisms for students to skip levels
- Allowing students who have passed Algebra II in high school to move directly into college-level Statistics
- Bridge programs that enable students to move into a higher level of coursework

### **Compression**

Combining levels of a sequence into an intensive format within the same semester, either keeping the total # of units the same or reducing the # of units

- Elementary & Intermediate Algebra
- Developmental English 1 & 2 levels below college
- 1 Level below plus college English

### **Paired Courses**

Paired courses link basic skills and college-level courses with complementary subject matter, such as an upper-level developmental writing course and a college literature course. This allows students to begin to accrue college credit earlier than they would if they were required to complete the basic skills classes first, eliminate exit points between courses, and makes basic skills learning more relevant. Student may also feel more like “real” college students and benefit psychologically from taking college level work rather than first rehashing high school content.

### **Mainstreaming**

Placing developmental students into a transfer-level basic skills course with some kind of additional support built in. For example, students testing one-level below college English are placed into the standard college-level English 1 class.

Additional support may include:

- Supplemental instruction
- Additional lab hours
- Student tutors embedded in class
- Support course paired with transfer-level course

### **Modular Redesign**

Replacing the traditional course sequence with individualized learning modules; some students may need to spend more time mastering certain competencies and less on others. More fine-grained diagnostic tests assess students' incoming levels of skill and competency. Learning modules are created to focus on smaller coherent topics, often aided by computer software. Students may complete some modules much faster than others or skip modules altogether to move faster into college-level courses.

### **Sequence Redesign**

Restructuring curricula to engage developmental students in more complex reading, writing, and thinking tasks sooner and prioritize the most essential skills and knowledge needed in college courses:

- Eliminating levels in the sequence and enabling students with lower scores to enroll in more advanced courses
- One-semester, open-access pre-statistics courses
- One-semester, open-access reading and writing courses

### **Contextualization**

By integrating basic skills instruction into college-level courses, the traditional sequence of basic skills courses is eliminated and students can begin college-level work immediately. Integration is designed to address students' academic deficiencies in learning contexts that are more relevant than traditional basic skills classes. The best example is Washington State's Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST) program. I-BEST integrates basic skills learning into college-level CTE courses that are jointly taught by CTE and basic skills faculty.