Given the implementation of an outcomes-based funding formula in Tennessee along with ambitious Drive to 55 completion goals and vigorous workplace demands for college-trained workers, a key challenge for us has been to effectively address the two-thirds of community college students who enter underprepared for college-level work. To foster success for these students in the Tennessee Board of Regents system, the co-requisite model of remediation has been taken to scale with success defined as completing an aligned credit-bearing class within the year.

In fall 2014 and spring 2015, we carried out a substantial pilot of the co-requisite model of instruction in the community college setting. In mathematics, 1,019 students across 9 campuses who would otherwise have been placed into pre-college level learning support mathematics classes were enrolled directly into an Introductory Statistics class. These students were required to also attend a supplementary instruction experience. We disaggregated the course completion data by ACT score so that we would be able to gauge the effectiveness of this approach for students with various levels of preparation. Results from the 2014-15 co-requisite model pilot in community colleges were inspiring: in mathematics, 63.3% received passing grades in the college-level class compared to 12.3% under the prerequisite model with strikingly higher success rates for students at every ACT mathematics sub-score. The students who took part in the mathematics co-requisite pilot also had a much increased fall-to-fall retention rate compared with their colleagues who went through standard learning-support. The retention rate for the co-requisite students was 57.4% compared with 43.3% of the more than 38,000 students who were not part of the pilot.

Pilot results prompted implementation of the co-requisite remediation model in all 13 community colleges in fall 2015. Results at full scale proved astounding: for those students who took a co-requisite mathematics class in fall 2015, 51 percent received a passing grade in their credit bearing mathematics class in that first semester. This is a more than four-fold increase in completing an aligned credit-bearing class within the year over the prerequisite model. For minority students the success rate in mathematics rose more than six-fold to 42.6% just as it had in the pilot while the success rates for adults showed an almost five-fold increase in mathematics from 11% to 52.3%. Results follow that pattern across all entering ACT scores.

Implementation of the co-requisite remediation model at scale is further supported by TBR-wide Co-requisite Academies, which are held annually. These convenings of community college and university faculty provide a forum to share results, present practices at individual institutions, discuss pedagogical approaches, and explore effective uses of technology in teaching co-requisite remediation classes. In addition, pragmatic concerns such as staffing, logistics and support are broached to help to refine the co-requisite remediation strategy and bolster its success.

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