

Developmental Education Reform Inquiry Tool



Questions for Identifying Innovative Practices to Improve Student Experiences and Outcomes

This tool is for teams of faculty, staff, and administrators who have already implemented developmental education reforms (including multiple measures assessment, corequisite remediation, and math pathways). The questions support reflection and planning to implement new practices within teaching, learning, and support contexts to improve more students' experiences and outcomes in college-level math and English. We recommend that teams begin by discussing the first two questions (about outcomes they would like to improve and their observations about what students may be experiencing that contributes to lower outcomes) and soliciting data to better inform their understanding of students' experiences. Then teams can focus on the remaining three questions to build an action plan to guide their next steps. This inquiry process can be repeated to support continuous improvement efforts.

1. What outcome(s) are we trying to improve? For whom?

- Consider which developmental education reform contexts you would like to focus on (courses, academic supports, other programming) and what outcomes to consider (course pass rates, course attendance, completion of coursework and major assessments, uptake of academic and student supports, enrollment in next course, next term / next year persistence).
- Examine institutional, departmental, and course-level data to better understand student outcomes in these contexts.
- Identify what students have lower outcomes and if those students share similar experiences, behaviors, or attitudes.

2. What student experiences do we think affect learning negatively and contribute to lower outcomes? (Focus on in-class / on-campus experiences.)

- Consider how institutional policies, campus culture, course curriculum, pedagogical decisions, and/or the psychological dimensions of learning shape these students' learning and success and might contribute to disparities.
- Think about your hypotheses and the types of evidence you can observe from your roles as faculty, staff, and administrators.
- Speak to these students to learn more about their experiences.

3. What particular student experiences do we want to focus on?

- Identify student experiences that can be improved through changes made by faculty, staff, and administrators.
- Determine what can be addressed in the near term and what may require more elaborate changes in the future.

4. What practices should we implement to improve these student experiences?

- Drawing on examples from your colleagues and professional networks, consider practices at the institutional level (including institutional policies, campus culture, student support services) and classroom level (including course curriculum, pedagogical decisions, and the psychological dimensions of learning) that can be changed to positively influence student learning and success.
- Prioritize a small set of practices to be implemented in the near term.

5. What academic behaviors and attitudes could we observe or measure to know if student experiences are changing?

- In addition to measures of academic success and momentum (e.g., course pass rates, persistence in college), identify observable indicators that the student experience is changing: such as consistent attendance or logins to the course LMS, timely completion of assignments, number of assignments completed, increased communication with faculty or support services.
- Identify potential measures, including survey or interview/focus group questions, for (1) students about belonging, self-efficacy, motivation, engagement, critical thinking, help-seeking, salient factors in the learning environment, and campus climate—and (2) faculty about attitudes toward student learning and areas of interest for training and support.
