

About CAPR

The Center for the Analysis of Postsecondary Readiness (CAPR) is a research center funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences to study developmental education and provide evidence about promising reforms. Established in July 2014, CAPR is a partnership of two organizations — the Community College Research Center (CCRC) at Teachers College, Columbia University, and MDRC — as well as additional research scholars from several universities.

Why Study Developmental Education?

Developmental education is designed to bring underprepared college students up to speed in math or English so they can succeed in college-level courses. While it makes sense to give students an opportunity to catch up, the way developmental education is currently designed can hurt rather than help their chances of getting a college degree.

Federal data indicate that 68 percent of community college students and 40 percent of students at public four-year colleges take at least one developmental course. Many are assigned to multiple semesters of developmental courses, delaying their entry into courses that count toward a college degree or discouraging them from their studies altogether. In one study, only 11 percent of students assigned to three or more levels of developmental math completed those courses and went on to pass their first college-level math course. The figure for reading was 29 percent. In addition, research has found that the standardized placement tests commonly used to determine if students need developmental help place many students in developmental courses who could have done well in college-level courses.

What CAPR Does

CAPR researchers are conducting several studies examining developmental education, and our website is a centralized source of research on promising practices and policies, providing news and links from around the nation. CAPR researchers engage with the field at conferences and workshops and through the CAPR blog. The center's annual convenings bring together a select group of researchers, policymakers, and practitioners to guide the work being done throughout the country in this important field.

CAPR's Research Studies

Evaluation of Alternative Placement Systems and Student Outcomes

CAPR is evaluating the replacement of the use of standardized tests as a sole measure of college readiness with the use of a variety of measures, including high school grade point average, to determine if students need remediation in math or English. A random assignment study at community colleges in New York is comparing the academic outcomes of students placed using tests alone with those placed using "multiple measures."

Evaluation of Developmental Math Pathways and Student Outcomes

CAPR is assessing an alternative model of developmental math that shortens the time students spend in remediation, tailors course content to different career and academic paths, and uses more engaging curriculum and instruction. The study compares traditional developmental courses with the mathematics pathways approach developed by The Charles A. Dana Center at The University of Texas at Austin.

National Study of Developmental Education Policies and Practices

CAPR is conducting a national scan of the developmental education landscape. This study looks at how colleges and systems are approaching developmental education through a national survey of colleges about their course placement and developmental education practices, and through in-depth qualitative interviews with system and college representatives. The end result will be an understanding of the choices colleges are making, the strategies they are using, and other aspects of developmental education programs.

CCRC

The Community College Research Center (CCRC) is the leading independent research center on two-year colleges in the United States. CCRC conducts research on the issues affecting community colleges and works with colleges and states to improve student success and institutional performance. Connect with CCRC at ccrc.tc.columbia.edu or on social media at [@CommunityCCRC](https://twitter.com/CommunityCCRC).

MDRC

MDRC is an education and social policy research organization committed to finding solutions to some of the most difficult problems facing the nation. MDRC designs promising new interventions, evaluates existing programs using the highest research standards, and provides technical assistance to build better programs and deliver effective interventions at scale. Connect with MDRC at www.mdrc.org or on social media at [@MDRC_News](https://twitter.com/MDRC_News).

Find CAPR online at postsecondaryreadiness.org, join our email list, and follow us on Twitter at [@CAPR_deved](https://twitter.com/CAPR_deved).

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