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Academic Chairpersons Conference
Proceedings

36th Academic Chairpersons Conference,
Houston, TX

Ending remedial programs? What your faculty can do.

JACQUELINE KRESS

Georgian Court University, jkress101@gmail.com

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Recommended Citation

Kress, J. (2019). Ending remedial programs? What your faculty can do. Proceedings of the 36th Academic Chairpersons Conference, Houston, TX. New Prairie Press. Retrieved from: www.newprairiepress.org.

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Ending remedial programs? What your faculty can do.

The benefits of a college degree are well-known and well-documented (Pew, 2018). Today more high school graduates than ever are enrolling in college anticipating the good life a degree signifies. Recent data show a 28 percent enrollment gain from 2000 to 2016 (US Department of Education, NCES, 2018). At the same time, persistence and graduation data depict a worrisome, if not tragic, trend. The more who enroll, the greater number who test into precollege remediation. In all, about 60 percent of first-time students are designated as needing remediation in one or more basic skills. Remedial courses, aka developmental courses, have been around for more than 70 years (Pressey, 1930), but only in the last two decades have policymakers and administrators seriously questioned their value.

New outcome data from carefully designed studies show not only do most remedial programs not bridge the skills gap, they may contribute to students' attrition, \$1.5 T student loan debt (Friedman, 2018), time-to-degree, and failure to complete. The failure to complete, combined with staggering student loan debt is thought by policymakers to weaken US competitiveness. Recent international data place the US in 10th place for portion of population earning a college degree (OECD, 2018).

In response to these findings, states and individual institutions have begun to legislate changes. These include changing the way remedial need is determined, making non-degree remedial courses optional (O'Connor, 2013) ; and scrapping remedial pre-requisites in favor of co-requisites (Castillo, 2018). Other states are adding concentrated first-year support, supplemental instruction for gateway courses, study groups, and other strategies.

Faculty share responsibility for students' success in their courses. While remedial programs have focused on skills students were expected to learn before college, degree programs focus on the content and skills needed to advance student learning in a discipline in preparation for further study and/or careers.

After a brief overview of the issues and current data, this session will provide a whole-group interactive opportunity for participants to share the changes, if any, that are being made to remedial education at their institutions. This will be followed by discussion of what is being done/can be done to enhance learning in every department course. The presenter will introduce participants to several teaching strategies that support reading and learning from text and that can be applied across curricula. Exemplar materials for several content areas will be provided.