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What We Are Learning About Scaling Up in Developmental Education Reforms

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BUILDING KNOWLEDGE
TO IMPROVE SOCIAL POLICY


Achieving
the Dream™

DEVELOPMENTAL
EDUCATION
INITIATIVE

Accelerating Achievement



Agenda

- Introduction to the DEI
- The extent of scale-up
- Challenges of taking the strategies to scale
- Beyond scale-up
- The initiative's outcomes
- Conclusions



Developmental Education Initiative

- Fifteen ATD community colleges and six states participating in three-year initiative.
- DEI builds on institutional and state policy work of ATD.
- Colleges funded to initiate/scale up promising developmental education practices.
- Funding comes from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Lumina Foundation for Education.
- Involves partnership of AACC, CCRC, JFF, MDC, MDRC, UTexas.





DEI Colleges and States

Connecticut

- Housatonic CC
- Norwalk CC

Florida

- Valencia College

North Carolina

- Guilford Technical CC

Ohio

- Cuyahoga CC
- Eastern Gateway CC
- North Central State College
- Sinclair CC
- Zane State College

Texas

- Coastal Bend College
- El Paso CC
- Houston CC
- South Texas College

Virginia

- Danville CC
- Patrick Henry CC





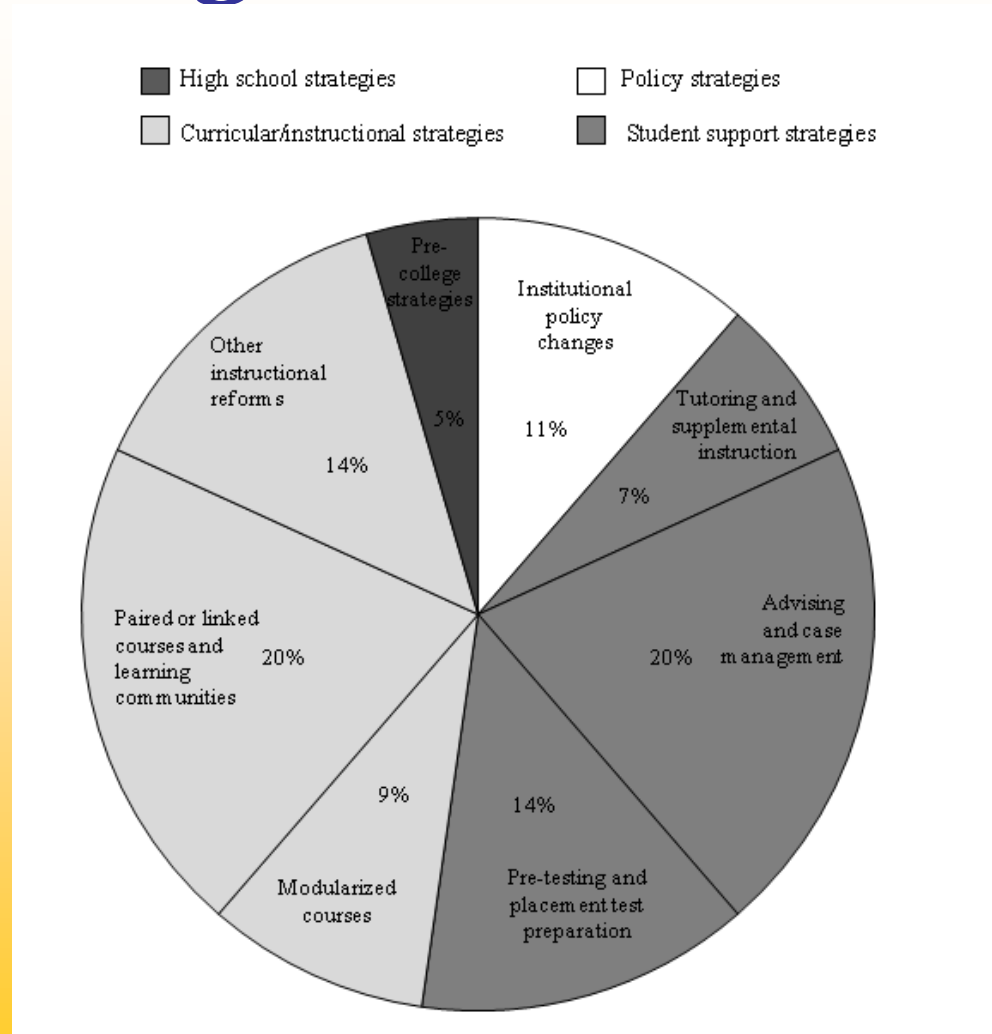
Two Points to Bear in Mind

- Colleges' decisions about what to scale based largely on “best practices” evidence, not on rigorous research.
- Meaning of “going to scale” not clarified early on.





Types of Strategies that DEI Colleges Put in Place





Strategy Objectives

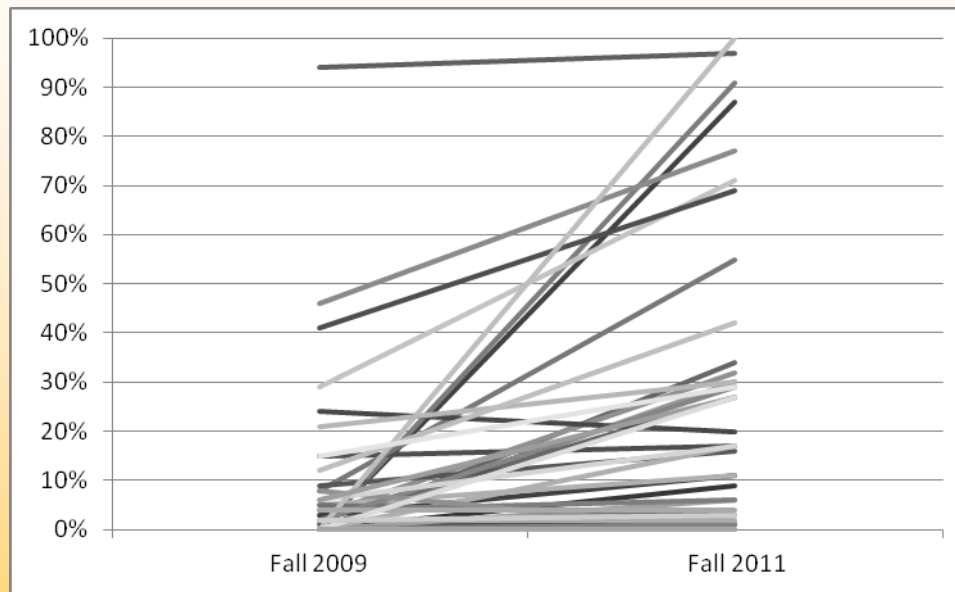
- Acceleration (e.g., modularized courses, some learning communities)
- Avoidance (e.g., placement test prep crash courses)
- Curricular relevance (e.g., contextualization, cooperative learning)
- Supports (e.g., supplemental instruction, case management)





Extent of Scale-Up

Percent of target population served by each strategy





Scaling Up Is Hard To Do

- Scaling up did occur, but....
- By the end of the study, the great majority of focal strategies were reaching less than 50 percent of their target populations.
- Only 4 of the 15 colleges were reaching the majority of incoming developmental students with any of their focal strategies.
- “Scaled-up” strategies didn’t reach more students than new ones.





What Factors Promote Scaling?

- Resource adequacy
- Communication and engagement
- Agreement that all instructors will teach and all students will learn through a uniform instructional approach (e.g., computerization, contextualized curriculum). Agreement secured through:
 - “Gentle fiat” (top-down)
 - Faculty support (bottom-up)



Scaling Up By “Gentle Fiat”

- Is perhaps the most efficient way to scale instructional strategies quickly.
- Involves setting a course for practice
- Allows no opt-outs for faculty or students (although faculty may be involved in planning for implementation)
- Works because resources are available and just need to be redeployed.
- Is not necessarily the most effective way to scale instructional strategies.





What Factors Impede Scaling?

- Choice for students and faculty about teaching and learning approaches
- Students' other needs
- Correcting a course of action that isn't working (e.g., when wide coverage compromises depth of services)
- The desire to evaluate before scaling further





Does Participation in the Focal Strategies Affect Outcomes?

- Compared participants with nonparticipants, pre-DEI with post-DEI entering cohorts
- Looked at 5 outcomes: term 1 credits, term 1 GPA, term 2 persistence, passing math and English gatekeeper courses by end of term 2.
- Differences suggest focal strategies may have had positive effects but are descriptive only.
- Strategies associated with instructional relevance were especially likely to be associated with positive outcome differences.
- No clear relationship between extent of scaling up positive outcome differences.





The DEI – More Than the Sum of Its Focal Strategies

- Other interventions beyond the focal strategies
- New policies for DE
- Professional development
- Networking opportunities
- Broader campus change





Conclusions

- An improvement, not a “big win”
- Did not entail sweeping reforms
- Scaling up is difficult and takes time
- Planted seeds for further change
- Both optimism and caution are warranted





Open Invitation/Shameless Plug

- Come to our breakout session
- Ask questions
- Hear about the experience of scaling up from the perspective of a practitioner
- Share your own experiences





Resources:

- DEI Website: www.deionline.org
 - Recent Research on Dev Ed
 - Blog
 - DEI Talking Points
 - Latest news
- Publication: *More to Most: Scaling Up Effective Community College Practices*





Jobs for the Future

www.jff.org

- *Driving Innovation: How Six States Are Organizing to Improve Outcomes in Developmental Education
The DEI Self-Assessment Tool*
- *The Developmental Education Initiative: State Policy Framework & Strategy*
- *Scaling and Sustaining: State Progress on Developing Good Processes, People, Policies in the Developmental Education Initiative*
- *The DEI Self-Assessment Tool*





MDRC

www.mdrc.org

- *Scaling Up Is Hard to Do: Progress and Challenges During the First Year of the Achieving the Dream Developmental Education Initiative*





MORE INFORMATION

Download event materials and learn more at
www.PostsecondaryResearch.org

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