Summary of Best Practices in Basic Skills
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Faculty Success
Individual colleges have a wide range of best practices in basic skills that they can draw from to improve their basic skills offerings. First, faculty need to be recognized as a key part of the basic skills curriculum and its implementation. Faculty development addressing basic skills is a key component for student success. Professional development activities are more effective when conducted by faculty and staff from within the college who are already familiar with its structure, offerings, and culture. As a result of the large proportion of adjunct and other part time faculty involved in professional development, professional development need not be limited to full time faculty, and all faculty and academic staff should feel their participation at the college matters. In fact, colleges can benefit from allowing adjuncts greater input in all facets of college life. Faculty support can further be bolstered through the creation of Faculty Success Centers, Faculty Inquiry Groups, and Faculty Inquiry Networks.

Student Success
Various institutional changes can help benefit student success in developmental education classes. Tying participation in such classes to the use of student success centers or support services has been proven to be beneficial not only in improving student success within that course but also increasing the ability of students to attain assistance in classes not requiring the use of support services later on. Faculty should be acquainted with student support services and may benefit from including a presentation of those services at the start of their course each and every term. Students should be encouraged to be enrolled in a program full time and to work towards program completion. Greater use of technology can also benefit students both in and outside the classroom by providing additional information and support whenever it might be needed. Tutoring and supplemental instruction are also effective when implemented in a structured format attached to course requirements. Supplemental instruction can also address other learning styles not best accommodated within a traditional lecture format.

Assessment
Assessment should be a mandatory part of the matriculation process, however should not be limited to a single high-stakes exam. Assessment into courses should include a number of factors including high school background, any additional status during high school, diagnostics, and other holistic tools. Literature also suggests that while assessment shall be mandatory, the high-stakes dimension could be reduced by allowing students to eventually test up after initial placement to speed their process through developmental education should an improper placement be made. Colleges also need to take the needs of those with learning disabilities into more consideration during the assessment process. Of current statewide approved assessments, ACT’s COMPASS is the best option but still presents numerous in how to conduct assessment within our community colleges. Ultimately, colleges should work to streamline assessment between institutions, work to institute a common ESL assessment at a bare minimum, and create concordance between other assessments for the purpose of measuring equivalencies.
Data
Data collection and institutional research plays a key role in the implementation of basic skills programs. In fact, some colleges lack the robust institutional research offices recognized as a best practice in developmental education. Data collection should not just be limited to statistics that describe, but should also play a role in basic skills program evaluation. Data needs to be utilized to find which programs success and which programs fail to further implementation of basic skills best practices across the community college system. Numerous articles suggest the introduction of scorecards utilizing standardized formats and common datasets to make information about community college programs transparent to the public, legislators, and other colleges. Common performance benchmarks can help contextualize the information that datasets provide and allow users to understand if programs meet, exceed, or fail to meet the benchmarks.

Classroom Pedagogy and Curriculum
Literature notes the importance of a student centered classroom environment. More interaction benefits students and can be achieved by having students work in small group sizes. Problem-based learning is also a potential methodology that will benefit students for college-level classes by instilling and improving upon critical thinking skills. Contextualization also remains a beneficial option so long as the course remains academic in nature. Particularly these efforts are most beneficial in courses with high failure rates. Acceleration and modularization are also being utilized throughout the country in different fashions and benefits may exist in radically altering the course plan for developmental education. Mainstreaming into college-level classes with additional developmental education level support sections also provides an additional possibility and would be the quickest option to get students into college level courses if utilized.

K-12 Integration
Community colleges should note the importance of working with K-12 school systems. Colleges and prospective students can benefit from partnering with local high schools to bring programming such as assessment testing and orientation components to the high school campuses so students know what to expect when arriving at college. Colleges should work to align themselves onto the Common Core State Standards to have a greater understanding of the environment that newly matriculating students are coming from. Colleges will also benefit from early assessment to determine if students meet the basic skills requirements to enroll in college-level courses, in a format similar to that of the CalState’s EAP optionally administered to 11th graders. An option with more mixed results, but still somewhat favorable, is the introduction of pre-college summer bridge and pre-orientation programs focusing on developmental education, allowing students to get ahead before the normal term.