**Workforce 3One**

**Transcript of Webinar**

**Acceleration Strategies Virtual Institute**

**Accelerating On-Ramps for Underprepared Learners**

**New Models for Developmental Education and Adult Basic Education**

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BRIAN KEATING: Welcome everyone to the Acceleration Strategies Virtual Institute, accelerating on-ramps for unprepared learners, new models for developmental education and adult basic education, part of the TAACCCT Learning Network. And to kick things off I'm going to turn things over to Samantha Brown from the Department of Labor. Samantha, take it away.

SAMANTHA BROWN: Thank you, Brian. Welcome to today's webinar. This is the first of three webinars of this virtual institute, and the topics of discussion during the virtual institute are in response to feedback from TAACCCT grantees on items that you want more information about. So we hope that this series will be helpful to you.

First, I want to bring your attention to the attachments at the bottom of your screen. There's a document there which provides helpful information about TA resources that are provided to all TAACCCT grantees. Also wanted to mention a reminder that the deadline for submitting a proposal for a session at the TAACCCT convening in February of 2016 is December 4th. We have already gotten some great proposals and look forward to seeing even more.

Now, I would like to introduce our moderator for today's webinar, Barbara Endel, senior program director at Jobs for the Future, and our presenters, Jon Kerr, director of basic education for adults from the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, Martha Claire Drysdale, director of career and technical adult education from the Mississippi Delta Community College, and Lara Couturier, director of postsecondary state policy at Jobs for the Future and Marilyn Smith, grants coordinator for Colorado Community College System. So now, I will hand it over to Barbara.

BARBARA ENDEL: Terrific. Thank you, Samantha. And again, I'd like to extend my welcome to everyone. I'm Barbara Endel, senior director at Jobs for the Future and is extraordinarily excited to be with you today. We've got a terrific lineup of speakers and good content. We expect lots of great questions from you. So we structured, as Samantha just mentioned, this virtual institute to essentially accommodate what we thought would be two elements of the work.

So we have Jon Kerr and Martha Claire Drysdale will be joining me in a session around adult basic education and adult education, and then Lara Couturier, my colleague, together with Marilyn Smith will be in a breakout with you around adult developmental education for those that might require essentially more in depth information there. So we are just really, really excited, and thank you, speakers, for joining us today.

So let me tell you a little bit about today's agenda, and I'm going to set the context here for us and take just a few minutes to do that before we get into our two exciting breakout sessions. So we've already gone through a lot of the welcome and the introductions. And in just a moment I'll be setting up a context and telling you a little bit about what problems we're trying to solve and work that way. I'd like to provide an overview of the acceleration strategies and the things that we're trying to work with there.

And then after that point we will go into breakout groups, our 101 and then our deep dive. We'll spend about an hour there so you have lots of time for our speakers to present the great work that they're doing and then for you to ask about your challenges, ask questions, share with us the good work that you're doing. We'll take time to do that, and then we'll head back with about 15 minutes to go in the institute and wrap it up.

We'll present some takeaways and what we heard in our sessions and then ask our presenters where the field is heading and get their great viewpoints around that one. And then if you haven't already done this, the resources that have been assimilated for you and accumulated are just awesome, and so you should take a look in the files that we put together. I think you'll find some really great resources.

MR. KEATING: And those files are available on the resources page where you registered for the event. I'm posting a link in the chat window.

MS. ENDEL: Great. Thank you, Brian. So to place the context a little bit, here is the description for today's virtual institute. So we'll be focusing on effective on-ramps for underprepared students and really amplifying and highlighting the key strategies that you are using as part of your TAACCCT work and really trying to parse and dissect what are some of the most effective models.

What are the most effective elements for those models? What's causing you challenges? What are causing you to really accelerate your work? And so we're excited to kind of dive into this issue. This is the first of a three-part series, and so remember if you also want to sign up for the other two, we'd love to have you engaged in that as well.

So let's set the table just a little bit with this work. So essentially, we know that traditional practices in both adult and developmental education haven't really worked all that well for students.

And our traditional approach where we required these linear sequences, we're so excited that the TAACCCT investments and the work and the strategies that so many of you have been undertaking with your work has essentially been trying to get past or break through these traditional approaches, which requires in many ways for students to take semesters long of remedial courses or, for example, in the work Jon and I are leading, why do we need to require students to have their GED or high school credential before entering college?

And then there could be up to four different subjects with math, English, reading, ESL, etc. And what – it will be so exciting to hear from Martha Claire and Marilyn about how do we get past all these – what we're calling these moldable exit points. And terrific research from Community College Research Center is amplifying that the more exit points you have, the more likely you are to lose students through those exit points. So how do we get students in and through faster? What might be the models to help or shore up some things that you're doing?

So if we say to ourselves, our traditional approach isn't working all that well, what can we be doing differently, then you're in the right place. Going to be a great roughly a little over an hour that we can be talking about these terrific issues.

So the problem we're trying to solve here is that our results within our existing moldable level of adult ed and developmental ed systems, we just don't think are ever going to be enough. We've got to be able to restructure both curricula and support services and things to eliminate the exit points where we lose students.

So this whole idea that we must accelerate is a driving theme across the institutes, this one today plus in the next few weeks, and how can we present some great material for you to contemplate and help strengthen the strategies you're already putting in place?

So what did we learn from the field? This is just a really high level, top level approach here that the traditional stand-alone developmental ed and adult ed represent a significant barrier to completion of a certificate or a degree. Research is really showing in the south that students need to be enabled to – that they need to earn these in-demand credentials, and it does require really rethinking both or adult basic education and developmental education ways so that students are able to have a clearly defined path toward their guided pathway.

And so we know that stand-alone programs – we all know that national data; right? Stand-alone programs essentially – when they're connected, things are better I think is the point we're trying to get to. So certainly with these innovative interventions that allow students to co-enroll, we'll be talking about those today and study – and essentially how that's happening, demonstrating very strong evidence of effectiveness.

So there's some exciting work that you're both driving with the work you're doing with your TAACCCT grants and that other people are doing across the country. So here are a few points I'd like to make around how this work is shaping up.

So first of all, creating sequential credentials leading to degrees rather than an all-or-nothing approach is really gathering a lot of steam I think in the field and is something that people are taking on more and more.

Secondly, using diagnostic assessments to create individualized competency-based instruction that gives students what they need when they need it. We know there's a real movement in the country too to consider how we get students both placed in a better way and how do we make sure that they know what they need to know before moving forward.

Third, delivering the short-term intensive learning programs that enable adults to make rapid progress and increase persistence. That's a key point as well with many people trying that, and then obviously contextualizing the course content with an occupational focus so that, essentially, students are able to get a deeper understanding of both the foundational learning like math, English, et cetera that relates to their program of study or their pathway. And contextualizing the course content rather than having it be a stand-alone delivery in adult ed or dev ed is something also many people are experimenting with.

I'd like to present to you – it looks kind of colorful; right – this cool rainbow, if you will, of acceleration strategies, and though we're going to be focusing primarily on a few of the models today, I'd like to make sure that you have the sense around what's happening with acceleration strategies nationally and with the research base that's happening there.

So obviously, if we start in the bottom left-hand corner with co-enrollment models, a lot of folks, including Jobs for the Future, Complete College America, I-BEST in Washington State, the work happening in Colorado, even the work happening with early college high school, this idea that you can actually do two things at once is breaking a lot of barriers, helping students get where they need to go further and faster.

So for example, what Jon will be talking about and Martha Claire is how students are able to get started on their program of study and at the same time with their foundational learning happening and there's not these long sequences, knowing that time is the enemy for students.

Then if we look up at that colorful really fun green box around modularized and self-paced instruction, this is something that has largely been a curricular reform. However, it's gaining a lot of steam with work happening across the country, and it's being tailored to help understand and know student's deficiencies, whether it's self-paced or not. And again, there's a lot of dependency here on a comprehensive diagnostic assessment.

But one of the most important modularized areas that has gained a lot of attention over time is what's called the emporium model, first developed at Virginia Tech and then largely supported by Pearson Education with programs such as My Math Lab. This is permitting students to actually show what they know first and then make their way through their instruction through math, et cetera, in an accelerated way that is self-paced. That will be part – a little bit a part of our competency-based virtual institute, the last one coming up in December.

Next, if we looked at accelerated and stretch courses, this again is something a lot of people call fast track courses where it's permitting students and the content to be delivered either in courses that are less than the 16-week semester or, if there are basically academic content that students are having a hard time mastering, the stretch course's concept is basically permitting colleges with their curricular reforms to elongate it across two semesters.

And it's largely a remedial avoidance strategy permitting students to move, even though it's more slowly, through academic content that they may find more difficult initially. And while that may seem counterintuitive to where we're trying to go with acceleration, it really is a way to get students into credit courses, college courses first without spending a lot of time in adult ed or dev ed, essentially. And we can talk a little bit more about that in the sessions, if you'd like to know.

Next is our competency-based education models, and again, there are currently over 300 postsecondary institutions experimenting with this. Competency-based models are delivering content without prescribing seat time and represents, if you ask me, one of the most promising reforms and most exciting reforms to date.

We'll be essentially learning more about competency-based models in our third series coming up in December. So I won't steal anyone's thunder right now, but it's one you'll want to log in to. We've got some terrific tech colleges, including Sinclair and Austin and Edmonds, presenting their work that has just really important implications for all of us across the country.

The next one is assessment test prep and retesting opportunities, and I think we're seeing a lot more of this happening nationally. I think Lara Couturier, if I was sitting next to you, you'd be shaking your head yes.

Basically, we know that students may not be getting a lot of prep time with undertaking their placement tests, and with boot camps or some brush up, sample test questions, even ahead of time, actually help with that, if you will, rust removal, especially around math, to get students in the test mode gear and get them rethinking about it and the test preparation really thinking about it.

The differentiated math pathways concept is something that I know Jenny and others may want to spend some time talking about after these series are over because it's – there's a lot of terrific work representing some of this, and we'll be hearing, especially in our dev ed session today from Marilyn who in the Colorado model has been doing some terrific work. But here what this concept is all about is that really looking toward and saying that essentially students on many campuses, that college algebra is considered the default entry level or gateway, if you will, math course for most majors.

But there's a growing consensus that college algebra is only relevant for programs of study that require pre-calculus or calculus. And so the idea here is to actually math up the math courses that make the most sense for your program of study, and there are many campuses across the country that are experimenting with, for example, creating a STEM transfer where you may want to have college algebra and a transfer gateway math course pathway.

The two leaders of this work right now are called New Mathways Program out of the Dana Center at University of Texas at Austin called New Mathways and also work happening with the community college pathways program funded by the Carnegie Foundation for the advancement of teaching. Both of these represent significant departures from the way we've been thinking about math and can help accelerate students' learning.

Next, with these transitional courses and dual enrollment, this is a little bit like what we talked about with co-enrollment models, especially around high school where students could take courses before coming. But I love this idea on transitional courses where they're supplements to a college-ready curriculum, and they're usually offered in high school students' junior or senior year.

And they're typically presented for students who are assessed as being under-prepared and could include entry-level credit-bearing college courses. And there are several states doing this work, including those served by the Southern Regional Education Board who are really retooling their curriculum to include these readiness courses, especially, as I mentioned, at the college – or at the high school level.

And then lastly before we move on is the – this sense around diagnostic assessments and multiple measures that I mentioned a little bit at the beginning where campuses across the country are not relying as much as they used to on competence or ACCUPLACER or other standardized normative test scores but are instead thinking of more innovative ways to get and understand what a student knows and can understand more than just a high stakes placement test. So for example, many campuses are considering high school GPA, if they have taken an ACT or an SAT test prior, and even this idea about being more self-directed.

Many campuses are including an interview with students who can talk about how prepared or not they would feel for the courses that are being advised after their placement test. So we're really deemphasizing this use of a single cut score and trying to develop better standards for interpreting multiple measures and student readiness.

So I'm going to stop there on this slide, but I'm just going to – I hope this has opened your eyes that there are many different ways to include acceleration strategies. And for today's virtual institute we'll be basically thinking about some of these elements but looking in context how a place like Washington State or in Mississippi or in Colorado has tackled these issues.

And I wanted to just very briefly talk about an important set of strategies happening in California as well with a program called Community Colleges Statewide or the CAP project. And this is an acceleration project that's utilizing many of the strategies that I just outlined before. So the commitment to really undertaking this idea of acceleration is something that's being driven in many different levels. So we're so excited to hear more from our presenters and your work about how you're getting to your acceleration and the strategies that you're using.

So one last thing here. In terms of looking at the research across the field, there tends to be some elements that we feel are really important, and these are successful model characteristics. So number one is this early selection of a program of study.

Number two, we talked about co-enrollment and contextualization. This alignment and seamless credit transition connecting pieces of the college together so that students don't waste time and money is another one that is cross – cutting across this work. Obviously, clearly articulated and these guided pathways from short-term to longer-term, financial barrier remover, and then these student supports.

So it's going to be exciting, I think, the work you're doing in your breakouts. And I know I've taken a little bit more time than I planned. So I'd like to work with Brian now to have us think about go ahead and breaking out and having a great time talking about these wonderful acceleration strategies.

(Main room audio break.)

MR. KEATING: All right. Welcome back, everyone. Thanks for participating today in the subconference. Appreciate everyone's participation today. I want to go ahead and invite our presenters here to give us a debrief of what we learned quickly in today's event. Just give me one sec to pull that up here. Let's see.

All right. Well, tell you what. We're going to go back to presentation mode here, and we're going to go ahead and pull up the notes or the feedback from what happens and we'd love to get your ideas about that. So I know we had two breakout rooms. Thanks to everyone who participated. I really enjoyed being in the breakout room I was in. So we're going to go ahead and bring up the notes for each room. We're just go ahead and get folks to give us an open-ended feedback. So we'll start with Barbara with the adult basic education room.

MS. ENDEL: Terrific. Yes. Thanks, Brian. So this is Barbara Endel once again, and I moderated a terrific session with new models for adult basic education. And because we're pretty close to time, I'll just very briefly talk about what I thought were the three key takeaways for me, and then I'll ask Lara Couturier, my colleague, to give us a quick rundown on your breakout.

So number one, I think, key takeaway here is that there's evidence-based from Washington State that actually engaging students from even approximately the grade equivalency of third grade and beyond, all of the co-enrollment models are possible with even on-ramps through a baccalaureate into this amazing set of pathways that you can help engage students and co-enroll them along the way. And so really cascading this idea of co-enrollment from almost start to finish in the student's career is so amazing.

Number two, co-enrollment models pay off. Jon presented very compelling evidence from a return on investment study that students who are engaged in these co-enrollment models in I-BEST, it does pay off.

And then lastly, Martha Claire presented a wonderful video and some – and really some terrific models where they've identified career technical programs and talked a lot about how barrier reduction and peers and mentors, that sort of work, and the team teaching has resulted in good success at Mississippi Delta.

So with that, Lara, I'll turn it over to you. What were your takeaways?

LARA COUTURIER: Thank you, Barbara. Well, first of all, just want to thank Marilyn for a really compelling PowerPoint and want to thank all of our really engaged participants who asked questions throughout, and nobody teased me for the typing I was doing on the screen that probably was full of typos. So thank you for that.

My three big takeaways on model, Barbara, here first was Marilyn made a really nice point that the legislature was going to take action in Colorado. They were looking at student outcomes in dev ed and they weren't happy. And so the system leadership proactively tried to get out in front of that, and they said, look. Let us have some time here. We're going to set up a taskforce, and we're going to tackle it ourselves.

And I actually copied down Marilyn's words because she said it so nicely. She said, "This allowed the people who do the work in Colorado to come up with solutions that worked for them." And so the faculty designs the curriculum. The faculty designs a model. It's not something that was done to them, which I thought was some really – some nice framing, and it's clear that the faculty leadership of the work really came across.

There were a few key things that they did in the dev ed redesign. They switched their mentor model to placing students in the highest level for which they were prepared instead of the lowest level for which they were prepared. They instituted an advising session before students take a placement test, which was something that garnered a lot of interest from our friends in the breakout room.

They make sure that students are advised of the importance of the placement test and the fact that this really is going to determine a trajectory for their future. They integrated reading and writing under the dev ed redesign, and they created differentiated math pathways so that they now have different math options available to students depending upon which program they're looking at.

And the last big point that Marilyn made is that all of this is a work in progress. They are passionate about this work, which means that they're not resting. They know that there are still some things they need to fix. They're paying close attention to the data.

They are disaggregating the data and being very honest about this isn't working perfectly for all student groups, and they're going back to investigate why and getting into some really interesting cultural sensitivity training, I guess would be one way I might describe what Marilyn was talking about. So they're really taking the conversation to the next level, which I think is terrific. So I'll stop there.

MS. ENDEL: Wonderful. Thanks, Lara. I think just for the sake of time, we're going to do what's called a real quick popcorn. In 10 seconds or less if our presenters can do it, where do you think this field is heading? So Jon, can we start with you? I know you're quick on your feet?

JON KERR: Well, I would say that we're headed towards really implementing comprehensive guided pathways that every step, no matter what level, even at our lowest level, count towards a diploma or certificate or degree. And that acceleration is built in to making sure that all courses – that basic skills and dev ed are never taught in isolation but in a contextual – in contextualization that makes sense to the student's next step.

MS. ENDEL: Great. Martha Claire, where do you think the field is heading?

MARTHA CLAIRE DRYSDALE: I'm going to take a little different approach. I'm going to say that I think it's headed to really helping legislature understand that this population of students has been long overlooked, the adult education population, and they are a huge contributor to economic development. And I think that as we help them understand that, then the money will be there to really fully implement this, which will be hugely successful, I think, across the country.

MS. ENDEL: Terrific. Thank you. And, Marilyn, what do you think?

MARILYN SMITH: Well, I think there's two major trends. One is that we always need to be intentional in what we do from the choices of how we – how – what we do in our classroom with the time we have with students to pathways so that they know why they're taking a class, what it means to them, and how it's connected to their goal of getting a degree, a job, what they want to do with their life. Everything has to be intentional. It can't be left to chance. We must be looking and providing clear connections for our students between what we do and what happens to them, and that instruction needs to be correct, that if we have dev ed, if a student has things that they need to remediate, that everything tells us that the best way to do that is at the same time that you are doing the college level work.

MS. ENDEL: Terrific. And then, Lara Couturier – Dr. Couturier, you are such a national expert as well. Would you mind piping in with your quick answer before we wrap up?

MS. COUTURIER: Setting me up for failure there, Barbara. Thank you.

MS. ENDEL: No. No. No. No. No. No. No. Go ahead.

MS. COUTURIER: Doesn't get – no. I'm kidding.

MS. ENDEL: It's going to be brilliant like it always is.

MS. COUTURIER: I think everything we heard today, it comes back around to that this is really hard work, and those of us that have lived in it have always known that it's hard work and that there's no simple solution. But a lot of easy things have been tried, and I've been starting to say more and more we've learned the hard way that the easy work doesn't work.

And it takes this kind of hard work. It takes these – (inaudible) – that are looking at everything the students need from the career advising to the wraparound student support to the prerequisite before. It takes the whole holistic approach.

MS. ENDEL: Terrific. Thank you. So I want to, as your moderator – again, this is Barbara. I'd like to thank Department of Labor and also Brian and Eric and the technical team at Maher & Maher. You guys are awesome. You rock. And to Jenny Freeman, whose leadership around this technical assistance work is so important to the colleges and to the work nationally. So thanks on behalf of all of us, and thanks – thank all of you for being part of this webinar.

So any kind of last things, Brian, before we call it a day?

(END)