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## Jordan Ford

Co-requisite remediation continues to accelerate student progress in college by providing learners with access to college-level English and math classes with supplemental support in lieu of solely offering developmental education coursework. In this People in the Reform publication, we feature Jordan Ford's path through co-requisite English at Wright State University, present outcomes from research on co-requisite English, and share how this structure produced positive results for Jordan even before the fall semester of her first year of college.

### Personal Story

After graduating from high school in 2019, Jordan matriculated to Wright State University (WSU) in Dayton, Ohio where she plans to major in Political Science and minor in African and African American studies. During Summer 2019, Jordan participated in WSU's Raider Academy, a summer program that gives incoming students a jumpstart to life in college by providing summer coursework, support to complete an academic success plan, and opportunities for social engagement with other students. When Jordan joined the academy, her advisor suggested that she take a co-requisite English course: a graded college-level English class paired with a pass/fail developmental English class (Jordan refers to this as "the DEV course"); the same instructor taught both classes. Different from what Jordan expected in a college-level English class, the 25-person course consisted of high school, freshman, and graduate students. Only 12 students were enrolled in the DEV course.

### Policy-Related Overview

Part of the developmental education reform movement, co-requisite remediation was designed to improve the rates at which college students enter and successfully complete gateway math and English courses. Instead of the traditional developmental model which provides standalone, non-credit courses, the co-requisite structure pairs college-level coursework with developmental classes; the latter provide "just-in-time" remediation to support the material students are learning in the college-level course. The Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) at the Community College of Baltimore County, based on the co-requisite structure, was designed to improve the rate at which students assessed as "academically unprepared" complete college-level English courses. Authors of a 2012 study on this model compared outcomes from students who were mainstreamed into an English 101 course paired with the ALP course with learners who took the highest-level developmental writing course alone. Findings show that students in the co-requisite model were 31.3 percentage points "more likely to complete English 101" (Soo, Kopko, Jenkins, & Jagger, 2012)—college-level English—within one year. In a related study, authors also found that the ALP model is more cost effective for learners who take the English courses required for an associate degree (Jenkins, Speroni, Belfield, Jaggars, & Edgecombe, 2010).

The benefits of co-requisite English courses prompt questions about the factors that contribute to their effectiveness. My conversation with Jordan revealed some of the ways this course structure improved her academic experience. For instance, when reflecting on her behaviors in class before and after the course, Jordan shared that she was “standoffish” and “shy, yet outgoing” early in our conversation and then shared that she soon became “confident in [her] abilities” and “charismatic.” These changes in her perspective prompted me to ask her about the types of classroom engagement and assignments that encouraged the shift. Jordan responded by talking about one of the differences between the college-level course and the DEV course—class size—and how this affected her participation. Reflecting on her time in the 25-person course, she said “I didn’t feel like I could raise my hand and ask a question.” However, in the smaller DEV course, she raised her hand and communicated with the instructor differently. As she noted, “With the DEV [class], I felt like I had more one-on-one time.” She also talked about her instructor’s relational practices and their impact on her: “When I had questions, [my instructor] would actually come around her desk, and sit with me, and talk with me, and show me what I need to do...It really helped because I never had a teacher who really sat down and talked to me... She would be patient with me. That’s what I appreciated the most...It felt like a one-on-one connection with my teacher.”

In addition to employing effective relational practices, Jordan’s instructor supported her academic success by creating meaningful assignments and teaching life skills in the DEV course. She explained, “We had like a 5,000-word essay that we had to finish by the end of the summer...[and] it was the hardest thing I’ve ever done.” For this assignment, Jordan decided to focus on a topic that was important to her: the effects of the Black Lives Matter movement. Although she was passionate about the topic, she admitted that writing a 5,000-word essay challenged her in part because it required that she address her procrastination skills and create a structure that would help her complete the assignment on time. Her instructor helped in two ways: 1) by providing time management skills and 2) discussing on-campus resources that could support learner success. Along with providing strategies for time management, her instructor invited a representative from the writing center to share about their offerings. Jordan discussed the ways she used the center’s resources: “I would go there, get help, and have people read over [my paper], fix it, [and] revise it.” Reflecting on contributions from her instructor and the tutors at the writing center she said, “I had a lot of help systems.” By the end of the summer, Jordan earned an A in the college-level class and passed the DEV course.

Looking ahead to life after college, Jordan intends to attend Howard University’s law school in Washington, D.C., practice sports management law, and ultimately, open her own law firm where she can support the success of up-and-coming lawyers.

## References

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