Why this word "Acceleration"?

There is currency—both intellectual and temporal—around the word acceleration right now. We are responding to that because we think there is an opportunity for real change here. Nobody has cornered the market on what acceleration truly means. Our response has been to move into this vacuum by exploring and characterizing the word in a way more akin to deep learning that matters, a way that stretches across the disciplines. Acceleration is a prompt to question our curriculum and all the learning assumptions it implies, and even further to seriously question the role and the goal of community college education within our democracy. We are defining the word, and the work, in a way that we think is most true, most rich, and so that it can be most of service to educators on the ground.

One way acceleration has been talked about is as shortening of sequences, moving students more quickly to transfer. Shortening sequences matters in our developmental education areas like English, Math and ESL. But this begs the question HOW this might happen. Structure is only part of the equation. How in the world can we be faster and shorter with the same students who are not making it now and expect better outcomes? This is a real question.

Most faculty assume that we are now expected to simply go faster, rush, and push students through the exact same material but now at breakneck speed. First of all, that probably isn’t doable; when teachers feel this, they are resistant. It isn’t what we mean by acceleration anyway. Acceleration is more about entering the storm where hundreds of thousands of students are failing and failing away and asking ourselves what is possible, what is most effective, and what is most responsive to our students at this time and place. The Acceleration in Context Initiative is an opportunity for faculty to rethink and redesign curriculum and pedagogy. It’s an opportunity to look at how our students learn—and how we teach—in fresh ways. Acceleration is more about deep engagement in relevant learning experiences that subsume the learning of specific skills or vocabulary, while respecting and leveraging student capacity. One result of approaches like this is that students do move more quickly through redesigned sequences, and they are more likely to stay on the path to completion and transfer.

No curriculum, approach or practice will work if faculty are not trusted locally to make sense of teaching and learning for themselves. Acceleration in Context encourages a very lively and creative professional development space, where faculty riff and design around many words, many theories, much data and informative research. Acceleration is a word du jour, and paying attention to it in an open and creative, even irreverent manner positions us faculty to both do something significant while not being had by the fad.

This Initiative is supported by the Walter S Johnson Foundation. Contact us at: 25555 Hesperian Blvd, Hayward CA 94545. Phone: 510.913.1850 Email: tdewitt@chabotcollege.edu, smfarland@chabotcollege.edu
13 ACCELERATION MODELS

1) Shortened sequence model: Basic Skills pathway that integrates several existing levels and allows students a shorter pathway to transfer level courses.

2) Dual Purpose Classroom model: Basic Skills course that gives students opportunity to earn transfer credit.

3) Stretch model: Students can take 2 semesters to earn transfer credit for a course. If it does take 2 semesters, they can still get college credit for the first semester. (For ex. they can get GE or Humanities credit.)

4) Compressed model: semester's course squeezed into less time (i.e. summer school).

5) Compressed/Stacked model: semester's course squeezed into less time (like summer school), followed by next course in sequence in same semester.

6) Self-paced modular model: learning broken into modules; students move at own pace; students may be able to earn more than one course credit in a semester. “Pay once/Earn twice”.

7) Learning Community model: Students work in cohorts; curriculum can be integrated and classes packaged; frequently this model builds in support services.

8) CTE model: course or series of courses that contextualize Basic Skills into the technical instruction.

9) Transfer support model: transfer course combined with learning support (i.e. Supplemental Instruction) into which Basic Skills students are directly placed.

10) Integrated Redesign: Basic Skills and discrete knowledge subsumed inside deeper learning. Frequently, different disciplines are combined.

11) Bridge model: high-intensity short term program; can better prepare students to take placement exam and/or to take Basic Skills course.

12) High Touch and Intrusive Counseling model: College creates many points of contact with student throughout the semester.

13) Intensive, Holistic Orientation model: students are readied to navigate the whole institution, including preparing for assessment, being introduced to studenting skills, developing awareness of support services.
**Acceleration Model Evaluation Tool**

When considering an Acceleration Model, it is valuable to compare it to the status quo in order to determine the model’s potential for bringing effective change to an institution. We have developed a simple tool that helps you do that. Consider your model in 4 categories. For each category you can award one point for a positive impact, subtract one point for a negative impact, or leave it at zero if there is no change. The goal of this tool is to develop a first snapshot of the model. (Of course the devil is in the details and we have other tools that account for that.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>+1</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>-1</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time to Transfer</td>
<td>Decrease</td>
<td>No Change</td>
<td>Increase</td>
<td>??</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student persistence and success</td>
<td>Increase</td>
<td>No Impact</td>
<td>Decrease</td>
<td>??</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost Implications</td>
<td>Save $$</td>
<td>No Savings</td>
<td>Cost $$</td>
<td>??</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation</td>
<td>Easy</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Difficult</td>
<td>??</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Once you create this snapshot you can evaluate these categories in relationship to each other. For example, imagine you are considering a model that will be very difficult to implement, but which will save millions of dollars over the next ten years. If you can make the case for the cost savings, you may very well be able to garner institutional support that makes implementation less difficult.

Depending on the model you are considering, you may reasonably feel that you don’t know HOW to score a particular category. For example, you may have heard mixed results about how learning communities impact student success. For those situations you can put “Not Sure.” This is not necessarily a cause for alarm though. Any area you are not sure about is actually a prime area to direct your assessment efforts. AIC works with teams to frontload inquiry and assessment into design and implementation.
Acceleration Koans

A. Acceleration ramps it up, and keeps it dancing; it's a simulation of the bigger dance.
B. Acceleration is full of ironies and here is one: The teacher must slow down for the student to speed up. And yet, speed in itself is not the whole story. Getting there at all is. And acceleration makes that more likely.
C. Acceleration creates enough momentum in students to glide over the speed bumps that thwart learning.
D. Acceleration is playful, and can include looking at the structures of things, ruminating about patterns, developing solutions for problems that the students themselves might create.
E. Acceleration is about: Practice it, then do it again, practice. Try it this way, try it that way, play, experiment; trying, competing, wrestling with raw material.
F. Acceleration builds on the evidencing of ability we see in programs and classrooms around the state.
G. Acceleration is a low stakes experience in a high stakes context, both in terms of the identity of the learner and in terms of making meaning that matters.
H. Acceleration should be designed to be a stress incubator; students are stressed to begin with. Our job is to teach students how to use stress, not be abused by it.
I. Acceleration not only trusts the student, but also demands and expects they can meet high expectations.
J. Acceleration is gracious.
K. Acceleration is an invitation to success.
L. Acceleration removes the likelihood that students don't measure up intellectually, so students can get to what really matters, which is learning how to think. Students can safely not get it.
M. Acceleration leads to many happy endings and a few broken hearts.
N. We need to slow down to accelerate. When teachers are the only ones moving fast, that is not acceleration.

O. She who hesitates is lost—she who accelerates is found—by herself, fellow students and her teacher.

P. The student mind asked to accelerate is a stronger mind; it develops savvy about making choices.

Q. Students can accelerate by acting in concert; the student comes into full flower in groups.

R. Teaching is not about information. It's about having an honest intellectual relationship with your students. It is the argument itself that gives the truth its context, and determines what is really being said and meant. (From “Lockhart’s Lament”)

S. Acceleration lays bare a moralizing that is part of the problem of how we teach Basic Skills students.

T. Teachers who can bring their love and passion for their subject into the classroom accelerate their students.

U. When students can learn without shame and fear they are ready to accelerate.

V. There are no best practices; there are best people.

W. Acceleration ignites a development arc.

X. Acceleration thinks of learning as stirring, seasoning, simmering and heating up, ah delicious!

Y. Things are not learned in isolation, but in context and juxtaposition, a kind of layering that can provide a teacher some calm when he is worried that they don’t get it.

Z. You don’t come to be educated if you are not ready to be unsettled, unnerved and shaken up and unhoused. That's what it means to muster the courage to think critically against the grain to shatter conformity, complacency and especially cowardice. (Cornel West)
"Love isn't worth much if it doesn't matter to anyone. I mean if others aren't better for it."

One of my students said this about a decade ago when we were trying to make sense of James Baldwin's, *The Fire Next Time*. I blurted, "Ouch! What a standard! You just put Hallmark out of business." Love that matters? Think of your parents, siblings, children, friends. Does your love of them matter? How then does it matter? Now ask the same questions about your students. Should we even ask such questions, hold such a standard, when it comes to our students?

The professional standard I want to refer to here is gauged at the level of one individual teacher and one individual student at a time. Think of one of your colleagues down the hall. Recall a time when she was really showing care to a student, or a time he was really helping a student to succeed. *Really Helping*. They were almost lost in the effort, their voice traveling further down the hall than they even knew. They were leaning forward in their seat, half about to come out of it even. Mark this down as a reference point—and call it love. Or close your eyes and scan your last classroom or the students who visited your office last week and call out where love is. Mark it down.

To overgeneralize about capitalist culture: it tends to make our public interactions, especially inside of institutions and marketplaces, presumptuous and cold-blooded, shaped by commodification. Learning in our institutions often feels similar to this—loveless. Meanwhile we teachers purport that learning, unlike transactions in the marketplace, can’t be merely bought. When we say this we refer to the cognitive side of learning. What is being explored in many FIN and Umoja teams is that the cognitive and the affective domains are inextricably intertwined when learning is happening. What I want to suggest is that we need to begin to "mark down" the affective experience of our students in a way that it stands apart from the typical experience of consumer culture.

Our 2.4 million community college students respond to love and trust. Within the FIN and Umoja Community work we have had the chance to ask hundreds of students about their learning experiences and again and again they say, "That teacher really cared about us." The students are so generous and direct when they talk about a teacher who cares; they most often don’t use "me", they say "us." How beautiful it is to open arms wide and say "us." They may even call the classroom a "family." Feeling loved and respected opens the gate to thinking, trying, trusting, maybe even teaching. And this love flows not only from teacher to student, but from student to teacher and student to student. The voice here is soft, sweet-heartish because teaching and learning are so vulnerable, so much about relationship.

I was talking with a brilliant teacher the other day. She said things were going very well in her class, the students were learning, the success rates were high; she was on the whole feeling good about what her C students knew and could demonstrate that suggested potential success in their next course. But she was concerned about what she characterized as a big group of the students who were "not really engaged," didn't seem to care about the subject and who were "polite at best." Polite with little affect, distant in other words. We talked through what to do and she concluded that there was "no choice but to close the distance." I didn’t get into the love thing with her at that moment. Even with a woman whom I respect so much and feel comfortable with, love still felt foreign to bring up. (over)
Perhaps it would have been useful to interject, as a prompt, a reference point for how she might close the distance.

How do we interject love right smack in the middle of our discussion of pedagogy and practice, our dialogue of standards and outcomes, our attempts at scalability and replicability? How do we interject love without it being an embarrassment or a non sequitur? I am not certain. But from our experiences in FIN and the Umoja Community over the last several years it is abundantly evident that love, and all the practices and pedagogies that can be traced to it, is fundamental to improving basic skills outcomes and increasing success and retention.

Being loved is not clamoring for your students’ affection; what Toni Morrison refers to as “clamoring for a kiss” at the end of Beloved—students don’t tend to respect clamorers. Rather, being loved is knowing that learning is interdependent, a kind of dance over an open space—where the instructor is held up by the students, held up as they fall. Learning that is vital, no matter the subject, is a kind of falling into the space between student and teacher, between the discipline the instructor loves and the students’ attempt to gain entry into it, and between academic culture and the sheer weight of the real world, with all its instant messaging.

“Love that matters” increases cognition, engagement, transference, self-reliance, quest as a framework for learning, and a sense of belonging in our institutions for so many students who feel like outsiders and who teeter on the brink of failure from the second they enter our doors. These are claims; here is a pedagogy, even a methodology, waiting to be written in our community college system. Announcing “love that matters” as a professional standard, a learning outcome, or a best practice sounds ridiculous, at the same time that it begs the ridiculousness of so much of our discussions and efforts around these educational topics du jour. No fight or slight intended here, rather some nice and serious way that instructors can author their own meaning and creativity in their work.

What feels so good about saying that a teacher should be loved—that a student should be loved? This you can answer for yourself. Really, do a free write. Whatever you say on your own about “being loved” in the classroom is more significant than anything you might read here; it is your own professional development, alone and/or shared. Try the “Love that Matters” standard on yourself or perhaps with your teacher friend over some tea, gently and lovingly. The words and feelings you share will help sustain your own wonderfulness as a teacher over the years to be.

Let us not worry for a minute about what is reasonable, scalable across some big system, or feasible to ever ask of a teacher, let alone claim. So many of us around the state talking about effective teaching, caring passionately about students learning and improving outcomes, we can take courage from the simplicity of the fact that effective teaching is engendered, even regenerated, by introducing the affective as a standard. Let us simply say a teacher should be loved, a student should be loved.

Tom deWit, Chabot
Acceleration in Context: Resources & Services

Acceleration in Context is a comprehensive new initiative with the central aim of introducing accelerated curriculum and pedagogy into a broad cross-section of disciplines, services and programs. AIC's primary goal in its work with faculty and institutions is to bring about concrete curriculum that takes students deeper and faster towards their educational goals. Most expressions of Acceleration around the country are defined primarily by structural changes—stacking classes, pairing courses, compressing semesters, adding learning supports. Acceleration in Context promotes and integrates such structural changes, and is further distinguished by three core principles:

- Curriculum must be dramatically redesigned, especially in developmental education
- A wide variety of accelerants must be employed to transform pedagogy and practice
- Institutions must support their faculty growing Acceleration models that make sense locally

The Acceleration in Context team provides training and support to faculty teams, departments, and institutions. We offer a range of services, tailored to local needs and institutional cultures:

- Consultations, Presentations, Workshops
- Extended Trainings, Summer Learning Institute
- Mentoring, Institutional Navigation, Knowledge Sharing Network

AIC features a rich array of original materials, and also offers training for faculty to make their own, including:

- Acceleration models, Design/Mind products, resource rich Website
- Movies, Animations, Power Points, Sample accelerated Curriculum/Syllabi/Lesson Plans
- Interactive Spread sheets, Data representations, Newsletters

AIC supports and facilitates work in:

- **Curriculum Redesign**
  - Faculty reconnecting with their subject
  - Faculty implementing and adapting proven Acceleration models
  - Designing backwards from transfer

- **Pedagogical Innovation**
  - Putting students at the center of their own learning
  - Fostering deep learning and teach to whole student
  - Designing effective, innovative lessons and courses

- **Student Capacity**
  - Leveraging students' resounding capacity for learning
  - Bringing effective domain to center of classroom
  - Challenging students to do far more than what is often asked

- **Assessment Strategies**
  - Bringing Inquiry mind-set to assessment strategies
  - Integrating Student Voices into assessment process
  - Training faculty to Make Visible their assessments so others can learn

- **Institutional Navigation**
  - Sharing out Acceleration model with colleagues, department, institution
  - Strategizing and taking steps to scale up model
  - Integrating campus services to make Acceleration model a success

This initiative is supported by the Walter J. Johnson Foundation.
Fiscal Implications of Accelerated courses:
Huge cost savings while increasing student success

Below is an example of the savings accrued from implementing an Accelerated English course at Chabot College in Hayward, California.

English 102 is a one-semester open access course, one level below freshman composition, that integrates reading and writing. The cost/class is about $5K if an adjunct instructor teaches it, and $10K if a full-time instructor teaches it. Every English 102 Accelerated course saves Chabot College at least:

- $5K compared to a 2 level sequence below transfer
- $10K compared to a 3 level sequence below transfer
- $15K compared to a 4 level sequence below transfer

On average Chabot College has offered 40 English 102 Accelerated courses per year over the last 5 years. The savings are substantial:

- $5K x 40 courses/yr x 5 years = at least $1,000,000 saved compared to 2 level sequence
- ...at least $2,000,000 saved compared to a 3 level sequence
- ...at least $3,000,000 saved compared to a 4 level sequence

Many community colleges have 3-4 levels beneath transfer in both their English and Math course offerings. Removing one or more of these layers not only increases student success, but also results in substantial cost savings to the institution. AIC works with faculty and administrators, using live spreadsheets and other analytic tools, to determine how best to implement these structural changes. AIC also supports and facilitates faculty in doing curriculum and pedagogy redesign that supports effective structural change.
parts of an institution. Counselors are uniquely positioned inside community colleges to be primary shapers, creating and sustaining conditions that support student “life”.

To this end, in AIC workshops, counselors share, design and refine counseling models that contribute to student success. Many different accelerated counseling expressions are emerging: self efficacy, community based counseling, learning community support, student-to-student support (with counselor facilitation), mandatory counseling, intrusive counseling, high touch counseling, and more.

Building accelerated models is an important start; then we look at the tone and character of the interactions inside the model. This is where counselors excel. AIC core concepts of Capacity, Love, and Student Voices inform and support this part of the work of bringing the model to life. At one of the AIC events a group of counselors came up with this “manifesto”:

- All counseling is an opportunity for building community
- All counseling is an opportunity for introducing and integrating meta-cognition
- All counseling is an opportunity for teaching
- All counseling is an opportunity for leveraging student Capacity

The key point here is that counselors themselves will create “Accelerated Counseling”—and that it is happening already in creative and empowering ways for both counselor and student.
Accelerated Counseling

One of the counselors we are working with exclaimed, "I have more to say about acceleration than just advising and advertising particular ‘accelerated’ sections for my colleagues over on the instruction side.” Counseling, as much as any curriculum around the state, is prone to being trapped. She went on, “We can’t keep on with business as usual. I know my students—their brilliance, their trauma, what is at stake for them to be successful here. Not one student I know is playing around, chilling while they fail classes, not giving a damn.”

Counselors know better than any one on a campus what are the real world consequences of what researcher Thomas Bailey calls the “pipeline problem”: they KNOW the impact on students of having to navigate the many layers before transfer (esp. in English, Reading, Math, ESL) but too often counselors’ perspectives/advice/solutions about this problem are not integrated into an institution’s choices. Accelerated Counseling moves counselors to the center of this discussion.

One of the realities in counseling of the “pipeline problem” is that the ratio of counselor to student at nearly every community college in the state exceeds 1 counselor to 1000 students. And the ability to provide real time counseling at the time when students need guidance is severely limited. “Our greatest untapped resource is our students. There are great models and practices of peer-to-peer mentoring around the state. This is one example of how student services supports acceleration.” There is no shortage of good practices that can inform a comprehensive expression of accelerated counseling.

It is sometimes said that good practices on the student services side are too expensive to implement. But AIC demonstrates three major points about cost: First, the current level of failure is very costly; literally, our colleges are spending a lot of money while students are not reaching their educational goals. Second, when faculty are trusted to design new approaches, they can do so while attending to cost. (A big part of AIC’s work is to support and encourage brand new paradigms). And third, for those who would argue that students “just cannot handle” accelerated classroom models, we propose that part of the vast amount of money saved by reducing layers before transfer can be redirected to support services—counseling, tutoring, etc—that seriously grow student success.

“Terraforming” is a key AIC concept. In Science Fiction Terraforming means to go into previously inhospitable settings—the classic example is the planet Mars—and to create the conditions that will sustain human life there. In the community college setting, Terraforming means to create conditions that will sustain student success across all