



## Guide for Starting Up and Scaling Up the Accelerated Learning Program (ALP)

### Definitions

**Accelerated Learning Program (ALP).** The co-requisite model for developmental writing developed at the Community College of Baltimore County and adapted at more than two hundred colleges and universities around the country. In this guide, CCBC's model will be referred to as ALP, although some school may decide to call it by a different name.

**Co-requisite models** for developmental education. This term, originated by Complete College America, refers to any model of developmental education in which students not placed in the credit-level course are, nevertheless, registered for it and then provided support to make it likely they will be successful in the credit-level course. ALP is one example of a co-requisite model.

**Non-cognitive issues.** The affective issues or life issues that cause many students placed in developmental courses not to be successful, commonly because they give up.

**Scaling up.** In a general sense, this term refers to the process of taking a small scale, pilot program to a much larger size. There are at least three slightly different conceptions of when an innovation has been scaled up:

1. When it is the experience of the vast majority of students, although a small number of students may have a different experience.
2. When it is the normative experience for students, although there may be other options available.
3. When the innovation completely replaces the older model, and the older model is no longer an option.

**Acceleration.** Any redesign of a developmental program that moves students to the credit-level course in a shorter period of time.

### Principles of ALP

The Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) suggests the following principles, although many ALP programs are not able to include all of these:

1. The pipeline through which developmental students must move in order to take credit-level English should be as short as possible.
2. Students should take their development class as a co-requisite to their credit-level English class.
3. Reading instruction should be integrated with the ALP developmental course and also with the credit-level English class.
4. Developmental students should not exceed half the students in the credit-level English class.
5. The primary goal of the ALP developmental class should not be to prepare students for the credit-level English class; it should be to assist them to pass the credit-level English class.
6. The developmental class should be small, ideally ten students, but no more than twelve.
7. The same instructor should teach the ALP developmental class and the credit-level English class.
8. The curriculum for the ALP developmental class should be developed through "backward design" from the credit-level English class.

9. ALP instructors should be attentive to non-cognitive issues that may interfere with their students' success.
10. ALP Instructors should employ active learning when it is appropriate.
11. ALP Instructors should address reasoning skills as often as possible.
12. While the ALP developmental writing class should not be viewed as a grammar class, instructors should use creative approaches to address sentence-level error, usually in the context of the students' own writing.
13. Robust faculty development for teaching in this model will be very helpful.

**Table 1: Possible Objections to Starting Up ALP**

The following table lists the objections that various parts of the campus may raise to *starting up* ALP . . . and suggests ways to respond to them:

| Objection                                                                        | Likely Source                       | Possible Responses                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
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| These students can't handle ENG 101; it won't work.                              | English faculty                     | <p>Data from CCBC and from a study of 7 other colleges where it has worked shows that the traditional approach has not worked for 2/3 of students; ALP results are that 74% of students pass ENG 101.</p> <p><a href="http://alp-deved.org/what-results-has-alp-produced/">http://alp-deved.org/what-results-has-alp-produced/</a></p> <p><a href="http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/publications/ccbc-alp-student-outcomes-follow-up.html">http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/publications/ccbc-alp-student-outcomes-follow-up.html</a></p> <p><a href="http://alp-deved.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/ALP-Replication-Study-2015-Final.pdf">http://alp-deved.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/ALP-Replication-Study-2015-Final.pdf</a></p>                                                                     |
| ALP is too expensive.                                                            | Administrators                      | <p>ALP is actually less expensive than traditional approaches because they lead to so much attrition.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Our developmental instructors aren't credentialed to teach credit-level English. | Administrators and department heads | <p>In some parts of the country, faculty with only a BA are allowed to teach developmental courses; these faculty would not be credentialed to teach the credit-level course.</p> <p>I don't understand why anyone, including the several accrediting agencies who allow it, would think one needs fewer credentials to teach basic writing. If anything, it should require more.</p> <p>Nevertheless, this is the reality we must live with in many states. One fairly heartless solution is simply to announce that those teaching with a BA will not be allowed to teach ALP. A more compassionate solution would be to create a window—say three years—during which those needing to raise their credential would do so. Some financial support for this would be even more compassionate.</p> |

| Objection                                                                                   | Likely Source               | Possible Responses                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
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| It is unprofessional to ask faculty to teach a subject matter they have no preparation for. | Reading and English faculty | Having to develop a course that an instructor has never taught before is a lot of work, but to say “I don’t want to do something that will double students’ chances of successfully completing the credit-level English course because it wasn’t what I was hired for,” seems indefensible. Lots of faculty end up teaching courses they weren’t hired to teach as programs are modified or discontinued.                                                                                                                                                                |
| We think our current program is working fine. We don’t see any need to change.              | English faculty             | <p>Producing data on the existing program is the best way to answer this objection. Sometimes, having the Institutional Research Office present the data is more convincing than having ALP “zealots” present it.</p> <p>It is important that the data show how many students from a given cohort placed in the traditional developmental writing course make it all the way through credit-level English. It is not a valid evaluation of the program to look only at what percentage of developmental students who actually attempt college-level English pass it.</p> |

**Table 2: Possible Obstacles to Scaling Up**

The following table lists the obstacles that may arise to scaling up ALP:

| Obstacle                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Likely Source               | Possible Solutions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
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| We don’t have enough faculty who know how to teach ALP or Integrated Reading and Writing.                                                                                                                                                                | English and Reading faculty | Scaling up will require lots of professional development. Leaving it up to faculty members to figure it out for themselves is an inefficient and probably ineffective way to develop faculty who are comfortable teaching the course.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Part-time students (at many schools, a majority of students) may not be able to take more than 9 credits in a semester. If they need ALP as well as developmental reading and math and a student success course, that can total 13 or more credit hours. | Advisors                    | <p>This problem can be alleviated by integrating reading and writing. ALP is usually 6 credit hours; if the developmental reading course is 3 or 4 more credits, that adds up to 9 or 10 credits. When they are integrated, the total number of credits goes down—at some schools down to 6 credits total; at others 7 or 8 credits.</p> <p>If integrating reading and writing is not possible, a college-wide group with reps from Reading, English, Math, Advising, and Student Success, needs to be formed to work out a recommended course sequence for developmental students.</p> |

| Obstacle                                                                                                                                                                                              | Likely Source                                    | Possible Solutions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
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| <p>We don't have enough classrooms for all the courses currently offered. Putting a class of only 10 or 12 students in a room that will hold 30 is not an efficient use of our limited resources.</p> | <p>Facilities Management or Plant Operations</p> | <p>At some schools this is a legitimate concern. Solutions include dividing existing classrooms in half to make to ALP developmental classrooms or converting underutilized conference rooms into ALP developmental classrooms.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <p>We don't want to redesign our program because this is a top-down mandate, and we were not given a chance to provide input.</p>                                                                     | <p>English and Reading faculty</p>               | <p>Too often this is the case. Top-down mandates with no faculty input are a mistake. However, if the data show that this top-down mandate will double the number of developmental students who are successful, what is the right faculty response?</p> <p>Forceful objections to mandated changes are certainly appropriate, but refusing to adopt a redesign that will dramatically improve student success simply because the process was flawed is not the best response.</p> <p>Faculty should stay alert for such mandates and as early as possible communicate to administration their eagerness to be part of the process of redesigning the program.</p> <p>If no such "mandate" appears to be imminent, faculty might find it advantageous to initiate such a redesign. In the current climate, administrations are likely to welcome such a faculty initiative.</p> |
| <p>It is a bad idea to take a model that may have worked well in Baltimore and attempt to impose it rigidly in an entirely different context.</p>                                                     | <p>English and Reading faculty</p>               | <p>First, ALP has been shown to be successful in 7 schools in addition to CCBC. See the study here: <a href="http://alp-deved.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/ALP-Replication-Study-2015-Final.pdf">http://alp-deved.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/ALP-Replication-Study-2015-Final.pdf</a></p> <p>Second, ALP is an extremely malleable model. The CCBC model can be modified in ways that will make it more suitable for your context.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |

**Table 3: Schedule of Tasks for Implementing ALP**

The following table is a list of tasks that may need to be performed at your school if you follow the model of one year for planning ALP, two years for a pilot, and full scale up in the third year:

| Who's Responsible?                                                                                                    | Planning Year                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Year 1                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Year 2                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Year 3                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
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| Administration                                                                                                        | <p>Appoint ALP Director/Coordinator and ALP Steering Committee.</p> <p>Charge Committee</p> <p>Allocate funding for Planning Year and Year 1.</p> <p>Support ALP at every opportunity.</p> <p>Request reports at end of planning year.</p>                                                                                     | <p>Continue supporting ALP at every opportunity.</p> <p>Intervene as necessary to resolve problems with the pilot program.</p> <p>Request reports at end of Year 1.</p> <p>Allocate funding for Year 2.</p> | <p>Continue supporting ALP at every opportunity.</p> <p>Intervene as necessary to resolve problems with the pilot program.</p> <p>Request reports at end of Year 2.</p> <p>Allocate funding for Year 3.</p>          | <p>Continue supporting ALP at every opportunity.</p> <p>Intervene as necessary to resolve problems with the scale up of ALP.</p> <p>Request reports at end of Year 3.</p> <p>Allocate funding for Year 4.</p>      |
| <p>ALP Steering Committee</p> <p>(Some tasks listed here could be listed under ALP Director/Coordinator instead.)</p> | <p>Review research on ALP at other schools.</p> <p>Develop model for ALP at your school.</p> <p>If appropriate, propose the course to governing body.</p> <p>In conjunction with Institutional Research, develop data plan for evaluation of pilot.</p> <p>Conduct faculty development for those who will teach in Year 1.</p> | <p>Establish website to host materials to support future faculty.</p> <p>Analyze data on Year 1 cohort of ALP students.</p> <p>Conduct faculty development for new faculty to be teaching in Year 2.</p>    | <p>Continue adding material to website.</p> <p>Analyze data on Year 1 cohort as they continue into Year 2.</p> <p>Analyze data on Year 2 cohort.</p> <p>Conduct faculty development for 100% scale up in Year 3.</p> | <p>Continue adding material to website.</p> <p>Establish regular data plan including data on accumulation of college credits and completion.</p> <p>Conduct faculty development for as appropriate for Year 4.</p> |

| Who's Responsible?                                                                                                       | Planning Year                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Year 1                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Year 2                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Year 3                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
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| <p>Director/Coordinator of ALP</p> <p>(Some tasks listed here could be listed under ALP Steering Committee instead.)</p> | <p>Chair ALP Steering Committee.</p> <p>Build support: meetings with various constituencies to explain and answer questions.</p> <p>Invite outside speakers as appropriate.</p> <p>Meet with advisors and prepare handouts for them concerning ALP.</p> <p>Develop flyer informing students about ALP.</p> <p>Schedule and staff pilot sections for Year 1.</p> <p>Request budget for Year 1.</p> <p>Submit report on Planning Year to administration.</p> | <p>Conduct regular meetings with faculty teaching pilot sections to identify problems, determine shortcomings in faculty development, and gather materials to support future instructors.</p> <p>Meet with advisors to improve advising for Year 2. Revise handout for advisors.</p> <p>Revise flyer informing students about ALP.</p> <p>Develop list of campus resources to help students.</p> <p>Develop list of non-cog consultants to visit ALP classes.</p> <p>Schedule and staff pilot sections for Year 2.</p> <p>Request budget for Year 2.</p> <p>Submit report on Year 1 to administration.</p> | <p>Conduct regular meetings with faculty teaching pilot sections to identify problems, determine shortcomings in faculty development, and gather materials to support future instructors.</p> <p>Establish mentoring system under which new faculty are provided with an experienced ALP faculty mentor.</p> <p>Meet with advisors to improve advising for Year 3. Revise handout for advisors.</p> <p>Revise flyer informing students about ALP.</p> <p>Develop list of campus resources to help students.</p> <p>Develop list of non-cog consultants to visit ALP classes.</p> <p>Schedule and staff 100% scale up in Year 3.</p> <p>Request budget for Year 3.</p> <p>Submit report on Year 2 to administration.</p> | <p>Continue to collect materials and place them on the web site for other faculty to use.</p> <p>Assign mentors for new ALP faculty.</p> <p>Update list of campus resources to help students.</p> <p>Update list of non-cog consultants to visit ALP classes.</p> <p>Troubleshoot logistical, curricular, and administrative problems.</p> <p>Request budget for Year 4.</p> <p>Submit report on Year 3 to administration.</p> |
| Faculty                                                                                                                  | <p>Attend faculty development.</p> <p>Plan course.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <p>Teach first sections.</p> <p>Meet regularly with ALP Director/Coordinator to provide feedback.</p> <p>Contribute materials for future faculty.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <p>Faculty who will be teaching ALP for the first time in Year 3 attend professional development.</p> <p>Provide feedback to ALP Director/Coordinator.</p> <p>Contribute materials for future faculty.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

| Who's Responsible?        | Planning Year                                                                                                                           | Year 1                                                                                                                   | Year 2                                                                                              | Year 3                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
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| Records & Registration    | Develop system for registering for ALP.                                                                                                 | Modify registration system as necessary.                                                                                 | Plan modifications to registration system in anticipation of 100% scale up in Year 3.               | Monitor and troubleshoot registration system for ALP.                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Institutional Research    | Work with ALP Director/Coordinator to develop data plan.<br><br>Develop baseline data on success rates for traditional model.           | Produce data on Year 1 cohort of students.                                                                               | Produce data on Year 1 students as they progress in Year 2.<br><br>Produce data on Year 2 students. | Work with ALP Steering Committee to develop regular data plan including data on accumulation of college credits and completion.                                                                                                                      |
| Advising                  | Train advisors so they will understand the advantages of ALP and encourage students to enroll in ALP sections.                          | Provide feedback to ALP Steering Committee on student response to ALP.<br><br>Provide ALP training for any new advisors. | Plan for 100% scale up in Year 3.<br><br>Provide ALP training for any new advisors.                 | Make sure advising staff is aware that no more traditional developmental writing sections are being offered. Be prepared to explain to students fearful of taking two English courses in one semester that ALP will double their chances of success. |
| Physical Plant Operations | Find or create small classrooms for ALP students.<br><br>Acquire laptop computers and charging/security cabinet for each ALP classroom. | Plan for classroom space and computer support for expanded ALP program in Year 3.                                        | Carry out any needed construction to provide enough classrooms for 100% scale up in Year 3.         | Troubleshoot any problems with the many new classrooms that will have been created for the scale up.                                                                                                                                                 |