Florida Colleges Make Plans for Students to Opt Out of Remedial Work

By Katherine Mangan

New students who show up here at Florida State College at Jacksonville have to take placement tests in mathematics, English, and reading. About 70 percent end up in one or more remedial courses. For now, at least.

State lawmakers voted in May to make such courses, which some see as obstacles to progress, optional for most students. Starting next year, recent high-school graduates and active-duty military members in Florida will have the choice of whether to take the courses or even the tests meant to gauge students' readiness for college-level work.

That prospect has sent a wave of anxiety across the state's 28 community and state colleges, which all have open admissions. Their fear: that an influx of unprepared students could destabilize introductory courses and set those who will struggle up for failure.

The colleges have become ground zero in a national battle over remedial education, a field whose current models aren't working, say even its most ardent supporters. Several organizations—including Complete College America and Jobs for the Future, both backed by groups including the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Lumina Foundation—have been pushing to reduce the number of students who end up in noncredit remedial courses. Based on the argument that remedial education, as currently delivered, is ineffective, the groups have persuaded lawmakers in Connecticut, Tennessee, and other states to pass laws channeling more students directly into credit-bearing courses.

Complete College America, whose leaders testified before the Florida Legislature, estimates that fewer than one in 10 students
who start in remedial courses, which educators and state lawmakers also call developmental courses, graduate within three years. Its vice president, Bruce Vandal, says that only about 15 percent of the students whose test scores place them into the courses truly need to be there. The others, he says, could succeed in credit-bearing courses if colleges were to consider a broader set of criteria in placing them.

But even Mr. Vandal questions the wisdom of leaving the choice up to students. If the law gave colleges the flexibility to identify and support unprepared students, steering some toward technical certificates, that would help, he says.

Thomas R. Bailey, director of the Community College Research Center at Columbia University's Teachers College, testified alongside Mr. Vandal in favor of reforming remediation, but he agrees that making it optional goes too far.

"If you have a complete open door to college-level classes, you'll get more students in there who can't manage it," says Mr. Bailey, who is also a professor of economics and education at Teachers College. "Colleges are going to have to figure out what to do with students who make it partway through and drop out."

That is one of many questions Florida’s community colleges are anticipating and scrambling to answer. Educators are preparing to revamp courses so that instructors can teach to a broader range of abilities.

Meanwhile, they are beefing up advising for students who are determined to skip remediation, even when they have little chance of passing a college-level course.

While campus officials acknowledge that the existing remedial system is deeply flawed, they point to experimental new models and efforts already in place to bolster students' progress.

The goal of moving students along makes sense, educators say, but only if those students are ready for it, not if they simply opt out.

"We're worried about the students who are going to come in and
say, 'Yeah, I'm fine. Let me try,'" says Jacksonville's interim president, Willis N. Holcombe, a former chancellor of the Florida College System and a former English professor. "You may be trying to teach someone the five-paragraph essay," he says, "and they can't write a complete sentence."

**Guesswork and Support**

Now students must pass out of remediation before they can enroll in credit-bearing courses. Kathleen Ciez-Volz, director of academic and instructional program development at Jacksonville, regrets that some of them get stuck.

"We know that the longer students are in developmental education, the less likely they are to succeed," Ms. Ciez-Volz said in a meeting here last month for faculty and staff members to discuss how the new law would affect them.

Pushing students ahead could be effective, she said, but the approach probably won't work for those with the weakest math and reading skills.

Meanwhile, Florida State College's campuses and centers all have academic-success programs dedicated to remedial students, to help them progress. It’s unclear what will happen to the centers, but Ms. Ciez-Volz says she hopes they can be revamped to meet the support needs of students in both remedial and credit-bearing courses.

Since 2009, Florida State College at Jacksonville's Deerwood Center has helped raise pass rates in math courses from about 65 percent to more than 80 percent, says Jerry Shawver, a remedial math professor who won the Association of Florida Colleges' professor of the year award in 2012. The center relies on individualized, computer-assisted instruction, peer tutoring, and intensive faculty support.

Mr. Shawver jokingly challenges legislators who might think such a resource is a waste of time. "Let’s stick it to them and show them our success rates and dare them to shut us down," he says.

In addition to giving active-duty service members and post-2007
graduates of Florida high schools the choice to skip remediation, the new law requires institutions to offer more ways for students to catch up, ideally while enrolled in college courses. The options suggested in the law include compressing two remedial math courses into one, embedding more tutoring in credit-bearing classes, and offering modules that cover only what a student is shaky in.

The college has already been experimenting with some such models, says Patti Levine-Brown, a professor of communications at Jacksonville and president of the National Association for Developmental Education. Those include compressed and fast-track courses and self-paced modules that zero in on specific skills.

The idea of offering remediation alongside college-level courses, instead of as a prerequisite, was touted last year in a report by four national higher-education groups, using data from the Community College Research Center. The center has concluded that students near the cutoff who start out in remedial courses fare no better, and often do worse, than students at a similar level who jump right into credit-bearing courses.

The new law will mean a lot of guesswork for institutions on how many remedial and college-level courses to offer. And shuffling faculty members at the last minute won’t be easy: A master’s degree isn’t always required for remedial instructors, many of whom are adjuncts, but it is for those teaching college-level courses.

Faculty members in introductory courses worry that there may be pressure to dumb things down. Some students share that concern.

Jonathan C. Bolick, a student at North Florida Community College, plans to transfer next year to a four-year institution to study international business and history. But first he had to pass remedial math, which he did last year.

Mr. Bolick, who serves as a peer tutor, says students who need remediation may opt into college-level courses, where their
struggles will "stunt learning" for the entire class.

"The teacher doesn't necessarily have to teach to the person who's not understanding the material," he says, "but teachers who really care don't want to leave anyone behind."

**Students' Choice**

Without placement tests to go on for most students, advisers will have to look more closely at high-school records, which some say are a better predictor of success. But getting access to those records and finding time for extended counseling sessions won't be easy. The Jacksonville campus has 63 advisers for 6,000 incoming students.

Colleges should provide data to those thinking of skipping remediation to show them how much better their odds of success might be with the catch-up, says Jacob Winge, a junior at Edison State College and president of the Florida College System Student Government Association.

Still, he believes students should have choices about how they get up to speed. He took two semesters of remedial math and says he probably could have gotten by with one.

The stakes are high: If a student fails a course and takes it again, that costs money and time. If he or she needs a third try, the state charges out-of-state tuition, which is four times as high as the in-state rate.

Taking remedial classes can be demoralizing for many, but for Mildred Bautista, it made going back to college a little less scary. She's close to finishing her bachelor's degree in public-safety management at Jacksonville and says she wouldn't have made it this far without the remedial math and reading courses she was placed in when she entered an associate-degree program, in 2007.

"It was a little aggravating having to pay for classes I didn't get credit for, but I was nervous going back to school, and I wanted to take baby steps," says Ms. Bautista, who plans to become a police officer.
Her remedial-English instructor took her under her wing and persuaded her to become a peer tutor, Ms. Bautista says. "That lady helped me blossom."

Colleges have until March to present the state with a plan for how they’ll overhaul remedial education, offering new options to support less-prepared students. Those plans must take effect by the fall of 2014, but colleges will start rolling them out next spring.

Across Florida, colleges are struggling with the new mandate. William D. Law Jr., president of St. Petersburg College, concedes that remedial education hasn't been working but thinks that allowing students to place themselves is asking for trouble. "When you ask an 18-year-old student, 'Would you like to opt out of developmental math?' I'm guessing I know the answer more often than not," he says. 'I'm really worried about what this is going to look like two to three weeks into the semester, when students have that 'aha!' moment and say, 'I should have chosen a different level.'"

55 comments

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Avatar teachfordamasses • 10 days ago
Easy fix for this issue and one that will emerge shortly given the incentives and the current climate: just give more students a passing grade in the regular introductory courses. Presto chango: problem solved! Wait another ten years and listen for the waves of anguish as employers realize "college graduates" can neither read, write nor understand quantitative reasoning. But, hey, we are an educated nation by definition as we all have degrees.

43 ▲ ▼ Reply Share ▼

a_specialist → teachfordamasses • 9 days ago
Could not agree more. The employers have already been complaining, and rightfully so. Also, this is a brilliant way to exponentially raise our attrition rates so that they can deny more funding. We need to educate the parents of these "soon-to-fails" so that they make the necessary noise. No one believes that the educators know what is really going on, even though we are likely the only ones who do. Is anyone asking WHY they are not college ready? Is anyone putting the burden where it belongs?

23 ▲ ▼ Reply Share ▼

jballen → a_specialist • 8 days ago
AMEN!
Even the picture shows the student looking clueless at the professor instead of the screen. What a shot.

What you suggest already seems to be a current problem. The intake seems already to be less ready than say 20-30 years back. Another drop in education level will really leave us floating in worthless degrees.

We're already floating in worthless degrees. What we're making with this proposal is a tsunami.

Absolutely right! Dumb & Dumber are already the norm for most of the US. The Tea Party would never be voted into office or tolerated by a more informed citizenry. Nor would the norm of journalism be and FoxNews stupidity. Anti-intellectualism in this country has always been a problem since industrial and finance capitalism became the dominant political and cultural form back in the late 1800s. Candis is correct to see this ultraright proposal as a miseducation tsunami. We have to find swift and effective ways to defeat this madness.

I don't understand. The argument being made is that we should put remedial students into regular courses, because too many are *failing out* of the remedial courses?? I'd argue that it's our politicians who need the remedial education the most. All I interpret from these "reforms" is a ham-handed attempt to cheapen college learning and diminish the value of a college education.

No, they're not necessarily failing out of the remedial classes. They're leaving the college before they complete a degree. Remedial classes aren't credit-bearing, and many institutions have strings of them - so that you may have to take 2 or even 3 remedial classes before you get into an actual credit bearing course. Well, that's a year to a year and a half when you've advertised a program as being 2 years, so a lot of students get disillusioned and leave.

If they are failing out of remedial classes, they are correctly being filtered out of the Higher Education system. If they are "disillusioned" about having to take remedial classes in the first place, they should have met minimum academic aptitudes to not have to take them.

Or they should take the whole process seriously. Many students blow off the entry test and find themselves in layers of remedial. These students might do find in credit bearing, but if they are blowing off the test, chances are they will blow off the credit bearing class assignments also.
This new mandate allowing students to opt out of developmental/remedial classes will prove to be counter productive to student success initiatives. Without pre-enrollment assessments and proper course placements, ill-prepared students are at risk of failing college-level courses. Faculty teaching college-level course work will be pressured to water down courses when their classes are flooded with ill-prepared students. I fear that the open-door will become a revolving door as students are shut out of opportunities to succeed in college.

Agreed. I currently teach a Gen. Ed. science course at a community college and students can barely pass when they have NOT been given remedial placement. I'm trying to teach genetics and I will end up having to teach basic mathematics because more than 1/2 of them simply don't understand fractions, proportions, decimals, and percents. The college I teach at is moving to the same system, optional remediation with customized programs for those that choose. Who is going to CHOOSE to take a remedial course? Furthermore, if I don't go over basic math skills in the course and teach just the material I'm supposed to, I'll have a bigger failing rate than I already do. I maintain that it is the primary and secondary school systems that are failing to teach the required skills for students to succeed. I briefly tutored a high school student in "SAT preparation" and he could not add, subtract, multiply, divide, nor read past a 2nd-3rd grade level. He was a senior getting straight A's in a FL public school. He expected to get a 2100 on the SAT, succeed, and go to medical school. They are simply funneling children through the system without actually educating them.

Marginalization at the expense of de-funding our elementary school systems. Folks surprised? Remember our educators working conditions are our students learning conditions...

Yes, and of course the famous "No Child Left Behind," which furthered the problem by an order of magnitude.

Well, here we go! The government has dumbed down our K-12 system, which is the reason so many of these students are coming to college so unprepared, but NOW they want to dumb down higher education. I teach a general college course in which students in remedial classes may enroll. These students come to class, many times without buying the books (they don't use their grant money to buy books so they can get a refund check from the government grant and use the money to buy things they want). Many times they do not feel they need to study because in high school all they needed to do was show up - most of the time - and, at the end of the semester ask if there was anything they could do to pass. the teacher would have them write a 5 word essay and the passed! Even though I tell these students that I will not give them that option, they still try. They are then surprised when I say no, and even more surprised when they fail. "I thought I was going to pass," is what I hear every semester. When I show them their grades and ask "how could you have thought you would pass with a 30 average?," they look at me with a blank look because they do not have the math skills to average their own grades.

Now we have the removal of remedial classes. The next step in this dumbing down process will be to make college professors push these students through...
Reading Faculty • Neil Boumpani • 9 days ago

I couldn't agree more!1

max5reilly • Neil Boumpani • 9 days ago

Perhaps the root of the problem is the notion that everyone should attend college whether or not they are prepared. It's called "higher" education for a reason. It is so disheartening for a faculty member to try to teach a class in which the students don't know fundamental information that allows discussion. I have had to stop discussion to teach students the location of various countries and basic facts. THIS IS NOT COLLEGE-LEVEL WORK!!!!!! Colleges cannot be held accountable when students simply are not ready to do the work.

MChag12 • max5reilly • 7 days ago

Agreed. I did not become a professor to teach 9th grade comprehension. Theory is out of the question. And getting them to work is a major task. It has become a very depressing situation, and like many teaching in present college environments, the only practice that keeps me alive is my own research and collaboration with organizations and universities overseas. They are dooming these students to service jobs, if they can find them. But then, an educated public is a dangerous public.

aloofbooks • max5reilly • 6 days ago

You are largely correct.

Reythia • Neil Boumpani • 7 days ago

About college, I absolutely agree.

But I question your idea that all teachers (in any state) "know how to teach their kids". I admit to a certain bias, since I'm an engineer and have taught "teach the teacher" classes as well as elementary-college level seminars. I don't know what things are really like in non-math/science classes today. But I DO know that a huge percentage of middle/high school math/science teachers are absolutely unprepared to teach those subjects well. And for the exact same reason as remedial math students at CCs do poorly: they aren't prepared because they never really learned the material themselves. And no one can teach what they don't really understand themselves. Just go and ask them; far too many math/science teachers will tell you that, really, she's "not a math person" and is only teaching the class because it was that or lose her job.

Unprepared teachers isn't a good situation to have. And it's part (though surely not all) of why so many students entering college need remedial classes. After all, if your teacher sincerely believes that all of math and science can be blindly memorized, how would her students ever learn that there's anything they're missing?

Avatar • Plant Prof • 8 days ago

For the vast majority of students remedial courses have no academic benefit. All the research shows that placing students in college-level courses and providing supplemental instruction is the best practice. Remedial education is only kept alive by the second most ineffective educational practice placement testing. The only real impact is on their debt load. In my opinion remedial education is just another...
one of those practices that allow society to say it is providing paths to opportunity when all it is offering is a road to financial slavery. It lives because it serves a purpose. It keeps certain groups of individuals out of competition with the privileged elite.

MChag12  •  Plant Prof  •  7 days ago

NO, all the research does NOT show that. CUNY has had a very successful remedial program for a number of decades with a high success rate. Remedial education is possible, if thought and scholarship are put into it.

archman  •  Plant Prof  •  7 days ago

WTF are you smoking? Can I have some? Yea sure... students who can't read or write or do basic math can just drop into college courses, no problem. Maybe you should go *talk* to your remedial faculty, or better yet *teach* some remedial courses. Jeez... is this a paid blog post for the state legislature? Saying nonsense is so easy on the internet.

Reythia  •  Plant Prof  •  7 days ago

I'd love to see you teach an introductory calculus class to someone who can't use fractions correctly.

Luciano Salinas  •  8 days ago

Developmental/Remedial education is not the baby we should throw out with the bath water!!! First, let's start helping student realize that the placement test they are about to take is one of the most important tests they will ever take. Slow down...don't speed through it because then you the student will be mis-placed...usually into a lower level course you do not need. Tell them they should take an hour for each section of the test. PRE-TEST them and never let them test the same day they land on our campuses! So that's part one! Part two: Most students today are working and some are young, fulltime workers wanting to take a full-time course load (12 hours)...that's a disaster waiting to happen in about the third or fourth week of the semester! Along that thread, never offer the developmentals (online)...never, never, never...developmental implies needs skills in one or all of the 3R's! BEST idea coming.... REFORMAT DEVELOPMENTAL DELIVERY SYSTEM... There are two levels in each of the developmental courses...Student test into 1st level in all three areas. Divide the semester into four 4-week semesters in the 16 week semester. First "reading" then "writing" then "math". Fall semester: Reading 1, Reading 2, Writing 1, and Writing 2. The student would take each course three hours a day, four days a week all by itself!!!

As John Oliver put it when he was standing in for Jon Stewart: Florida is where your grandparents and justice go to die.

the_doctor  •  7 days ago

The dumbing down of American education continues unabated. What a brilliant idea: admit the unprepared and unqualified. If this standard is okay for presidents, I suppose it's okay for community college students. That unprepared and unqualified students who enroll in remedial classes achieve similarly to corresponding students who bypass remedial classes is a damning indictment of a community college education. Think of it: Students who lack proficiency in
chronicle.com/article/Some-Florida-Colleges-Plan-for/141783/?key=Tz9zIQ7MH1AYXFnWPj0NT0DbC...

A community college education should not be dumbed down. I teach 14 years in a community college and observed the increasing volume of remedial students appearing each September and the decreasing rigor of college curricula and requirements for student success. There is no easy answer to solve this problem, but admitting the unprepared and the qualified is not the answer. The meaning of a college education continues to mean less and less.

9  

MChag12 @ the_doctor 7 days ago

The answer is the analysis of why this is happening. There is a reason that education in this country became important in the 1950s and there is a reason it is no longer considered essential. Power is involved, and a weak and unorganized workforce is preferable. If students can’t read or write, they can’t organize either. Florida is run by the Tea Party. This kind of legislation should not be a surprise.

7  

cbres 7 days ago

Once again, we see politicians thinking they know more about higher education and how to succeed in it than those of us who do this for a living. Do other professions see this phenomenon?

2  

readerinamherst @ cbres 7 days ago

I imagine the insurance and energy industries do.

1  

llwallace @ cbres 7 days ago

Oh my goodness YES! As a nurse and member of the health care community, it is distressing to realize how uninformed the public is that government and non-health care decision makers are directing medical and nursing practice. The decisions being made scare my nearly grey hairs off my head!! How have we let these folks "drive the buggy" so long and to such extent?

4  

abichel 7 days ago

It’s already bad enough that we encourage unprepared students to sign up for remedial classes when they don’t belong on campus in the first place, but now we are just going to usher them to their seats in the front of the class despite their lack of having earned the right to be there. Our societal rush towards "fairness" and "equality" is costing us the very institutions that once made us great.

12  

archman @ abichel 6 days ago

Our politicians are turning college into an extension of high school.

3  

jamary 7 days ago

I see the Chronicle has "dumbed down" to the comments style of cable news, etc., losing its distinctive approval button and reader welcome. Ah, it's disheartening to youthful Americans to have to remediate! Funny that international students from much poorer countries than the US, know how to "do fractions." Not so long ago, a campy prof here said that things like the abacus should be discarded as obsolete. Ha! Chinese youth who still learn arithmetic this way out think American kids, taught by elementary teachers who themselves neither understand fractions, nor value them - begrudgingly feeling that US kids are punished by such inhumane curricular objectives. That's the problem: it is the fall of Rome! American children are needed as consumers; they use "aps" on their cellphones, without the slightest understanding how anything really works. They buy stuff, enjoy stuff, socialize, sexualize ; they do not have time to hit the books. They cannot, but for a cherished...
They cannot, but for a cherished few, sit still and live in the focused power of their own minds. A relative few will join the immigrants from India, China, Korea and increasingly near everywhere else at MIT, UCLA, etc. learning to invent and design - new products for good Americans to buy. Soon, however, the rest of the world, notably that place straight down through the globe, will just buy us out. I hear that the Chinese are buying up cheap.

You cynical person, you! You're hit the nail on the scary head! Brings to mind the old quip, Going to Hell in a Handbag (shudder).

Let us read the book: The Sabre Tooth Curriculum before its too late, again!

Welcome to K-16. The K-12 system is in shambles and now we want to use the same failed actions and theories on higher ed.!

Here's a thought. Why is it necessary that every student in the USA must take a college prep curricular? There is no other country in the civilized world who requires such madness.

Requiring college prep courses as the only way to get through high school? For 100% of all Americans? We even test our special education students and many school districts require special ed students to first "attempt" to take Algebra before allowing them to place out of it even when they were already evaluated for special education and are assigned to the program. Madness.

This country only has one track for all students study and that is succeed in the college prep classes or fail.

Today community colleges are confronted with all of these unprepared students who have been told to prepare for college. They are now actually applying to college and many students are not ready. In these economic difficult times, the community colleges are not given the funding and resources to deal with this major issue. Community Colleges too will be evaluated as "incompetent" in not achieving their goals.

This country seems to be in total denial of what we are doing to our students and our colleges. Public school teachers are leaving. Soon community college personnel will be leaving. More students will feel disenfranchised and in an attempt to keep their jobs, bureaucrats will be creating new solutions and requirements every other year or two. Is this really the educational structure we want or need?

"Opting Out" means, let's try the cheapest way to get out of this mess and sometime in the future, after I am gone, let someone else worry about it.

One reason remedial education may not work is that no one really wants to evaluate and answer the truth of: "How long and how much will it take to re-educate each individual student? What do we do with a student who may need two or three years of assistance before the student is qualified academically to succeed in first year college courses? Do we really want to create two years of
remedial courses in "my" college? Do we really want this truth facing us directly?

Or, is it easier to just let the student "choose" and decide, "I'll try the harder courses which I am not really prepared to take. Then, when I get enough D's and F's, it will be my fault that I did nor succeed."

Let's be face it. On a few community college campuses where remedial programs have been successful, the components of the planning included not just "testing" but a full program of counseling, tutoring, and monitoring of remedial courses. This type of plan takes courage for any administrator to step out of the box and say, "it takes these many resources over these many years to create successful students from some of those who apply."

How many colleges would prefer to just put these funds into an "honors program".

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flewwood • 7 days ago

There used to be a time when many of these students needing "remediation" would be counseled into the one to two year technical and vocational programs. But unfortunately most of these programs have been terminated at community colleges and today many of these colleges only offer the first two years of a four year college degree.

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fosca • flewwood • 7 days ago

Our local vocational school is literally BEGGING for students. Students can earn a certificate in HVAC tech, for instance, and immediately make more money than I as a professor here will ever dream of. And probably be happier than I am, as well, since I have to teach students who not only cannot read or write but resent me for asking them to (and for marking them down if they do not).

Yes, I've looked into those programs myself. I'm not quite there, but it's looking better all the time--particularly since I'm in Florida.

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ist0306 • 7 days ago

In all the discussion about the "unpreparedness" of students for college level courses, why isn't anyone examining the issue of elementary and secondary education. These students didn't just magically appear on the doorstep. If one of the purposes of a high school education is to prepare students for college, then they are obviously failing miserably. "You can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear".

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11247112cd • 7 days ago

"We know that the longer students are in developmental education, the less likely they are to succeed."

Yes, and the sicker someone is the more likely they are to die but we aren't shutting down ICU's and ER's in hospitals because the patients don't always make it.

Remediation gives those students a chance to "survive" but if their ability (health) isn't at the level it needs to be then they will "perish." A college degree is not for everyone.

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sciencegrad • 7 days ago

With proper advising, colleges will be able to convince some students of the benefits of taking remedial courses, especially at the schools that use remedial programs that target the specific areas of weakness. However, the Dunning-Kruger effect will likely cause most of the weakest students to opt out of remedial education because they falsely think they are prepared.
This makes perfect sense.

Old system:
Problem: Student does not grasp or comprehend grade 6-12 level material. 
Student has not learned study skills or other skills... that contribute to academic success.
Solution: Offer remedial courses to reteach grade 6 - grade 12 level material to prepare students for University level work.
Rationale: Relearning the content and learning study skills, time management skills, etc... will prepare students to succeed in University level courses. From my experience with remedial education at the University level this is the norm.

New system:
Problem: Student does not grasp or comprehend grade 6-12 level material. 
Student has not learned study skills or other skills... that contribute to academic success.
Solution: Let students ignore knowledge and skills gap and place them in University level courses.

The problem is that many students who test into remedial courses do NOT need to be in them at all (or are missing only 1-2 topics out of a whole course). As a result, getting through the course sequence (2 additional semesters of time, for example, including additional costs, time to degree, more chance that "life" happens) becomes the challenge. And very few who are assigned to this track (by a test that is not particularly accurate) make it to a 4-year degree. Some studies have shown higher rates of degree completion when students are not required to take remedial courses. Even better are co-requisite models where students who would normally be required to take remedial courses are instead required to participate in additional tutoring, peer support, and other supports during the semester in the college-level class. But those studies have not been done on the scale Florida is attempting.

Sure, so in order to fix the "problem" of these "many" remedial students who "may not" actually belong there, we will simply cancel remedial classes wholesale across the entire state. What a brilliant reform effort on the part of the Florida legislature.

Here's where we are headed:
1) Students can opt out of remedial math and go on to statistics and calculus.
2) Students can opt out of remedial reading and go on to classes in pre-law.
3) Students can opt out of remedial science and go on to classes in pre-med.
Does anybody see the edge of the cliff coming?