The 4 C's to Collaborate: Communicate, Comprehend, Compromise, and Cooperate

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Welcome!

- Thank you for having me!
- You are very important people; you have an exponential effect on the lives of thousands of students, the economy, the country, and the world
- communitycollegedata.com and @ccollegedata
- We should start with some positive data
- You need to know that you have already been making a difference as developmental educators

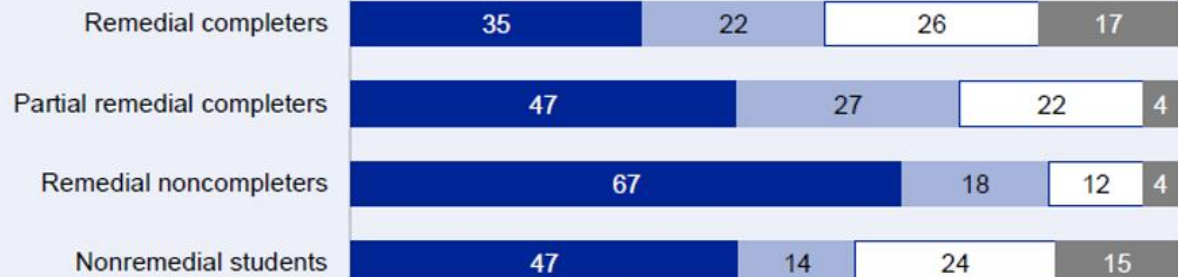# USDOE "Remedial Coursetaking" (2016)[1]
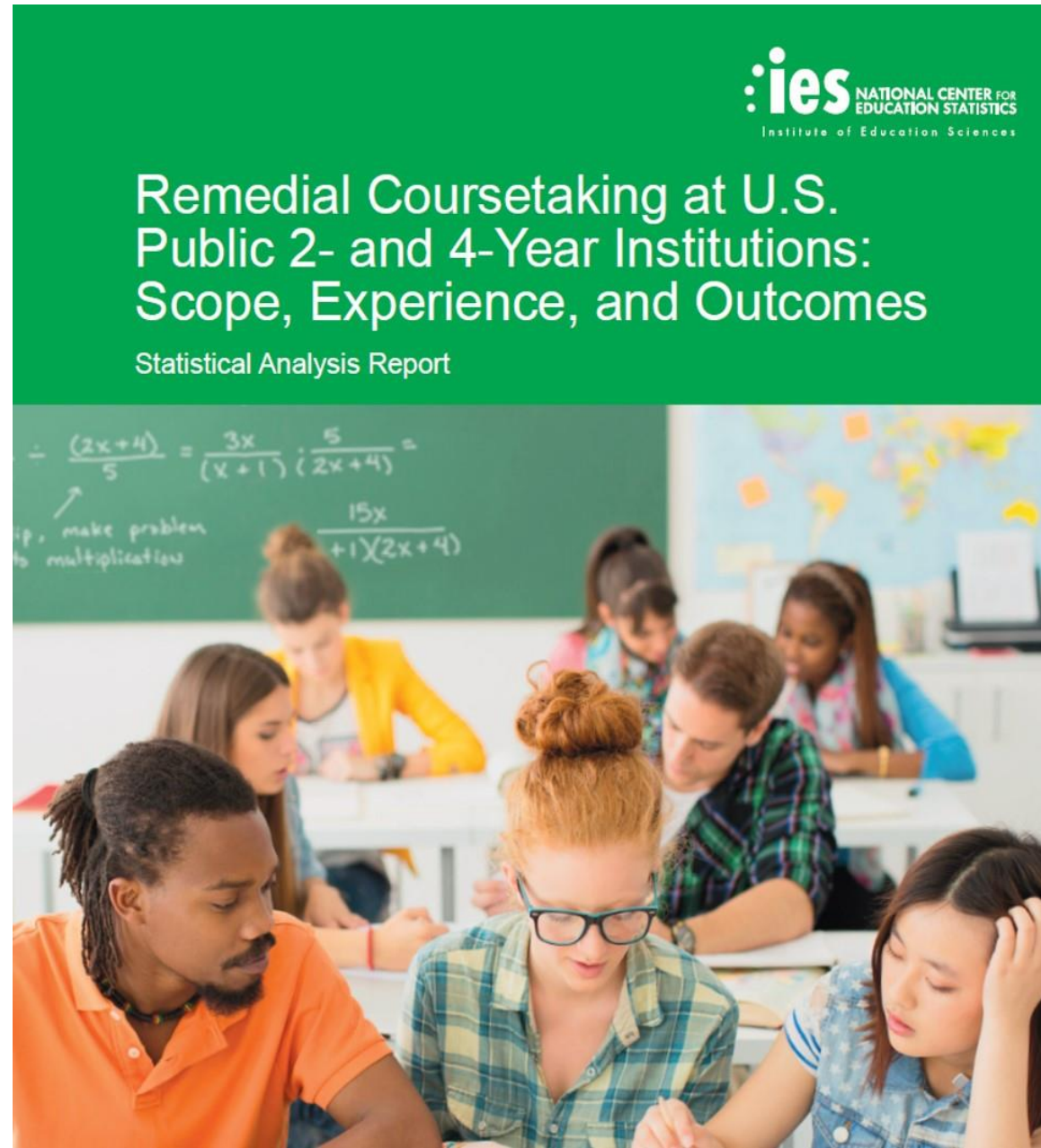
USDOE "Remedial Coursetaking" (2016)[1]
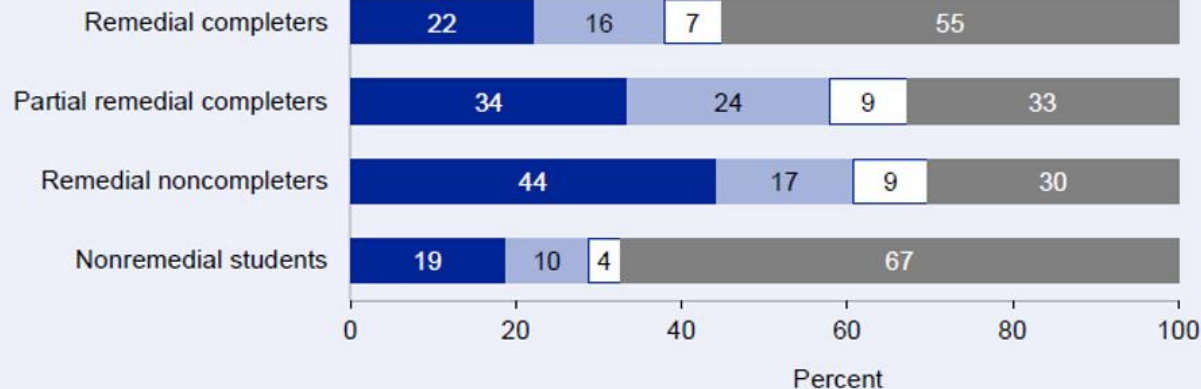

Figure 7.
SIX-YEAR PERSISTENCE AND ATTAINMENT: Among 2003–04 beginning postsecondary students who first enrolled in public 2- or 4-year institutions, percentage distribution of students according to their postsecondary persistence and highest degree attainment as of 2009, by remedial course enrollment and completion status: 2003–09

Students beginning at public 2-year institutions

	No degree and not enrolled	No degree but enrolled	Attained an associate's degree or certificate	Attained a bachelor's degree
Remedial completers	35	22	26	17
Partial remedial completers	47	27	22	4
Remedial noncompleters	67	18	12	4
Nonremedial students	47	14	24	15

Students beginning at public 4-year institutions

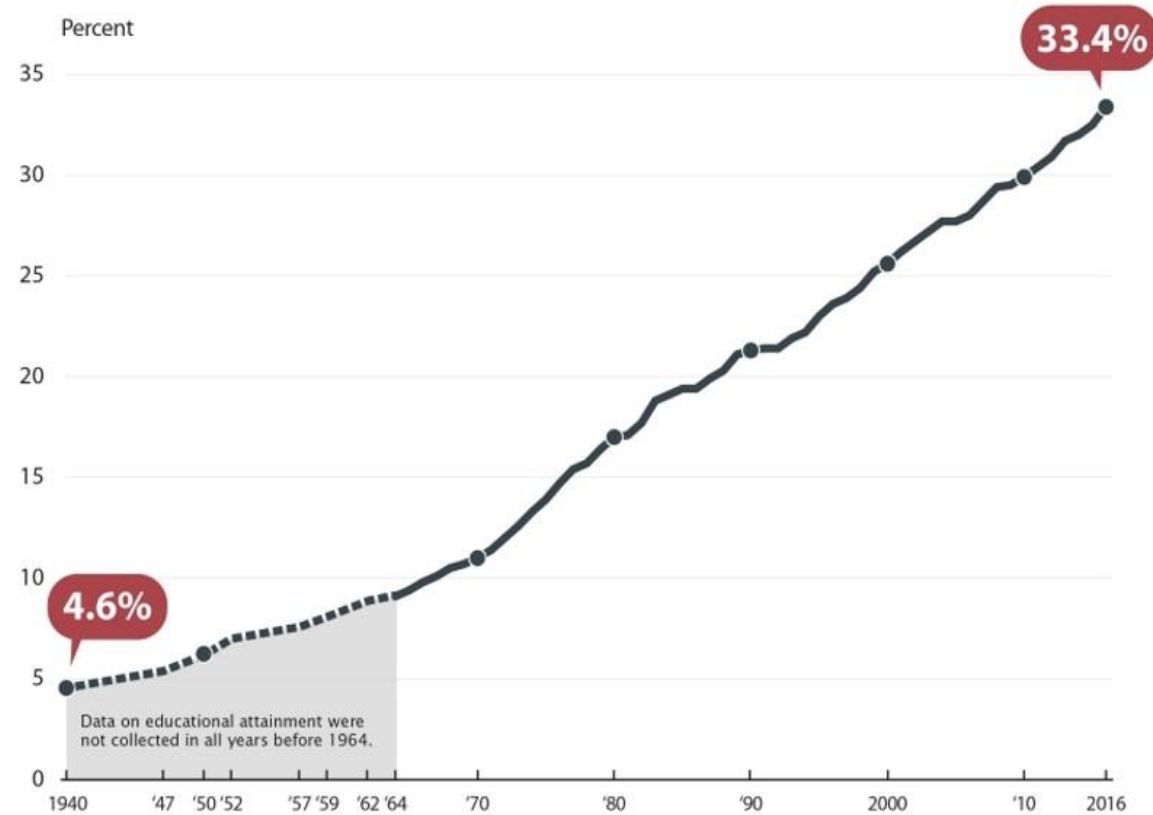|	No degree and not enrolled	No degree but enrolled	Attained an associate's degree or certificate	Attained a bachelor's degree
Remedial completers	22	16	7	55
Partial remedial completers	34	24	9	33
Remedial noncompleters	44	17	9	30
Nonremedial students	19	10	4	67

Percent

■ No degree and not enrolled   ■ No degree but enrolled   □ Attained an associate's degree or certificate   ■ Attained a bachelor's degree

Remedial Completers (49%) 6-Yr Grad Rate: 43%

Nonremedial 6-Yr Grad Rate: 39%

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"Highest Educational Attainment Levels"[2]

Highest Educational Attainment Levels Since 1940

Adults 25 Years and Older With a Bachelor's Degree or Higher

Percent

33.4%

4.6%

Data on educational attainment were not collected in all years before 1964.

1940   '47 '50 '52   '57 '59 '62 '64   '70   '80   '90   2000   '10   2016

United States Census Bureau

U.S. Department of Commerce
Economics and Statistics Administration
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU
census.gov

Source: 1940-2010 Censuses and
Current Population Survey
www.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps.html
www.census.gov/prod/www/decennial.html
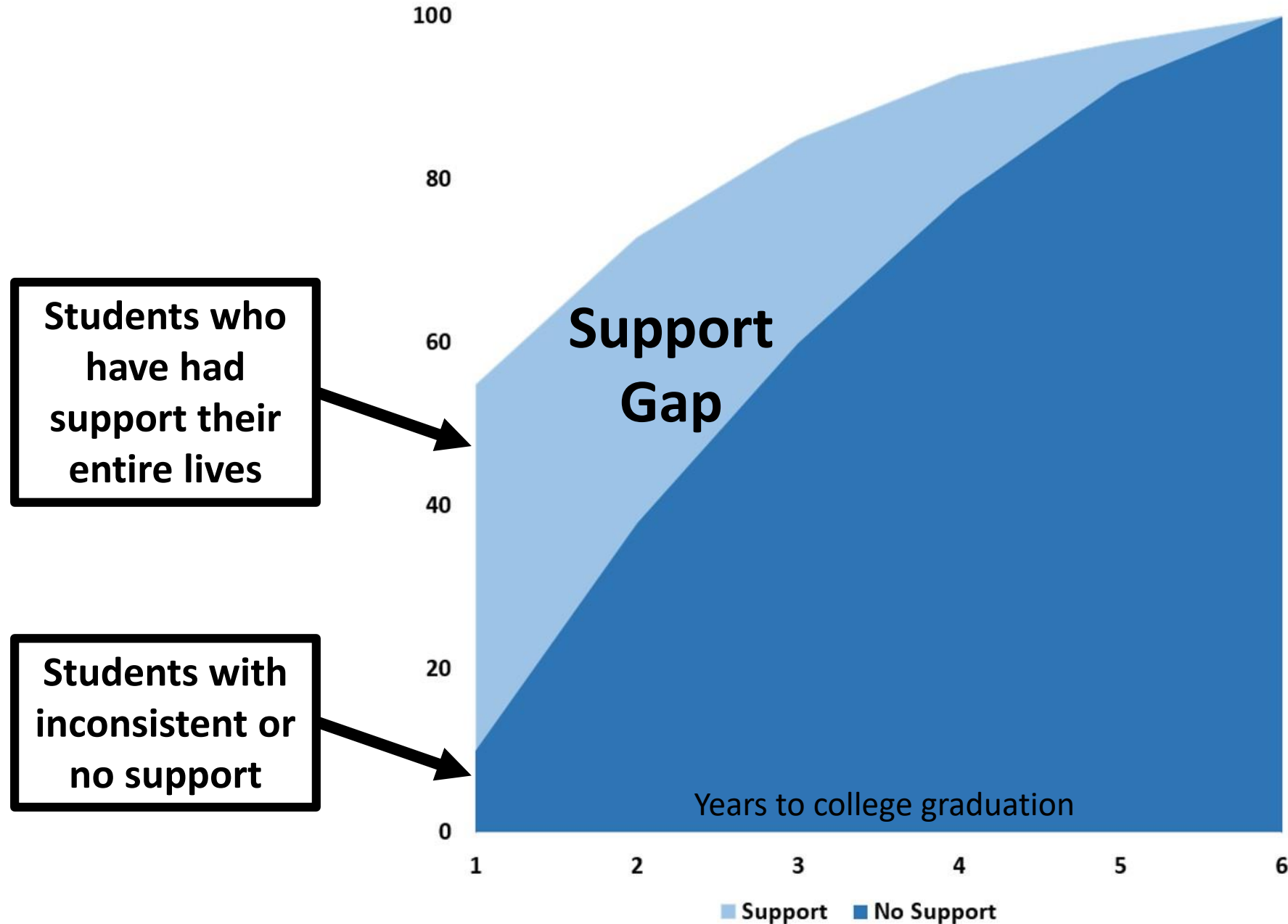
More Good News

- So overall 4-year grad rates are on the rise; remedial completers' grad rates are higher than nonremedial
- Moreover, the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center (2017)[3] recently reported updated 8-year completion rates for two-year public colleges
- Overall public two-year graduation rates after tracking for 6 years is about **38%**
- However, if you follow students for 8-years, the certificate and degree completion rate is **44%**

We Can All Still Improve

- There are still pervasive and persistent problems[4,5]

- For example, we now know that support for at-risk students needs to be well-funded and sustained

- At-risk students in college face what I call a long-term

Support Gap

Model of the Probability of
Graduating College by Support Level

Students who have had support their entire lives

Students with inconsistent or no support

Support Gap

100

80

60

40

20

0

Years to college graduation

1   2   3   4   5   6

Support   No Support

We Can All Still Improve

- How can we reduce the **Support Gap**?
- Again, we know that well-funded and integrated holistic reform is ideal, when we have a lot of money[6,7,8]
- The question is what to do when there is no money!
- This means making more difficult decisions, and it also means *collaborating* on these decisions
- Getting buy-in from the people you work with guarantees more successful reforms

The 4 C's Approach to Collaboration

- How do we improve collaboration for successful reform?
- I am offering lessons from professional failures in collaboration to demonstrate what and what not to do!
- Research suggests that failure is one of the best ways to improve, learn, and be successful[9]
- Alternative title of today's presentation:

"Lessons From a Failed Collaborator"

Step 1: Communicate

Step 1: Communicate

- We have to be able to communicate with each other

- Lesson 1:

 If they do not like you, they will not help you

- You may recognize this from the film *The Imitation Game*

- It is probably one of the most important lessons when improving communication and collaboration overall

- It does not mean obsequiousness; just be polite!

Step 1: Communicate

If they do not like you, they will not help you

- In the process of collaboration, at the very minimum, the best result after any communication is that the other person believes you are a good person (or competent, well-intentioned, etc.)

- It is the first barrier in communication: It is important to increase the chances someone might actually agree with you later on a proposal, but it must be sincere!

Step 1: Communicate

If they do not like you, they will not help you

- There are ways to challenge others on their claims without making enemies:

  - For example, ask a question: "Have you considered x, y, z?" or, "What about this other approach?"

  - This is not to be confused with Minnesotan passive aggression!

Step 1: Communicate

If they do not like you, they will not help you

- We must also believe or attempt to believe that everyone is working in good faith with the right intent
- Even if you disagree with a colleague, realize they are still trying to do the best they can to improve outcomes
- It is a good life maxim: People are doing the best they can to do their work well

Step 1: Communicate

- Lesson 2:

   Even e-communications should be considerate

- Emails and calendar meeting invites should have an actionable subject line, greeting, three paragraphs when possible, an agenda, and be a week in advance (plus a follow-up email a day before?)

- The term "considerate" here means respect for others' time, schedule, expertise, etc.

Step 1: Communicate

- Lesson 3:

  Create a culture of efficient and respectful meetings

- Meetings should begin and end on time; agendas sent in a timely manner; important agenda items are followed with time allowed for discussion; if voting, then a vote could follow the discussion

- The leader of the meeting is responsible for moving people through the agenda efficiently and respectfully

Step 1: Communicate

- Lesson 4:

    All parties need to know they have been heard

- This is one of the most common concerns faculty voice around the country

- If you agree that everyone should have input before a decision is made, each party needs to know their input has been considered

- This can be improved with Step 2: *Comprehend*

Step 2: Comprehend

Step 2: Comprehend

All parties need to know they have been heard

- I would like to offer a process to improve how we *communicate* and *comprehend* each other

- It is designed to be efficient and make use of technology appropriately

- It is also designed to minimize meetings that are often unnecessary and frustrate people

Step 2: Comprehend

I call this the **SCORED** process for individual reforms:

1. **S**urvey by email (5-min email for responders)
2. **C**ompile & **O**rganize the results (several hours)
3. **R**eport the results at meeting 3 weeks later (15 min)
4. **E**valuate the results in that meeting (15 min+)
5. **D**ecide the motion (revised on the floor or not) or postpone for additional changes (5 min)

Survey, Compile, Report, Evaluate, and Decide

1. **Survey**: Email brief survey 3 weeks before meeting
   - Subject line: "Please Respond: Proposed Change to X"
   - Brief paragraph describing the problem and the proposed solution
   - At most, one Likert scale multiple choice question
   - An open textbox for limited written comments (maybe 250 words maximum)

Survey, Compile, Report, Evaluate, and Decide

2. **Compile** and **Organize** the results

- The party that proposes the change should compile and organize the results using a chart: At the top of chart, repeat the proposed change

- The written comments should be summarized and put into themes (percents are a good thing)

- The report should also note the most common objections and problems

Survey, Compile, Report, Evaluate, and Decide

3. **Report** the results at a large meeting

- The party who initiates the proposal should show the original proposal paragraph to remind everyone what the proposal was: "Remember the survey email?"

- Then they should show the responses' themes and show most common objections and problems

- During this presentation, they should then offer ideas about how to address those problems one by one

Survey, Compile, Report, Evaluate, and Decide

4. **Evaluate** the results in an open discussion

- The presenter should then open the room for discussion on the problems to address those who still have concerns and suggestions

- Discussion may take time to foster trust

- Based on the discussion, the proposal may go back to the drawing board and the SCORED process may be begun again with an amended proposal

Survey, Compile, Report, Evaluate, and Decide

5. **Decide** on the proposal

- If most of the parties appear to be satisfied, then a vote can take place on the proposal based on your governance model and policies

- Again, the SCORED process can be begun again if not everyone agrees

- Here is an example of the entire process using Google Forms and the survey feature:

The SCORED Process Example: The Survey

Proposal: Research shows that students often do not understand what the Accuplacer is before they take it. This may negatively impact their score. We propose to devote staff and resources to informing students about the test (impact, layout, etc.) before they take it.

Form description

Are you in favor of dedicating staff and resources to talking to all students before they take the Accuplacer placement examination?

○ Strongly agree

○ Agree

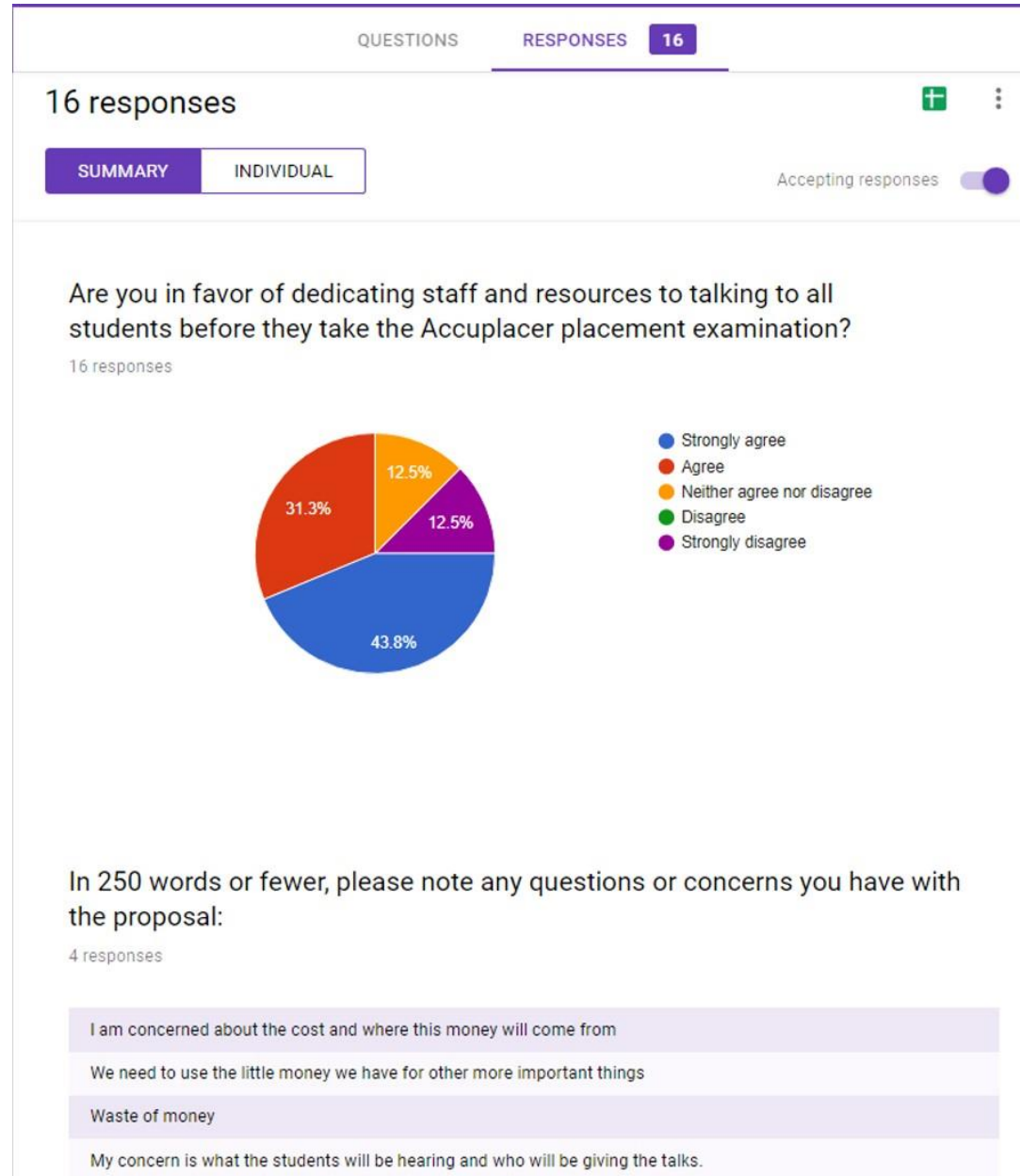○ Neither agree nor disagree

○ Disagree

○ Strongly disagree

In 250 words or fewer, please note any questions or concerns you have with the proposal:

≡ Paragraph ▾

Long answer text

The SCORED Process Example: Compile & Report

Benefits of the SCORED Process

- Everyone is made aware of the proposal well before a meeting takes place (3 or 4 weeks is best); no surprises!

- People are then prepared to discuss the proposal

- The compilation of the results shows all parties that their concerns have been heard; the silent majority's views will be known; one can thus address individual concerns that may not represent the whole

- Efficient way to make changes and include everyone

Step 3: Compromise

Step 3: Compromise

- There are two different ways to compromise:

    1. One side agrees to the other side's approach and the other side concedes some changes before implementation

    2. Both sides get what they want in a more limited way: You implement both approaches!

- It turns out that many compromises involve doing both

Step 3: Compromise

- Either way, compromise is necessary and crucial

- How best to do this?

- I have an exercise that might generate helpful advice for all of us to facilitate more compromise at our institutions

- We are going to get into small groups briefly to generate ideas to share with the entire group

Step 3: Compromise

- I would like to pair administrators from one institution and faculty from different institutions
  - Please form groups of 2, 3, or 4
  - One administrator per group might be best
  - All people in the group should be from different institutions if possible
  - Administrators, please stand and raise your right hand
  - Faculty, please find admin from a different institution

Step 3: Compromise

- Take turns asking this question:

  What do you need me to know about your *role* and/or *experience* that would help us all to communicate and compromise on proposals in the future?

- Results? Let's share some things we learned

Step 4: Cooperate

Step 4: Cooperate

- My definition of *cooperation* is people working together on a reform that they have agreed to implement
- This means people have roles, share work, communicate well, resolve problems, etc.
- We also need to trust that everyone is doing the best they can
- Leaders of work groups need to follow up with good communication and move things along efficiently

Step 4: Cooperate

- An idea about how to cooperate:

 ***Implement effective leadership structures***

- A leadership structure involves
  - Identifying key roles
  - Appointing leaders to complete those duties
  - Following up with those leaders regularly
  - Allowing those leaders some decision-making abilities

Collaboration in Action

- To recap last year's presentation, I am offering a method for implementing reforms

- This is called **Spectrum Thinking**

- It involves assessing what you are already doing well, putting what you do on a spectrum of piecemeal to full implementation, and moving towards a full, holistic, and integrated system to improve student success
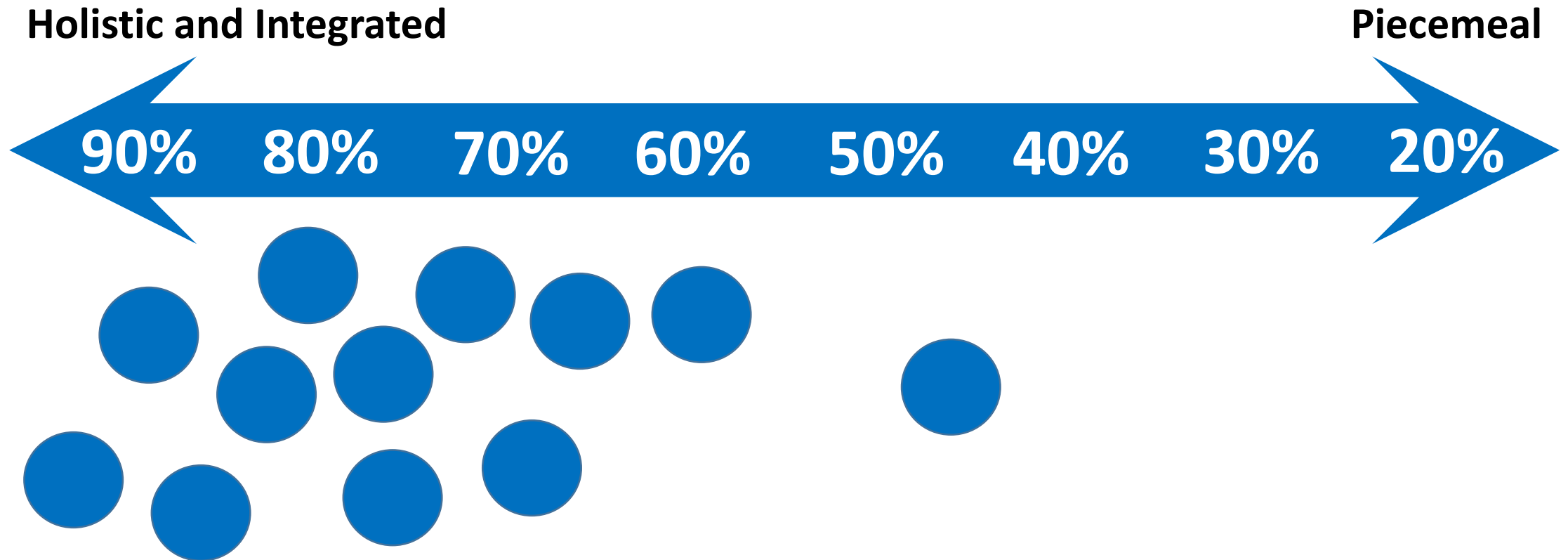
Using Spectrum Thinking with Reforms
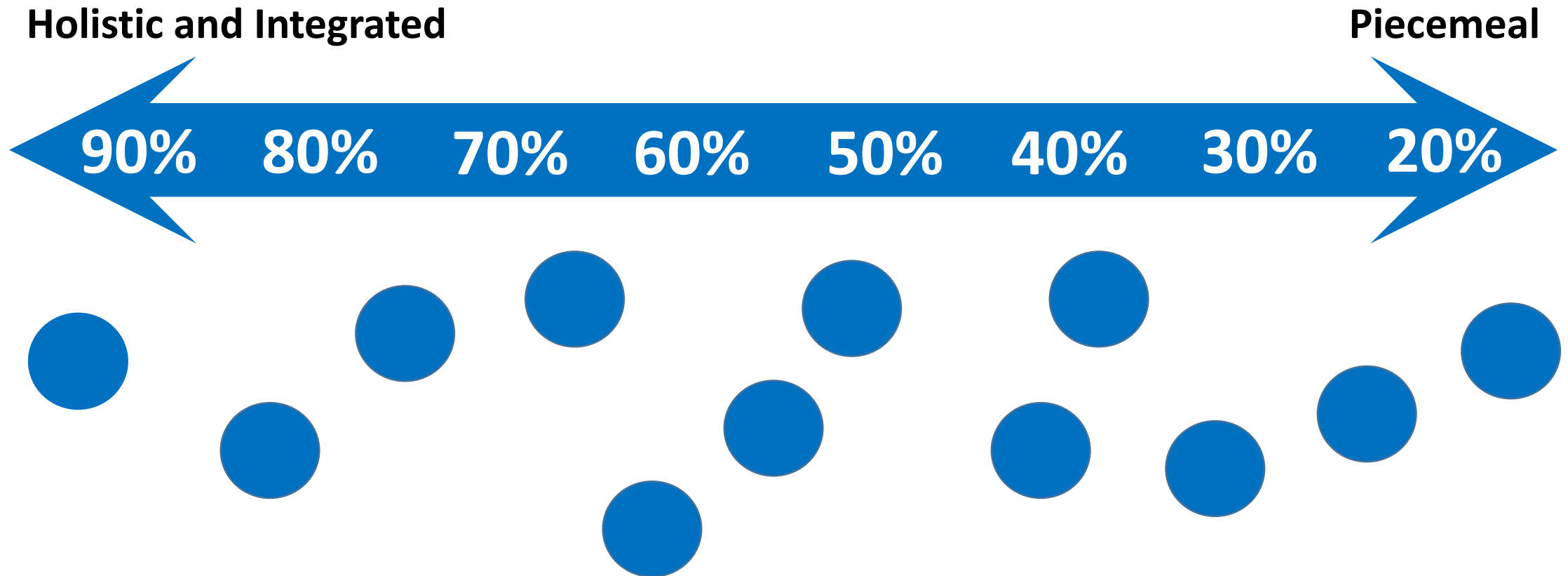
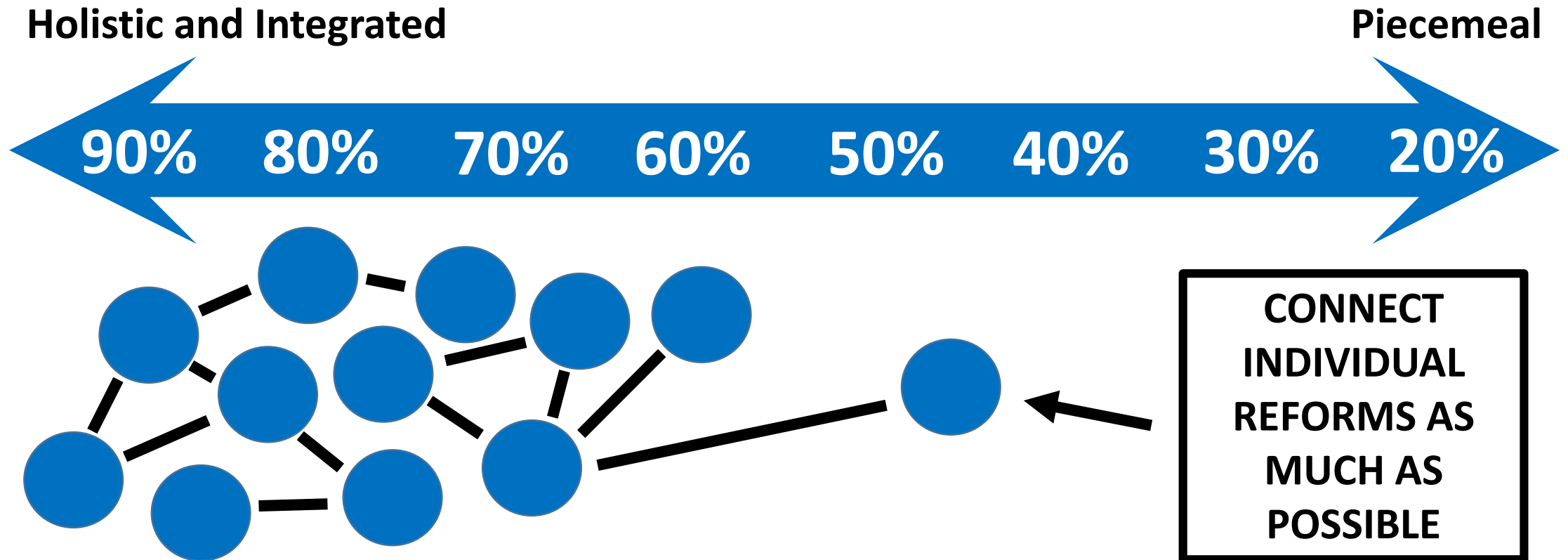**SPECTRUM OF PIECEMEAL TO HOLISTIC IMPLEMENTATION**

Holistic and Integrated   **Piecemeal**

90%   80%   70%   60%   50%   40%   30%   20%

Using Spectrum Thinking with Reforms

SPECTRUM OF PIECEMEAL TO HOLISTIC IMPLEMENTATION

Holistic and Integrated

Piecemeal

90%   80%   70%   60%   50%   40%   30%   20%

CONNECT INDIVIDUAL REFORMS AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE

Applying Spectrum Thinking to Any Reform

What should people do differently starting now?
- Put all the known reforms on a table
- Arrange them in a spectrum based on preference
- Then begin move toward full implementation
- Always remember to keep supporting existing initiatives before allocating resources to new reforms
- This is a thoughtful, data-based, holistic implementation process which will improve success

Summary of Ideas to Start Collaborating

- **Communicate**: trust others; be kind, even if you disagree
- Be respectful in meetings, agendas, emails and in person
- Make sure you listen and **comprehend** others' ideas
- Try the **SCORED** process when surveying colleagues about new approaches for reform
- **Compromise** is good faith negotiation
- **Cooperate** to implement reforms for students

Thank you!

Keep up the great work!

References and more reading available at
communitycollegedata.com

Follow me on **@ccollegedata**

References

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