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Perspectives On The Critical Factors For Student Success In Developmental Education: Instructors and Students Speak

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Perspectives On The Critical Factors For Student Success In Developmental Education: Instructors and Students Speak

by

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Dedication

To my beloved family: my father, Lester M. Ross Sr., my husband, James E. Moore Jr.,

and my sons, Darren Gregory McFatter and William Brent McFatter.

No woman could be so blessed with a support system greater than you.

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Perspectives On The Critical Factors For Student Success In Developmental Education: Instructors and Students Speak

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The questions of how the relationship between the instructors and students affects underprepared student success and specifically how well developmental education instructors understand what underprepared students view as factors required for their success remain vague. There are still many students who are not successful in their developmental educational efforts. There needed to be an updated, clearer understanding and agreement between developmental instructors and their students on the most important factors needed for student success in developmental education programs.   The purposes of this study were to explore the relationship between developmental instructors and their students regarding their individual views of what is required for developmental student success, to determine if there is room for improvement in this relationship by an increased understanding by the instructors of the meaning of what developmental students define as their personal factors for success, and to compare and contrast these

findings to the established body of knowledge on student success factors in developmental education.

This qualitative study is facilitated by the Interactive Qualitative Analysis method. Two focus groups; one of developmental instructors and one of developmental students were conducted. Each participant was individually interviewed, based on the affinities determined in the focus groups. Affinities were coded, and theoretical relationships were determined between the affinities. The research sample consisted of 19 instructors and 20 students. Commonalities and inconsistencies of factors and perspectives required for a successful developmental experience are determined.

The study findings support the existing body of knowledge as documented in the literature and provided new insights into modern-day perceptions of underprepared students regarding the definition of factors required for success in developmental education. The findings of this study suggest that developmental education instructors and students define similar sets of success factors while they have varied opinions on the importance of the relationship between the developmental education instructor and student. The relationship between instructor and student in the developmental education environment was found to be on the same horizontal plane of importance as the degree of personal motivation of each underprepared student, progression to either end of the spectrum is driven primarily by the student.

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Chapter I: Introduction

"Strange is our situation here upon earth. Each of us comes for a short visit, not knowing why, yet sometimes seeming to divine a purpose. From the standpoint of daily life, however, there is one thing we do know: that man is here for the sake of other men." –Albert Einstein

Relationships among humans define our connectivity. All humanity is connected either directly or indirectly through varying and multiple relationships. Once a relationship between two people as individuals, groups of individuals, or nations of individuals has begun, it will continue forever either in reality, spirit, or concept. As with all situations, experiences, and perceptions, relationships provide multi-lateral learning opportunities- children learn from parents, and parents learn from children; subordinates learn from supervisors, and supervisors learn from subordinates; friends learn from friends; victims learn from assailants, and assailants learn from victims; buyers learn from sellers, and sellers learn from buyers; and, finally, students learn from instructors, and instructors, hopefully, learn from students.

Through the years the instructor of higher education has been described as the *chalice* that holds knowledge from which all students must drink or gain information--one of the student's primary methods of *knowing*. College instructors exist for the *sake* of students. The literature suggests that there are multiple dimensions to the relationships between instructors and students.

The relationship between instructor and student in past times has been somewhat one-sided, with the instructor actively sharing his years of experience and knowledge while the student's participation has been limited to quietly taking notes. With new innovations in information technology, learning communities, and teaching methods, this standard is changing. Menges, Weimer and Associates (1996) feel that the two primary issues defining student and instructor relationships are the assignments the instructor requires and the methods the instructor uses to motivate students to adequately complete these assignments. Roueche and Pitman (1972) describe the close relationships and contact between student and teacher as, many times, being reserved for either the best or the worst students. Wlodkowski and Ginsberg (1995) view the relationship between instructor and students as more of an overall challenge of addressing increasing diversity and cultural differences of the student body. Roueche, Milliron, and Roueche (2003) view the relationship of the instructor with the student as being constructed around the teacher's primary goal of *helping the student to learn*. While significant progress has been made in the engagement of the student in taking responsibility for not only his learning but also in the teaching process, instructors can still learn much from the perspectives of students, especially those who are most challenged, defined frequently as *underprepared*.

When considering the growing number of students seeking higher education opportunities who initially present themselves as less than college-ready

or *underprepared* for college-level work, it is important to consider the significant success factors and the relationships between instructors and students.

Statement of the Problem

Factors contributing to the successful remediation of underprepared students have been a topic of research for more than 30 years and controversy for even longer. Some progress has been made through the years towards determining best practices in remediation, developing successful programs that embrace underprepared students, increasing retention and completion rates, and developing program and student evaluation standards. The theoretical standards are being developed. Still, with the growing demand for remediation of students prior to entry into college-level work, from a practical standpoint there is much work to be done to increase the success of these students. How the relationship between the instructors and students affects underprepared-student success and, specifically, how well instructors of developmental education understand what underprepared students view as factors required for their success remain largely as unanswered questions.

Significance of the Problem

In an era of increasing demand for skilled workers and programs that successfully remediate students to college-ready status, there is a need to increase the understanding of and enhance the relationship between students and instructors to increase underprepared students' success.

<u>Purpose of the Study</u>

This study identified the factors students in developmental education feel are critical for mastering the competencies that developmental instructors feel they must achieve to be successful, and compared and contrasted the experiences and perceptions of developmental instructors and developmental students regarding the factors required for student success. The purposes of this study were to explore the relationship between developmental instructors and their students regarding their individual views of what is required for developmental student success, to determine if there is room for improvement in this relationship by an increased understanding by the instructors of the meaning of what developmental students define as their personal factors for success, and to compare and contrast these findings to the established body of knowledge on student success factors in developmental education.

<u>Research Questions</u>

1. What factors do underprepared students identify as required for success in the developmental education environment?

2. What factors do developmental education instructors identify as required for success in the developmental education environment?

3. How do these two perspectives compare?

<u>Study Limitations</u>

This study has several limitations. The participants of the study are all associated with the same institution of higher education at the time the study is conducted. Therefore, the findings from the study *may be* limited in generalizability over all developmental instructors, underprepared students, and institutions of higher education that provide developmental services. The number of participants is limited due to the available resources at the participating institution of higher education, and participants were selected using narrow criteria. Finally, the study includes participating underprepared students who range from moderately underprepared to severely underprepared for college-level work. There is no distinction made as to the subject or subjects in which these participating students are declared underprepared and need preparation for college success i.e., reading, writing, or mathematics and to what degree.

<u>Definitions for this Study</u>

- The terms *developmental*, *developmental,* and *underprepared* students are used interchangeably to describe students who are not sufficiently prepared for college-level work.

- The terms *remedial* and *developmental* instructors are used interchangeably to discuss instructors and teachers of underprepared students.

- The term *moderately underprepared* refers to students who have mastered academic work at or below the ninth-grade-level.

- The term *severely underprepared* refers to students who have mastered third-grade-level work or below.

- The term *underprepared* students refers generally to both moderately and severely underprepared students.

- The terms *participant* and *respondent* are used interchangeably to define the subjects in this study.

Significance of the Study

The data from this study, through the rich description of the experiences and perceptions of college developmental instructors and underprepared students; provide a clearer understanding of what members of both groups believe are the factors required for developmental student success. From these findings, identification of conflicts and inconsistencies of these perspectives, utilization of this knowledge in the enhancement of existing developmental programs, and the design of new developmental programs are possible outcomes. Finally, these findings support and enhance the existing body of knowledge as documented in the literature and provide new insights into modern-day perceptions of individual underprepared students regarding the competencies they must acquire in order to achieve academic success in developmental education.

Chapter II: Literature Review

<u>Introduction</u>

"Despite their many achievements, community colleges can do better. Although some have exceptional remedial education programs, as a group community colleges fall short. They ignore what is known about underprepared student learning." (McCabe, 2000, ix)

The body of knowledge developed through the years on how best to remediate students successfully and prepare them for college-level coursework is vast. This literature review includes perspectives from educators, theorists, and practitioners who have dedicated their lives and careers to determining how to assist underprepared students best as they seek attainment of their personal dreams through the educational process. A historical timeline is provided in Table 1.

<u>Best Practices in Developmental Education</u>

Numerous practitioners and researchers have studied developmental education and remediation efforts for the past three decades. Still, Spann (2000) states, "Effective and efficient remediation is one of the greater challenges facing the community college" (p.1). There are many factors, identified as a result of years of research, which contribute to the failure of students' efforts, mitigate their efforts towards a successful educational experience, and put students at risk of failing in their quest to obtain their goals and dreams through the educational process. According to Roueche and Roueche (1993), "From a synthesis of 30 years

of literature on remedial/developmental education, Cross drew five major

conclusions and stated them as recommendations for designing effective programs:

1. Skills training must be integrated into the other college experiences of the student. Transfer of training does not take place automatically.

2. Cognitive skills training must be integrated with the social and emotional development of the student. Academic achievement or lack of it is not a purely cognitive matter.

3. Staff working with remedial students should be selected for their interest and commitment as well as for their knowledge about learning problems.

4. Degree credit should be granted for remedial classes. Initially at least, the major "reward" that education has to offer these students are college credit.

5. Remediation should be approached with flexibility and open-mindedness. There is still much that we do not know. We do not even know which skills developed to what level are important to academic survival. We do not know that self-confidence is a major ingredient of success. (p.55)

Roueche, Milliron, and Roueche (2003) cite the following characteristics

that put students at risk of academic failure.

- first-generation learners with little support
- pathways to success unknown
- poor self-image
- never left the neighborhood
- failure, self-defeatism, or unreachable goals
- work 30 hours per week and subject to social ills
- average age 29
- returning women
- large minority student population
- increasing numbers of foreign-born students
- economic insecurity: one-third below poverty level
- desperation, economically driven

- academically weak
- in the top 99 percent of high school graduating class
- poor or low test scores or GED scores (p.39)

While developmental education programs vary greatly from institution to institution, there are many common factors and basic requirements that enhance the chances of success. In *Between a Rock and a Hard Place*, Roueche and Roueche (1993) shared the results of a survey, conducted by The University of Texas, of developmental education programs that reported a 50 percent or better retention rate in developmental courses and were determined to have the following common factors:

1. Strong Administrative Support
2. Mandatory Counseling and Placement
3. Structured Courses
4. Award of Credit
5. Flexible Completion Strategies
6. Multiple Learning Systems
7. Volunteer Instructors
8. Use of Peer Tutors
9. Monitoring of Student Behaviors
10. Interfacing with Subsequent Courses
11. Program Evaluation (pp. 56-57)

As a result of a study of national community college remedial education, McCabe (2000) cites the following components as contributing to successful remediation of students:

- Implementation of mandatory assessment and placement

- Establishment of clearly specified goals and objectives for developmental programs and courses

- Use of mastery learning techniques in remedial courses

- Provisions of a high degree of structure in remedial courses

- Use of a variety of approaches and methods in remedial instruction

- Application of sound cognitive theory in the design and delivery of remedial courses

- Provision of a centralized or highly coordinated remedial program

- Use of a formative evaluation to guide program development and improvements

- Establishment of a strong philosophy of learning to develop program goals and objectives and to deliver program services

- Provision of a counseling component integrated into the structure of remedial education

- Provision of tutoring performed by well-trained tutors

- Integration of classroom and laboratory activities

- Establishment of an institution wide commitment to remediation

- Assurance of consistency between exit standards for remedial courses and entry standards for regular curriculum

- Use of learning communities in remedial instruction

- Use of supplemental instruction, particularly video-based

- Provision of courses or workshops on strategic thinking

- Provision of staff training and professional development for those who work with underprepared students

- Provision of ongoing student orientation courses

- Integration of critical thinking into the remedial curriculum (p.45)

McCabe (2003) combined findings from studies of more than 30 years of his own, and Roueche and Roueche, which are summarized by McCabe as *16 Steps for an Effective Developmental Program*.

<u>16 Steps For An Effective Developmental Program</u>

1. Avoid the   negative connotation of *remedial*, choosing a more positive term like developmental or preparatory to describe   a program for underprepared students.

2. Adopt a centralized approach, or at least carefully coordinate the various units involved in program delivery.

3. Adopt goals for the total program effort, even if there is not a single remedial unit.

4. Provide professional development for all   faculty and staff who work with underprepared students.

5. Recognize that at-risk students need structure in courses and support services.

6. Recognize the importance of student orientation for new enrollees.

7. Incorporate counseling, study skills, and learning communities or   cohort groups in the program.

8. Integrate the work of tutors and mentors with   carefully selected faculty members.

9. Address the   issues   of   assessment, placement, late   registration, and simultaneous enrollment in   college-level courses, including   mandatory assessment and mandatory placement.

10. Establish consistency   between exit standards for remedial courses and entry standards for college-level courses.

11. Provide supplemental learning opportunities, particularly for skill practice.

12. Find the appropriate use of technology and media to support student learning.

13. Consider a case management approach for the least prepared students.

14. Embrace a variety of approaches and methods in program delivery.

15. Commit to program evaluation and the dissemination of results.

16. Expand and enhance pre-enrollment activity with the public schools. (p.25)

Boylan (2002) identifies success factors as a result of several major studies conducted through the National Center for Developmental Education.

1. Organizational, Administrative, and Institutional Practices

    1.1 Centralization of Program Activities

    1.2 Coordination of Developmental Education Courses and Services

    1.3 Management of Faculty and Student Expectations of Developmental Education

    1.4 Collaboration with Other Academic Units

    1.5 Establishment of Clearly Defined Mission, Goals, and Objectives

    1.6 Identification of Developmental Education as an Institutional Priority

    1.7 Provision of Comprehensive Support Services

    1.8 Use of Grant Funds for Innovative Program Development

    1.9 Integration of Developmental Education and Community Outreach

2. Program Components

    2.1 Mandatory Assessment and Placement

    2.2 Systematic Program Evaluation

    2.3 Formative Evaluation for Program Improvement

    2.4 Emphasis on Professional Development

    2.5 Provision of Tutoring

    2.6 Involvement in Professional Associations

    2.7 Adjunct Faculty as a Resource for Developmental Education

    2.8 Student Performance Monitoring by Faculty and Advisors

    2.9 Developmental Philosophy as a Guide to Program Activities

    2.10 Integration of Classrooms and Laboratories

3.   Instructional Practices

    3.1 Develop Learning Communities

    3.2 Accommodate Diversity Through Varied Instructional Methods

    3.3 Use Supplemental Instruction

    3.4 Provide Frequent Testing Opportunities

    3.5 Use Technology with Moderation

    3.6 Provide Frequent and Timely Feedback

    3.7 Use Mastery Learning

    3.8 Link Developmental Course Content to College-Level Requirements

3.9 Share Instructional Strategies

    a. Teach Critical Thinking
    b. Teach Learning Strategies
    c. Use Active Learning Technique

3.10 Use Classroom Assessment Techniques (pp. 7-104)

4.   Matching Your Own Program Against Best Practices

As previously discussed, developmental education success factors have been studied through the years and more recently in the research studied by Boylan (1997, 1999, 2002); Roueche, Milliron, and Roueche (2003); Roueche and Roueche (1993,1999); and McCabe (2000, 2003), although many others have contributed significantly to this body of knowledge such as Cross (1976, 1992, 1993, 1997) and Boylan, Bliss, and Bonham (1994, 1997).

One of the more important and compelling factors identified by McCabe (2003), which is supported by Roueche, Million, and Roueche's (2003) findings and never mentioned in Boylan's results, is the integration of a counseling component into the developmental education program. Early on, Roueche and Kirk (1973) speak of the necessity of personhood development of every student, which is supported by a sound-counseling program, and Moore (1970) describes the counselor as a specialist, an educator, and an emerging giant in remedial education in the community college. Daloz (1986) views counselors as mentors who promote the development of the student. Salvia and Ysseldyke (1981) note the importance of counselors in student development as deleterious events may have profound

effects on a student's development. According to Roueche and Snow, "Counselors are increasingly contributing their expertise to improving the learning climate" (1977) Roueche and Pittman (1972) viewed counseling and teaching as merging distinct activities. Further studies from the students' perspectives will investigate and discuss the realities of the critical impact this single component can have on the success of underprepared at-risk students.

A Model Program in Developmental Education

Best practices in developmental educational programs have been identified from more than 30 years of research. Few developmental education programs have reached their desired level of success in transforming theory into practice. Roueche and Roueche (1999) make the following recommendations to institutions dedicated to developmental education success:

- Recommendation 1: Examine the essential characteristics and components of other institutions' successful remedial courses and programs.

- Recommendation 2: Employ a more collaborative effort to learn from each other.

- Recommendation 3: Ask the questions about your own performance that are being asked about others, and take action.

- Recommendation 4: Provide a holistic approach to programs for at-risk students.

- Recommendation 5: Abolish voluntary placement in remedial courses.

- Recommendation 6: Create a more seamless web.

- Recommendation 7: Strengthen the web with other partnerships.

While its successes in developmental education have been numerous, The Community College of Denver (CCD) remains more dedicated than ever to the continued student success rate they have documented in recent years. According to Boylan (2002), "The Community College of Denver developed a systematic program evaluation plan for developmental education that measures a variety of outcomes for those who participate in developmental courses and services". Roueche, Ely, and Roueche (2001) published a study of CCD's commitment to "valuing diversity" – where this college was so serious about their commitment that they had been setting goals, achieving those goals, and raising the standard on performance every year for more than ten years. In accordance with CCD's commitment, faculty and staff developed the following programs that not only supported developmental education students directly through the Center for Educational Advancement but indirectly in terms of creating an institutional environment and commitment to student, faculty, and staff success.

- The Service Learning Center – integrates academic study and community/civic service to aid students in practical application and professional relationship development.

- The Teaching/Learning Center – provides professional development opportunities for CCD faculty and staff.

- The Special Learning Support Program – offers academic assistance and special accommodations to students with learning disabilities or

special learning needs.

- The Student Support Services – assists low-income, first generation students, and disabled students.
- The Summer Bridge Program – recruits area high school students.

- The Vocational Tutoring Services – provides tutoring services to academically needy and learning disabled students (Roueche, Ely, and Roueche, 2001)

CCD's commitment to supporting the efforts of faculty and staff is evident in their publications. O'Banion (1997) discusses CCD's success and provides *The Statement of Values for Teaching Excellence* that CCD adopted after several revisions and multiple open forums that were used to solicit feedback from faculty:

The Statement of Values for Teaching Excellence

1. Enables students to become independent learners.

2. Demonstrates a commitment to student outcomes (job readiness, skill levels, mastery of subject matter,)

3. Provides an opportunity for critical thinking and problem solving.

4. Provides linkages between instruction and real-world applications.

5. Demonstrates an excitement about teaching and learning.

6. Maintains high but realistic expectations.

7. Demonstrates appreciation of a diverse student population.

8. Encourages growth in students' self-esteem.

In addition to CCD, there are other exemplary developmental education programs that understand the value of hiring and supporting professional staff and

faculty. McCabe (2003) cites Central Carolina Community College, Kirkwood Community College, Oakton Community College, Owens Community College, Richland College, Valencia Community College, Miami-Dade Community College, Community College of Baltimore County and Piedmont Community College among others as having effective programs and practices in developmental education. Boylan (2002 states that, "Richland College provides several professional development opportunities for faculty to learn the best of current teaching techniques". According to Roueche and Roueche (1993), "Miami-Dade Community College allocates funds annually to staff development; approximately 25 percent of the funds are earmarked for minority affairs". "Santa Barbara City College is required by the state and federal grants supporting the math and English components of TAP to involve faculty in such staff development activities as workshops, reading, curriculum development, and identification of techniques successful with underrepresented ethnic minority and high-risk students" (Roueche and Roueche, 1993). Professional developmental education faculty and staff also need institutional support to increase student persistence.

Student Persistence Theories and Models

The second body of knowledge included in the literature review for this study is based on the research conducted through the years regarding factors related to student persistence. While the focus of this research has been primarily on university undergraduate and graduate students and not on remedial students, it

is relevant. This field of research continuously provides ongoing challenges: increasing student retention, decreasing student departure, increasing student persistence, reducing student attrition rates. Simply, if a student does not continuously present himself/herself to the educational institution, either in person or virtually through the Internet, then it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to have teaching and learning occur. There are many factors that have been identified as a result of decades of research that increase student retention rates.

> The study of student departure from higher education is not lacking for models which seek to explain why it is that students leave or drop out from college. Regrettably, most have been neither very effective in explaining departure nor particularly well suited to the needs of institutional officials who seek to retain more students on campus. (Tinto, 1993, p. 84)

Determining the factors which lead to the voluntary leaving of students from college and identifying factors which increase their persistence in the educational process have been lifetime quests of many researchers. Studies by Bean (1980, 1985), Cope and Hannah (1975), Pascarella (1980), Spady (1970, 1971), and Tinto (1975, 1982, 1987) (as cited in Pascarella, and Terenzini, 1991) share a common thread - student persistence and associated educational attainment is a significant function of the student's fit with the college environment.

For years, researchers have used several theoretical models to analyze student persistence in college (Spady, 1970; Tinto, 1975; Pascarella, 1980; Pascarella, Duby and Iverson, 1983; Bean and Metzner, 1985; Cabrera, Nora, and Castaneda, 1992; Cabrera, Castaneda, Nora, Hengstler, 1992) (as cited in Hoyt,

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1990). Tinto (1993) points out that Spady (1970) was the first to apply Emile

Durkheim's early work on suicide, in 1951, to the study of student persistence

(Figure 1). Tinto (1993) describes the longitudinal process by which students

come to leave college voluntarily in his model of persistence (Figure 2). Pascarella

and Terenzini (1991) developed a persistence model based on factors they believed

influenced the educational aspirations, persistence, and eventual level of

educational attainment a student eventually mastered (Figure 3). St. John, Cabrera,

Nora and Asker (2002) pointed out that Bean and Metzner (1985) studied the

independent variables contributing to how the student's educational aspirations

were shaped (as seen in Bean and Metzner's Attrition Model in Figure 4; personal

finances were only incorporated as relating to subsequent selection of institution

following personal educational aspirations.
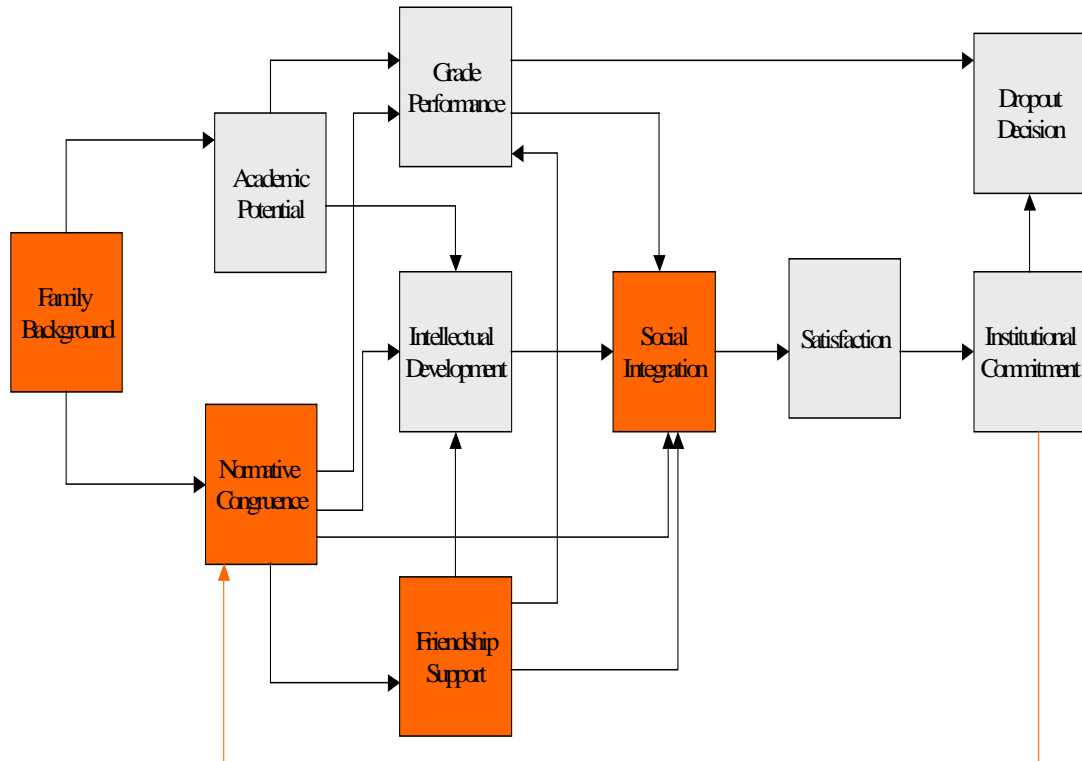
Figure 1

 (Graphic Source: Robole 2002 Dissertation Proposal, *Impact of Primary Relationships and Individual Attitudes on Doctoral Student Persistence*)
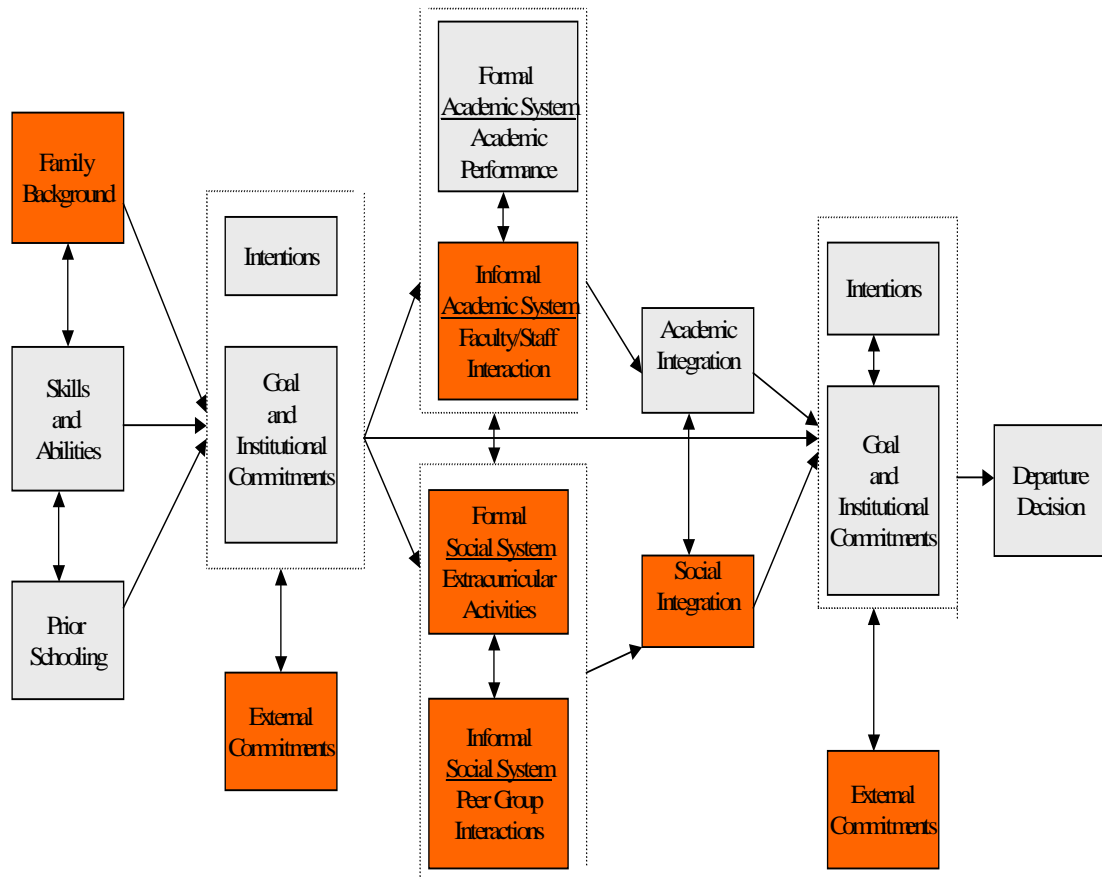
Figure 2 (Graphic Source: Tinto,V. (1993) *Leaving College – Rethinking the Causes and Cures of Student Attrition.* Chicago, IL.: The University of Chicago Press.)

Institutional Factors
 Faculty Culture
Organizational Structure
Institutional Image
Administrative Policies and
Decisions
Institutional Size
Admissions Standards
Academic Standards

**Student Background
Characteristics**
Family Background
Aptitudes
Aspirations
Personality, Orientations,
Goals, Values and Interests
Secondary School
Achievement and
Experiences
Expectations of
College
Openness to change

**Informal Contact
With Faculty**
Context
Exposure
Focus
Impact

**Other College
Experiences**
Peer Culture
Classroom
Extracurricular
Leisure Activities

**Educational
Outcomes**
Academic Performance
Intellectual Development
Personal Development
Educational/Career
Aspirations
College Satisfaction
Institutional Integration

**Persistence;
Withdrawal
Decisions**

Figure 3

(Graphic Source: Hoyt, J.E. (1990) *First Year Retention at Utah Valley State College*: A Follow-up Study http://www.uvsc.edu/ir/research/fall1990nr.htm)
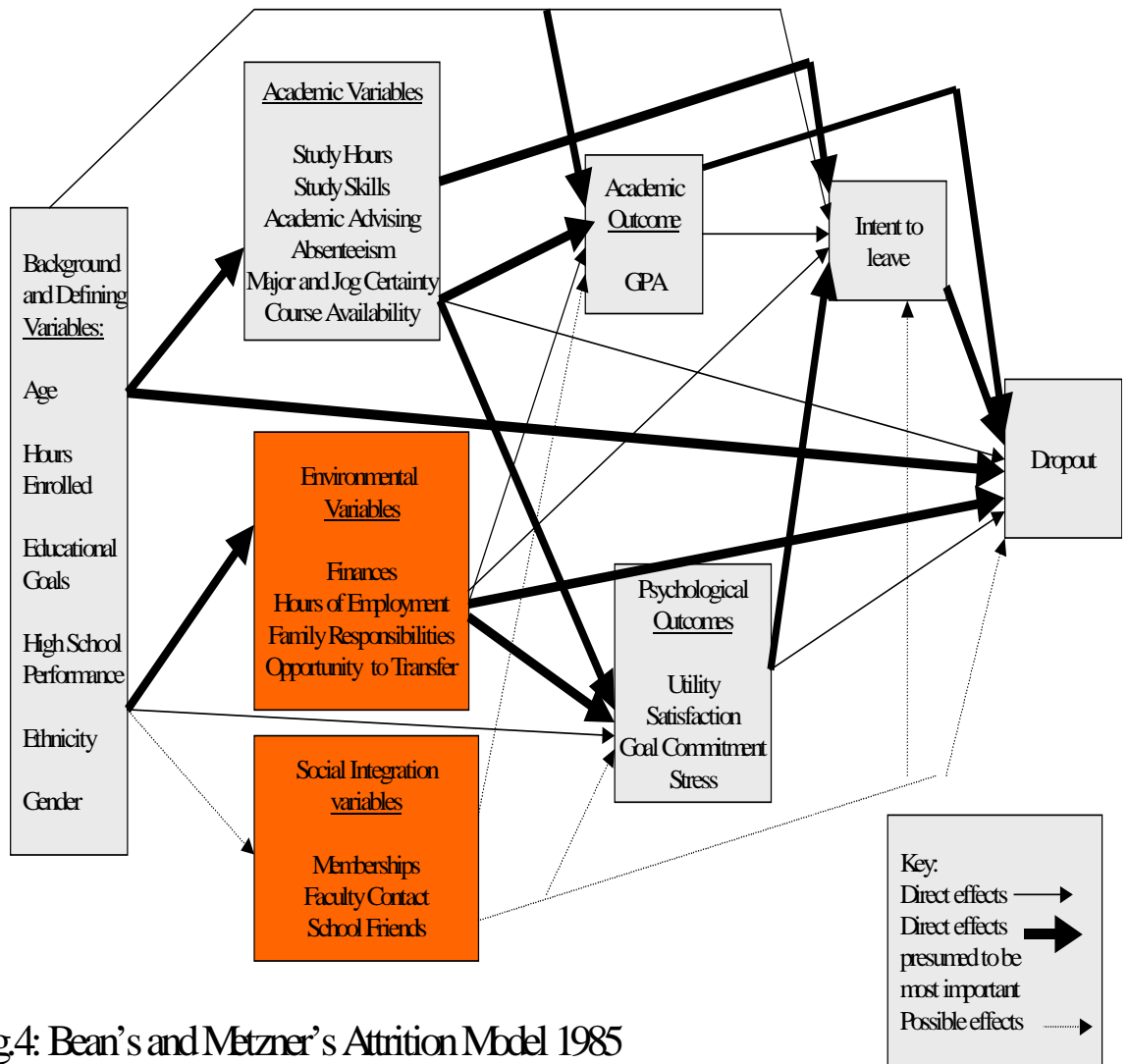
Fig.4: Bean's and Metzner's Attrition Model 1985

Academic Variables

Study Hours
Study Skills
Academic Advising
Absenteeism
Major and Jog Certainty
Course Availability

Background
and Defining
Variables:

Age

Hours
Enrolled

Educational
Goals

High School
Performance

Ethnicity

Gender

Academic
Outcome

GPA

Intent to
leave

Dropout

Environmental
Variables

Finances
Hours of Employment
Family Responsibilities
Opportunity to Transfer

Psychological
Outcomes

Utility
Satisfaction
Goal Commitment
Stress

Social Integration
variables

Memberships
Faculty Contact
School Friends

Key:
Direct effects ⟶
Direct effects
presumed to be
most important
Possible effects ⋯▸

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Few challenges in the higher educational environment have received as much attention and observation as (Spady 1970, 1971; Tinto 1975, 1982, 1987; Cope and Hannah, 1975; Pascarella, 1980; Raimst, 1981; and Bean, 1980, 1985, 1990). Pascarella and Terenzini (1991), while reviewing the evidence on the influence of college educational attainment, further considered the body of evidence that dealt with student persistence and withdrawal behavior patterns. They felt there was sufficient evidence to support the belief that where students begin the educational process has a great deal to do with their level of persistence (Pascarella and Terenzini, 1991, p. 372). Wlodkowski and Ginsberg (1995) relate student attrition to a presumption of deficit of some students as a result of their failing to conform to expectations or standards determined by a dominate culture. Wlodkowski (1999) points out that people work harder and are more persistent when they are personally motivated. Brint and Karabel (1989) feel that, while a complex issue, the climate of the institution has a significant influence on the persistence of the student. Hoyt (1999) noted that attrition rates and remedial placement rates were highest in disabled student groups, he compared to other student groups in his study. Davies, Shevlin and Bracken (2000) suggest that interactionist and ethnographic approaches would result in a more appropriate framework to determine student attrition rather than previously suggested models. Even though Tinto (2002) does not feel that retention could be the mirror image of dropout and that the factors that have been determined that relate to students

leaving college are not homogeneous to the ones which explain the institution's

ability to retain students; he has developed a set of factors which when

implemented do appear to increase student retention.

Chapter Summary

A review of the literature written about the determination of the factors

needed to remediate underprepared students effectively and the factors which

increase undergraduate and graduate student retention rates provides practitioners

with common best practices in developmental educational programs and multiple

theories and models to help them understand why students persist in or drop out of

higher education.

Table 1 - A Historical Timeline of Faculty/Student Involvement in Developmental Education.				
Researcher:	**Thornton (1966)**	**Blocker and Richardson (1968)**	**Roueche (1968)**	**Moore (1970,1971)**
Source:	Moore (1970)	Moore (1970)	Moore (1970)	Moore (1970)
	Community college teachers were recruited from other outside positions – business, industry, other disciplines in other institutions. (p.64)	Teachers and students are engaged in a cooperative process of an active interchange of intellectual stimulation, knowledge, and affective relationships. (p.74)	Developmental education requires motivated instructors who must motivate students towards a desire to learn. (p.81)	Students need instructors dedicated to the challenge of making human beings better than they were. (p.229) 1971 – Reported that many faculty believed the effects of cultural deprivation to be irreversible. (Roueche and Roueche, 1993, p.59)

A Historical View Faculty/Student Involvement in Developmental Education.–Continued - Page 2				
Researcher:	**Roueche (1974)**	**Cross (1976)**	**Roueche and Mink (1980)**	**Moore and Carpenter (1985)**
Source:	Roueche and Kirk (1974)	Roueche and Roueche (1993)	Roueche and Roueche (1993)	Roueche and Roueche (1993)
	Developmental educational instructors measure their success in terms of student success. Only instructors who volunteer to teach non-traditional students should ever be involved in developmental educational programs. (p.74) Faculty must be student-oriented. (p.65)	Staff working with developmental educational students should be selected based on their interest and commitment as well as their knowledge of learning problems. (p.59)	Called for instructors to change their attitudes toward the curriculum and students, to move from a subject orientation to a student orientation. Further noted – instructors are the key because they control the content and the delivery mode. (p.59)	Call for a change in faculty attitudes. Faculty were ill prepared to accommodate increasing student diversity of the underprepared population. (p.54)

A Historical View Faculty/Student Involvement in Developmental Education.– Continued - Page 3					
Researcher:	**Roueche and Baker (1987)**	**Boylan, Bonham, and Bliss (1994)**	**Astin (1998)**	**Roueche and Roueche (1999)**	**Spann (1990)**
Source:	Roueche, Milliron, and Roueche (2003)	Boylan, Bonham, and Bliss (1994)	Roueche and Roueche (1999)	Roueche and Roueche (1999)	McCabe (2003)
	Roueche and Baker's Teaching for Success Model (1987) – "Excellent teachers establish relationships with students through use of humor, showing personal interest in and respect for students." (p.57)	Characteristics of developmental education faculty and staff are examined.	Few full-time instructors want to work with at-risk students so they prefer to minimize their contact with them by hiring part-time instructors to teach the developmental education classes. (Astin, 1998, p.12)	Developmental Education instructors should be eager to teach the underprepared, flexible in their teaching strategies to accommodate students' needs and willing to spend the additional time, energy, and effort at-risk students require. (p.32)	"The classroom is the stimulus that makes people want to make contact after class." (p.55)

A Historical View Faculty/Student Involvement in Developmental Education.– Continued - Page 4			
Researcher:	**Roueche, Ely, and Roueche (2001)**	**McCabe (2003)**	**Roueche, Milliron, and Roueche (2003)**
Source:	Roueche, Ely, and Roueche (2001)	McCabe (2003)	Roueche, Milliron, and Roueche (2003)
	"Quality faculty are critical to student success." (p.114)	"Instructors have the most influence in shaping the classroom environment and thus have great power in making that environment a welcoming one for the underprepared student." (p.55)	Instructors making contact with students – "We were reminded of the importance of making contact with students – ont only by being there for them as teacher, but by creating communities and relationships that they can count on to provide support, encouragement, and help." "Creating situations in and out of the classroom that will foster the development of networks and "hot lines" will help establish relationships that can be important beyond the classroom walls and long after the course has been completed." (p.88)

Chapter III: Methodology

<u>Introduction</u>

The majority of the literature on factors relating to developmental student success has been written from the positivist perspective with an emphasis on the components identified as *best practices* in an effective developmental educational program and factors that increase students of higher educational persistence. The purpose of this study was to determine and examine the perspectives of developmental education instructors and underprepared students relating to student success, and a qualitative research design was deemed as appropriate for the study. In this chapter, methodology will be explained. The researcher was defined as an observer and interpreter of the findings. The qualitative research approach and strategy will be discussed.

<u>Selection of Method</u>

The methodology employed in this study was a qualitative research design – Interactive Qualitative Analysis (IQA). This design was selected to add depth, definition, and detailed substance regarding current perspectives of developmental instructors in higher education and of underprepared students on required success factors to the existing body of knowledge described in the literature. The focus of this research is to determine correlates and contrasts between general perspectives held by developmental instructors and by underprepared students regarding the factors required for their success.

<u>Qualitative Research</u>

"Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials – case study, personal experience, introspective, life story, interview, observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts – that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals' lives" (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994, p.2). Qualitative research has become accepted as the preferred method of inquiry, capturing a holistic perspective of an issue and using words to describe findings. This method is used commonly in research to provide an in-depth description of a specific issue, problem, or practice. The qualitative researcher studies subjects in their natural environment and attempts to draw meaning and interpret phenomena in terms of the contribution participants provide (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). The inductive approach attempts to provide information integrating and summarizing the empirical relationships among the research subjects which is one theme of qualitative inquiry. However, according to Northcutt and McCoy (2002), "by the time one reaches the state of generating research questions, *deduction* is the primary analytical tool…generating research questions once constituencies have been defined is deductive, which is to say a fixed number of constituencies always results in a given number of comparisons." (p.18) "Grounded theory was developed by Glaser and Strauss and can be described as a general methodology for developing theory that is grounded in data systematically gathered and analyzed" (Strauss and Corbin, 1994, p. 273). The

phenomenological approach places the research subjects' experiences at the center

of the inquiry (Mertens,1998). Therefore, generalizations *may be* drawn from the

commonality of experiences that likely will be discovered as a result of this study.

Dr. Norvell Northcutt developed Interactive Qualitative Analysis (Northcutt, 2002)

at The University of Texas at Austin as a systematic approach supporting the

grounded theory. "IQA attempts to integrate and reconcile some of the disjunctures

in theorizing about the purposes and methods of qualitative research, and also

describes a detailed, applications-oriented, systematic process by which data,

analysis, and interpretation are integrated into a whole" (Northcutt and McCoy,

2002, p. xv). IQA provides a systematic approach to qualitative data gathering,

aggregation, analysis, synthesis, and interpretation. Therefore, the IQA process

provides an appropriate approach to the exploration of the relationship between

developmental instructors and their students regarding their views on factors for

student success.

Interviews conducted for qualitative research studies are generally

unstructured or minimally structured (Mertens, 1998). Focus groups and individual

interviews are the foundation for the initial data gathering of the IQA process.

Information provided in the focus groups is used to develop the individual

interview protocols. Participants in the focus groups identified generalized topical

areas from a broad perspective that were then examined in depth in the individual

interviews. Krueger (1988) described the characteristics of questions for focus

group interviews as follows:

- Usually, focus groups interviews include less than 10 questions and generally around 5 or 6 total.

- Focus group interviews use open-ended questions such as, "Where does your child usually play?"

- Avoid using "why" questions as these questions can set off a defensive reaction by the respondent.

- Questions should be developed carefully. Brainstorming sessions with colleagues can generate many questions then these questions can be reduced to establish a critical question set.

- The context for questions should be established so participants are ready and prepared to respond.

- There should be enough information in each question so that the participant clearly understands what exactly is being asked for.

- Questions should be arranged in a logical order from a more general perspective funneled down to specifics. (p.98)

The group of developmental instructors represented the first focus group; and

the group of underprepared students, who are currently in developmental education

at the same institution and who are taught by instructors from the first focus group,

comprised the second focus group.

Individual interviews were minimally structured only. "Generally speaking,

qualitative researchers tend to favor semistructured or unstructured individual

interview formats" (Mertens, 1998, p.322). Based on the generalized topical areas

defined in the focus groups, individuals were asked to comment on these areas privately.

In an effort to add depth and rigor to this study, the instructors were asked, in their individual interviews, about their perspectives of the affinities identified by the student focus group. The students in this study were not given the same opportunity to comment individually on the affinities identified as a result of the instructor focus group session.

Sample Size

The sample sizes for the two focus groups and follow-up individual interviews were small. One group of 19 developmental instructors comprised the first focus group. One group of 20 underprepared students comprised the second. The groups were kept small in an effort to provide a purposeful sample, utilizing participants who were able to provide detailed information based on their individual experiences and knowledge. A purposeful sample was optimal for this study given the power of selecting "information-rich cases for study in depth" (Patton, 1990, p.169). In this study, participants were selected who could provide immediate responses relative to their experiences in developmental education, in general, and the institutional experiences they had in common.

<u>Participants</u>

The developmental instructor focus group was a non-homogenous group as members represented multiple ethnic groups, race, age, and gender. The developmental instructor focus group participants were selected as a result of:

- their association with a common institution and developmental education department,

- their documented years of experience as remedial or developmental education instructors, and

- their willingness to participate in this study and consider current policy and procedures, and identify and describe potential areas of improvement.

The underprepared student focus group was also a diverse group of participants in terms of race, age, gender. These participants were selected based on:
- their association to the common institution and developmental education department, and

- their willingness to participate in this study and make their voices heard regarding their perceptions of what they need to succeed in the developmental educational process.

<u>Issue Statements</u>

According to Northcutt and McCoy (2002), "Different constituencies have different perspectives on the same phenomenon, so the issue statement must be meaningful to each….the issue statement is quite simple and is always a variation of *Tell me about*…, but it must be presented in terms that are real to a given constituency." (p.17) Each focus group was presented with an issue

statement that is designed to elicit thoughts, perceptions, and ideas on the topic

of underprepared student success factors. The remedial instructor focus group

responded to the following issue statement:

> You have been supplied with ample index cards and markers. For this portion of the exercise, please respond individually without consulting your colleagues.
>
> Now, please take a moment to close your eyes and relax. Please think about your life and experience in higher education and especially of your experience in this college. Reflect on your experiences, feelings, and thoughts as a remedial instructor. Now, think about your students for a moment. Picture yourself teaching in your classroom. Now, picture yourself consulting with a student about his/her educational needs. Think about the different faces and attitudes of your students.
>
> What words come to mind when I ask the question, "What do underprepared students need to be successful in their developmental coursework? Now, please open your eyes and write those words on the index cards in front of you. Please only write one word or thought per card. You may use as many cards as you like; I have more in the event you run short.
>
> Once again, the question is what words or phrases come to your mind when you consider what is required of underprepared students for them to be successful in their developmental education coursework.

The underprepared student focus group responded to the following issue

statement:

> You have been supplied with ample index cards and markers. For this portion of the exercise, please respond individually without consulting your friends or other students in the group.
>
> Now, please take a moment to close your eyes and relax. Please think about your life and experience in higher education and especially of your

experience in this college. Reflect on your experiences, feelings, and thoughts as a student. Picture yourself sitting in the classroom. Now, picture yourself consulting with an instructor about your educational needs. Think about your progress in the developmental education process and in school.

What words come to mind when I ask the question, "What do you as a developmental education student need to be successful in your developmental coursework? Now, please open your eyes and write those words on the index cards in front of you. Please only write one word or thought per card. You may use as many cards as you like; I have more in the event you run short.

Once again, the question is what words or phrases come to your mind when you consider what is necessary for you as a developmental student to be successful in your developmental coursework.

<u>Interviews</u>

Prior to the follow-up individual interviews, each participant was asked to complete a demographics questionnaire (appropriate to the individual as instructor or student). These data provided personal information on each respondent and helped to facilitate additional interview scheduling as needed.

Follow-up individual interviews were conducted with each of the participants in the two focus groups. The individual interviews were conducted in an unoccupied classroom at the college. Each individual interview was audio-taped and transcribed by one of the researcher's agents. Following each individual interview, the researcher documented perceptions, thoughts, feelings, and behaviors/actions in a journal to provide an audit trail of the research process and

proceedings. Following each individual interview, the audio-tape data were

rendered into transcriptions and the interviews were coded individually.

Analysis of the Data Process

Data from the individual interviews were analyzed using axial coding and

theoretical coding. In the axial coding process, affinities were identified by the

respective focus groups and documented. When the axial coding process was

complete, each interview was re-coded using the theoretical code method. During

this process, patterns of relationships and influences between the affinities were

established. Once coding was complete, following the IQA process, Pareto Charts

were developed. According to Northcutt and McCoy (2002), the Pareto principle

states, "minority of the variables in a system will account for the majority of the

total variation in outcomes" (Systems Relationships, Pareto Principle, Screen 1).

As a result, the bulk of the variation in the system was supported only by a

relatively few affinity relationship pairs.

The affinity pair relationships identified as a result of the theoretical coding

of the individual interviews were incorporated into the Inter-Relationship Diagram

(IRD). Primary and secondary drivers of influence were determined once

directional arrows were applied, based on the theoretical coding findings, and then

were tabulated. Primary drivers were defined as those affinities that have a

significant influence on other affinities. Primary outcomes, on the other hand, were

defined as those affinities that are themselves significantly influenced by other

affinities. Secondary drivers and outcomes are influenced by and provide

influence on the primary drivers and primary outcomes. These relationships are

represented in a systems graphical design format-System Influence Diagram (SID).

The SID is a modified basic graphical/path diagram that represents the

affinities and the relationships between the affinities that develop from the

theoretical coding and the tabulation used in the IRD. The basic graphical/path

diagram is modified by the allowance of a recursive path. The design of the

diagram provides for feedback loops to be incorporated representing a dynamic

perpetuating movement in the system.

<u>Chapter Summary</u>

This qualitative study employed the structure, the data-gathering and

rendering system, and the analysis and interpretation format of Interactive

Qualitative Analysis (IQA). Focus groups and individual interviews provided the

raw data that was processed through the IQA system.

Chapter IV: Findings

The purpose of this study was twofold. The first purpose was to determine what developmental instructors and their students viewed as the most significant factors to the students' success in their developmental studies. The second purpose was to explore the relationship between developmental instructor and student regarding their perspectives on success factors. In this chapter, the instructors' and students' voices are presented as they responded to both the first and second purpose of this study. The instructors' voices will also be heard in their response to the students' opinions of what they viewed as factors contributing to or denying them their opportunities for success in their developmental studies.

<u>Demographics</u>

As described in the methodology of the study, two focus groups were held: one of developmental education instructors and one composed of developmental education students. Twenty-one instructors were scheduled to attend; however, only 18 arrived to participate. Twenty-five students were scheduled to attend; however, only 20 arrived to participate in their focus group session. Thus, this study reflects the experiences and perspectives of a total of 38 participants. The instructors represented a diverse group, varying in age, years of experience, and educational backgrounds. Their demographics include:

Table 2: Demographics of Male Developmental Education Instructors

Male Instructors	Instructional Discipline	Total Years As Instructor	Full- or Part-time	Education	Levels Taught	Ethnicity
FG/I-43	Writing	6-10	Full	MA-Eng.	D/E-C	White
FG/I-49	Writing	21+	Full	BA-Jou.	K/12 D/E-C	African-American
FG/I-1	Math	21+	Full	MA-Math	D/E-C	White
FG/I-92	Math	11-20	Part	BA-Math	K/12 D/E-U	White
FG/I-52	Reading	11-20	Full	MA-Hist.	K/12 D/E-C	White
FG/I-75	Math	21+	Full	Doc-Ed.	D/E-C	African-American
FG/I-62	Study Skills	21+	Full	BA-Soc.	D/E-C	African-American
FG/I-51	Math	6-10	Part	Doc-Ed.	K/12 D/E-C	African-American
FG/I-31	Math	0-5	Part	MBA	D/E-C	White
FG/I-79	Math	6-10	Full	MA-Math	D/E C-U	White
FG/I-11	Math	0-5	Part	BA-Math	D/E	White

FG- Focus Group participant, I- Interview participant, D/E- Developmental Education, C- College, U- University

Table 3: Demographics of Female Developmental Education Instructors

Female Instructors	Instructional Discipline	Total Years As Instructor	Full- or Part-time	Education	Levels Taught	Ethnicity
FG/I-81	Math	21+	Part	BA-Math	K/12 D/E	White
FG/I-7	Reading Writing	11-20	Part	BA-Eng.	K/12 D/E	White
FG/I-1	Math	21+	Full	MA-Math	D/E-C	White
FG/I-28	Math	6-10	Full	MA Curr/Dev	D/E-C	White
FG/I-16	Writing	21+	Full	MA-Psy.	K/12 D/E	African-Ameri.
FG/I-76	Study Skills	0-5	Full	MA-Psy.	D/E-C U	African-Ameri.
FG/I-107	Math	21+	Full	BA-Math	K/12 D/E-C	African-Ameri.
FG/I-2	Reading	21+	Full	MA-Ed.	D/E	White

FG- Focus Group participant, I- Interview participant, D/E- Developmental Education, C- College, U- University

The students were a diverse group, varying in age, experience in education, and program interest. Their demographics included:

Table 4: Demographics of Female Developmental Education Students

Female Students	Dev/Ed. Area(s)	Degree Desired	High School Graduate	Marital Status # of Children	Employed	Age	Ethnicity
FG/I-32	R,W,Ma	AAS	No	S-0	No	25	African
FG/I-6	R,W,Ma	Cert.	No	M-4	No	37	Hispanic
FG/I-33	R,Ma	Cert.	Yes	S-0	No	19	Africa-Am
FG/I-4	R,W	Cert.	Yes	S-0	Yes	19	White
FG/I-13	R,W,Ma	AAS	No	M-3	No	24	Hispanic
FG/I-35	R,W,Ma	AAS	Yes	S-0	Yes	22	Africa-Am
FG/I-3	R,W,Ma	AAS	Yes	D-0	No	37	White
FG/I-1	Ma,R	AAS	Yes	S-2	Yes	33	Africa-Am
FG/I-2	Ma	AAS	Yes	S-1	Yes	22	Hispanic

FG- Focus Group participant, I- Interview participant, R- Reading, W- Writing,
Ma-Math, M- Married, S- Single, D- Divorced

Table 5: Demographics of Male Developmental Education Students

Male Students	Dev/Ed. Area(s)	Degree Desired	High School Graduate	Marital Status # of Children	Employed	Age	Ethnicity
FG/I-37	R,W,Ma	AAS	Yes	S-0	No	19	Africa-Am
FG/I-12	Ma	AAS	Yes	M-3	Yes	27	White
FG/I-31	R,Ma	AAS	Yes	S-0	Yes	18	Africa-Am
FG/I-39	R,Ma	AAS	Yes	S-0	No	19	White
FG/I-9	R,W	AAS	Yes	S-0	No	23	White
FG/I-10	R,W,Ma	Cert.	Yes	D-5	No	41	Africa-Am
FG/I-17	R,W,Ma	Cert.	No	S-2	No	29	Africa-Am
FG/I-8	Ma	AAS	Yes	S-2	Yes	35	White
FG/I-16	R,W,Ma	Cert.	Yes	S-0	No	18	White
FG/I-18	R,W,Ma	AAS	Yes	S-0	Yes	18	White
FG/I-34	R,W,Ma	Cert.	Yes	S-0	Yes	18	Africa-Am

FG- Focus Group participant, I- Interview participant, R- Reading, W- Writing, Ma-Math, M- Married, S- Single, D- Divorced

Both focus groups were held in classrooms in the developmental education department at Texas State Technical College. The instructors' focus group was held late one afternoon to accommodate daytime and evening teaching schedules. The students' focus group was held at lunch one day between their scheduled classes-with pizza provided.

Introductions were unnecessary in the instructors' focus group as they all are employed by the same institution and have worked together. Following social exchanges and light hors d'oeuvres, the instructors were instructed to sit and be comfortable, and then asked to close their eyes and reflect on the following narrative statement:

Please take a moment to close your eyes and relax. Please think about your life and experience in higher education and especially of your experience in this college. Reflect on your experiences, feelings, and thoughts as a remedial instructor. Now, think about your students for a moment. Picture yourself teaching in your classroom. Now, picture yourself consulting with a student about his/her educational needs. Think about the different faces and attitudes of your students.

What words come to mind when I ask the question, "What do underprepared students need to be successful in their developmental coursework? Now, please open your eyes and write those words on the index cards in front of you. Please only write one word or thought per card. You may use as many cards as you like; I have more in the event you run short.

Once again, the question is what words or phrases come to your mind when you consider what is required of underprepared students for them to be successful in their developmental education coursework.

The instructors were quiet for about 10-12 minutes, writing their thoughts on cards and sifting through their responses to cull duplications. As they began posting their cards on the walls of the room, categories emerged. After all cards had been successfully grouped into categories, the categories were named. These categories represented the affinities in Interactive Qualitative Analysis.

Developmental Education Instructors

The focus group of developmental education instructors generated the following group of affinities (Table 6).

Table 6: Focus Group Affinities – Developmental Education Instructors

Affinity	Descriptors
External Support	Family support; counseling and advising assistance; child care options; financial assistance
Instructional Support	Caring instructors; positive personal interaction with instructors; encouragement from instructors
Student Individual Resources	Transportation; finances; available time; personal health
Student Management Skills	Time management; resource management; intensity of personal demands; academic and personal responsibilities
Student Personal Skills	Academic abilities; level of persistence; depth of dedication; work ethic
Physical Environment	Adequate air conditioning; chalkboards; flash cards

Each of the instructors was interviewed privately to glean personal perspectives on each of the recorded affinities. Each of the affinities is detailed below through an amalgamation of the instructors' words and their descriptions of their educational and personal experiences. Quotes from their interviews are designated by this symbol (♦).

1. <u>External Support</u>

This affinity concerns the factors that either provide or influence external support for the students. The instructors described external influences such as family support, counseling and advising assistance, and childcare options. In the interviews, the concept of external support was embraced as very influential to the success of developmental education students.

♦ Obviously I think it's essential to have family support. With that being in place I think the student would be more inclined to perhaps be a little bit more motivated and perhaps a little more inclined to follow through.

♦ I feel like the support doesn't just begin when the student reaches the age to begin college, but it should begin as soon as they are old enough to understand what the education process is all about. A family that encourages the student to go to school will find that in the long run, those students will probably have a better idea of what school is all about and probably be more determined to succeed in college than one who's focus is not on the family. I have found that taking the oldest child, at least in our family, and setting that child as an example for the others causes the others to follow that one and then they understand when they get to be that age, school, college is just a natural process. When the children in our family count up their educational years, usually they count from high school through college then they make preparations for life after that.

♦ Personally, I'm support for a 55-year-old daughter that is fixing to go to school here. I'm her family support, moral support, financial support and even her teacher. It all works.

♦ From my experience, I found that it is very important that the student receive external support from someone, one person or persons, who he or she has a relationship with to support and to motivate and help them to

understand the importance of what he or she is trying to accomplish academically. The family, the young student right out of high school, of course the parents, the mother, father and sister, all offer external support. If we are speaking of an older married student with a spouse and children, the family can be there to support what he or she is trying to do. Likewise, the family can make the college experience excruciatingly painful. The single student with no family may have friends or coworkers or others who are there to lend external support. I think it is important that students have an on campus a support system from the counseling department to provide assistance if they have concerns or problems they need to resolve which would better enable them to reach their educational goals. Children of a single mom can be a debilitating distraction, a hindrance which could be an easily resolved obstacle to the student's educational success.

♦ I had an experience last week that one of my students didn't have a person to take care of his little girl and so he left the child with a neighbor and he was worried the whole class time. Several times I let him use my phone to go and call to check on her and she was crying. He eventually had to leave the class to go get her. So, especially when you have head of household, sometimes a male and sometimes a female, they have the same identical problems.

While all the instructors felt external support was essential to the success of their developmental education students, some felt they had no influence or control over those external support factors.

♦ As far as external support for students, especially for community college and the specific demographics of this school, they are probably more desperately needed than a lot of first time college students, than say at the university level. My indirect experience is watching students have to drop out because of family concerns. They have to drop out because of childcare concerns and there is really nothing as an instructor I can do other than to wish them well. That's kind of a shame when you see talented students who really are dedicated to what they are doing, having no external support options to help. And the school, I would say, is simply unable to for whatever reasons, provide these.

Other instructors voiced their desire to be a supporting factor in the dynamic coordination between external components.

♦ When I think of external support, I automatically think of how it relates to what we have identified as there need to find that balance between the family, the school, and the student. So when the student, let's say, is brought to the institution initially, a lot of times parents just drop them off. When they simply drop them off at the curb, it reminds me of first grade or kindergarten when kids first go to school, and so the child entrust the

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parent, but yet when the parent leaves they cry. I think parents are molding

them at the point where they are not crying as the parent see them, but the

students are still crying out in other ways. It is almost like the child acts

out for a week in kindergarten but with us we probably have them act out

for six weeks because they are dropped off and then they are left by

themselves to people who they really don't know. I think there is an

assumption of security. Even though the parent is the one who they

entrusted, when students come to college for the first time, they have left

their foundation by stepping out. When they arrive, I think there should be

a net to engage the student as well as the parent. Maybe a group or

instructional orientation which I think would help initially so that the

parents would be engaged as opposed to saying, "well this is a tech college

and we'll just dump them off here." I think this is a big factor so that the

student will know that the parental security as external support does not end

just because he/she started school. Then the institution and instructors can

build on that parental security and foundation that they are bringing with

them; there is an opportunity for some kind of connection and continuity.

There was consensus among the group of instructors that external support is

a critical factor in the success of developmental education students. Their mutual

agreement was summarized by this comment, "Everybody needs external support.

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One cannot go this alone. Higher education is a goal in which you must have a foundation, but you also need the external support."

2. Instructional Support

The group of instructors described this affinity as the influence instructors provide to assist developmental education students in achieving their academic goals. They used the descriptors; caring, encouraging, sympathetic, and approachable to describe how they felt instructors should relate to their students. Few of the instructors felt that they actually had little influence on the success of their students.

> ♦ I don't think the instructor should go much further than just teaching the content. Being friendly puts the instructor in a compromised position; it can cause some problems, animosity or something between you and the student. You lose your professional rapport with them or something, especially if you give them the wrong advice or something. I don't recommend that you try to be a Jack-of-all-Trades, just teach the class. If they get it, they get it, if they don't, they don't.

The majority of the instructors in the focus group felt that they had the potential to greatly influence the students' chances of success, either positively or negatively. Their voices rang out to the positive influences they hoped that they had on their students.

♦ I believe that the connection between the instructor and the student needs to be made quickly, at the outset of the class. You can establish that positive connection the first few days, first few meetings are pretty critical. I try to learn all their names as quickly as I can and address them by their names. My relationship with students, a lot of times, extends from the very start, right here in their developmental classes to their walk across the stage. I encourage a positive relationship and I tell them so.... some times they come back after remediation for me to help them in their higher-level math classes. I've done that. A lot of them wanted me to attend their graduation. There are some who have kept in touch. In fact, tomorrow evening a student...is giving his wife a surprise birthday party and he called me and asked me to come. He was my student first of all. Then he found out that I had a house for rent, so he rented a house from me. They became real close friends. One of my old remedial students came in today and wanted some help, some issues with physics. I believe here in developmental education, just like I believe when I was teaching public school…I'm being paid to make sure they learn in spite of themselves. The relationship between instructor and student has possibly the greatest impact on their success.

♦ I think the instructional support is very important. In fact that is one of the basic problems that you see in developmental or other type classes when they are real large. They can be too large…you can't get to know

student individually. I think you lose a lot of students because of a lack of

instructional support. When there is an interment relationship between the

instructor and the student in terms of knowledge, understanding,

interaction, and coordination, then they don't develop a level of comfort

with each other which helps students persist in their educational efforts.

♦ I have opportunities to positively influence students' lives and to provide

instructional support all the time. If it only means providing a concerned

ear. I've had students that will come and sit down and talk about their

family. I had a student the other day to come in and he was having a whole

lot of family problems. I think he had gotten a divorce. He was at the

point, he said, of taking his own life. The reason that he was so upset was

because his wife had cheated on him or something of that nature. I asked

him if he had talked to his parents about the situation. His reply was that he

doesn't talk to his mother or father. He always goes to his grandfather

because his grandfather has more wisdom than his mother and father. His

grandfather had encouraged him to pick up from where he was. So he was

back in school pursuing his education without his wife and focusing now on

this part of his life. I told him I thought his grandfather was very wise.

♦ I think instructional support is the key factor for student's success in our

program. I've been at schools, universities, colleges and community

colleges where developmental instruction was looked at as a menial job,

kind of the stepson of the rest of the campus. In fact if you could not teach anything else, maybe you can teach developmental. In fact, when I got my masters and wanted to teach freshman composition, many folks view freshman composition as just grunt work, you can imagine what they think of developmental! It's like, "oh, God, I've got to teach these dummies something", and they could not care less about being in that classroom, much less providing instructional support. They could care less about helping the students. They could care less that those students understand what they are talking about. At universities especially you get a lot of that attitude. More the reason I am dedicated to providing as much instructional support to my students as I have energy to.

♦ I think young people pick up when the instructor genuinely cares or not. They're intuitive. Students know whether or not the instructor likes them. They know whether or not the instructor cares about them because they're still children in that sense. It is hard to get someone to accept your way of thinking and what you're attempting to teach them if they view you as transparent or uncaring. How can you be an effective instructor if your not willing to make every effort humanly possible to lend instructional support to every one of your students?

♦ An instructional process requires the student to identify with something. That's important. To learn something, you have to identify with it. And

normally, it's the source in which you get that information from. So that

makes the instructor a very key component of the learning process. The

student actually identifies with the instructor himself, plus with the

instructor has the ability to give another factor. Let's take automotive for

instance. The instructor has the ability to help the student learn to identify

with an automotive technician. Then if a person is delivering some kind of

instruction, the person receiving that information should identify with the

person that's delivering the information. As students, we identify and relate

information to the instructor equally as much as we do the information

received. This is why instructional support is so important.

♦ The student graduates from the institution and states that they learned

math for instance, but most of the time, they also state who they learned it

from. That's the key to it. They relate their learning to the instructor.

Students also relate the lack of instruction to the instructor, the lack of

instructional support. The very lack of instructional support is what in many

cases has placed them in remediation in the first place. They've had

negative instructional support. It wasn't the materials at all. It wasn't the

content or the curriculum at all. It was the lack of instructional support.

They've been negatively impacted, actually damaged from instructional

support, the lack of it. As developmental educational instructors, we have to

overcome this damage before we can have a positive experience with the

student. So actually, the instructor has to identify the student as suffering from a negative experience of lack of instructional support and overcome it before they can move forward and help the student identify in a positive manner. We have to be able to work through that first before positive learning can happen. I've had students in class who have been able to describe this concept…they say it's just like having a bad accident or something. If you have a bad accident you're nervous about driving. That's the same thing about having a poor instructor or the lack of positive instructional support. After being involved in a bad accident, is hard to get back in that car and drive again. In reality, I don't think most instructors consciously understand this process.

♦ I think every student wants to go into a classroom hoping they will like their teacher that year, or at least get along. I think most students and teachers walk in the first day, first week and it's… we don't want a confrontation. We want to get through this. We want a successful semester. Teachers, especially the semester courses, have a very small window to gain students' trust and openness and it's real easy to lose, real easy to shut down. If you are seen as an instructor who is approachable, then you become support for them. They will ask you questions. They won't be afraid to visit during your office hours. They won't be afraid to speak up and participate in class. But if, and this goes back to my

philosophy on having to do these things, the instructor is viewed as very compartmentalized, and there's no interaction other than that called upon, speak when you are spoken to, students will do only that. It's not as rewarding in my mind, a classroom experience for those students as the give and take exchange. The positive interaction between instructor and student is critical to the student's success. I think it's more critical than probably any other relationship on the campus. Students will stay in a class because they like an instructor. They will work hard because they like an instructor, or they want that instructor's approval, especially students who are driven by grade point. There will be the students, first time in college, they're relying on that personal interaction because this is the college teacher. The teacher is right. There is that kind of mindset of some students. So the idea of working hard just to get the grade is there, but the teacher's approval is paramount. The positive interaction helps because building that relationship becomes an important piece which integrated with the external support provides an excellent system for success.

♦ We as instructors need to encourage our students every chance we get. That doesn't mean to coddle them, to give in, we need to be there to show them we *are there*. Put yourself in that person's shoes and understand what he or she is going through. Only when the instructor interacts with the student can they make sure the student can comprehend the information and

make meaning out of it. The instructor must let the students know from the first day of class that they are there for them, if they have any concerns or problems with respect to the work that they are required to do. This is the last chance for many remedial students. It is important for the student to see that the instructor is very dedicated and very much enjoys what they are doing and that is important to the success of the student. The student must believe that the instructor is not just standing before the class just to get the paycheck. We don't talk enough about or acknowledge enough about how important the perception the student has of that instructor in the instructor's role and the impact that perception has on the student's success. Look at it from a different point of view, 90% of developmental students don't want to be here anyway, they have all failed before. They are used to failing. Many have never experienced any academic success. Many of my students operate at the third and fourth grade level academically. They hate the stigma that is attached to developmental education. Most technical students simply want to learn a trade and look forward to spending time in their program classes but end up in remediation instead. I think it is important that the developmental education instructors care enough about their students to make an effort to integrate varying technologies into the remedial process. Care enough to go the extra mile to make remediation relative to the students' personal interests, which are the very reasons they

make the effort to attend the institution. Help the student understand that developmental studies will enhance what they are trying to learn in their technical field. I see it as being so important, tying the two together.

♦ Instructors must show the students that they are there to help them. When you start breaking a concept down where a student can understand it, then some of the other students who didn't grasp it will grasp it also. A lot of students do not participate in class. In my classes, I try to get all my students involved. Participating may be difficult for some students because they are shy but I try to bring the shyness out of them and this gives them an opportunity to know that they can communicate. It gives them confidence. I also try to emphasize to them that communication is the most important thing in the world of work. If you can't communicate then your chances of getting promoted or succeeding on the job will be very, very slim. A lot of my students have told me that I have helped them to learn how to communicate. You have to show student you are concerned with their work and with their needs. This is really what's important. If a student tells you, well, I've been out of school 20 years and I just don't see how I'm going to be able to do master this concept. You must encourage them.

♦ Instructional support is very important. I've taken enough classes and had enough professors myself to know which ones I wanted to really put

my energy into and they were ones I liked as instructors. These instructors

maintained good interaction and it made us as students want to come to

class.

♦ It's my feeling that if you show students respect, most of the time you will

get that respect back. Showing that you care about them, answering their

questions, staying a few minutes, or even tutoring during office hours,

telling them that you are there if they need assistance. Many times students

will want to talk about a personal problem or something that's bothering

them and as long as it's discussed on a professional level, I think it helps

the students to have instructors who at least are willing to listen. Just

showing that you care about them as people and students is important.

As can be seen from these quotes, this affinity drives to the very heart and

soul of why many instructors are so dedicated to developmental education. Their

experiences and perspectives reflect the commonality of personal dedication to

their difficult challenges in academically developing their underprepared students.

3. Student Individual Resources

This affinity was described by the group of instructors as an area that could

have a significant impact on developmental education students' success. These

individual resources were identified as transportation, finances, and available time.

Several instructors pointed out the potential challenges of (having or not having)

these resources.

♦ A student and their resources or lack thereof is a personal thing. Many students come to class and before you can start teaching math you have to first listen to some of the things that have affected them before they got to the classroom. And you listen to those problems, like lack of transportation….what they don't have, they don't have. Sometimes students' can't help themselves and sometimes the instructor can help out in various ways. I've had students that have been hungry and have come and asked if I have something they could eat. I usually always try, to keep about five dollars in my purse and if the student does come to me hungry I can give him some lunch money. I do that because I was once a student and didn't have lunch money. I have nieces and nephews that might experience the same thing. When they come to pay it back I just pass it onto the next person. I think their individual resources are very important, and without those they cannot operate to the fullest extent, especially in the classroom. Even a minor lack of resources can present a major distraction to concentration and learning in the classroom. Many times I go to their desks and they are not working, it's not because they don't know the material, it's because they are having other problems, personal distractions. I try to stop and listen to those other problems when asked. I remember coming to one student's desk and I asked him what the problem was because he wasn't doing the work. He said that his mother didn't get him

out of jail in time that morning. He was a little late getting to class. I'm

amazed that they aren't ashamed or afraid. They will tell you anything,

whatever is troubling them, they will generally tell it to you. It's kind of

shocking to me. After awhile you get used to it. They don't call you out of

class…they will just say it right then and there in front of the whole class.

I'm the only one that's shocked. The other students have no problem with

it at all. I think their individual resources are important and what they don't

have, we can help out in those areas and we try.

♦ Of all students, remedial students need resources the most.

♦ Concern regarding a lack of resources can have a considerable impact on

a student's ability, not on their ability to learn but on their mindset with

their worrying about transportation and housing issues, and money issues.

That worry can impact their ability to concentrate and think on the matters

of the course content, course requirements. I try to listen and if sometimes

they do have some family issues where they need to leave class early, I

have no problem with that.

♦ I think a lot of our students come in not realizing what is required in

terms of individual resources, a lot of our students, I think, tend to live right

on the edge of stuff. They try to operate with so little resources. They seem

so desperate sometimes. Even if the chance for success if one out of a

million, they try. I encourage them to do all they can to really work on their

lack of resources to allow themselves a better chance for success. Some of

our students just barely have the ability to get here. I have students that are

working two jobs and trying to go to school here. A lot of students are

working full time, 11 to 7 at night and come here and have an 8:00 am class

and get out at 2:30. Then they drag home to the family, maybe they are a

single parent or fixing to be a single parent whether they realize it or not!

They are just on the edge with their personal resources. They don't have

enough, lots of sacrifices, some areas the school can help. Some external

entities can come in and help the student with their individual resources.

♦ Specific to this campus transportation is important. I've already, in three

weeks, fielded half a dozen phone calls from students with transportation

problems. Then at least that many or more personal comments before and

after class about why a student was late, again related to transportation.

Not just from off campus to campus, but on campus transportation. So

student individual resources are critical. Then there are finances, students

are trying to buy books, trying to buy supplies, and you hear the stories.

The checks aren't in, they don't have financial resources or support, they

had to spend money for rent, money for bills, and many students really are

struggling. Like anyone else, students not only have the added cost of a

household to maintain and families to care for, they have the cost of an

education, sometimes for themselves, sometimes in a two student

household. It can be quite a strain. I hear that from students and I see it.

I've had students who have missed six weeks of classes because they had to

go on construction jobs and pay for being in school that they weren't

attending. It's sort of damned if they do and damned if they don't. They

can't go to school without money and they can't get the money by going to

school. If I had an answer I would probably be somewhere other than the

department of education right now.

♦ So many of our students have financial difficulties. They have a lack of

resources and a number of them really don't know where to begin to look

for the resources that are available. We provide a lot of services on our

campus to aid students who have limited individual resources. We have

different offices on our campus that have knowledge of outside resources

that students can take advantage of. Our students ordinarily have very

limited money, this makes it difficult for them to concentrate on studies

when they are having to deal with some type of financial crisis. Of course a

good number of them also have transportation problems. For example, I

have some students that use the city transportation, the bus service and

from what I've been told there's a problem with the schedule so that's

presenting a problem in getting to class on time.

♦ Time is an important individual resource for students. Students must have

available time. This semester, I have had several students sign up for class,

but they never can stay for the entire class because they can't be late for work. I wonder if these students didn't know that they shouldn't sign up or make a commitment to take a college course, if they didn't have the hours free in their lives for 16 weeks. I believe they never even thought it through, amazing. So, I'm watching them carefully because they are less likely to succeed especially than people who are there all the time. Individual resources are very important.

Interestingly, one instructor viewed resources as an impediment to creativity and the need for resources as an opportunity for growth and development, a real-life challenge.

♦ When money was not available nor was the ability to go to certain schools and do certain things in certain neighborhoods back in the day and even when we didn't have money we tended to be better off because we relied on our own personal resources, our own creativity. I think there is a philosophy, I think there is a lot of convenience that has occurred for people, instead of us trying to come up with ways of developing resources. We no longer anticipate our own needs, so when a crisis occurs, we have forgotten how to respond. I think modern conveniences rob us of our ability to develop an "on the fly" solution of how to resolve a problem when before we didn't need a bunch of think tanks and a whole bunch of money to figure it out a basic

logical approach. What a wonderful individual resource, the ability to create

and think logically on the spur of the moment!

♦ It's almost like the issue itself of resources, whether students have them or

whether they don't have them, the whole issue of resources to some degree

has diluted our creativity as teachers, which has ironically resulted in

limiting the students' individual resources. As instructors, look what we

often teach by example, just by vying and competing for limited resources

we get away from being creative.   We get away from the very basics of

teaching and learning. Reading is a good example. We have computers, we

have books, we have all kinds of resources at our disposal, but still many of

our students don't know how to read.

These quotes detailing this affinity by the group of developmental education

instructors reflect the genuine concern they share in the increasing challenges their

students must face with ever-decreasing individual resources.

4. Student Management Skills

This affinity describes how well students manage their time, resources,

personal demands, and academic and personal responsibilities. The focus group of

developmental education instructors mutually agreed that the degree to which their

students could successfully manage all aspects of their lives played an important

role in their chances to succeed in their educational endeavors.

♦ Everyone needs to be able to manage their resources, their personal

demands, their academic and personal responsibilities, including our

students. The remedial student can't manage because they don't have

anything to manage.   As students develop and feel ownership, then they

can learn to take ownership. Once they take ownership and responsibility,

they can develop management skills. If they don't have ownership, they

don't have anything to manage. These concepts must be taught, but yet and

still it's a point in which the student starts to understand management skills.

So if students don't have things on their plates, like skills, abilities, and

knowledge, then they don't have any elements to manage on that plate.

Consider a person with personal demands, like kids at home, or a spouse at

home, they may manage those things. We see kids being neglected at home,

we see cars in the driveways that are scheduled to be repossessed, all of

which are mismanaged. These people don't have the understanding, they

don't see and feel the ownership. They see it as a bad trip. That's what

happens when we see a lot of individuals whether they are remedial or not

have kids and families, have big responsibilities and you say, "why can't

you fix that" they can't fix it because they don't see ownership. They don't

see it as theirs to manage. So, learning management skills and proficiency

in management skills comes from responsibility and ownership.

♦ Students who have management skills tend to be more successful and tend to succeed more easily than those who don't. We do have a lot of students that don't have management skills and they have their priorities a lot of times in the wrong place. Sometimes you have to sit down and talk with them and help them put their priorities in the right perspective, a healthy perspective. If they can make a priority adjustment, then they will be more successful. A lot of times they cannot accomplish this. The reason isn't always because they are goofing off, they just don't realize what is of importance in their lives. I always tell them their family is more important. If something happens to that child, you have to stop and take care of him or her, things of that nature, before you can concentrate on studying. Most of our developmental students don't manage their time well and can't find the time to study like they should. I remember one student I had came to me at the end of a lecture. I told them that, they weren't ready for the test. I extended his time to give him through the weekend for additional study time and then Monday he would sit for the test. He pronounced that he didn't believe in studying on weekends! I told him that studying should be a priority. I try to make students understand that this part of their lives, ages, 18 to 24 and 25, God gave them to get an education. If possible, lay everything aside and get that education. I told my nephew that at this time, even if he doesn't get anything to eat…the most important thing is to put

everything aside, get an education, then you may get a nice apartment, you may buy a nice car. Students need to learn the order of life. Management comes from order and organization. Students can work, go to school and manage their time and study at the same time. If it's possible not to have to work and go to school, that's an ideal situation that not many of us are allowed the privilege of. Many have to juggle work and school together, plus a family. I told my nephew that if he finds the right girl and he's in college, I would keep her safe, until he finishes.

♦ If the students can conquer the management skill activity then they are more likely to succeed in education, in life, and certainly in work. Most students don't manage their lives very well, most people don't manage their lives very well.

♦ I can relate to this just like the wind and the air because the older I got the better I understood how important it was to be organized and manage the time. I think managing time is based on personality. It's an individual thing. I think there are some people who are able to really do it well and then some people who don't. Once again, I think you can teach people. I believe you can teach people just about everything. So, I think young people can be taught at an early age how to manage time. They can be taught to see time management as being central to whether or not they're stressed out, frustrated in school, etc.

♦ As instructors and even as a community and as parents, I think that not

everybody is a good manager. To me the management is personal. It has to

do with how you manage yourself. I can manage myself pretty well, and

that comes with time and it comes with age. But it also comes to the

learning process. And you don't always have to be old before you get it

right. I think student's probably mismanage resources or don't utilize them

because they don't see how it fits into the scheme of their needs unless it's

sports or part in something entertaining. We talked about leadership. If

students could see the essence of how a leadership program or mentoring

could help them make money and get the kind of thing that they want in

life, I think that they would participate in it. Likewise, when students

understand how utilizing management skills can make their lives easier and

how learning them are well worth their time, then the concept of

developing management skills would have real meaning and value to them.

♦Our younger students aren't so hot on management skills. Some of the

older students that we have coming back to remediate their academic skills

understand the value of management skills, they've been out in the

workforce. They usually are pretty good at managing their time and

resources and provide positive examples for the younger students.

♦ Two reasons students have problems with their management skills. One,

they've never been exposed to management skills whatsoever, consciously

or even sub-consciously. Sometimes they are raised in an area where they just don't exist. The management skills that their parents had or didn't have, the management skills that other students had or didn't have that they grew up with where their only frame of reference. Management skills are as personal as other personal skills.

♦ Obviously, almost anything you do you need to have some kind of time management skills. When students go out there in the working field to work they are going to need those management skills in place. If they come here to college right out of high school, they are generally a little bit short of those skills. Management skills can and should be taught. An instructor can incorporate management skills in the class, when a student does something that is contrary to what they would do at the workplace, for instance. Then you can have an opportunity to communicate with that student.

♦ Some of my students have brilliant management skills and everything is organized to the minute and flows smoothly. Other students have the approach where, whatever lands closest, screams the loudest, or tastes the best get attention first. So, I believe students like everyone else developed their own management skills to get by in whatever they do in their life, in their jobs, and at home. Certainly having good management skills is a great asset in working to reach academic goals, any goals for that matter. Time

management skills are a great benefit in the educational environment. Classrooms require more of a time schedule than some students are accustomed to. Papers have to be in at a certain time. It's an hour of class. It starts here and ends here. Not every student is going to have that type of management style. Teaching management skills that stick long term is a lot easier to theorize than to practice.

♦ All students need management skills. When considering management skills, structure needs to come into play. Structure is another concept people either learn or it can be imposed on them, like the unfortunate ones who experience incarceration. Personal expectations and personal responsibilities determine the shape of the structure by which a person must master the management skills to operate efficiently and effectively. Students need to understand the importance and benefits of managing their time, resources, and lives. Structure helps students keep perspective on their priorities.

♦ If students have not learned time management and how to control their own lives, then they are generally ill prepared to go to college. Another factor which goes hand in hand with time management is learning that personal sacrifices must be made to reach desired goals. There are very few friends who would say, "no don't watch the movie, or no don't go with us, you need to study for that test you have tomorrow". So, student

management skills are very, very important to their success. Sometimes,

we just need to teach them the value of time management and personal

sacrifices first before they take a class requiring serious commitment.

♦ I have students this semester, they are scribbling down their homework

as I walk into class. So they are not managing their time very well. This

definitely affects their quality of work.

The group of instructors agreed that students could greatly benefit from

having management skills; however, some felt that these skills are more likely

developed over time in a personal nature rather than being skills instructors can

develop in their students over the short-term.

♦ Not only does the student persist but there's an instructor component in

that persistence also. Think of this, a man standing on a creek bank with a

really light rod and reel set, light line, very light line and he's throwing out

and he hooks a huge fish on the line. Well, if you think of that interaction

between that man and that big fish and that light line and that light

equipment there is no way that equipment is designed to bring in a big fish

then there's got to be give and take on both sides.

If you look at that scenario in terms of persistence, the fish was

interested in getting something as well as the fisherman. The fisherman on

the bank is definitely interested in landing this big catch. So if you look at

it in terms of persistence there's value on both sides and there's a

relationship going on there that is very delicate in many ways. Another thing, the fish was just hungry, the fish didn't have any clue that that the bait was attached to person who was not equipped to handle him. I think at that point, the fisherman is really the determining factor as to what's going to happen. That instructor is very much the determining factor as to what degree that student actually persist. Lots of correlations here. You let them run with it a little bit until they tire out. And that may give them an opportunity to figure out what to do rather than tiring themselves out and I think we tend to yank it in and then when the pole breaks it's like okay. See you later.

Also on the side of the fish or the student in this scenario. You know, that student is wanting to learn and wanting to be engaged. That student probably really understands that that connection to the instructor is very delicate an that if he chooses to break the line and go off in the other direction and be gone then he definitely has the ability to do that as well. But as long as he sees value then he's probably going to want to attempt to persist.

Motivation is a part of persistence. It seems to me students that are motivated to stay in school, do it all because they have nothing else to do. It's not what we knew traditionally as you go to school to get an education to get a job. Or you get a job but it may not be the kind that you want. The

motivation is to have things as opposed to seeing how like my dad would say "education is a tool". They don't see how that tool can take them higher. They're looking at the tool taking them where they just want to go which is right out there, right now, not twenty or thirty years down the road. They're not motivated by the same things that may have motivated us twenty or thirty years ago or even five or ten years ago. Things that make them feel good seem to motivate them. So then you say, okay, how do you tap into that? Now the value that's assigned to that, you know may be questionable, but if it allows a person to follow through with completing their educational goals and personal goals then that's fine. I think sometimes the problem is short term, it doesn't last long. They're motivated for awhile, then after that it's gone. It's no big deal.

Then we're suppose to motivate students. I think that what students see is parents who are broke down and tired from their jobs. They see us who are parents who are broke down and tired from their jobs. They see their friends who are broke down and tired period. So where is the motivation? Is that really what they want to work toward to having a job and having all of these demands and having children and all that and just being tired to the extent where you can't enjoy any of it. Where is the excitement? Why is that picture something somebody would want to be motivated towards?

I mean if I'm not feeling good about who I am and then I'm instructing someone, and then you want me to feel good and you come to work and you can't smile. You know, and I know, not all classes are ideal and all of the instruction but I think that's getting back to the assessment. You're excited about teaching math and reading and writing when you were young. You know. What happened to it? So are the students to be cut short because I got tired? Or what is it that I can do to ignite them? Now, I think young people are motivated by, once again, things that we think are not in their best interest. So there again that motivation, that motivational drive is there. It may not be to keep their room clean, make up the bed, but their motivated to have cars because they love cars. They spend thousands of dollars on cars.

So, they're not motivated towards education as we see it. There's nothing to ignite them about what they're doing in class. They go into the classroom. They sit there. They get in. They go out. Until we look at the scores, until we go through it and observe it we really don't know so you can't get any feed back. So I think it's important to have that kind of feedback to motivate them.

We have spoken before in the past about what we termed "vertical education" and the conceptualizing where a student is motivated along a path and hopefully it's a positive one. Many times, like we've said it's the

negative one. But for whatever reason, that student is motivated or on that path and we hope that it's a positive path toward success. And then at some point and time the student may actually lose that motivation and at that point, lay down, have to rest, kind of take a "time out" type situation. And then hopefully that student has some means or ways personally to stand back up and to re-energize themselves. And to gain that motivation back and stand upright vertically again and to move again forward towards that hopefully positive, successful goal that they have in their mind.

I think the horizontal position becomes more familiar and something that they know better than any other. We expect people and especially students to be able to pull themselves up by themselves from any crisis. We may view them laying down and not moving in a forward motion as negative but they don't. To begin to stand up is awkward, but not for us. That to me suggest that that's what we may call a lack of motivation but its just a resistance. Moving forward doesn't' feel familiar. It's not that students want to be down. It's not that they want to be flunking and they know that they know the material, but this is different. We're talking about many students who have never experienced even a tiny bit of academic success.

So we as educators may think that there's something wrong with students, lack of motivation, but the students don't think there's anything

wrong. They are comfortable where they are laying down and not moving forward.

That's where the choice then comes in. The student has a choice, he can lie back down or he can come up a little bit. And I think that offers probably some more ownership, you know, and probably less of a threat. They like that laying down comfort zone rather than getting up meeting challenges or meeting the unknown. Meeting a possibility to succeed but also meeting a possibility of failure and that that takes a lot of courage to get up and stand up vertically and move forward. We need to verbalize this process and encourage students to learn what it takes for them to stand-up vertical, move forward and keep that forward progress going. Also, we need to teach them that life is peaks and valleys and how to recognize which is which. We learned this growing up at home, I don't think they learn it at all now days.

5. Student Personal Skills

This affinity was identified by the group of instructors as a critical factor pertaining to developmental education student success. They categorized attributes such as academic abilities, persistence, dedication, and a solid work ethic in this affinity. These quotes relate their strong sentiment about the value of these concepts.

♦ I notice that some of my students will listen but then they cannot retain the information. I can come right back and ask them a question and they did not understand it because you know, their attention span is so short. I believe that one must learn how to concentrate and compartmentalize information in their minds so they can better retain information. This is another personal skill many of our students are lacking.

♦ Ordinarily, the students that we get in the developmental area are kind of turned off to the academics .....it's like well, we've already been there and done that. Many just expect to be unsuccessful. They really don't have that positive attitude that is really necessary in order to be successful. I think they have to have a positive mindset in order to be able to do well in all their studies. They have to personally be able to visualize themselves being successful. Key personal skills like this I believe is a big part of what separates developmental students from college-ready students, life-ready students.

♦ When he comes in you are going to expect him to be lacking in academic skills. But, that's the easiest thing to correct, the academic skills…it's the social skills and all the other things that are difficult to correct.

♦ Motivation is a personal skill which is a critical piece. Another hard part is to get in the work ethic and get the student to view things in the way and

manner which employers view things. That's what you are trying to do.

You are trying to get him educated so he can hold down a job.

♦ A lot of our younger students have few personal skills like persistence and dedication. It seems our current generation of parents actually accept this lack of personal skills and just pass it off as, well, students now days just don't know how to hang in there…we're in the alt-control-delete generation. The young grow up with video games, electronic baby-sitters. Kids that grow up playing video games learn that when faced with a problem or challenge that may take some effort, they just hit, control-alt-delete. I believe they learn from an early age to sub-consciously "quit" and take the easy way out to avoid processing through the obstacle. They probably don't even realize what they are or are not doing, it has become a natural reaction to quit and maybe look for cheat codes later to solve their problems. That's another topic for discussion! A lot of times the older generations look at this behavior and say, "ahh, control-alt-delete". Yeah, you know, when things get tough, the tough hit alt-control-delete, quit and go on to something else.

♦ …it's like developmental classes, a developmental instructor has to assume they are going to help develop the whole person, not just teach their subject, but help them learn the personal skills they are severely lacking. If

they had the personal skills…they probably would not need remediation at the level our students do.

♦ The difference between being persistence and giving up is the thought that, "I can win". Their dreams are unobtainable to so many of our students. They can't get there. They don't see themselves getting there. It's more of a personal thing. You have to redirect. You don't have to do something because mama said do it or you ought to do this because the church pastor said do it or just good for your soul. Once students have gotten to the level that we look at them, the college level, they've worked through that. That type of motivation approach won't get it anymore. You have to reestablish another kind of self worth or personal value. You have to have a different tactic. You have to be able to get them to visualize and see themselves in a house or in a new car or a good job if that is their dream. Then they can put value in that. 99% of the students we see at this point, they've lost that external motivating factor, it's meaningless to them. They have to find their motivation to persist in their educational efforts from within.

♦ Personal skills like, persistence and dedication, again, we go back to the family. These are things that have to be instilled in the child as they grow up. My sister was going to school, she studied and made the children study at the same time that she studied so that they could learn the value of everybody being quiet, everybody studying, this is important, but if it's not

stressed enough in the family, a lot of times young people grow up not knowing and understanding persistence and dedication. These things come with personal sacrifice. I have a lot of students that say they want to finish college because they will be the first one in the family to have a college education. They are very determined.

♦ Sometimes they are non-academic factors, physical factors are involved. There's the past, what schools students went to, quality of the schools they grew up in, any external family support they had in education before. There's just a whole laundry list of things that affect their level of personal skills. I'm kind of reminded of what a mentor of mine likes to say, "the students we are getting are the survivors". These are the "best" of their category, for lack of a better term, that are coming up. They have come to college. Maybe they skipped out of K-12….but they still desire to reach success in their lives. That says a whole lot about them, about their personal responsibilities and their work ethic. They are here. That must be worth something!

♦ Mom, Dad, the government, the courts, whoever is sending them out here to this college cannot provide motivation, it must start somewhere within the individual student.

♦ Young people today will follow through and persist at something that is interesting, period, whether it's good or bad (games are good examples;

they'll go through the whole nine yards even though there may be pain or some other things going on that may be negative but they do it). That's something that we need to look at and try to transfer this motivation into something positive because the persistence and dedication is there and the commitment is there because of their high level of interest. There is something about negative activity since the beginning of time, that has always caused people to motivate other people to get involved in a negative behavior as opposed to what we call good, healthy or positive activity. Maybe we don't have that kind of flavor. To me, it's almost like a formula. There is a formula that causes a young person to behave a certain way even though they know that it's wrong. Just like if they don't go to class, they know they're suppose to go but there is something that's happening over across campus in a dorm room or in the gym that "tastes" better. When we figure out the formula and can duplicate it, there's our solution to motivating young students.

The instructors' views on the developmental education students' need for personal skills describe a challenge to family, society, instructors, institutions, and students to embrace whatever processes necessary to develop these personal skills for educational and personal success.

6. Physical Environment

This affinity, as described by the group of developmental education instructors, pertains to the physical environment or classroom where teaching and learning should take place. Some agreed that the physical environment of the classroom can have a significant impact on the success of developmental education students, by providing a conducive environment or by furnishing a legitimate reason to evade participation. Others felt teaching and learning can happen at any time, any place, with every situation.

♦ When we consider resources and environment and all that entails, as far as teaching and learning, I believe that when you have two individuals that teaching and learning can happen. Or, one individual and an event, an occurrence. That interaction between those two individuals can actually happen in a vacuum with no resources except air, gravity, you get the picture. So, if you boil it down to the process of teaching and learning, you could say that the process of teaching and learning at it's most basic form is not actually dependent on really any resource whatsoever, including environment That process in of itself is not dependent on any resource. Not on paper and pencil, not on desk, not on books, not on structure.

♦ Our central focus is what makes teaching and learning happen and maybe sometimes we get so tied up in the resources and dealing with the resources

and utilizing the resources or not utilizing the resources that we actually lose

focus on the actual teaching and learning process in the purest form.

Many instructors voiced their views of the need to create and maintain an

environment conducive to learning. While this affinity was not cited by the

instructors as a critical factor to their students' educational success, most

acknowledged that comfort and updated technologies and equipment certainly have

an impact.

♦ I think environment is important to the extent that the rooms are not too

hot or too cold and they are well lighted. This would probably be the least

of my concerns because we all know that kids learned in one room school

houses, so learning can occur with the most meager of physical

environment. People do expect a little bit better than wooden benches and

their own little chalkboard. I think as long as everything is adequately

ventilated, relatively comfortable, there is room so that people don't feel

they are cramped together, I think that is probably what is necessary.

♦ Air condition is great when it's 128 outside.   But if you keep a sense of

humor about it, the students will forgive up to a point, then you have to have

maintenance done. Same with an elevator being built next door to your

classroom. The noise is a huge distraction. Students will suffer a whole lot

of indignities in the physical environment.

One instructor pointed out the value of a conducive physical environment and the effects both on the students and instructors abilities and effectiveness.

♦ Yes, oh Lord, yes! Physical environment is very important! If you have to come in a classroom and it's hot, the battle is lost. First of all, and I'll be honest, even for me as an instructor, I could not, no matter how much I enjoy what I'm doing, if it's not comfortable, it becomes very difficult. I can remember, of course when I was in school, going back to the early years before there was air conditioning, with the windows up, because that's the way it was, you were comfortable. You adapted do it. Now, we don't adapt to those things. If it's winter time and it's cold we want the thermostat to be adjusted to a temperature where we can be comfortable. In the summer, the same thing. The environment has to be comfortable for that student to learn. It has to be comfortable for that teacher to teach it too. It works both ways. No one wants to look at a teacher sweating and you know, uncomfortable and trying to go through the teaching process and it's just not working. If you need a chalkboard and that's the way that you are more comfortable presenting, it should be there.

♦ I tell my class, it's my television show. I'm the star and you're the supporting cast. So the star has to be comfortable. So then you can just expound and give and share that information and you can smile through it and make it pleasurable.

♦ There are two concepts here, when you talk about the physical

environment, there is external and there is internal.....if you come in and

you've had a bad day, if you had a falling out with a spouse or a child or

something and then you try to teach and that comes out in your presentation,

the students feel it too. That's part of the environment too. So the

environment both internally and externally has to be nearly perfect so that

you can make teaching happen. If your are standing there with a toothache,

you can't teach. If you are standing there with your corn hurting, you can't

teach. If you are standing there with heartburn, you can't teach. You can

try, but your discomfort is still going to show unless you are one of those

people that like pain.

♦ The environment needs to be comfortable for the student and the

instructor.

♦ The physical environment is very important. I won't say it's the most

important, but it's very important. If a student is not comfortable, a lot of

times they will have a hard time learning. Whereas if the situation is

reversed, he is cool or he is warm, he's full, he can think a lot better and

probably do a lot better. I know in most of our math classes, practically all

the math classes, we have taken out dry erase boards out and put in chalk

boards, because we like them better and it seems like our students like them

a whole lot better also. They are easier to read. I think the physical

environment has a lot to do with their learning experience away from home.

It's kind of hard to please everybody in the classroom but you do the best

you can to keep the temperature as well adjusted as you possibly can.

Sometimes you are going to ask them what's wrong. I'm too cold. You turn

the temperature, you adjust to meet that one need. So the physical

environment has a lot to do with the learning experience for that hour.

♦ I like to go beyond just classroom, air conditioning, chalkboards and

flashcards and stuff and get into their personal appearance. Where are they

going to learn and how they carry themselves? Their physical appearance is

part of the classroom also. Physical appearance around peers is important

because that's all part of growing up and moving out and redefining yourself

and doing something positive.

♦ I can recall going to school in the 50s where you had the issue, A&M

didn't have air conditioning....in chemistry....an auditorium in fact, if you

had a class that was scheduled around noon, you would be sitting there

nodding off and it would get very hot, you would try as hard as you could

but it was difficult to learn much that day. I always tried to schedule my

classes around that. None of the classes were air conditioned at A&M. My

hardest classes, I would try to schedule early in the morning. I was alert and

it wasn't too bad. I found that scheduling those tough classes in the

morning, I could concentrate better. Yes, physical environment does impact

learning.

♦ Physical environment is important. You have to have an environment that

is conducive to learning, which means there has to be a teacher who has a

large degree of control in the classroom otherwise it's doubtful that learning

is going to take place. I think by changing the pace of instruction, that is

very helpful to, and this probably goes back to another area but I think the

teacher generates enthusiasm that has a tendency to be contagious and more

students as a result will be more happier with the situation and more inclined

to want to learn, even if the environment isn't perfect.

♦ It's kind of like the flight or fight syndrome, if you are upset, or mad, or

hot and uncomfortable, you aren't going to learn anything.

Instructor Perspectives on Student Identified Factors for Success

Following the focus group session for the developmental education

instructors, a focus group session was conducted with the group of participating

students. The same process was followed in the student focus group as in the

instructor focus group and their list of factors/affinities having significant

relevance to their success as developmental education students was developed.

Table 7: Focus Group Affinities – Developmental Education Students

Affinity	Descriptors
Institutional Assistance	Counseling and advising assistance; child care options; financial assistance; Food service and transportation.
Instructional Assistance	Caring instructors; more teacher aids; One-on-one teaching opportunities; tutoring.
Student Financial Needs	Financial-aid; par-time job; more money in general.
Student Emotional Needs	Support from families and friends; less stress in their lives; fewer child care and financial worries; to have a clear mind.
Student Physical Needs	Good food options; working computer at home; medications.
Student Social Needs	Study partners; socialization activities on campus; ways to hook-up with students with same interests.

Upon completion of the individual instructor interviews where they shared their perspectives and experiences on the affinities identified as a result of their focus group, each instructor was then asked their views on the six affinities that were identified as a result of the students' focus group session (Table 7). Their reactions to the affinities resulting from the students' focus group session were generally in agreement with each other and with the students. Most instructors made correlations between the affinities the instructor focus group identified and the affinities identified by the student focus group. Few conflicting statements were made which were focused around the students' perceived need for more personal physical amenities such as a new computer at home. A sense of understanding and confirmation was prevalent in their voices.

1. Institutional Assistance

This affinity, as described by the group of students combines the services the institution provides in the operation of the institution in general and services provided specifically for the students. Some of the examples they cited were providing dedicated and well-trained administration, faculty and staff members, guidance and counseling services, financial aid services, child care options, an environment conducive to learning, on-campus housing, and free transportation with frequent pick-ups.

The instructors were quite impressed and relieved that the students actually identified six different affinities and did not propose that their entire educational success perched precariously on the shoulders of their instructors. The instructors were in agreement that institutional assistance as the students described could well be a factor in their educational success.

♦ Yes, they do need an environment that's conducive to learning. The institution is responsible in part for providing that environment. Financial and child care concerns are only a few of the issues many students face which rob them of their concentration in the classroom. Now when I think about transportation, they could have it built into their tuition. The students that live on campus must purchase a parking decals….so a student living off campus would have to purchase a bus transportation voucher of some kind. I agree with childcare facilities on campus. I don't think we have a large enough facility. Many students would have their children here if we

had ample facilities for them. I heard that we have a waiting list over there of more than a hundred names.

♦ Sometimes I wonder if students depend too much on the institution for their success; maybe they expect everyone else to do everything for them. Many don't have the initiative, self-initiative that an adult, at least in my opinion, should have in place. So they really don't have the maturity level at this point in their lives that was in place in my generation, for example. When I was going to school, I was the seeker of information. Nobody came to me with all of this. I had to seek it out on my own. I think the mindset now is the student expects too many accommodations and maybe would value their educational experience more if it was harder to obtain.

♦ Many of our students are just individuals with children. They are going to have transportation problems because they have money problems. They do need guidance and counseling services, bad. They are going to have some kind of loan or grant or something. They do need a lot of tutoring. They need a place where they can go get tutoring. Most have no chance of success without institutional assistance prior to even considering performance in the classroom.

♦ Some of our students come from high school to college, from the workplace to college, or from maybe not working at all to college, from housewifery to college and so many of them don't have any idea what's

going on. As an institution, if we don't provide them with enough

information, if we don't provide them with enough services then it's our

fault. They have no other way of knowing. I've heard from a lot of

students that sometimes they don't feel like they get enough information

from us. I think that plays a key role in, many times, if a student is even

able to go to school much less having any chance of success. I think student

assistance needs to be a strong point. They're right on this factor,

institutional assistance which includes us as instructors or agents for the

institution can be a determining factor in their educational success.

♦ I believe institutional assistance is important to their success and

especially on a campus like this where they can live here in on-campus

housing. Many feel a connection like this is their "home away from home",

and look at the whole institution as their parent. In this department, we have

quite a few students who have no home, they came here from foster homes

and have no where to go for holidays. This is their home so they may never

graduate.

♦ These students who feel they need institutional assistance to succeed

don't feel completely in charge of themselves. Somebody has to help them

along the way. They believe that their destiny is not in their hands. They

don't control their outcome because somebody else helps them along. This

is exactly part of what we have to change as developmental education

instructors. Where a student goes and how they control their educational

experience should help guide their futures. All these decisions should be in

their hands. This is the reason why it is important that even in the teaching

process I like to tell the student, "you ask the question and let me respond,

rather than me asking the question and letting you respond". I want the

student to feel in charge of their learning and responsible for that learning,

again, taking ownership. Our students cannot succeed by themselves. They

can't do it by themselves. This is a big part of what we need to be teaching

them, how to deal with life.

♦ Our students' success is our success. We need to be trying to find out all

types of ways how we can help the students become successful in their

educational endeavors. If we have more and more students that need day

care for their children, we've got to make sure that the service is available.

If students need housing, we've got to make sure the housing is satisfactory

and available. It's simple, take care of their basic needs so they can take

care of their educational responsibilities, while helping to teach them to

help themselves. If we don't do this, who will? K-12 hasn't prepared them

for life, nor have their parents.

♦ I might be the wrong person to ask this I'm usually in the students'

corner. These are things that they need, especially if they say that they

need them, I think it's the duty of the institution to …..financially or

whatever, provide means to satisfy students' needs. We know that these six areas they have identified as needs for their success are true because the students that we work with on a daily basis tell us the same thing everyday. Like free transportation, not all of the students will need this but you may have some that are destitute and they want to come to school and they want to finish up a course. So, if it's possible, I think that we should provide what we can.

♦ Half of these factors you will hear faculty talking about that students need to be successful, not necessarily just the students.

♦The institution should be accountable to students' needs. If they have the, whatever, finances or the facility to do these things, they need to make sure the classrooms are up to par, that the facility is up to par. The institution needs to make sure there are counselors there to meet those needs and to help those students with the concerns that they might have. If that student has concerns about childcare, they need to see what they can do about that. Transportation, if it's possible, they need to see what they can do to help that happen and make sure that it's successful, whatever is needed. If they feel they need more teaching assistants, the students would know better than anyone if that's what they need to make it work, yeah. If they need information about financial aid, someone should make sure they know what monies are out there.

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2 . Instructional Assistance

The group of students also felt instructional assistance was a critical component in their opportunities for educational success at the developmental education level. They were in agreement that this affinity categorized all the means by which instructors can have either positive or negative influence on the learning opportunities of their students. It is noted that the student participants were quick to point out that while they were defining this affinity, they in no way were insinuating that the instructional level or level of support they had received in the developmental education department of this institution was anything less than quite adequate, only that they considered instruction as a critical piece. Conversely, the students wished to profess the value they realized by the positive impact their instructors had had on them and on the educational progress they felt they were making largely due to the instructors' professionalism, dedication, knowledge, and understanding.

The instructors were questioned individually during their personal interviews about their thoughts regarding the students identifying instructional assistance as one of their critical success factors specifically as having caring and understanding instructors, many one-on-one teaching and learning opportunities, instructors giving up-front expectations and directions, and instructors providing continuous positive feedback and assistance to students in overcoming obstacles unrelated to the classroom or course content. The students cited few minor isolated

conflicts with their instructors; their overall sentiment was very complimentary.

The instructors seemed quite gratified that the students identified the value of the

instructional piece as a success factor and that their heart-felt efforts were well-

received and verbalized by their students, as are evident in these quotes by the

instructors.

♦ If the students are having problems then you want to provide them with

something that is going to help them to understand the content more if it

does mean one-on-one teaching, uh, one-on-one tutoring, whatever it takes.

As an instructor, you want to be able to give them whatever help they need

whether it be with you or in the lab. …..you see yourself also as a resource

of information. If our students are unhappy with us, we really haven't heard

about it and knowing them, they would have said something.

♦ I think first and foremost the students need to know that the teacher does

care about that particular student and if they don't perceive that, if that is

not in place then I think that produces a number of negatives including the

student being turned off to learning altogether. It's not uncommon at all for

students to say that they have teachers in their programs that really don't go

out of their way to help them out, whether it's from a tutoring standpoint or

just from the listening standpoint to help them out. I'm glad we here are

making positive progress to help our students. I'm very pleased.

♦ In the remedial areas, that's the reason I've always thought that if you could have an instructor, lab assistant, teaching aid, you know, you need that support system for the instructor there because if you have 157 student, if you have 200 students you can't do all of this…unless you have those people that are in support of you. With this support system in place, the instructor can have time to work with their students, give them some positive feedback and suggestions on what they can do to improve their chances for success.

♦ There would be instructors on any campus that meet the students' criteria they give here and there are going to be instructors that are not going to meet it. I'm glad we have dedicated, caring instructors in our department. It is perpetuating, students coming from a previous class where they felt they had a good instructor makes them easier for me to deal with in my class from the onset.

♦ All the stuff these students are saying is right. They like more one-on-one teaching opportunities, which is one of the things in my class that students benefit from more than anything, when we sit down one-on-one and talk about what they are doing wrong and how they may make corrections. Being accommodating to their needs. That's just one of those things, too often instructors don't want to accommodate the students' needs, they want the student to accommodate the instructor's needs. Some

instructors say, "I don't want to give essay tests, so I'm not gonna. I'm going to give multiple choice because that's easier for me as the teacher". Grading essays is going to take more of your time. What you are actually teaching is, "it doesn't fit my needs, so I'm not going to do it". The students are saying, "We're students, we have needs. Not only that, but at college, we're paying for this learning opportunity and if you don't accommodate us, if you don't help us, if you don't give us the opportunity to do our best, why don't I take my money somewhere else that will". So, up front direction, positive feedback, helping students overcome obstacles, it's right in there with student needs. That's what they need. And you know, when we were talking back about the students…what the modern students need, the students that grow up on video games, we as instructors must learn how to accommodate how students learn stuff. This component is ever changing. If we don't attempt to accommodate the students' ways of processing information, they are going to turn us off. It's back to that trust thing between instructor and student. I think what students are saying is, "it doesn't mean that we paid tuition for an "A", it means we have paid for the opportunity to learn what the instructors have to teach us in a way that best works for us". In this department, we really try to adjust constantly to the changes in students needs…a lot of institutions totally ignore what the students need.

♦ Wow. I think that's great. I'm glad that they see our instruction as being valuable to their success. I'm glad they see the instructors as a vital part of their learning. I know, my students tell me they very much want that interaction with the instructors, they don't want a totally computerized environment.

♦ Why would students ever think that the instructors are not going to assist them in the first place? Why would the students come in and think that they would get anything any less than a caring, understanding, dedicated professional? These are questions that bother me. It goes to show that we once again as remedial instructors must undo many negative preconceived ideas before we can even begin to think of teaching content. I'm glad to hear their positive responses.

♦ The students will tell you the truth, whatever they say is generally the truth. Can I go back up here….hiring more teaching assistants. I agree with that, especially in classroom where you have, the classrooms are rather large and the instructor can't get around to everybody at the same time. I've always been an advocate of that. Get as much help in the classroom as you possibly can, if that's possible. I know there are a lot of other things, dependent upon that. The instructors must have a solid support system to help them maintain their level of energy to be able to assist underprepared students in any way and at anytime they need help. This is remediation.

Developmental education students need not only remediation in course content but also as importantly in the basic concepts of how to survive and maybe have a chance of personal success in life. Our homes do not teach the basic to children anymore. We are challenged with remediating students in every aspect. You just would not believe how we have to help them. No one else will. Developmental education instructors must have trust in their support systems, in their supervisors especially. Who they have to directly report to. That affects their teaching ability. If they put a person in that supervisory capacity who doesn't understand the needs of a classroom and a lot of times that happens, then that presents a problem for both the student and the instructor. The instructor can't do a good job unless they can feel pretty free to do what they need to do. This is the first time that I've ever experienced being under direction where you are free to be a person and not criticized for it. Have a supervisor that is flexible and understanding and will push you to try new things. Believe it or not, instructors depend upon this administrative stability….to understand the administration. ….I found it to be a very necessary thing to put people in administrative positions that can understand what the institution is, not only instructor's needs but the needs of the students. You are going to need somebody in there that understands the needs, especially remediation. Developmental education students are probably the greatest challenge in all of education. Most

instructors want to teach the brightest students in higher education, we are

challenged with teaching students who have so many problems, inadequate

academic abilities are many times the very least of their problems. I can't

over emphasize the need to put the right person in the right administrative

spot for remediation. If you don't, you have a terrible situation on your

hands. It's going to mess up the whole system and the program cannot be

successful, students cannot be successful. I think a program can only be as

successful as it's leader. If the leader is a good leader then you're going to

have a good program.   I think we have a very good program because we

have a very good leader.

♦ As a student tries to please the instructor, the instructor tries to please

their superiors in the same way. It is no different than the instructor student

relationship in many aspects. If instructors don't have the administrative

support, if you can put the instructor in the place of the student to the

director, then you can see the picture a little better……they look to that

director for guidance just like a student looks to the instructor for guidance,

and ….let me give you a good example, maybe the administration tells me

to let the students use calculators in the classroom because that's what they

want to do. The administrator doesn't understand remediation, that the

student needs to learn the basics before they get to the calculator. They

don't know that. They just think….let them punch a button. A person in

that position that understands remediation, if I went to them and told them, I don't want the students to use a calculator because it will hinder them more than help them. The person that understands remediation, they are going to allow me to make the call. If they don't, then they might be persistent…..they will do all kinds of things to you and it destroys your confidence as an instructor….if the instructor doesn't think the director cares and isn't responsive to their needs, then they don't care. If they feel like the director does care…..then they have a better chance of reaching their potential as an instructor. This is one reason our students are very happy with there instruction here in this department.

♦ I give my students this example when they first begin my class. They've hired me to teach them math. Each one here as the same opportunity because each one paid the same amount to get the same amount of work. The example I use is that if you hire me to wash your car and I wash it and I left a lot of spots on the back and I didn't do the carpet good enough. As the person who is paying me, you have a right to tell me you want me to go back…this is what I paid you to do. They have that same opportunity in the classroom. You've hired me to teach you. If I'm going too fast, you have the right to tell me to slow down. You have a right to say, you aren't making that clear. You have a right to ask me not to talk too fast, don't erase the assignment until I have a chance to get it down. You have the

right to ask me anything you are paying me to do. So I make them feel like they've hired me to do the job for them and if I want to be hired and keep on as the person that's doing the job then I need to stop and listen to what you're saying because I might get fired if I don't take all these things into consideration. To me the student is the most important thing that happens to us in this building. When I'm trying to resolve problems I try to look at the student's perspective first. I think student appreciate it when they can find out that you do care, when they understand that you are concerned about their education, that they are getting it.

If students don't know, then I will stop and tell them, ask them do they have any questions, don't be afraid. I'm here for you. I'll do all I can. I'll bend over backwards. This is what I tell them, "I'll bend over backwards to do anything I can do to get you through". I'm a real easy person to get along with.

♦ I'm glad to hear our students are happy with our instructional efforts. There can be great nurturing and wonderful instructors who don't know anything about the subject they are teaching, who get all sorts of teaching awards. Then there are those that know their subject inside and out and have a thousand textbooks on it and can't teach. They don't have the...whatever, the personality. So it's interesting that...they wanted an instructor who knows what they are talking about but they want an instructor here who is going to provide some type of, if not academic

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support, intellectual support and an emotional support, psychological

support. The upfront direction, not knowing exactly how they are defining

it. If that's straight up directions and guidance on this is what we're doing.

I think we all kind of appreciate that at some point, especially coming into a

new situation. And the positive feedback, again, for some instructors

positive feedback is getting the papers back within a week. But that's still

psychological, that's still making the student feel appreciated and

understood and welcome in the classroom. It doesn't necessarily mean that

the student is learning the subject. It helps. I'm assuming they would be.

But yeah, the positive feedback, definitely, instructors should give that. It

doesn't have to be so obvious to be effective, or so sugar coated that it's

insincere. Students can see through that in a minute. But, you know, hey if

you got a 100 and everybody else got an 85, good job. A student will

appreciate that a whole lot more than candy and flowers.

♦ I'm not amazed that they're on target on this component. I'm really not.

I think that that's a good thing that those of us who have identified similar

things is matching up with what they're saying is important so I'm glad to

see that. Of all things, they truly know the value of the instruction they

expect.

♦ Well, they're right on this one. As long, I think as students perceive it

safe to approach the instructors with questions or concerns about the class

or the material, not understanding, and know that the instructor is willing to

explain, stay a few minutes, model, show another example or whatever the

concept is that is giving the student the problem, I think that is important.

3. Student Financial Needs

The next affinity the group of students identified as having relevance in

their attempts to be successful in their developmental educational efforts was their

financial needs. The student focus group described this affinity as having financial

resources such as financial aid from the institution, less on-campus housing fees,

better-paying part-time jobs, and more financial resources, in general. The

instructors were interviewed individually and asked about their views on the

students' identifying financial need as a significant factor contributing to their

academic success in developmental education. The instructors were in agreement

with the students' perspective that financial resources were important to the extent

that finances were needed to pay for their tuition and fees and were also valuable in

helping to eliminate financial individual and family concerns (which can greatly

distract a student from concentrating in class, as indicated in their quotes).

♦ Yes, many of our students need financial assistance. Solving some of

their financial issues may encourage them to participate more in their

academic areas.

♦ They've got them. I'm not sure what the school, as an institution or the

instructors can do directly to address financial issues other than, to provide

financial aid. I know there are short term loans given through some offices

on the campus. I understand that many of our students have tremendous

financial needs and I'm aware that they may impact the student's

performance in the classroom.

♦ I assume some students' financial needs affect their classroom behavior

or their ability to complete the course, make good grades. Maybe their

financial needs could be a barrier to their success. I do agree that they do

need financial assistance. Sometimes students come and borrow textbooks

from me, maybe they can't get a textbook until they either get some money

from somewhere, a grant or loan or something like that. Usually, I have an

extra textbook, or I will let them use mine until they get theirs. If they can't

get one for the whole semester sometimes we have material already run off.

I'll give them a packet. That seems to help them out quite a bit. They do

have financial needs.

♦ I think college must be affordable. I don't think it has to be free, but it

has to be affordable.

♦ Well, it's a step of maturity because if they are young they probably just

came out of high school where their education was free, and now all of a

sudden they find themselves in a different environment, they must learn to

handle their own financial needs. So, they realize that they must make

financial adjustments, they come to realize that they can't get the higher

education that gives them the better paying jobs without sacrificing somehow. Finances are a huge issue with some of our students.

♦ Again, it's one of those things, when you get to the theory folks…we all have financial needs. But I don't think sometimes instructors and administrators realize how close to the edge some of these students cut it. Some of these students are extremely poor. A lot of the students that come in to our programs don't have a job. If they do have a job, it doesn't pay much. This is a constant hassle. It's like draining the swamp. If you're worried about the alligators it's real hard to remember that you're here to get a two year education when you can't pay to feed your children. Any help that we can provide, we should. Unfortunately we have to live in an area that finding jobs, period, is difficult. Yeah, if we could help with housing in some way….anything that works like that, goes back to the transportation, like on resources, public transportation, that helps them, anything we can do that would be a benefit to them we should.

♦ It would seem we could do better getting the student connected with the financial resources.

♦ I've talked with a number of students through the years, they need some money, that support, support not only in getting them an education but as far as their family goes. Many of our students don't really know how to go about seeking employment and at one time on our campus, the financial aid

office...there was a listing, that office kept a listing of jobs within the community. That was wonderful. A lot of our students want a part-time job but yet they may have transportation problems where even if they had that opportunity they wouldn't be able to get to the job. So that's one area of concern. Another has to do with a student working too many hours. In other words a part-time job, they start working many more hours than they should, that poses a problem as far as their studying time.

4. <u>Student Emotional Needs</u>

The instructors acquiesced that developmental education students often times come to the college with many personal challenges that may present barriers to their academic success. The instructors were asked individually during their personal interviews about their views on the students' perspectives that they considered emotional needs a critical factor in their educational successes. This affinity concerns the emotional needs students feel can become a barrier or stumbling block to their success such as their ability to cope with stress in their lives, their need to feel that their families emotionally support them, their need to have a clear mind when they attempt to learn and process information, and their constant worry regarding the safety and well-being of their families while they are attending school. The sympathy and understanding of these issues were evident in the instructors' comments.

♦ I think they've hit on some of the areas of concern that even I expressed

about their families. I'm glad to see that. I think the other thing that we

need to consider is that the students talk about stress and coping skills and

the utilization of our current resources like counseling because we have that

available. So that's something that we really need to look at, the students

are saying they need that help and yet we have it but it's not well supported

or funded from the administrative side.

♦ Coping with stress, study skills, support from their families, sense of

accomplishment, and making progress toward their degree. Yeah, we can

address those in general in the classroom, instructional support, but many

students won't tell an instructor that there's some area of emotional stress

that's causing them to falter. As I told all of my classes every semester, I

don't need to know exactly the situation. I don't need to know the details.

I just need to know that there's a problem. Then we can work around it or

we can solve it. But if I don't know that there is some big nasty thing going

on in the outside that is affecting your work here in the classroom, I don't

know how to work around it. I don't know how to sit down with you and

say, okay, don't worry about this, worry about this later, do this next, as far

as my class goes or as far as who to talk to on campus. I've had students

lose family members...common sense. Take care of that first. Come

back...don't worry about class right now. Instructors need to show some

compassion. If you're going to have to bury your child or your grandchild. You don't need to worry about a reading assignment or a math assignment or English or History or whatever it is. The class will still be here. Take care of that first. If they don't tell us or give us some sort of sign that we can pick up on, sometimes teachers are pretty dense, we have so many students that we don't pick up on things like we should sometimes. We need to be hit over the head. We need the student to tell us there is a problem and not to be afraid. Some emotional issues can be debilitating.

♦ I think the things they listed, as factors for success, are correct. A clear mind is important for the instructor as well as the student to have. If you can't teach them, if you don't have a clear mind it's going to be impossible to teach the students. A lot of times when you come to that desk, before you can get to the math, you may have to listen to a student's problem, something that has happened the day before, or something that is going to happen when they leave the classroom. Sometimes I go to the desk I don't always get to teach math first. I may have to stop and listen to what they have to say. Sometimes you have to give a little counseling and a little advice about their problems. Sometime they will break right down in class and cry. It is not uncommon. It depends on what the situation is. Sometimes, I've had cases where they've just lost a loved one. I asked what are you doing sitting here in the classroom. In situations like that I try

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to get them out of the classroom, because when they think about it, then that's all they are thinking about anyway. It's going to bring sorrow and they won't have a clear mind. What we can do to help to keep their minds clear…now let's see if we can talk as much about the math as we did about the problem. Get their attention focused. Instructors have to know the breaking point of these students too. How much can they take? Because when they are having an emotional problem, you want to be extra careful what you say and what you do. Sometimes you pass by the desk and they are sitting there staring at their pencil. I will ask them why their pencil is not moving and then they will explain the problem that they are having. As soon as I can get my children a pair of shoes then I will be able to concentrate on my studies. I understand that. I've been there too. They do have emotional needs and we should be sensitive to them.

♦ It's hard to put your hands around what it takes to get students feeling good everyday about learning and taking care of all of those emotional needs they have. To deal with the whole student. In remediation, an institution that provides the best remedial programs of the future is going to have to address all the four areas the students identified plus the last two. We would definitely have to address these six issues. The students know what they need to succeed; we need to listen to them as an institution.

♦ Wow. They are definitely opening up and talking about their needs, having to be less worried about their children while they are gone, and stuff. They are opening up and sharing some deep things which could possibly be problems. These must be really important issues with them or they would never have opened up and shared them.

♦ Many times an emotional need is tied into this financial thing. Many of these areas the students have identified overlap like our affinities did. Like, it's hard to be upbeat and positive when you don't have the money to pay for your kid's childcare, even if it is across the street. Those are things that they do need. It's hard; it's hard to argue with any of that. We've got to recognize that there are factors that weight heavy on the students that are trying to get an education, factors that impede their academic progress.

♦ So many of our young students who are only children, have many children themselves. It's not uncommon, but wow, the emotional demands on our students!

♦ The students that we get have so many problems and you really don't know what's going on. Sometimes you can observe them and they are off in another world. The other day there was a young lady standing outside of the lab, 117 and she was on the telephone and she was just boo-hooing. I didn't know it. Another instructor cam by my office and told me…. I went down and I asked if everything was okay. And she said something about

her baby being sick. I said, do you have transportation to get there? She said, I'm trying to get my mother to go pick her up. All of these type things impact the way the students learn and act in the class and react in the class.

5. Student Physical Needs

The focus group of student participants cited that they had certain physical needs, which were critical to their success in their developmental education efforts. The students' physical needs spanned a wide range from having enough to eat, to needing a decent computer at home. The instructors were sensitive to these needs; however, in their personal interviews, they argued that while this area had merit, it probably was not as critical a factor as some of the other issues the students described. The instructors shared these views individually.

♦ I guess physical needs can destroy concentration in the classroom as easily as anything else. I think the students, most of the students on campus sign up for the health plan. If they don't, then they should be more encouraged to do so. The health plan would cover their prescriptions. Some of these students qualify for Medicaid. They base your payment on how much money you make. If you don't make any they will tell you to give them two or three dollars. They can go over there and get that done. Teeth extracted and all of that.

♦ Some of the physical needs I would agree with. That's the kind of thing that hopefully some of these folks for the first time are hearing somebody

tell them that yeah, it's right, you do need that break. You don't need to cram for twelve hours. Study for fifteen minutes and go get a stick of gum and come back. You need to have a place to work at home. They need food and drinks, some of my students, yeah, they need a few less food and drinks just like I need less food and drinks. By in large, yeah, they have a lot of physical needs.

♦ Yes, they are not machines, they have physical needs, and this is a big campus to get around to always have to run back if you need to get a snack for some energy. There are the machines and stuff, but yes they definitely have physical needs. Hungry, tired, or ill students just don't perform well in class. They're right.

♦ While physical needs are very important and they can slow a student's academic progress, I think students have to remember that some sacrifices must be made, like a new computer. You might not have enough money, enough gas, whatever, but right now the most important thing besides the family would be trying to get your education.

♦ I'm not sure all of these items the students named are physical needs. Some of these sound like material wants. If these are things that the students, some students think they need to have to succeed in school, uh, well, maybe they are for that student. However, the instructor should be informed of real physical needs. I have had students that were in their

seventh month of pregnancy and they looked at me and it was like, I may

have to leave for a few minutes. No problem. Sit by the door if you want,

wherever you need to sit, go, leave. Common sense.

♦ I agree, some student have more critical physical needs than others.

Some students are more challenged physically than others. It's an

individual thing that instructors should be conscious of. Anything and I do

mean anything that can steal the concentration from a student trying to

learn and focus in class should be addressed if possible.

One instructor felt that physical needs should not be considered a barrier to

academic success.

♦ By the time they get to college, they are adults, they are at least 17 years

old, so they understand that to stay awake in class, they need to get some

amount of sleep, and that food and drink helps to feed the brain. Certainly

they should be mature enough by this age to have learned how to take care

of their physical needs.

6. Student Social Needs

The final area the group of participating students discussed as critical to

their academic success in their developmental educational efforts was their social

needs. This affinity describes the social needs the students felt contributed to their

success as having study partners, having opportunities to socialize on campus to

find and network with other students of common cultures and interests, and having

opportunities to interact with instructors and administrators informally. When

asked their perspectives on the students' feeling socialization was a key component

to their educational success, the instructors shared these thoughts.

♦I like that part with the studying with buddies and also the interacting

with administrators and instructors. I think that's powerful.

♦ I do think socialization is important and I know , I think I mentioned

before about the Women's Resource Center. A lot of women take classes

and like seminars on different issues to help them with the support they

need, and I know especially like single mothers, they are really helped by

that program, and it is important. This is a college, and even though a lot of

students don't live on campus, I think it would help to have different clubs.

I think the technologies, most of them have some kind of professional club

or organization were they encourage socialization. We are social beings. I

think that might be a reason many students do stay in school, if they see a

lot of social activities going on the campus.

♦ Part of college is the social aspect. That's the part that gets them

interested initially sometimes. So, there should be social activities, more

social activities. And the collegial atmosphere, I guess that's the right

adjective. And it's an ongoing discussion here because there is no, there

are no sports teams to rally around on this particular campus. There are no

teams of any sort, academic teams or anything that the whole campus can

associate with. There's no focal point. There's no place on campus where people can meet. There's no social area. There's a cafeteria that a lot of people never set foot in. There's a recreation center that a lot of people never go to. So, the students are right. For a lot of them, in asking, how is this educational experience different than what you expected, they will say, they were expecting what is typical college life. They weren't expecting Animal House or anything like that, but they were expecting there to be a social atmosphere on the campus when actually this is a campus that socially shuts down Thursday night. So, for a lot of the students who are living on campus, it's probably limited to institutionally sponsored social activities. Whereas other campuses have concerts and such. We do have intramural programs. I agree, there should be more interaction with instructors and administrators. If I see a student at Wal-Mart, they say hello and I say hello and we might talk for a few minutes. I never see anybody on campus because I'm never outside of the building. I think it's the same with most instructors on campus. They never see anyone because they never go out and see anyone. So, yeah, I agree with this component. As far as being critical to their success, well, maybe, depends on the student's individual personality and social needs.

♦ Socialization is part of the college experience. I feel, especially for those right out of high school, that's what the college experience is all about,

being a part of an organization, social functions and students services

provides those kinds of activities to make sure. I don't think anyone should

just go through this experience and come back and say that it was just about

academics. I tell my students, when you leave this college, you are going to

be paying bills for the rest of your life. Have some fun now. A good

portion of the college education would be that social function where you

make new friends, where you learn new ideas, you come from different

communities and different things and it helps you to become a better citizen

because you become more tolerant of different people, different cultures,

different views and perspectives, more accepting of other people. It's an

important part because many students have limited experiences

geographically; they have been in one small location all their lives. This is

where they get their mix, even from out of state. I think that's important. I

think the social part of college is very important. It's not the most

important thing and maybe not a critical success factor, maybe it is, but it's

certainly an important part.

♦The students should be calling the shots. If socialization is what they

need, then to the best of our ability we need to try to supply those needs.

♦I'm surprised that the group of students would note socialization as a

need but yeah, they absolutely have to have that. We don't do a very good

job of encouraging it on this campus though because we always suggest to

students, you need to do your individual thing. When in fact that student

right next to them might have the math equation and be able to explain it to

them better than the instructor. Wonder why some instructors are

intimidated by students teaching students sometimes? Aren't we all

connected? Don't we all learn from each other anyway? That is

socialization.

♦ That's probably going to be the least difficult concept to deal with that

the group of students came up with. They are going to meet and mingle

and match all the way. But that is important also. It really is. You know.

Typically students are going off to college to meet their life long friends.

That's where it happens at so that's very important too. And they should.

We should get more involved in that, particularly for the remedial type

student, we should offer opportunities for more socialization with other

students on campus, especially in their desired programs. It's very

important. Anytime you can integrate their program interests into their

remedial efforts, it's beneficial.

♦ Well, I like this component too because that's part of your college

education, learning to become part of society, and this is a little piece of

society here and that learning to function and recognize each others needs is

important.   I can see how the issue of socialization can be a critical need to

their academic success.

Prior to dismissing the instructors from their individual interview sessions, the researcher took the opportunity to take advantage of their emotional fatigue, relaxed posture, and broken-down inhibitions to ask the following un-planned final question, "Is there anything else regarding the relationship between students and their instructors you would care to share?" Their responses were natural, instinctive, and spontaneous.

♦ I think that the majority of the faculty is pretty dedicated. I'm saying this because this is what I've observed. I feel that some are overly concerned. When I say overly concerned, I don't know if it's concern. We don't need to baby the students. I heard one instructor down the hall referring to her students as, the kids. I have to get back to the kids. I don't like that terminology for adults. We don't want children, some of them act like kids, but we are here to make sure they don't continue to be kids, to go to the world of work. So one major thing is treat them like adults. Don't baby them. Respect them. You can treat them kind and you can give them compliments on a daily basis but don't baby them and whine and go on. I don't like the terminology used as kids, because they are not. That really turns me off. Some of these people are as old as me. In my class, you know, I mainly call them by name. Sometimes I'll call them Miss so and so or Mr., like I was called when I was in college. Some prefer that. I never refer to them as kids though, children. I think we're doing a good job

primarily. I know we get a few complaints. You are not going to satisfy

everyone in the world. I had a young lady in the hallway last Thursday or

Friday and she had this baby and he whined and he cried, he was a one-

year-old person. People in the lab were complaining. Michael came down,

he heard it. I'm in my office on a long distance call. I go and I ask the

young lady, are you going to class? Why are you here with your baby?

She says, I have to bring him to class or I have to stay at home with him. I

said well, you aren't supposed to bring your babies and take them to class.

I said it just like I'm saying it now. Well, everybody has let me do it all

week. I said, well, if you've done it over here it's wrong. And if you've

done it any place else, because we do have rules. We can't have children in

the rooms. We are liable for anything that happens. She said, well, I'm

going to take him. We need to help these students but we need to be

conscious of following the rules and regulation and policy as set forth by

the institution and also being conscious of other students and faculty

members.

♦ Relationships between college instructors and students has changed

drastically. It went from probably in 1950s, very little instructor, student

interaction. In fact, you pretty much learned not to go bother your

professor, unless it was really, really important. And then you know, it's

kind of changed a little bit, more contact. It kind of went a little too far in

some instances and they had some problems. There were some lawsuits. There were a lot of things that took place because of that. The communication is different, became different and people had more information and they assumed more things about and they read more, they saw more. So, then you had to start to be careful about what you said to a student. Now, I think they are trying to go back the other way a little bit to get a little more familiar with the student and communicate with the student but in a very professional way. You have to keep it professional. Some people interpreted that, back there, as being buddies. You can, you try to set an example, but at the same time you can't be buddies with the students. You have to still maintain that professional student-instructor rapport. It's kind of gone full circle.

♦ The relationship between instructor and student has possibly the greatest impact on their success than any other factor. In general with the range of students that we have and the variance of personalities and the knowledge they bring with them. It's the knowledge they bring with them, not so much; all I need is a good mind and somebody that has some good work habits and good work ethics. I know I can get him there. I know I can show him success. There are some students that I've had that they don't need much help. They are going to make it anyhow and they are going to dig it out for themselves.... mostly, especially in mathematics, they say, I'm

not good in mathematics. I say, you don't know that! The students that

we've got here, if I can show them that mathematics doesn't have to be

hard, there are good techniques and ways of explaining things that can

make it quite easier. In fact, a lot of the things that I teach are not coming

out of the book. It's coming out of what I've learned over many years.

One thing is I'm very sound in what I teach. I have a good record with my

own mathematics. I tell them I want them to be as good as I am. I try to

teach them all of the things that I think give me an edge. So they can be as

good as I am. The personal part of it, I think they are more willing to listen

to what I have to say, I think, when they do know there is a personal

interest there. I share mathematics and I share personal mathematic

experiences with them. I share of myself. All of the people who I consider

good teachers, didn't necessarily do that. I can remember one teacher in

high school that all of us in high school called Bloody Mary. She taught

senior English and she was a taskmaster. She was good. So you don't have

to have that.... but I use it. Some of it is because I just like people.

♦ I'm a firm a believer that there's a trust element between the instructor

and the student and if you don't have a trust element, if there's not

something where the student trusts that what the instructor is going to give

him is worth something, then it's, they aren't going to listen. On the other

side, if the teacher doesn't trust that the students can do the work, I think,

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they don't put as much effort into teaching it. They don't trust that the student is capable.

♦ When those Ph.D. students come down to the teaching environment and they have a college ready student, they attempt to draw back from the students' existing body of knowledge and that helps them, not only confirm their theories but it enhances their theories drawing back confirming information from the capable student where they would be bored with an incapable student or the one that they view as incapable, like an underprepared student. Actually, the Ph.D. instructors can gain a lot from the experience of teaching the underprepared if they are open to it, if they are willing to see. But what happens, most cases like that you get a class of 30 students, 25 of them that don't understand half of what is being said, 5 that are may be college ready but they are in a developmental class because they slept through TASP or something. My experience is that this instructor will tend to deal with those five students more and on a better level and disregard the other students. Teach the brightest; don't waste your time on the rest. Kinda sad.

♦ I really feel like the best development instructors do care about their students. I'm not saying that other instructors don't, but it's hard to care about your students when you go into a room with 500 students and you lecture and give them multiple choice tests and never see them. That's

going to be real hard. We occasionally will get somebody who will be better suited to teaching that way, getting into the developmental program. In fact a large number of teachers teach that way because that's the way they've been prepared. When I went back to journalism school they didn't teach you that you might go to a little dinky newspaper that was working on manual typewriters still and had somebody typesetting it. They taught you the state of the art. They taught you the top of the line. They taught you the best. So we prepare students, folks going into academia, for the top of academia. We don't prepare them for the bottom, for the folks that are having trouble. College students are supposed to know the basics. Why don't they know the basics? You are supposed to get it K through 12. If you didn't get it in K through 12, you don't get it in my 1301 class, in my college level class because this is college level. …already out of K through 12 and…won't get it in the college classroom, what do you do? I think that developmental students come to developmental instructors and feel that the instructor should somehow acknowledge the fact that the student doesn't have that body of knowledge and hey, that's what we're here to help you with, instead of right off the bat the student feels like, okay, I don' t have this body of knowledge, I don't have the basics, I'm going to get beat up for not having it. I have my students go down and do an e-write on the computer the first week of class. Oh that first week they want to please so

bad.   …over and over again, guys, I just want to see where you are, I

assure them. I want to see where you started. You can't do it wrong. Just

go down and do your best. You get a hundred if you do it for a quiz grade

and you get a zero if you don't. Just go do it. No pressure, just do it. As

soon as they get through with that and we start into the writing process and

even before, I don't say any of this stuff before they go in and do this. I

wait to start my segue into the writing process until after they've finished

with the diagnostics………if you made a four that's where I expect you to

start out…now we're going to talk about what…. you'll know what you did

on that e-write…feel comfortable not knowing, that's okay. Nobody is

going to beat you up for not knowing. We need to acknowledge where you

are and move forward. I keep pushing them to accept themselves and move

forward, it's for their benefit, not mine.

♦ Communication between the instructor and the student is the most

important part of that relationship…what the expectations are and

understanding, communicating understanding for where the student is and

what their needs are is important.

♦ It makes me feel good the students want to take so much responsibility

for their own learning because no matter how enthusiastic and good a

teacher might present the material, it's their frame of mine, the student's

frame of mind either lets something come through or it blocks it out. There

have been lots of students I've struggled and struggled and finally found whatever it took to win them over, then they start participating and start getting better grades and stuff. So the students, it's really good for them to see that they can stop the learning or make it happen. A real good student, no matter how bad the teacher, if the student really wants to learn, will find a way in spite of the teacher. So, it's a good marriage, the instructor and student relationship. Well, I think one of the important things for instructors especially to remember to do is treat each student respectfully. Nowadays you can look out across the classroom and see all kinds of colors and styles of hair and earring in every place of the body and I try to focus in on the eyes and see the soul. The child of God inside there. Disguised in that fancy house on the outside and teach to that child. I always pray everyday and ask the Lord, help me to respect the student, not to be judgmental on what the package is because I realize they are students, I really the ones who do the most decoration to their bodies are the most in need of attention in life. It's their way of crying out to be different and be noticed because they may have come from a big family and they didn't get enough or whatever.

♦ I can't emphasize enough how important the instructor- student relationship is. The instructor plays a major role in shaping the lives of anybody. Instructors should always be teaching and learning themselves.

Man, I'm telling you, that is so important.   And it's more so in a remedial

setting. Students feel that, "If you don't treat me right you won't teach me

right." So students have to believe that they've been treated right so they

can learn. Learning is a trust factor that reaching out, moving into new

territories, accept something from the instructor that he intend to give me

but yet and still I have to believe that it's the right thing. Something I as a

student needs. We have to establish that linkage and that trust. That's

important. If we don't do that it will work, but it doesn't work nearly as

well. So we're back to the value thing. It's almost like the student trust the

instructor to give him knowledge that is of value and not to waste their time

in learning. Not to waste their time and money. Give them accurate and

true information. Very important. I tell this story quite a bit about students

that are taking test, particularly technical students and remedial students.

They have to trust the presenter. They have to believe that you're telling

the truth. And in many cases they will challenge the instructor too. It's ok

for the students to challenge. They'll ask you questions about the content or

material because they don't believe you're telling them the truth. When

they challenge your information, it's like they don't accept it for face value.

That's the reason why academics is so difficult for most minority students.

They don't trust the presenter. They don't trust them at all. They look at it

and say, "I don't believe that." And they look into it and the first thing they

do is try to find out is if there is anyway that I can contradict what you just said, prove you wrong. They try to prove you wrong. Then, when they can't do that, they will just look for some other reason not to believe what you're saying. That's a big trust thing. When you have an instructor of one race and a student of a different race and the student challenges the instructor on the content or the knowledge that the instructor is providing, the instructor does not like that challenge. They sure don't understand it. And most of them take it personal. They look at it and say "Oh, God." But they still don't understand in many cases where the student is coming from because that student in many cases hasn't been told the truth on a number of issues and they question that business. In the technical end, particularly when you're dealing with stuff like changing engines and putting in spark plugs and all of that stuff and the instructor says "here's the way it should happen" and then you get a group of student's who say "but here's the way it works".... show me the real deal right up front and they don't usually do that. They don't show everybody the same thing on how to cook that cake. You know, we talked about that recipe. I can have the recipe but I can't make that thing look that good. And the instructors don't tell them all their little secrets to the recipe and that's the same thing in academics. They don't tell them all of the secrets too. The student doesn't trust that. So once you can develop that trust and the student believes that what you're

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saying is accurate and true, and there's no need to research anything

beyond that, they ponder. So the student teacher relationship is so critical.

It's very important. You have to have a good solid relationship built on

trust and you have to keep building. That is very difficult with remedial

students because, man they've had those external forces that have kept

them out and pulling them into a trust thing is difficult. Because they've

usually heard so much in the past that didn't work out well for them. I

can't say that I blame their hesitation to trust.

♦ We can't over emphasize how important it is for the instructor to develop

a relationship with the student. It's not always easy….I think that's the

hardest part for the instructor to be at a level and let the student know that

I'm at that level where we can have a relationship with more than just

numbers….other problems and try to solve those. All instructors out there,

if they could just understand that. My philosophy, maybe it's just a point of

view, is that when students come into your classroom and they come in all

sizes, shapes and colors and all kinds of problems and conditions, when I

look out there at those students….I see a student with a math deficiency and

that's all I see. My job is to correct the deficiency without partiality. If

every instructor could treat them as they would like to be treated. What

broke me up from a lot of not taking the time to really help students when

they need help or to explain a problem when a student needs help….I was

in a computer class when we first started learning to use the computer. I didn't know anything at all about the computer and I was very reluctant to get on it anyway. It took them almost a year to get me on the computer, now I can't live without one. The person that was up showing us how to do what needed to be done. …went real fast and I didn't catch it. I couldn't get it. I didn't learn what I was supposed to learn and it taught me a lesson. I was in the student's shoes and now I understand what it means for teacher to go too fast, don't go back and explain it, don't go step by step and show you how to do it. It really affects you…. that's the way students feel. If you've been there you can understand that and hopefully come out better.

♦ Instructors also need to remain motivated toward the successful goal of being a good instructor and an instructor that provides learning opportunities for their students. So, once again we almost get back to that vertical education and that staying motivated. So it applies to the instructors too. That they actually fall down, they get complacent, they get horizontal, they get into their comfort zone and what does it actually take to bring them up vertical again and keep them up on that path. I think one way that it's going to take for everybody is to the student and instructor is like an exercise I do with the student "I'm Dreaming", I think we've stopped dreaming. We had a goal to be whatever and when we were a child we were asked what do you want to be. Did you want to be a doctor and you ended

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up being an instructor and it ended up putting a damper on your dream.

And we have not been able to refrain or reset that. To look at that in a

different way and to say well, if I wanted to go to the Olympics, I may not

be running in the Olympics but if I make it, maybe I'll just make it to the

games. So I did make it to the games. And I think dreams will keep us

motivated. So I'm teaching now, but what is it that I really want to do?

And what is it that I really just had the desire to do and I believe that I can

do it? And I think that that's the thing that we have to get back to and also

to promote dreaming and goal setting with the students. It may sound silly

but if they want to be a scientist and they can't read but we know about the

notable failures from Einstein to the guy who opened up Woolworth's.

You know there are a lot of folks that people said they couldn't be

successful, but they did. And once again we're almost talking about the

relationship of the instructor and the student in showing value in this place,

for instance full circle. That instructor to a large degree has the ability to

determine value and to show the student the value and so forth. And if that

instructor is lying down and complacent then there is no relationship, much

less demonstrating value. The student says to the instructor, "you may tell

me there's value but I see you laying down and complacent so I don't really

see the value." See, the students often times don't see the energized person

that was excited about their job. They only see them now and that's what

they're living in and trying to relate to. They're living in "now".

Developmental Education Students

The students' focus group was held at lunch one day between their

scheduled classes, with pizza provided.

Introductions were necessary in the students' focus group. Few of these

students knew each other. Most were familiar with each other's faces; however,

they had not met. Each student was given an opportunity to introduce him or

herself to the group and share any information about themselves and their

experiences with the institution that might be appropriate or useful. Following the

completion of the demographics sheets, the students were instructed to sit and be

comfortable, then asked to close their eyes and reflect on the following narrative

statement:

> You have been supplied with ample index cards and markers. For this
> portion of the exercise, please respond individually without consulting your
> friends or other students in the group.
>
> Now, please take a moment to close your eyes and relax. Please think about
> your life and experience in higher education and especially of your
> experience in this college. Reflect on your experiences, feelings, and
> thoughts as a student. Picture yourself sitting in the classroom. Now,
> picture yourself consulting with an instructor about your educational needs.
> Think about your progress in the developmental education process and in
> school.
>
> What words come to mind when I ask the question, "What do you as a
> developmental education student need to be successful in your
> developmental coursework? Now, please open your eyes and write those

words on the index cards in front of you. Please only write one word or thought per card.

Once again, the question was, "what words or phrases come to your mind when you consider what is necessary for you as a developmental student to be successful in your developmental coursework."

The students worked quietly for a few minutes and then began mingling around the room taping their cards to the walls. As with the instructor focus group, categories began to emerge of similar thoughts and concepts regarding their perceived ideas of success factors relating to their educational experience in developmental education. Like the instructor group, the student focus group created a list of six categories or affinities. The students agreed that their instructors played a critical role in their academic success; however, they identified five other areas that were extremely significant when they attempted to analyze areas in their lives that contributed to potentially insurmountable challenges that impeded their academic progress.

In the days following the focus group session, students were interviewed individually to gather their independent views on the defined affinities.

1. Institutional Assistance

This affinity, as described by the group of students, combines the services the institution provides in the operation of the institution, in general, and services provided specifically for the students. Some of the examples they cited were;

providing dedicated and well trained administration, faculty and staff members, guidance and counseling services, financial aid services, child care options, an environment conducive to learning, on-campus housing, and free transportation with frequent pick-ups.

Many students spoke of the impact the institution could have on their academic progress.

♦ We need the institution to help us. Like childcare, I have a real bad problem with child care right now. Right now, I'm having a real hard time because I have a one year old son and I can't make it to class all the time, I'm late, or I can't go because I don't have child care, and I don't have the money, the financial assistance right now to help pay for that. And, that's one thing that I need to help me get through school too. Cause if I can't get a babysitter to watch my child, then I can't go to school and learn and become something better. And, that's one of my main problems right now, that and financial assistance. They don't charge very much, they are pretty reasonable. I already pay for one and then I pay for after school for another and then I have a third one, an infant. So, it's just my husband working. Husband works all day and I go to school during the day because my sister in law whenever she does not work, she keeps my infant and I come to school. If she has an appointment, that leaves me without child care. I

really don't have anybody to take care of him. That's my main thing in life.

♦ If the students try hard enough, they would be able to reach their goals, but they have to have help. The institution must help them like with money and a place to stay. I live on campus, unfortunately. I don't want to, but I have to. I didn't want to live on campus, and right now, if I don't want to I can go and live with an uncle, ok, but they told me that since I was 19 I had to live on campus, but I will be 20 pretty soon, so I can move off campus. I want to live off campus because I have migraines really bad and my roommate plays his music and you know, it's hard to have peace and quiet on campus. I had to do something so I took his wires on the stereo and hid them in the house. Well, that took care of that. I couldn't get any sleep so I could not study or stay awake in class.

The institution provides counselors, food service and things like that right? Yes, we could not make it here without the institution's help because this campus is too far away from everything to walk.

♦ Well, I think that um, when you are a first time student or even when you're a second time student and you come in to register they don't give you a lot of information. The institution could help more than they do. There needs to be more information up front. They have you to do stuff but they don't tell you the consequences of what you do. Like oh, don't worry

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about it you know, just take out an emergency loan and we'll take care of it. Well, then it comes up due and there's no money there. So, they just need to be better. They need to take the time to inform us of what's happening. I think they, student services misleads people, you know they make students think that everything is just so easy and it's abcd and there's b and c that's missing from the whole thing. If you figure out who to go ask and what to go do, when you find that right person they're very willing to help. If that right person who can and will help you is off from work that day, well, opps, your out of luck. It's just finding that right person to get the right information should be I think a little bit easier.

♦ I think it's a big part in all students' life to live on campus and kind of get away from their parents, but it can also be a bad situation because they are around a bunch of other students their age for the first time out on their own, they party a lot, they end up not going to class because they don't have to go to class and the institution loses about half their students because of that. The institution could help but I believe it is eventually the students' responsibility to succeed. Only the institution can help, but the student has to want do make it work bad enough or there is nothing the institution can do to succeed for them.

♦ The institution can help me with my goals and help me focus in life so that I can build as I go through my educational process.

♦ Yes, I depend on the staff that works here to teach me the subjects and if I have problems I need them to confront me and tell me how to deal with the problems in the class as far as the subjects and tell me who I can go to for tutoring or any other area I need that may be able to assist me. So I do depend on them to have the information or be able to lead me to someone who can give me the information. I depend on the instructors and they are a big part of the institution. I depend on the institution to hire and keep the best instructors.

♦ Without the institution you wouldn't have any instructors, so yes, we need the institution to help us.

♦ I think that institutions should supply help to the students as well as do other things like transportation pick-ups, help with financial issues, you know.

2. Instructional Assistance

The group of students also felt instructional assistance was a critical component in their opportunities of educational success at the developmental education level. They were in agreement that this affinity categorized all the means by which instructors can have either positive or negative influence on the learning opportunities of their students. The students shared their perspectives on their current instructors.

♦ Very, very important. Instructors should be willing to be here to help you, not just sit there and leave it all up to you to go and do it. If you really don't understand something and you need their help, and if they are not really caring, and they are just here for the money, then that doesn't help you any. Our instructors here care. I would be working so hard to come here with three kids at home if I thought they didn't care a bunch.

♦ Instruction help is very important. You need one-on-one instruction sometimes and there are a lot of group activities. I like feel like I need to have a good relationship with an instructor where I can get information from them on a first hand basis. It's really helpful because I'm ADD and everybody learns differently.

♦ Well, all of my instructors are really good, and if you go and ask they'd help. You just have to be aggressive enough to get up and go ask. I have one class that doesn't have any lecturing and I thought that it would and I think that should even though it is a self paced class because you see I didn't know that in the beginning they don't tell you that. So, I think that at least if you meet three times a week they should at least each week go over the chapter that every body's working on and kind of hit the basics. But, I mean they're really good if you go and ask them they'll sit down and they'll help you. I mean I don't have any trouble with my instructors at all. I guess I should've been from Missouri instead of Texas cause I like hands

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on, I like doing, but I would rather somebody show me than for me to have to read it. Sometimes you read something and if you don't know how to do it, it's like reading Japanese so you don't get much out of it and then you spend weeks of fumbling until you go, oh I got it now. I wish I had someone tell me this early on. Just one word could make somebody go a whole lot quicker which only makes your graduation quicker and it makes your grades better. If your fumbling for two weeks into a semester you know, and nobody else is fumbling then your already behind everybody else and then you have a confidence and self-esteem thing going on then you know cause' you feel like your stupid and you know everybody's just moving right along ahead of you. Some instructors can tell if your fumbling and they ask you, other are so busy and we only have fifty minutes in class.

♦ I've been to five other colleges besides this one, and this is one of the best one as far as one-on-one teaching and helping each other out, and the instructors really work with you and they understand that you can't always do your homework because of work or whatever needs, and they are a little more lenient than a regular college would be. They really seem to care.

♦ The instructors are good because you know they speak to us and they share their experience of what they've done in the past and they help you with all your problems. They really try. They have a hard job.

♦ If you are not getting along with the instructor, you are not going to be paying attention in class. You are not going to be focused on what he or she is teaching and you need to be focused on the subject at hand. These instructors are easy to get along with mostly. It's not like this at every college.

♦ The students they need help, I mean they come to college, I mean I know they went through high school and what not, and they know little bit about little bit. Like me, I mean I don't know everything. Instructions their here to teach and it's like tutorials. I mean you can go and get tutored but you can also have the instructor teacher which is the person that teaches the class. So, yeah that one-on-one teaching is a good thing and feedback and I mean you know people just don't want to give up. I mean they want to keep going, inspire them.

The students were inspired by the instructors as evident in these comments.

♦ We need the instructors to teach us how to go out into the world. They do that.

♦ That old man teacher helps me a lot in math. He constantly tells me, I have a good mind. He tells most every student in class that they have good minds.

♦ Some students act stupid in class; it makes it harder for us to learn. These instructors have some tough students to try to teach. Some just don't

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want to learn, they just want to get their financial aid checks. They make

class hard on us and the instructors.

♦ I go to the teachers' offices a lot. They give me stuff to eat, give me

things to do. I live on campus and don't have many friends. I spend lots of

time in this building because I don't know anyone else and don't have

anywhere else to go.

♦ The instructors here are cool. They really try to help us in everything.

3. <u>Student Financial Needs</u>

The next affinity the group of students identified as having relevance in

their attempts to be successful in their developmental educational efforts was their

financial needs. The student focus group described this affinity as having financial

resources such as financial aid from the institution, less on-campus housing fees,

better-paying part-time jobs, and more financial resources in general. When the

students were interviewed individually, they all cited that they had financial needs

to some extent.

♦ Financial needs are very important. You need gas money to get back

and forth to school. You need money for school supplies. If you can get

financial aid or Pell grants, that's good. But, you have paper, books,

pencils, scantrons, extra little things you need to finish the school year, and

money runs out. Not all people get a free lunch and you have to pay for

your lunch. It's a big deal, people need money. You can't get anywhere if

you don't have gas. You can't feed yourself if you don't have money to get

food. You sure can't concentrate in class if your hungry. Having money to

get by is real important.

♦ Well, me I am not having too bad of financial needs right now. I mean

everybody wants money, but not everybody needs it. And, the reason I say

that is because my roommate, ok, for example, he's a foster child. He has

foster parents that live in Houston. He has nobody here in Waco. I have a

lot of family here in Waco. I get about $30 a week and they give me food,

but you know that is why I don't go to Women's Resources and get food.

The way I feel about students financial needs, if you are able, go get a job.

If you aren't able, then I understand that you have to depend on somebody

because right now I'm a full time student.

I plan to get a job while I'm in school. Since I don't have crazy hours for

school and it's very weird because this is my first time being somewhere

else and not having a job. The whole time I was in jr. high and high school

I had one job. OK, and I come here and I can't find a job. I've been to

some interviews, but it's not me because I used to go to interviews dressed

any kind of way, but when you go to an interview dressed any kind of way,

you don't get hired. And, I learned that by watching a video.

♦ Just getting money is hard. I'm still going through the process of getting

money right now. I sent off my papers but I haven't heard yet. It takes

time. I worry about it a lot. I want to be in school and do well but if I have

to get a job, it is going to make coming to school really tough.

♦ I don't have any extra money. Buying books and stuff takes all my

money. I get depressed sometimes and it makes it hard to study. I think,

what's the use. I guess its good I am stuck on this campus with no

transportation.

♦ A group of guys in my dorm put our money together and cook dinner.

We are all good cooks, just no one does dishes. We get by. I was a foster

kid so I haven't ever had money to spend.

♦ I guess we always in life have financial needs. Um, I've loved the

students keep telling me there's all these grants out there, all these grants,

all these grants, well I ain't found any of them. So there's a lady in

financial aide that she gave me a list but the list that she gave me is all, buy

this, and buy that, and she already told us that that's nothing but scams that

you don't have to buy stuff. If it says buy this book; don't do it because it's

a scam so you know. So I don't know if I'm not looking on the right

website whenever I get there. If I'm picking the wrong site to go on but um,

I know there's some grants out there. There's all kinds of government

grants out there and I mean if you go in and you ask. I feel that any thing

that you go and ask if you could find the right person they'll help you

they'll walk you through it step-by-step. Finding the right person, finding

the right resource, that's the hard thing. It's so frustrating, I wonder if its all worth it.

♦ A lot of students go through their financial aid program and after getting the money from it, their grants and loans and what not, a lot of them don't have to work, but some of them still do if they have like family, so I don't know, I think it is a problem, I don't know.

♦ It is important, you know for school supplies, and you know . . . eat properly, three meals a day and have a good attitude when you come to class. Students have to learn to work through their problems.

♦ I can get money for myself because I am the father of three kids and a husband and I have to depend on money outside of school and also I need the education to make more money, so I have to look at two things put together. I depend a lot on money, but there are agencies out there if the students are informed that can give them the assistance and grants and things they need. They just need to find the right people to find it. My family comes first, if I didn't have the money for them first, I could not spend any money on school.

♦ Money is real important. Probably the most important thing. If you have money problems, your not going to do good in school. You can't study, you can't eat, you can't buy books, you can't go out.

♦ I have financial needs, I mean I'm like a ward of the court as they call

it. I'm by myself very much I call my momma and she doesn't help me out.

I have financial needs. I need everything that anybody can supply. Right

now I'm broke waiting for my check to come out and I need all the

financial help I can get. I come to class sometimes.

4. <u>Student Emotional Needs</u>

This affinity concerns the emotional needs students feel can become a

barrier or stumbling block to their success such as their ability to cope with stress

in their lives, their need to feel that their families emotionally support them, their

need to have a clear mind when they attempt to learn and process information, and

their constant worry regarding the safety and well-being of their families while

they are attending school. Common threads in their responses were their abilities

to deal with stress and the effect stress has on their learning.

♦ Emotional needs are important. When you go to school, like I have a

family, I'm 24 years old with three kids. It's real hard trying to go to

school and be married and you have a lot of problems that happen at home

that come with you to school because they are part of life. (crying) Like for

instance, I'm going through a lot this semester. I thought I'd start school

and you know be able to work through it, but I already have childcare

problems. I had childcare, but my childcare left to Mexico. It was my

husband's grandmother and she just got up and left. She decided to leave

and that left me there with no childcare. Here, I'm trying to cope with no childcare and trying to get to class and I can't get to class cause I don't have childcare, and I can't do lab work and that really stresses because I'm trying as hard to be here and I do want something in my life so my kids could be better too so I could show them there are things you can do, but with one person working in the household. I've put applications in, but don't get nobody to call. My husband just finds out that he may not be working very long, so that leaves me stressed all the time and upset. I'm trying hard to deal with everything.

♦ Well, to me it really doesn't bother me. I deal with stress my own way. Like, if my mother wants to come see me, she can come see me, but if she calls me and tells me something, it doesn't bother me because I stay focused on my school work. I have to graduate and I have long-term goals. Everything depends on how I react. Like my roommate. He knows I have migraines. He chooses to turn his music up. So, we don't see eye to eye anymore. I messed with his wires. I have to stay focused on me.

♦ Emotional needs are a big part of students quitting school, they don't see the value in their lives, they're all stressed out. They can't hang.

♦ If a student deals with stress or not has a big impact on their educational success. It has a lot of impact on it. I think because most students will let stress start affecting their schoolwork and stuff and they always bring it to

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school. If they would deal with it at home, then they wouldn't have to worry about it at school. That should be two separate things but if it affects one, it affects the other.

♦ I've seen so many stressed out students just get up in the middle of class and walk out.

♦ I know a lady who's husband doesn't want her to come to class. He keeps her all upset.

♦ Well I guess they always need support from either their family, spouse or you know they need support from their teachers. Which I personally, I mean I have support from everybody. I feel like I have some of the best teachers. I have better teachers now than I had in high school. I mean I quit high school my sophomore year because my teachers didn't care. We had fifty; forty, fifty, sixty students in class in high school it's not self-paced. They have to teach and I had teachers who didn't know algebra. So I never learned algebra. So, they can't teach something that they don't even know. I had a coach. He was worried about football and basketball. Not algebra, he didn't know how, he didn't know the formulas. It's like okay now we're not gone to take questions now. Well I got a question well no we need to do something else. Yeah, he couldn't answer it. It's like well, I can't tell you I don't have the answer. So I got frustrated and I quit. I just got completely frustrated and quit cause I was always a good student. I wasn't a straight A

student but I made A's, B's and C's. C's only because I had classes that I didn't like very well and I didn't do as well in them, but I got frustrated and I quit. You know, and ever since then I've never been a quitter. So, um, I lost my job that's why I'm here in school and I was suppose to be able to draw unemployment. Well, they're denying me my unemployment because um, I'm a full time student. Cause they say I'm not available for work for the hours that I was working and um, so I have no money. I mean I'm not getting any money or anything like that I mean I'm fighting them trying to make them pay me or whether not that will work or not I don't know. But, I'm a confident person and I'm not a quitter and they can throw all the obstacles out there that they want and one of the questions that they asked me was, "Will you quit school"? No, was my answer, which was the wrong answer. You know, no I'm not going to quit school. I'm thirty-seven years old. If I quit school four years down the road when I'm 42 and 43 I'm a be back in the same boat that I am now and that much older and still have no education. You know, and I'm trying to do better for myself to where I don't have to be here again. So, everybody has stress. If you live, you have stress. I'm just never gonna quit again, even if I'm starving.

♦ Emotionally, it's good to have positive feedback on how you are doing in school and that will keep you going. I think down deep, everyone wants to

do good and please others. Positive feedback makes you forget stress sometimes.

♦ You know if one conducts himself in the right way or learns to deal with those emotional problems, he is develop coping skills. That's important in life.

♦ Group attention helps, if you can relate to people about problems you are having sometimes they can help you see that your problems aren't as big as theirs are. You can reach out to groups to lean on each other. You are not the only one. Sometimes, it's good to listen to other people, you can learn from listening to people. Everyone has stress and emotional needs, when you understand you're not the only one, its better.

♦ Everybody has emotional needs, especially young people trying to learn how to make it in life and in school.

♦ Well, you need, we need any kind of support. I mean friends, family, and peers. Anybody, I mean, it's like you know, I mean my family they don't really support me very much. I mean I call them and they'll tell me what not and their like, okay. I understand that they're trying to help me but I need more than just what they do. I can't just sit there and say okay, okay I'm gonna go and get a job and that's going to inspire me to graduate out of college. I mean it's not working I need more. I have a lot of stress, I need them to care about me or at least pretend they do.

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♦ I like to be around lively people, the instructors here are fun sometimes, I mean, I hear them laughing and having fun down the hall. We have to be quiet in the labs, but we have fun outside and that helps stress.

5. Student Physical Needs.

The focus group of student participants cited that they had certain physical needs which were critical to their success in their developmental education efforts. The students' physical needs spanned a wide range from having enough to eat to needing a decent computer at home.

♦ For me, I mean physical needs are really not the most important. I do need to eat and get something to drink to keep myself going, and like books and stuff I have. When I first started, I really didn't have money to get the rest of the stuff, like scantrons, stuff like that, it's real hard. And, cause I have bills at home to pay, I have learned to get by on few physical things. I never have new clothes. My husband can't support all of that. He only makes so much amount of income and you can't make it on just that.

♦ The instructors here give me food every morning otherwise I wouldn't show up for class. They know this.

♦ I have some physical needs. Well, I've never been a house without cable TV. My apartment is the only apartment that I know in Village Oaks that gets free cable. I don't have a TV of my own so I'm going to get one today, but I don't watch TV. To occupy my time, I don't think you need a TV. I

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think you just need something decent to do, something that is legal and something decent. I sleep and study. I go to class, I don't have any books, so I go to class, I go home, I go get food, and I go to sleep until my mom calls me and she lives in Wichita Falls. My roommate has physical needs, he needs food all the time. I don't think he ever eats.

♦ I think students that have learning problems should have more options for them here and stuff like getting help. I have ADD and since I am, I have to take medication. Getting my medication is a big physical need. I can't do anything without it, certainly not study or learn. It really affects my school work.

♦ If I had a computer in my room, I could take DL classes and not have so many scheduling problems. I could graduate sooner.

♦ Students have physical needs like health problems. If something happen to them and a lot of them probably aren't living off their parents any more some of them may be but a lot of them probably aren't. They're trying to get out on their own. That's what they want to do. Some type of medical insurance, I know that there's something out there I don't know how easy it is to get, how good it is, or anything like that. A couple of boys were talking and said you can go over to women's resource building and they will give you all the food you want. You ask for it; hamburger, meat, cheese, bread, uh cereal. I mean so it's there but it all goes back to having

the information up front. You can give every student all these brochures, paper-work they go home and they set that paperwork down and they don't ever read anything. You know, a certain day of registration to where each speaker from each building of what programs they have to let everybody know what they have to offer would be nice. I mean students have to be willing to go out there and get the information. If they're not willing to help themselves then you can't help them anyway. Doesn't matter what you put out there for them. But um, it's here, I mean I didn't know that it was here. I mean I don't need food or anything like that but I mean I didn't know it was here, and only because of those two boys talking. You know, just listening in my classroom and the women's resource building will give anybody food. When I seen the sign of women's resources I'm thinking it's strictly for women, but it's not, it's for anybody.

♦ Well, if they don't have the supplies to do their work, it's going to be hard for them to succeed in the class. Physical needs like books, paper and pencil are important.

♦ In a positive way, by eating properly, and a negative way of not eating properly. Students have other physical needs to, like if they don't sleep, they sleep in class. I have even slept in class.

♦ Physical needs are very important. You have to take care of yourself first if you are going to succeed. You are going to have to take care of your

body and what needs you have so you can pay attention in class. Food and

exercise and all those things are important. If you don't take care of your

physical needs, you won't be successful in school, work, or anything.

♦ Physical needs are important. Can we take a break, I need to get some

water or coke.

♦ I mean a student they need, they need a good meal if they got a good

meal then yeah, then their going to come to school and their gonna do

better in class. I mean if they ate real good then their gonna you know their

gonna have a good day and their gonna go through class. That goes kind of

like with your uh, financial needs. I mean if the school pay for your lunches

then most people would have food and go to class. I mean most people

they don't have groceries and that's also with your emotional needs and the

things your family can be helping you with. See my family, they don't do

nothing so, I'm hungry all the time.

♦ When you have the physical need to have a smoke in the middle of class,

you gotta go outside. The instructors here are pretty understanding about

this physical need. I cannot concentrate in class if I gotta smoke.

6. Student Social Needs

        The final area the group of participating students discussed as critical to

their academic success in their developmental educational efforts was their social

needs. This affinity describes the social needs the students felt contributed to their

success as having study partners, having opportunities to socialize on campus to find and network with other students of common cultures and interests, and having opportunities to interact with instructors and administrators informally. The students' voices shared contrasting views on the level of importance student social needs had in determining their chances for academic success.

♦ I think students need friends. I think this is important to their success. It would be good because you always have a friend there that you could talk to, study with, but if you do that you've got to watch it because you really need to know who you are really sitting down and studying with and the important thing is not to goof off or nothing. Some students are really serious about their education, others are not. I think it would help because sometimes if you just be around just yourself, it don't bring up your emotion, your self esteem and you feel down and you don't have nobody to talk to, can't do this and can't do that. It just makes you depressed and if you are socializing it's good because you learn and experience new things and new people. Its part of the educational process.

♦ No one should be isolated. It's not healthy, to their educational success or to their lives in general.

♦ Having time to spend with your friends is very important, even at school, especially at school, earning how every body learns differently from everybody else, not everybody is the same. Its good to learn from

difference. Learning everybody's different is a learning opportunity in itself.

♦ Well, that might not be a good one for me because I'm not that concerned about socializing. My social life is really outside of school and I have met lots of really nice people that I could study with any day of the week probably. And um, everybody's real friendly and stuff I don't really need a study buddy myself. I mean I'm, I kind of go home and do my own thing cause I have my own thing outside of here. I guess it would be good for the people that are real quiet and don't meet a lot of people if they had some kind of little group that met on a certain couple of days a week that people could go in and study with people. I can see how some people really need it.

♦ Well, if a student doesn't feel like they're accepted in the environment, they are not going to do well in class, as opposed to someone who feels they really fit into the group, they will be able to I think, they will think more on their studies or what they can do. I know one girl who quit school because she missed her friends back home; she wasn't able to make many friends here. I think she could have if she had stuck around a little longer, although its hard to make friends on this campus sometimes.

♦ I watch them be wise and cool in their social life, whether it's positive or negative, preferably stay away from the negative. I don't socialize here at

school. I just come in, do my work and leave. I'm an older student though, I've been around.

♦ Social interactivity between each other helps you with relationships and it can help you later on in your job after you get out of school, you can use it if you learn it while you are in school, learn it with friends and peers. When you get into a job environment, it is a lot more important to have that. Socializing is part of the education they are trying to teach us out here.

♦ I think this part is real important because everybody needs someone, or a companion or someone to talk to.

♦ If you communicate with the instructors they'll help you out. Part of education is learning to communicate and socialize. Your buddies, your partners, your friends, all that other stuff yeah, they will help you. I mean they'll help and if you get to know them like real good. I mean I know some guys I have friends and but they don't help me I mean but their my buddies cause we just go out and we have a good time. Just going and having fun helps. Like when I go out and have a good night, like Thursday is my night, I go to the club and when I get back Friday, that makes my next week go by a whole lot better.

♦ I wish we had more opportunities to see our instructors outside of class. Some of my instructors used to play basketball with us in the gym, I think

they got hurt or tired or something. We had fun then. It was easier to talk to them in class after killing them on the court.

One student had no desire to socialize with others; he could not justify social needs as a factor relating to educational success like the other students.

♦ No, I do not. I do not need to socialize. I told the people at Village Oaks this and at the Recreation Center. All these meetings that you people have, I do not need to come to because this is not a part of my success. I do not need this. They laughed at me when I told them that but I don't need to meet with people I don't know to succeed in life. All I need is a good head on my shoulders and to stay focused. That's all I need. I don't need to be in a study group with anybody because they might bring me down one day. They might call me and say let's study, and then not study. They might want to go get pizza. I have to get my schoolwork done first. If I get all my work done, all my cleaning, then I can go do whatever I have to do. I can't have fun until the work's done. There's not many people out there that are worth spending time on. Very few.

Summary of Developmental Education Instructor Findings

The focus group of instructors identified and then individually discussed six affinities: external support, instructional support, student individual resources, student management skills, student personal skills, and physical environment. The group of instructors was given the opportunity to comment on the six affinities

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identified by the student focus group. Finally, the group of instructors was given an opportunity to share any further thoughts pertaining to their individual views regarding instructor and student relationships in general. Following theoretical coding the uncluttered system influence diagram for the developmental education instructor group was constructed and is presented in Chapter V.

Summary of Developmental Education Student Findings

The focus group of students identified and then individually discussed six affinities: institutional assistance, instructional assistance, student financial needs, student emotional needs, student physical needs, and student social needs. Following theoretical coding, the uncluttered system influence diagram for the developmental education student group was constructed and is presented in Chapter V.

Chapter V: Discussion

"Teaching is the description and sharing of life experiences in terms by which another can find meaning and gain knowledge and understanding." – F.L. Moore

<u>Introduction</u>

In Chapter IV, the voices of developmental education instructors and developmental education students were presented as they responded to the affinities that emerged from the two focus group sessions. Affinities are those categories of meaning that reflect the instructors' and students' perceptions, experiences, and desires for greater understanding. They are the themes that the instructors and students identified in the focus groups when asked to identify success factors of developmental education students and discuss relationships between developmental education instructors and their students. Through theoretical coding, as described in Chapter III, the relationships between these affinities were determined and presented by their degree of influence relating back to others and the whole. Primary Drivers were identified in the instructors' component, which are those affinities that have a significant influence on other affinities.

Tentative Primary Drivers were identified in the students' component. Likewise, Primary Outcomes are those affinities that are significantly influenced by other affinities and were identified in the instructors' component of this study. Tentative Primary Outcomes were identified in the students' component. As will

be described later in this chapter, the students' system influence diagram presented

no definitive Primary Driver or Primary Outcome as their perception of the

relationship between the affinities they described was cyclical with no defined

beginning or end. Respective system influence diagrams are presented in this

chapter, representing the relationships between the affinities of each of the two

individually homogeneous groups.

In this chapter, the system influence diagram (SID) for each group

(instructors or students) will be interpreted, and the two diagrams will be

juxtaposed for comparison and contrast. The voices of the instructional and

student participants remain the foundation of this study, so select quotes from their

interviews are again featured in this process. Upon completion of the system

influence diagram interpretation, final conclusions regarding the information

presented will be drawn.

Developmental Education Instructors System Influence Diagram

The system influence diagram for the developmental education

instructors are interpreted in a triad of methods. First, the structure of the system as

linear and circular pathways will be detailed. Second, the system will then be

interpreted from a theoretical perspective, exactly how the data reinforce the

current literature. Finally, the system will be compared to the students' system

influence diagram.

<u>Structural Interpretation</u>

The following SID is representative of the relationships between the following six affinities identified by the focus group of developmental education instructors:

1. External Support

2. Instructional Support

3. Student Individual Resources

4. Student Management Skills

5. Student Personal Skills

6. Physical Environment

As represented in Figure 5, there are two inter-related Primary Drivers in this system, on the left of the diagram, which lead to the two sub-systems of inter-related Primary Outcomes on the right side of the diagram.

Figure 5: Developmental Education Instructors System Influence Diagram
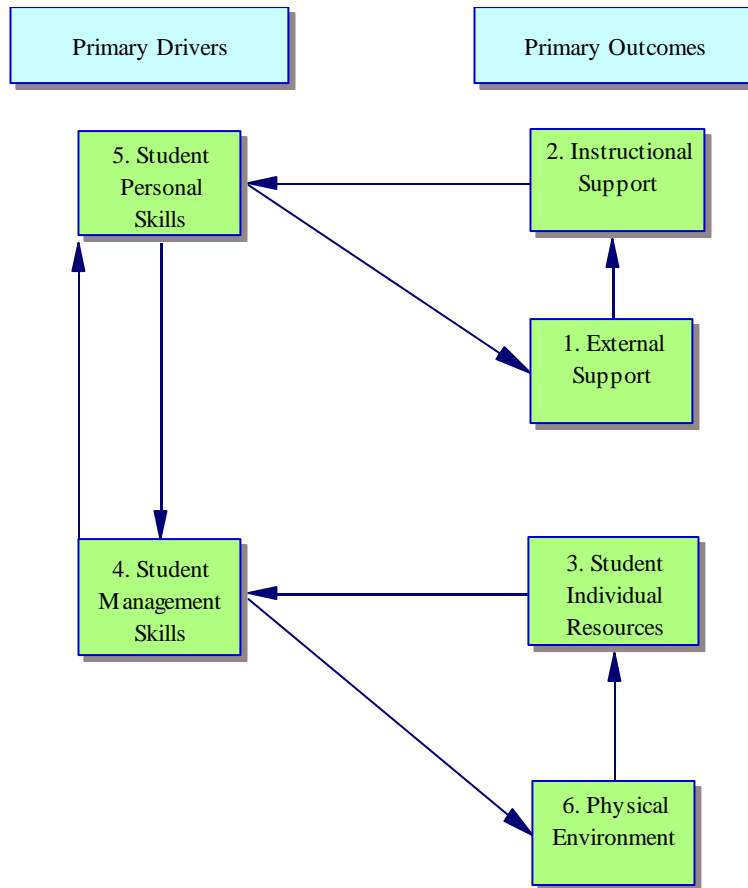
The Primary Drivers that emerged from the data are the affinities of (#5) Student Personal Skills and (#4) Student Management Skills. The Primary Outcomes are the affinities of (#2) Instructional Support, (#1) External Support, (#3) Student Individual Resources, and (#6) Physical Environment.

Each of the Primary Drivers leads to a separate set of Primary Outcomes. The Primary Driver of (#5) Student Personal Skills leads to the two inter-related

Primary Outcomes of (#2) Instructional Support and (#1) External Support while

the Primary Driver of (#4) Student Management Skills, leads to the two inter-

related Primary Outcomes of (#3) Student Individual Resources and (#6) Physical

Environment. It is also interesting to note that the two Primary Drivers of (#5)

Student Personal Skills and (#4) Student Management Skills are inter-related as

represented by arrows in both directions which indicate that each Primary Driver

could lead to the opposing Primary Outcome sets.

The Primary Drivers of (#5) Student Personal Skills and (#4) Student

Management Skills were viewed as interchangeable by many of the instructors, as

evident in the following quotes.

♦ I think the areas of student management skills and student personal skills

are so close together that they are the same thing or at least certainly inter-

changeable.

♦ About ten years ago I had a student who lived in a single parent

household, he was the oldest son. He was supporting his mother and three

or four siblings. He was a senior in high school. Spontaneously, one day in

class he made a speech about something. He was answering a question and

he made this speech. It was incredible, he got a standing ovation. Two

weeks later he was dropping out of school because he had to support his

mother. He was not going to graduate but he had come farther than

anybody else in his family had. For him, there was no real difference in management and personal skills.

♦ Two reasons students have problems with their management skills, I think, is one, they've never been exposed to management skills whatsoever…consciously, yeah. Or even sub-consciously. Sometimes they are living in an area where these skills just don't exist. The management skills that their parents had, the management skills that other students had where their parents went to school in past generations, there is now a lack of those skills. If you have a school where every teacher and every student, is just worried about living through the day, okay, it's awful hard to focus on time management skills. They are in survival mode. Survival mode is the best they can do and hope for. They never progress to personal or management skills because it takes all they can do to survive the day. The second reason is that sometimes students may have personal skills issues that cause them to not develop management skills. I think, someplace there are some fine lines there, personal and management skills overlap. Here you're personal and you take one more step and you are in management skills.

From the system diagram, it is apparent that the affinities described, as outcomes are dependent on the affinities identified drivers on the left side of the diagram. Both sets of outcomes form two separate feedback loops. The two

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feedback loops are separated by the two drivers of (#5) Student Personal Skills and

(#4) Student Management Skills. These feedback loops are named a) Persistence

by Support and b) Persistence by Resources by the researcher.

The first feedback loop (see Figure 6) was named Persistence by Support as

it documents relationships between (#5) Student Personal Skills, (#2) Instructional

Support, and (#1) External Support.

Figure 6: Persistence by Support - Feedback Loop 1
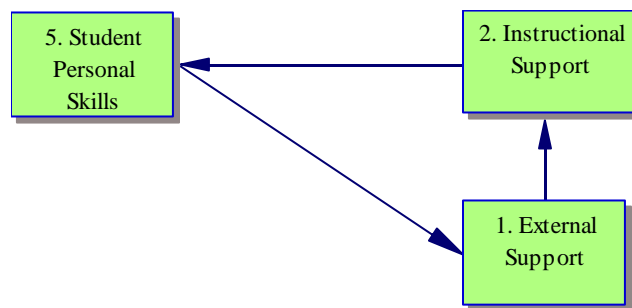
Many of the instructors felt that a student's persistence towards success in

developmental education was enhanced by the external support from many sources

and by instructional support. As demonstrated in Loop 1, a student's personal

skills, such as persistence and dedication, provide an opportunity for external

support to have a positive impact on success that then provides an opportunity for a

positive influence by the instructional component. Unfortunately, many students

who do not have the personal skill of dedication cannot take full advantage of

external or instructional support available to them. This dynamic process is

described in the following quote by one of the instructors.

♦ First, students must believe that they can be successful in their academic

efforts. Many of our developmental education students have a hard time

maintaining this belief. If students believe, then they can learn. However,

the instructors must also believe in the student'' abilities. Many students

can learn persistence and dedication as a result of life' lessons but many

learn persistence or tenacity from influences in their early developmental

years. The school of "hard knocks" I remember some saying when I was

young. Anyway, Sometime along the way, we learn to progress from the

sandbox to either the sandbag or the sandcastle. The institution can provide

assistance and aid to students and parents and spouses can provide every

ounce of support they have but it boils down to the personal dedication of

the student. The institution can provide the best and most caring instructors

but if the student doesn't show up for class, then there is little hope of

success. I cannot teach to an empty chair. Sometimes a student has to figure

out for themselves that they are the single determining primary factor

leading to either their success in the building of their sandcastle which is

fortified and holds their dreams and lifelong desires or their failure by

staying in the sandbag or bed at home and not trying to live their lives as

productively as they could. This is a basic element of success that most

successful people understand, the hope of success starts with the personal

decision to be successful and to try and try until they make it. It's a basic element.

Two instructors described their concepts of how students relate their desires to persist to external support, from the institution and instruction. One describes the perceived disconnect between required course content and actual educational need as a possible barrier to success.

♦ I am amazed everyday at our students. Some of them think they are at Burger King when they are here. They believe it should be a, "Have it Your Way" education. They are determined all right, to define what the institution and instruction should be teaching them. I believe there is a disconnect between what some of our students perceive they "need" in class and in their courses and what the institution and the state regulators feel should be imparted to the students. They come in my class and say, don't teach me that, I won't ever use that in my program, I need to know this. Teach me this then I'm going home. How can they utilize the external support and instructional support provided to them by this institution if they don't see the personal value in the content we are trying to teach them? Maybe they have a point, maybe we need to customize our educational process like Burger King so they can get only what they want the first time and keep coming back time and time again to get the content they found out they needed but didn't get in the first place. I think it is an understanding or

establishment of "need" and then continually justifying that determination. Students just are not accepting like we were when I was in school. If they taught it, I assumed we needed it. Maybe I just described why so many students have returned to college after being out in the workforce for so many years and are now coming back for the basics they never got in K-12 or just plain out forgot them since they say they graduated from high school a hundred years ago.

This instructor makes the potential and likely connection between environmental impact during the formative years as a potential misdirection to the value of education and the impact on personal success.

♦ I can see why some students don't persist. I don't agree with it but I can see it. As far as their external support being their families and how they were maybe brought up to value education or maybe not. Some students learn to be creative from an early age from their parents. Actually from a lack of their parents being home. Maybe they are from a two-income family and the individual had to learn from an early age to be creative to entertain themselves, to feed themselves, to care for themselves. I think they called them "Latch-key kids". Anyway, these children learned that their parents worked all the time just to make ends meet, they learned that creativity alone can mean success, they learned this from watching MTV Cribs and the rappers. They all live for the here and now. Even though they are

naturally creative people, I sometimes think K-12 teaches what some

students consider "traditional" materials and content in basically a

traditional manner. Many of our standard proven teaching techniques are

viewed as "out dated" to some students. I believe the TV teaches them to

accept below standard quality and to demand an immediate return on their

efforts. If it can't be really good, it might as well be fast. No more delayed

gratification for the new generation. Students feel there needs to be more

application and less content. I may have to agree on this point. Sometimes

these students don't realize the potential external support exists for them

and certainly the instructional support component goes un-noticed. Maybe

we need to rap the Gettysburg Address.

Figure 7: Persistence by Resources - Feedback Loop 2
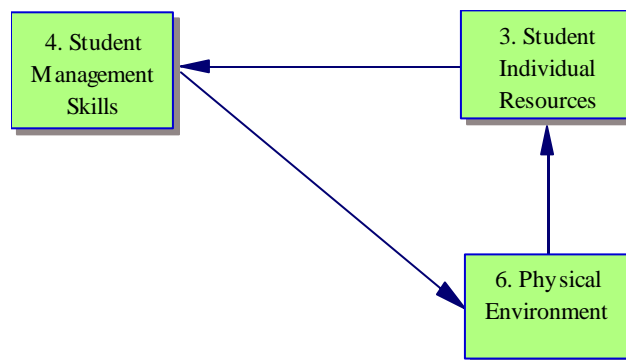
The second feedback loop involves (#4) Student Management Skills, (#6)

Physical Environment and (#3) Student Individual Resources. The extent to which

a student manages his time and resources has a possible impact on the physical

environment of learning then is further perceived as an individual resource (Figure

7). For example, one instructor shared the process of how these affinities are

related.

> ♦ Unfortunately, I have students who do not manage their time well, they
>
> don't go to bed at night so they can get up and come to class the next
>
> morning. Much less prepare a writing assignment that is due the next
>
> morning. Then they come in class, sleep through the entire lesson, fail my
>
> class and then wonder why they didn't get any more financial aid. They just
>
> don't understand. Either no one ever explained it to them or they are just
>
> trying to beat the system in the short term. It is incredible how many
>
> students leave after they get their financial aid checks. Some call it
>
> "glorified welfare."

Theoretical Interpretation

The systems influence diagram suggests that for these instructors, there are

two primary issues influencing their students' academic success. These are student

management skills and student personal skills. These instructors further

acknowledge that there are many barriers to the success of their developmental

education students; however, the degree to which their students persist and work

through these barriers depends on their level of personal dedication. The

perceptions of the instructors interviewed support the research that identifies many

social and economic barriers to success, as experienced by underprepared students.

In other words, the instructors in this study describe similar challenges experienced by their students that are similar to those reported in the literature. The factors contributing to the underprepared student's success have changed little over the years.

<u>Primary Driver of Student Management Skills</u>

The developmental education instructors were cohesive in their opinions regarding the value of student management skills by underprepared students. While the group acknowledged that students could indeed persevere with limited management skills, these skills were viewed as paramount to managing not only academic and time demands but personal responsibilities in their lives. Throughout the interviews the instructors gave repeated examples of how their students either benefited from honing their management skills to overcome barriers to success or could never master even the most basic management skills and continued to suffer both personally and academically. Some instructors shared that while it is often assumed that successful people, including some of their colleagues, were competent managers, some actually lacked highly developed management skills and had somehow improvised and compensated for this deficit as a way to achieving success. The literature on student management skills and cognitive skills as relative to academic success has made the need for training students essential, both from economic and socialization perspectives. These skills

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training must be integrated with the social and emotional development of the student (Cross, 1976; Roueche and Roueche, 1993).

The instructors in this study viewed the student management skills with the student personal skills as the genesis of the foundation development needed to overcome their other challenges effectively – e.g., child care issues, financial constraints, transportation problems, and work schedule conflicts.

Primary Driver of Student Personal Skills

The issue of student personal skills relating to persistence and motivation was most often identified by the instructors in their interviews. While student management skills and student personal skills were discussed (sometimes interchangeably), the issues of persistence, motivation, and dedication were categorized generally as a student's personal skill rather than a management skill.

Research has suggested that motivating a student towards success and maintaining that motivation must be an ongoing process that cannot be the instructor's responsibility alone. Lack of home support to encourage continuing academic efforts, and unrealistic and ill-defined goals, play a significant part in the lack of motivation in students (Merson, 1961; Roueche and Roueche, 1993). The instructors in this study had varying perspectives on what exactly motivates students towards success. There were theories of motivation stemming from perceived value of the learning experience, as indicated by this quote.

♦ Students may be initially motivated in class but if their perception of value wanes, they quickly become disinterested. The value piece is twofold, the value the student perceives the instructor puts in the process of teaching how theory relates to practice in his discipline and secondly, the value the student puts in his perceived personal need for the content the instructor is attempting to impart. The student must trust the instructor's abilities and dedication to the process of transforming his theory into practice for application. This process is where meaning happens for the student. However, this process is of no value to the student if he doesn't see the direct relation to what he perceives he needs from his educational efforts. He must see the connection to his educational goals and his professional goals as a practitioner in the world someday in a satisfying job. Other students can actually add validity to this process. This is why the application process and opportunities must be current and relevant. Remember, our students live in the here and now and expect to see relativity in terms they can appreciate immediately.

Another instructor saw motivation and dedication as a very personalized issue.

♦ What ignites motivation in one person may not in another. Now, I think young people sometimes are motivated by, once again, things that we think are not in their best interest. So there again that motivation, that motivational drive is there. It may not be to keep their room clean, make

up the bed, but they are motivated to have cars because they love cars.

They spend thousands of dollars on cars. Some are motivated to keep a job

so they can keep their truck running. And that's it. That's all he wants to

do. He's not interested in a girlfriend. He's going to school only because

he was told that's what he needs to do but it stops right there. He's not

truly motivated to work through the challenges that he will surely face. I

think most students are motivated by what is in their lives in the here and

now. It's personal, maybe a friend, maybe keeping a truck running, maybe

keeping a job, maybe feeding the children something not necessarily

something healthy, just something. Things that motivate today's student in

our environment are immediate issues, they don't plan for the future.

That's back to the management issue, if you cannot plan, how can you

manage?

Thus, these developmental education instructors describe similar

experiences and issues relating to the many factors contributing to the challenges

of underprepared students similar to those reported in the literature. They also

suggest that while they may have a vital influence on that success, the student-

instructor relationship is not the primary contributing factor to success or failure.

The instructors describe their deep commitment and dedication to understanding

and assisting underprepared students. However, they charge that if a student sees

no value in the content or the process, and cannot maintain a level of personal

motivation, there is no magic solution the instructor can provide to ensure academic success. For them, issues of student motivation are grounded in the individual and at best can only be encouraged by instructors while led tenuously towards student success.

<u>Applied Interpretation</u>

The systems influence diagram has been described from a theoretical perspective, and now the applicability of the model presented will be analyzed. While the issues that formed the affinities of the system were based on perspectives of student success factors held by instructors, the theoretical relationships between these affinities were also grounded in their individual perspectives. As the researcher peels away the discussion of success factors, the researcher finds that all perspectives and experiences on students grow from the personal knowledge and experiences of these instructors with their students. The application of this system is best discussed at the level of the relationship between instructor and student. The underlying issue then becomes, since the study findings support the years of literature on underprepared student success factors, that possibly there are more proactive pathways that provide routes by which instructors may enhance their relationships with their students to increase individual success.

The amalgamation of the Primary Drivers as a fluid combination of (#5) Student Personal Skills and (#4) Student Management Skills provided by the

structural interpretation of the SID, and the voices of the instructors in their attempts to relate and understand their students, can provide the desired proactive pathway.

- Coordinate the development of student management skills with the students' desire to identify and embrace "value" in the personal learning process.

- Relate student persistence, dedication, and motivation to the student's need for immediate gratification and living "for the now" or the present.

- Aggressively address the development of student management skills with the identified barriers to success like lack of resources and personal demands.

- Use the students' urgency of the concept of "living in the now" and seeking immediate gratification to justify the development and value of personal skills.

- Correlate the students' immediate motivating factors of; for the truck, for the girlfriend, for the job, to clear application of the discipline theories and processes.

- Promote the development and utilization of student management skills as a means of liberation out of the unproductive and often destructive survival mode.

- Describe and interpret the concept of "vertical" education in conjunction with the development of student personal and management skills.

- Empower students to have life and education "their own ways" by developing personal and management skills to enhance their cognitive and strategic thinking.

These recommendations provide seeds of creative approaches to propagation and cultivation of motivation in students that will only grow in the

fertile soil provided by caring, dedicated, knowledgeable, and determined instructors.

Developmental Education Students System Influence Diagram

Structural Interpretation

The diagram below (Figure 8) is a representation of the relationships between the following six affinities identified by the developmental education students.

1. Institutional Assistance

2. Instructional Assistance

3. Student Financial Needs

4. Student Emotional Needs

5. Student Physical Needs

5. Student Social Needs

Figure 8 – Developmental Education Students Systems Influence Diagram

Example A
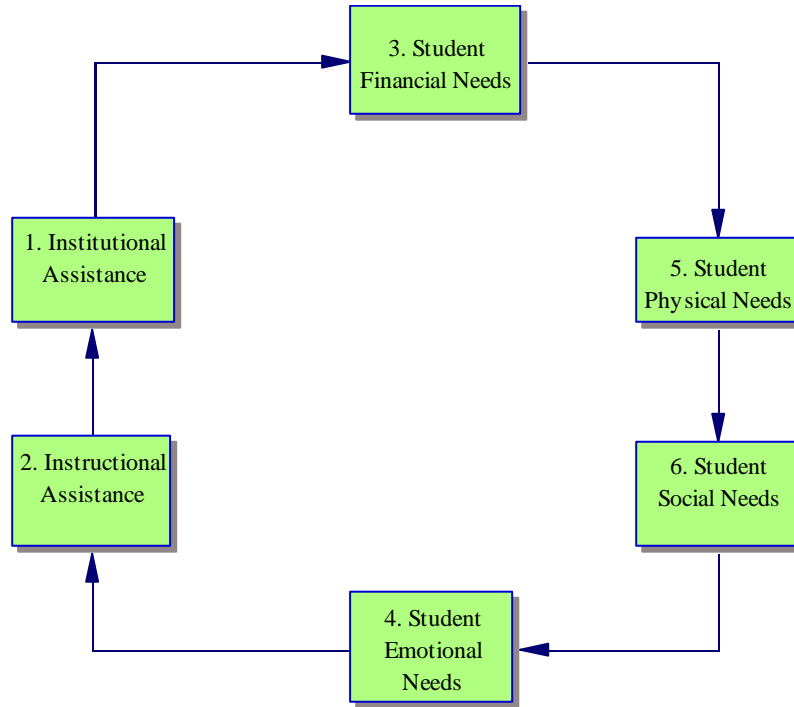
Example B
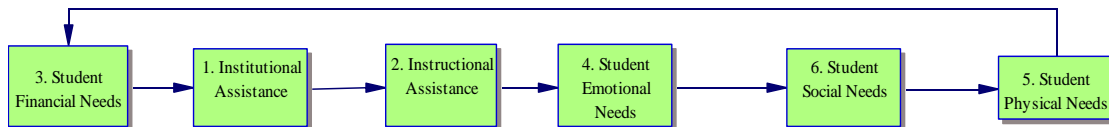
Example A and Example B represent two different presentations of the same system diagram. The only difference is their affinity placement. These affinities were described in detail in Chapter IV.

There is no Primary Driver indicated or Primary Outcome indicated in either presentation of the developmental education student systems influence diagram. There was no change in the sequence of affinities when processed through the IRD. The diagram is cyclical in nature with no defined start or end. Consequently, there is no opportunity for feedback loops. This seemingly unusual result of the IQA process is representative of the data presented by the group of developmental education students. The grinding of the IQA machine was conducted multiple times to eliminate any possibility of error and to ensure the accuracy of the results.

This dynamic perpetuating system is indicative of the voices shared by the students when they were individually interviewed. Their experiences of facing multiple barriers to their educational process were vast and unanimous. No challenge seemed greater than the other; no barrier was considered insurmountable. It was again noted by the group of instructors that they or the affinity of Instructional Assistance was not cited as the Primary Driver influencing a negative outcome and unfortunately was not viewed by the group of students as the Primary Driver influencing positive outcomes.

<u>Theoretical Interpretation</u>

The absence of a Primary Driver and of Primary Outcomes in the developmental education student systems influence diagram is significant. It is noted that when the students participated in the focus group session and in the individual interviews, they described their six affinities as factors relating to their success. They were unified in their position that their intent was not to identify present problem areas that they not necessarily could overcome, only areas that could present barriers and challenges to their success, or ones they are currently processing – e.g., child care issues. The students viewed the identified affinities in total as factors contributing to their success. Conversely, the lack of any one of the affinities could present a barrier to success at most anytime during the educational process. For this reason, it is not surprising that there is no Primary Driver or Primary Outcome represented on the developmental education student systems influence diagram.

<u>Applied Interpretation</u>

The students' system influence diagram from the structural and theoretical perspectives has been described, now the applicability of the model will be discussed.

It is important that developmental education students first determine their personal picture of what success means to them from an educational perspective. Only then can they map out a path to that ideal. If students are personally

motivated towards their personal description of success, then they have a better chance of overcoming most barriers to that end. One of the students spoke of how he maintains his focus and personal motivation.

♦ I am very focused, and I know where I'm going and why I'm here at school. What motivates me is my attitude and the fact that I'm determined. I have to be successful. If you are not determined, and you are lazy and you are always depending on somebody and you are always moping and whining, then you are not going to ever get nowhere. Quit whining about it, get out there and get a job. If you can't get a job, then I understand that. Me, if I get a job I have to walk or ride my bike. I have a lot of family that live here, but they are all old people. I don't stay motivated all the time. I get down sometimes. That's when I talk to my mama and I talk to my grandpa. And if I don't, say I'm in a situation where I can't go to family, I usually just sleep for a couple of hours to get away from people. That's how I get my focus back. I have found that talking to people whom I do not want to be around about my problems, it doesn't help, it helps those people because it helps them figure me out, but it doesn't help me with my problems.

I don't depend on my teachers for my motivation. Is that what you are say. I've been motivated and focused on my goals since I was in the 10th grade, when I had a teacher tell me that I had to start to coming to

school everyday or I was going to fail, and if you tell somebody that you are going to fail, they might not care then, but in the long run, they are going to consider that. What he wanted to do was to put me into a remedial class, with slower kids. I'm not going to stay "stupid", I'm going to say "slower". That had an affect on me because I wasn't the smartest in the class, but that was an easy class, it was English. It was boring to me because the homework was in the book. I stayed to myself. I had no friends. The reason that I had no friends, because they tend to bring you down eventually and friends come in dozens. Friends tend to pull me down. When I do lose focus, it's because I'm bored. When I'm extremely bored. So when I lose focus, I look for my family support and quiet time. It only takes me a couple of hours to get my focus back. Plus, mom calls me every Wednesday around 6:00 at night. When my Mama calls me, I talk to her, tell her what happened and then she tells me what I can do to improve that.

Comparison of the Developmental Education Instructors and Students
System Influence Diagrams

The third purpose of this study was to discover the similarities and contrasts of the perspectives of the developmental education instructors and the students. If we mentally juxtapose the two SIDs in this study, we can make immediate comparisons.

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Structural Comparison

When comparing the content of both diagrams, many of the same affinities emerged. The instructors' SID has six identified affinities describing their perspectives on student success factors. The student's SID also has six identified affinities describing their perspectives on their success factors. Not only do both diagrams have the same number of affinities, but the six given by each group are similar.

Instructors' Affinities	Students' Affinities
External Support	Institutional Assistance
Instructional Support	Instructional Assistance
Student Individual Resources	Student Financial Needs
Student Management Skills	Student Emotional Needs
Student Personal Skills	Student Social Needs
Physical Environment	Student Physical Needs

Both groups described issues of family support, services provided by the institution, instructional support, financial challenges, and learning to manage stress. While both diagrams shared the same number of affinities, the placement of the affinities, in relation to each other, was different.

In contrasting the two diagrams, the instructors' diagram represented two clearly defined Primary Drivers and two groups of Primary Outcomes. The students' SID was cyclical with no definitive beginning or end and certainly had no

identifiable driving force. In the individual interviews, the instructors emphasized how difficult it appeared to be for students to succeed in the developmental education process while the students seemed comfortable with the fact that they have all faced barriers to their success, overcome some, sidetracked some, and avoided others to work towards their individual concepts of success. The students were more comfortable and accepting of the challenges they had or would face inevitably than were the instructors. The instructors had higher expectations of the remedial system while the student's perspectives were shaped by individual motivation to their defined standards and success.

Theoretical Comparison

There were several important differences in the systems influence diagrams of instructors and of students, as evidence in the previous section. The instructors clearly defined the driving force in their systems influence diagram as the students' management and personal skills. The instructors felt that the key to the students' overcoming all their barriers to academic success rested in their individual management and personal skills; the instructors blamed the lack of these skills on student failure. Conversely, the students perceived no definitive driver to their success or failures and were confident and comfortable with their educational progress, in general, and maintained their own version of management techniques. The argument could be made that an actual theoretical congruency exists between the two diagrams in that the instructors voice the importance of student

management and personal skills while the students' SID represents their empirical

management in terms of equalizing their defined affinities. The student's SID

could be viewed as their "circle of persistence."

While comparing the systems of each group, it is important to explore the

general frame of reference for both. Developmental education instructors

historically know and understand the many barriers their students face on a

continuing basis in their efforts to succeed academically. The barriers to industry

defined standards defining academic success, college readiness. The instructors

interviewed for this study were all anxious to do whatever it takes to increase the

opportunities for their students to succeed academically. They want to strive

continually to have the best remedial program available for their students.   The

instructors want the best program structure academically for their students while

the students are working to perform at an increased personal level of comfort.

There is a disconnect between the expectations of the college-trained

individuals who are dedicated to imparting their knowledge to future generations

and the expectations of students who only live for the here and now and are not

driven by future goals they cannot even conceive. By their very nature, the

instructors are teachers, parents, helpers, trainers, and givers; they continually

attempt to pour knowledge into students' glasses when the students are the ones

determining when the glass is (appropriately) full.

Developmental education students, on the other hand, operate from an entirely

different frame of reference when examining what they consider their personal

standards for academic success. Their perspectives of success factors are not

historically based as are the instructors; but conceptually based through individual

life experiences. When interviewed, the students acknowledged the barriers to

success that the group identified, but felt they were making appropriate progress in

their academic efforts. Many are the first in their families to attempt college, so

they are immediately successful in their views and in the view of other family

members. Many of the students interviewed had never experienced any type of

academic success, so they progress successfully through even the lowest

developmental program level, they are immediately successful to their way of

thinking.

The differences in the two systems are also interpreted as evidence of the

constant debate between developmental education instructor and student as to

which party drives the relationship. Many of the instructors in their individual

interviews acknowledged that if students were persistent and dedicated enough,

they would learn the material and course content in spite of the instructor, if

necessary. Alternatively, many of the instructors cited their relationship with

students as the critical component contributing to student success. It is, therefore,

interesting to note again the structural differences in the system influence diagrams

of the two groups, specifically the fact that the students' SID had no driver and the

instructors clearly identified drivers in their SID. The interpretation is that

instructors generally feel it is their position and responsibility to drive the relationships with their students in an effort to have as much impact on student success as possible. While the students certainly appreciate caring, helpful, dedicated, assessable, approachable, creative, and fun instructors, they demand their independence and maintain that they could get the information on their own. The instructors view the other four affinities as extraneous to the Primary Drivers of student management and personal skills as represented in their SID, while the students' SID represents their perspectives of the affinities moving in a dynamic constantly evolving motion. It is interpreted and supported in the instructors' interviews that they place much of the blame for lack of academic success directly on the students' lack of management and personal skills, not on instructional value, not on the relationship between instructor and student - they indirectly acknowledge that the student is the driver of his own academic success or failure. Eventually, students define what academic success means to them personally while they control the relationship with instructors as well as their progress towards their success.

Summary

This study sought answers to three questions with regard to success factors for developmental education students. The first question, "What factors do underprepared students identify as required for academic success in their developmental education? Was addressed by the focus group session and follow-

up personal interviews provided six categories or affinities that described in detail their perceived factors pertaining to their success in their developmental educational efforts. The second question, "What factors do developmental education instructors identify as required for student success in developmental education?" was also addressed by the focus group of developmental instructors and supported in great detail in their personal interviews.

Many of the instructors shared lengthy concepts and theories of student motivation, seeking and realizing educational value, modern day student perspectives on the educational process and current individual effectiveness, and concepts of how the new generation of students may process information. All of these "pearls of wisdom" stemming from years of experience working with underprepared students is relative to the overall goal of increasing their opportunities for educational success. The third question, "How do these two perspectives compare?" was also discussed at length with varying perspectives and interpretations of contrast and congruency both from the structural and theoretical perspectives of the two systems influence diagrams. In addition, when the instructors were asked individually about their perspectives on the success factors identified by the student focus group, they did not take ownership but were in general agreement with the students' responses.

Conclusions

The data from this study suggest several issues that have been discussed in the literature to date. When determining what developmental education students see as success factors, each individual participating student must first determine a personal definition of "educational success." Some cannot make this determination. When determining that students needs to enhance their management and personal skills in order to increase their chances of academic success in developmental education, the manner or process in which current generation students actually manage their lives and their studies must not be evaluated initially based on traditional theories and practices of management. Acceptable methods of management that are appropriate for the new generation students must be more broadly considered.

The findings of this study supported the literature on success factors as determined by developmental education instructors. It also supported the literature on opposing perspectives of the value of the relationship between the instructor and student. It can be augured that the relationship between the instructor and student is critical to the success of the student (See Table 1), and the perspective was supported that student success can be based largely on the degree of motivation and dedication held by the individual student. While both instructor student relationships and student motivation are critical factors to educational success, the final determination of those elements that are more applicable to individual

students in a given class is solely ascertained by the individual students themselves.

Final observations, interpretations, findings, and recommendations of the researcher may improve best practices in developmental education and provide an insight into how current developmental students interpret the factors for their success which may shed light on future directions for improving developmental education programs.

Recommendations for Future Research

In order to gain a deeper understanding of the ways in which new generation students process information and learning concepts, further research needs to be conducted on the ctrl-alt-delete process of managing information and the short and long-term effects of the constant steeping of a student in this process.

There is value in understanding how new generation students manage their lives. Further research is needed on the effects of students growing up in households that have only operated in "Survival Mode" and if and how they ever make successful transitions into "Management Mode" in their lives, and the design on which their "Management Mode" is based.

This study illustrated how incredibly dedicated developmental education instructors are to the success of their students. While some instructors inherently take the "savior" position with many of their students, they also recognize the value of their students' independence, creative thinking, and individuality. It is

hoped that even though the argument can be made that even if the developmental

education program is marginal, a motivated student will seek out the information

he needs and will succeed with or without the influence of a caring instructor, that

dedicated instructors will continue to answer their calling and developmental

education programs will continue to pursue excellence for all involved.

Developmental Education Instructors

<u>Research Study - Issue Statement</u>

If you will note, you have been supplied with ample index cards and markers. For this portion of the exercise, please respond individually without consulting your colleagues.

Now, please take a moment to close your eyes and relax. Please think about your life and experience in higher education and especially of your experience in this college. Reflect on your experiences, feelings, and thoughts as a remedial instructor. Now, think about your students for a moment. Picture yourself teaching in your classroom. Now, picture yourself consulting with a student about his/her educational needs. Think about the different faces and attitudes of your students.

What words come to mind when I ask the question, "What do underprepared students need to be successful in their remedial coursework? Now, please open your eyes and write those words on the index cards in front of you. Please only write one word or thought per card. You may use as many cards as you like and I have more in the event you run short.

Once again, the question is what words or phrases come to your mind when you consider what is required for underprepared students to be successful in their remedial coursework.

Developmental Education Students

<u>Research Study - Issue Statement</u>

If you will note, you have been supplied with ample index cards and markers. For this portion of the exercise, please respond individually without consulting your friends or other students in the group.

Now, please take a moment to close your eyes and relax. Please think about your life and experience in higher education and especially of your experience in this college. Reflect on your experiences, feelings, and thoughts as a student. Picture yourself sitting in the classroom. Now, picture yourself consulting with an instructor about your educational needs. Think about your progress in the remedial process and in school.

What words come to mind when I ask the question, "What do you as a remedial student need to be successful in you remedial coursework? Now, please open your eyes and write those words on the index cards in front of you. Please only write one word or thought per card. You may use as many cards as you like and I have more in the event you run short.

Once again, the question is what words or phrases come to your mind when you consider what is required for you as a remedial student to be successful in your remedial coursework.

Affinities in Descending Order of Frequency
With Pareto and Power Analysis Chart – Instructors

Affinity Pair Relationship	Frequency Sorted	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent (Relation)	Cumulative Percent (Frequency)	Power
1. 2 → 6	14	14	3.3	6.4	3.1
2. 1 → 3	13	27	6.7	12.5	5.8
3. 1 → 5	11	38	10.0	17.6	7.6
4. 2 → 3	11	49	13.3	22.7	9.4
5. 2 → 5	11	60	16.7	27.8	11.1
6. 1 → 4	10	70	20.0	32.4	12.4
7. 3 → 5	10	80	23.3	37.0	13.7
8. 4 ← 5	10	90	26.7	41.7	15.0
9. 2 → 4	9	99	30.0	45.8	15.8
10. 3 ← 4	9	108	33.3	50.0	16.7
11. 5 ← 6	9	117	36.7	54.2	17.5
12. 1 → 2	8	125	40.0	57.9	17.9
13. 1 ← 2	8	133	43.3	61.6	18.3
14. 4 → 6	8	141	46.7	65.3	18.6
15. 1 ← 4	7	148	50.0	68.5	18.5
16. 1 ← 5	6	154	53.3	71.3	18.0
17. 1 → 6	6	160	56.7	74.1	17.4
18. 3 → 4	6	166	60.0	76.9	16.9
19. 3 ← 5	6	172	63.3	79.6	16.3
20. 3 → 6	6	178	66.7	82.4	15.7
21. 5 → 6	6	184	70.0	85.2	15.2
22. 2 ← 4	5	189	73.3	87.5	14.2
23. 2 ← 5	5	194	76.7	89.8	13.1
24. 4 ← 6	4	198	80.0	91.7	11.7
25. 1 ← 3	3	201	83.3	93.1	9.8
26. 1 ← 6	3	204	86.7	94.4	7.7
27. 2 ← 3	3	207	90.0	95.8	5.8
28. 2 ← 6	3	210	93.3	97.2	3.9
29. 3 ← 6	3	213	96.7	98.6	1.9
30. 4 → 5	3	216	100.0	100.0	0.0

Affinities in Descending Order of Frequency
With Pareto and Power Analysis Chart – Students

Affinity Pair Relationship	Frequency Sorted	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent (Relation)	Cumulative Percent (Frequency)	Power
1. 1 → 6	14	14	3.3	6.4	3.1
2. 1 → 4	13	27	6.7	12.5	5.8
3. 1 → 5	11	38	10.0	17.6	7.6
4. 1 → 3	11	49	13.3	22.7	9.4
5. 2 → 6	11	60	16.7	27.8	11.1
6. 2 → 4	10	70	20.0	32.4	12.4
7. 3 → 6	10	80	23.3	37.0	13.7
8. 3 → 4	10	90	26.7	41.7	15.0
9. 1 → 2	9	99	30.0	45.8	15.8
10. 3 → 5	9	108	33.3	50.0	16.7
11. 2 → 3	9	117	36.7	54.2	17.5
12. 2 → 5	8	125	40.0	57.9	17.9
13. 4 ← 6	8	133	43.3	61.6	18.3
14. 5 ← 6	8	141	46.7	65.3	18.6
15. 5 → 6	7	148	50.0	68.5	18.5
16. 4 → 5	6	154	53.3	71.3	18.0
17. 4 ← 5	6	160	56.7	74.1	17.4
18. 4 → 6	6	166	60.0	76.9	16.9
19. 2 ← 5	6	172	63.3	79.6	16.3
20. 3 ← 4	6	178	66.7	82.4	15.7
21. 2 ← 4	6	184	70.0	85.2	15.2
22. 1 ← 2	5	189	73.3	87.5	14.2
23. 1 ← 3	5	194	76.7	89.8	13.1
24. 1 ← 5	4	198	80.0	91.7	11.7
25. 2 ← 3	3	201	83.3	93.1	9.8
26. 2 ← 6	3	204	86.7	94.4	7.7
27. 3 ← 5	3	207	90.0	95.8	5.8
28. 3 ← 6	3	210	93.3	97.2	3.9
29. 1 ← 4	3	213	96.7	98.6	1.9
30. 1 ← 6	3	216	100.0	100.0	0.0

Tabular Inter-Relationship Diagram - Instructors

Affinity Name
1. **External Support**
2. **Instructional Support**
3. **Student Individual Resources**
4. **Student Management Skills**
5. **Student Personal Skills**
6. **Physical Environment**

Tabular IRD									
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**OUT**	**IN**	**Δ**
1		↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	5	0	5
2	←		↑	↑	↑	↑	4	1	3
3	←	←		←	↑	↑	2	3	-1
4	←	←	↑		←	↑	2	3	-1
5	←	←	←	↑		←	2	3	1
6	←	←	←	←	↑		1	4	-3

Tabular IRD – Sorted in Descending Order of Δ									
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**OUT**	**IN**	**Δ**
1		↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	5	0	5
2	←		↑	↑	↑	↑	4	1	3
5	←	←	←	↑		←	2	3	1
3	←	←		←	↑	↑	2	3	-1
4	←	←	↑		←	↑	2	3	-1
6	←	←	←	←	↑		1	4	-3

Tentative SID Assignments	
1	Primary Driver
2	Secondary Driver
5	Secondary Driver
3	Secondary Outcome
4	Secondary Outcome
6	Primary Outcome

Tabular Inter-Relationship Diagram - Students

Affinity Name
1. **Institutional Assistance**
2. **Instructional Assistance**
3. **Student Financial Needs**
4. **Student Emotional Needs**
5. **Student Physical Needs**
6. **Student Social Needs**

Tabular IRD

	1	2	3	4	5	6	OUT	IN	Δ
1		↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	5	0	5
2	←		↑	↑	↑	↑	4	1	3
3	←	←		↑	↑	↑	3	2	1
4	←	←	←		↑	←	1	4	-3
5	←	←	←	←		↑	1	4	-3
6	←	←	←	↑	←		1	4	-3

Tabular IRD – Sorted in Descending Order of Δ

	1	2	3	4	5	6	OUT	IN	Δ
1		↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	5	0	5
2	←		↑	↑	↑	↑	4	1	3
3	←	←		↑	↑	↑	3	2	1
4	←	←	←		↑	←	1	4	-3
5	←	←	←	←		↑	1	4	-3
6	←	←	←	↑	←		1	4	-3

Tentative SID Assignments	
1	Primary Driver
2	Secondary Driver
3	Secondary Driver
4	Secondary Outcome
5	Secondary Outcome
6	Primary Outcome

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VITA

Frances Lynn Moore, the middle child of Lester and Frances Ross, was born on November 20, 1956 in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. Her family later moved to Huntsville, Alabama where she graduated from Virgil I. Grissom High School in 1975. As a non-traditional student, Lynn received her B.S. degree online in Business Management in 2000 from the University of Phoenix in Phoenix, Arizona. She later received her Masters degree online in Business Administration from Baker College in Flint, Michigan in 2002. Upon graduation, she immediately entered The University of Texas at Austin Community College Leadership Program and intends to graduate with a Ph.D. in Educational Administration in the Spring of 2004. As a result of her academic achievements, Lynn was initiated into Kappa Delta Pi, an international honor society in education. She is also a member of Phi Kappa Phi honor society.

Over the years, Lynn has held various management positions in the community and technical college systems, the public sector, and in private industry. She has served as co-owner and business manager of the Beachton Denture Clinic in Thomasville, Georgia, and as the project manager for the Document Imaging Group of the Information Technology Division of the Comptroller of Public Accounts of the State of Texas. While completing her degree with the University of Phoenix, Lynn served as counsel substitute for the

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Currently, Lynn serves as the Director of Supplemental Educational Services at Texas State Technical College in Waco, Texas. She is an online adjunct instructor teaching undergraduate business and management courses for Central Texas College in Killean, Texas, and DeVry University in Chicago, Illinois. Lynn also currently teaches graduate school online for Keller Graduate School of Management in Chicago, Illinois and Indiana Wesleyan University in Marion, Indiana.

Lynn is married and highly supported in her academic and professional pursuits by her husband, James E. Moore, Jr., a native of Texas. Lynn is also highly supported by her father, Lester M. Ross, Sr. of Huntsville, Alabama and her son, Darren Gregory McFatter of Hamilton, Texas. In addition to spending time with her family, Lynn enjoys the company of the family's lovable pets, Paloma, Shaggy, Skittles, and the late Tip. When time allows, Lynn and her husband love to travel to Louisiana and Alabama.

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