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College Developmental English Instructor Perceptions and Experiences About Instructional Strategies

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Walden University

College of Education and Human Sciences

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Yolanda R. Toney

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

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Walden University
2023

Abstract

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by

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EdS, Walden University, 2016

M.Ed., Alabama A&M University, 2008

BA, Alabama A&M University, 2005

Project Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

December 2023

Abstract

The problem addressed in this study was that teachers have been challenged to implement effective strategies in recent years at a local community college in the southern region of the United States with a 47 to 49% student failure rate in developmental English. The purpose was to investigate the challenges encountered by developmental English instructors in their current practices and their suggestions for improved teaching approaches. This study was guided by Gagne's conditions of learning and Mezirow's transformative learning theory as the conceptual framework. Two research questions addressed how community college developmental English instructors perceived the value of their current instructional strategies in facilitating student achievement and their suggestions for improving student outcomes. Ten developmental English instructors were interviewed in this basic qualitative research study. HyperRESEARCH was used to code and analyze the data from the audio interviews. The results revealed seven major themes: preparing students for success, implementing teaching methods, using effective instructional strategies, eliminating ineffective instructional strategies, engaging students during instruction, helping students with the writing process, and ensuring student success. This project study is significant in that it may help to increase the passing rate amongst students in the developmental English course by identifying specific teaching methods that faculty, based on their experience, believe are effective in improving student success. The findings of this study indicate specific teaching methods that may increase the passing rate among students in the developmental English course.

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Dedication

I dedicate my research project study to my older brother, Terrance Toney, who I never got the chance to know/meet because he passed away when he was less than a month old. I would also like to dedicate my study to my biological father, Marvin Boatler Jones, who transitioned from his earthly home to his heavenly home on July 6, 1998, the summer before my sophomore year in high school. Although he obviously has never physically attended any of my graduations, he has been with me spiritually as I have made my way across each stage to receive my high school diploma, my undergraduate degree, my graduate degree, and my postgraduate degree. Meanwhile, I lastly but not least dedicate my study to my late stepfather, Horace Drake, who died during the spring semester as I was completing my Educational Specialist degree at Walden University. He constantly bragged about how his daughter (i.e., me) was in school to achieve her doctorate degree. Though he is no longer with me physically, my stepfather will be with me spiritually as I am pronounced Dr. Yolanda Rochelle Toney.

Acknowledgments

Genesis 1:1 (NIV) declares, “In the beginning God created...” Before I can acknowledge and/or thank any faculty, family member, and/or friend, I must first give honor to the Creator who gave seed to my biological father and then created me inside my mother’s womb. Had it not been for God who created me for and with a purpose, I would not have been able to manifest a childhood dream and accomplish a long-term goal that I believe will serve a greater purpose in my life. Therefore, I am forever grateful to Abba for allowing me to see my dream come true, so I can show young girls who look like me that societal standards are meaningless when a Higher Power holds their future.

Meanwhile, I would like to thank my loving mother, Evelyn Drake, who has raised me to be an integral and a respectable woman. I am who I am because of the example my mother has shown me. I also would like to acknowledge my former doctoral chairperson, Dr. Debra Bebe. Although she has transitioned from Earth, she will forever hold a special place in my heart because her encouraging words strengthened me during challenging times. Dr. Beebe always had my best interest at heart, and I would not be connected with my current doctoral chairperson, Dr. Carole Pearce, if it had not been for Dr. Debra Beebe. With that said, Dr. Pearce has played such an instrumental part in my life, and I am grateful for her and my second doctoral chairperson, Dr. Charlotte Redden, who has always been my second chair since I began my doctoral journey. Both Dr. Pearce and Dr. Redden have nurtured me into the scholarly writer who I am today.

Table of Contents

List of Tables	v
Section 1: The Problem.....	1
The Local Problem.....	1
Rationale	4
Evidence of the Problem From the Professional Literature	4
Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level.....	5
Definition of Terms.....	6
Significance of the Study.....	7
Research Questions	9
Review of the Literature	9
Conceptual Framework.....	10
Adult Learners.....	12
Developmental Education.....	13
Developmental English.....	15
Writing as a Basic Academic Skill in Developmental Education.....	16
Teaching Strategies for Developmental English Instructors	17
Student Outcomes in Developmental English	18
Enhancing and Meeting Student Academic Skills	20
Assessment and Evaluation in an English Course	21
Implications.....	22
Summary	23

Section 2: The Methodology.....	26
Qualitative Research Design and Approach	26
Participants.....	27
Data Collection	28
The Procedures for Gaining Access to Participants.....	30
The Role of the Researcher	31
Data Analysis	33
Data Analysis Results	36
Procedures for Data Analysis.....	36
Discrepant Cases	38
Conclusions	39
Limitations	40
Delimitations	40
Data	41
Coding Methods.....	41
Results and Analysis of Interviews.....	42
Preparing Students for Success.....	44
Implementing Better Teaching Methods	46
Using Effective Instructional Strategies	50
Eliminating Ineffective Instructional Strategies	52
Engaging Students During Instruction.....	54
Helping Students With the Writing Process	56

Ensuring Student Success	58
Trustworthiness and Validity	60
Findings in Relation to the Problem and Research Questions	62
Project Deliverable	65
Summary	67
Section 3: The Project	69
Introduction.....	69
Rationale	70
Review of the Literature	72
Establish and Maintain an Interactive Student-Instructor Relationship	73
Implement Instructional Strategies That Are Student-Centered.....	74
Choose Learning Activities That Will Keep Students Engaged During	
Classroom Instruction	75
Teach Students Basic Writing Skills.....	77
Project Description.....	77
Project Evaluation Plan	79
Project Implications	81
Summary	83
Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions.....	85
Project Strengths and Limitations.....	85
Recommendations for Alternative Approaches	87
Scholarship.....	89

Project Development and Evaluation.....	89
Leadership and Change.....	91
Analysis About Personal Growth of Self as a Scholar	93
Analysis About Personal Growth of Self as a Practitioner and Project Developer	93
Reflection on Importance of the Work	94
Implications.....	95
Applications	96
Directions for Future Research	96
Conclusion	97
References.....	99
Appendix A: The Project	105
Appendix B: Self-Designed Interview Protocol.....	128
Appendix C: Email Invitation to Recruit Participants	130

List of Tables

Table 1. Student Academic Performance in Developmental English Course During 3
Consecutive Fiscal Years at Local Community College3

Section 1: The Problem

The Local Problem

The problem addressed through this study is that teachers have been challenged to implement effective strategies in recent years at a local community college in the southern region of the United States, leading to a student failure rate in developmental English of 47 to 49%, according to the coordinator of developmental English. Developmental courses at the college level have been implemented into the higher education curriculum because many students, particularly adult learners, who enroll in college lack certain skills to begin with regular academic core classes, such as English (Pruett & Absher, 2015). Zeng (2018) explained how many first-time college students have not had many extensive writing assignments before entering college, so they struggle to complete college writing assignments. According to a local report from the research site of this project study, there have been approximately 37 sections of developmental English courses offered each fall and spring semester in recent years at the local community college. The coordinator of developmental English at the local community college, where this project study was conducted, stated that the current passing rate among students who take developmental English is 53% based upon end-of-the-semester reports, and the college would like the passing rate to be higher. The academic dean of the Humanities and Social Sciences department at the local community college verified that the 53% passing rate is not acceptable according to the college student success rates, so the 47% failure rate among students who take developmental

English is a problem at the local community college and has been a problem in recent years. Based upon a recent report from the local community college where the study took place, the dean of the Humanities and Social Sciences department explained that the 47 to 49% failure rate reflects the students who did not complete the course by the end of the semester.

Bonet and Walters (2016) expressed that college instructors play a pivotal role when it comes to college students progressing to general education classes after these students have taken developmental education courses. Based upon statistical data from a local report at the local community college where the project study was conducted, Table 1 indicates the high failure rate among students who are in a developmental English course has been a problem in recent years. Balderas and Cuamatzi (2018) suggested that English instructors implement different yet effective teaching methods in the classroom to cater to the academic needs of their students so students can improve upon their writing skills to proceed to their next English course. Despite the high failure rate, 53% of students do pass the developmental English course at the local community college. The overall student failure rate of 47% in developmental English courses is deemed unacceptable by the college leadership. Based on variable student success rates among developmental English instructors at the local community college, the dean of the Humanities and Social Sciences department shared that some instructors appear to implement instructional strategies that lead to students successfully passing the developmental English course. The problem that has been addressed through this study is

that teachers have been challenged to implement effective strategies in recent years at a local community college in the southern region of the United States, so there is a student failure rate in developmental English of 47 to 49%, according to the coordinator of developmental English at the study site.

Table 1

Student Academic Performance in Developmental English Course During 3 Consecutive Fiscal Years at Local Community College

Variable	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
Course section	33	37	35
Instructors	10	13	10
Students enrolled	541	469	543
Withdrawn students	38	33	30
Student pass rate	51%	58%	52%
Student failure rate	49%	47%	47%

Note. Information received from the dean of the Humanities and Social Sciences department on April 3, 2020.

Schaffhauser (2016) proposed that one of the main goals of a college instructor is to guide students through college. The primary course objective, according to the

developmental English coordinator at the local community college, provided in the course syllabus for the developmental English course is for students to enhance their writing and grammar skills. According to Li (2018), college developmental English courses are designed to help students from making major grammatical errors. Namaste (2017) revealed how some students do not progress academically when taking a semester-long English course, so they do not improve upon their writing skills. Wilder and Yagelski (2018) emphasized the importance of writing as the most essential skill that students will use in every discipline and/or profession of their lives. Developmental education courses at a college and/or university are designed for students to enhance basic writing and grammar skills (Woods et al., 2017). Hashemi and Daneshfar (2018) conveyed how important it is for students to become proficient in grammar because it is the foundation of communication skills whether students are speaking or writing. The gap in practice addressed by this study was to investigate the current instructional practices, which are generating a 47% failure rate among students who take developmental English at the local community college, so that a 53% passing rate can be improved by implementing effective instructional strategies.

Rationale

Evidence of the Problem From the Professional Literature

Boylan and Trawick (2015) found through their research how underprepared many students are when they enter college. Most colleges nationwide require students to take some type of standardized test or a placement test, so college administrators can

determine what classes students need to take during their first college semester (Bonet & Walters, 2016). Standardized and/or placement test scores often reveal how competent and proficient students are academically. Low standardized and/or placement test scores prevent students from taking general education courses during their first semester in college. Many students who are first-semester college students are placed in developmental education courses, such as reading, English, and/or mathematics, because those students did not perform well on a standardized and/or placement test. Goldwasser et al. (2017) recognized how each college has its own unique developmental education program set in place to cater to the academic needs of students who are not prepared to take a general education course, such as English. Enyew and Melesse (2018) mentioned the complexity of students lacking reading and writing skills, so they are incompetent in those said skills, and their incompetency causes them to retain in a developmental education course.

Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level

The local community college where this study was conducted offers developmental education courses, such as English, to allow students who are underprepared for college, so they can gain the skills they need to succeed in a general education course. The college has offered approximately 37 sections of developmental English each fall and spring in recent consecutive years. According to the developmental English coordinator at the study site, the number of sections indicates how students need the course based upon their standardized test scores and/or their lack of passing the

developmental English course. The dean of the Humanities and Social Sciences department commented that the current 47% failure rate among students who take developmental English is a problem at the local community college and has been a problem in recent years, and the 53% passing rate is not acceptable according to the expected college student success rates.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the challenges encountered by developmental English instructors at the local community college in their current practices and their suggestions for improved teaching approaches. A variety of diverse teaching methods and resources has been suggested by the English department at the local community college for the developmental English instructors to utilize in the classroom, according to the dean of the Humanities and Social Sciences department. Many underprepared students who are enrolled at the local community college are not passing the developmental English courses.

Definition of Terms

Developmental education: Remedial coursework that is designed for college students who lack basic academic skills in subjects, such as reading, writing, and/or mathematics. Developmental education is intended to help students improve upon such academic skills, so they can succeed in general education courses, such as English Composition I and/or Pre-Calculus (VanOra, 2019).

Developmental English: A remedial course at a higher education institution that is offered to students who scored below average on either a standardized test or a placement

test. Developmental English is offered to students during their first semester learning experience (Schnee & Shakoor, 2016).

Student learning outcomes: Expectations for students who are enrolled in general education courses at the collegiate level. According to the dean of the Humanities and Social Sciences department at the study site, students are expected to think critically, communicate effectively, and act professionally after they complete general education courses.

Significance of the Study

This project study is significant in that instructor challenges (which were academic, in part, and student-related for some) could be identified and addressed through a policy recommendation. The findings of this study indicated, from the perceptions and experiences of developmental English instructors, specific teaching methods that may increase the passing rate among students in the developmental English course at the local community college. English instructors at any higher education institution are required to provide instruction to specifically meet the academic needs of their students, so the students can communicate effectively and perform well in other subjects (Enyew & Melesse, 2018). Sacher (2016) affirmed that college-level students need certain proficiency skills like writing to help them earn entry-level positions in the workforce. Because the gap in practice addressed by this study was to investigate the current instructional practices, which are generating a 47% failure rate among students who take developmental English at the local community college so that a 53% passing

rate can be improved by implementing effective instructional strategies, this research project study may contribute to improving teacher performance at the local community college.

Students who are in a developmental English course need compassion because they already feel defeated being in a remedial course, so according to the dean of the Humanities and Social Sciences department, the developmental English instructors are encouraged to implement instructional strategies that are personable to the students. The study findings provided information to help fill in the gap by encouraging all the developmental English instructors to implement the most successful instructional strategies in their course for their students to successfully complete and pass the developmental English course. This research may support professional education practice at the local community college as the findings provided information to offer support or recommendations to assist with putting practical instructional strategies in place for all developmental English instructors to obtain a high passing rate for their students. In addition, the developmental English instructors who do not have the highest passing rates among their students may benefit from this study because they may implement successful instructional strategies that support students to pass the developmental English course. With successful instructional strategies set in place for all developmental English instructors to use in their classroom, students may reap the benefits for them to successfully complete the course.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to investigate the challenges encountered by developmental English instructors at the local community college in their current practices and their suggestions for improved teaching approaches. Data collected during this study provided information on using successful instructional strategies to increase the student success rate at the local community college. Two guiding questions were developed for this study:

1. What are developmental English instructor perceptions about the challenges encountered in their current developmental instructional practices?
2. What are developmental English instructor suggestions for improving student outcomes?

Review of the Literature

The strategy used to access the literature was an exploration of research databases that hold content pertaining to developmental education course studies primarily but not exclusively to developmental English courses. Research was conducted through Google Scholar and the online Walden University library system. The following keywords were used to search for articles: *basic writing skills, community college, developmental education, developmental English, developmental writing, instructional strategies, reading, remedial education, teaching strategies, and writing*. The different topics that the literature review covered are as follows: adult learners, developmental education, developmental English, writing as a basic academic skill, teaching strategies, student

outcomes, student academic skills, and assessment and evaluation. Sources came from electronic professional peer-reviewed journals as well as traditional books and journals.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study included Gagne's (1985) conditions of learning and Mezirow's (1991) theory of transformative learning. The proposed research project study focused on the instructional strategies used by some of the faculty who teach developmental English courses at a local community college. Gagne's conditions of learning worked best for the study because it served as the foundation of the research questions to better understand how community college developmental English instructors perceive their current instructional strategies as facilitating student achievement and their suggestions for improving student outcomes. Gagne's conditions of learning conceptualizes several different types or levels of learning where instructors are encouraged to provide a different type of instruction based upon each different type of learning style for students in their class(es). Mezirow's theory of transformative learning was also used because the theory provides a basis to understand how to promote student success among college instructors. Mezirow's theory of transformative learning is primarily centered around adult learners. Merriam et al. (2007) analyzed Mezirow's definition of transformative learning as the occurrence "when there is a transformation in one of our beliefs or attitudes (a meaning scheme), or a transformation of our entire perspective (habit of mind)" (p. 133). Mezirow developed the theory of transformative learning for adult education and adult learners to understand that their prior knowledge

and/or experiences in life can be applied to new learning concepts. Mezirow's theory of transformative learning involves the transmittal of human interaction through communication where tasks are given to solve problems that orient the cause and effect of student-instructor relationships. Mezirow's theory of transformative learning additionally helps with developing and delivering the best teaching strategies during classroom instruction to cater to student learning needs. According to the developmental English coordinator at the study site, based upon the information provided in the course syllabus, the instructors who teach developmental English courses at the local community college are required to implement multiple teaching methods (e.g., lecture and discussion, group work, audio-visual presentations, and computer-based online assignments) in the classroom to help increase the academic performance amongst students.

Gagne's (1985) conditions of learning provided structure that explain the findings of how beneficial implementing varied successful instructional strategies can be. Gagne categorized learning to include information exchanged verbally, skills presented intellectually and physically, and strategies given cognitively. Gagne's primary focus on the conditions of learning was the intellectual skills of a learner. Hope (2015) also emphasized the importance of college instructors providing effective teaching methods that aid student success. Gagne's conditions of learning theory are designed for college instructors to provide learning guidance and feedback, to elicit and assess student performance, and to enhance retention; therefore, this theory has been used extensively among various aspects of higher education, especially institutions that offer

developmental education courses. Namaste (2017) intentionally designed classroom assignments among her students, so she could analyze how well students improved upon their writing skills through competency and development. Khalil and Semono-Eke (2020) reported that instructors should implement audio-visual instructional techniques to help students understand the course content. Goldwasser et al. (2017) recommended that college instructors assess and evaluate their best practices at the end of each semester to determine the effectiveness of multiple teaching methods.

Adult Learners

The student population at most community colleges nationwide includes minorities and/or recent immigrants, and adult learners are among those demographics (Bonet & Walters, 2016). Sanchez et al. (2018) asserted that colleges are held responsible for students performing academically well. Posner (2017) acknowledged instructors as “stakeholders in the learning process” (p. 36). Fagioli et al. (2020) noted how every stakeholder should have a positive mindset to adhere to the success of every student enrolled at a higher education institution. Housel (2020) further recommended that college instructors recognize how adult learners may have educational interruptions, learning disabilities, and/or other issues (i.e., domestic, and mental) that could possibly affect their academic performance. Housel mentioned how adult learners may not perform at as high of a literacy rate as those who are classified as traditional college students because adult learners sometimes come from a poverty-stricken socioeconomic background. King-Spezio et al. (2020) confirmed that a learning environment plays a

significant role in student persistence and student success for adult learners because the classroom climate determines whether students are comfortable and confident enough to actively engage in classroom participation. Sanchez et al. (2018) focused on student persistence and institutional retention and how college administrators work hard to support both student persistence and institutional retention. Posner (2017) recognized learning as an everyday and everchanging process. King-Spezzo et al. (2020) focused on studying learning tasks that are oriented in the classroom by examining how teachers support their students during classroom instruction and how teacher support influences student learning.

Developmental Education

Jamieson et al. (2021) emphasized how most colleges require students to complete a standardized test (e.g., the SAT or ACT) or a placement test for college administrators to determine what college courses students should take. Mokher et al. (2021) stated that students are placed in a developmental education course based upon their standardized or placement test scores. Boylan and Trawick (2015) explained developmental education as remediation for first-time college students who are not academically prepared to take general education classes at the collegiate level. Fagioli et al. (2020) found that students from diverse backgrounds are among the underprepared students who are placed in developmental education courses.

VanOra (2019) mentioned community college students' perceptions that involve academic, personal, and financial advantages and challenges regarding the value of

developmental education at a higher education institution; these attributes correlate with the nature of this study. Mokher et al. (2021) specifically commented on the financial burden upon students who take developmental education courses because developmental education courses are not calculated in graduation credit courses, and students are using much of their financial aid to take those courses. Mokher et al. (2021) suggested that colleges should reduce the cost of developmental education courses for students who have to repeat those courses.

Jamieson et al. (2021) mentioned how students do not choose a community college as their first college choice. VanOra (2019) recognized developmental education courses as a form of remediation for students who are underprepared for regular college courses, such as English Composition I and/or Pre-Calculus. Perun (2020) found that most students who take developmental education courses lack a strong educational background. Developmental education courses, such as reading, writing, and mathematics, are in place for students to gain basic reading, writing, and mathematic skills so they can be successful in general education courses (VanOra, 2019). Koule et al. (2015) identified students who are enrolled in developmental education courses as being the most at-risk of dropping out of college before they complete their college degree. Royer and Baker (2018) commented how students sometimes lack inspiration when they take developmental education courses. Koule et al. (2015) focused on how faculty can help students succeed in developmental education courses through in-depth conversations with one another. Royer and Baker (2018) specifically encouraged college

developmental education instructors to create a supportive learning environment for students to feel more confident during the learning process. Student success is important as it is related to the purpose of this study.

Developmental English

Chamba et al. (2019) recognized an English course as one of the most beneficial courses for college students to take because writing is a skill that allows effective communication. Developmental English is one of the few remedial courses offered at many community colleges nationwide. Enyew and Melesse (2018) described developmental English as a college course that allows students to gain the reading and writing skills, such as enhancement in reading comprehension, vocabulary, and basic grammar, that they need to succeed in a general education college-level course. Chamba et al. (2019) reported how college students in a developmental English course are tested on their vocabulary, reading comprehension, and grammar skills. Zeng (2018) acknowledged writing as an exchange of ideas through basic yet vital communication skills. Chamba et al. (2019) concluded that moderate listening comprehension and oral communication skills are contributing factors for students who lack basic writing skills. Zeng (2018) stated that college students have difficulty conveying their ideas when writing paragraphs and/or essays.

Anxiety is a common trait that most students have when they write in a college English course (Zeng, 2018). Jamieson et al. (2021) recognized stress as a contributing factor for students when their academic performance is not the best. Haverila et al. (2020)

stressed the importance of college faculty/staff satisfying the academic needs of their students so the college itself can improve upon its academic programs. Khalil and Semono-Eke (2020) emphasized how a college English course prepares students to write in other courses that require writing. Khalil and Semono-Eke (2020) also explained how a college English course should satisfy specific purposes that include occupational and academic purposes. Wilder and Yagelski (2018) regarded English as a required course for first-year college students at most colleges and universities. Goldwasser et al. (2017) mentioned how most first-year college students are not prepared for the coursework in courses like English, so those students are placed in developmental English to satisfy basic college requirements before they can enroll in a general education course. Sanchez et al. (2018) discussed how low-income and first-generation college students are usually the ones who do not perform academically well.

Writing as a Basic Academic Skill in Developmental Education

Wilder and Yagelski (2018) described writing as an essential skill across every discipline in higher education. Goldwasser et al. (2017) displayed the percentage of college students who typically take developmental education courses. Boylan and Trawick (2015) also explained how much developmental education is needed in higher education for students who are not academically prepared to take regular college-level courses, such as English, so there is a correlation with the nature of this project study. Woods et al. (2017) explored developmental education as an option based upon academic advising, remedial courses, and legislative mandates. Clay-Buck and Tuberville (2015)

addressed poor writing skills among students who are placed in developmental English courses, and poor writing skills are inclusive within the nature of this study. Sacher (2016) completed an overview of the writing crisis regarding recent high school graduates who have trouble writing and therefore are placed in developmental English at the collegiate level. Sacher (2016) provided solutions, such as raising the writing achievement for students, motivating students through instruction, and developing positive incentives, on how to address the writing crisis through college developmental writing classes.

Teaching Strategies for Developmental English Instructors

Teaching strategies for developmental English instructors were common in the literature. Posner (2017) proposed adaptive learning as a teaching strategy for instructors to deliver instruction through a “human-centric” approach. Enyew and Melesse (2018) conducted research on the teaching practices where college English instructors implement strategies, such as teaching reading content, teaching grammar, scanning while reading a text, and skimming while reading a text, which activate prior knowledge, enhance vocabulary, increase reading skills, and intensify reading comprehension in the classroom. Balderas and Cuamatzi’s (2018) discovery of different teaching strategies, such as student self-assessment and peer correction, which have been used to help students in college English courses to improve their writing skills was beneficial to the problem of this study. Hashemi and Daneshfar (2018) discussed the impact of different instruction techniques, such as deductive, inductive, and implicit, on teaching grammar to

college students that may guide the nature of this study. The deductive instructive technique involves the instructor presenting grammar rules to students, so they can apply those rules when given a writing assignment (Hashemi & Daneshfar, 2018). The inductive instruction technique reciprocates the deductive instruction technique where students are provided examples of a writing sample, and then the students discover the grammar rules given by the instructor (Hashemi & Daneshfar, 2018). The implicit instructive technique is used when the instructor acknowledges that students are not consciously aware of certain content within a given subject (Hashemi & Daneshfar, 2018). Liu (2019) asserted that students are not able to think critically when lecturing as the primary teaching strategy. Li (2018) delegated teaching reform strategies that involve audio-visual presentations for students to understand the course material through memorization, so the college English course is driven by source problems under the cognitive neuroscience view.

Student Outcomes in Developmental English

Zeng (2018) conducted a study on the improvement of English writing competency for college students. Zeng (2018) did not provide participation information in his study. Zeng (2018) aimed to find solutions on how to help college students improve their writing skills and to discover why students lack college writing skills. Zeng (2018) based his study upon a comparison analysis of students who live in economic areas where educational resources are limited that hinder students from performing academically well in college courses such as English. Zeng (2018) stated that students being able to

comprehend what they have read and being able to translate what they have read in writing have been vital for college students to explain their understanding of what was read in an English course. Liu (2019) recommended that college English instructors implement teaching strategies where students are required to write summaries and/or commentaries after reading a text to assess their critical reading and thinking skills. Zeng (2018) explained how students become discouraged and lack confidence when their writing skills are not advanced. Khoule et al. (2015) emphasized how important it is for college instructors who teach developmental courses, such as English, to serve their students to the best of their ability because these students are more likely to withdraw from college than students who are taking general education courses. Khoule et al. (2015) suggested that instructors who teach developmental courses should have conversations among themselves to discuss how to implement teaching strategies that will help students succeed in developmental courses like English. Bonet and Walters (2016) discovered contributing factors, such as academic, personal, and/or financial issues, which affect student persistence at the community college level as to why students repeat certain classes like a developmental English course. Bonet and Walters (2016) recommended that college instructors should be receptive to professional development for themselves as a way to better serve their students in the learning environment. Pruett and Absher (2015) found how various contributing factors like financial restrictions, social development, and economic resources cause students at community colleges to fail a developmental education course, such as English.

Enhancing and Meeting Student Academic Skills

Vick et al. (2015) examined effective techniques, such as implementing tutoring and learning laboratories in the classroom, for college instructors to provide as support in developmental education, so students who are placed in developmental courses can strengthen their academic skills in courses like English. Vick et al. (2015) recommended techniques, such as incorporating tutoring in the classroom and creating learning laboratories. One of the variables that Vick et al. (2015) found effective was the increase in student success when developmental English instructors included tutoring as part of their classroom requirement. Tutoring not only provides additional academic assistance to students who are in developmental English but tutoring also evokes academic success that affords students to perform well in a general English composition course. Haverhila et al. (2020) recognized that academic excellence could be affected if there is a lack of educational resources provided to ensure student success. Fagioli et al. (2020) stated that some colleges could perhaps be academically ineffective because they may lack student support programs that provide services for students who face academic challenges.

Perun (2020) mentioned that some colleges do not necessarily offer educational training for students to perform academically well in a developmental education course. Hope (2015) suggested different techniques that involve college faculty and staff organizing events where students can gain more knowledge about academia as a whole to help educators meet the academic needs of underprepared college students. Bonet and Walters (2016) mentioned that embedding a college course or seminar to focus on student

development could possibly help students become more confident in developmental courses, such as English. Royer and Baker (2018) recommended that colleges implement co-requisite courses to reduce the number students who take developmental education courses. Hope (2015) emphasized the importance of having solid leadership at colleges because faculty are the driving force behind student success. Hope (2015) highlighted how critical it is for faculty to know what students need to succeed. It is also important for faculty to establish an effective communicative relationship with students, so they can feel comfortable and confident talking to their instructors about their academic needs (Hope, 2015).

Assessment and Evaluation in an English Course

Assessment and evaluation in an English course were the primary focal points in multiple resources of the literature. Namaste's (2017) explained how students in an English course are assessed and evaluated through the coursework that is provided by instructors who teach English courses. Students in an English course are assessed by writing essays, and they are evaluated through a grading rubric (Namaste, 2017). Perun (2020) mentioned how college developmental English instructors know firsthand when students are not familiar with standard English formalities when writing essay assignments. The relevance of assessment and evaluation for the developmental English class is to determine what writing skills, such as reflective writing, storytelling, and reader-response writing, students lack that cause them to fail developmental English (Namaste, 2017). Namaste (2017) noted course design for a college English class as a key

factor of how students are assessed and evaluated throughout the duration of the course. The course design should outline potential student learning goals for instructors to assess and evaluate students.

Schaffhauser's (2016) recommendation that college English instructors provide feedback to administrators about their students to determine how many students need academic guidance. Schaffhauser (2016) explored how faculty used a technological approach where a retention network system is imputed to determine what students are at risk of failing a course, such as developmental English. Schaffhauser (2016) aimed to discover how faculty handle the students who are flagged "at risk" by tracking student retention through a case management tool, such as Starfish. One methodical approach that Schaffhauser (2016) discovered among two higher education institutions was faculty being provided a questionnaire which included questions about each student's academic performance. The questionnaire is then given to administrators for them to review, so they can identify common trends in students' grades regarding the classes students take (Schaffhauser, 2016).

Implications

Students who take developmental English courses sometimes feel defeated, so developmental English instructors at the local community college are advised not to talk down to students (Bonet & Walters, 2016). Bonet and Walters (2016) discussed how students who are enrolled in developmental courses often feel defeated because they lack emotional support. Students who are placed in a developmental education course are

usually not academically prepared for the general education coursework (Boylan & Trawick, 2015). Results from this study revealed effective instructional strategies used by developmental English instructors at the local community college to increase the student success rate. Implementing certain teaching methods, eliminating ineffective instructional strategies, and engaging students during instruction are other results revealed from this study.

This study investigated the challenges encountered by developmental English instructors at the local community college in their current practices and about their suggestions for improved teaching approaches. Results from this study were able to identify successful instructional strategies that are being used by developmental English instructors at the local community college and how these instructional strategies lead their students to successfully complete their course(s). Preparing students for success, helping students with the writing process, and ensuring student success were also identified as results from this study. Once the data were collected and analyzed from this study, the project deliverable was a policy recommendation for developmental English instructors at the local community college.

Summary

Section 1 presented the local problem that addressed how in recent years at a local community college, there has been a student failure rate in developmental English of 47 to 49%, suggesting that additional instructional strategies and supports may be needed for the faculty who serve these struggling students. Definitions of terms were listed in this

section to provide clarity of certain terminology associated specifically with this study. The significance of this study was also included in Section 1 to give insight about how this study positively can help to increase the passing rate amongst students in the developmental English course at the local community college by means of identifying specific teaching methods from experienced faculty. Two research questions were presented in this section to guide the study and align it with the problem and the purpose. This section also included a literature review to support the information provided in the study. Implications were amended to describe what happened once the study was completed.

Section 2 includes the methodology of the study. I briefly describe the qualitative research design and approach I chose. I also describe how the research design derives logically from the problem and research question. In addition, the data collection and data analysis processes are explained.

Section 3 introduces the project deliverable which is a policy recommendation paper. I also provide the rationale in Section 3, which is to interview developmental English instructors for me to collect qualitative data. Section 3 includes a literature review for the project deliverable. In addition, Section 3 includes project implications with one being the possible social change for students to successfully complete and pass the developmental English course, so they can proceed to general education courses and achieve their college goals. The project evaluation plan is provided in Section 3, and the evaluation approach is outcome-based.

Section 4 includes reflections and conclusions. Project strengths and limitations is provided in Section 4. In addition to the project strengths and limitations, recommendations for alternative approaches are included in Section 4. Scholarship, project development and evaluation, and leadership and change are also provided in Section 4. An analysis about personal growth as a scholar and as a practitioner and project developer is presented in Section 4. Section 4 includes a reflection on the importance of the work, implications, applications, and directions for future research. Section 4 ends with a conclusion.

Section 2: The Methodology

Qualitative Research Design and Approach

Qualitative research is characterized as unknown variables that involve explorative techniques to address a research problem presented by a researcher (Creswell, 2012). The nature of this study was a basic qualitative research design. The problem addressed through this study was that teachers have been challenged to implement effective strategies in recent years at a local community college in the southern region of the United States, leading to a student failure rate in developmental English of 47 to 49%, according to the coordinator of developmental English. A basic qualitative research design is the most common among the educational sector, and the data collected come from “interviews, observations, or document analysis” (Merriam, 2009, p. 23). Because a basic qualitative research design discovers “how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences,” it was the best approach for this study because I interviewed developmental English instructors to understand how they perceived the strategies they have employed in their developmental English courses for student success and their suggestions for improved teaching approaches (see Merriam, 2009, p. 23).

Phenomenology was less effective for my research because I did not focus on human experiences that derive from “love, anger, and betrayal” (see Merriam, 2009, p. 25). Ethnography explores behavior patterns among a specific group of people as it relates to culture, so ethnography was not as effective as a basic qualitative research

design for this study. Because I did not build a theory, a grounded theory research design was not effective for the nature of this study. A narrative analysis was least effective for this study because the participants did not provide first-person stories. The data collected for this study came from interviews, so a critical research approach was ineffective because it focuses more on context (see Merriam, 2009). For my planned research design, I used a self-designed interview protocol with college developmental English instructors who teach developmental English at the local community college. The purpose of this study was to investigate the challenges encountered by developmental English instructors at the local community college in their current practices and about their suggestions for improved teaching approaches. The perceptions of participants were best captured through collecting interview data. The qualitative research method worked best for my project study because I interviewed those instructors to understand how they perceived the strategies they employed in their developmental English courses that they believed facilitated student success and their suggestions for improved teaching approaches.

Participants

The basic qualitative research study involved interviewing college developmental English instructors at the local community college. Selecting participants for this study was based upon the purpose. The study participants were experts in the field of higher education, specifically developmental English and English composition. They also had years of teaching experience with high success rates at the local community college, which was my research study site. The rationale for interviewing developmental English

instructors was to collect qualitative data. There were 10 research study participants. The dean of the Humanities and Social Sciences department at the research site provided me with a list of developmental English instructors who have taught and/or teach developmental English courses within the last 3 years and have high success rates among their students. The list of the identified developmental English faculty was only used to send an email invitation and to deliver a consent form at the same time via the college email system to participate in the study. I sent the email invitation and informed consent form to each research participant from my Walden email address and explained my role as the researcher. The invitation and the consent form informed the research participants of the requests that I made and the protections that I provided. I made sure to collect a personal email address from each participant in order to protect the confidentiality of their participation. Once each faculty member signed the consent form, a mutually convenient time was identified to conduct the interview. I interviewed the developmental English instructors to collect qualitative data.

I avoided demeaning any of the research participants' character, morals, and/or values. I refrained from making any biased assumptions based upon the data that I collected from the research participants. I dismissed any prejudices that target gender, sexual orientation, racial or ethnic group, disability and/or age toward any of the research participants (see Creswell, 2012).

Data Collection

Merriam (2009) described semistructured interviews as less structured than highly structured interviews; therefore, semistructured interviews require more open-

ended questions than highly structured interviews. I conducted interviews to address the research questions about how community college developmental English instructors perceived their current instructional strategies in facilitating student achievement and their suggestions for improved teaching approaches. The interview questions were developed to address the two guided research questions. The interviews served as the data collection instrument, and the self-designed interview protocol served as a guide to collect data. Creswell (2012) defined an interview protocol as “a form designed by the researcher that contains instructions for the process of the interview, the questions to be asked, and space to take notes of responses from the interviewee” (p. 225).

Creswell (2012) provided a list about how to conduct interviews with participants who are part of the research process. The list included identifying the interviewees, determining the type of interview (i.e., telephone, one-on-one, and/or email), recording the questions and responses during the interview, taking notes from the interview, locating a place the interview, obtaining consent for the interview, using probes, and being courteous and professional throughout the interviewing process (Creswell, 2012). The interviews were audio taped, and the audio tapes were transcribed. I also kept a research log on my personal computer to record the data collected from the interviews with the developmental English instructors. The research log was supplemental to the audio taped interviews that were transcribed and included the participants, the type of interview (i.e., telephone, one-on-one, and/or email) for each participant, the questions and answers from each interview, the location of each interview (i.e., if the interview was

one-on-one), and the time and date of each interview. The transcribed interviews were the data that addressed my research questions. I also used the research log to take notes regarding emerging themes that were revealed while analyzing the data collected.

The Procedures for Gaining Access to Participants

Creswell (2012) emphasized the importance of researchers gaining permission to conduct research at a study site and gaining access to interview participants. Creswell also mentioned how researchers should be sensitive to the nature of a research study, and researchers should be respectful to the individuals who are active participants in the study. I received approval from Walden IRB and the research study site where I collected data. The dean of the Humanities and Social Sciences department at the designated research study site provided me with a list of English instructors who have taught and/or teach developmental English. The list of the identified developmental English faculty was only used to send an email invitation first and then deliver an informed consent form via the college email system to participate in the study. The invitation and the consent form informed the potential participants of the requests that I made and the protections that I provided. I made sure to collect a personal email address from each potential participant in order to protect the confidentiality of their participation. Once each faculty member signed the consent form, a mutually convenient time was identified to conduct the interview.

I scheduled an audio interview via Zoom with each participant for any follow-up information. I stored any written data collected from the open-ended interviews on a

Microsoft Word document, and I saved the recordings from the audio interviews on my personal laptop. I did not have a past or present professional relationship with any of the research participants who I interviewed to collect data. There was no identified bias and/or influence that affected the data collected in any way. My role as a college instructor related to the participants because I had teaching experience with college developmental English. The identity of the participants was not revealed; I am the only one who knows the true identity of each participant. Each participant was identified by a number (e.g., Instructor 1, Instructor 2, Instructor 3, etc.).

The Role of the Researcher

Merriam (2009) stated how human beings are the “primary instrument of data collection and analysis in qualitative research” (p. 214). Because I conducted a qualitative research project study, my role as the researcher was critical because I interviewed participants to collect data. Merriam (2009) described qualitative researchers as those who “seek to describe and explain the world as those in the world experience it” (p. 220). My primary role as the researcher was to collect data from the research participants who have taught and/or teach developmental English at the local community college. As the researcher, I also interpreted the information provided from experience based upon the interviews from the research participants. The data that I collected from the participants were their “interpretations of reality” (i.e., shared experience of the participants) that I retrieved directly from the interviews (see Merriam, 2009).

Merriam (2009) mentioned how credibility is dependent upon the researcher as a professionally integral person who refrains from being biased but remains intellectually astute and competent. I, as the researcher, presented myself as a professional at all times during the interviews with the research participants, and I ensured the participants that their rights would be protected, their privacy would not be violated, and their information would not be deceived. My past and current professional role as an adjunct instructor at the research site may have affected data collections because I have taught developmental English in the past and I currently teach English courses with a corequisite where students receive additional assistance to help them pass a regular English course.

My relationship with the instructors who participated in the study was passive because I only communicated with instructors during required departmental meetings that included both full-time and adjunct instructors. Because I am an adjunct instructor, I am not required to attend weekly and/or monthly departmental meetings, so I do not and did not have much interaction with a lot of the instructors. I mainly interact with the dean, the two department chairpersons, and two full-time instructors when I teach on campus twice a week. I do not have and did not have a supervisory role over the instructors who served as my research study participants. My past and current professional relationship may have risked bias because I have been an employee at the research site for more than 10 years, and I am familiar with the dynamics and demographics of the developmental English courses.

Being an employee of the research site may have affected my biases as a researcher because I may not have agreed with some of the answers from the research study participants during the interview process. One of the two instructors with whom I mainly interact was selected as a research study participant, but I was not biased by favoring their answers more than the other study participants. I addressed any biases by maintaining an ethical behavior/manner during the interviewing process with each research study participant. I refrained from presenting any of my own values during each interview. I did not serve as “a judge or a therapist” at any time during the interviewing process (see Merriam, 2009, p. 231).

Data Analysis

Merriam (2009) described data analysis as “the process of making sense of the data. And making sense out of data involves consolidating, reducing, and interpreting what people have said and what the researcher has seen and read – it is the process of making meaning” (pp. 175-176). Data analysis and data collection are contingent to one another. Merriam (2009) described how there is a step-by-step process for analyzing data. The first step of analyzing the data that I collected from the research participants was to transcribe the interviews. Creswell (2012) provided the procedures and the basic features of software programs to use when transcribing data collected from interviews. HyperRESEARCH is a software program that is specifically used for qualitative research, so I used it to code and analyze the data from the audio interviews (see Creswell, 2012). I assigned codes from the interview data. The written transcripts of interview data were

used to analyze the data that I collected from the interviews with the study participants. I then reviewed the transcripts several times to examine patterns/data that addressed the two research questions. I grouped comments and notes from the interviews with the participants that seemed to link together. Grouping similar comments and notes from the interviews with the participants revealed a recurring pattern that allowed me to construct the data into categories and/or themes. Merriam (2009) explained categories (i.e., abstractions derived from the data) as “conceptual elements that cover or span many individual examples of the category” (pp. 181-182). The categories that derived from the data that I collected from the interviews with the research participants became subcategories. The number of categories and/or subcategories depended on the data I collected from the research participants and the focus (i.e., the problem statement, the purpose, and the research question) of the research.

Merriam (2009) further explained categories and recommended that “categories should be responsive to the purpose of the research; categories should be exhaustive; categories should be mutually exclusive; categories should be sensitizing, and categories should be conceptually congruent” (pp. 185-186). I, as the researcher, was responsible for naming the categories based upon the findings from the data that I collected during the interviews with the research study participants. I was able to discuss the evidence of quality through the trustworthiness of the findings when I began the data analysis. Issues of trustworthiness include the following four topics in qualitative research: credibility (strategies such as triangulation, member checks, saturation), confirmability (strategies

such as reflexivity), dependability (strategies such as audit trails and triangulation), and transferability (strategies such as thick descriptions; Merriam, 2009). I addressed these issues of trustworthiness by examining the data collected from each participant to determine whether there were recurring themes among the answers to the interview questions.

Merriam (2009) emphasized how important it is for researchers to conduct themselves in an ethical manner. I, as the researcher, upheld Merriam's sentiments while conducting research and collecting data. Assuring accuracy and credibility of the findings from the data that I collected was contingent upon how I analyzed the data (i.e., the congruency of the findings versus reality). The data analysis consisted of developing categories and themes from the data collected that addressed the research questions. Credibility can be established by capturing what the participants believe, experience, and perceive through member checking.

Merriam (2009) emphasized how validity and reliability are pivotal when a researcher is conducting any type of research study. I, as the researcher, was professional at all times while conducting research and collecting data from the interviews with the research study participants. My intelligence, professionalism, and competence credibility lent itself to me as both a college instructor and the researcher. I was prepared to deal with any discrepant cases. A discrepant case is inclusive of data that lacks support to explain any contradictory patterns that are not apparent in the data analysis (Merriam, 2009). I refined my analysis and continued to revise this study findings until I could

provide an explanation of the data collected (see Merriam, 2009). I compared similar findings and themes from the data collected to determine where the discrepancy derived, if there was any. I then mentioned in the data analysis if there were any discrepant data, what the discrepant data was, and how the discrepant affected the data analysis. I ensured privacy and protection for each of the research study participants before, during, and after the interview. I also refrained from asserting my own assumptions, biases, ethics, morals, and/or values upon the research study participants during the interviews and even after the interviews when I analyzed the data.

Data Analysis Results

Data were collected individually from the interviews with the 10 interview participants, and then the data analysis process began. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) described the data analysis process as being able to work with the data, organize the data, break the data into units, code the data, synthesize the data, and search for patterns among the data that were collected. The participants' responses to the interview questions were coded to analyze the data collected. The subcategories below are arranged in a methodical order to manage the procedures for data analysis, trustworthiness and validity, discrepant cases, assumptions, limitations, and delimitations.

Procedures for Data Analysis

The data collected were developed into different segments based upon similar themes. Similar themes among the data collected were then grouped into specific codes to analyze. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) defined coding as “the process of developing

categories to sort data” (p. 271). According to Bogdan and Biklen (2007), coding is an integral part of the data analysis process. Creswell (2012) suggested that researchers should minimize codes into themes from the data collected. The coding process begins once the researcher has read “the first interview transcript, the first set of field notes, the first document collected in the study” (Merriam, 2009, p. 178).

I listened to each audio recording and played back several parts of each recording as often as I needed to make sure that I provided an accurate transcription of what each participant revealed during the interviews. After I transcribed each interview, I reviewed the notes that I typed from each interview, so I could code the interviews into common themes by searching for key words and/or phrases that specifically addressed the research questions. Merriam (2009) defined coding as “[jotting] down notes, [making] comments, [reviewing] observations, and [creating] queries in the margins” that correlate to the research questions in a research study (p. 178).

Constructive categories derive from pieces of data being assigned codes (Merriam, 2009). I listened for similar words and/or phrases when I replayed the audio recordings, and I looked for similar words and/or phrases when I looked at the written transcript from each interview. I also compared the interviews to one another, so I could note any emerging themes. If any of the participants used the same and/or similar words, I made note of it, so I could categorize those said words as a particular theme.

Merriam (2009) observed how a researcher analyzes collected data by developing themes to work on a particular set of the data collected. I used a certain color highlighter

to highlight the words that were used in the same context from the participants. For example, I used a blue highlighter to highlight words and/or phrases that were relative to effective instructional strategies. I used a green highlighter to highlight words and/or phrases that related to ineffective instructional strategies. I used an orange highlighter to highlight words and/or phrases that were relevant to student engagement. I used a pink highlighter to highlight words and/or phrases that correlated to student success. Once I coded and developed themes, I created a Microsoft Word document on my personal laptop, so I could track emerging themes and include code words that certain participants used.

Discrepant Cases

All 10 interview participants who responded to my initial email began and completed the study. Every interview that I conducted via Zoom was completed with each participant, and I allowed each participant to provide me with additional information that would benefit my study as it related to the two guiding research questions and the purpose of this study. The additional time after the interview gave each participant the opportunity to provide any additional information that I did not address during the initial interview. Each interview was conducted and completed via Zoom during a selected time proposed by each participant individually. I conducted and completed each interview via Zoom in the privacy of my home on my personal laptop where no one was able to intrude and/or intervene. There were no discrepant cases found during this study.

Conclusions

This study highlighted how beneficial it is for developmental English instructors at a local community college to use effective teaching methods in their respective classrooms to ensure student success for students who are enrolled in a developmental English course. This project study is significant in that it may help to increase the passing rate amongst students in the developmental English course at the local community college by means of identifying specific teaching methods that faculty, based on their experience, believe are effective in improving student success. The findings of this study may indicate, from the perceptions and experiences of developmental English instructors, specific teaching methods that may increase the passing rate among students in the developmental English course at the local community college.

The 10 interview participants are assumed to have answered each question with honesty and integrity. I did not provide any input and/or remarks about my own personal experience teaching a developmental English course while I was conducting each interview. The only remarks that I provided were at the beginning and end of each interview to alert the participant when the recording would begin and end and to thank the participant for their time and willingness to participate in this study. I also reminded each participant during the interview that their name would not be used anywhere in this study but would be given a pseudonym, such as Instructor 1, Instructor 2, etc.

Limitations

The limitations of this study included the 10 interview participants. I sent an initial email from my Walden email account to each of the 12 developmental English instructors whose names were provided by the dean of the Humanities and Social Sciences department at the local community college which is my research site. Each developmental English instructor was a current employee at the local community college, and each developmental English instructor had at least three years of teaching experience. Only 10 of the 12 developmental English instructors responded to the email that I sent to each of them individually to conduct an interview, so I moved forward with those 10 and scheduled an interview via Zoom with each of them separately. This study investigated the perceptions of developmental English instructors' experiences of instructional strategies being used to support student success and their suggestions for improved teaching approaches.

Delimitations

The extent of this study is limited to the responses that were provided individually by the 10 interview participants during a one-on-one 30-minute Zoom interview that was audio recorded. The perceptions of each developmental English instructor's experiences of instructional strategies and their suggestions for improved teaching approaches helped me to recognize what they each are using to support student success among their students in a developmental English course. This study focused on the current practices that each developmental English instructor has implemented into the classroom to help their

students succeed in a developmental English course. This study was limited to the data analysis determined by interviewing the 10 developmental English instructors.

Data

Data collected addressed the two guiding research questions by examining how community college developmental English instructors perceive the value of their current instructional strategies in facilitating student achievement and their suggestions for improved teaching approaches. Interviewing was the only method of data collection to identify any commonalities and differences in the participants' responses to the research question. There were not any discrepant data in this study.

Coding Methods

Each of the 10 interview participants responded to seven interview questions with additional probing questions included. I conducted each interview with the respective participant via Zoom on my personal laptop, and I audio recorded each interview with the permission of the respective participant. Managing data involves coding which is “nothing more than assigning some sort of shorthand designation to various aspects of your data so that you can easily retrieve specific pieces of the data” (Merriam, 2009, p. 173). I used certain color highlighters to highlight code words that were found in the data collected from the interviews. I also underlined those code words and wrote notes in the margins to certain words and/or phrases that addressed the research questions. Based upon the data analysis, I was able to determine emerging themes among codes.

Once I coded each interview individually, I looked at the data collected from the interviews to compare the data that addressed the research questions. I highlighted and underlined similar data from the interviews, so I could analyze the data that specifically addressed the research questions. Said data were listed as code words and/or phrases and then were grouped together to help me create themes. For example, responses from the interviews that related to student engagement contained code words and/or phrases, such as comfortability, community, encouragement, and student-centered.

Merriam (2009) described axial coding as interpreting what has been said during an interview between a researcher and a participant and reflecting on the meaning of what was said by the participant. It was important to create and then keep a list of the codes, so they could be grouped together on either the interview transcript or a separate document, such as Microsoft Word (see Merriam, 2009). Patterns and themes derived from the codes and phrases emerged from the data collected, so I highlighted those codes and phrases in a certain color. The first interview that I transcribed revealed similarities among codes and themes with the data collected from the interviews. I listened to the audio recorded interviews several times and read the transcripts to make sure that I did not overlook any missed themes.

Results and Analysis of Interviews

Ten developmental English instructors at a local community college in the southern region of the United States participated in this study. I first emailed each participant an invitation to participate in this study. Each email was sent from my Walden

email account to each participant's respective email account at the local community college, and I copied my email account at the local community college, so they could identify me by name. Once each participant agreed to participate in this study, I then sent each of them a consent form approved by the Walden IRB as well as my organization's IRB to each participant for them to review and consent. After each participant consented, I allowed them to select the date and time for the audio recorded interview. Each interview was conducted privately via Zoom in my home office with no one else present. I reviewed the content from the consent form with each participant prior to beginning the interview to reaffirm them as a protected participant for this study.

I transcribed accurate and precise information from each of the interviews. I emailed each participant a copy of the interview questions and their responses. I asked each participant individually via email to review their respective transcript for accuracy, clarity, and validity, and they each responded to let me know that their transcript was accurate, clear, and valid. There were several code categories that developed during the interview process with each of the participants. Seven major themes emerged from the following categories: preparing students for success, implementing better teaching methods, using effective instructional strategies, eliminating ineffective instructional strategies, engaging students during instruction, helping students with the writing process, and ensuring student success.

Preparing Students for Success

A developmental education program at any college and/or university should be created in a unique way to cater to the academic needs of students who are placed/enrolled in a developmental course, such as developmental English (Goldwasser et al., 2017). Interview question number 1 prompted each participant to convey how they prepare their students to be successful at the beginning of the semester in their developmental English course during a regular session. Establishing a good relationship between the instructor and the students was a common phrase that all of the research participants emphasized as their answer for interview question number 1. The participants supported the first question with the following statements. Instructor 3 expressed, “It is important to establish a good relationship with students because it gives students the confidence they may lack and it creates a welcoming atmosphere.” Not only did Instructor 3 discuss how important it is for instructors to establish a good relationship with their students, but the instructor also talked about how instructors should be friendly because it gives students the opportunity to get to know the instructor and be comfortable. Instructor 7 solicited, “I try to create an inclusive environment for my students, so they can be comfortable while they are in the classroom.”

Going over the syllabus during the first week of class in their developmental English course was another similar statement that many of the research study participants expressed. The following statements support how going over the syllabus the first week of class is detrimental. Instructor 1 mentioned,

I provide copies of the course syllabus to all of my students during the first day of class, so we can go over the syllabus aloud in class, and I ask my students to highlight sections of the syllabus that are deemed as important.

Instructor 10 also liked to go over the course syllabus with their students during the first class session, so their students will know what will be covered throughout the semester. Instructor 10 explained, “I like to give my students expectations, and I like to give my students instructor expectations.” In addition, Instructor 10 allowed students to see a former student’s assignments anonymously, so their current students have a better understanding of what to expect for the course. Instructor 2 revealed, “I devote time to the writing process during the first week of class since most of the assignments on the course syllabus involves writing.”

Giving students the opportunity to become familiar with one another was the third commonality that a few of the research study participants revealed during their individual interviews. Instructor 4 and Instructor 8 both stated in their individual interviews how they make sure students communicate with each other during the first day of class. The following statements from the participants are supported by the idea of making sure students communicate with each other during the first day of class. Instructor 4 said, “I use ice breakers for my students to get acquainted with one another.” Instructor 8 disclosed, “I have my students do a lot of community building and collaboration during the first week of class.”

Making sure students are successful was another important factor among several of the research study participants, and their ideas are supported by the following statements. Instructor 4 stated, “I let my students know that they can be successful.” Instructor 7 regarded, “I take time to set students up for success by giving them specific growth mindset activities during the first week of the semester.” The instructor also has students write a letter to themselves and gives their students examples of their personal academic past. Instructor 8 stated, “I make sure that my students understand the importance of completing the developmental English course.” Both Instructor 6 and Instructor 9 expressed during their individual interviews how they talk about the importance of setting goals with their students. Instructor 6 emphasized, “I spend a lot of time giving basic organizational skills to my students for them to be successful.” Instructor 9 said, “I assign my students an article to read that prepares them to do well in school.”

Implementing Better Teaching Methods

The ultimate goal of developmental English is to help students improve their reading and writing skills, so they can proceed to a general English course that is required for them to complete as part of their degree program curriculum (Enyew & Melesse, 2018). Participants were asked to answer several probing questions for interview question number 2. The second open-ended question began with me asking each participant to reveal the teaching methods that are required to include by the English department, the college as a whole, and/or the state level to implement in their development English

course. Instructor 5, Instructor 6, Instructor 8, and Instructor 9 revealed that there are no required teaching methods set in place for them to implement in the developmental English course. Instructor 5 stated, “I focus on three ways, which include focusing on personal/social development, bringing in other parts of the college into the classroom, and providing general support, to teach my students in a developmental English course.” Instructor 6 explained, “I have a lot of freedom to teach any methodology in my developmental English course, and having the freedom to do so supports student success.” The instructor also talked about how they use active learning and a lot of critical thinking skills’ activities in their course. Instructor 6 concluded the open-ended question by discussing the following: “I spend a lot of time working on the writing process.” Instructor 8 and Instructor 10 both disclosed in separate interviews that they use a variety of teaching methods. Instructor 9 said, “I use an instruct, practice, and assist teaching method in my developmental English course.” Instructor 1, Instructor 3, Instructor 7, Instructor 8, and Instructor 10 answered in their individual interviews that they like to use collaborative learning as one of their teaching methods in their developmental English course.

Instructor 1, Instructor 2, Instructor 3, Instructor 4, and Instructor 7 mentioned in separate interviews how they are required to implement a certain number of reading assignments, essay assignments, course objectives, and student learning outcomes in their developmental English course. Their ideas are supported in the following statements. Instructor 2 confirmed, “Instructors who teach a developmental English course must use

a reference book to teach writing.” Instructor 2, Instructor 4, and Instructor 7 stated in their individual interviews how developmental English instructors are required to assign certain reading and writing assignments with the synthesis essay as the last writing assignment. Instructor 3 and Instructor 7 talked about how developmental English instructors must follow certain course objectives to satisfy the student learning outcomes set forth by the state.

The first probing question that I asked each participant was to tell me which teaching methods they implement in their developmental English course, and explain why. The second probing question that I asked each participant: how does/do that/those teaching method(s) benefit their students the most? The following statements support the ideas of the research study participants. Instructor 5 expressed, “I use personal/social development and general support more often than campus resources because the former two provide a lot of social benefits and allows students to be more involved.” Both Instructor 6 and Instructor 10 regarded active learning as the teaching method that they use the most. Instructor 6 declared, “Active learning helps students build confidence.” Instructor 10 mentioned, “Active learning gives students individualized practice time.” The teaching method that Instructor 9 uses more often is the instruct, practice, and assist method because they like to provide their students with a lot of practice of the skillset.

Instructor 1, Instructor 3, Instructor 7, Instructor 8, and Instructor 10 explained in separate interviews how they use small group discussions more often than any other teaching method. The participants supported their ideas in the following statements.

Instructor 1 stated, “Students develop their own thoughts when they are placed in small groups.” Both Instructor 3 and Instructor 10 confirmed in separate interviews that students like small groups because students connect with and learn from one another and students are participating in the learning process. Both Instructor 7 and Instructor 8 discussed in their individual interviews that students are able to come out of their shell and are locked into the course when students are placed in small groups.

The last probing question that I asked each participant was to discuss which teaching method do they utilize less often in their developmental English course, and explain why. The following statements support the idea regarding which teaching method the participants use less often and why. Instructor 5 said, “I do not use campus resources as often as personal/social development and general support because campus resources are not as beneficial as the other two are.” The teaching method that Instructor 6 uses less often is grammar instruction because they do not like to assign grammar worksheets and/or grammar quizzes. Instructor 8 stated, “I find traditional grammar instruction as a teaching method the least effective.” Instructor 1 had the same sentiments about using formal grammar quizzes/tests less often than other teaching methods, in their individual interview as Instructor 6 did. Instructor 9 stated, “I do not use group work as a teaching method because they personally do not like group work for students.”

Instructor 2, Instructor 4, Instructor 7, and Instructor 10 revealed in separate interviews that they do not favor lecture as a teaching method, and their ideas were supported in the following statements. Instructor 2 said, “Lecturing does not allow

students to apply what they have learned.” Instructor 4 expressed, “A lecture does not visually engage students.” Instructor 7 had the same sentiments in their interview as the aforementioned instructors where they expressed that using lectures as a teaching method do not allow students to participate in the learning process. Instructor 10 stated, “I try to limit lecture time to focus on other teaching methods that are more beneficial.”

Using Effective Instructional Strategies

Instructional strategies should be used and utilized for students to be included in the learning process where they are actively engaged by doing a learning activity that is hands-on that causes students to think about what they are doing (Arjomandi et al., 2018). The third open-ended interview question that I asked each participant had one probing question. Interview question 3 encouraged each participant to talk about the instructional strategies they have found to be the most effective and/or successful in their developmental English course. Instructor 1, Instructor 3, Instructor 4, Instructor 5, Instructor 8, and Instructor 9 expressed in separate interviews how the most effective instructional strategies are successful when the classroom is interactive and conversational between the instructor and the students. The following statements supported the third interview question. Instructor 1 talked about how they use reciprocal teaching where students see what the instructor does first and then the students reciprocate what the instructor does. Instructor 3 declared, “Join-in conversations allows my students to put information into their own perspectives.” Asking students a lot of feedback questions, focusing on what students understand, and gauging students have

been the most effective instructional strategies for Instructor 4. Instructor 5 said, “Using active learning helps my students to participate and engage themselves in the learning process.” Active learning allows flexibility in the classroom as Instructor 8 and Instructor 9 both expressed in their individual interviews.

Instructor 2, Instructor 6, and Instructor 10 conveyed in separate interviews how teaching writing as a process is the most effective instructional strategy in their developmental English course, and the following statements support their ideas.

Instructor 2 relayed, “I demonstrate writing as something students will use beyond the classroom.” Instructor 6 stated, “I like to give my students an example of a summary to uncover features of a specific literary genre.” Instructor 10 disclosed, “I break down an essay and walk through the essay where my students write a group essay.” Instructor 7 told me that they use small group discussions as the most effective instructional strategy in a developmental English course and then explained how research shows that putting students in groups of three are more substantial.

I asked each participant the same probing question for the third open-ended question which was for them to explain how they find those instructional strategies to be the most effective and/or successful in their developmental English course. The participants supported the probing question with the following statements. Instructor 1 regarded, “Reciprocal learning is the most effective instructional strategy because students understand better and need examples to follow.” Instructor 3 expressed a similar sentiment when they said that “students feel like their opinions are valued during

interactive learning and classroom conversations.” Instructor 4 declared, “Students feel more comfortable and see me as a trustworthy person when interactive learning as an instructional strategy.” Instructor 8 answered in a similar manner as other interview participants did when asked why the most effective strategy is interactive learning. The instructor acknowledged that students have room to choose what they need to work on, so instruction should depend on what students need which is the most beneficial. Instructor 9 stated, “Implementing interactive learning and classroom conversations as an instructional strategy allows students to actually participate in the learning process.”

Instructor 2, Instructor 6, and Instructor 10 conveyed in separate interviews how teaching writing as a process is the most effective instructional strategy in their developmental English course, and their explanations to support the idea are as follow. Instructor 2 and Instructor 6 both explained that teaching writing as a process is the most effective instructional strategy in their developmental English course because students are able to apply their critical thinking skills which builds their confidence. Instructor 10 also expressed, “Students build their confidence during the writing process. In addition to building their confidence during the writing process, students are able to catch their weaknesses when completing a writing assignment.”

Eliminating Ineffective Instructional Strategies

Instructors often provide a list of expectations for students to perform academically in a developmental English course to assess and evaluate their writing during a semester (Wilder & Yagelski, 2018). Interview question 4 was similar to the

previous open-ended question, but the fourth question involved instructional strategies that each participant found to be the least effective in their developmental English course. Instructor 4, Instructor 5, Instructor 6, Instructor 7, and Instructor 8 had the same response in their individual interviews to the probing question for the fourth open-ended question. They all answered how lecture is the least effective instructional strategy in their developmental English course. Direct instruction in grammar is something that both Instructor 2 and Instructor 9 found to be the least effective instructional strategy. Annotating a text, telling students to write, and providing feedback on writing assignments were all regarded respectively as the least effective instructional strategies by Instructor 1, Instructor 3, and Instructor 10.

The probing question that I asked each participant after they answered the fourth open-ended question was to state why they find those instructional strategies to be the least effective and/or successful in their developmental English course. Since Instructor 4, Instructor 5, Instructor 6, Instructor 7, and Instructor 8 had the same response to the probing question to the fourth open-ended question, their sentiments are supported in the following statements. Instructor 4 articulated, "Implementing lectures as an instructional strategy disallows students to learn if the instructor is talking too much." Both Instructor 5 and Instructor 6 replied with the same answer in separate interviews. They both said that students are not actively engaged during a lecture. Instructor 7 stated, "Lecture is out of context," and Instructor 8 stated, "Students have problems transferring a lecture back."

Since Instructor 2 and Instructor 9 found direct instruction in grammar to be the least effective instructional strategy as they disclosed, their responses to support the probing question for the fourth open-ended question are as follow. Instructor 2 declared, “Grammar should not feel like math where students have to solve a problem in a math course.” Instructor 9 had a similar explanation when they said that “teaching grammar in a developmental English course does not make a huge difference and has a lot of variables.” The last answers to the probing question for the fourth open-ended question are from Instructor 1, Instructor 3, and Instructor 10. Instructor 1 mentioned, “Annotating a text is the least effective strategy in a developmental English course because students do not know what annotating a text means, so they will not interact with the text as expected.” Telling students to write has not been an effective instructional strategy for Instructor 3 because “students are afraid to ask questions or they are unsure on how to write an essay.” Because students have a limited time to review feedback, Instructor 10 has seen providing feedback on writing assignments as the least effective instructional strategy.

Engaging Students During Instruction

Students who are enrolled in a developmental education course, such as developmental English, tend to do well when they have developed a community and a collaborative relationship with their instructors and classmates (Bonet & Walters, 2016). I took a different approach with the fifth open-ended interview question where I asked each participant to explain how they engage their students during classroom instruction in

their developmental English course. Making sure the classroom environment is student-centered was a common approach among all the research study participants. Instructor 1, Instructor 3, Instructor 5, Instructor 6, and Instructor 8 discussed in separate interviews how they keep their students engaged in their developmental English course by making their classroom environment collaborative, and their ideas are supported in the following statements. Instructor 1 mentioned, “I pull something from the textbook and relate it to everyday life, so my students are able to pick up each other’s ideas.” In the same manner, Instructor 2 talked about how they engage their students by having them help each other during certain in-class assignments. Instructor 3 provided information about student engagement by explaining how they assign small group work activities, so students can interact among themselves. Instructor 6 said, “I bring my students to a round table to have a group discussion, so students can build community.” The response given by Instructor 8 was: “Asking for student input is the best way to keep students engaged in the learning process.” The instructor also said that they try to keep everything collaborative.

Instructor 2, Instructor 3, Instructor 4, and Instructor 7 shared how they engage their students in a developmental English course by implementing certain writing techniques to help their students during the writing process. The following statements support the idea of engaging students in a developmental English course. Instructor 2 stated, “I make sure that the learning environment is always student-centered by providing students with foundational writing tips, so they know how to actively write at

all times.” Instructor 3 explained, “I write paragraphs on the board for students to see how to develop an essay.” The instructor also revealed how they will sit one-on-one with their students to help them write an essay. Instructor 4 discussed, “I first start thinking about what students can talk about when writing an essay assignment to make essay topics personal and relevant.” Instructor 7 talked about how they bring in a lot of videos, articles, and current events to discuss with their students to engage them in the learning process as students prepare to write an essay assignment.

Instructor 4, Instructor 9, and Instructor 10 mentioned how they engage their students in the learning environment by asking them questions, and they supported their ideas in the following statements. Instructor 4 expressed, “I try to gauge my students by how much the students have spoken during a Q&A discussion.” Instructor 9 stated, “I pick on my students by asking them questions, so they are comfortable asking questions in return.” Instructor 10 acknowledged, “Asking my students questions helps students generate conversations during the learning process.”

Helping Students With the Writing Process

Students sometimes have limited time when they are writing an essay, so their dependency is often regarded as the time that they are given in the classroom when completing an essay assignment (Zeng, 2018). Interview question 6 included information where participants were asked to discuss how they prepare their students for the writing process in their developmental English course. Most of the research study participants

stated that they go over the writing process in class to prepare their students for an essay assignment.

Instructor 3, Instructor 4, Instructor 5, Instructor 7, Instructor 8, and Instructor 9 said that they talk about the writing process in class before they assign an essay to their students in a developmental English course. The participants supported their ideas about the writing process in the following statements. Instructor 3 stated, "I have my students read an article and then think about their own personal experiences." After students read the article and think about their own individual experiences, Instructor 3 conducts a brainstorming activity where they write ideas on the board to generate essay topics. Once students select an essay topic, Instructor 3 asks their students to create an outline before writing the actual essay assignment. Instructor 4 expressed, "I go over an essay assignment first and then take students through the assignment sheet." Once Instructor 4 goes over the essay assignment, they give their students writing tips and then have students annotate the assignment before implementing a peer review session.

The following statements continued to support the idea of helping students with the writing process. Instructor 5 said, "I go extra slowly when beginning the writing process with my students, and I am really big into organization and structure, so I make students go through every paragraph and work on smaller pieces of the essay." Instructor 7 stated, "I talk about the writing process with my students and then model the steps of writing an essay, so my students can practice those steps." Instructor 8 expressed, "I go over the writing process in class with my students and then give them a prewriting

activity to complete in class.” Instructor 9 explained, “I have my students brainstorm about a topic in class together and then they create a draft, so we can go through the draft during class.” Instructor 9 continued to explain how they show students how the writing process works and have students talk about the process. Instructor 9 concluded, “I have students highlight their thesis statements and topic sentences in their essay.”

Instructor 1, Instructor 2, Instructor 6, and Instructor 10 shared how they use low-stake assignments to prepare their students for the writing process. The following statements support the idea of helping students with the writing process from the previously mentioned research study participants. Instructor 1 noted, “I use quick writes and journal entries to prepare my students for the writing process.” Instructor 1 also stated that they utilize graphic organizers to help students with writing an essay assignment. In a similar manner, Instructor 2 said, “I give my students a writing prompt to help them begin the writing process.” Instructor 6 had similar sentiments as the two former instructors about how assigning low-stake assignments builds upon an essay assignment to help students with the writing process. Instructor 10 described, “I assign students a reading assignment to allow them to work from active reading to writing about the text, so students can annotate the text to help them with the writing process.”

Ensuring Student Success

Student academic deficiencies amidst a developmental education course like developmental English can be improved by implementing and/or emphasizing tutoring programs that help to ensure student success (Vick et al., 2015). The last open-ended

interview question that I asked each participant was to share what else they have used aside from instructional strategies to ensure student success. Encouraging students to ensure student success was a commonality among most of the interview participants, and they supported the idea with the following statements. Instructor 3 answered the last interview question by stating, “I encourage my students to keep an open line of communication and by letting students know I care.” Instructor 3 also conveyed that they stay in contact with their students by emailing them. Both Instructor 4 and Instructor 5 said that they encourage their students to ensure student success with Instructor 5 constantly reminding their students that college is a new experience. Instructor 6 shared, “I encourage my students by emphasizing the importance of building community as well as positive relationships and friendships.” Instructor 8 talked about how they encourage their students to contact them, so they and their students can cultivate a relationship. Instructor 9 explained, “I encourage my students to develop a growth mindset for them to be successful.”

Being personable was another common theme that some of the participants expressed as a means to ensure student success, so the following ideas from the participants support the idea. Instructor 2 stated, “I stay on my students and use tough love to let my students know that I care.” Instructor 2 also said that they speak life into their students and do not let them get away with anything. Instructor 4 expressed, “I wish my students well and make sure students connect with one another.” Instructor 6 declared, “I let my students know that they are in a supportive environment.” Instructor 8

revealed, “I make myself available outside of class by giving students my personal cell phone number.”

Incorporating and/or bringing supplemental resources into the classroom is something that a few participants find helpful to ensure student success, so the following statements by those participants support the idea. Instructor 1 explained, “I like to use audiovisuals, create PowerPoint presentations, and post YouTube videos in Blackboard to ensure student success for my students.” Instructor 3 disclosed that they refer their students to tutoring when they see an academic need for students who are failing their developmental English course. Instructor 4 told me that they have their students complete weekly assignments as a tool for students to be successful. Instructor 5 mentioned, “I like to bring in representatives from career services and tutors to talk about what they offer students to help them be successful.” Instructor 7 conveyed, “I bring in non-cognitive skills into the classroom to assist with student success.” Instructor 9 stated, “I have my students write a literary reflection to ensure student success.” In a similar manner, Instructor 10 stated, “I show my students examples of other writers who talk about the writing process, so students can see other perspectives of how to be successful.”

Trustworthiness and Validity

Merriam (2009) recognized how research should follow a code of ethics, so the research can produce knowledge that is both valid and reliable. Conducting research in a manner that is ethical creates a level of trustworthiness between the researcher and those who benefit from the research. Trustworthiness is contingent upon the “credibility,

transferability, dependability and confirmability” that is based upon the “worldviews and questions that are congruent with the philosophical assumptions underlying” the perceptions of a research project study (Merriam, 2009, p. 211). I kept a research log of field notes that I took on my personal laptop while listening to each recording from the interviews that I conducted with each participant. Keeping a research log is what Merriam (2009) regarded as an audit trail because a “qualitative study describes in detail how data were collected, how categories were derived, and how decisions were made throughout the inquiry” (p. 223).

Data collected from interviews for a qualitative research study should be analyzed and interpreted to conceptualize the validity of the findings in an ethical manner (Merriam, 2009). Validity can be internal or external. Internal validity determines whether or not research is found to be relatable to real-life situations; whereas, external validity questions whether or not the findings from research are based upon “artificial situations” (Merriam, 2009). Member checks is an example of internal validity because it is a strategy used in research to ensure credibility. I conducted one-on-one interviews with participants for my study. Each participant reviewed their respective transcript to check for accurate, clear, and valid information from the data collected. None of the participants deleted and/or changed any of the content. Each participant noted that their respective transcripts were impartial and valid. As a researcher, I must remain unbiased and adhere to what participants say and/or do.

Findings in Relation to the Problem and Research Questions

The problem addressed through this study was that teachers have been challenged to implement effective strategies in recent years at a local community college in the southern region of the United States, so there has been a student failure rate in developmental English of 47-49%, according to the coordinator of developmental English. The purpose of this study was to investigate the challenges encountered by developmental English instructors at the local community college in their current practices and about their suggestions for improved teaching approaches. Data collected during this study provided information on how, using successful instructional strategies, to increase the student success rate at the local community college. The two guiding questions developed for this study were as follows:

1. What are developmental English instructor perceptions about the challenges encountered in their current developmental instructional practices?
2. What are developmental English instructor suggestions for improving student outcomes?

Based upon the data collected from the probing questions that I asked the 10 research study participants, I was able to determine emerging themes among codes. Seven major themes emerged from the following categories: preparing students for success, implementing teaching methods, using effective instructional strategies, eliminating ineffective instructional strategies, engaging students during instruction, helping students

with the writing process, and ensuring student success. Each emerging theme addressed at least one of the two guiding research questions.

Implementing teaching methods was one of the emerging themes that addressed the first research question about developmental English instructor perceptions about the challenges encountered in their current developmental instructional practices. Several of the research study participants said that lecture is a teaching method they stay away from in their developmental English course because students are not actively engaged when an instructor lectures the entire class time. Eliminating ineffective instructional strategies was another theme that addressed the first research question. Some of the research participants disclosed that direct instruction in grammar is something that they found to be the least effective instructional strategy because students do not always understand the grammar that is being taught and it shows when they submit essay assignments.

Annotating a text, telling students to write, and providing feedback on writing assignments were all regarded respectively as the least effective instructional strategies for a few of the research study participants because students do not know how to annotate a text, do not want to be told to write, and do not read the feedback provided by the instructor on a writing assignment. Annotating a text is a required assignment in developmental English, so a few of the research study participants find it challenging to teach students how to annotate a text because students do not always comprehend the instructional strategy. Said research participants stated how telling students to write has also been a challenge because students in developmental English lack writing skills, so

telling them to write an essay is intimidating to them. Providing feedback on writing assignments was another challenge that a few of the research participants find challenging because students do not always read the feedback provided by the instructor. If the students do read the feedback, the research participants said that the students do not always understand the feedback.

Preparing students for success, using effective instructional strategies, engaging students during instruction, helping students with the writing process, and ensuring student success addressed the second research question about developmental English instructor suggestions for improving student outcomes. Most of the research study participants stated that they prepare their students for success by establishing a good relationship between the instructor and the students at the beginning of the semester because it gives students the opportunity to get to know the instructor and be comfortable. Per using effective instructional strategies, many of the research study participants mentioned how the most effective instructional strategies are successful when the classroom is interactive and conversational between the instructor and the students. Engaging students during instruction was a theme that emerged based upon the answers that the research study participants provided. Several of the instructors emphasized how important it is to make sure the classroom environment is student-centered because students should be interactive during classroom instruction.

Helping students with the writing process was a theme that addressed the second research question because most of the research study participants stated that they go over

the writing process in class to prepare their students for an essay assignment. Some of the research study participants stated how they talk about the writing process in class before they assign an essay to their students in a developmental English course. Other research study participants discussed how they use low-stake assignments to prepare their students for the writing process. Ensuring student success was the last theme that addressed the second research question, for encouraging students to ensure student success was a commonality among most of the research study participants. Being personable was another common approach that some of the participants expressed as a means to ensure student success. Incorporating and/or bringing supplemental resources into the classroom is something that a few participants find helpful to ensure student success.

Project Deliverable

The honest and integral responses given by the research study participants helped me to develop a policy recommendation paper where English instructors who teach a developmental English course are encouraged to consider implementing the most successful instructional strategies in their course for their students to successfully complete and pass the developmental English course. Participants conveying how they prepare their students to be successful at the beginning of the semester in their developmental English course during a regular session will support my research project study because I can offer recommendations to other instructors about how to prepare their students to be successful at the beginning of the semester in their developmental English course. Based upon the responses from most of the research study participants, I can

reveal in my research project study the teaching methods that are required to include by the English department, the college as a whole, and/or the state level to implement in their development English course. Since every research study participant talked about the instructional strategies, they have found to be the most effective and/or successful as well as the least effective and/or least successful in their developmental English course, I can provide said instructional strategies in my research project study to help other instructors who teach developmental English.

With each research study participant providing details about how they engage their students during classroom instruction in their developmental English course, I can offer those details as recommendations in my research project study to assist other instructors who teach developmental English. Offering information where participants were asked to discuss how they prepare their students for the writing process in their developmental English course will benefit my research project study because I will be able to provide the information to other developmental English instructors. Because every research study participant shared what else they have used aside from instructional strategies to ensure student success, their responses will allow me to make recommendations in my research project study to other developmental English instructors who may find ensuring student success aside from instructional strategies as a challenge. Section 3 will provide more details of the themes that related to the interview questions presented to the research participants to identify the direction for the proposed research

project study. Section 3 will also discuss the research project study (i.e., a policy recommendation paper).

Summary

Section 2 addressed the qualitative research design and approach. I confirmed in Section 2 that the qualitative research design was a basic qualitative research design, and I explained why a quantitative research design was not beneficial to my research project study. I discussed in Section 2 how the planned research design was a self-designed interview protocol with developmental English instructors as research study participants. Section 2 emphasized that each participant was given a consent form via email to protect their identity. Section 2 of this proposal also revealed the data collection instrument that was used for my proposed research project study. The interviews with the developmental English instructors served as the primary data collection instrument. I identified each data collection instrument and source in Section 2 of this proposal. Section 2 explained how I established sufficiency of data collection instruments to answer the research questions. I discussed in Section 2 how I provided each process for how and when the data were generated, gathered, and recorded. Section 2 provided a description of the systems for keeping track of data and emerging understandings. I explained the procedures for gaining access to procedures, and I presented my role as the researcher in Section 2.

Section 2 lastly provided details about how the data collected was analyzed. I mentioned in Section 2 how and when I presented the data collected from the research study participants. The data was analyzed through coding based upon the written

comments that I recorded from the participants and the written notes that I recorded from the interviews. I revealed in Section 2 that I stored the data collection from the interviews with the research study participants in Microsoft Office Word. Section 2 also provided evidence of quality and procedures to assure accuracy and credibility of the findings from the data that I collected during the interviews with the research study participants. Section 2 concluded with an explanation of the procedures for dealing with discrepant cases.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

The honest and integral responses given by the research study participants helped me to develop a policy recommendation paper where English instructors who teach a developmental English course are encouraged to consider implementing the most successful instructional strategies in their course for their students to successfully complete and pass the developmental English course. Participants conveying how they prepare their students to be successful at the beginning of the semester in their developmental English course during a regular session supported my research project study because they provided information about how to prepare their students to be successful at the beginning of the semester in their developmental English course. Based upon the responses from most of the research study participants, I revealed in my research project study the teaching methods that are required to include by the English department, the college as a whole, and/or the state level to implement in their development English course. Because every research study participant talked about the instructional strategies they have found to be the most effective and/or successful as well as the least effective and/or least successful in their developmental English course, I provided the said instructional strategies in my research project study to help other instructors who teach developmental English.

With each research study participant providing details about how they engage their students during classroom instruction in their developmental English course, I

offered those details as recommendations in my research project study to assist other instructors who teach developmental English. I asked each research study participant to discuss how they prepared their students for the writing process in their developmental English course, and their responses benefited my research project study because I was able to share their information with other developmental English instructors. Every research study participant shared what they have used aside from instructional strategies to ensure student success, so I made recommendations in my research project study to assist other developmental English instructors who may find ensuring student success as a challenge.

Rationale

The basic qualitative research study involved interviewing college developmental English instructors at the local community college. Selecting participants for this study was based upon the purpose. The study participants were experts in the field of higher education, specifically developmental English and English composition. They also had years of teaching experience with high success rates at the local community college, which was my research study site. The rationale for interviewing developmental English instructors was to collect qualitative data.

There were 10 research study participants. The dean of the English department at the research site provided me with a list of developmental English instructors who had taught developmental English courses within the last 3 years and had high success rates among their students. The list of the identified developmental English faculty was only

used to send an email invitation and to deliver a consent form at the same time via the college email system to participate in the study. I sent the email invitation and informed consent form to each research participant from my Walden email address and explained my role as the researcher. The invitation and the consent form informed the research participants of the requests that I made and the protections that I provided. I made sure to collect a personal email address from each participant in order to protect the confidentiality of their participation. Once each faculty member signed the consent form, a mutually convenient time was identified to conduct the interview. I interviewed the developmental English instructors to collect qualitative data.

The research study participants identified academic concerns to increase the 53% passing rate and decrease the 47% failure rate among students who take developmental English at the local community college. If the local community college does not address the challenges encountered by developmental English instructors at the local community college in their current practices and consider their suggestions for improved teaching approaches, the 53% passing rate and the 47% failure rate among students who take developmental English might continue to be a problem. Implementing the recommendations of this paper could increase the 53% passing rate and decrease the 47% failure rate among students who take developmental English at the local community college where developmental English instructors (a) establish and maintain an interactive student-instructor relationship, (b) implement instructional strategies that are student-

centered, (c) choose learning activities that will keep students engaged during classroom instruction, and (d) teach students basic writing skills.

Review of the Literature

The strategy used to access the literature was an exploration of research databases that hold content pertaining to student success in developmental education course studies primarily but not exclusively to developmental English courses. Research was conducted through the online Walden University library system. The following keywords were used to search for articles: *student success in higher education, student engagement in higher education, student-centered learning in higher education, effective instructional strategies, and college writing*. The different topics that the literature review covered were based upon the emerging themes from the interviews with the research study participants, and they are as follows: (a) preparing students for success, (b) implementing better teaching methods, (c) using effective instructional strategies, (d) eliminating ineffective instructional strategies, (e) engaging students during instruction, (f) helping students with the writing process, and (g) ensuring student success. Each emerging theme addressed at least one of the two guiding research questions. These findings, along with theory and best practices discussed in the literature, led to the following recommendations to increase the student success rate in developmental English at the local community college in the southern region of the United States:

- establish and maintain an interactive student-instructor relationship
- implement instructional strategies that are student-centered

- choose learning activities that will keep students engaged during classroom instruction
- teach students basic writing skills

Sources came from electronic professional peer-reviewed journals as well as print books and journals.

Establish and Maintain an Interactive Student-Instructor Relationship

Establishing and maintaining an interactive student-instructor relationship addressed Research Question 2 and aligned with the following emerging themes: preparing students for success and ensuring student success. Crabbe (2018) recognized how students are often underprepared for college because they are first-generational college students, lack an educational plan, lack financial resources, and lack childcare (if any students are parents). Howard et al. (2018) wrote about how instructors should consider taking a more hands-on approach to connect with students who are underprepared for college because being hands on can provide the support that students need to better understand the subject matter. Howard et al. (2018) emphasized the importance of college instructors recognizing student perceptions of higher learning because most students are often underprepared for the college environment. Mahfouz et al. (2018) recommended that college institutions incorporate mindfulness-based wellness programs to help students be successful and comfortable in a college classroom setting. Mahfouz et al. (2018) described the mindfulness-based wellness programs as a means to help students alleviate stress so they can create a healthy lifestyle for themselves as they

pursue a higher education. A mindfulness-based wellness program is a supplemental program that serves as a student resource for students to utilize when they are dealing with mental health issues (Mahfouz et al., 2018). Mahfouz et al. (2018) recommended that college institutions integrate such programs during first-year courses because students sometimes do not know how to balance school and other life endeavors. Having such programs in place at college institutions can benefit both students and instructors alike because students can focus more on the classroom and instructors can benefit from student engagement (Mahfouz et al., 2018).

Crabbe (2018) explained how instructors can prepare students for success by making sure that the instructional strategies they present in class are relevant and current so students can easily engage and connect during classroom instruction. Crabbe (2018) also mentioned how offering tutoring services to underprepared students is a measurable resource to ensure student success by increasing retention rates. Real project-based learning is another instructional strategy that Crabbe (2018) recommended to incorporate into the classroom. Crabbe (2018) encouraged instructors to consider flipping their classroom where learning is blended and students are not just learning from the instructors.

Implement Instructional Strategies That Are Student-Centered

Implementing instructional strategies that are student-centered aligns with using effective instructional strategies, and it addresses the first research question about developmental English instructor perceptions about the challenges encountered in their

current developmental instructional practices to eliminate ineffective instructional strategies. Sa'd and Rajabi (2018) discovered that some college instructors might not know how to present effective instructional strategies during classroom instruction. In addition, Haijan (2019) recommended that instructors consider implementing teaching methods where learning will exist inside and outside the traditional classroom. Haijan (2019) emphasized the importance of instructors being able to create an authentic learning environment where students can relate to real-life and/or current events that spark their interests and draw upon previous life experiences. Jenkins (2020) suggested that instructors be mindful of the decisions that they make when implementing certain pedagogical habits into the learning environment.

Jenkins (2020) stated how important it is for instructors to identify the most effective instructional strategies that they use in the classroom. Jenkins mentioned that one of the most effective instructional strategies is when students are allowed to participate in a group discussion. Sa'd and Rajabi (2018) recognized teaching vocabulary as an ineffective instructional strategy. Haijan (2019) explained how creating a collaborative document, such as Google Docs, for students to provide their input on an assignment is an effective instructional strategy. Nanquil (2019) referenced peer assistance from other esteemed college students as an effective instructional strategy.

Choose Learning Activities That Will Keep Students Engaged During Classroom

Instruction

Choosing learning activities that will keep students engaged during classroom instruction aligns with implementing teaching methods and engaging students during instruction where both emerging themes address the second research question. Heal and Goodwin (2023) mentioned how college instructors should not assume that students are engaged during classroom instruction by keeping them busy with in-class assignments. Heal and Goodwin (2023) also mentioned that students become more engaged during the learning process when instructors implement teaching methods where students can recall previous learning experiences and/or prior knowledge.

Kurt and Sezek (2021) explained how instructors should remember that every student has a different learning style, so instructors should be open to implementing a variety of teaching methods into the classroom to cater to the learning styles of their students for them to be successful. Miller et al. (2021) emphasized how student engagement should take place in and outside the classroom. Miller et al. (2021) also expressed how the intended outcome for any teaching method is for students to gain knowledge. Tani et al. (2021) mentioned how students should be actively engaged and involved in every learning activity.

Kurt and Sezek (2021) also explained how students may become uninterested in a subject that is difficult to understand, so they become disengaged in the learning environment. Tani et al. (2021) recognized student engagement as an extension of the learning process where students are actively involved during classroom instruction.

Tomlinson (2023) discussed how instructors should always remember that they are preparing their students for real-life events and experiences, so their teaching methods should be student-centered to reflect those moments in time. Tomlinson (2023) further suggested that every instructor should make their classroom an inviting learning environment for their students to be comfortable and engage in the learning process.

Teach Students Basic Writing Skills

Teaching students basic writing skills aligns with helping students with the writing process and addressed the second research question. Sinha (2022) admitted that colleges and universities nationwide offer a lot of English composition courses to cater to the academic needs of students who are underprepared for college. Sinha (2022) also mentioned how students should be taught basic writing skills so they understand their strengths and weaknesses in writing. Zeng (2018) explained how students should be given writing tasks to help build their confidence and competence in writing. Zeng (2018) specifically mentioned how reading is an essential component of any writing task because reading allows students to see how sentences and paragraphs are structured.

Project Description

The project for this study is a policy paper that provides recommendations to address the challenges shared by the study participants. I developed the recommendations based on the challenges identified from the first research question, the literature, and the suggestions from the research participants. I also developed the recommendations based on the conceptual framework work of Gagne's (1985) conditions of learning and the

work of Mezirow's (1991) theory of transformative learning, and current literature. The resources are the policy paper recommendations to share with the dean of the Humanities and Social Sciences department at the local community college. I do not need any additional resources, and I did not need any resources from the local research site.

I will provide the dean of the Humanities and Social Sciences department at the local community college with a timeline to discuss the policy paper recommendations. Because graduation is near, I will send them an email during spring 2024 so we can discuss the recommendations before a new academic fiscal year begins. I will use my Walden email account to share the policy paper recommendations with the dean. A potential barrier could be if the dean does not respond to my email. A potential solution to the barrier is to send the dean a friendly reminder email. My role as the researcher is to reach out and follow up with the dean to receive feedback and comments from the department chair to see if they would like to meet with me to discuss the policy paper recommendations.

The research findings based upon the data collected from the interviews, along with theory and best practices discussed in the literature, led to the following recommendations to increase the student success rate in developmental English at the local community college in the southern region of the United States:

- establish and maintain an interactive student-instructor relationship
- implement instructional strategies that are student-centered

- choose learning activities that will keep students engaged during classroom instruction
- teach students basic writing skills.

Establishing and maintaining an interactive student-instructor relationship addressed Research Question 2 and aligned with the following emerging theme: preparing students for success and ensuring student success. Implementing instructional strategies that are student-centered aligned with using effective instructional strategies, and it addressed the first research question about developmental English instructor perceptions about the challenges encountered in their current developmental instructional practices to eliminate ineffective instructional strategies. Choosing learning activities that can keep students engaged during classroom instruction aligned with implementing teaching methods and engaging students during instruction where both emerging themes addressed the second research question. Teaching students basic writing skills aligned with helping students with the writing process, and it addressed the second research question.

Project Evaluation Plan

This project seeks to improve the student success rate in developmental English at the local community college in the southern region of the United States by establishing and maintaining an interactive student-instructor relationship; implementing instructional strategies that are student-centered; choosing learning activities that will keep students engaged during classroom instruction; and teaching students basic writing skills. The project deliverable is outcome-based because I wrote a policy recommendation paper

where I provided recommendations based upon the emerging themes that were identified from the interviews with the research study participants. The outcome-based approach is the best evaluation approach. I only provided recommendations, and I did not write a curriculum nor did I propose a professional development workshop. The outcome-based approach allows an investigation about whether or not the result of a program serves a greater good (Merriam, 2009). The outcome-based approach aligns with the purpose of this study which was to investigate the challenges encountered by developmental English instructors at the local community college in their current practices and about their suggestions for improved teaching approaches.

The overall evaluation goal is to improve the student success rate among students who are enrolled in a developmental English course. The key stakeholders consist of the college leadership and developmental English instructors at the research study site. The best way to share the recommendations with the leadership (i.e., the dean of the Humanities and Social Sciences department) at the research study site is via email. A suitable format to present qualitative data is via email (Merriam, 2009). I can request feedback from the leadership by sending them an email (from my Walden University student account) with the policy recommendation policy paper attached. If they are available, I could meet with them to discuss the recommendations. I would be happy to meet with them in person or via Zoom to talk about the recommendations.

Project Implications

This study investigated the challenges encountered by developmental English instructors at the local community college in their current practices and about their suggestions for improved teaching approaches. Results from this study revealed effective instructional strategies used by developmental English instructors at the local community college to increase the student success rate. Implementing certain teaching methods, eliminating ineffective instructional strategies, and engaging students during instruction are other results revealed from this study. Results from this study were able to identify successful instructional strategies that are being used by developmental English instructors at the local community college and how these instructional strategies lead their students to successfully complete their course(s). Preparing students for success, helping students with the writing process, and ensuring student success were also identified as results from this study. Once the data were collected and analyzed from this study, the project deliverable was a policy recommendation for developmental English instructors at the local community college.

This project study was significant in that instructor challenges (which was academic, in part, and student-related for some) could be identified and addressed through a policy recommendation. The findings of this study indicated, from the perceptions and experiences of developmental English instructors, specific teaching methods that may increase the passing rate among students in the developmental English course at the local community college. Since the gap in practice addressed by this study

was to investigate the current instructional practices, which are generating a 47% failure rate among students who take developmental English at the local community college, so 53% passing rate can be improved by implementing effective instructional strategies, this research project study may contribute to improving teacher performance at the local community college.

The study findings provided information to fill in the gap by encouraging all the developmental English instructors to implement the most successful instructional strategies in their course for their students to successfully complete and pass the developmental English course. The possible social change is for students to successfully complete and pass the developmental English course, so they can proceed to general education courses and achieve their college goals. This research may support professional education practice at the local community college as the findings provided information to offer support or recommendations to assist with putting practical instructional strategies in place for all developmental English instructors to obtain a high passing rate for their students. The developmental English instructors who do not have the highest passing rates among their students may benefit from this study because they may implement the successful instructional strategies that support students to pass the developmental English course. With successful instructional strategies set in place for all developmental English instructors to utilize in their classroom, students may reap the benefits for them to successfully complete the course.

Summary

Section 3 introduced the project deliverable which is a policy recommendation paper. I developed a policy recommendation paper where English instructors who teach a developmental English course are encouraged to consider implementing the most successful instructional strategies in their course for their students to successfully complete and pass the developmental English course. I provided the rationale in Section 3 which was to interview developmental English instructors for me to collect qualitative data. Section 3 included a literature review for the project deliverable. The literature review covered different topics that were based upon the emerging themes from the interviews with the research study participants, and they are as follow: (a) preparing students for success, (b) implementing teaching methods, (c) using effective instructional strategies, (d) eliminating ineffective instructional strategies, (e) engaging students during instruction, (f) helping students with the writing process, and (g) ensuring student success.

Section 3 provided a description of the project which is a policy paper that provides recommendations to address the challenges shared by the study participants. I also mentioned in Section 3 how I will provide the dean of the Humanities and Social Sciences department at the local community college with a timeline to discuss the policy paper recommendations via email from my Walden account. Section 3 also included project implications with one being the possible social change for students to successfully complete and pass the developmental English course, so they can proceed to general

education courses and achieve their college goals. The project evaluation plan was provided in Section 3, and the evaluation approach is outcome-based.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Project Strengths and Limitations

The idea to complete a research project study derived from my desire to find innovative strategies to teach college students how to transition from shorthand writing (i.e., through text messages and/or written conversations on social media) to academic writing at the collegiate level in a developmental English course. After I conducted a basic qualitative study and collected data through interviews, I developed a policy recommendation paper where I provided recommendations based upon the emerging themes that were identified from the interviews with the research study participants. The honest and integral responses given by the research study participants helped me to develop a policy recommendation paper where English instructors who teach a developmental English course are encouraged to consider implementing the most successful instructional strategies in their course for their students to successfully complete and pass the developmental English course. Data collected from the research study participants during their individual interviews revealed how each participant prepares students for success, implements teaching methods, uses effective instructional strategies, eliminates ineffective instructional strategies, engages students during instruction, helps students with the writing process, and ensures student success.

One strength that could possibly evolve from this project study is a consistent interactive student-instructor relationship between developmental English instructors and their students at the local community college. Being able to establish and maintain an

interactive student-instructor relationship could possibly prepare students for success to help ensure student success. Another strength that could also develop from this project study is the implementation of instructional strategies that are student-centered in every developmental English course at the local community college. Implementing instructional strategies that are student-centered may allow developmental English instructors at the local community college to see the benefits using effective instructional strategies while eliminating ineffective instructional strategies. A third strength that could possibly derive from this project study is the selection of learning activities that can keep students engaged during classroom instruction in every developmental English course at the local community college. Choosing learning activities may keep students engaged during classroom instruction aligns with implementing teaching methods and engaging students during instruction. One last strength that could possibly emerge from this project study is the departmental decision for every developmental English instructor at the local community college to teach basic writing skills to their students. Teaching students basic writing skills may help students to better understand the writing process.

The limitations of this project study included the 10 research study participants who were current employees and taught developmental English at a local community college, which was my research study site. The number of participants was a limitation because there are other English instructors who could have been interviewed to provide additional information. Another limitation was that there was only one research site, and there could have been more where other developmental English instructors could have

provided information about their student success rates. I investigated the perceptions of developmental English instructors' experiences of instructional strategies being used to support student success and their suggestions for improved teaching approaches. As an English instructor at the local community college, I recognize the challenges encountered by developmental English instructors in their current practices and about their suggestions for improved teaching approaches.

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

The problem addressed through this study is that teachers have been challenged to implement effective strategies in recent years at a local community college in the southern region of the United States, resulting in a student failure rate in developmental English of 47 to 49%, according to the coordinator of developmental English. Although I interviewed developmental English instructors, there might have been some other approaches that I could have used to examine this problem in a different way. Because the problem is about implementing effective strategies, other avenues, such as looking at the curriculum, interviewing the students, and/or interviewing the chair of the department to discuss what adjustments may have been made in the program to remedy the above problem, could have been pursued.

Interviewing students who are enrolled in a developmental course could have been an alternative approach. If I had chosen to interview students, I could have asked questions that were related to their individual academic background – particularly their writing skills. Another alternative approach could have been me interviewing the

chairperson of the English department. If I had interviewed the English department chair, I could have asked them questions about the procedures for students to be placed in a developmental English course. I could have also asked the chair about the types of professional development offered to instructors to assist in implementing effective classroom strategies. One common question that I could have asked during an interview with a student or the department chair is as follows: Is communication between the instructor and student consistent and effective?

As the world continues to evolve, colleges are becoming increasingly diverse, and the learning environment is becoming increasingly diverse as well. Every college instructor should create a welcoming learning environment for every student because each student comes from a different social class. Being willing and/or able to create a learning environment conducive for all students to learn allows instructors to cater to every student rather than one small group of learners. College students, especially those who are enrolled in a developmental course like English, often need encouragement, motivation, and inspiration, so these are common attributes that every college instructor should provide within any learning environment. Facilitating learning should be a collaborative effort between teachers and students. Although college instructors are the cause for learning and their students are affected by learning, each participant plays a prominent role in the learning environment.

Scholarship

As a college English teacher who is required to students how to write according to the Modern Language Association's (MLA) guidelines, it has been a challenge transitioning from teaching MLA to writing in APA. I feel more confident about writing in APA, but I still have my own reservations. I did well on all of my written assignments during the EdS program at Walden University, but there are a few APA guidelines of which I am still unsure. After reading information to complete my prospectus, I felt somewhat at ease about how to present my doctoral study in APA. I must admit that I had never heard of a prospectus before, so I was concerned about if I would be able to write one. As I teach my students to dissect words, I had to take my own advice and break down the term *prospectus* to give myself a better understanding of what a prospectus means. My biggest concern was being able to choose a prospective research methodology and design for my doctoral study.

Project Development and Evaluation

Through this project, I seek to increase the student success rate in developmental English at the local community college in the southern region of the United States by establishing and maintaining an interactive student-instructor relationship, implementing instructional strategies that are student-centered, choosing learning activities that will keep students engaged during classroom instruction, and teaching students basic writing skills. Developmental classes are not regarded as college credits. Thus, I decided to conduct the project because I realized how many students enrolling into the local

community college have to take developmental courses, such as developmental English, because their academic status is not substantial enough for them to take general education core classes, like English Composition 101. Developmental education courses are designed to help students gain a better understanding of the content area so they will be able to succeed in general education core classes like the ones previously mentioned. Although some students may not have done well on the English portion of a standardized test, other students lack basic writing skills, and developmental English instructors have been challenged to implement effective strategies.

Taking the data that I collected to develop a policy paper was not as overwhelming as I had imagined. I had initially thought about writing a curriculum, but curriculum is already in place, so I decided to write a policy paper. Conducting a basic qualitative study and collecting data through interviews helped me to develop a policy recommendation paper. I was able to determine the recommendations for my project based upon the emerging themes that were identified from the interviews with the research study participants. I had to make sure that the project aligned with the challenges identified from the first research question, the literature, and the suggestions from the research participants. I also had to make sure that the recommendations aligned with the conceptual framework work of Gagne's (1985) conditions of learning and the work of Mezirow's (1991) theory of transformative learning, and current literature.

Leadership and Change

Throughout my doctoral journey, I have acquired certain leadership skills that I never had and/or that I never knew I had. As a doctoral student, I have become more self-aware because I understand how my actions and behavior as a college instructor can impact the collegiate environment as a whole. When I conducted the interviews with each research study participant, I made sure that I presented myself as a professional. If I had been unprofessional, the interviews may not have gone as well as they did. Because I was professional during every interview, each research study participant treated me with the utmost respect and thanked me for selecting them to be a part of my research project study. Not only did each participant treat me with respect, but they each gave me honest and integral responses during their interview.

I can honestly say that the following leadership skills were cultivated during my doctoral journey: critical thinking, problem solving, communication, teamwork and collaboration project management, time management, and self-discipline. My critical thinking skills were challenged when I had to decide what my guiding research questions would be. I proposed several research questions, but I ended up with two, and those two allowed me to develop open-ended questions as well as probing questions to ask during the interviews. Because I had to present a problem for my doctoral study, my problem solving skills have been refined because I now understand how to write a problem statement and then conduct research to find a possible solution to the problem. Communication is an essential skill in everything we do in life, so my communication

skills have enhanced because I had to use anonymity and discretion when I emailed each research study participant and conducted each interview.

Teamwork and collaborative project management are attributes that I sometimes struggle with because I prefer to work alone, so it was difficult for me to navigate through teamwork and collaborative efforts. Although teamwork and collaborative project management are one of my character flaws, I managed to work with a team of experts (i.e., my doctoral committee) who helped me to understand why and how collaborative project management was required for any research project study. I would not have been able to complete and/or conduct my research project study without my doctoral committee, the Walden IRB committee, the research study site IRB committee, the dean of the Humanities and Social Sciences department, and the research study participants. Time management, on the other hand, has always been one of my best leadership skills. I pride myself on being punctual and organized, so I managed to set aside time to work on my doctoral study, especially since I have been teaching at three different colleges. It took great self-discipline for me to devote time to my doctoral study instead of doing other things that were not as productive. I would often go to a local coffee shop to work on my doctoral study because I would not be distracted by the television or any other electronic device. I believe that I have become a more self-aware and astute leader because of my doctoral study, and I am eager to be a more effective leader and make a change wherever I go.

Analysis About Personal Growth of Self as a Scholar

Learning is an activity that involves and includes every participant in the process, and everyone is free to engage in the learning process within any learning environment. My own personal experiences in the classroom have afforded me the opportunity to better understand how students learn. The way they learn is contingent upon how I present instructional strategies. As educators, administrators, and/or stakeholders, it is our professional duty to enhance the knowledge among our students. Although we each have separate duties, we all should be invested in the success of our students. As a scholar, I have personally grown by enhancing my own knowledge about a subject (i.e., English) that has always interested me ever since I was in elementary school. Ever since I have been on my doctoral journey, I have become more confident and competent in the classroom as I improve upon my own writing skills. Not only have I become more confident and competent in the classroom, but I have become more accountable and responsible for my own professional duties as both a scholar and educator.

Analysis About Personal Growth of Self as a Practitioner and Project Developer

Many professional experts in the dynamic and diverse field of education have studied and have researched different instructional strategies, and these experts have developed many theoretical concepts for educators, administrators, and/or stakeholders. As a practitioner and project developer, I now understand the depth as well as the importance of accurate and valid research. Though I always instruct my students to conduct research and find resources that are accurate and valid, my sentiments are more

restrictive because academia is an endeavor that takes great pride in promoting excellence and success. Being a practitioner and project developer has provided me with academic and professional skills that I can use in the classroom. Those academic skills include research, comprehensive reading, data collection, data analysis, and project management. The professional skills that I gained were writing a prospectus and proposal, learning how to create a consent form, and conducting interviews via Zoom. My experience as a practitioner and project developer has given me the same confidence and competence that I now have as a scholar.

Reflection on Importance of the Work

My doctoral study is important because many students entering college, especially community college, have to enroll into developmental courses because their competence is not where it should be for them to take basic core classes like English Composition 101 and/or Math 112. The said developmental courses are designed to help students gain a better understanding of the content area so they can succeed in the upper-level classes like the ones previously mentioned. Interviewing English instructors who teach developmental English allowed me to understand how important it is for colleges to offer developmental education courses for students who may not be prepared for a general education course.

Ever since I have been teaching at the collegiate level, I have always taught a developmental English course. It is indeed disheartening to see so many students in developmental courses because they lack the basic knowledge to proceed to English 101.

However, I would much rather have them in a developmental English course than have them struggling in an English Composition 101 course. As I reflect on the importance of my doctoral study, I am encouraged that I can contribute to the success of those students who have to take a developmental English course. It is important that developmental English instructors establish and maintain an interactive student-instructor relationship, implement instructional strategies that are student-centered, choose learning activities that will keep students engaged during classroom instruction, and teach students basic writing skills. After conducting research and interviewing English instructors who teach developmental English, I now realize how important it is to prepare students for success and ensure student success when students are enrolled in developmental education courses.

Implications

This project study was significant in that instructor challenges (which were academic, in part, and student-related for some) could be identified and addressed through a policy recommendation. The findings of this study indicated, from the perceptions and experiences of developmental English instructors, specific teaching methods that may increase the passing rate among students in the developmental English course at the local community college. Results from this study revealed effective instructional strategies used by developmental English instructors at the local community college to increase the student success rate. Implementing certain teaching methods, eliminating ineffective instructional strategies, and engaging students during instruction

are other results revealed from this study. Results from this study were able to identify successful instructional strategies that are being used by developmental English instructors at the local community college and how these instructional strategies lead their students to successfully complete their course(s). Preparing students for success, helping students with the writing process, and ensuring student success were also identified as results from this study.

Applications

College developmental English instructors have witnessed first-hand the academic barrier among students who are enrolled in developmental English courses. The research study participants whom I interviewed strive to provide every student with experiences that will help each of them to understand the subject matter. When developmental English instructors are able to impart such knowledge, students are able to effectively express their ideas in a clear and precise manner when writing an essay assignment. As a result, developmental English instructors breaking the academic barrier among students who are enrolled in developmental English courses could possibly break a generational cycle of illiteracy. Developmental English instructors being aware of how their students learn allows the instructors to be more effective in the classroom and causes the students to be more engaged in the classroom.

Directions for Future Research

This research may support professional education practice at the local community college as the findings provided information to offer support or recommendations to

assist with putting practical instructional strategies in place for all developmental English instructors to obtain a high passing rate for their students. The developmental English instructors who do not have the highest passing rates among their students may benefit from this study because they may implement the successful instructional strategies that support students to pass the developmental English course. With successful instructional strategies set in place for all developmental English instructors to utilize in their classroom, students may reap the benefits for them to successfully complete the course. One implication for social change would be students proceeding to general education courses. Another implication for social change would be students completing their respective degree programs, so they can work in their desired career field.

Conclusion

College developmental education courses, such as developmental English courses, are set in place for students to receive the skills they need before they can progress to a general education course. College instructors sometimes find it difficult to focus on what students need to improve upon. As a college English instructor, I know how important it is to implement effective instructional strategies during classroom instruction, and I also know how important it is to keep students engaged during classroom instruction. Implementing the recommendations of this policy paper could increase the 53% passing rate and decrease the 47% failure rate among students who take developmental English at the local community college where developmental English instructors: (a) establish and maintain an interactive student-instructor relationship; (b) implement instructional

strategies that are student-centered; (c) choose learning activities that will keep students engaged during classroom instruction; and (d) teach students basic writing skills. These recommendations should allow instructors to understand the who, what, where, when, and why of learning. Who students are as learners should not be determined by their nonacademic status. What students are capable of learning should not be measured by those who do not have their best interest at heart. Students who learn should not be limited within confined and/or conformed boundaries. When students learn should not be dictated by those who spend less time on content and more time on self. Why students learn should only be determined by those who truly have their best interest at heart.

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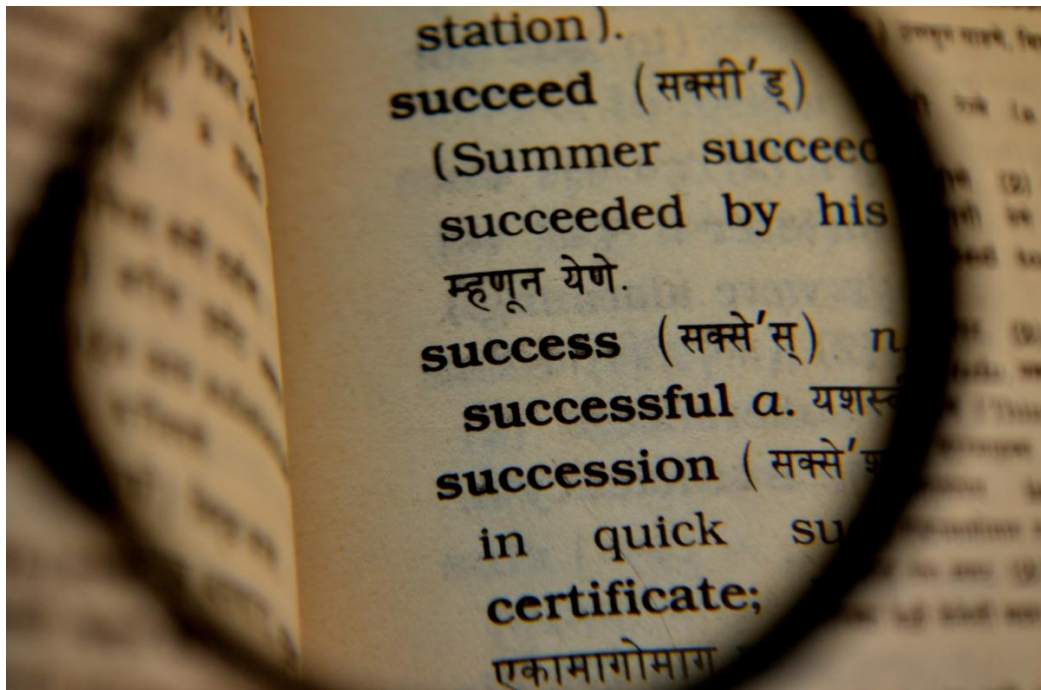
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Appendix A: The Project



**College Developmental English Instructor Perceptions and
Experiences About Instructional Strategies
Walden University Student**

Policy Recommendation Paper

The problem addressed through this study was that teachers have been challenged to implement effective strategies in recent years at a local community college in the southern region of the United States, so there has been a student failure rate in developmental English of 47-49%, according to the coordinator of developmental English. The purpose of this study was to investigate the challenges encountered by

developmental English instructors at the local community college in their current practices and about their suggestions for improved teaching approaches. Data collected during this study provided information on how, using successful instructional strategies, to increase the student success rate at the local community college. The research questions of this qualitative case study were focused on (a) developmental English instructor perceptions about the challenges encountered in their current developmental instructional practices and (b) developmental English instructor suggestions for improving student outcomes.

Based upon the data collected from the probing questions that I asked the 10 research study participants, I was able to determine emerging themes among codes. Seven major themes emerged from the following categories: (a) preparing students for success, (b) implementing better teaching methods, (c) using effective instructional strategies, (d) eliminating ineffective instructional strategies, (e) engaging students during instruction, (f) helping students with the writing process, and (g) ensuring student success. Each emerging theme addressed at least one of the two guiding research questions. These findings, along with theory and best practices discussed in the literature, led to the following recommendations to increase the student success rate in developmental English at the local community college in the southern region of the United States:

1. establish and maintain an interactive student-instructor relationship
2. implement instructional strategies that are student-centered

3. choose learning activities that will keep students engaged during classroom instruction
4. teach students basic writing skills.

The Problem

The problem addressed through this study was that teachers have been challenged to implement effective strategies in recent years at a local community college in the southern region of the United States, so there has been a student failure rate in developmental English of 47-49%, according to the coordinator of developmental English. The coordinator of developmental English at the local community college, where this project study was conducted, stated that the current passing rate among students who take developmental English is 53% based upon end-of-the-semester reports, and the college would like the passing rate to be higher. The academic dean of the Humanities and Social Sciences department at the local community college verified that the 53% passing rate is not acceptable according to the college student success rates, so the 47% failure rate among students who take developmental English is a problem at the local community college and has been a problem in recent years.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study included Gagne's (1985) conditions of learning and Mezirow's (1991) theory of transformative learning. This research project study focused on the instructional strategies used by some of the faculty who teach developmental English courses at a local community college. Gagne's (1985) conditions

of learning worked best for the study because it served as the foundation of the proposed research questions to better understand how community college developmental English instructors perceive their current instructional strategies as facilitating student achievement. Mezirow's (1991) theory of transformative learning was also used because the theory provides a basis to understand how to promote student success among college instructors. Gagne's (1985) conditions of learning provided structure to help explain the findings of how beneficial implementing varied successful instructional strategies can be.

Purpose and Design

The purpose of this study was to investigate the challenges encountered by developmental English instructors at the local community college in their current practices and about their suggestions for improved teaching approaches. The two guiding questions developed for this study were:

1. What are developmental English instructor perceptions about the challenges encountered in their current developmental instructional practices?
2. What are developmental English instructor suggestions for improving student outcomes?

The nature of this study was a basic qualitative research design. Since a basic qualitative research design discovers "how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences," it was the best approach for this study (Merriam, 2009, p. 23). I interviewed developmental English instructors to understand how they perceive the strategies they have employed in their developmental English courses for student success. Many underprepared students who

are enrolled at the local community college are not passing the developmental English courses.

Results

Implementing better teaching methods was one of the emerging themes that addressed the first research question about developmental English instructor perceptions about the challenges encountered in their current developmental instructional practices. Eliminating ineffective instructional strategies was another theme that addressed the first research question. Preparing students for success, using effective instructional strategies, engaging students during instruction, helping students with the writing process, and ensuring student success addressed the second research question about developmental English instructor suggestions for improving student outcomes. Helping students with the writing process was a theme that addressed the second research question because most of the research study participants stated that they go over the writing process in class to prepare their students for an essay assignment. Ensuring student success was the last theme that addressed the second research question, for encouraging students to ensure student success was a commonality among most of the research study participants. Being personable was another common approach that some of the participants expressed as a means to ensure student success.

Preparing Students for Success

Preparing students for success addressed the second research question about developmental English instructor suggestions for improving student outcomes. Giving

students the opportunity to become familiar with one another was a commonality that a few of the research study participants revealed during their individual interviews. Crabbe (2018) listed group work as the top instructional strategy for instructors to include in their classroom to prepare students for success because collaborative learning is important. A few of the research study participants stated in their individual interviews how they make sure students communicate with each other during the first day of class.

Implementing Better Teaching Methods

Implementing better teaching methods was one of the emerging themes that addressed the first research question about developmental English instructor perceptions about the challenges encountered in their current developmental instructional practices. The research study participants mentioned in separate interviews how they are required to implement a certain number of reading assignments, essay assignments, course objectives, and student learning outcomes in their developmental English course. The participants stated in their individual interviews how developmental English instructors are required to assign certain reading and writing assignments with the synthesis essay as the last writing assignment.

Using Effective Instructional Strategies

Per using effective instructional strategies, many of the research study participants mentioned how the most effective instructional strategies are successful when the classroom is interactive and conversational between the instructor and the students. Using effective instructional strategies addressed the second research question. The research

study participants expressed how students feel like their opinions are valued during interactive learning and classroom conversations and how students feel more comfortable and see instructors as trustworthy when interactive learning as an instructional strategy.

Eliminating Ineffective Instructional Strategies

Eliminating ineffective instructional strategies was another theme that addressed the first research question. Some of the research study participants disclosed that direct instruction in grammar is something that they found to be the least effective instructional strategy because students do not always understand the grammar that is being taught and it shows when they submit essay assignments. Annotating a text, telling students to write, and providing feedback on writing assignments were all regarded respectively as the least effective instructional strategies for a few of the research study participants because students do not know how to annotate a text, do not want to be told to write, and do not read the feedback provided by the instructor on a writing assignment.

Engaging Students During Instruction

Engaging students during instruction was a theme that emerged based upon the answers that the research study participants provided. Several of the instructors emphasized how important it is to make sure the classroom environment is student-centered because students should be interactive during classroom instruction. Engaging students during instruction addressed the second research question. A few of the research study participants mentioned how they engage their students in the learning environment by asking them questions, and they supported their ideas in the following statements.

Helping Students With the Writing Process

Helping students with the writing process was a theme that addressed the second research question because most of the research study participants stated that they go over the writing process in class to prepare their students for an essay assignment. Some of the research study participants stated how they talk about the writing process in class before they assign an essay to their students in a developmental English course. Other participants discussed how they use low-stake assignments to prepare their students for the writing process.

Ensuring Student Success

Ensuring student success was the last theme that addressed the second research question, for encouraging students and being personable to ensure student success were common traits among most of the research study participants. Several of the research study participants said that they encourage their students to keep an open line of communication and by letting students know their care. The participants said that they encourage their students to ensure student success by constantly reminding their students that college is a new experience and by emphasizing the importance of building community as well as positive relationships and friendships. The participants talked about how they encourage their students to contact them, so they and their students can cultivate a relationship.

Recommendations

I developed the recommendations based on the challenges identified from the first research question, the literature, the suggestions from the research participants, the conceptual framework work of Gagne's (1985) conditions of learning and the work of Mezirow's (1991) theory of transformative learning, and current literature. The research findings based upon the data collected from the interviews, along with theory and best practices discussed in the literature, led to the following recommendations to increase the student success rate in developmental English at the local community college in the southern region of the United States:

1. establish and maintain an interactive student-instructor relationship.
2. implement instructional strategies that are student-centered.
3. choose learning activities that will keep students engaged during classroom instruction.
4. teach students basic writing skills.

Recommendation #1

Establish and Maintain an Interactive Student-Instructor Relationship

Crabbe (2018) recognized how students are often underprepared for college because they are first-generational college students; lack an educational plan; lack financial resources; and lack childcare (if any students are parents). Establishing and maintaining an interactive student-instructor relationship addresses research question two and aligns with the following emerging themes: preparing students for success and ensuring student success. Most of the research study participants stated that they prepare

their students for success by establishing a good relationship between the instructor and the students at the beginning of the semester because it gives students the opportunity to get to know the instructor and be comfortable. Encouraging students to ensure student success was a commonality among most of the research study participants. Being personable was another common approach that some of the participants expressed as a means to ensure student success.

How can developmental English instructors prepare students for success by establishing and maintaining an interactive student-instructor relationship?

Howard et al. (2018) talked about how instructors should consider taking a more hands-on approach to connect with students who are underprepared for college because it can provide the support that students need to better understand the subject matter. One of the research study participants expressed how important it is to establish a good relationship with students because it gives students the confidence they may lack, and it creates a welcoming atmosphere. Not only did the participant discuss how important it is for instructors to establish a good relationship with their students, but the instructor also talked about how instructors should be friendly because it gives students the opportunity to get to know the instructor and be comfortable. Howard et al. (2018) emphasized the importance of college instructors recognizing student perceptions of higher learning because most students are often underprepared for the college environment. Another participant discussed how they try to create an inclusive environment for their students, so they can be comfortable while they are in the classroom. Mahfouz et al. (2018)

recommended that college institutions incorporate mindfulness programs to help students be successful and comfortable in a college classroom setting.

How can developmental English instructors ensure student success by establishing and maintaining an interactive student-instructor relationship?

Incorporating and/or bringing supplemental resources into the classroom is something that a few research study participants find helpful to ensure student success. Crabbe (2018) explained how instructors can prepare students for success by making sure that the instructional strategies they present in class are relevant and current, so students can easily engage and connect during classroom instruction. One of the participants explained how they like to use audiovisuals, create PowerPoint presentations, and post YouTube videos in Blackboard to ensure student success for their students. Crabbe (2018) mentioned how offering tutoring services to underprepared students is a measurable resource to ensure student success by increasing retention rates. Another participant disclosed that they refer their students to tutoring when they see an academic need for students who are failing their developmental English course. Real project based learning is another instructional strategy that Crabbe (2018) recommended to incorporate into the classroom. Other instructors told me that they have their students' complete weekly assignments as a tool for students to be successful and that they like to bring in representatives from career services and tutors to talk about what they offer students to help them be successful. Crabbe (2018) encouraged instructors to consider flipping their classroom where learning is blended, and students are not just learning from the

instructors. A few instructors conveyed that they bring in non-cognitive skills into the classroom to assist with student success, and they have students write a literary reflection to ensure student success while showing their students examples of other writers who talk about the writing process, so students can see other perspectives of how to be successful.

Recommendation #2

Implement Instructional Strategies That Are Student-Centered

Sa'd and Rajabi (2018) discovered that some college instructors might not know how to present effective instructional strategies during classroom instruction.

Implementing instructional strategies that are student-centered aligns with using effective instructional strategies while it addresses the first research question about developmental English instructor perceptions about the challenges encountered in their current developmental instructional practices to eliminate ineffective instructional strategies. Many of the research study participants mentioned how the most effective instructional strategies are successful when the classroom is interactive and conversational between the instructor and the students.

Some of the research participants disclosed that direct instruction in grammar is something that they found to be the least effective instructional strategy because students do not always understand the grammar that is being taught and it shows when they submit essay assignments. Annotating a text, telling students to write, and providing feedback on writing assignments were all regarded respectively as the least effective instructional strategies for a few of the research study participants. Students do not know

how to annotate a text, do not want to be told to write, and do not read the feedback provided by the instructor on a writing assignment.

Why is it important for developmental English instructors to use effective instructional strategies that are student-centered?

Haijan (2019) recommended that instructors consider implementing teaching methods where learning will exist inside and outside the traditional classroom. Most of the research study participants expressed in separate interviews how the most effective instructional strategies are successful when the classroom is interactive and conversational between the instructor and the students. Haijan (2019) emphasized the importance of instructors being able to create an authentic learning environment where students can relate to real-life and/or current events that spark their interests and draw upon previous life experiences. One participant talked about how they use reciprocal teaching where students see what the instructor does first and then the students reciprocate what the instructor does, and another participant declared how join-in conversations allows their students to put information into their own perspectives. Asking students, a lot of feedback questions, focusing on what students understand, and gauging students have been the most effective instructional strategies for most of the research study participants. Jenkins (2020) suggested that instructors be mindful of the decisions that they make when implementing certain pedagogical habits into the learning environment. One participant said that using active learning helps their students to participate and engage themselves in the learning process. A few of the participants

discussed in their individual interviews how active learning allows flexibility in the classroom.

Why is it important for developmental English instructors to eliminate ineffective instructional strategies that are not student-centered?

Jenkins (2020) stated how important it is for instructors to identify the most effective instructional strategies that they use in the classroom. Some of the research study participants had the same response in their individual interviews when they were asked about ineffective instructional strategies. They all answered how lecture is the least effective instructional strategy in their developmental English course. Jenkins (2020) mentioned that one of the most effective instructional strategies is when students are allowed to participate in a group discussion. Direct instruction in grammar is something that two of the participants found to be the least effective instructional strategy. Sa'd and Rajabi (2018) recognized teaching vocabulary as an ineffective instructional strategy. Annotating a text, telling students to write, and providing feedback on writing assignments were all regarded respectively as the least effective instructional strategies by other participants. One of the participants explained how annotating a text is the least effective strategy in a developmental English course because students do not know what annotating a text means, so they will not interact with the text as expected. Haijan (2019) explained how creating a collaborative document, such as Google Docs, for students to provide their input on an assignment is an effective instructional strategy. Another participant noted that telling students to write has not been an effective instructional

strategy because students are afraid to ask questions, or they are unsure on how to write an essay. Providing feedback on writing assignments is a least effective instructional strategy because students have a limited time to review feedback. Nanquil (2019) referenced peer assistance from other esteemed college students as an effective instructional strategy.

Recommendation #3

Choose Learning Activities That Will Keep Students Engaged During Classroom Instruction

Heal and Goodwin (2023) mentioned how college instructors should not assume that students are engaged during classroom instruction by keeping them busy with in-class assignments. Choosing learning activities that will keep students engaged during classroom instruction aligns with implementing teaching methods and engaging students during instruction where both emerging themes address the second research question. Several of the research study participants said that lecture is a teaching method they stay away from in their developmental English course because students are not actively engaged when an instructor lectures the entire class time. Several of the instructors emphasized how important it is to make sure the classroom environment is student-centered because students should be interactive during classroom instruction.

Why is it important for developmental English instructors to implement teaching methods that will keep students engaged during classroom instruction?

Heal and Goodwin (2023) mentioned that students become more engaged during the learning process when instructors implement teaching methods where students can recall previous learning experiences and/or prior knowledge. One of the research study participants stated that they focus on three ways, which include focusing on personal/social development, bringing in other parts of the college into the classroom, and providing general support, to teach their students in a developmental English course. Kurt and Sezek (2021) explained how instructors should remember that every student has a different learning style, so instructors should be open to implementing a variety of teaching methods into the classroom to cater to the learning styles of their students for them to be successful. Miller et al. (2021) emphasized how student engagement should take place in and outside the classroom. Another participant explained that the importance of having the freedom to teach any methodology in their developmental English course, and having the freedom to do so supports student success. The participants also talked about how they use active learning and a lot of critical thinking skills' activities in their course. Miller et al. (2021) expressed how the intended outcome for any teaching method is for students to gain knowledge. Two other participants disclosed in separate interviews that they use a variety of teaching methods, and one of those participants expressed how they use an instruct, practice, and assist teaching method in their developmental English course. Tani et al. (2021) mentioned how students should be actively engaged and involved in every learning activity. Most of the

participants discussed in their individual interviews how they like to use collaborative learning as one of their teaching methods in their developmental English course.

Why is student engagement important in developmental English courses?

Kurt and Sezek (2021) explained how students become uninterested in a subject that is difficult to understand, so they become disengaged in the learning environment. Several of the research study participants shared how they engage their students in a developmental English course by implementing certain writing techniques to help their students during the writing process. Tani et al. (2021) recognized student engagement as an extension of the learning process where students are actively involved during classroom instruction. One participant stated that they make sure that the learning environment is always student-centered by providing students with foundational writing tips, so they know how to write academically and professionally. Another participant explained how they write paragraphs on the board for students to see how to develop an essay. The instructor also revealed how they will sit one-on-one with their students to help them write an essay. Tomlinson (2023) discussed how instructors should always remember that they are preparing their students for real-life events and experiences, so their teaching methods should be student-centered to reflect those moments in time. Other participants discussed how they first start thinking about what students can talk about when writing an essay assignment to make essay topics personal and relevant and how they bring in a lot of videos, articles, and current events to discuss with their students to engage them in the learning process as students prepare to write an essay

assignment. Tomlinson (2023) suggested that every instructor should make their classroom an inviting learning environment for their students to be comfortable and engage in the learning process.

Recommendation #4

Teach Students Basic Writing Skills

Sinha (2022) admitted that colleges and universities nationwide offer developmental English courses to cater to the academic needs of students who are underprepared for college. Teaching students basic writing skills aligns with helping students with the writing process and addresses the second research question. Most of the research study participants stated that they go over the writing process in class to prepare their students for an essay assignment. Some of the research study participants stated how they talk about the writing process in class before they assign an essay to their students in a developmental English course. Other research study participants discussed how they use low-stake assignments to prepare their students for the writing process.

Why is it important for developmental English instructors to teach students basic writing skills?

Sinha (2022) mentioned how students should be taught basic writing skills, so they understand their strengths and weaknesses in writing. Some of the research study participants shared how they use low-stake assignments to prepare their students for the writing process. One participant noted that they use quick writes and journal entries to prepare their students for the writing process, and they also stated that they utilize graphic

organizers to help students with writing an essay assignment. Zeng (2018) explained how students should be given writing tasks to help build their confidence and competence in writing. Other participants said that they give their students a writing prompt to help them begin the writing process and that they assign low-stake assignments to build upon an essay assignment to help students with the writing process. Zeng (2018) mentioned how reading is an essential component of any writing task because reading allows students to see how sentences and paragraphs are structured. A few of the participants in separate interviews talked about how they assign a reading assignment to allow students to work from active reading to writing about the text, so they can annotate the text to help them with the writing process.

Concluding Thoughts

Challenges encountered by developmental English instructors at the local community college in their current practices and about their suggestions for improved teaching approaches are not alarming. The research study participants identified such concerns to increase the 53% passing rate and decrease the 47% failure rate among students who take developmental English at the local community college. If the local community college does not address the challenges encountered by developmental English instructors at the local community college in their current practices and consider their suggestions for improved teaching approaches the problem might continue among students who take developmental English. Implementing the recommendations of this paper could increase the student success rate among students who take developmental

English at the local community college where developmental English instructors: (a) establish and maintain an interactive student-instructor relationship; (b) implement instructional strategies that are student-centered; (c) choose learning activities that will keep students engaged during classroom instruction; and (d) teach students basic writing skills.

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Appendix B: Self-Designed Interview Protocol

Open-Ended and Probing Interview Questions

I am Yolanda R. Toney, an Ed.D. student at Walden University, and this interview is part of the research for my doctoral study at Walden University. There is a proposed study that in recent years at the local community college, there is a student failure rate in developmental English of 47-49%. Your consent to conduct this interview was verified by your response via email to let me know as the researcher of your interest. For this study, you as a participant will be asked several open-ended and probing interview questions where you will describe the challenges encountered as a developmental English instructor at the local community college in your current practices and about your suggestions for improved teaching approaches. This Zoom interview will only last 30 minutes and will be audio recorded. The interview questions align with the two guiding research questions for my doctoral study. To protect your privacy, my published study will use pseudonyms (e.g., Instructor 1, Instructor 2, Instructor 3, etc.). You can end the interview at any time.

1. How do you prepare your students to be successful at the beginning of the semester in your developmental English course during a regular session?
2. What teaching methods are you required by the English department, the college as a whole, and/or the state level to implement in your development English course?

Probing Questions: Which teaching methods do you utilize more often in your developmental English course, and why? How does/do that/those teaching

method(s) benefit your students the most? Which teaching method do you utilize less often in your developmental English course, and why?

3. What instructional strategies have you found to be the most effective and/or successful in your developmental English course? **Probing Question:** Why do you find those instructional strategies to be the most effective and/or successful in your developmental English course?
4. What instructional strategies have you found to be the least effective and/or successful in your development English course? **Probing Question:** Why do you find those instructional strategies to be the least effective and/or successful in your developmental English course?
5. How do you engage your students during instruction in your developmental English course?
6. How do you prepare your students for the writing process when completing an essay assignment in your developmental English course?
7. Aside from instructional strategies, what else have you used to ensure student success?

Thank you for your time and willingness to be a participant in my doctoral study! I really appreciate your feedback for the questions that I asked. If I have any questions, I will send you an email from my Walden University email account. Thanks again!

Appendix C: Email Invitation to Recruit Participants

Subject line:

Interviewing (current and past) developmental English instructors during spring 2023 (\$10 thank you gift)

Email message:

There is a proposed study that in recent years at the local community college, there is a student failure rate in developmental English of 47-49%. For this study, participants are invited to describe the challenges encountered as a developmental English instructor at the local community college in your current practices and about your suggestions for improved teaching approaches.

About the study:

- One 30-60 minute Zoom interview that will be audio recorded
- You would receive a \$10 Target gift card as a thank you
- To protect your privacy, the published study would use fake names

Volunteers must meet these requirements:

- Experienced college English instructor
- Current English instructor at the local community college
- History of student success rates

This interview is part of the research for a doctoral study for Yolanda R. Toney, an Ed.D. student at Walden University. Interviews will take place during spring 2023.

Please respond to this email to let the researcher know of your interest. You are welcome to forward it to others who might be interested.