

2015

# Administrator Perceptions of How Developmental Education Impacts Student Attrition

Jennifer Michelle Price  
*Walden University*

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### Review Committee

Dr. Carole Pearce, Committee Chairperson, Education Faculty

Dr. Lynn Nolte, Committee Member, Education Faculty

Dr. James Valadez, University Reviewer, Education Faculty

Chief Academic Officer

Eric Riedel, Ph.D.

Walden University  
2015

Abstract

Administrator Perceptions of How Developmental Education Impacts Student Attrition

by

Jennifer Michelle Price

MA, Bowie State University, 2007

BS, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, 1999

Doctoral Study Submitted in Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

June 2015

## Abstract

Nationally and locally, developmental education students attending community colleges are not persisting at a high rate. This growing attrition problem affects many aspects of a local community college including enrollment, completion rates, and tuition revenue. The purpose of this study was to analyze community college administrators' perceptions of developmental education and how developmental education affects student attrition. The conceptual framework of this study, social constructivism, provided a foundation to better understand the role each administrator plays in this social group. A qualitative study through structured interviews was conducted, targeting 10 college administrators from 1 local community college, from each of the following college units: student affairs, academic affairs, and finance. Once data were collected through the interview process and transcribed, major themes and categories were developed by examining majority common responses to the interview questions. The findings found administrator perceptions of developmental education and how it impacts student attrition heavily focused on students' personal problems, need for improved student engagement, teaching methods, and curriculum delivery modalities that would promote student success. Success of these students is significant to the financial and enrollment sustainability of the local community college. This sustainability in terms of increased enrollment, tuition revenue, and completion rates contributes to social change within the local community college and the community by developing community members through education.

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## Dedication

This doctoral project is dedicated to my parents, Daryl and Brenda, and my love and inspiration, Sam. To my parents, thank you for the continued and unwavering support and love you have always shown me. I always felt I could achieve any goal or aspiration because I knew you would be there supporting me with unconditional love. I do not always tell you enough but thank you and I love you. You taught me to be a goal driven independent person. To Sam, it has been amazing journey together, and I must say two of the many things I love about you are your loyalty and security. You are never afraid to let me shine; in fact, you silently support and encourage me while I am in the spotlight. I love you and thank you!

## Acknowledgments

I must first acknowledge and thank my chair, Dr. Carole Pearce. This journey has been amazing and purposeful because of you. Our meeting was truly by chance and fate and I am grateful every day. Your advice, guidance, and knowledge helped all this happen and I need you to know, from the bottom of my heart, what an amazing person I think you are, not just as a faculty member but also as a colleague and friend. Thank you! In addition, I would like to acknowledge Dr. Lynn Nolte, my second committee member. Dr. Nolte, your guidance makes me think and look at my writing and being a scholar very differently. You challenge me to improve myself. Thank you!

I would remiss if I did not also acknowledge Dr. Tracy Harris, my mentor and friend. I never knew what it was like to have a true mentor until I met you. You will never know what your guidance, both personally and professionally, has meant to me. You did not just teach me everything I know about college administration, you led by example and allowed me to develop with your guidance. You taught me how to be a compassionate, knowledgeable, and action oriented administrator. You pushed me when I needed it and let me shine when I thought it was impossible. I am truly grateful to have you in my life!

## Table of Contents

Section 1: The Problem.....	1
Introduction.....	1
Definition of the Problem .....	2
Rationale .....	6
Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level.....	6
Evidence of the Problem From the Professional Literature.....	6
Definitions.....	7
Significance.....	8
Guiding/Research Question .....	10
Review of the Literature .....	11
Community Colleges .....	12
Developmental Education Students .....	12
Developmental Education Goals.....	14
Developmental Education Faculty.....	15
Student Attrition.....	15
Community College Leadership Perceptions.....	16
Student Services.....	18
Conceptual Framework.....	19
Literature Review Summary .....	20
Implications.....	20



Summary .....	21
Section 2: The Methodology.....	23
Introduction.....	23
Research Design and Approach .....	24
Study Setting.....	26
Participants.....	27
Criteria for Selecting Participants.....	28
Procedures for Gaining Access to Participants.....	28
Measures for Ethical Protection.....	29
Data Collection .....	30
Data Collection Instruments .....	30
Interviews.....	30
Data Collection Procedures.....	31
Participant Access.....	32
Role of the Researcher .....	33
Data Analysis .....	34
Data Analysis Results .....	36
Study Findings .....	37
Summary.....	41
Section 3: The Project.....	44
Introduction.....	44
Description and Goals.....	44

Rationale .....	45
Review of the Literature .....	47
Teaching Methods.....	48
Classroom Curriculum Modalities .....	49
Faculty and Student Engagement.....	51
Faculty Professional Development .....	51
Developmental Education Faculty Development .....	53
Literature Review Summary .....	54
Implementation .....	54
Potential Resources and Existing Supports.....	64
Potential Barriers .....	64
Roles and Responsibilities of Participants .....	65
Project Evaluation.....	66
Implications Including Social Change .....	67
Local Community .....	67
Far-Reaching.....	68
Conclusion .....	69
Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions.....	70
Introduction.....	70
Project Strengths .....	71
Recommendations for Remediation of Limitations .....	72
Scholarship.....	72

Project Development and Evaluation.....	73
Leadership and Change.....	74
Analysis of Self as Scholar .....	74
Analysis of Self as Practitioner.....	76
Analysis of Self as Project Developer .....	77
The Project’s Potential Impact on Social Change.....	77
Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research.....	78
Conclusion .....	80
References.....	81
Appendix A: Doctoral Project .....	96
Appendix B: Interview Protocol .....	131
Appendix C: Letter of Cooperation .....	132
Appendix D: Letter of Informed Consent.....	133

## **Section 1: The Problem**

### **Introduction**

Student attrition can affect various areas within an institution of higher education including enrollment management, academic affairs, and fiscal management.

Community colleges experience a higher attrition rate college wide compared to 4-year colleges and universities (Bauerlein, 2012). Community colleges experience more transient, stop in and out students versus 4-year colleges or universities. The National Center for Education Statistics reported in 2011 the attrition rate of freshman students was 24.5%, with 42% of this population leaving for financial reasons (as cited in Ramsey, 2011). Many community college students balance school with employment, as the average age of the community college student nationally is 29 (American Association of Community Colleges, 2013). Therefore, many community college students are taking less than full time credits per semester. In addition, while there are over 7 million community college students in credit courses, only half are receiving financial aid (American Association of Community Colleges, 2013).

The reasons vary for this higher attrition rate among community college students. Many community college students struggle to balance school and life responsibilities, experience difficulty funding their education, and experience difficulties with developmental education (Bauerlein, 2012). Difficulties with developmental education can vary from an inability to comprehend and master the coursework to discouragement at the length of time to complete the course work. Community college students have often focused on the ability to obtain a quality education within a shorter amount of time;

when developmental education coursework is in addition to the course sequence to earn an associate's degree, the length of time to complete the degree can almost double (Maue, 2012).

While developmental education programs vary, many community colleges are experiencing similar trends. There is growing need for developmental education courses among incoming students. Colleges report high attrition rates of these students within the first semester or two of attendance (Maue, 2012). In this study, I explored community college administrator perceptions of how developmental education affects student attrition.

### **Definition of the Problem**

Increasing attrition rates of developmental education students at a local community college have existed for the past 5 years. This increasing attrition rate has affected many areas of the college, including academic affairs, enrollment management, and fiscal operations. With declining enrollment over the past 4 years, college leadership must give attention to how student attrition significantly affects the areas of academic affairs, enrollment management, and fiscal operations.

The college is a large community college with five campuses in both urban and suburban areas, spreading over multiple counties with an annual enrollment of over 20,000. The full-time student population consists of 32% of the population, and the average age of these students is 23. The part-time population consists of 64% of the total population, and the average age of these students is 28. The population includes 62% females and 38% males, respectively. Nearly 71% of incoming students test into at least

one developmental course. The annual attrition rate of these developmental education students is nearly 50% (fall to spring; Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, 2013).

The department of academic affairs has seen a significant shift in the need of developmental education courses among new students enrolling in the college. Nearly 71% of new students entering the college need at least one developmental education course, a 20% increase from 10 years ago (Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, 2013). Due to the increased need of these entry-level developmental education courses, Academic Affairs has needed to cancel higher-level courses to use existing faculty and classroom space. The college's current budget status drives the decision to cancel higher-level courses in lieu of hiring additional faculty. The decline in enrollment over the past 3 years has strained the college's fiscal operating budget. In addition, cancelling these higher-level courses changes the availability of courses needed to graduate. According to a recent student satisfaction survey conducted at the college (Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, 2012), students indicated many of their higher-level courses are offered only once a year, or multiple courses were offered once a semester at the same day and time. This unavailability of courses needed for completion has caused students to transfer early or not complete their education at the college. While there has been discussion regarding course sequencing, elimination of a rolled schedule, and possibly increasing programmatic offerings at the multiple campuses, the unavailability of courses has not been addressed. In addition, the cancellation of higher-level courses affects students' ability to complete or graduate from the college,

decreasing the graduation rate to under 15% and completion rate to under 30% (Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, 2013). These declining rates coupled with the increasing attrition rate among developmental education students have also played a significant role in effective enrollment management at the college.

Enrollment management efforts have significantly shifted due to the high attrition rate of these developmental education students. The declining retention rate of developmental education students has significantly affected the college's enrollment, shifting focus to the need for more substantial front-end enrollment management to bring more new students into the college. Front-end enrollment management focuses on the process of the matriculation of students from recruitment to retention (Copeland, 2013). However, increased competition among other colleges and universities in the area and declining high school enrollment has caused effective recruitment practices to become problematic for the college. Actions have begun to address the problem of effective recruitment practice; however, no resolution has been reached at this time. This inability to attract new students to the college, coupled with the inability to retain developmental education students, has significantly affected fiscal management of the college. The decline in enrollment has caused budget deficits and the need to eliminate programs, resources, and staff positions.

The fiscal management of the college has been significantly impacted by the attrition of developmental education students due to a decrease in enrollment. Enrollment has seen a significant decline over the past 3 years, with an average loss of 3 to 4% annually (Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, 2013). This enrollment

decline has caused budget deficits and the inability for the college to reach projected budgets. When projected budgets are not met, programs, resources, and staff were eliminated to balance the budget. When resources and services are eliminated for developmental education students, the college could perpetuate the cycle of attrition. The development of first year experience courses and programs that address the needs of these students can address the high attrition rate and assist colleges in early intervention of these students (Box, Callan, Geddes, Kemp, & Wojcieszek, 2012).

First year experience programs have been in development nationally over the past few years to address the attrition rate among developmental education students, due in part to the significant amount of students who are entering college unprepared (Schuetz & Barr, 2009). While first year experience programs have been prominent on the national level, additional initiatives including improved collegiate preparation, early intervention strategies, and developmental education redesign have also been a focus (Quint, Jaggars, Byndloss, Magazinnik, & MDRC, 2013).

Locally, the college will need to begin to identify retention strategies for these developmental education students or redesign the developmental education program. Currently, college administration is discussing the purchase of retention software it will use as an early alert system for at risk students. In addition, the developmental education department is beginning to examine the developmental education curriculum and length of course sequence to identify where improvement is possible. The redesign of the developmental education program and retention strategies may significantly affect the



sustainability of the college in regards to enrollment management, academic success, and fiscal management.

## **Rationale**

### **Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level**

Nationally, over 60% of students entering community college require developmental education coursework (Daiek, Dixon, & Talbert, 2012). At this local community college, the percentage of entering students who need developmental education coursework coincides with the national trend. Even though many students who enter public 2-year institutions feel they are academically prepared, placement testing is identifying these students as needing developmental coursework before entering college level courses (Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, 2013). In addition, nationally, community college students who need multiple areas of developmental education coursework have nearly a 50% attrition rate (Daiek et al., 2012). The high attrition rate of this large portion of the college's enrollment significantly influences college sustainability.

### **Evidence of the Problem From the Professional Literature**

Nationally, community colleges have struggled with academic preparation of the diverse population of students they serve who enter at various skill levels (Maue, 2012). In addition, many of these students are balancing multiple life situations outside of the classroom that possibly hinder their persistence. Nationally, the average percentage of students entering a community college who need at least one developmental education course is approximately 70% (Daiek et al., 2012). Among these students who need

developmental education, nearly 50% do not persist to the next semester if they are in the lower level of developmental course work (Daiek et al., 2012). This problem is affecting the enrollment and sustainability of community colleges nationally.

### **Definitions**

*Community college administrators:* Administrators with a community college who are key decision makers to the college's overall sustainability. In this study, I will focus on key college units including student affairs, academic affairs, and finance (Doyle, 2012).

*Developmental education:* A sequence of courses underprepared students must complete prior to taking credit coursework (Barnett, 2011).

*Developmental education faculty:* Faculty within the organization who teach developmental education curriculum to assist students with introductory skills to bring them to the level of collegiate coursework (Brothen & Wambach, 2012).

*Enrollment management :* A strategic approach to control the enrollment at a college by identifying prospective students and attracting them to the college through marketing and recruitment. In addition, it provides an overall plan identifying processes by which students enroll and are retained from semester to semester until they complete their intended educational goal (Copeland, 2013).

*Fiscal operations:* The operations in which the college creates, manages, and balances a fiscal year operating budget (Lee, 2010).

*Placement testing:* Conducted with incoming students to assess their current academic skills. The college determines course placement using these results whether

any developmental education coursework are needed prior to enrolling in collegiate courses (Belfield & Crosta, 2012).

*Retention:* The process by which students are retained at the college from semester to semester to complete their educational goals. Various strategies exist to assist the students in identifying resources to be successful both in and out of the classroom (Melguizo, Bos, & Prather, 2011).

*Student attrition:* The rate by which students leave the institution due to various reasons including academic failure, personal reasons, or finances (Edgecombe, 2010).

### **Significance**

Nationally, 11 million students, nearly half of all enrolled college students, attend a community college (American Association of Community Colleges, 2013). In addition, research has indicated that over 70% of all incoming community college students, through testing, place into at least one developmental education course (Nakajima, Dembo, & Mossler, 2012). Of these students, nearly 50% do not persist to the next semester (Arnsperger, 2008; Bahr, 2012; Guydish, 2011). Community college students can be transient with various life circumstances causing them to become stop in/ stop out students. Stanford-Bowers (2008) indicated that student commitment to a course relies heavily on whether the person-environment fit exists, based in Tinto's student integration model. Tinto's model explains that students who integrate themselves into the college's social and academic systems are more likely to persist and be retained at the college more specifically, integration into group specific models are more effective (Tinto, 1993). Therefore, focusing on developmental education students as a group-specific model will

be important to this research as they have very different and specific needs in relation to persistence.

There is a significant need to conduct research regarding attrition rates of developmental education students. With more community college students needing developmental education, coursework it will be important for the college to identify programs and services to promote student success. In addition, college administrators can use the research to make important decisions regarding enrollment and fiscal management. For this study, I chose to analyze community college administrators' perceptions of developmental education and how these administrators believe developmental education affects student attrition.

The administrators identified for this study were key stakeholders in the matriculation process of these developmental education students, at various stages. Their perceptions of how developmental education impacts student attrition are important in assisting the college to develop strategies to retain more of these students. Retaining these students will have significant impacts on the college units examined in this study including enrollment services, academic affairs, and fiscal operations.

Administrators within enrollment services view retention of students balances the need to recruit new prospective students (Lee, 2010). Considering the national decline of high school populations and the shift in economy, prospective students are not as prevalent as they once were (United States Census Bureau, 2012). Finance administrators notice a significant loss in revenue to the college when students are not retained (Lee, 2010). This decline in revenue significantly affects college operating

budgets. The impact to the budget could result in the elimination or reduction of services, programs, and staffing. Finally, administrators within academic affairs see student attrition from a different perspective (Paulson, 2011). While community colleges have remediation in developmental coursework, academic affairs professionals expect a certain level of preparedness for collegiate coursework among students. Students not persisting in developmental education can significantly influence the sustainability of academic programs. Students not persisting will also affect college graduation rates and program completion statistics. This nonpersistence can also negatively affect the availability of future resources for academic programs based upon enrollment numbers and budget.

This research can assist in examining how developmental education impacts student attrition and how this affects the college's enrollment, completion rates, and fiscal operations from the perspective of the college administrators. In addition, the administrator perceptions can also lead to the development, implementation, and management of key student services or course redesign that would promote persistence and completion.

### **Guiding/Research Question**

Developmental education is a significant discussion nationally among all colleges and universities as well as at a state level discussing how students are leaving secondary education unprepared for collegiate coursework. Locally, the research also demonstrates that students are unprepared for collegiate coursework upon leaving secondary education. The state educational leaders are asking community colleges to improve student success,

completion, and retention rates. Improving education factors such as completion aligns with the educational reform initiatives prompted from President Obama's administration. Therefore, it is imperative to identify why community college developmental education students are not persisting at a higher rate. To examine this from college personnel with the most interest in students and power in decision making will be crucial to tackling the high developmental education attrition rate. Therefore the guiding research question is as follows: What are the perceptions among a select group of community college administrators within academic affairs, student affairs, and finance regarding how developmental education impacts student attrition?

### **Review of the Literature**

The literature review includes cited sources including scholarly articles, research publications, and peer-reviewed articles, focusing on primary research within the past 5 years. Primary search engines used were Education Resource Information Center (ERIC), Proquest, Google Search, and college websites. The word search included the following terms singularly or in combination: *community college, developmental education, administration, perceptions, student attrition, enrollment management, recruitment, first year experience, and student development and persistence.*

The literature review is organized into seven parts, including community colleges, developmental education students, developmental education goals, developmental education faculty, student affairs services, student attrition, and community college leadership perceptions. The literature review provides an overview of the role of a community college, the design and intent of developmental education, a description of

the students and faculty, services and programs provided within student affairs to promote success, student attrition of developmental education students, and the perceptions of community college leadership. The conceptual framework highlights the importance of understanding how community college administrators view developmental education and its impact on student attrition.

### **Community Colleges**

Nearly 40% of students pursuing higher education are doing so through community colleges nationwide (Nitecki, 2011). Historically, community colleges have assisted underprepared students to gain access to higher education. With lower cost tuition and relaxed admission standards such as open-door policies, underprepared students have the opportunity to matriculate to higher education through a community college (Karp & Bork, 2012).

The profile of a community college student is not typically the same as a university student. With the national average age of 26 to 29, students in community colleges are there for various reasons (Nitecki, 2011). Some choose the community college because of the lower tuition, while others choose the community college to update job skills in order to increase employability or change careers. However, a staggering number of students entering a community college have the need for developmental education.

### **Developmental Education Students**

Nearly 70% of incoming community college students test into at least one developmental education course (Daiek, et al., 2012). The need for developmental

education course work has risen dramatically from the late 1990s where only 42% of incoming community college students needed developmental education coursework (Saxon & Slate, 2013). Many institutions view developmental education as a stepping-stone and a separate entity from the institution as a whole in regards to persistence and completion (Engstrom & Tinto, 2008). When developmental education is viewed separately from students' academic programs, it disengages students from the institution and does not allow a smooth transition into college level courses. In addition, the length of time needed to complete developmental coursework sequence increases (Couturier, 2010).

Nationally, the average number of courses in a developmental education course sequence is five to seven courses (Melguizo et al., 2011). Therefore, a student testing into the lowest courses of the sequence would not be eligible for credit courses for over 1 year. Developmental education redesign is becoming a high priority among community colleges. Redesigning developmental education curriculum involves multiple aspects including altering the curriculum, changing the course sequencing, or even offering the course in a different teaching modality. This redesign would allow community colleges to become more competitive against proprietary institutions, which may not require these developmental courses for their students to complete certificates or degrees. When students are required to take fewer courses to complete a degree, they remain more engaged with the college, and the college may see improved completion and graduation rates (Saxon & Slate, 2013).



Proprietary schools are for profit schools that provide many certificate and degree programs similar to those offered at the community college (Outcalt & Schirmer, 2003). However, their curricula is more tailored and focused to specific courses needed for completion and career preparation and often do not require significant developmental coursework (Outcalt & Schirmer, 2003). While students may encounter difficulty transferring these credits to 4-year colleges or universities, their programs are very attractive to students needing to prepare quickly for the workforce. Therefore, the community college often loses prospects to these proprietary school competitors.

### **Developmental Education Goals**

The primary goal of developmental education programs is to provide students with opportunities to improve existing educational skill gaps. When students enter a community college with no prior college credit, they complete an assessment test. One primary test used among community colleges is ACCUPLACER, created by the College Board, and the Compass test, created by ACT (Belfield & Crosta, 2012). These tests provide an overall assessment of strengths and weaknesses in the areas of reading, English, and mathematics. Nationally, 70% of students entering higher education test into at least one developmental education course, indicating the need for remedial course work (Saxon & Slate, 2013). This high developmental course placement rate suggests students are not retaining basic skills from secondary education and are not prepared for collegiate level course work entering college (Box et al., 2012). Students who test into developmental education work with faculty to identify weak academic areas and develop them to become more prepared for collegiate success.

### **Developmental Education Faculty**

Developmental education faculty are integral to the curriculum and success of the developmental education program because of their work with incoming students unprepared for collegiate coursework. These faculty are skilled in bridging the gap for underprepared students between secondary education and college coursework (Silver-Pacuilla, Perin, & Miller, 2013). In addition, developmental education faculty play a significant role in the social development of the students both academically and socially (Brothen & Wambach, 2012).

Brothen and Wambach (2012) discussed how influential developmental education faculty can be to the persistence of underprepared students. They are the first academic interaction the student has with the college and can provide a strong foundation both academically and socially in regards to persistence. Many students in developmental education struggle with social stigma (Melguizo et al., 2011). This social stigma sometimes follows students in developmental education, implying they are not academically prepared for collegiate coursework. These students need strong support in the classroom to build academic skills and self-confidence to persist to the next course and complete their educational goals.

### **Student Attrition**

Researchers have suggested students enrolled in developmental coursework in their first semester are less likely to persist to their sophomore year or to complete a degree (Melguizo et al., 2011). Ray (2008) asserted that many factors can contribute to the high attrition rate of students in developmental education including (a) the length of

the developmental education course sequence, (b) the social stigma of developmental education, (c) financial implications indicating the lack of finance aid, and (d) the difficulty of the course curriculum. Regardless of what causes students not to persist, students' failure to persist can significantly affect the strategic plan at a community college (Silver-Pacuilla et al., 2013). A college's strategic plan is a comprehensive plan that aligns college goals to promote sustainability through academic affairs, enrollment management, and fiscal goals (Doyle, 2012).

Multiple factors that can cause flux in student attrition are often beyond the college's control (i.e., economy and declining community population); however, it is imperative the college maintain a grasp on the factors it can control (Nitecki, 2011). Students enter community colleges with diverse skills, particularly students in developmental education. The college can positively influence the retention of these students through student services such as tutoring, mentoring, and early intervention strategies (Jaggars & Hodara, 2013). However, it is imperative these strategies are addressed in a student retention plan to guide college administrative decisions related to budget, student services, and academic support (Nakajima et al., 2012).

### **Community College Leadership Perceptions**

Community college leaders are "directly linked to three core aspects of the community college mission: (1) serving 'local community needs,' (2) providing 'comprehensive educational programming,' and (3) student success (i.e., aiding students in achieving their academic and career goals)" (Young & Cutwright 2012, p. 182). Developmental education attrition directly and significantly affects these core aspects of

the community college mission. The colleges' leaders' perceptions of these core aspects and the roles they play in achieving them are significant to the success of the students and the colleges' sustainability.

Paulson (2011) discussed the importance of college leaders in identifying the role they play in student success. Student success extends beyond student affairs and the classroom. Each member of the college community plays a significant role in student success and the learning community (Paulson, 2011). How leadership perceives this role is significantly different among various areas of the college's organizational structure. While leaders may be more knowledgeable of their own job duties, they should have a clear understanding of how their individual job roles impact student success. Their perceptions of how developmental educational impacts student attrition will vary depending upon their own leadership roles and the roles they play in the organizational structure of the college.

Administrators from key areas of student services, academic affairs, and finance experience the most impact from student attrition. This impact includes a decline in enrollment that needs to be supplemented with new prospective students, students not persisting through educational goal completion, and loss in tuition revenue. Student services staff, including enrollment services administrators, will have specific perceptions of student attrition and retention focusing on sustaining or increasing enrollment. If student retention rates falter, it will be the responsibility of this student services staff to supplement enrollment numbers by increasing new student enrollment or developing new retention strategies for current students. With contributing factors such as a struggling

economy, declining high school enrollment, and limited financial resources, this is not always possible. In addition, student affairs staff in retention services will need to focus heavily on the resources and services provided to developmental education students that keep them engaged and persisting.

### **Student Services**

Slotnick (2010) indicated college administrators found student engagement to be a contributing factor in student persistence. Working with first year students, particularly those in developmental education, is a rising need nationally (Box et al., 2012). Many colleges and universities have adopted first year experience programs to address the very specific needs of these first time college students and their academic struggles in developmental education. Researchers have indicated that staff and faculty engagement affects student persistence, student growth and responsibility, navigation of the college, transitional learning, and individual students' issues (Barnes & Piland, 2011).

A strong commitment to student success does not strictly lie with the staff and administrators of student services. Student services serve as a bridge between enrollment and academics as well as between academics and degree completion. It is the role of student services to assist the student in the matriculation process, provide a solid foundation of an academic support system, and provide students with the proper resources. If student support resources for at risk students are available, the attrition of students in developmental education will improve. These services include orientation, college success courses, academic advising, early alert and interventions, and campus

programming. In addition, degree completion percentage will increase as well (Duggan & Williams, 2011).

### **Conceptual Framework**

Lee and Roth (2009) discussed how using a conceptual framework within higher education can allow various stakeholders to use knowledge transfer and sharing to improve practices, policies, and procedures within a higher education institution. The conceptual framework of this study is social constructivism. This framework concept will play a vital role in this study by examining the institution's organizational structure. In addition, it will be important to explore how stakeholders' perceptions of developmental education and student attrition are impacted by their roles within the college's organizational structure.

Social constructivism theory is based upon on how individuals learn and interact within a social group (Kim, 2011). For the purposes of this study, the social groups are the roles within the college's organizational structure. The role each administrator plays in this social group will provide a variety of perceptions regarding developmental education and how it affects student attrition. In this study, I will focus on the social groups within academic affairs, student affairs, and finance.

In addition, senior administration's perspective of implementation of changes and the top down approach becomes much more effective and supportive (Lee, 2010). The hierarchy and institutional structure will be important to examine since they influence perceptions of administrators in academic affairs, student affairs, and finance on how developmental education affects student attrition.

## **Literature Review Summary**

Community colleges are a national leader in providing higher education to postsecondary completers and adult learners returning to education (Bailey, Jeong, & Cho, 2010). However, many students entering a community college are not academically prepared to complete the rigor of collegiate coursework. Over 70% of the 6.5 million students enrolled in community college require at least one developmental education course after completion of the placement exam (Belfield & Crosta, 2012). However, many of these students do not persist through completion of their original educational goals due to many factors including financial restraints, personal issues, length of developmental educational coursework, and the social stigma of developmental education or the lack of ability to complete the curricula (Jaggars & Hodara, 2013). Community college administrators work closely with developmental education goals, curriculum, and faculty to provide a developmental education program that effectively prepares underprepared students for collegiate coursework. Their perceptions of the developmental education program and its effect on student attrition allows them to examine and adjust programs or student services to promote student success. The ultimate goal for students in developmental education is for them to become more prepared for student success and to achieve their intended educational goals.

## **Implications**

By examining administrator perceptions of developmental education and how developmental education impacts student attrition, I was able to identify areas for faculty development that could possibly improve the retention rate of these students. I initially

had to understand how administrators who implement curriculum and programming perceive developmental education. This local community college has experienced declining enrollment for the past 3 years, largely contributing to decreased retention of current students, particularly in developmental education.

A possible project could be to suggest a redesign of the developmental education program. A redesign of the developmental education program could assist students in skill development that would make them more successful in the community college. In addition, the college could create partnerships with secondary school systems to improve students' academic skills prior to entering the community college.

Another possible project could be to suggest the development of a comprehensive student success center or first year experience program. While the college has a student success course, it is only required for students testing into two or more developmental education courses and is only 1 semester in length. A more comprehensive program that provides support beyond the first semester could enhance the student experience and provide support in multiple areas including academic and social areas. This concept of first year experience programs has become a national trend with positive results in reducing student attrition (Nelson, Quinn, Marrington, & Clarke, 2012). Students would be retained at a higher rate, completing their programs of study, both positively influencing the fiscal management of the college.

### **Summary**

Developmental education is a significant component of the current structure of community colleges nationally (Lake & Mrozinski, 2011). With more students entering



community colleges annually, developmental education will continue to be a need within the community college structure. In addition, as colleges increase graduation and completion rates, more effective developmental education curriculum might advance students through their intended educational goal. Student attrition, if not addressed, will continue to be a focus among community colleges.

In Section 2, I discuss the methodology of the study. I examined community college administrators' perceptions of developmental education and how developmental education impacts student attrition. I discuss the primary methodology of this qualitative study, selection of participants, design of the study, and how the data was analyzed. In Section 3, I discuss the doctoral project including how the project genre was determined from the study's findings, the development of the project and implementation, how the project will be evaluated for effectiveness and growth, the implications of the project, and its impact upon social change within the local community college and community. In Section 4, I discuss reflections and conclusions of the project's strengths, limitations, and how I developed as a scholar, project developer, and social change leader.

## **Section 2: The Methodology**

### **Introduction**

Developmental education student attrition can significantly impact the sustainability of a community college. Since community colleges are open access/enrollment institutions, students enter the community college at various academic skill levels. Nationally, 70% of incoming community college students need at least one developmental education course, and nearly 50% do not persist to their next semester (Bahr, 2012; Guydish, 2011; Nakajima et al., 2012). It is evident that this high number of students who are not persisting can significantly affect college revenue, completion rates, and enrollment. How administrators in the college units of student affairs, finance, and academic affairs perceive developmental education and how it affects student attrition can shift power both positively and negatively within the college infrastructure due to their roles in decision making for the college.

Bogdan and Bilken (2007) discussed five suggestions when choosing a study, including (a) being practical and choosing a study of reasonable size and complexity, (b) choosing a study the researcher is not directly involved in, (c) being open and flexible, (d) studying something of interest, and (e) studying something of importance (p. 121). Researchers have suggested that students enrolled in developmental coursework in their first semester are less likely to persist to their sophomore year or to complete a degree (Bahr, 2012; Bettinger & Long, 2008; Guydish, 2011). This attrition of students in developmental education can have a significant impact on a college. Examining administrator perceptions of how developmental education affects student attrition was

the focus of the study because of their significant involvement in the college structure and decision-making.

The type of design chosen was a qualitative case study. Merriam (2009) explained that qualitative research explores uncovering phenomenon rather than simply understanding the cause and effect of a situation. This research design type allowed me to gain insight into how multiple college unit administrators view developmental education and its effect on student attrition. Using a qualitative design allowed the participants to share perceptions and insights through open-ended questions, allowing me to identify common themes. In addition, the study's findings provided a clearer picture on how college decision-makers view a significant area of the college. The study's findings assisted in constructing a direct approach to the doctoral project, identifying key areas of internal education, communication, and professional development needed.

### **Research Design and Approach**

Various types of qualitative research designs exist including case studies, grounded theory, and ethnographic designs. Qualitative case studies assist the researcher to look for meaning and understanding of the identified research topic through an inductive strategy (Merriam, 2009). While ethnographic studies are similar to case studies by examining a phenomenon, ethnographic research designs are rooted in study setting and how it influences the research data (Merriam, 2009). This design is not appropriate for this study because the setting did not influence the developmental education program. Grounded theory designs focus on developing a theory as a bottom up approach, developing a theory and working to prove the theory (Lodico, Spaulding, &

Voegtler, 2010). This design is not appropriate because I was seeking perceptions, not already known. Therefore, a grounded theory approach is not appropriate. While each of these qualitative designs has its own strength, the case study allowed me to gain a better understanding of the perceptions of community college administrators in academic affairs, student affairs, and finance regarding how they feel developmental education affects student attrition. Lodico et al., (2010) indicated, “in case studies, no one qualitative method is used. Instead multiple techniques, including interviews, observations, and at times, the examination of documents and artifacts, are employed” (p. 269). For the purposes of this study, in-depth interviewing with open-ended questioning identified administrator perceptions of developmental education, organizational structure, and how developmental education affects student attrition.

The rationale for selecting the case study was to provide an overarching view of perceptions among various decision makers within the community college. These administrators have significant influence over the overall sustainability of the college. Their perceptions of this perennial problem (developmental education attrition) within this local community college assisted me in developing a doctoral project that addresses the perceptions and issues surrounding developmental education and its effect on student attrition. When students do not persist, the college is affected in aspects related to academics, enrollment management, and financial sustainability. To understand the impact developmental education student attrition has on these college units, a qualitative case study rather than a quantitative design was more effective.

Quantitative research design data are collected and reported in numerical form (Merriam, 2009). Popular quantitative designs include descriptive survey and experimental research designs. Descriptive survey is designed to identify perceptions through opinions and beliefs collected in a survey design (Lodico et al., 2010). The limitation to this design is that the researcher is unable to ask more probing questions through an interview process that would clarify or dig deeper into identified issues. The experimental design tests a hypothesis or a cause and effect relationship (Lodico et al., 2010). For the purposes of this study, I identified perceptions of administrators on how developmental education impacts student attrition. Without open-ended questions, I would have been unable to further explore into the meanings of the administrators' answers or ask follow up questions with quantitative designs. In addition, I was not testing a hypothesis; rather, I was attempting to explore administrators' perceptions of developmental education and how it influences student attrition (Merriam, 2009).

### **Study Setting**

The setting of this study was a large community college with five campuses in both urban and suburban areas, spreading over 10 counties with an annual credit enrollment of over 20,000. The full-time student population consists of 32% of the total population, and the average age of the students is 23. The part-time population consists of 64% of the total population, and the average age of these students is 28. The population also includes 62% females and 38% males, respectively. The college's graduation/completion rate is 12%, which is consistent with the national average of 12 to 16% of colleges its size (Schneider & Yin, 2012).

With nearly 71% of incoming students testing into at least one developmental course and an attrition rate of nearly 50% of developmental education students (fall to spring), the impact on the college's sustainability is significant (Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, 2013). Research nationally has shown that the attrition rate within higher education is reportedly higher among community college students compared to students enrolled in 4-year colleges or universities, particularly among students in developmental education (Arnsperger, 2008; Bahr, 2012; Guydish, 2011).

Purposeful sampling procedures were used to select participants for the case study (Creswell, 2012). This allowed for a mixture of administrators that would have very different views and opinions regarding developmental education and its impact on student attrition. An administrator from various areas and departments of the college important to this study included administrators from student services, academic affairs, and finance. This cross representation of administrators within the institution allowed each subgroup to be represented. The sampling focused on three administrators from each subgroup. This provided varied perceptions from each administrator in each department, allowing for identification of major themes.

### **Participants**

The participants of this qualitative study were community college administrative leaders within key college units including enrollment management, academic affairs, and finance. These units were chosen because of the significant impact student attrition can have on these key college units. Student attrition among developmental education students can negatively affect college enrollment, degree completion, and revenue.

Therefore, the administrators in these college units provided insight of the research topic and the influence it has on the college's sustainability.

### **Criteria for Selecting Participants**

A participant pool of 10 administrators was selected, three from each college unit, including student affairs, academic affairs, and finance. The final administrator was the college's president. My sole focus was administrator perceptions of developmental education and how it affects student attrition. These administrators have significant decision-making power within their designated college unit regarding budget, student services, and academic offerings, thus administrators instead of faculty were selected for this study. These administrators each brought expertise from their areas in relation to the research topic of developmental education and student attrition.

### **Procedures for Gaining Access to Participants**

A researcher-participant relationship was established between all participants and myself. Since I work closely with these individuals on a regular basis, it was important for me to establish myself as the researcher of this study. While I have an established rapport with the participants, it was important for me to clearly outline the study and how the interview process would be conducted. The explanation of the process created a relationship related to the study and not my full time position at the college.

Once approval was received from Walden University's IRB (approval number 08-05-14-0302972) to conduct the study, I conducted internal recruitment within the college, identifying senior administrators in the college units of academic affairs, student affairs, and finance. I sent an initial recruitment email via campus email to each identified

administrator. The email served as an introductory letter explaining the purpose of the study, highlighting confidentiality and seeking agreement to participate. Once each administrator agreed to participate in the study, I scheduled their interview day and time. As an employee of the college, I had the ability to use an on campus neutral location to conduct the interviews. All follow-up questions occurred via phone, and member checking procedures were conducted in the same campus locations.

### **Measures for Ethical Protection**

Reliability and validity of a study relies heavily upon strong ethical standards of the researcher and the study (Merriam, 2009). It was imperative that I created and adhered to ethical guidelines and standards during the entire process of the study including interaction with participants, data collection, and analysis. Merriam (2009) identified core characteristics of ethical issues including the explanation and purpose of the inquiry, cooperation, assessment of risk, acquiring participation consent, maintenance of private information, the aptitude and mental stability of the interviewer, identification of an ethical advisor, data collection boundaries, and ethical versus legal conduct. These core characteristics were addressed in the informed consent and were reviewed with each participant prior to the beginning of the interview. In addition, I employed member checking and peer debriefing procedures to ensure reliability and validity of the study.

In the member checking procedures, I provided summative data to the participants to ensure the data were collected accurately and interpreted properly (Bogden & Bilken, 2007). Peer debriefing was conducted with an impartial, unbiased peer, who reviewed the interview questions prior to the commencement of the interviews. In addition, this peer



reviewed the collected data and findings and provided their feedback and professional opinions. The peer was a colleague not associated with the college, however, has a strong background in higher education serving as a student affairs administrator for over 20 years, which brought credibility to the study (Bogdan & Bilken, 2007). This peer debriefer complied with the standards of research and signed a confidentiality agreement. I used these ethical standards to ensure all proper measures were followed throughout the study.

## **Data Collection**

### **Data Collection Instruments**

Creswell (2012) indicated that in qualitative research, particularly case studies, the researcher can use various data collection instruments such as interviews and document analysis. For this study case study, interviews were the primary and only mode of data collection. The research question drove specific interview questions that explored each administrator's perceptions of why students do not persist in developmental education, defining the administrator's role in the organizational structure and his or her perceptions of current and needed strategies to address the attrition problem among students in developmental education.

### **Interviews**

Semistructured interviews were conducted with each of the participants asking 10 open-ended probing questions regarding their understanding of developmental education, their role at the institution, their perceptions on how developmental education affects student attrition, and how student attrition impacts their decision making and

administrative areas (Appendix B). Semistructured interviews allowed me the opportunity to explore issues through the predetermined list of interview questions. The semistructured interview design also gave me the flexibility to ask follow-up questions if other relevant topics were exposed during the interview (Merriam, 2009). During the first two interviews, the topic of open access versus open admissions came to the surface. Due to the nature of the topic and the subsequent conversation, it was important to explore this topic with the remainder of the participants. The interviews were, on average, 45 minutes in length. After the selection of the participants, three from each of the identified college units, I scheduled the interviews allowing a 2-hour block of time, giving an appropriate amount of time to discuss procedures with each participant as well as develop a rapport with the participants.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

Merriam (2009) discussed three ways to collect data during an interview including tape recording with participant permission, note taking during the interview, and finally recording everything post interview. This final method of recording all data postinterview is the least effective, as the researcher may not remember and record the data properly. The most effective is audio recording, which ensures all information is recorded accurately. My method of data collection was audio recording, and I took few hand-written notes to avoid participant distraction. Notes taken during the interview served as reminders for follow-up questions. This allowed me to remember key points or information shared to probe later and not interrupt the participant. There was an option for a follow-up interview or phone call to participants to clarify any data collected during

the initial interview. However, I only needed to conduct two follow-up phone calls with two participants to clarify collected data that were inaudible in the audio recording. All recorded data were marked and cataloged with the participants' initials only. In addition, all transcribed interviews are stored on my computer and a flash drive with participant initials. As the interviews were transcribed, I created an Excel spreadsheet tracking key messages in the responses from the interview questions. I inserted them into the spreadsheet and color-coded them according to similar responses. This allowed me to identify emerging major themes and categories of those themes.

### **Participant Access**

As an employee of the college, I had an established rapport with each of the identified participants, allowing for open communication. An informed consent letter (Appendix C) was given to each participant prior to the start of the interview. The letter included a statement of volunteer nature, my contact information as the principal investigator, the research topic, an overview of the methodology, and how the study's findings will be reported and used (Lodico et al., 2010). I sent an initial recruitment letter and held an initial conversation with each administrator, asking them to participate voluntarily in the study through a qualitative interview format. I clarified the confidentiality of the study and that their participation would not affect their current employment status. I secured a neutral location within the college that allowed me to conduct interviews during nonworking hours and scheduled each interview, allowing a 2-hour block of time.

### **Role of the Researcher**

Currently, I serve as a student affairs administrator at the research setting. I have a peer colleague or a subordinate relationship with the participants and do not have a supervisory role over any of the administrators in this study. The administrators within my own department, student affairs, were peers and my own supervisor. The targeted administrators in finance and academic affairs were also colleagues. These relationships did not affect the interview process or case study design. In fact, my relationship with the participants enhanced the interview experience as I have an established rapport with these administrators as colleagues. In addition, this case study and doctoral project have the ability to significantly enhance the developmental education program, increase completion and positively affect enrollment and revenue.

One bias I brought initially to this study was a strong belief that developmental education significantly impacts enrollment management because of the attrition of developmental education students. As the college's enrollment manager I made assumptions there would be a correlation between student attrition and the developmental education course sequence length or curriculum. To me, this possibly would have explained why the college has experienced an enrollment decline over the past three years. To address this bias, I entered the study with an open mind, specifically choosing to do the study from an administrator's perspective. The perceptions from various administrators within college units such as student affairs, academic affairs and finance assisted in identifying more insight into developmental education student attrition. These front line administrators from various college units highlighted issues not previously

considered. I have nearly 15 years of experience in enrollment management. In addition, I have served as an adjunct faculty member in developmental education at a previous institution. My professional experience enhanced this study and the interview process as due to my understanding of developmental education, enrollment management, and academic affairs. Finally, my professional relationship with the office of finance and experience allows me to understand how student attrition negatively impacts college revenue and the fiscal operating budget.

### **Data Analysis**

#### *How and When Will Data be Collected*

Bogdan and Bilken (2007) discussed how qualitative research is analyzed inductively. They also identified that qualitative researchers “do not search out data or evidence to prove or disprove hypothesis they hold before entering the study; rather, the abstractions are built as the particulars that have been gathered are grouped together” (Bogdan & Bilken, 2007, p. 6). For the purposes of this study, the collection of data regarding administrators’ perceptions of developmental education and how it affects student attrition was the primary focus. In addition, their perceptions of the organizational structure of the college and their roles in this social group identified the components of the conceptual framework, social constructivism theory. The collected data was coded to identify major working themes (Bogden and Biklen, 2007).

I transcribed written transcripts for each recorded interview. This allowed me to develop follow-up or clarifying questions, as needed. I recorded these transcribed interviews on a flash drive and a file on my computer coding each transcription with the

administrator's initials to maintain confidentiality. I created an excel spreadsheet to record each interview question and administrator response. I then examined the spreadsheet to identify repetition of key words from similar context that emerged from the interviewee answers. Once I was able to identify common key terms that were emerging from multiple questions, I was able to identify the top four themes.

Bogden and Bilken (2007) discuss family coded themes, an inductive analysis type, which allowed me to group information collected through the interview process. Inductive analysis focuses on building abstractions from data collected, rather than disproving a hypothesis (Bogden & Bilken, 2007). Setting and context codes included information related to the college's developmental education program, student attrition and fiscal operations. I was better able to understand how the participants felt about the developmental education program and why they feel students do not persist.

The perspectives held by subjects coding allowed me to code information collected regarding perceptions of the developmental education program and how the administrator's role in the college's infrastructure influences those perceptions. Finally, the event codes allowed me to code data related to specific events within the college units that influence decisions regarding enrollment management, resources for developmental education students and fiscal management.

#### *Evidence of Quality and Procedures*

A peer debriefer was identified and signed an agreement of confidentiality. The peer debriefer reviewed the interview questions, data and findings to provide feedback and professional opinion. This person does not have a professional relationship with the

setting of the study, however has an extensive background in higher education administration, specifically within a community college. Working with this peer debriefer allowed me to maintain integrity of the study. In addition, following each interview I provided the interview transcript to each interviewee for member checking. This ensured I accurately recorded and interpreted the interviewee's comments and participation in the interview process.

#### *Procedures for Dealing With Discrepant Cases*

Data providing a variant perspective is a discrepant case (Bogden & Bilken, 2007). I identified discrepant cases when they did not fall into the major coded themes that were established or emerged. Examining these discrepant cases was important to the study's findings allowing me to show a balance to analyzing all data in a non-biased way. Some counter evidence was just as important to the study and shed light on additional reasons for developmental education student attrition.

#### **Data Analysis Results**

Ten administrators participated in the study, nine from the college units of Student Affairs, Academic Affairs, and Finance. The tenth administrator was the college's president. The administrators were invited based upon their status of administrator, length of time at the college (at least 1 year), and by the college unit, in which they are employed. I invited the administrators to participate through email correspondence, and all ten asked to participate agreed. I scheduled each administrator's interview during non-work hours at the campus, in a neutral location, conducting all ten interviews over a one-month period. During the initial moments of the interview, I

established a rapport with the interviewee and thoroughly explained the informed consent form, including the background of the study and my interest in the topic. Each administrator signed the consent and I proceeded into the interview. I audio recorded each interview and then transcribed the interviews after completion, storing them on a secured flash drive. During the interview and transcription process, I used only the initials of each administrator to protect his or her identity.

### **Study Findings**

The statement of the problem in this study focuses on the local community college's increasing attrition rates of developmental education students over a five year period. This increasing attrition rate has affected many areas of the college including academic affairs, enrollment management, and fiscal operations. It was imperative to identify major themes from each of the administrators that would address this problem statement. The major themes from the data analysis include reasons for the high attrition rate, strategies that can be employed to address the high attrition rate and how the college's organizational structure influences perceptions of developmental education and it affects attrition.

#### *Reasons for the High Attrition Rate*

The first major theme identified reasons for the high attrition rate among developmental education students. Of the ten administrators, many identified the following five categories: (a) student personal problems, (b) difficulty balancing life and school (c) unrealistic goals, (d) lack of commitment (e) under preparedness and a lengthy developmental education course sequence as key reasons for the high attrition rate.



The administrators felt student personal problems was one of the top reasons for the high attrition rate, which issues surrounding financial obstacles, illness, caring for children, and the inability to balance school and life. The average age of the college's students is 27 years of age; therefore, many are working adults trying to balance school with personal responsibilities (Office of Institutional Research, 2013). The administrator participants stated, "juggling school and work and just personal issues becomes difficult for our students"; "the personal issues they have, I don't think we have services for that"; and "students have baggage".

The course sequencing was another major category within this theme. If a student places in the lowest developmental education course sequence at the college, they may not be qualified for a credit course for nearly 2 years (Office of Institutional Research, 2013). This is very discouraging for students, as an Associate's degree would not take over 4 years to complete. The administrator participants indicated they felt; "extended time in the course sequence"; "course sequencing takes too long"; and "taking too long to get through the coursework" were contributing factors to the high attrition rate among developmental education students.

The administrator participants felt there were various factors that affect student persistence among developmental education students. Personal problems and the significant length of the course sequence were mentioned in eight of the ten participant interviews. These significant reasons are important to the next major theme, strategies that could be employed to address the high attrition rate. The strategies developed can

address the above identified reasons, creating a more strategic focus to address the high attrition rate and affect change on a long term basis.

### *Strategies to Address the High Attrition Rate*

The second major theme that emerged focused on, what strategies could be implemented to assist in addressing the high attrition rate among developmental education students. The top categories identified were the need for faculty professional development, more faculty and student engagement, more support for these students which have specialized needs, the need for faculty to employ new teaching methods and more support in the classroom. Of the ten participants interviewed there was a strong emphasis on employing new classroom methods and faculty being trained to identify and provide the support these students need. The administrator participants stated; “teaching teachers how to teach”; “more faculty in engagement with students”; faculty needing to employ some new methods in the classroom” and “professional development for faculty, our developmental education students come with issues” are important strategies that could address the high attrition among developmental education students. These were apparent in the third major theme identifying how the college’s organizational structure influences perceptions of development education.

### *College’s Organizational Structure*

The third major theme examined how the college’s organizational structure influences the administrators’ perceptions of developmental education and its impact on student attrition. Major categories noted by the administrator participants in this theme include “concerns with developmental education combined into the discipline”; “adjuncts

not full time faculty teaching developmental education courses”, “there is a struggle getting them college ready due to their diverse needs”. The college’s developmental education program is not a separate academic unit; it is a part of the academic discipline. Therefore, many of the full time faculty wish to teach higher-level courses, possibly allowing developmental education to be taught by adjuncts. Students in developmental education need more classroom support than students in higher-level courses and part time faculty simply do not receive the professional development skills to assist these students. In addition, full time faculty who may also teach developmental education courses are often employing antiquated teaching methods using “more formal approaches like traditional lecture based teaching”. They are not always incorporating more modern styles of teaching methods that may lend better to multiple learning preferences. While these major themes brought clarity to administrator perceptions, a few discrepant cases existed.

Discrepant cases existed in the data analysis. While these cases did not emerge into major themes or categories, they were somewhat relevant to the study’s overall findings. These discrepant cases seemed to develop from perceptions of administrators who are not closely connected with developmental education within their daily job functions. When discussing how the college’s organizational structure influences their perceptions or how developmental education attrition affects their daily job functions some discrepancies existed from administrators with less direct student interactions included; “it doesn’t influence me at all. I have leadership to deal with that”; “on the surface not much”; “I’m a resource not an authority figure so it’s difficult”.

While discussing reasons for the high attrition rate, discrepancies existed outside the emerged themes. These discrepancies focused upon “no career development discussions” and “restrictions in placement”. It is imperative to note, these discrepant cases were from administrators whose daily job functions deal solely with placement and career development.

Finally when discussing strategies to employ or how to alter current strategies to address the high attrition rate some discrepancies included; “faculty informing us to just find better students”; “what retention strategies, honestly we have none”. This discrepancy was interesting as it was a perception of an administrator within student retention, indicating strategies do exist - they just are not effective.

While these discrepant cases existed, it shed light on the study by identifying frustrations through perceptions. I could see the visible frustration during the interviews from administrators who have unsuccessfully attempted to affect change over some period of time. This frustration is an important aspect of the study’s findings because it shows the need for a cultural shift in how the college serves developmental education students. Faculty spend the majority of the time with these students, educating them and assisting with the personal struggles and needs, as well. Therefore, faculty development will train faculty to assist these students in meeting their educational and personal goals, in and out of the classroom.

### **Summary**

Nationally and locally developmental education is a discussion among community college administration (Doyle, 2012). Many students entering community college are in

need of developmental education coursework. This trend lends itself to the need of a strong developmental education program. However, many of these students are not persisting to the next semester or completing their intended educational goals. This high attrition rate among students in developmental education impacts many areas of the college including student affairs, academic affairs, and fiscal operations. When new students do not persist, enrollment management administrators must focus on creating an enrollment management plan that focuses on recruiting more students to offset the retention decline. In addition, if these students are not persisting they are not completing degrees at the community college.

Non-completion of degrees, certificates or career programs can significantly affect the sustainability of programs offered. The college also becomes less attractive to prospective students when the college's graduation or completion rate is lower than its competitors. Finally, when students do not persist, and enrollment is not supplemented with new students, the college suffers an enrollment decline. Enrollment decline can significantly impact the fiscal management of the college with the lack of revenue. This can result in severe budget cuts and elimination of positions. Cutting the budget and eliminating positions can impact current students by providing less resources and individual attention from faculty and staff, which many community colleges identify as a core reason for student success (Melguizo et al., 2011).

In summary, a qualitative study focusing on a social constructivism framework was conducted. Kim (2008) discusses how social constructivism theory, in regards to learning, is more successful through social engagement, for the purposes of this study

engagement between the college and developmental education students. For the college to enhance and maintain sustainability through increased enrollment and completion rates it must engage developmental education students to decrease the high attrition rate among this group of students. This study focuses on the perceptions of administrators in key decision-making roles at the college who determine enrollment, financial, academic and student success goals and strategies related to the development and implementation of services and programs for developmental education students. In addition, the college administrators serve as leaders of the college as a social group, promoting and enhancing learning through collaborative decision-making.

Through purposeful sampling, three community college administrators were identified from each college unit including student affairs, academic affairs, and finance. The final administrator was the college's president. Recorded structured interviews with each participant were conducted focusing on questions that provided insight on their perceptions of college culture, structural organization, developmental education and how developmental education affects student attrition. Once all ten interviews were completed, they were transcribed to identify emerging themes and codes. These emerging themes allowed me to develop a doctoral project focusing on professional development for faculty teaching. In addition, member checking and work with a debriefer were conducted to ensure integrity of the study.

### **Section 3: The Project**

#### **Introduction**

In this study, I focused on community college administrator perceptions of developmental education and how it affects student attrition. The study's findings suggested the need for a faculty training program for developmental education faculty. The data analysis from this study determined key areas of focus regarding why developmental education students do not persist at a high rate within this local setting, including student personal issues or concerns, student inability to complete coursework in a timely manner, and faculty use of teaching modalities that do not serve the needs of developmental education students.

#### **Description and Goals**

The project for my doctoral study is a faculty training program for developmental education faculty. The faculty training program is an intensive 4-day professional development program for faculty in the math, English, and reading disciplines who teach developmental education coursework. Developmental education students come with varying issues that extend beyond the classroom, which can affect their educational performance. This professional development opportunity will highlight how faculty can identify students who are struggling academically, refer students to campus services for assistance (including tutoring and personal counseling.), and employ new teaching modalities that address a wider range of learning preference needs. Finally, the training program will introduce faculty to new curriculum designs, which may assist in addressing the length of time the students are enrolled in developmental education coursework.

Researchers have suggested that students who participate in modular or hybrid course delivery modalities have the ability to regulate their pace through the course content (Booth et al., 2014). This ability to regulate pace allows the student to work quickly through mastered course content. In addition, it allows the faculty and student to work on problem curriculum areas at a slower pace to ensure mastery of skills before moving to the sequential area of content.

The goals of the project are to (a) enhance the classroom experience for developmental education students, (b) increase faculty and student engagement, (c) assist faculty in identifying and employing new teaching modalities to address various skill levels, and (d) improve retention of developmental education students.

### **Rationale**

In this study, key themes emerged including how the college's organizational structure influenced administrator perceptions of developmental education, the reasons for the high attrition rate among developmental education students including personal problems, and the inability to complete the coursework and what strategies can be employed to assist the high attrition rate among developmental education students.

The data analyzed from the study identified key areas administrators felt needed to be addressed to improve the persistence of developmental education students. The first area of improvement identified reasons for the high attrition rate. Study participants felt developmental education students have specific issues outside of the classroom that contribute to their attrition including financial and personal problems. Students in developmental education first enter the classroom with lower skill sets and are often not



prepared for the academic rigor of collegiate coursework. The participants of this study felt this unpreparedness coupled with personal problems outside of the classroom are significant reasons for the high rate of attrition. While many student affairs staff within the college are trained to work with personal issues or can refer students to specialized services, faculty may have less experience in this area of expertise.

The second area of needed improvement focused on the implementation of new teaching methods in the classroom that would foster student and faculty engagement. Researchers have indicated that faculty and student engagement in and outside of the classroom promotes student success (Alsharif & Yongyue, 2014). Developing and implementing new innovative teaching methods allows more classroom discussion, critical thinking, and student development, which a traditional classroom lecture may lack. The participants of this study indicated the current teaching methods employed at the college may not address the varying learning styles and preferences of the diverse student population, specifically developmental education students.

The third area of improvement identified the need to address the length of the developmental education course sequence. Many developmental education courses have students with various skills sets in one classroom. Introducing multiple types of curriculum delivery modalities, including modular curriculum, allows students to proceed through the course work at their own pace. Another example of a curriculum delivery modality are hybrid blended courses, which allow the faculty to incorporate online educational modalities to supplement and reinforce classroom instruction and discussions (Daniels, 2013).

These three areas of improvement center on the classroom and assisting faculty in identifying new and innovative ways to interact with, engage, educate, and retain developmental education students. Therefore, the genre selected was a professional development opportunity for faculty who have direct contact with educating developmental education students. While the faculty are content experts in their academic discipline, it is imperative to provide them with the skills and resources necessary effectively to assist developmental education students' transition into college level course work. Improving this transition will assist in decreasing the attrition rate among developmental education students and improve completion and graduation rates.

### **Review of the Literature**

The literature review includes cited sources including scholarly articles, research publications, and peer-reviewed articles, focusing on primary research within the past 5 years. Primary search engines used were Education Resource Information Center (ERIC), Proquest, Google Search, and college websites. The word search included the following terms singularly or in combination: *community college, developmental education, faculty engagement, student engagement, teaching methods, teaching modalities, faculty development, and faculty training.*

The literature review is organized into four parts including teaching methods, classroom curriculum modalities, faculty professional development, and faculty and student engagement. The literature review provides an overview of the importance of current trends in teaching methods and new teaching modalities that adapt to a variety of

student learning preferences as well as faculty and student engagement to promote success in the classroom and on-going faculty professional development.

### **Teaching Methods**

Providing diverse and flexible teaching methods is important to new and innovative pedagogy in the classroom (Samfira & Faragau-Dragos, 2014). Throughout the years, teaching methods and the classroom environment have changed and developed through increased use of technology and a developed understanding of how students learn, in other words, their preferred learning style.

Within the classroom, various learning preferences exist. A learning preference is the type of delivery a student prefers that helps him or her retain more information from within the classroom. When discussing best practices and the 150 teaching methods that currently exist including expository, conversative, communicative, and demonstrative, to name a few, it is important for faculty to understand that each student in their classroom has unique learning needs (Drummond, 2015). Howard Gardner, a Harvard University professor, developed the multiple intelligences theory in 1983 (as cited in Carter, Bishop, & Kravits, 2012). This multiple intelligence theory indicates that each human being uses a combination of eight multiple intelligences including “verbal-linguistic, logical-mathematical, bodily-kinesthetic, visual-spatial, interpersonal, intrapersonal, musical and naturalistic” (Carter et al., 2012, p. 61). While each individual has a dominate way of learning, Gardner felt these intelligences “almost never function insolation” (as cited in Carter et al., 2012, p. 60). Therefore, in the classroom, it would be impossible for teachers to adapt their dominate teaching preference to all students effectively. Alsharif

and Yongyue (2014) discussed how student learning and success can be influenced by the faculty's instruction methods and overall classroom demeanor.

Teaching preference is the instructor's preferred method of instruction in the classroom. Some examples of teaching methods are lecture, media, small group discussion, and interactive learning using technology. A recent study found that students, because of its restrictiveness in nature, less appreciate a lecture-based classroom (Samfira & Faragau-Dragos, 2014). In addition, students do not feel they are active participants in the learning process while participating in a lecture based classroom environment (Samfira & Faragau-Dragos, 2014). With one instructor to an average classroom of 20, it is difficult to adapt to every learning preference that exists among the students (Office of Institutional Research, 2013). However, employing a combination of teaching methods allows the instructor to create an interactive classroom addressing various needs for students who may be visual, kinesthetic, or auditory learners. Some new trends exist in modular, open source, and hybrid teaching methods and classroom modalities.

### **Classroom Curriculum Modalities**

As technology has grown and developed, traditional classroom modalities have become less effective (Jaggars, Hodara, Cho, & Xu. 2015). The introduction of new trends in curriculum delivery has been important, particularly to developmental education. Researchers have suggested a common concern among developmental education students who do not persist is the course sequence because it takes too long (Maue, 2012). Students who have multiple developmental education courses to complete lengthen their time to complete an associate's degree at the community college. New

classroom modalities like modular curriculum can address this issue by shortening the length of time students are in developmental education.

Course placement occurs during the initial phases of enrollment for many students. Colleges often assess students' readiness for collegiate coursework through multiple placement entrance points through placement exams, prior college coursework, or secondary education grade point averages (Horn et al., 2009). Often the placement exams place students into courses who score within a certain range. Placing students by a range score may determine students at various levels within the range are in one class. Throughout the semester, each student is going to experience periods of being ahead or behind the remainder of the class. Modular classroom modalities allow students to work at their own pace with guidance from the instructor (Betts & Smith, 1998). Therefore, students who tested at the high range can work ahead of the lower range students. This flexibility of learning in the classroom allows students to be successful based on their learning development pace.

Another example of innovative teaching modalities is in a hybrid or "flipped" classroom. Hybrid curriculum delivery methods are a mixture of classroom based and online instruction. While distance education has been in existence since the late 1800s, it has evolved with the use of technology (Doering & Veletsianos, 2008). Hybrid courses allow the instructor to infuse technology into the curriculum, which reinforces lecture through a kinesthetic task online (Jaggars et al., 2015). In addition, the use of online forums such as discussion boards can enhance student engagement, improving student persistence (Brooks & Bippus, 2012).

## **Faculty and Student Engagement**

Faculty and student engagement is an essential part of the higher education experience, allowing students to develop and grow both academically and personally (Troy, 2013). Community college students, more particularly developmental education students, enter college at various academic and personal levels. Some students may be entering from secondary education not equipped with the necessary academic skills to be successful in college level coursework, or some may be reentering education after a long absence.

Either scenario brings the possible need for developmental education coursework as well as the need for the student to be supported in the classroom. Research has indicated that over 60% of students who engage in their college with their faculty, staff, or student organizations are retained from semester to semester and over 70% from year to year (Daniels, 2013). However, it is imperative that instructors remain active and engaged in the process as well by developing an effective learning environment, and they are often assessing their teaching methods and deliverance of curriculum (Malott, Hall, Sheety-Moore, Krell, & Cardaciotto, 2014). Implementation of new teaching methods, modalities, and improving student engagement are important skills to highlight within professional development.

## **Faculty Professional Development**

As education evolves, continuous professional development is very important to the success of both the faculty and students in the classroom. Professional development, or as one researcher indicated, professional learning, provides faculty the opportunity to

improve their teaching methods and to improve the recognition of student needs in the classroom (Bickerstaff & Edgecombe, 2012, p. 1). This recognition is vital to the success of developmental education students because of their very diverse needs. Empowering faculty to introduce new teaching methods and curriculum delivery modalities can only enhance the classroom and should be the primary focus of ongoing faculty professional development (Altstadt, 2012). In addition to the content, the delivery method and frequency play an important role in the faculty professional development program (Herman, 2012).

Faculty are also learners with very diverse needs and varying learning preferences. Research has indicated an initial development program with refresher sessions and a resource tool kit are most effective for longevity and successful implementation (Vaill & Testori, 2012). The resource tool kit allows faculty to revisit the training materials, share best practices with colleagues, and remain abreast of innovations in teaching (Vaill & Testori, 2012). In addition, there is an opportunity to remain up to date with trends in their field by networking with peers. Some researchers have also suggested that summer workshops allow faculty to work with their peers to develop new classroom strategies that could promote developing an underprepared student (Persellin & Goodrich, 2010). One of the key components of working with underprepared students, which many developmental education students are, is for K to 12 faculty and higher education faculty to participate in professional development together (Knowlton, Fogleman, Reichsman, & de Oliveira, 2015). This joint collaboration would allow faculty to bridge gaps between secondary education and higher education and assist

faculty who teach developmental education a better understanding of the key skills underprepared students may lack.

### **Developmental Education Faculty Development**

Developmental education students have very specific needs in the classroom related to their learning preferences and developing their academic skills to become successful in credit level coursework (Williams-McMillan & Hauser, 2014). These needs often extend beyond the classroom and prepared faculty can assist these students be successful in their classroom and reach educational success. Researcher have suggested faculty who teach developmental education are not always skilled in meeting the instructional needs some of these students require (Kim & Sax, 2011). Many faculty teaching developmental education are experts in the discipline, Mathematics, English, or Reading; however, they are not skilled in the personal development needs of these students. Professional development specifically for faculty who teach developmental education courses is necessary to the persistence of these students and to the professional growth of the faculty (Moss, Kelcey, & Showers, 2014).

Many faculty who teach developmental education courses are also adjunct faculty within specific disciplines related to developmental education. Researchers have suggested students will often adopt characteristics and behaviors in the classroom from the faculty and the mode of instruction (Moss et al., 2014). Moss et al., (2014) also indicated these behaviors can impact developmental education persistence. Developing a more holistic approach to developmental education faculty training will allow faculty to



develop classroom behaviors and skills that will address the specific needs of the developmental education student (Shagir, 2014).

### **Literature Review Summary**

Faculty training programs and professional development are essential to the success of students in higher education. Education, just as technology, has evolved over the years. In addition, educators are learning more about how students learn and creating a classroom environment that promotes student success. If faculty continue to deliver curriculum through the same teaching methods and curriculum delivery modalities the classroom remains stagnant and does not create an opportunity for success through faculty-student engagement. Student and faculty engagement is imperative to developmental education students to engage in the classroom, develop their academic skills and persist into credit coursework.

### **Implementation**

The faculty-training program is appropriate for current and new faculty teaching developmental education courses. The faculty-training program is a four full day training program will explore how to; engage and work with developmental education students, develop and implement new and innovative teaching methods; and implement new curriculum delivery modalities for developmental education students. These main goals will promote faculty and student engagement and improve retention developmental education students.

The chief academic officer of the college should identify a faculty training program facilitator who will coordinate the training program including reserving space,

scheduling guest lecturers and demonstrations, and implement the core components of the training program. A training program facilitator who has experience in the areas addressed in the training program lesson plans and has work with developmental education students in and out of the classroom would be beneficial to the success of the training program.

The training program facilitator will collaborate with department chairs of the academic disciplines including mathematics, English and reading to identify training program participants. The facilitator will send an email to each of the faculty highlighting the key objectives and goals related to the training program. In addition, the facilitator will send the full agenda for each training day.

#### Day 1 Agenda

- 7:00 am – 8:00 am                      Introductions, Objectives and Continental Breakfast
- 8:00 am – 8:30 am                      Ice Breaker/Get to Know You Activity
- 8:30 am – 9:00 am                      ACCUPLACER Overview and Preparation
- 9:00 am – 9:30 am                      Break
- 9:30 am – 12:00 Noon                   Administration of the ACCUPLACER Placement  
Test
- 12:00 Noon – 1:30 pm                   Lunch
- 1:30 pm – 2:00 pm                      Discussion of the ACCUPLACER
- 2:00 pm – 3:00 pm                      New Student Orientation
- 3:00 pm – 4:00 pm                      Individual Sessions with Academic Advisors (Break  
for participants waiting to see an advisor)

- 4:00 pm – 4:30 pm                      Wrap-up, Review and Adjournment

The first day of the training program will begin by identifying the guiding questions for the training program (Appendix A):

- How can we identify, understand and support developmental education students in the classroom?
- How can we improve classroom teaching methods to increase faculty and student engagement?
- How can we implement new curriculum delivery modalities to enhance learning and decrease the length of the developmental education course sequence?

The facilitator will then explain the goals for the training program:

- Enhance the classroom experience for developmental education students
- Increase faculty and student engagement
- Assist faculty in identifying and employing new teaching modalities to address various skill levels
- Improve retention of developmental education students.

After this initial discussion, day one activities will proceed with an icebreaker activity. Each participant will select a mini pack of skittles candy and for each color in the pack they will share information about themselves based on the following categories:

- Red – Favorite Hobbies
- Green – Favorite Place on Earth
- Purple – Favorite Memory
- Yellow – Dream Job

- Orange – Wild card

The goal of this icebreaker is for the training participants to establish rapport and learn more about one another. The training program is four full days in length and it is imperative the participants become comfortable. Established rapport and an engagement relationship will allow for sharing best practices and create an open, productive and engaging professional dialogue during the course of the training program.

The first two days of the training program will focus on how developmental education students are assessed and placed into courses; processed through the enrollment process; and referred to and provided student support services during their academic journey. Following the icebreaker the next session focuses on the ACCUPLACER placement exam, overview and preparation. Once students have applied to the college and are accepted they must complete placement testing unless they have eligible assessment scores from the SAT or ACT or previous college credit that exempts them from the ACCUPLACER exam. This session will provide faculty the opportunity to review the ACCUPLACER exam, review key areas the text assess related to their disciplines and also interact with preparation materials (Appendix A). Following this overview and review of ACCUPLACER all participants will break for thirty minutes before the next session.

For developmental education faculty, it is important they understand how their students are assessed and what the students experience through the assessment process. Therefore, during the next session each training program participant will take all components of the ACCUPLACER placement test. This will give the participants the

opportunity to identify content of the test and be able to support skills deficits once the students are in their classrooms.

Following the ACCUPLACER administration and lunch the facilitator will engage the participants in a large group discussion of the ACCUPLACER. The facilitator will facilitate and engage the group in sharing their experiences with completing the test. Following this discussion all participants will participate in a modified version of the new student orientation program all new students are mandated to attend. Their participation in this orientation will allow the participants to understand; services available; college policies and procedures; and financial and scholarship options. At the conclusion of the new student orientation each participant will meet individually meet with an academic advisor to review their raw ACCUPLACER test scores; select an academic major; select required courses for the sequence; and register. Once each participant meets with an advisor the group will reconvene and review the day's objectives and learned information.

#### Day 2 Agenda

- 8:00 am – 9:00 am                      Prior Day Review, Discussion of Placement and Continental Breakfast
- 9:00 am – 10:00 am                      Review of Student Support Services
- 10:00 am – 10:15 am                      Break
- 10:15 am – 11:00 am                      Presentation of Student Case Study
- 11:00 am – 12:00 Noon                      Small Group Session: Identification of Student Support Needs/Services

- 12:00 Noon – 1:30 pm            Lunch
- 1:30 pm – 3:00 pm            Large Group Discussion of Case Study
- 3:00 pm – 3:15 pm            Break
- 3:15 pm – 4:00 pm            Small Group Session: Development of Group Case Study
- 4:00 pm – 4:30 pm            Wrap-up, Review and Adjournment

The second day of the retreat will continue to focus on developmental education students' needs and services available to promote student success both in and out of the classroom. The first session of the day will be an overview of student support services, a presentation and discussion facilitated by a guest lecturer from student affairs. This session will provide participants the opportunity to learn what services are available to developmental education students who may be struggling with academic success. Some items this session will cover are services available, how students can access these services and resources available to faculty to utilize referrals for students. Some services include; tutoring, personal counseling, mentoring, early alert intervention and financial resources.

The afternoon session will provide participants the opportunity to work in small groups reviewing a provided case study of a developmental education student (Appendix A). In these small groups the participants will work together to assess the student's service needs and how to refer the student to necessary resources. The training program facilitator and the student affairs guest lecturer, should visit each group to assist in facilitating the group discussion. Following this activity and an afternoon break all

participants should return to the large group to debrief and highlight key discussion items from the small group case study activity. A final debridement of the day and adjournment will then occur to close the second day of the training program.

### Day 3 Agenda

- 8:00 am – 9:00 am                      Prior Day Review and Continental Breakfast
- 9:00 am – 10:00 am                    Large Group Discussion on Current teaching Methods
- 10:00 am – 10:15 am                   Break
- 10:15 am – 11:00 am                   Presentation of New/Best Practices Teaching Methods
- 11:00 am – 12:00 Noon                Small Group Interactive Session, How to Incorporate New Methods in the Classroom
- 12:00 Noon – 1:30 pm                 Lunch
- 1:30 pm – 2:45 pm                     Small Group Interactive Session: Case Studies in Review
- 2:45 pm – 3:00 pm                     Break
- 3:00 pm – 4:00 pm                     Presentation of Small Group Case Studies
- 4:00 pm – 4:30 pm                     Wrap-up, Review and Adjournment

The third day of the training program will move into discussion on teaching methods and allowing the group to discuss current best practices and begin exploration of new innovative teaching methods. These new methods will engage the students in the classroom, promoting student success and retention. The first session of the day three is

an interactive session for the large group promoting healthy dialogue regarding what current methods exist, how are they using them in their classrooms and which methods are more and less effective among developmental education students. Following this session, a guest lecturer selected from academic affairs with an extensive background in developmental education and teaching methods best practices will facilitate a session introducing new innovative teaching methods.

Following the introduction of new teaching methods the final morning session prior to lunch will be an interactive session, broken into small groups. Each participant will be given an activity sheet listing 150 possible teaching methods (Appendix A). They will check off the methods they have used, star the ones they have found effective, cross out the ones they have found ineffective, circle the ones that sound interesting and finally add ones they have tried not on the list. In their small groups, they will share the results of their activity sheets and brainstorm a list of effective teaching methods for developmental education students based on each participants feedback and experiences. Once this has been completed, they will return to the large group and report out from their brainstorming session.

The afternoon sessions of day three will focus on another case study review. Each group will exchange the case study created in the afternoon session of training day two with another group. In small groups, participants will review the new case study and brainstorm a list of new and innovative teaching methods learned in the morning session that could be effective in educating the student from the case study. They should discuss what methods should be used, how they would introduce the methods and how they



would evaluate the effectiveness of the selected methods. Following an afternoon break the small will present their findings in the final day three session. The facilitator will review the day's training and adjourn.

#### Day 4 Agenda

- 8:00 am – 9:00 am                      Prior Day Review and Continental Breakfast
- 9:00 am – 10:00 am                    Large Group Discussion: Current Curriculum  
Delivery Modalities
- 10:00 am – 10:15 am                    Break
- 10:15 am – 11:00 am                    Activity – Learning Style Inventory
- 11:00 am – 12:00 Noon                Presentation: New/Best Practices Curriculum  
Delivery Modalities
- 12:00 Noon – 1:00 pm                  Lunch
- 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm                      Small Group Interactive Session: Exploration of  
Technology, Introduction to Blackboard and  
Modular Curriculum
- 2:00 pm – 3:00 pm                      Small Group Interactive Session: Case Studies in  
Review, Incorporating New Technology
- 3:00 pm – 3:15 pm                      Break
- 3:15 pm – 4:00 pm                      Presentation of Small Group Case Studies
- 4:00 pm – 4:30 pm                      Wrap-up, Review and Adjournment

Day four, the final day of training will begin with an overview of day three and discuss the topic of the day, curriculum delivery modalities. The first session of the day

will be a large group discussion of current curriculum delivery modalities, what participants are currently using and the strengths and weaknesses of these modalities. The session will be an interactive session, in which all participants will complete the learning style inventory (Appendix A). The learning style inventory will allow the participants to identify what type of learner they are; auditory, kinesthetic or visual. This session will be a segway for the next morning session, a presentation of new curriculum delivery methods. The guest lecturer will be selected from academic affairs, who will have extensive knowledge in innovative and technology based curriculum development, design, and delivery. This guest lecturer will focus on modalities including learning style model, virtual and hybrid classrooms, and the networked teacher model. During the final session of the morning, the participants will break once again into small groups and rotate through demonstrations of Desire to Learn (D2L), Blackboard, hybrid formats and modular curriculum models. Innovative faculty who have successfully introduced these new methods into their classroom or have expertise in said areas will lead these demonstrations.

In the afternoon session, the participants will return to their small groups and review the case study given to them in the first day of training and the case study developed during day two. The groups will discuss which innovative curriculum delivery methods can be introduced into their classrooms and be successful, based on the case study student needs. Following this small group discussion they will return to the large group and report their findings.

The facilitator will lead a discussion on what was learned during the duration of the training program. The facilitator will focus on the following questions:

- What did we learn overall?
- What changes will you make to your classroom?
- What was the most thought provoking take away?
- Final Thoughts/Questions?

These questions will allow the group to discuss the training as a whole, provide feedback regarding how they will incorporate this information into the classroom and curriculum in the future. In addition, this information will be useful to the evaluation process of the training program. At the conclusion of this discussion, the facilitator will ask the participants to complete a confidential survey (Appendix A).

### **Potential Resources and Existing Supports**

The faculty training program will need the assistance of various college departments and outside resources including offices within student affairs and guest lecturers to provide curriculum delivery modality demonstrations. Student affairs offices necessary for the successful implementation of the faculty training program include; disability support; academic advising; counseling; placement testing and enrollment services.

### **Potential Barriers**

While resources exist to successfully develop and implement the faculty-training program, faculty resistance may exist. A strong assumption of distinction could exist between student affairs and academic affairs roles and responsibilities. Faculty may feel

it is not their role or responsibility to identify needs among their students or to counsel those regarding issues outside of the classroom. While identifying their needs or counseling them would not be expected from academic affairs, it could be perceived as an expectation and possible barrier. This perception could make faculty feel their role as an educator has grown beyond what they are professionally trained and educated to do within the classroom.

In addition, some faculty just may feel it is not their job. Often, faculty may feel students within a collegiate classroom should be prepared for the coursework. Therefore, developing additional strategies for underprepared students could be perceived negatively and cause an additional potential barrier. Finally, the ability to sustain this faculty-training program could be a potential barrier. The college would need to commit to provide on-going training to participants to keep their knowledge and skills current. An effective method of communication or a resource center will need to be created for faculty to learn of new processes or changes to existing policies and procedures for students within student affairs.

### **Roles and Responsibilities of Participants**

The roles and responsibilities of the participants are to engage in the training and learn how to effectively interact with, engage, educate and retain students in developmental education. To have a successful training program experience the faculty will need to come prepared with an open mind for change and with examples of classroom situations they have experienced. These examples will be an important part of

the training process through case study discussions and critical thinking interactive exercises.

### **Project Evaluation**

The goals of the faculty training program are to foster learning to; (a) enhance the classroom experience for developmental education students; (b) increase faculty and student engagement; (c) assist faculty in identifying and employing new teaching modalities to address various student skill levels; and (d) improve retention of developmental education students.

A combination of diagnostic and summative evaluations will be conducted through pre and post survey instruments before and after the faculty training program. Prior to the faculty-training program each participant will complete a pre-survey that will evaluate their perceptions and expectations of the trainings' learning outcomes (Appendix A). In addition, it would allow them to rate their current knowledge regarding the program content. At the conclusion of the training program, each participant will complete post-survey assessing their post training program knowledge regarding the program content (Appendix A).

The pre-survey will ask eight ranking questions to evaluate the participants current level of knowledge related to the faculty training program content and learning outcomes. The post-survey will ask 12 ranking questions. The first eight questions will evaluate the participants new level of knowledge related to the program content and learning outcomes after completing the training. In addition, four final questions will

evaluate session content and facilitation and will be answered on a scale of excellent being the highest rating, good, fair and poor, being the lowest rating.

On both surveys questions related to learning outcomes will assess how well the participant feels the training program prepared them to implore the concepts learned throughout the training. The scale for these questions range from *very well*, being the highest, *somewhat well*, *well* and *not well*, being the lowest. In addition, each participant will have the opportunity to share additional thoughts or comments after each question. The quantitative and qualitative data collected from bot the pre and post surveys will be tabulated and compared to finds areas in which the faculty training program increased the participant knowledge regarding program content and learning outcomes.

In addition to the survey, the training facilitator will take observation notes during the training program. Observations and surveys are two of the primary methods of evaluation in diagnostic and summative assessment (Lodico et al., 2010). Observation notes will enhance the survey results and allow to training facilitator to assess the quality of the training program content and facilitators.

## **Implications Including Social Change**

### **Local Community**

Developmental education student attrition has been a significant problem in the local community, with nearly 50% of the students in developmental education not persisting to the next academic year (Office of Intuitional Research, 2013). Being one of the largest institutions of higher education in the community it is the role of the college to provide quality education and assist students in gaining transferable knowledge, which

will be useful in the world of work. Students are entering the college at various skill levels, and many lack the necessary entry-level skills to be successful in collegiate credit courses. Developmental education assists students in bridging the gap between their current knowledge and skills necessary to be successful in credit coursework.

This project will work with faculty who teach developmental education to improve student and faculty engagement and the classroom experience through improved teaching methods and curriculum delivery, which all play a significant role in student persistence. If developmental education student attrition rate decreases, more students will complete their educational goal and be prepared for diverse careers and roles in the local community. These students can then contribute significantly to the community, which would increase revenue and promote social change by allowing many more community members to further their education beyond secondary education. In addition, the development and persistence of these students will assist the college in meeting budgetary and enrollment goals.

### **Far-Reaching**

Developmental education is not just a conversation occurring locally but on a national level. Educators must look at this attrition problem and focus on how to make improvements they are sequential through all levels of education to promote preparedness and persistence. This project could also be important to all secondary education faculty and administrators by examining how they too can better improve student engagement and academic skills needed in higher education. This study and project could also shed

light on the need for increased funding and improved standards throughout all aspects of education.

### **Conclusion**

This section outlined the faculty training program for developmental education faculty. This training program was designed from qualitative data derived from research participants. These participants shared their perceptions of developmental education and how it affects student attrition. Once analyzed, the data showed the need for a faculty-training program that would assist faculty in; identifying the needs of developmental education students; how to develop and implore new teaching and curriculum delivery methods; and how to increase faculty-student engagement to promote student persistence. In addition, this section discussed the rationale for choosing the project genre, the project's goals and objectives, the proposed implementation process, evaluation plan and project implications. These project implications are significant to section four as they guided my reflections to promote social change.



## **Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of community college administrators' perceptions of developmental education and its effect on student attrition. The chosen design of the study, a qualitative approach, allowed me to look at the attrition problem through the eyes of key decision makers within the college. The attrition problem of developmental education students was the motivating factor for conducting this study. Declining retention rates of developmental education students is a local and national problem (Office of Institutional Research, 2013; Quint et al., 2013). Key daily decisions made by these administrators include decisions regarding programs and services offered and the college's operating budget. The guiding research question for this study was as follows: What are the perceptions among a select group of community college administrators within academic affairs, student affairs, and finance regarding how developmental education impacts student attrition? Data were collected through semi structured interviews of 10 community college administrators and three key themes emerged from the analyzed data that focused the college's organizational structure, the reasons for the attrition, and strategies that could be employed to address the high attrition rate of developmental education students. The categories identified from the findings indicated the faculty and staff needed a better understanding of developmental education students and the personal struggles they face, and innovative teaching methods and curriculum delivery modalities need to be implemented by faculty to promote success of developmental education students.

I will discuss the strengths and limitations of this study and its findings and the development of the doctoral project. This study is important to research because of the national and local problem of declining retention rates of developmental education students, cited previously. Finally, I will discuss what I learned in this process as a scholar, practitioner, and project developer, the project's impact on social change, and directions for future research.

### **Project Strengths**

The study highlighted the need for a developmental education faculty-training program, designed to educate faculty regarding the needs of developmental education students. The largest strength with this project is that it trains the faculty directly working with developmental education students. One of the components of the training program focuses on preparing the faculty to identify and refer developmental education students to services outside of the classroom for assistance. This strength will allow the faculty and students to engage and build a more productive collegial relationship. This relationship will assist in keeping the student engaged in the classroom and persist to the next semester, also could potentially promote completion of their academic goals. In addition, the faculty training program focuses on developing the faculty's teaching and course curriculum delivery methods. Increasing these two areas allows the faculty member to engage students based on their classroom needs and learning preferences. Researchers have suggested that faculty and student engagement is a key element to student persistence and success (Kim & Sax, 2011; Slotnick, 2010; Troy, 2013.),

### **Recommendations for Remediation of Limitations**

The project's primary limitations in addressing the local problem are factors not within the control of the faculty or the classroom. While this training program is dedicated to teaching faculty how to recognize developmental education student needs and implore new teaching and curriculum delivery methods, this may not be enough in assisting these students with persistence. Many reasons exist for developmental education attrition. A key reason for the high rate of attrition, identified in this study, is personal issues that exist for students outside the classroom. The college lacks control of these outside influencers and cannot intervene from a holistic perspective.

### **Scholarship**

The doctoral process opened my eyes to a new way of being a student and a scholar. I will admit I have not always been comfortable with writing. In pursuit of my bachelor and master degrees, I struggled with the writing component at times, as well. In my current position, professional knowledge and staying abreast of innovative approaches to enrollment management are crucial to the success of my staff and the college in terms of enrollment. It is imperative I read and seek knowledge regularly to keep the college competitive among an area where significant competition among colleges and universities exists. This aspect of reading, researching, and seeking knowledge came easily to me in the doctoral journey. However, it became difficult at times for me to synthesize the reading material and my knowledge and translating them effectively into my writing. I would often feel my knowledge base was stronger than my writing ability, and it was difficult to express that knowledge in words. However, with the assistance of

my chair, I found processing my knowledge verbally with her by engaging in dialogue truly assisted me in putting my thoughts to paper.

Working in higher education allowed me to be an effective scholar when it came to research and seeking out this knowledge to support my research question and purpose of the study. I found my established rapport with the study participants, and my work ethic assisted me in this scholarly process because I was able to move through requests and approvals quickly.

### **Project Development and Evaluation**

After carefully reviewing the findings of the study, I began to explore possible genres for the doctoral project. In my career, I have worked with developmental education students from an enrollment management perspective and taught them as an adjunct faculty member. When I began my study, I made assumptions that developmental education students were not successful due to being underprepared. With this preconceived bias, I was prepared for a different doctoral project genre. My professional experiences led me to consider an extensive intervention program for students for them to become better prepared for collegiate coursework. However, through the process of the study, I found their under preparedness was not the reason for the high attrition. The study findings indicated that the high attrition rate focused more on how students are engaged and educated. It was obvious from these findings that faculty would benefit from a training program that could assist them in how to work with the needs of developmental education students and how to identify and incorporate new and innovative teaching methods and curriculum delivery modalities into the classroom.

## **Leadership and Change**

I have learned in this process that effective leaders understand what change is, means, and how to engage their staff in making transitions. I have been in an administrative role for the last 7 years at two different higher education institutions, and every leader is different. Each leader has a different style, expertise, and management style. This study and the doctoral process have made a better leader because I am looking at change in a very different way. There is a large difference between need and want in regards to change at any institution. Administrators sometimes focus on change based on their own needs or perceptions of how much easier the change would make their jobs. However, effective, strong leaders make bottom up decisions about change, not top down. Conducting research and speaking with the frontline staff regarding processes and interactions with students has allowed me to approach change decisions in a more strategic manner. This study and project development showed me that as an administrator, my colleagues and I are often removed from daily interactions with students. While I can read the latest, best practices research or attend conferences, I need input from the staff, faculty, and students who are affected by change decisions made by administration.

## **Analysis of Self as Scholar**

One of the biggest lessons I learned as a scholar through this process was how quickly procrastination can occur when experiencing writer's block in a section. I had to learn very quickly that it was acceptable to move on to another section or even give my mind a rest to regain my scholarly focus. In addition, I found it was important to give

myself deadlines to complete tasks such as research or writing sections. This allowed me to avoid extreme procrastination and stay on track. As I moved through the process, I found with more knowledge, the words began to flow faster to the paper. I began to see the light at the end of the tunnel. I must admit, I have always had a procrastination mindset; however, given deadlines and goals, it is also my nature to meet them.

Working as a scholar through this process with my committee chair was a rewarding experience. While taking criticism has never been a strength of mine since I would analyze the criticism, my chair offered constructive criticism and presented it in a way that allowed me to expand and flourish as a scholar. While I may not have wanted to research the same topic looking for several supporting peer reviewed journals, she presented it in a way that I could comprehend the significance. Little did I know it would be significant in later sections and truly eliminated duplication of effort. I also learned to be more objective as I developed as a scholar. I allowed the data and subject matter to lead and guide me to the findings and the development of the doctoral project. When I began this process, I was adamant this study was going to show that as a college, we served students well. I truly felt that work needed to be done in secondary education and prior to these students enrolling in the college. I learned very quickly that my perceptions do not always mirror the perceptions of others.

Truthfully, the aspects I loved the most about this process were the interviews and conducting the study. I enjoy interacting with people, and I selected this study because of my passion for community college students and enrollment management. I knew completing this study would give me some insight on becoming a better practitioner.

### **Analysis of Self as Practitioner**

One of the most important aspects I learned about myself as a practitioner is that it is important to keep abreast of changes and best practices in education. My research and reading of best practices should not end when this doctoral journey ends. How I may have experienced something or implemented a program in the past may vary from year to year or from institution to institution. I like being successful in my job, and I am open to change and trying new things, but it is important to keep in sight that education is constantly evolving and that we must keep the students we are serving in mind. My job as an administrator is to provide these students services and knowledge for them to be successful in higher education. This project opened my eyes to how I make decisions in my current role and how significantly other office decisions can affect the outcome I am attempting to achieve. I have always encountered “that’s not my job” instances as I have progressed through administration. However, I now understand more clearly that one decision can impact another significantly. While I have also taught in higher education, this study and project gave me a new respect for the relationship that is needed between student and academic affairs. I am not sure many administrators or even faculty truly understand the impact decisions made in our two areas can have on the other. In addition, in this process, I heard perceptions that as a practitioner, I can change, and I believe it is my job better to educate my colleagues on the impact uninformed decisions can have on enrollment management.

### **Analysis of Self as Project Developer**

The project genre and development decision came very early in the process for me. During just the first three interviews, themes were already emerging. After review of all 10 of the interviews, it was very clear that I needed to create a project that assisted students in the classroom to become academically, socially, and personally successful. I enjoyed developing this project and work with colleagues from student and academic affairs regarding the content. A project like this requires strong collaboration, and it was imperative that I used these skills to create content that would promote success in the faculty-training program.

The themes quickly emerged, and it was obvious that faculty and student engagement through an interactive learning environment would have the most impact on developmental education attrition. With the varying learning styles of the diverse group of students, it was important to assist faculty in developing skills to identify how they engage with their students and create a learning environment conducive for all learning preferences. This project's success would also play a significant role in promoting social change within the institution.

### **The Project's Potential Impact on Social Change**

Developmental education attrition impacts many areas of the college including academic and student affairs as well as finance. Students who do not persist negatively affect the college's enrollment, graduation rates, and revenue. This was the primary reason for selecting administrators within these college units of academic affairs, student affairs, and finance as participants of the study. In addition, developmental education



attrition can negatively affect the community at large. When students do not complete higher education, they do not often move forward in economically supportive careers or jobs. This may cause an economic shift within the community as these students continue in minimum wage employment or even leave the community to live elsewhere due to affordability. This project supports social change because it is focused on working with faculty at a community college, whose primary focus is to serve the community. If students in the community are persisting through the community college to completion, they become contributing factors to the economic and social stature of the community. In addition, this project could have national implications regarding social change that promotes more access to higher education for a larger group of students through a community college better prepared to serve diverse students with varying academic skills upon entry.

### **Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research**

This study has significant importance due to the nature of the topic that is a local and national problem. Many secondary and higher education systems are struggling with preparing students with the necessary skills to completing their degrees or educational goals. With secondary schools focusing so much on standardized state testing, students are lacking in the collegiate skills building or faculty student engagement to promote success. I learned during this process that as an administrator, many are removed from daily interaction with students, and very few are still in the classroom if they ever were. We make decisions as administrators that are supposed to promote enrollment, matriculation and completion of a postsecondary degree. This study and project focused

on working within our institution to better engage and prepare students for success and completion who entered the college unprepared for collegiate coursework. Many faculty and administrators may say this is not our role but instead the role of secondary education. However, we are not influencers over what occurs in secondary education. Rather than setting these students up for failure, it is our job to meet them where they are and develop them into scholars. If we can be successful in engaging the entire college community in this process, it will be a smooth transition for any students wishing to further their education in a community college. This concept could be useful across the nation and countries of the world, and we can take lessons from successful countries with top notch educational systems. Further research on this topic will be needed to address this growing epidemic. While the study was significant by examining the developmental education student attrition problem from an administrator's perspective, future research from a student perspective will be just as important. The identified administrators in this study are key decision makers at the college, making decisions related to staffing and resources for developmental education students. Assessing the needs of the developmental education students from a student perspective will be just as important to the decision making process. The local community college cannot solve the growing problem in secondary education of underprepared students; however, they can work with the students once enrolled at the college to develop their academic, social, and personal skills to promote completion of their academic goals.

## **Conclusion**

In this section, I highlighted the reflections and conclusions of this study and project focusing on myself as a scholar, practitioner, and project developer. In addition, I highlighted how this project could impact social change and applications further research. This process as a whole has been a very positive experience for me as a scholar and most importantly as a practitioner. I have a new respect for my colleagues and understand how collaborative work is so important in affecting the lives of our students. The biggest lesson learned in the process of the study and creating the doctoral project is that we cannot make key decisions as administrators through assumptions. Developmental education student attrition is a problem at this local community college and nationally and this attrition can affect various areas of the college including enrollment management, academic success, and financial sustainability. It is important that the problem of developmental education attrition is approached in a way that will make the most impact and promote student success. The perceptions of various administrators unveiled an underlying issue that can be easily addressed.

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## Appendix A: Doctoral Project

The following items are the doctoral project lesson plans and power point presentation for the developmental education faculty training program. The goals of the project are to: (1) enhance the classroom experience for developmental education students; (2) increase faculty and student engagement; (3) assist faculty in identifying and employing new teaching modalities to address various skill levels; and (4) improve retention of developmental education students. In the lesson plans, objectives were identified for each day to achieve the overall project goals. The Power Point presentation will guide the training facilitators through each training day.

## Lesson Plans

<b>Guiding Question:</b>	
<b>Objectives:</b>	<p>Faculty will understand how students are assessed and placed into developmental education courses.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Take the ACCUPLCER placement test in the areas of English, Reading and Mathematics.</li> <li>2. Complete a mini new student orientation process each new student completes prior to enrollment</li> <li>3. Meet with an academic advisor to review their ACCUPLACER raw scores and discuss their placement</li> </ol> <p>Faculty will understand student and academic supports offered to students in developmental education to be successful in the classroom</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review of students support services, ie: tutoring, personal counseling, career development</li> <li>2. Development of strategies to identify needs and complete referral to services</li> <li>3. Using case studies to identify needs and services</li> <li>4. Development of their own case studies to further understand developmental education students.</li> </ol>
<b>Resources and Materials based on 30 training participants:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ice breaker activity</li> <li>• ACCUPLACER test preparation material</li> <li>• ACCUPLACER placement test online for each participant (30)</li> <li>• Internet connectivity</li> <li>• Power point presentation</li> <li>• ACCUPLACER placement test proctors (2)</li> <li>• Academic Advising staff (5)</li> <li>• Student Affairs staff (5) (1-Disability Services, 1-Counselor, 1-Career Development, 2-Student Success staff (tutoring, mentoring, etc.)</li> <li>• Developmental Education Student Case Study</li> <li>• Easels and Flip Charts</li> <li>• Markers and Pens</li> <li>• Handouts regarding student support services</li> </ul>

<b>Faculty Professional Training Program</b>	
<b>Day 3 – Identification, implementation and management of innovative teaching methods</b>	
<b>Guiding Question:</b>	How can developmental education faculty improve classroom teaching methods to increase faculty and student engagement?
<b>Objectives:</b>	<p>Faculty will discuss and share current teaching methods</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Discuss current teaching methods already used in the classroom</li> <li>5. Participate in an activity that explores best practices used among the group</li> <li>6. Share information with the group regarding their own classroom methods</li> </ol> <p>Faculty will explore and be introduced to new teaching methods</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Be presented with new and best practices methods related to developmental education curriculum delivery</li> <li>2. Using case studies (profiles of developmental education students) explore how they can incorporate new teaching methods into the classroom</li> </ol>
<b>Resources and Materials based on 30 training participants:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internet connectivity</li> <li>• Power point presentation</li> <li>• Teaching faculty guest facilitators (2)</li> <li>• Developmental Education Student Case Study (developed by the groups)</li> <li>• Easels, Flip Charts, Markers and Pens</li> <li>• Handouts regarding teaching methods</li> </ul>

Guiding Question:	
<b>Objectives:</b>	<p>Faculty will discuss and share current curriculum delivery modalities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Discuss current modalities already used in the classroom</li> <li>4. Participate in an activity to explore curriculum delivery modalities</li> </ol> <p>Faculty will explore and be introduced to new curriculum delivery modalities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Participate in an activity to explore learning style/preference</li> <li>2. Be presented with new and best practices modalities related to developmental education curriculum delivery</li> <li>3. Receive a demonstration of Blackboard</li> <li>4. Receive a demonstration of modular hybrid curriculum based modality</li> <li>5. Receive a demonstration of Desire to Learn (D2L)</li> </ol> <p>Faculty will explore new technology to integrate into the classroom</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Using case studies (profiles of developmental education students) explore how they can incorporate technology into the classroom</li> <li>2. Share best practices and explore how they can incorporate them in their classroom</li> </ol>
<b>Resources and Materials based on 30 training participants:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internet connectivity</li> <li>• Power point presentation</li> <li>• Teaching faculty guest facilitators (2)</li> <li>• Developmental Education Student Case Study (developed by the groups)</li> <li>• Easels, Flip Charts, Markers and Pens</li> <li>• Learning Style Inventory</li> <li>• Training Program Survey</li> </ul>





## Guiding Questions

- How can we identify, understand and support developmental education students in the classroom?
- How can we improve classroom teaching methods to increase faculty and student engagement?
- How can we implement new curriculum delivery modalities to enhance learning and decrease the length of the developmental education course sequence?



## Training Program Goals

- Enhance the classroom experience for developmental education students
- Increase faculty and student engagement
- Assist faculty in identifying and employing new teaching modalities to address various skill levels
- Improve retention of developmental education students.



## Ice Breaker

- Select a mini pack of Skittles
- Introduce yourself, your faculty discipline, what you like best about teaching and how long you have been at the college
- For every color you have in your mini Skittles pack please tell us something about you:
  - Red – Favorite Hobbies
  - Green – Favorite Place on Earth
  - Purple – Favorite Memory
  - Yellow – Dream Job
  - Orange – Wild card!



## ACCUPLACER

- What is the ACCUPLACER? [www.accuplacer.org](http://www.accuplacer.org)
  - ACCUPLACER tests your knowledge in algebra, reading, and sentence skills
  - Over 1,500 institutions administer ACCUPLACER
- How is it administered?
  - Online
  - Adaptive
  - Untimed
- How can you prepare?
  - Sample test questions
  - iPhone and web-based app
  - My Foundations Lab



Break 9:00 – 9:30 am



## ACCUPLACER Administration

- Online adaptive test
- Untimed, test at your own pace
- 2 1/2 – 3 hours is typical



Lunch 12:00 Noon – 1:30 pm



## ACCUPLACER Review

- How do you think you did?
- What was difficult?
- What was easy?
- Raw Score Interpretation





## New Student Orientation

- Purpose?
  - Acclimate the student to the college
  - Review college policies and procedures
  - Introduction to academic and student success services and resources
  - Discuss academic program and career development
  - Discuss placement test results
  - Choose semester courses
  - Financial Aid
  - FERPA
  - Title IV



## Session with Academic Advisors

- What will you gain?
  - Interpretation of placement test scores
  - Selection of academic program and career development
  - Selection of courses
- What should you ask?
  - How long will it take to complete/graduate?
  - What is the difference between a career and transfer program?



## Day 1 Wrap-Up

- What did we learn today?
- How does this alter my perception of my students?
- Where can improvements be made for these students at this point?
- What changes can I begin to consider in my own classroom?
- How can I prepare for tomorrow's session?



## Day 2 Agenda

- 8:00 am – 9:00 am      Prior Day Review, Discussion of Placement and Continental Breakfast
- 9:00 am – 10:00 am      Review of Student Support Services
- 10:00 am – 10:15 am      Break
- 10:15 am – 11:00 am      Presentation of Student Case Study
- 11:00 am – 12:00 Noon      Small Group Session: Identification of Student Support Needs/Services
- 12:00 Noon – 1:30 pm      Lunch
- 1:30 pm – 3:00 pm      Large Group Discussion of Case Study
- 3:00 pm – 3:15 pm      Break
- 3:15 pm – 4:00 pm      Small Group Session: Development of Group Case Study
- 4:00 pm – 4:30 pm      Wrap-up, Review and Adjournment

## Student Support Services

- Bookstore
- Academic Advising
- Career Services
- Counseling Services
- Disability Services
- Mentoring
- Tutoring
- Scholarships and Financial Aid
- Transfer Services
- Military and Veterans Services

Break 10:00 am – 10:15 am





## Case Study

- Carrie is a 19 year old freshman majoring in Criminal Justice. She has placed into the lowest developmental match course in the sequence, the middle developmental English course and the middle developmental level reading course. She attends school full time (12 credits per semester), works as a work study student 20 hours per week in the cafeteria and hopes to transfer to the University of North Carolina once completing her Associate's degree. She is very shy in class and only participates when called on. While her homework is completed on time it is not always thorough and she is frequently 10 minutes late to class. She is performing poorly on exams which are mostly short answer and multiple choice. She has difficulty connecting her thoughts in essay answers.



## Identification of Support Needs/Services

- What are the key concerns in this case study?
- What are Carrie's immediate needs?
- What services would Carrie benefit from?
- What is your role as her faculty?
- Where and how would you refer Carrie?



Lunch | 2:00 Noon – 1:30 pm



## Discussion of Case Study

- What are the concerns with Carrie?
- What would be your approach?
- What services do you recommend for Carrie?
- How would you refer Carrie?
- What follow-up would you conduct?

Break 3:00 pm – 3:15 pm



## Development of A Case Study

- In small groups
  - Develop your own case study
  - Be as detailed as possible
  - Incorporate attributes of a student from each group member





## Current Teaching Methods

- Large Group Discussion
  - What methods exist?
  - What do you currently use?
  - What have you found to be effective with developmental education students?
  - What methods do developmental education students seem to struggle with?

Break 10:00 am – 10:15 am





## New and Best Practices in Teaching Methods

- 150 Teaching Methods Handout
  - Check off the ones you have used
  - Star the ones you have found effective
  - Cross out the ones you have found ineffective
  - Circle the ones that sound interesting
  - Add ones you have tried, not found on the list
- Small Group Breakout Session
  - Share and Discuss your handout



Lunch 12:00 Noon – 1:30 pm

Lunch.  
  
Feed your curiosity™

## Case Study Review

- Return to small groups from yesterday
  - Share your developed case study with another group
  - Discuss most effective teaching methods based on the case study



Break 2:45 pm – 3:00 pm



## Small Group Presentations

- What methods were selected and why?
- What methods would no be effective for this student and why?
- How can other students in the class benefit from the methods selected?



## Day 3 Wrap-Up

- What did we learn today?
- How does this alter my perception of my students?
- Where can improvements be made for these students at this point?
- What changes can I begin to consider in my own classroom?
- How can I prepare for tomorrow's session?

## Day 4 Agenda

- 8:00 am – 9:00 am                      Prior Day Review and Continental Breakfast
- 9:00 am – 10:00 am                    Large Group Discussion: Current Curriculum Delivery Modalities
- 10:00 am – 10:15 am                    Break
- 10:15 am – 11:00 am                    Activity – Learning Style Inventory
- 11:00 am – 12:00 Noon                   Presentation: New/Best Practices Curriculum Delivery Modalities
- 12:00 Noon – 1:00 pm                    Lunch
- 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm                      Small Group Interactive Session: Exploration of Technology, Introduction to Blackboard and Modular Curriculum
- 2:00 pm – 3:00 pm                      Small Group Interactive Session: Case Studies in Review, Incorporating New Technology
- 3:00 pm – 3:15 pm                      Break
- 3:15 pm – 4:00 pm                      Presentation of Small Group Case Studies
- 4:00 pm – 4:30 pm                      Wrap-up, Review and Adjournment

## Current Curriculum Delivery Modalities

- What modalities are you currently using?
- How do you select your modalities?
- What are the strengths?
- What are the weaknesses?



Break 10:00 am – 10:15 am



## Activity – Learning Style Inventory

### What's Your Learning Style?



#### Visual

Visual learners usually retain more information when they can see something that graphically depicts what they are trying to learn. Visual learners should study using visual aids whenever possible. Flash cards, pictures, drawings—anything that will give you a visual memory.



#### Auditory

Auditory learners will retain more information when they hear something. For auditory learners, the best way to learn is to listen, read and listen. Use a tape recorder. Read out loud. Have a friend quiz you orally.



#### Tactile

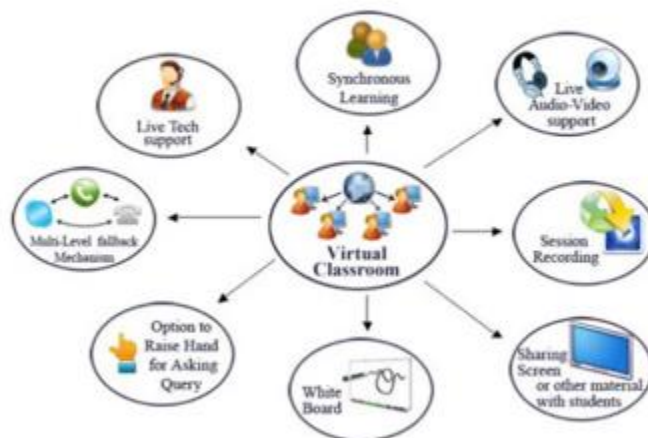
Tactile learners will retain more information when they use the "hands-on" approach—the lab and demonstration.



## New/Best Practices Curriculum Delivery Modalities

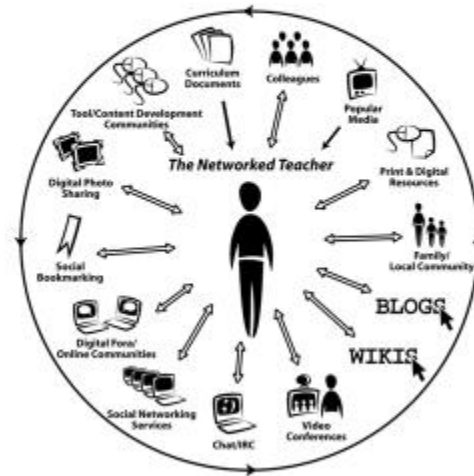


## New/Best Practices Curriculum Delivery Modalities





## New/Best Practices Curriculum Delivery Modalities



## Exploration of Technology

- Small group rotations
- Demonstrations of:
  - Desire to Learn (D2L)
  - Blackboard
  - Hybrid formats
  - Modular Curriculum



## Lunch 12 Noon – 1:00 pm

Lunch.  
Feed your curiosity™

## Small Group Discussion

- Return to previous small groups
  - Review case studies 1 and 2
  - What technology could be used in the classroom?
    - Most effective?
    - Most ineffective?





## Small Group Presentations

- What modalities were selected and why?
- What modalities would not be effective for this student and why?
- How can other students in the class benefit from the modalities selected?
- How can you use multiple modalities in the classroom?



## Day 4 Wrap-Up

- What did we learn today?
- How does this alter my perception of my students?
- Where can improvements be made for these students at this point?
- What changes can I begin to consider in my own classroom?



## Adjournment

- What did we learn overall?
- What changes will you make to your classroom?
- What was the most thought provoking take away?
- Final Thoughts/Questions?
- Thank you for participating! – Please complete the survey in your packet

**Case Study, Day Two Activity**

Carrie is a 19 year old freshman majoring in Criminal Justice. She has placed into the lowest developmental math course in the sequence, the middle developmental English course and the middle developmental level reading course. She attends school full time (12 credits per semester), works as a work study student 20 hours per week in the cafeteria and hopes to transfer to the University of North Carolina once completing her Associate's degree. She is very shy in class and only participates when called on. While her homework is completed on time it is not always thorough and she is frequently 10 minutes late to class. She is performing poorly on exams which are mostly short answer and multiple choice. She has difficulty connecting her thoughts in essay answers.

**Training Program Participant Survey****Developmental Education Faculty Training Program  
Pre-Survey**

*Your feedback is valued and appreciated so we can improve our faculty training program.*

1. How would you rate your current knowledge of the placement testing process for students?

- |                                    |                               |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> Good |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fair      | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor |

Additional suggestions/comments:

2. How would rate your knowledge of the student services offered for developmental education students?

- |                                    |                               |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> Good |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fair      | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor |

Additional suggestions/comments:

3. How would you rate your knowledge of new and innovative teaching methods?

- |                                    |                               |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> Good |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fair      | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor |

Additional suggestions/comments:

4. How would you rate your knowledge of curriculum delivery method? (ie: modular, hybrid, blended courses).
- |                                    |                               |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> Good |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fair      | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor |

Additional suggestions/comments:

5. How well do you feel the training program will enhance your ability to engage and educate developmental education students?
- |                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Very well | <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat well |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Well      | <input type="checkbox"/> Not well      |

Additional suggestions/comments:

6. How well do you feel the training program will prepare you to identify and implore new classroom teaching methods?
- |                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Very well | <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat well |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Well      | <input type="checkbox"/> Not well      |

Additional suggestions/comments:

7. How well do you feel the training program will prepare you to identify and implore new classroom curriculum delivery methods in the classroom?
- |                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Very well | <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat well |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Well      | <input type="checkbox"/> Not well      |

Additional suggestions/comments:

8. How well do you feel the training program will prepare you to assist in retaining developmental education students?
- |                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Very well | <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat well |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Well      | <input type="checkbox"/> Not well      |

Additional suggestions/comments:



## Developmental Education Faculty Training Program Post-Survey

*Your feedback is valued and appreciated so we can improve our faculty training program.*

1. How would you rate your knowledge of the placement testing process for students?

Excellent                       Good  
 Fair                                 Poor

Additional suggestions/comments:

2. How would you rate your knowledge of the student services offered for developmental education students?

Excellent                       Good  
 Fair                                 Poor

Additional suggestions/comments:

3. How would you rate your knowledge of new and innovative teaching methods?

Excellent                       Good  
 Fair                                 Poor

Additional suggestions/comments:

4. How would you rate your knowledge of curriculum delivery method? (ie: modular, hybrid, blended courses).
- |                                    |                               |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> Good |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fair      | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor |

Additional suggestions/comments:

5. How well do you feel the training program prepared you to engage and educate developmental education students?
- |                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Very well | <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat well |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Well      | <input type="checkbox"/> Not well      |

Additional suggestions/comments:

6. How well do you feel the training program prepared you to identify and implore new classroom teaching methods?
- |                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Very well | <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat well |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Well      | <input type="checkbox"/> Not well      |

Additional suggestions/comments:



## Day 4 – Curriculum Delivery Modalities

- |                                    |                               |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> Good |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fair      | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor |

Additional suggestions/comments:

## 10. How would you rate the guest facilitators?

## Day 1 and 2 – Student Services

- |                                    |                               |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> Good |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fair      | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor |

## Day 3 – Teaching Methods

- |                                    |                               |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> Good |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fair      | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor |

## Day 4 – Curriculum Delivery Modalities

- |                                    |                               |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> Good |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fair      | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor |

Additional suggestions/comments:

## 11. How would you rate the training program overall?

- |                                    |                               |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> Good |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fair      | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor |

Additional suggestions/comments:

## 12. Would recommend the faculty training program to other developmental education faculty?

Yes

No

Additional suggestions/comments:

## Appendix B: Interview Protocol

1. Please tell me your understanding of developmental education.
2. How does the attrition rate of developmental education students affect your daily job functions at the college?
3. What reasons can you identify for the high attrition rate among developmental education students?
4. How does the college's organizational structure influence your perceptions of developmental education?
5. What strategies could be employed from your perspective to assist in addressing the high attrition rate of developmental education students?
6. How do you feel current retention strategies can be altered to address the student attrition problem among developmental education students?
7. If the college does not address the high attrition rate of developmental education students, what impact can you project?
8. How do you feel the attrition rate of developmental education students impacts the college's enrollment?
9. How can the college address under prepared students?
10. If the developmental education student attrition rate is not addressed what impacts will it have on the college?

## Appendix C: Letter of Cooperation

Jennifer Price  
Doctoral Candidate, Higher education leadership  
Walden University  
100 Washington Avenue South, Suite 900  
Minneapolis, MN 55401

April 9, 2014

Dear Jennifer Price:

As the Provost at [REDACTED] I give permission for you to conduct the study entitled “Community College Administrators’ perceptions of developmental education and how it impacts student attrition.” As part of this study, I authorize you to recruit administrators to participate in your study from various college units including academic affairs, student affairs, and finance, interview participants, collect data, conduct member checking, and disseminate results. The administrators’ participation will be voluntary and at their own discretion.

We understand that our organization’s responsibilities include the following: access to statistical data of students in the developmental education program, access to interview administrators and a designated conference room to conduct interviews. We reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time if our circumstances change.

I confirm that I am authorized to approve research in this setting. If you have questions, you may contact me via email [REDACTED] or telephone [REDACTED]

I understand that the data collected will remain entirely confidential and may not be provided to anyone outside of the research team without permission from the Walden University IRB.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]  
Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs  
[REDACTED]

## Appendix D: Letter of Informed Consent

## CONSENT FORM

You are invited to take part in a research study of examining community college administrator's perceptions of developmental education and how it impacts student attrition. The researcher is inviting community college administrators within the college units of student affairs, academic affairs, and finance to be in the study. This form is part of a process called "informed consent" to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part.

This study is being conducted by a researcher named Jennifer Price, who is doctoral student at Walden University. You may already know the researcher as the dean of enrollment services, but this study is separate from that role.

## Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to gain insight into developmental education and how it impacts student attrition from an administrator's perspective. This is important to examine as student attrition impacts student enrollment, completion and the college's financial sustainability.

## Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to participate in an initial recorded interview, which may last approximately 60 – 90 minutes. I am asking you provide a two hour block of time that will allow time for the interview and any further clarifying



questions you may have. In addition, I may ask for your participation in a follow-up interview or phone call to clarify an data originally collected.

#### Voluntary Nature of the Study:

This study is voluntary. Everyone will respect your decision of whether or not you choose to be in the study. No one at Walden University or ██████ College will treat you any differently. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind during or after the study. You may stop at any time.

#### Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

Being in this study would not pose risk to your safety or wellbeing. The study's benefits could allow the college to examine the developmental education program and develop resources for students to assist them in persistence, rather than attrition. This would aid the college in enrollment management, retention, revenue and completion rates. Your participation in this study will be confidential and will not affect your employment in any way.

#### Privacy:

Any information you provide will be kept confidential. The researcher will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. Also, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in the

study reports. Data will be kept secure by a password protected file. Data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by the university.

#### Contacts and Questions:

You may ask any questions you have now. Or if you have questions later, you may contact the researcher via phone or email. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott. She is the Walden University representative who can discuss this with you. Her phone number is 1-800-925-3368, extension 1210. Walden University's approval number for this study is IRB will enter approval number here and it expires on IRB will enter expiration date.

Insert the phrase that matches the format of the study:

The researcher will give you a copy of this form to keep. (for face-to-face research)

#### Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information and I feel I understand the study well enough to make a decision about my involvement. By signing below, I understand that I am agreeing to the terms described above.

Only include the signature section below if using paper consent forms.

Printed Name of Participant \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Consent \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's Signature \_\_\_\_\_