

Summer 2016

Perceptions of Students, Families, and Community College Administrators about Developmental Education

Justin Necessary

Old Dominion University, jnece001@odu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.odu.edu/efl_etds

 Part of the [Community College Education Administration Commons](#), [Higher Education Commons](#), and the [Social and Philosophical Foundations of Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Necessary, Justin. "Perceptions of Students, Families, and Community College Administrators about Developmental Education" (2016). Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), dissertation, Educ Foundations & Leadership, Old Dominion University, DOI: 10.25777/fe9r-z445

https://digitalcommons.odu.edu/efl_etds/16

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Educational Foundations & Leadership at ODU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Educational Foundations & Leadership Theses & Dissertations by an authorized administrator of ODU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@odu.edu.

PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENTS, FAMILIES, AND COMMUNITY COLLEGE
ADMINISTRATORS ABOUT DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION

by

Justin Necessary

B.A. June 2007, The University of Virginia's College at Wise

M.S. January 2011, Kaplan University

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of
Old Dominion University in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

COMMUNITY COLLEGE LEADERSHIP

OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY

August 2016

Approved by:

Shana Pribesh (Chair)

Mitchell Williams (Member)

Alan Schwitzer (Member)

ABSTRACT

Perceptions of Students, Families, and Community College Administrators about Developmental Education

Justin Necessary
Old Dominion University, 2016
Chair: Shana Pribesh

Cohen and Brawer (2008) define developmental education as serving “students who initially do not have the skills, experience, or orientation necessary to perform at a level that the institutions recognize as regular for those students” (p.290). Students in developmental education must take additional courses in the beginning of their college career in order to prepare them for credit bearing college courses. Developmental education has reached the forefront of the higher education debate in part due to the overwhelming academic need of incoming college students. Currently the number of students requiring developmental courses ranges from 50 to 75 percent (Conley & Squires, 2012). According the McMillian, Park, & Lanning (1997) the need for developmental education has increased to 55 percent from 39 percent of all entering college students over five years. This study examines the perceptions of community college students, family, and community college administrators related to developmental education. This study utilized a qualitative approach conducting 24 interviews at community colleges across the commonwealth of Virginia. Furthermore, phenomenology was used as the theoretical lens so the results would arise from the experiences of the various constituencies. This study will not only aid in the advancement of developmental education, but will add to the scholarly literature relating to developmental education at the community college.

Copyright, 2016, by Justin Necessary, All Rights Reserved.

This thesis is dedicated to Jessica, Henry, Mom, Dad, Janet, and Ada May (love you all more)

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you to my committee. Dr. Pribesh thank you for all your support and help without your guidance this dissertation would probably not have happened. Thank you for always working to help me and giving me constant encouragement. Also, thank you for all you have taught me about research and made this journey one of the best experiences of my life. Dr. Williams thank you also for your help and encouragement. You were my first contact with ODU and after meeting with you I knew I found a home as a Monarch. Thank you for your constant help. Dr. Schwitzer I must also thank you for all of your help along this journey and your willingness to help me anytime I needed it.

I also must give many thanks to my cohort friends. I would like to especially thank Eric Vanover, Scott Kemp, and Darryl Tyndorf for everything you have done along the way.

I have saved my family for the conclusion, because this final product is only possible because of them. Jessica, thank you more than you will ever know. Thank you for supporting me and always believing in me. Thank you for being understanding and always pushing me to achieve my dreams. Mom and Dad, thanks for your constant support and love throughout the years. You always believed in me even when I didn't deserve it. My grandmother Ada May, thank you for always ending our conversations with love you more. Henry, my son, thank you for showing me the world. Truly, without all of you this would not be possible. I love you all!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES	9
LIST OF FIGURES	10
INTRODUCTION	11
Background of the Problem	12
Statement of the Problem	14
Purpose of the Study	15
Significance of the Study	15
Conceptual Framework	17
Research Design	21
Research FOCI	22
Definition of Terms	23
Overview of Chapters	23
LITERATURE REVIEW	25
Defining Developmental Education	25
Cost of Developmental Education	27
Success and Results of Developmental Education	30
Perceptions of Developmental Education	34
Summary	42
Filling the Gap	47
METHODOLOGY	48
Introduction	48
Research FOCI	49
Research Design	49
Population and Sample	50
Measures	55
Data Collection	58
Analytic Approach	60
Limitations	61
Trustworthiness	62
PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS	64
Introduction	64
What are Student Perceptions?	65
What Experiences Lead to Student Perceptions	73
What are Students Current Experiences	75
What Perceptions do Family Members Have about Developmental Education	79
What Perceptions do College Administrators Have about Developmental Education	88
Summary	96
Looking to Chapter 5	101
DISCUSSION	102
Introduction	102
Summary of the Study	102
Conclusion	111
REFERENCES	121

APPENDICES

A. CITI Certification.....	126
B. Human Subjects Approval Letter.....	128
C. Student Interview Questions.....	130
D. Administrator Interview Questions.....	133
E. Family Interview Questions.....	135
F. Informed Consent.....	137
G. Student Interview Blueprint.....	147
H. Administrator Interview Blueprint.....	150
I. Family Interview Blueprint.....	154
J. Pseudonym Chart.....	157

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1 . College Perceptions of Student Challenges	37
2 . Sample Selection Criteria	54
3 . Example Interview Questions	56
4 . Student Views of Developmental Purpose	68
5 . Student Identity Perceptions of Developmental Placement.....	69
6 . Post Enrollment Student Benefits.....	77
7 . Two Areas of Institutional Shortfalls.....	78
8 . Family Perceptions.....	87
9 . College Administrator Perceptions.....	96

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1 . Conceptual Framework.....	21

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Cohen and Brawer (2008) define developmental education as serving “students who initially do not have the skills, experience, or orientation necessary to perform at a level that the institutions recognize as regular for those students” (p.290). Students in developmental education must take additional courses in the beginning of their college career in order to prepare them for credit bearing college courses. Developmental education has reached the forefront of the higher education debate in part due to the overwhelming academic need of incoming college students. Currently the number of students requiring developmental courses ranges from 50 to 75 percent (Conley & Squires, 2012). According the McMillian, Park, & Lanning (1997) the need for developmental education has increased to 55 percent from 39 percent of all entering college students over five years.

Given the large portion of college students who need remediation, developmental education is one of the most evaluated and researched areas of higher education (Bachman, 2013; Boylan, 2002; Brothern & Wambach, 2012; VanOra, 2012). That research has led us to understand that pass rates of developmental courses are 60 percent (Mellow, Woolis, & Laurillard, 2011). The research also showed that developmental courses, which are non-credit bearing, consume students’ financial aid and often endanger student completion rates depending on the number of developmental credits needed (Pretlow & Wathington, 2011).

Although developmental education courses are offered by four year universities, community colleges have been charged with providing most of the developmental courses (Boylan, 2002). According to Perrin (2002) the community college has shouldered the majority of the responsibility in offering developmental courses. The responsibility of offering courses to

help students transition from high school to a college or university is central to the mission of the community college (Cohen & Brawer, 2008). Since developmental education is coupled with the mission of the community college, some feel that developmental education is the responsibility of the community college and not the responsibility of other institutions of higher education (Ignash, 1997).

Currently, perceptions of developmental education, have been largely unexamined (Barnes, 2012). The majority of the literature surrounding this topic concerns the evaluation of the outcomes of developmental education in quantifiable terms (Ashby, Sadera, & McNary, 2011; Bailey, Jaggars, & Scott-Clayton, 2013; Bahr, 2012; Barbatis, 2010). And, most research has examined quantifiable student outcomes only. Student success is often defined by the course pass rates of students, test scores, and transfer rates (Ashby et al., 2011; Bahr, 2012; Barbatis, 2010). Little research has been done on why these outcomes occur and how perceptions and experience may influence student success. Work conducted by Howard and Whitaker (2011) along with Jaggars and Hodara (2013) started exploring the role of perceptions and student success concerning developmental education. I expand those studies by widening the scope to perceptions of family and college administrators as well as students. I also explore the unique context of developmental education at the community college. This study will not only aid in the advancement of developmental education, but will add to the scholarly literature relating to developmental education at the community college.

Background of the Problem

To begin a discussion about developmental education it is important to understand how developmental education is defined. Developmental education is an academic program developed by institutions of higher education with the purpose of helping academically

underprepared students acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in collegiate level courses (Bailey, 2009; Breneman & Haarlow, 1998); Cohen & Brawer, 2008); Jaggars & Hodara, 2013). Developmental programs can be found at community colleges, four year colleges, and universities throughout the United States. While programs can be found at every level of higher education, the bulk of the responsibility for offering developmental education is housed at the community college.

There is debate over who should be responsible for providing developmental education to under-prepared students. Some feel that the burden of offering developmental education falls to the open-access community college and not to the selective college or university (Ignash, 1997). Some states have already moved to push the responsibility of developmental education exclusively to the community college. Seven states (Colorado, Louisiana, Nevada, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, and Tennessee) have passed legislation to cut funding to developmental education in state universities and offer developmental education solely at the community college (Jacobs, 2012). As such, according to Jacobs (2012) 72 percent of developmental students take their developmental courses at the community college.

The community college's unique mission places it in a position where developmental education is an essential part of their purpose. One of the cornerstones of the community college mission is to offer open access to higher education (Cohen & Brawer, 2008). It is also the job of the community college to serve as an intermediary for students who want to go to college, but may not be academically prepared to do so (Cohen & Brawer, 2008). In serving as a go-between the community college must aid under prepared students in order for them to continue on in higher education. Another cornerstone of the community college mission is to offer affordable access to higher education (Cohen & Brawer, 2008). Thus, students taking developmental

courses at the community college pay a small portion in tuition that they would have to pay at a four year college for the same courses. Offering developmental education aligns with the community college mission by offering open and affordable access to higher education.

The effectiveness of developmental education is a much contested topic in the literature. Some studies report that developmental education is failing (Barr & Schuetz, 2008) while others say developmental education is making strides toward improving student success (Goudas & Boylan, 2012). Most of the researchers who study developmental education report mixed results. According to Barr and Schuetz (2008) the first study conducted on the impact of remedial courses found that “90 percent of students withdrew or failed” (p.10). Asera (2012) agreed that modest successes often go hand in hand with other problems. Goudas and Boylan (2012) also couch their finding in that some community colleges are somewhat successful with their current developmental programs whereas others are not. The one constant in the studies is that they all focused on developmental education, quantifiable student outcomes. However, they also all lacked an examination of the processes that lead to student outcomes. This study moves away from the quantifiable, outcome driven results of previous studies and focuses on the processes that are intertwined with developmental education and may create and define student outcomes.

Statement of the Problem

More than half of college students come to post-secondary education unprepared and need some sort of developmental education program. However, developmental education programs appear to be missing the mark with most of participating students either not completing the developmental education courses, not enrolling in course bearing programs or not completing degree programs (Asera, 2012; Barr & Schuetz, 2012; Levin & Kater, 2013). We know a lot about these quantifiable markers, including quite a bit about what it is like to be a community

college student. However, but we know very little about the intersection of developmental education and community college in terms of the issues, experiences and perceptions of community college students who have to take developmental education courses.

This study seeks to advance the understanding of developmental education by not only helping to place the outcomes of developmental education in context, but will shed light on the path to those outcomes. The purpose of this study is to explore community college student, college administrator, and family perceptions about developmental education. Through this study, the understanding of perceptions of developmental education will be enhanced thus furthering the academic literature and potentially giving practitioners information needed to improve developmental education programs.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the perceptions of community college students, family members, and college administrators regarding developmental education at the community college.

Significance of the Study

The majority of the literature surrounding developmental education focuses on student success that is defined quantitative by outcomes. The outcomes measured include test scores, final grades, retention rates, and dropout rates terms (Ashby, et al., 2011; Bailey, et al., 2013; Bahr, 2012; Barbatis, 2010). Developmental education studies have often utilized a quantitative or mixed-method approach research designs ((Ashby, et al., 2011; Bailey, et al., 2013; Bahr, 2012; Barbatis, 2010; Goeller, 2013; Grubb & Cox, 2005). The studies that used a mixed-method approach relied more heavily upon quantitative data and primarily used qualitative for supporting quantitative findings (Ashby, et al., 2011; Bailey, et al., 2013; Bahr, 2012;Goeller,

2013). In doing so, I fill a methodological gap in by utilizing a qualitative approach with a phenomenology as its theoretical lens. The researcher explores the issue from a new approach that other studies have largely overlooked. Investigating it from the participants' angle with an emphasis on their voices. This study focuses on the developmental education perceptions that create the outcomes explored in previous studies.

While a plethora of outcomes studies exist, there are only two studies that begin to discuss developmental education processes that create student success: outcomes however they have limited samples. Howard and Whitaker (2011) explored the perceptions of developmental math students, but did not include students in developmental English. This study includes both math and English students with other diverse student demographics. Jaggars and Hodara (2013) interviewed and observed both math and English developmental students, however, they did not ask students to suggest how their feelings and experiences toward developmental education may impact their success in those classes.

Both studies concentrated on the student viewpoint and neither study explored the perceptions of other stakeholders. In this study, I focus on student perceptions, but also include the perceptions of the student's family and college administrators. Although this study is guided by the work by Howard and Whitaker as well as Jaggars and Hodara, I expand the exploration of developmental education further than these authors. My intention was to enhance our understanding of developmental education based not only on the experiences of the students who take the courses, but also of the families who guide and support students as well as the administrators who implement the developmental education programs.

The perception of developmental education can play a significant role in achieving student and college success (Jaggars & Hodara, 2013). There are many factors outside of the

classroom that can help shape students' expectations and perceptions going into developmental courses that could determine their success (Howard & Whitaker, 2011; Jaggars & Hodara, 2013). The area of perceptions and how they affect students is a relatively untouched realm of developmental education research.

The results of this study will not only enhance the academic literature related to developmental education, but will supply information that could help both administrators and faculty enhance student success. With a greater understanding of how students, family, and the colleges perceive developmental education, colleges can begin the process of strengthening their developmental programs to heighten student success.

Conceptual Framework

This work is framed overlapping conceptual lens that recognize that community college students, family members, and college administrators all participate in developmental education simultaneously yet from difference perspectives. In order to understand the perceptions of each group, it is crucial to recognize that they have independent experiences that overlap and influence one another. Those perceptions are shaped by their developmental roles and identities and that, in turn, might influence beliefs toward developmental education. The conceptual framework used in this study is built upon the potential influences and thoughts that may lead to the perceptions of students, family members, and college administrators.

Student Identity Formation

College students often come of age while pursuing post-secondary education. This transition from adolescence to emerging adult is a time of shifting personal and professional identity (Duranczyk, Goff, & Opitz, 2006). During this phase, students draw on family expectations and status attainment constructs to guide (or push) them into a student identity that

influences course selection as well as academic success (VanOra, 2012). This is a time of educational experimentation but within the confines of an emerging student identity.

Community college students are more complex in that they are often firmly entrenched in or are past the emerging adult developmental phase on a personal and professional level (Kaufman, 2014). Community college students are often older, have fewer economic resources, have dependents, and/or are first generation college attendees than students at four-year universities (Hand & Payne, 2008). However, these same students may have an underdeveloped student identity. Students must deal with their own personal identity as a student as well as the layer of the identity of a developmental student (Kaufman, 2014). Student identity formation is informed by different spheres including past student performance in high school or other community colleges as well as from family and peer expectations (Jaggars & Hodara, 2013; Kaufman, 2014; O' Shea, 2013). Students not only have to work with their own academic identity being in developmental education, but also how their family sees their identity as well as both students and developmental education students (Jaggars & Hodara, 2013). One might consider the developmental education student as not quite a college student because they are not enrolled in credit bearing courses but are acting like a full-blown community college student (Kaufman, 2014). Thus, I examine student identity formation as intersecting with family and institutional influences as well as extending this idea of student identity formation to encompass the special facets of developmental education.

Status Attainment

Family members must discover what it means for their student to be in developmental education and what this means for the family as well as the student (Hand & Payne, 2008; O'Shea, 2013). Status attainment refers to an inter-generational status transfer model through

education, wealth, and profession (Andres, Trache, Yoon, Pidgeon, & Thomsen, 2007; Houle, 2013). In the most basic sense, families expect and provide the structure for children to reach certain personal goals often including levels of educational attainment and/or the entry to certain professions (Hand & Payne, 2008). Families push students to certain paths. Families also transition in their own identities as children either pursue educational goals or stop out. Thus, it is likely that families with students who are enrolled in developmental education may struggle with status attainment conceptions in terms of their students being in developmental education (Jaggars & Hodara, 2013). To put it plainly, families may struggle to support students who are enrolled in college but not for credit bearing courses that are marked for remediation purposes (Houle, 2013).

Social Capital

Social capital refers to the transfer of knowledge, expectations, norms and obligations through social ties. Social capital is the mechanism through which student and families navigate both the community college and developmental education processes (Coleman, 1967; Portes, 1998). While family members and students also have external forces that may shape their views or individual perceptions of developmental education, they transfer information and find balance in expectation through social capital exchanges between students and family (Coleman, 1967; Portes, 1998). Coleman (1967) detailed the importance of social capital in educational attainment. Information is passed from important community stakeholders to family members which is then shared with students. Students in turn inform the family members and community. This closed network of loose ties (Granovetter, 1973) is important to understand when examining student educational perceptions.

Institutional Capacity

College administrators differ from the students and family members in terms of what may shape their perceptions of developmental education. They are inherently constrained by institutional capacity in terms of what programs can be offered, amount of money that can be spent, and enrollment that can be accommodated (Collins, 2010; Pretlow & Wathington, 2011). These are shaped by external, regulatory forces along with other issues facing community college administration (Jaggars & Hodara, 2013). In Virginia, community colleges are guided by a central administrative body, the Virginia Community College System (VCCS). The VCCS dictates much of the particulars of developmental education such as the levels and thresholds for credit bearing courses. In some cases, they also guide the means in which developmental education is delivered, i.e., in modules versus semester long courses. Community college administrators also have to manage external expectations in tandem with institutional resources at the same time considering how developmental education may impact their students and stakeholders (Bailey, 2009; Barr & Schuetz, 2008). Thus, I use the lens of institutional capacity to explore administrators' perceptions of the tensions surrounding developmental education. Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual framework where student identity formation, status attainment and institutional capacity intersect while being simultaneously informed through social capital mechanisms.

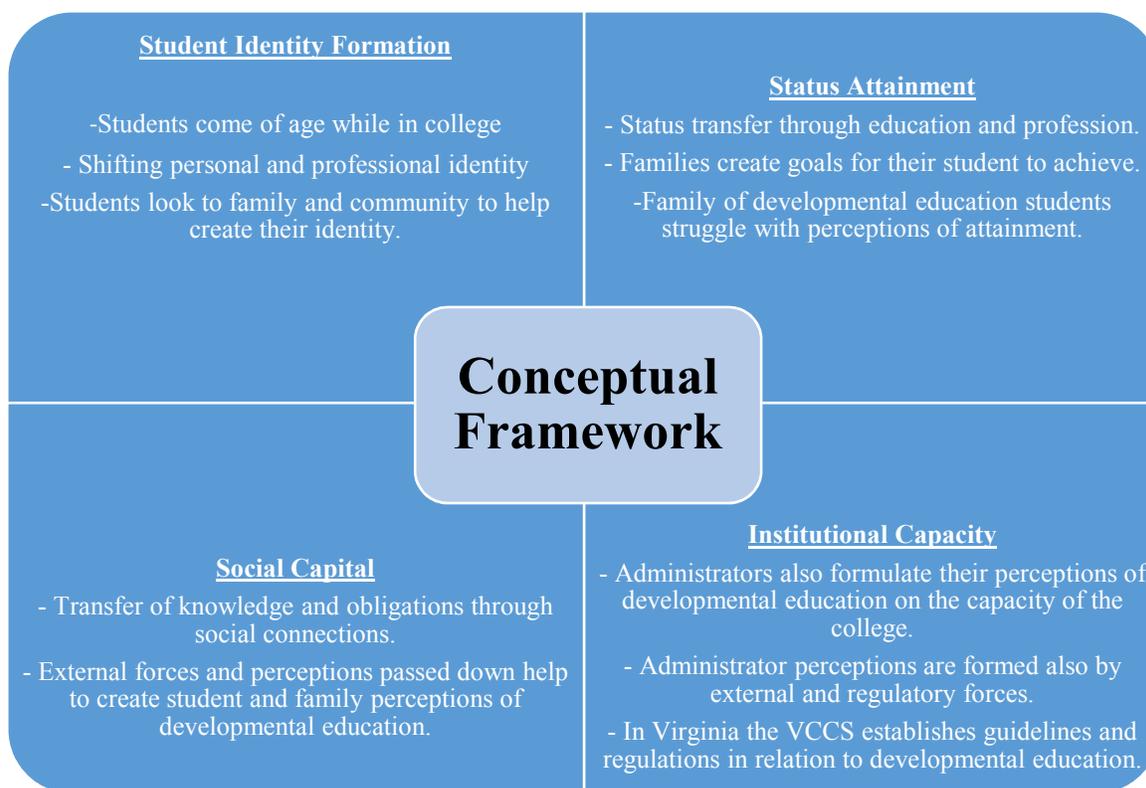


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework.

Research Design

Qualitative research methods will be used to illicit student, administrator, and family member viewpoints. A phenomenological research design is utilized for this study. According to Hays and Singh (2012) the purpose of phenomenology is to “discover and describe the meaning or essence of participants' lived experiences, or knowledge as it appears to consciousness” (p.50). The use of phenomenology allows the researcher to approach the phenomenon with a new perspective allowing for the data from participants to explain the phenomenon (Hays & Singh, 2012; Moustakas, 1994). Since the purpose of the study is to explore community college student, administrator, and family perceptions about developmental education, the use of phenomenology is the appropriate research design. Phenomenology will allow the researcher to approach the

phenomenon with a fresh approach and use the lived experiences of the participants to gain insight into how students, administrators, and family members perceive developmental education.

Population and Sample

The population for this study will be Virginia residents who are classified as one of the following: Community college student who is enrolled in developmental courses, family member of a developmental community college student, or an administrator who works at a community college offering developmental courses. The sample will consist of students, administrators, and family members from three community colleges in Virginia. The interview sample at each institution will be comprised of four students, two family members, and two administrators for a total of 24 interviews. Participants will be purposefully selected since the participants will have to meet certain criteria before being chosen for an interview.

The identities of the three community colleges are disguised so that students, administrators and family members can speak candidly. However, they span the state and represent the Virginia Community College population. Xavier Community College is located in an urban area whereas Jean Community College is suburban and May Community College is rural.

Research Foci

In this study, I focus on perceptions of developmental education at community colleges. To guide this exploration, I detail five research foci that touch upon issues of student development, status attainment, institutional capacity and the linkages of social capital:

1. What are student perceptions of developmental education?
2. What experiences lead to students' perceptions of developmental education?

3. What are students' current experiences with developmental education?
4. What perceptions do family members have about developmental education?
5. What perceptions do community college administrators have about developmental education?

Definition of Terms

Community College: Two year government supported higher education institution that offers associates degrees and certificates. The mission of the community college is to offer open access to affordable higher education.

Developmental Education: Academic programs in English and Mathematics that prepare students who do not possess the appropriate skills or knowledge necessary to perform at a collegiate level.

Remedial Education: Term used for developmental education before the developmental education became the accepted terminology.

Underprepared Student or Developmental Student: Any student who is not academically prepared to begin collegiate level coursework.

Perception: Mental impression created through understanding and interpretation.

Family of Developmental Students: In relation to this study the family of a developmental student will be the parent or guardian of a traditional age student (18-22 years of age) or the spouse/significant other of a non-traditional student (23+ years of age)

Significant Other: Spouse or long-term partner.

Overview of the Chapters

Chapter I serves as the introduction to the topic, the literature surrounding the topic, and an overview of the study. In Chapter II, the literature is evaluated in depth covering the major

issues surrounding developmental education and reports the results of significant past studies. The research methods are thoroughly explored in Chapter III covering the research design, population and sample, along with the measures and data collection procedures. The results of the study will be reported in Chapter IV. Finally, in Chapter V the results and conclusions will be discussed and how they relate to past literature and what they affect the future of developmental education.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Defining Developmental Education

The literature surrounding the definition of developmental education is very similar in meaning allowing for a universal understanding of developmental education. Boylan (2002) defines developmental education as “courses or services provided for the purpose of helping under prepared college students attain their academic goals “(p.3). Another common definition is courses designed to aid weak academic students to become capable of entering college-level coursework (Bailey, Jeong, & Cho, 2010). Other explanations define developmental education as remediation to bring students to a level of academic preparedness (Brothen & Wambach, 2012). Cohen and Brawer (2008) defined developmental education as “ students who initially do not have the skills, experience, or orientation necessary to perform at a level that the institutions or instructors recognize as regular for those students” (p. 290). While each definition is very similar not having a universal definition of developmental education makes the current literature diverse and creates a division among the field (Hodges, Simpson, & Stahl, 2012). The literature is also diverse in how the developmental student is defined. Some researchers focused on developmental students who were recent graduates, but under prepared for college level coursework. Asera (2011) described a more general student who “is grappling with academic material they have never seen before. Perhaps they had mastered the material and forgotten it or not mastered it the first time around “(p.28). The concept presented by the literature is that while the definitions are diverse the core component of aiding students to become more prepared for college level courses is universal.

Who Should Provide Developmental Education?

Debate has formed over who should be responsible for providing developmental education to under-prepared students. Some feel that the burden of offering developmental education falls to the community college and not to the college or university (Ignash, 1997). While, currently, both types of institutions offer remedial coursework the community college has taken up the majority of the task making it apart of the community college mission (Perin, 2002). Perin (2002) further stated that the community college mission to the community and their transfer students mandates that the community college be responsible for offering developmental education.

Ignash (1997) stated that colleges and universities should not be held responsible for the offering of developmental education since it is not college level coursework. The cost to students is another argument made as to why the community college should offer the needed developmental courses since their cost of attendance is much lower than that of a college or university (Ignash, 1997). For these reason many four year colleges have ended their developmental courses and relied upon the community colleges to offer all developmental education (Wilson, 2012). According to Bailey (2009) the community college is in a unique position to take over the developmental education task which would not only better serve students, but would help colleges during hard financial times. The discussion surrounding who should be responsible for the offering of developmental education is still being debated among the community college and four year colleges and universities. According to the literature while some four year colleges still offer developmental education there is a push toward the community college being solely responsible for the offering of developmental education.

Cost of Developmental Education

One of the main topics of debate surrounding developmental education is the cost both students and the colleges. The task of developmental education has fallen onto the shoulders of the community college and with it the cost of operating developmental programs and employing faculty who teach remedial courses. This is especially difficult for the community colleges since they receive one-third of the funding a four year college does (Mellow et al., 2011). Community colleges, compared to four year colleges, have fewer tutors, advisors, and full time faculty due to their different funding levels (Mellow et al., 2011). It is estimated that offering developmental education costs one billion dollars per year or one percent of the public expenditures of higher education (Hughes & Scott-Clayton, 2011). While the cost of providing developmental education ranges depending upon the study the most common financial commitment reports it to be around the one billion dollar mark. Some supporters of developmental education argue that the remedial courses pay for themselves because they better society and allow the student to succeed in their academic endeavors (Brothen & Wambach, 2012). Gallard, Albritton, and Morgan (2010) stated that “their greatest misconception about developmental education is that is costly” (p.11). They argue that the cost of developmental education is justified since these courses allow students to give back financially to the institution upon graduation and become integral parts of society (Gallard, Albritton, & Morgan, 2010). According to Hughes & Scott-Clayton (2011) community colleges, due to their open door policy, have taken up the torch when preparing under prepared students for college level work.

In 2011 Pretlow and Wathington composed an update of the cost of developmental education reviewing a cost assessment conducted by Breneman and Haarlow in 1998 (Pretlow &

Wathington, 2011). The original study done by Breneman and Haarlow (1998) found that the cost of developmental education was around \$1 billion dollars (Pretlow & Wathington, 2011). In an attempt to update those figures in to a more recent cost analysis Pretlow and Wathington estimate that developmental education has increased in Texas by 13 percent since then costing \$1.13 billion dollars. The authors contend that an updated analysis had to be done in order for any community college to develop a successful plan for the new goals set by President Obama (Pretlow & Wathington, 2011). According to Pretlow and Wathington at least 60 percent of first year community college students will require at least one developmental course before taking a full collegiate level course load (Pretlow & Wathington, 2011). The authors developed their updated cost by implementing a three part process. The first process was to use the state of Texas as their basis, same as Breneman and Haarlow (1998), to ensure validity (Pretlow & Wathington, 2011). The second aspect they investigated was to separate the developmental costs of the community college and the four year college to ensure the most accurate cost analysis (Pretlow & Wathington, 2011). Lastly, they call for more transparency in the state and federal agencies so that the cost of developmental courses can accurately be assessed (Pretlow & Wathington, 2011). The limitations of this study discussed by the authors writing that most institutions underrepresent their developmental education data, there is no consistent definition of developmental, and test scores can vary from institution to institution (Pretlow & Wathington, 2011). Finally, the authors write that the cost analysis does not include private institutions that provide developmental education as well (Pretlow & Wathington, 2011).

Another update took place in 2012 examining the costs of developmental education in Arkansas (Carroll, Kersh, Sullivan, & Fincher, 2012). In their study they examined the largest community colleges in Arkansas and determined how much each institution spent on

developmental education and how much financial support was given to each student. They found that one college with an enrollment of 1,797 spent \$1,016, 587 on offering remedial courses and found that each developmental student needed \$1,634 of financial support from the college (Carroll et al., 2012). The largest community college, enrolling 8, 112 students, found that they spent \$833 per student (Carroll et al., 2012). Statewide in one academic year the state of Arkansas spent \$32,686,062 on developmental education (Carroll, et al., 2013).

With such a high level of institutional and governmental financial amount of financial obligations many people are critical of the amount of benefit provided by developmental education. Critics of remedial education often point to the amount of money needed to operate these courses and feel that they are a hindrance to the institutions and the federal or state governments (Gallard, et al., 2010). Another issue raised by critics of the cost of developmental education is that the material covered in such courses should have been learned in elementary and secondary schools (Carroll et al., 2012). In response to the critics Gallard et al. (2010) found that developmental education yields three financial benefits that justify the high cost of their operation. The first benefit goes to the increase in allocation by some state governments based upon the number of successful developmental students (Gallard et al., 2010). The second financial benefit for colleges comes from the amount of full time students (FTE) who enroll increasing the amount of resources allocated based upon number of students served (Gallard et al., 2010). The last benefit noted was with an increase in full time student enrollment an increase in student fees associated with registration and enrollment will occur creating more money for the college (Gallard et al., 2010).

The arguments around the cost of developmental education are very diverse with many being critical of the cost compared to the benefit. While the estimated cost of offering

developmental education is one billion per year or one percent of the budget toward higher education the literature brings up good points for the sustainability of the programs given the cost compared to the potential student and institutional benefits.

Success and Results of Developmental Education

Like the cost of such programs the success of developmental education has yielded much diversity in the literature. According to Daiek, Dixon, and Talbert (2012) the need for developmental education rose from 43 percent in 2003 to 60 percent in 2011 and the need to look at the success has increased as well. While the growth of need for developmental education has increased the amount of college ready students may not be increasing (Bahr, 2012). Levin and Kater (2013) stated “developmental education is prominent in community colleges, but findings on its effectiveness have not been uniformly positive” (p.88). According to Barr and Schuetz (2008) the first study conducted on the success of remedial courses found that “90 percent of students withdrew or failed” (p.10). Also, Asera (2012) wrote that “there were some modest success, but they only chip away at the magnitude of the problem” (p.28). On the other side Goudas and Boylan (2012) found that “one could conclude that indeed community colleges are at least somewhat successful with their current developmental programs” (p.2).

One of the most common problems addressed in the research is the attrition and completion rates of developmental courses by students. Currently, only one in three community college students complete their developmental courses leading to a degree (Bremer, Opsal, Center, Medhanie, Jang, & Geise, 2013). Another study found that fifty percent of students take one or two developmental courses then do not return to complete their additional requirements (Levin & Kater, 2013). Similarly, Brothern and Wambach (2012) wrote that “it [developmental education] does not advance students toward advanced degrees” (p.35). One explanation for

this is that many students who are required to take developmental courses become discouraged and drop out and those who complete their remedial course work have a different level of motivation to succeed (Brothern & Wambach, 2012). The importance of finding ways to offset students not finishing their remedial coursework is best described by Gallard, Albritton, and Morgan (2010) when they stated “the plain truth of the matter is that if students don’t succeed in developmental education, they simply won’t have the opportunity to succeed anywhere else” (p.10).

Opposing forces often times hinder student success and retention (Jaggars and Hodara, 2013). The three areas that were discovered where the system wide consistency of the developmental courses, colleges not using effective assessment procedures, and the college valuing progression through the course instead of academic rigor (Jaggars & Hodara, 2013). The authors argue that lack of consistent practices in offering and evaluating developmental education creates an environment where the student is set up to fail (Jaggars & Hodara, 2013). Lack of appropriate assessment procedures hurts both the college and the student by not enhancing the developmental curriculum to produce more effective courses and maintain consistency in the offering of developmental courses (Jaggars & Hodara, 2013). Lastly, they found that colleges through the faculty do not promote the same amount of academic rigor that is consistent with college level course work (Jaggars & Hodara, 2013). By putting more emphasis on advancing students through the developmental courses instead of academic rigor students can pass developmental courses, but still not be able to succeed in college level courses (Jaggars & Hodara, 2013).

The first issue examined by the authors is the belief, stated in other studies, that developmental education is not effective since developmental students do not have higher

success rates in non-remedial courses than non-remedial students (Goudas & Boylan, 2012). According to the authors this ideology is misguided since developmental courses are intended to take students who need development in order to place them at equal ground to other students (Goudas & Boylan, 2012). Since the purpose of developmental education is to place students at equal entering non-remedial courses the belief that developmental students should perform better is wrong, according to the authors their success should be defined related to the other students (Goudas & Boylan, 2012).

Additionally, the authors wrote that if students are measured by the same standards then developmental students who then move into gatekeeper courses have similar success to non-developmental students (Goudas & Boylan, 2012). Following that definition developmental courses are in functioning and being successful in aiding students to do well in collegiate level courses contradicting the majority of the studies present (Goudas & Boylan, 2012). The authors also state that other studies are biased toward wanting to report that developmental education does not work. Goudas and Boylan contended that many studies only use the negative data and disregard any positive findings (Goudas & Boylan, 2012). Lastly, Goudas and Boylan wrote that comparing non-developmental students and developmental students is an unfair comparison since there is no “apples to apples comparison” (p.8). There is no apples to apples comparison since the two student demographics are so different in nature. The only way to have fair comparisons is to compare developmental with developmental in order to have similar demographics.

Assessment of Developmental Education

Success in higher education and how both student success and institutional success are measured has become even more important to higher education institutions since the push for

performance based funding (Conley & Squires, 2012). The need for assessment of developmental education must be not only done on the collegiate level, but the assessment process must begin with evaluating secondary school performance as well (Nunley, Shartle-Galotto, & Smith, 2000). Additionally, the colleges must not only evaluate pass rates of students, but must also look at their growth in the classroom as well (Conley & Squires, 2012; Dasinger, 2013). The methods to which developmental education curriculum and student success are evaluated are crucial to better understanding developmental education.

According to Conley and Squires (2012) community colleges must evaluate student performance in terms of passage rates in developmental education and beyond to fully assess developmental education. The beginning of this process must be done by calculating the number of passing students with the number enrolled (Conley & Squires, 2012). Then the process must be continued with the student's next course and then a re-evaluation of their success to completion (Conley & Squires, 2012). Bailey et al. (2013) stated that colleges measure performance first by using placement tests to gauge student knowledge before entering a developmental course. The placement tests given would allow for the college to use the measures defined by Conley & Squires (2012), but would give the college student performance data before the start of the developmental course aiding in getting a true representation of student success (Bailey, et al., 2013).

The work of Bailey, et al., (2013) and Collins (2010) found that assessment of developmental education must be done by the comparison of groups of developmental students going through developmental education to see aspects could be enhanced. Collins (2010) argued that through the current assessment process there is a gap in knowledge that is not being recorded. This gap in knowledge is found when colleges only evaluate passage rates (Collins,

2010). Bailey et al., found that the comparison of developmental education groups would produce the most valuable data in terms of assessing developmental success.

Another way colleges assess developmental education is to place emphasis on the student achieving their personal goals through the completion of developmental education leading to college completion (Ley & Young, 1998). Ley and Young (1998) reported that some colleges require developmental students to do a self-evaluation to determine what their personal goals are going into developmental education. In this model students would complete goals that are aligned with the developmental curriculum then assess their completion or progress toward the goals they set (Ley & Young, 1998). This form of assessment allows the student to take a more active role in the assessment of the developmental courses and gives the college data, from the student perspective that will lead to enhancement of their developmental education programs (Ley & Young, 1998). Using the assessment tools such as passage rates, success past developmental courses, and student self-evaluations the college could place themselves in a situation where they have begun to gauge the success of their developmental programs. While these methods of assessment will give the college data about the potential success of their developmental programs there are outside forces that may contribute to the success of the developmental student (Jaggars & Hodara, 2013). One of the potential areas that traditional assessment does not account for is the mindset or perceptions of the developmental students, college, and family of developmental students that may have an influence upon the success of developmental education.

Perceptions of Developmental Education

The majority of the literature related to developmental education focuses on outcomes there is a gap in the literature relating to what processes create the outcomes. One of the

processes that may influence the outcome data are the perceptions of developmental education. The perception of developmental education can play a significant role in achieving student success and college success (Jaggars & Hodara, 2013). There are many factors outside of the classroom and instruction that can help shape the students ideas and perceptions going into developmental courses that could determine their success (Howard & Whitaker, 2011; Jaggars & Hodara, 2013). When evaluating the impact of perceptions upon the developmental student it is crucial to look at the student, family, and college perceptions and how they create negative and positive perceptions of developmental education (Bachman, 2013; Barbatis, 2010; Capt & Oliver, 2012; Duranczyk, et al., 2006; Goeller, 2013; Grubb & Cox, 2005; Howard & Whitaker, 2011; Jaggars & Hodara, 2013; Koch et al., 2012; Miller, 2007; Reichwein, Schneider, & Onwuegbuzie, 2014; Schultz & Higbee, 2006; VanOra, 2012; Weinstein, 2004). By reviewing the literature surrounding the perceptions of students, family, and the college a better understanding of the phenomenon can be found and an enhancement of the importance of the researches study is apparent.

College Perceptions of Developmental Education

The perceptions of colleges in relation to developmental education is directly related to student success (Reichwein, et al., 2014). The perceptions of the college, especially faculty, can hinder student success in developmental education by impacting student placement and success in the classroom (Reichwein, et al., 2014). According to Weinstein (2004) developmental students enter their college career looking to the college and the faculty to help shape their view of college success. Students will enter college and depending on how the college perceived developmental education depends on how project their perceptions upon the student (Weinstein, 2004). According to Capt and Oliver (2012) it is crucial for researchers to explore the

perceptions of the individuals who create the college community in an attempt to better understand the various perceptions of developmental education. The perceptions of developmental education can be the factor that creates enhanced student success or results in students not reaching their academic goals (Jaggars & Hodara, 2013).

The literature surrounding this issue revolves around the instructors' perceptions about developmental education and what causes a student to need developmental instruction. Capt and Oliver (2012) wrote that developmental students needed faculty support to help them reach the ability to succeed in regular collegiate courses. The perceptions of developmental instructors are varied in terms of positive and negative. The majority of faculty place the blame on the student's lack of seriousness, intelligence, or determination to succeed (Capt & Oliver, 2012; Duranczyk, et al., 2006; Grubb & Cox, 2005; Koch et al., 2012; Miller, 2007; Reichwein, Schneider, & Onwuegbuzie, 2014; Schultz & Higbee, 2006). In a qualitative study conducted by Capt and Oliver (2012) they determined the main perceptions of developmental instructors in terms of what creates a student's need for remediation. Table 1 illustrates their findings based on their interviews with faculty and college administrators when asked about their perceptions of developmental education.

Table 1. *College Perceptions of Student Challenges.*

Developmental Students
<p style="text-align: center;"> Lack of preparation for college Lack of commitment Lack of focus Lack of self-confidence Lack of communication with teacher Require more personal attention Hold a negative view of developmental course Low motivation Not making school a priority Need to relearn key concepts Prone to academic dishonesty Does not have the needed college skills They may have more obligations Poor time management skills Have academic anxiety Does not understand concepts Have a short attention span Lack of goals Lack of support from family </p>

(Capt & Oliver, 2012)

The literature further calls for more research to be done to help offset these perceptions and determine how they affect student success. Grubb and Cox (2005) wrote that more training for developmental instructors would greatly enhance student success by giving the faculty more knowledge about what creates a developmental student. Weinstein (2004) calls for more emphasis to be placed on the student's academic journey that created their need for developmental courses when entering higher education.

Throughout the literature surrounding the perceptions of developmental education in relation to the college the call for more research is a constant. With the findings of this study the researcher will be add to the literature surrounding the topic and give more insight into the phenomena that may lead to a better understanding of the perceptions. With that understanding

the colleges can create and implement new programs that will foster student success in developmental education.

Family Perceptions

The perceptions of developmental education by the students' family members is equally as important as the college perceptions in formulating student ideas about developmental education (Byrd & MacDonald, 2005; Miller, 2007). According to Miller (2007) the family background of a student determines how they will view higher education and developmental education and potentially influence their later success. The formation of perceptions about developmental education begin with the family since students, often times, look to their family for advice and assistance in things they do not understand (Byrd & MacDonald, 2005). It is important to better understand the perceptions of the family members of developmental students in an effort to better understand what creates their negative or positive perceptions of developmental education.

The literature investigating the family perceptions of developmental students is lacking sufficient depth. This study not only adds to the existing literature, but will investigate family perceptions and their influence over the formation of student perceptions in a new way. This study will focus on the family perceptions in the same way it will student and college perceptions creating a more in-depth review of each of the areas.

Negative Student Perceptions

Howard and Whitaker (2011) found additional data providing more information about student success in developmental education. The article "Unsuccessful and Successful Mathematics Learning: Developmental Students' Perceptions" provides the findings of a qualitative study that focused upon student perceptions of their success when placed in

developmental courses (Howard & Whitaker, 2011). The study used a sample of 4,000 participants where were composed of 85 percent Caucasian, 4 percent Hispanic, and 2 percent other with 60 percent traditional and 40 percent non-traditional students (Howard & Whitaker, 2011). The researchers utilized four methods of data collection which where interviews, in-class observations, reflexive journal kept by the students, and the students' assessment scores on tests or quizzes (Howard & Whitaker, 2011).

The researchers found that students who were placed in developmental courses had different perceptions on their learning ability than other students (Howard & Whitaker, 2011). The authors found that students who placed in developmental math began their perception creation with a negative stimulus in previous mathematics courses that formed their belief that math was beyond their learning potential (Howard & Whitaker, 2011). Furthermore, the authors discovered that if a second intervention would occur which would produce a positive stimulus or learning event then the student would be able to offset the negative perception allowing them to believe they could learn the material (Howard & Whitaker, 2011). In the results the concept of student motivation played a major role by allowing students to utilize a positive perception of their learning capability in turn making them successful in the developmental courses (Howard & Whitaker, 2011). The authors contend that contrary to past studies perception and motivation are the main factor that creates student success rather than the actual learning environment (Howard & Whitaker, 2011).

According to Bachman (2013) developmental students are facing scorn from others who view that higher education is only for the brightest of students. This is similar to the findings of Koch et al. (2012) which found that incoming students who placed in developmental courses felt like they were “dummies” or “stupid” based upon their perceptions of developmental education.

Howard and Whitaker (2011) echoed this student belief by reporting that students who had negative perceptions of developmental education had a negative intervention at some point that formed that idea and the only way to offset that belief was by a positive intervention later. One possible negative intervention would be around the potential stigma of developmental education. VanOra (2012) found that while a stigma was placed on the intellect of developmental students some have a negative perception based upon outside demands on their time and taking non-credit courses was simply a waste. Additionally, Goeller (2013) found that the age of the student plays a role in negative perceptions in that students who were 18 to 22 felt like the material was too basic for them and that they should be smart enough to not be placed in remedial course.

Bachman (2013) found that some developmental students had a negative perception from the beginning created by the community college or four year institution. In her findings she described a stigma that had been placed upon developmental education that created a negative mindset in the student, parents, and college (Bachman, 2013). VanOra (2012) had similar findings in that the colleges create an idea that all developmental courses are for people who are intellectually deficient in some areas. The blame for this stigmatization is almost exclusively found in the methods that community colleges and four year colleges deal with developmental students and the way they market developmental education (Bachman, 2013; VanOra, 2012). Another potential way developmental education is stigmatized is by the amount of opposition surrounding the funding of developmental education (Bachman, 2013; Pretlow & Wathington, 2011; VanOra, 2012). Housed in this constant debate is the argument that developmental education should not exist since the skills covered in such courses should have already been mastered by the students before attending college (McMillan et al., 1997). The initial negative perception created by colleges sets the stage for development students to begin their higher

education journey at an automatic disadvantage making them feel inferior from the start (Goeller, 2013). Additionally, students who enter their first semester of college having a negative perception are less likely to be satisfied with their academic progress and less confident in their academic abilities (Goeller, 2013).

Positive Student Perceptions

While the literature highlights the negative perceptions of students in developmental education and the potential reasons for that occurrence there is also evidence showing that some students have positive perceptions. Some students who have an initial negative perception can shift from that if there are positive experiences in the developmental courses or support from others (Howard & Whitaker, 2011). Goeller (2013) reported that positive perceptions were most common in students who were over 23 years of age because they viewed the experience as needed or a means to a positive end. Adding to that Goeller (2013) also found that students who felt they were properly placed were more satisfied with the remediation and had a more positive experience with developmental courses. Another element of positive perception found was that students viewed themselves as role models for others going through developmental education (VanOra, 2012). It was also found that students had a positive perception of remediation because it better prepared them to be successful later making them more trained for their academic journey and career (VanOra, 2012).

In a study conducted by Barbatis (2010), the results demonstrated that there are four major student characteristics that create a positive perception of developmental education before and after entering higher education. Barbatis (2010) found that three indicators which were students socioeconomic status prior to enrollment, positive secondary school achievement, and strong family support. With each of these indicators students who achieved one or more of these

indicators were more likely to be satisfied with their placement and show stronger persistence in the courses (Barbatis, 2010; VanOra, 2012). Furthermore, students who have had positive experiences in secondary schools are more likely to have confidence in their abilities and demonstrate positive attitudes when enrolling in developmental courses (Barbitas, 2010; Howard & Whitaker, 2011). Barbatis (2010) also reported that students who had positive achievements, both in the classroom and outside in extracurricular activities, were able to create stronger relationships with the faculty creating a positive experience in developmental courses. Creating strong positive relationships with the faculty and college is one element to student success that is rarely found in the students with a negative perception when entering higher education (Barbatis, 2010; Howard & Whitaker, 2011; McMillan et al., 1997; VanOra, 2012).

Summary

Through this literature based study the topics of defining developmental education, cost of operating developmental programs, student success, negative student perceptions, and positive student perceptions were covered. Through the literature a better understanding of the definition, cost, and success of developmental programs helped to lay the base knowledge needed to better evaluate the impact of student perceptions. Boylan (2002) defines it as “courses or services provided for the purpose of helping under prepared college students attain their academic goals “(p.3). Another common definition is courses designed to aid weak academic students to become capable of entering college-level coursework (Bailey et al., 2010).

The cost is especially difficult for the community colleges since they receive one-third of the funding a four year college does and have fewer tutors, advisors, and full time faculty due to lessened financial resources (Mellow et al., 2011). It is estimated that offering developmental

education costs one billion dollars per year or one percent of the public expenditures of higher education (Hughes & Scott-Clayton, 2011).

In terms of the success of developmental education Levin and Kater (2013) stated “developmental education is prominent in community colleges, but findings on its effectiveness have not been uniformly positive” (p.88). According to Barr and Schuetz (2008) the first study conducted on the success of remedial courses found that “90 percent of students withdrew or failed” (p.10). One of the main difficulties of success in developmental education is the retention and completion of developmental students. Currently, only one in three community college students complete their developmental courses leading to a degree (Bremer, et al., 2013). Another study found that fifty percent of students take one or two developmental courses then do not return to complete their additional requirements (Levin & Kater, 2013). Similarly, Brothern and Wambach (2012) wrote that “it [developmental education] does not advance students toward advanced degrees” (p.35).

When evaluating the success of developmental education it is also important to look at the theories around the assessment of developmental education. The literature showed that there is debate as to when the assessment process should begin. The need for assessment of developmental education must be not only done on the collegiate level, but the assessment process must begin with evaluating secondary school performance as well (Nunley, Shartle-Galotto, & Smith, 2000). Others feel that the assessing developmental education is exclusively done at the collegiate level (Bailey et al., 2013; Conley & Squires, 2012; Ley & Young, 1998). According to Conley & Squires (2012) community colleges must evaluate student performance in terms of passage rates in developmental education and beyond to fully assess developmental education. Bailey, et al. (2013) stated that colleges measure performance first by using placement

tests to gauge student knowledge before entering a developmental course. Ley and Young (1998) found that some college assess developmental education by placing emphasis on the student. This method of assessment gauges the success students have in achieving their personal goals through the completion of developmental education leading to college completion (Ley & Young, 1998).

The literature surrounding college perceptions of developmental education revolves around the instructors' perceptions about developmental education and what causes a student to need developmental instruction. Capt and Oliver (2012) wrote that developmental students needed faculty support to help them reach the ability to succeed in regular collegiate courses. The perceptions of developmental instructors are varied in terms of positive and negative. The majority of faculty place the blame on the student's lack of seriousness, intelligence, or determination to succeed (Capt & Oliver, 2012; Duranczyk, et al., 2006; Grubb & Cox, 2005; Koch et al., 2012; Miller, 2007; Reichwein, Schneider, & Onwuegbuzie, 2014; Schultz & Higbee, 2006).

The perceptions of developmental education by the students' family members is equally as important as the college perceptions in formulating student ideas about developmental education (Byrd & MacDonald, 2005; Miller, 2007). According to Miller (2007) the family background of a student determines how they will view higher education and developmental education and potentially influence their later success. The formation of perceptions about developmental education begin with the family since students, often times, look to their family for advice and assistance in things they do not understand (Byrd & MacDonald, 2005).

The literature shows that the perceptions of developmental education by students can be both positive and negative. The perceptions of the students can influence how they approach the

course and how much benefit they get out of it. The literature showed that students with a negative perceptions viewed their placement as a reflection of their intellect by saying they felt like they were “dummies” or “stupid” (Koch et al, 2012). Others reported that students with a more positive perception thought they were placed correctly or viewed it as a means to a very positive end (Goeller, 2013). Also, VanOra (2012) found that some students viewed developmental education as positive since it allowed them to be role models to others in an attempt to negate the stigma. The issue of student perceptions is valuable for all community college leaders to better understand so that programs can be created and implemented in order to aid developmental student success. Furthermore, the literature provided excellent material that could benefit any community college leader wanting to enhance their understanding of the issue. Additionally, the literature provided ideas and guidelines as how to create viable programs in order to enhance positive student perceptions and how to offset or shift negative perceptions into more positive beliefs.

The literature shows that the perceptions of developmental education by students can be both positive and negative. The perceptions of the students can influence how they approach the course and how much benefit they get out of it. The literature showed that students with a negative perceptions viewed their placement as a reflection of their intellect by saying they felt like they were “dummies” or “stupid” (Koch et al, 2012). Others reported that students with a more positive perception thought they were placed correctly or viewed it as a means to a very positive end (Goeller, 2013). Also, VanOra (2012) found that some students viewed developmental education as positive since it allowed them to be role models to others in an attempt to negate the stigma. The issue of student perceptions is valuable for all community college leaders to better understand so that programs can be created and implemented in order to

aid developmental student success. Furthermore, the literature provided excellent material that could benefit any community college leader wanting to enhance their understanding of the issue. Additionally, the literature provided ideas and guidelines as how to create viable programs in order to enhance positive student perceptions and how to offset or shift negative perceptions into more positive beliefs.

Throughout the literature surrounding the perceptions of developmental education in relation to the college the call for more research is a constant. With the findings of this study the researcher will be add to the literature surrounding the topic and give more insight into the phenomena that may lead to a better understanding of the perceptions. With that understanding the colleges can create and implement new programs that will foster student success in developmental education. This study not only adds to the existing literature, but will investigate student, family, and college perceptions and how their perceptions may influence the formation of student perceptions in a new way. This study will focus on each demographic creating a more in-depth review of each of the areas. This study will create new data from new demographics that have not been represented adequately in past studies. When colleges begin to evaluate the importance of perceptions of developmental education in relation to student success the results of this study will be one of the first studies to incorporate the perceptions of all of the stakeholders for student success in developmental education. The questions that this study will explore are:

- What are the student perceptions of developmental education?
- What experiences lead to their perceptions?
- What are students' current experiences with developmental education?
- What perceptions do family members of students have about developmental education?

- What perceptions do community college administrators have about developmental education?

Filling the Gap

The literature presented illustrates the areas of study in developmental education. While the majority of the research and literature revolves around the outcomes of developmental education there are some that focus on the processes that create those outcomes. The perception of developmental education is one of those processes. While the research done by Bachman (2013), Howard and Whitaker (2011), Koch et al. (2012), and VanOra (2012) opens the door to the perceptions of developmental education there is still a gap in the literature. This study will help to fill that gap by going further than the previous studies and focusing not only on negative or positive perceptions, but also what helped to create these perceptions and what the students' current experiences are. Additionally, this study will not only utilize students as its sample, but will include college administrators and family members of students. With the inclusion of students, college administrators, and the family of the students a more in-depth clear picture of the perceptions is created. This study will open the door, created by the previous literature, further and aid in the furtherance of future studies that will aid to fill the remaining gap. The sample and methodology utilized in this study to investigate developmental education is unique to the literature and will aid to the work related to developmental education. The sample and methods will be discussed in the next chapter and will explain how the study will be carried out and what methods were used to analyze the data.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Cohen and Brawer (2008) reported that half of high school graduates required courses in developmental education. Nationwide, 44 percent of first time community college students took between one and three developmental courses (Cohen & Brawer, 2008). Ashby et al. (2011) stated that 79 percent of all incoming first year students will demonstrate the need for developmental courses. According the McMillain et al. (1997) the need for developmental education has increased to 55 percent from 39 percent over five years. It is estimated the 40 to 79 percent of students will require some level of developmental education to prepare them for collegiate level work.

Currently, there is a great deal of literature on developmental education dealing with student success and outcomes. The majority of this research has been conducted in either a quantitative or mixed method approach that reports results in terms of fail, pass, or dropout (Bachman, 2013; Boylan, 2002; Brothen & Wambach, 2012; VanOra, 2012). There is little research being done about the perceptions students, family members, and colleges experience regarding developmental education. Much of the literature based on the perceptions point to a negative stigma placed upon developmental education (Howard & Whitaker, 2011). The purpose of this study will be to explore the perceptions of developmental education from students, family members, and the college. In studying all the perceptions related to developmental education this study will expand upon the data collected by Howard and Whitaker (2011). This study will further the understanding of student, administrator, and family member perceptions of developmental education. The results may allow college and universities to better understand

how student perceptions may affect student success in developmental courses. The purpose of this study is to explore community college student, administrator, and family perceptions about developmental education.

Research Foci

1. What are student perceptions of developmental education?
2. What experiences lead to students' perceptions of developmental education?
3. What are students' current experiences with developmental education?
4. What perceptions do family members have about developmental education?
5. What perceptions do community college administrators have about developmental education?

Research Design

Phenomenology will be the research design utilized for this study. According to Hays and Singh (2012) the purpose of phenomenology is to “discover and describe the meaning or essence of participants' lived experiences, or knowledge as it appears to consciousness” (p.50). The use of phenomenology allows the researcher to approach the phenomenon with a new perspective allowing for the data found from the participants to explain the phenomenon (Hays & Singh, 2012; Moustakas, 1994). In approaching the study with a new or fresh perspective the researcher must set aside other explanations of the phenomenon that may be found in previous literature and use bracketing to remove any researcher bias. After setting aside any previous conclusions the researcher will allow the participants to guide the understanding of the phenomenon through their first hand experiences. In phenomenology the interview participants are viewed as co-researchers since they have an extensive amount of firsthand knowledge that

leads to the understanding of the phenomenon (Hays & Singh, 2012; Kvale & Brinkman, 2009; Moustakas, 1994). Since the purpose of the study is to explore community college student, administrator, and family perceptions about developmental education the use of phenomenology is the appropriate research design. Phenomenology will allow the researcher to approach the phenomenon with a fresh approach and use the lived experiences of the participants to gain insight into how students, administrators, and family members perceive developmental education.

Population and Sample

The population for this study are Virginia residents who are classified as one of the following; community college student who is enrolled in developmental courses, family member of a developmental community college student, or an administrator who works at a community college offering developmental courses. This study will utilize a sample of developmental education students, families, and administrators from three community colleges in Virginia. The sample will consist of eight interviews per institution. The interview sample will be comprised of four students, two family members, and two administrators. The study will be comprised of a total of 24 interviews.

Colleges Chosen

The colleges that the sample was chosen from were Xavier Community College which is urban, Jean Community College which is suburban, and May Virginia Community College which is rural. To keep the colleges confidential each college name was replaced with a pseudonym. These colleges were chosen to ensure an accurate representation of the population of students, administrators, and family members in the Virginia Community College System.

Xavier Community College is located in an urban setting with four campuses stretching across their service region. Currently, they have 7,520 students with a 24:1 student to faculty ratio (Xavier Community College Annual Report, retrieved from college website). Their student population is broken down into 38 percent male and 62 percent female. They have a 63 percent retention rate with a 21 percent graduation rate and 13 percent transfer rate. The age demographic of their students is broken down into 18 percent being below the age of 18, 53 percent between 18 and 24, with 29 percent between 25 and 64. The diversity of the study population can be found with 2 percent being Asian, 16 percent African American, eight percent Hispanic, 68 percent White, and four percent being of two or more races (Xavier Community College Annual Report, retrieved from college website).

Jean Community College is located in a sub-urban area with one campus serving 8,440 students (Quick Facts about JCC, retrieved from college website). The student to faculty ratio is 23:1. Jean Community College has a 63 percent retention rate with a 20 percent graduation rate and a 13 percent transfer rate. The student body is 45 percent male and 55 percent female with 11 percent being African American, three percent Asian, 81 percent White, three percent Hispanic, and two percent being of two or more races rate. The age demographic of the study population is broken down into 24 percent being under the age of 18, 43 percent being 18-24, 33 percent being 25-64 (Quick Facts about JCC, retrieved from college website).

The last community college that was chosen was May Virginia Community College which is located in a rural area. May Community College has 6,042 students that are served by two campuses (Facts about MCC, retrieved from college website). The student to faculty ratio is 23:1 with a 60 percent retention rate, 26 percent graduation rate, and a six percent transfer rate. The student body is comprised of 37 percent male and 63 percent female who are identified as 38

percent African American, two percent Hispanic, 57 percent White, and two percent being of two or more races (Facts about MCC, retrieved from college website). The age demographic of the students is 39 percent being under the age of 18, 32 percent from 18 to 24, 28 percent from 25 to 64, and one percent being over the age of 65 (Facts about MCC, retrieved from college website).

The sample was purposefully selected since the participants will have to meet certain criteria before being chosen for an interview (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009). The study utilized a criterion based sample where certain criteria was established for each of the sample groups. The criteria for student sample selection will be that they are currently enrolled in at least one developmental course at the community college. The student sample was separated into two students who are in their first developmental course and two who are in their second developmental course either in another discipline or subsequent after passing their first course. The student sample will be further separated into two traditional age students (18-22) and two non-traditional students (23 and above).

The criteria for family members was that their student is enrolled in at least one developmental course at the community college. The parents of the traditional age students will be half of the family member sample with the spouse or significant other being interviewed for the non-traditional age students.

The criteria for administrators to be included in the sample was that they are senior or mid-level administration who have a relationship with developmental education. Senior level administrators is defined as Vice Presidents of Academics or the President of the college. Mid-level administrators is defined as any administrator who reports to the Vice President of Academics including Dean of Students, Dean or Coordinator of Instruction, or possibly the Dean of the Arts and Sciences department. The sample size for administrators will be two at each

college. The sample will be separated where one interview will be with a senior level administrator who supervises some aspect of developmental education. The second administrator interview will be with a mid-level administrator who is directly responsible for developmental education. The administrator sample includes the Vice Presidents for Academics as the senior level administrator and a range of operational titles for the mid-level administrator. Table 2 illustrates the sample selected for this study.

Table 2. *Sample Selection Criteria*

Participant Demographic	Criteria
Students	Must be enrolled in either developmental English or math and must half the sample must be enrolled in their first developmental course and the other half in a subsequent developmental course. The student sample will be further separated into two traditional age students (18-22) and two non-traditional students (23 and above).
Family Members	The parents or guardians of the traditional age students will be the sample for traditional age students composing of half of the family member sample. The non-traditional student sample will be represented by the spouse or significant other being interviewed composing the other half of the family sample.
College Administrators	Half the sample will be senior level administrators (President or Vice-President and the other half will be mid-level administrators (Deans, Directors, or Coordinators). The sample will be separated where one interview will be with a senior level administrator who supervises some aspect of developmental education. The second administrator interview will be with a mid-level administrator who is directly responsible for developmental education.

Participant Protection

Before the start of this study the researcher ensured that the participants were protected by human subject's protection policies. The first step in ensuring the protection of the participants was the completion, by the researcher, of CITI training that dealt with human subjects testing. The CITI training certificate can be found in Appendix A. Additionally, the researcher has gained permission from the Human Subjects Research Review Committee and the approval letter can be found in Appendix B. Additionally, the researcher has gained IRB approval from each of the target colleges through an expedited IRB review. To ensure security and confidentiality of the participant responses all of the data will be stored on a password protected computer, server, and external memory device. The only person with access to the information will be the researcher. To further the confidentiality of the participants all names will be removed and replaced with place holder names.

Measures

The instrument utilized in this study will be interview protocols used when interviewing developmental education students, administrators, and family members of developmental students. The instrument used was created by the researcher with a base knowledge found in the literature. The literature did not produce a satisfactory instrument for this study so the creation of the instrument by the researcher was necessary. The instrument has undergone expert review by the researcher's chair. The interview questions for each sample can be found in Appendices C-E. The student interview questions can be found in Appendix C, administrator questions in Appendix D, and family member interview questions in Appendix E. Interview protocols for each data collection can be found in Appendix F. The measures for the collection were created

by the researcher and reviewed by the researcher's chair to determine content validity. Table 3 shows example questions for each of the samples interviewed.

Table 3. *Example Interview Questions*

Sample	Example Question
Student	How does it make you feel to take a developmental course?
Administrator	What causes students to need developmental education?
Family Member	Explain how your perceptions of developmental education may have influenced your student's perceptions?

The location and interview participants were chosen by the researcher and the institution where the interviews took place due to space limitations. The researcher used a criterion based sample to choose interview participants in that the participants had to meet certain criteria to be eligible for participation. The interview questions were composed by the researcher and went through expert review by the researcher's dissertation chair. In order to satisfy content validity the researcher composed a blueprint or table of specification to ensure the information needed was covered in the interview questions. The blueprints can be found in the Appendix where the student blueprint is Appendix G, administrator blueprint in Appendix H, and the family member blueprint in Appendix I.

Validity

Content validity was first satisfied by the creation of blueprints for each sample being interviewed and then expertly reviewed. Content validity is further satisfied by the completion

of a pilot test of the study conducted before the beginning of the actual study. The pilot test was conducted over the fall 2015 and spring 2016 semesters by the researcher to ensure the questions asked covered the purpose of the study and to ensure the wording of each question was clear and concise. The sample used for the pilot study was friends and colleagues of the researcher who had a prior knowledge of developmental education similar to the student and administrator samples and others who had minimal knowledge of developmental education similar to the family member sample. The main purpose of the pilot study was to ensure the reliability of the instrument by ensuring the questions and interview protocols allowed for the research questions to be answered. Upon the completion of the pilot test the researcher made appropriate changes in the interview protocols and the structure of the questions to enhance reliability and content validity of the instruments used. The changes made to both the interview protocols and the interview questions were expertly reviewed by the researcher's chair.

Upon the completion of the pilot test and the expert review the instrument was found to be appropriate to measure the sample interviewed and the successful in collecting data to fulfill the study. Furthermore, the instrument satisfies validity, in that the instrument accurately gauges the perceptions of the population through the interviewing of the sample. Reliability of the instrument is also satisfied since the interview protocol could be utilized by other researchers in order to study the same phenomena and should produce similar results. Validity and reliability is further enhanced by the completion of a pilot test and expert review of the updates to the instrument and interview protocols.

With the use of an instrument with open ended questions interrater reliability must also be satisfied. According to Roberts (2004) interrater reliability is “a check on the consistency between raters” (p.137). To satisfy interrater reliability, the researcher used an external person

to code the data and the researcher compared the themes and patterns found. The external coder identified the same themes and patterns as the researcher satisfying interrater reliability.

Data Collection

The study took place over the fall 2015 and spring 2016 semesters with interviews being conducted at three community colleges throughout Virginia. The community colleges included were Xavier Community College in Virginia, Jean Community College in Virginia, and May Community College. Each college represents the different demographics served the Virginia Community College System. Xavier Community College is urban, Jean Community College is sub-urban, and May Virginia Community College is rural. These colleges were chosen to ensure an accurate representation of the population of students, administrators, and family members in the Virginia Community College System.

The participants in the study were chosen using a criterion sample which included; students who were enrolled in developmental education, administrators who worked at a college that offered developmental courses, and family members of students who were enrolled in developmental education. The interview participants were chosen by the researcher with help from the college. The researcher will give the college the criteria for participant selection then ask the college to aid in the selection of possible interview participants who meet the criteria for selection. The interview process included eight interviews at each college which was comprised of four students, two administrators, and two family members. While eight interviews is the minimum preferred sample the researcher scheduled an additional two to three student interviews to ensure the inclusion of a minimum of four students. The researcher utilized the additional interviews when needed to accomplish data saturation in order to fully address the research questions. The student sample was broken down into two students who were taking their first

developmental course and two who were enrolled in their next appropriate developmental course. The interviews took place at least eight weeks or midterm into the semester to ensure that the student sample had adequate time to be involved with the course. Additionally, the time frame to begin interviews allowed for students who were most likely going to be in the developmental course until the end of the semester eliminating those who have already dropped or stopped participating in the course. Starting interviews at the midterm allowed for the most thorough responses from the interview participants. Administration interviews at Xavier Community College will be conducted with the Vice President of Academics and the Dean of Arts and Sciences. Administration interviews at Jean Community College will be conducted with the Vice President of Academics and the Coordinator of Developmental Education. Administration interviews at May Community college will be conducted with the Dean of Instruction and the Vice President of Academics.

The eight, or more, interviews at each college took place over two days with the interviews being scheduled for one hour in length. The interview location was determined by the researcher and the college due to availability of college facilities. The college and researcher worked together to utilize an acceptable space on the campus of the college to conduct the interviews. Each interview was conducted in the same location utilizing the same environment for each interview session to ensure reliability and consistency of the interview atmosphere. Interview questions will not be shared with the students or family members prior to the interview, but interview questions will be mailed to the administrators. Administrators will receive the base questions used for the interview, but the researcher will ask questions based upon the responses from the students and family members that will not be shared prior to the interviews. Interviews will be audio recorded via a recording application on a tablet computer

and later transcribed and coded for themes and patterns. The use of audio recording will allow the researcher to focus on the participant and allow the researcher to transcribe the responses to ensure accuracy in the data analysis. The interview process will include 16 questions for students, 14 questions for administrators, and 15 questions for family members. All interviews will follow the same interview protocol to establish consistency in the interview process.

Upon completion of the interviews the researcher will begin the data analysis process which will include transcription of the interviews and the coding process to identify themes and patterns in the data.

Analytic Approach

Phenomenology will be the research design utilized for this study. The use of phenomenology allows the researcher to approach the phenomenon with a new perspective allowing for the data found from the participants to explain the phenomenon (Hays & Singh, 2012; Moustakas, 1994). The first step in analyzing the data after concluding the data collection was to let the data rest. After an appropriate amount of time the researcher went back to the data to begin the analysis process. The interviews were recorded so the researcher transcribed each interview for later analysis. Upon completing each transcription the researcher again allowed the data to rest. The next step was to code the data. The researcher color coded all data using open coding then moving to axial coding to begin to identify themes and patterns in the data. The code categories began broad, but with each coding began to be more refined into smaller categories in order to better identify themes about the phenomenon. Revisions to the coding process occurred when new themes would emerge and others would merge into the larger themes. After the emergence of themes the researcher consulted with the external researcher who coded the same data to ensure saturation of the data. After saturation of the data through the

emergence of themes the researcher constructed a chart demonstrating which theme each participant response fit into. This chart will allow each interviewee response to be linked to its respective theme in order to create a more clear understanding of the theme.

Bracketing was utilized to offset any potential researcher bias and to isolate any pre-judgment about developmental education. Bracketing was also used to isolate any bias or pre-judgment about developmental so that the theory created would be grounded in the data and would ensure reporting the participants experience and knowledge in relation to developmental education. In order to bracket effectively the researcher kept their own bias in mind during the research process and recorded their potential bias in note form in order to have a reference back to their potential bias. Bracketing allowed the researcher to isolate any potential bias so that it could be removed. Any potential bias was removed so it would not affect the results of the study in any way.

After the analysis of the data the next step is to take the themes and patterns and apply those to the research questions creating the results of the data collected. In order to make the themes and patterns more clear the researcher created a chart with each of the themes and how they apply to the research questions. Additionally, the researcher used an external auditor to code the data and to check the procedures to ensure validity. The results given by the auditor and the researcher were compared to ensure saturation of the data was present in both results.

Limitations

One limitation of this study was the small sample size used with eight interviews from each college creating 24 over all interviews. With the small sample size it is possible not to have a representative sample to report on the phenomenon. To address this limitation the researcher chose schools from Virginia which is has the fifth largest number of community colleges in the

United States. By choosing the state with the fifth largest number of community colleges a more representative sample could be achieved. With such a large amount of community colleges the researcher was able to find colleges that fit each of the college service demographics (urban, suburban, and rural) creating a more representative sample. One limitation to interviews is that the researcher assumes that the interviewee is knowledgeable about the subject and they are telling the truth. The researcher must trust that the interview participant is giving honest responses to the questions and that they in fact have the knowledge base to offer correct insight into the phenomena. Researcher or interview participant bias may be a limitation since the researcher already knew one of the participants. To offset this limitation the researcher and the participant were both made aware of the potential bias and used bracketing to offset the potential bias. Another potential limitation was that the data collections only occurred once and the answers may change if there were future interviews done with the same questions. The fact that there is only one researcher involved in the data collection is another limitation. To offset the effects of this limitation the researcher will utilize bracketing to isolate and limit any researcher bias and after data collection will have outside researchers to code and review the data to ensure the themes and patterns found are free of any researcher bias. Additionally, the researcher kept a journal of potential bias in an effort to control any bias so that it would not affect the results.

Trustworthiness

This study has credibility through transferability, confirmability, coherence, and ethical validation. Transferability is present since this phenomenon is present in most community colleges and the research protocol or process could be transferred to another institution. The study also has confirmability since the researcher made every effort to maintain a neutral position during the data collection and the data analysis. This was done through bracketing to

isolate any potential researcher bias. Coherence was also present since the data collection utilized the same protocol with each collection. Interviews were conducted in the same environment, same researcher, same questions were asked consistently, and all procedures were checked by an external auditor.

In the next chapter the results of the study will be reported. In this section the interview responses will yield themes found in relation to student, family, and college perceptions of developmental education. In this chapter the data will report the perceptions of the sample and how they relate to developmental education.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Introduction

There are a multitude of reasons why a student may succeed or fail during their developmental coursework. Some of the reasons are housed inside the classroom based around teaching pedagogy or the materials used (Brothern & Wambach, 2012; Levin & Kater, 2013). Other reasons may include the student's difficulty with the subject matter, yet another reason revolves around the student's perception of developmental education (Bachman, 2013; Barbatis, 2010; Capt & Oliver, 2012; Duranczyk, et al., 2006; Goeller, 2013; Grubb & Cox, 2005; Howard & Whitaker, 2011; Jaggars & Hodara, 2013; Koch et al., 2012; Miller, 2007; Reichwein, Schneider, & Onwuegbuzie, 2014; Schultz & Higbee, 2006; VanOra, 2012; Weinstein, 2004). The perception of developmental education does play a major role in a student's success (Jaggars & Hodara, 2013). The idea of evaluating the perceptions around developmental education does not stop at the students perceptions, but stretches further into the realm of the family and administrator perceptions as well (Howard & Whitaker, 2011; Jaggars & Hodara, 2013). The perceptions of family members and the college as a whole also play a significant role in the formation of student perceptions (Bachman, 2013; Capt & Oliver, 2012). This study explored student perceptions of developmental education along with the inclusion of the family and college administrator views as well.

This study was conducted at three community colleges in Virginia. The three colleges chosen were Xavier Community College (urban), Jean Community College (suburban), and May Community College (rural). These colleges were chosen to ensure an accurate representation of the population of students, administrators, and family members in the Virginia Community

College System. This study was comprised of eight interviews per institution (four students, two family members, and two administrators) for a total of 24 interviews.

Upon completion of the interviews the data were coded by the researcher and an external party to ensure accuracy and validity. To keep the identity of the participants each interviewee has been assigned a pseudonym. For example, the first student interviewed at May Community College was assigned the name Lucy. The college and participant type along with the pseudonyms given can be found in Appendix J. Within each section of findings themes emerge that portray the current state of student, family members, and administrator perceptions of developmental education.

What are Student Perceptions of Developmental Education?

Student perceptions of developmental education fall into five categories: Purpose of developmental education, placement, developmental education being a tool for success, and cause of placement. Additionally, messages of student identity formation, status attainment, and social capital emerged in the themes. According to Howard and Whitaker (2011) students who are placed into developmental education had different perceptions on their learning ability than other students. Students who have a negative perception of developmental education may have had a bad experience with the subject in the past that has created their perception (Howard & Whitaker, 2011). The cause may also stem from the family members or college they attend projecting their own ideas onto the student influencing their perception formation (Reichwein, et al, 2014). Students who have a positive perception may have encountered the exact opposite series of events than the student with a negative perception (Capt & Oliver, 2012). These students may see it as another facet of higher education that one must go through to reach their goals. Lastly, some student maybe neutral and have no real perception about developmental

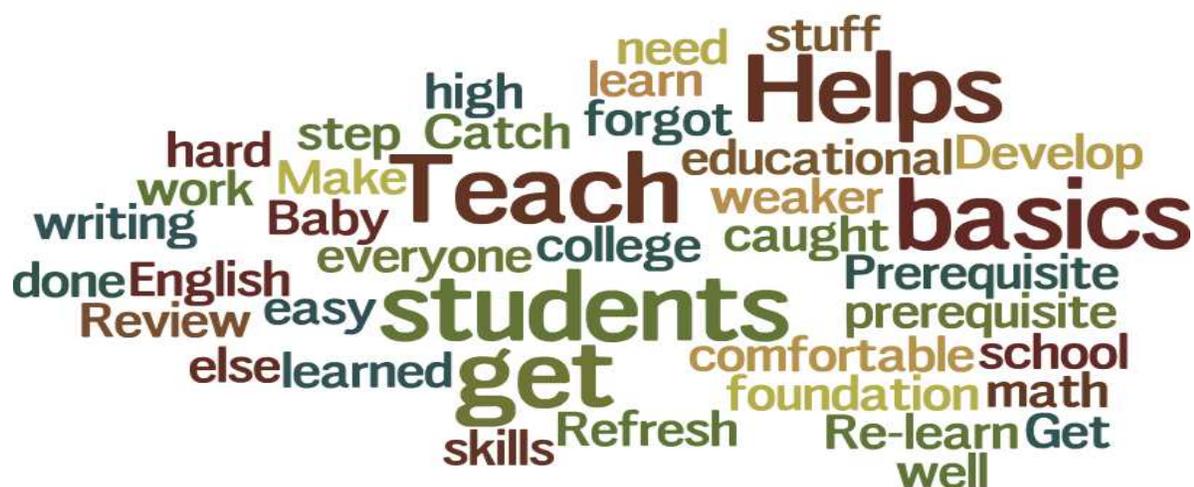
education. This may come from their lack of understanding of the purpose of developmental education, the same lack of understanding by family members, and the college not addressing developmental to the student (Bachman, 2013; Barbatis, 2010; Capt & Oliver, 2012; Duranczyk, et al., 2006; Goeller, 2013; Grubb & Cox, 2005; Howard & Whitaker, 2011; Jaggars & Hodara, 2013; Koch et al., 2012; Miller, 2007). Each of these topics arose from the interviews conducted along with the reasons behind each person's perceptions and the reason they feel they were placed in developmental education.

Purpose of Developmental Education

This section will explore the theme of developmental education purpose through student perceptions. Each interview began with the establishment of what the perceived purpose of developmental education was to the student. When coding the interviews it became clear that no student could really define the purpose of developmental education. Each participant began to struggle when asked about the overall purpose of their developmental courses. One student, Ben, simply stated that it was “a prerequisite for a prerequisite” and further explained stated “I hate it, honestly, I think it is a waste of time”. Another student from the same college, Hank, described it as “a little baby step...it's like you're not in college to other people”. Lucy from May Community College defined the purpose as “to develop your educational skills and to higher your education I think”. Another student, Jacob, defined it as a review class saying “a review of the basics before you start college and catching you up before you begin” Conner enhanced their belief that developmental is not a part of college by saying “extra practice before you actually start college”. Emily said “to build your skills before you start any college courses”. The theme of developmental courses not being actual college courses was found in many of the students from each institution (Ben, Conner, Emily, Hank, & Jacob). To these

students it was clear that while they were enrolled at a college they were in fact taking courses not a part of the actual college.

The students moved into speaking about how the purpose directly reflected on the developmental students. Students began to speak about what the courses are trying to offset with what the students were lacking. Jacob stated that “it is for students who have not done well and to get the caught up with everyone else”. Evan said “helps weaker students do college level work”. Edith felt very similar by saying “to teach you what you didn’t learn or you forgot...get you knowing what everyone else knows”. Morgan spoke about how students who do not try in high school come into college and have to “re-learn math and English” in order to qualify for college level coursework. Students emphasized that a main purpose of developmental is to take students who are “deficient” (Edith) academically and “catch them up” (Jacob; Mya) with everyone else. Students spoke about how the purpose reflected back on what it meant to be a developmental student helping to create their student identity. The words they used to describe developmental correlates with the type of student who needs those courses. In doing so, they spoke about student identity formation and how their views helped to shape their own identity. Table 4 shows how the students view the purpose of developmental education.

Table 4. *Student Perceptions of Developmental Education Purpose*

This section explored the purpose of developmental education through the student lens. Each student described what they perceived the overall goal of developmental education is and why it is needed. The interviews were met with short sentences and students struggling to define what the purpose actually was. The theme of it being coursework for students who were lacking academically was present in their descriptions. The perception of developmental not being associated with the college was also very present.

Student Identity in Relation to Developmental Placement

The way that students defined the purpose of developmental education as being for the underprepared and not actually college negative perceptions were already apparent with many students. The next portion of the interviews were focused on how the student felt about being placed in developmental education. While the results yielded that students both had negative and positive perceptions of their placement the vast majority had negative perceptions. Students began to discuss how developmental related to their status attainment and helped to create their student identity. They spoke about how they felt being placed in developmental education and

how they viewed their place in higher education. Jacob stated very clearly that his placement made her feel “lower than everybody else honestly, like you know you are not as smart and on par with everyone else”. He further stated he felt like the college and community “view it below” the average because “there are college courses and then there are developmental you know”. This student felt very ashamed and discouraged to be placed into developmental education and made it clear that she felt lower than everyone else in her other courses, was not as smart as other students, and others felt the same way because of her placement. Mya said that she felt the “stigma of incompetence” from here family, peers, and the college. Hank echoed these beliefs by saying that his placement made him feel “like you’re dumb and you have to take this”. Similar to the previous students Morgan stated that himself and others would view his placement “as a failure” and that made him feel “dumb”. Table 5 shows the words used to describe student’s negative perceptions of developmental education.

Table 5. *Student Identity Perceptions of Developmental Education Placement*

<p style="text-align: center;">Lower than everyone else (Jacob) Not on par with everyone else (Morgan) Not as smart as everyone else (Jacob) Colleges and other people view it as below average (Conner) There are college courses and then there are developmental (Jacob) Dumb (Morgan) They are a failure (Morgan) If you take developmental then you are dumb (Cory) Its common sense and you will never use it (Emily) Felt over my head and didn’t want to do it (Mya) If I’m not smart enough to place out of developmental then I’m not smart enough to pass developmental (Jacob) I hate it (Ben) Waste of my time (Hank) Hindrance (April) Incompetent (Mya)</p>

Students participating in this study demonstrated some of the same negative perceptions of developmental education that has been found in previous studies such as Bachman (2013), Howard and Whitaker (2011), and VanOra (2012). Students reported that being placed in developmental education made them feel “dumb”, “not as smart as everyone else”, “they are a failure”, “and if you take developmental then you are dumb”. These results yielded a clear theme which is the correlation between being placed in developmental education and the feeling of being inadequate academically”. Students felt that the college and the community would see them as subpar academically and even view them as not college students. This type of mindset creates a dangerous situation where the student feels so overwhelmed they no longer want to pursue their education and if they do they may not have the confidence needed to succeed. The negative stigma reported by previous studies is easily seen with the student interviewed here and the correlation between placement and feeling lower seems to be automatic for these students. While these student reported negative perceptions of developmental education there were a small minority who experience positive perceptions.

Developmental Education as a Tool for Success

As stated above in relation to the negative perceptions the students understanding of the purpose of developmental education as being for the underprepared created negative viewpoints, but it also created a few positive ones. When interviewing these students it was clear that their pre-conceived idea about developmental education was different than the others. To them it was not a negative, but a tool or resource to be used to their advantage. Conner stated that he had graduated from high school over eight years ago and he knew he needed help. He stated “I just need a little extra help”. He went further to speak about how he sees it as a benefit to him saying “I’d rather have the help than to just jump right in and fail it”. Conner also mentioned that he did

not understand why people would be offended by developmental placement since “it just lets you know where you stand”. The idea of it being a tool to be used for the student’s benefit was shared by other participants as well. Helen said that “once you get acquainted with what it and it becomes easy for them to know how to use it well”. She also felt that if students understood more about the benefit of developmental then people would not view it as problem instead they would view it as a solution since it is “helpful for me to get to graduation”. Edith shared the same positive perceptions as the other students and felt that “everybody should have to take this class before they move on to a higher level”. Further explaining that everyone at some point will need extra assistance with a subject and if everyone took the developmental course it would help everyone at some point during their college career. Evan said he “enjoyed it a lot because it helped a lot”. Helen said they would “feel more strongly about the class than they previously had and that make them feel great”.

While the positive perceptions were smaller in number than the negative ones they did illustrate that the negative stigma reported by previous studies is not universal. Some students view developmental as a helpful tool that can be used to their educational benefit and does not possess any negative aspects. What seemed to separate the students who had negative perceptions from the ones who felt positive about the courses was the knowledge of how they could benefit and the mindset that it was just one step in the process. The ability for the student to look beyond the initial placement and see it as a tool toward graduation, as Helen stated, made them view their developmental work with a lens of confidence and anticipated success that was not seen in the students with the negative perceptions.

What Caused the Student to Be Placed in Developmental Education?

The last theme that emerged from the student interviews was why they felt they were placed in developmental education. The reasons why students felt they were placed in developmental education were split between two main reasons. One reason was the students understood they lacked knowledge or ability in the subject due to past experiences. The other reason was the placement test dictated they enroll in developmental courses.

Some students reported that an extended break between high school and college had left them with certain deficiencies in English or math simply because they had not used the information. Ben said that “it’s been 10 years since I’ve been in a classroom. The information we learned in high school we don’t use it every day”. Mya stated she had been “out of school for 20 years and the way students come out of high school is different than when I did everyone is so reliant upon calculators and technology”. Another student, Hank, said that the lapse in instruction made them feel like they were behind “because I wasn’t quite comfortable with what I was doing”.

The other students felt that their placement in developmental courses was a result of their placement test scores. The students explained the reason why they were placed there by simply stating the test dictated their courses. The students did not seem to understand the correlation between their scores and their knowledge base. When asked why Morgan was in developmental courses they said “uh, because I didn’t pass the test, the placement test”. A similar answer was given when Conner was asked the same question his response was “um my placement test was low that’s why I placed in it”. Emily reported a similar situation stating “I was always bad in math and the placement test told me how far behind I was”. Another student who was confident in their English skills said the only reason why they were placed in the first level of developmental English was due to “the placement test put me there, but I am good at English

so". Throughout the interviews the students illustrated that the only reason they were placed in developmental was due to the one placement test and to them the college only cared about those scores.

The reason why students felt they were placed in developmental focused around knowing their ability needed improvement or their scores on a test, that to them, was not a reflection on their academic ability just a score and a mandate. The correlation between a lack of understanding or knowledge in the subject base seem to only be present in a few students while others did not see their actual ability was being assessed.

What Experiences Lead to Students' Perceptions of Developmental Education?

Building upon the previous findings the majority of students interviewed had a negative perception of developmental education and their placement within. While the importance of the student perceptions is easily seen, the reason or reasons that lead them to this belief is equally as important (Howard & Whitaker, 2011; Goeller, 2013). According to Howard and Whitaker (2011) students who have a negative perception of developmental had a negative intervention somewhere in their past. Furthermore, Howard and Whitaker (2011) wrote that the external forces before they begin their developmental coursework are very influential in establishing the students' perceptions. Goeller (2013) found that the negative perception was based upon the student feeling the material was too basic for them and they should be smart enough to not need the basics. Students perceptions, whether they are positive or negative, have been influenced by experiences or knowledge established before their entry into developmental education (Bachman, 2013; Barbatis, 2010; Capt & Oliver, 2012; Duranczyk, et al., 2006; Goeller, 2013; Grubb & Cox, 2005; Howard & Whitaker, 2011; Jaggars & Hodara, 2013; Koch et al., 2012;

Miller, 2007; Reichwein, Schneider, & Onwuegbuzie, 2014; Schultz & Higbee, 2006; VanOra, 2012; Weinstein, 2004).

When asked about what experiences had lead them to their perceptions of developmental education each of them spoke about their high school experiences with both math and English. Each student explained that their difficulties and perceptions had been formed during that time and they still held on to that belief now. Jacob said the reason why she views developmental as negative is because “I’m stupid I can’t do math. I can’t I mean it just I can’t do math”. She went further to say that it was a past teacher she had that “would not help me and I got behind and then I was never caught up”. April also discussed a past teacher who was not helpful and said that they “I feel like I got in over my head and it automatically made me not want to be there”. She said that due to this experience they “didn’t really do well in high school math and I’m not doing well in math now”. This study has a similar story with their background in English as well saying that a past teacher made him write many papers while not helping him when they asked making them “dislike writing and dislike English from then on”. Morgan also spoke about past negative educational experiences that formed their perceptions. He stated that many of their teachers gave homework and “it was more of you got it or you didn’t you either had to get it yourself or had to ask one of your classmates to explain it to you, I thought you could ask the teacher for help, but it didn’t work that way”. These students spoke of past interventions and experiences that lead them to have negative perceptions of the developmental subject and made them perceive their placement as another negative intervention.

Other students reported that their perceptions were created during high school, but they felt they created their own negative intervention. Lucy said that she had a great English teacher, but “I didn’t really care about my English education because I was too worried about me myself

and I". Lucy went on to say that due to their lack of interest in their education they fell behind and was not capable of college level courses while they "dislike being labeled developmental it is their my own fault". Conner shared a similar story about his high school experiences saying "I was getting out and I didn't pay any attention while I was there". They stated that they knew developmental was for people who were "behind and not college level" they felt they had fit that description, because of their experiences. Each student had a negative perception of the subject due to their lack of preparation leading up to college. The students reported that the social capital or knowledge passed down through their past experiences was lacking and did not properly prepare them for college. The knowledge that was passed down was a dislike or apprehension about a certain subject that grew into a developmental need later on. These experiences in social capital also helped to further their student identity by establishing an educational difficulty in a certain area through past experiences.

The experiences that lead to student perceptions were exclusively based in their high school experiences. Students reported that past teachers had created negative experiences that helped to mold their thoughts about the subject and their ability. Also, students reported that their own lack of preparation had created their difficulty with the subject. While the groups said their perceptions were formed by different stimuli each reported that it occurred during the high school years.

What are Students' Current Experiences with Developmental Education?

The student perceptions of developmental education and their cause have been reported in the previous section, in this section the students' current experiences in developmental education are explored. The students demonstrated both positive and negative experiences in

their current developmental courses. Negative experiences revolve around the delivery method and the instructors, while the positive experiences are based around the benefit they provide.

Benefits Post Enrollment

The interviews produced some students who have a positive view of developmental currently. Their experiences in the class and their perception of its purpose has evolved into the course being helpful and beneficial to their educational journey. Helen stated that developmental courses are “easy once you get acquainted with the courses it becomes easy to know it and how to use it to do well”. She said that due to the developmental they “feel more strongly about the class...it feels good”. Hank felt similar by saying “developmental kind of helped gain confidence in what I was doing”. Cory felt that he “felt better about the subject and became more independent as a learner”. They went further to say that their placement in developmental, while at first was disheartening, after being in the course “I think it’s good because if you put me in a higher English or math I was going to be so lost and I’m going to cry”. Edith echoed the sentiments of the other two students, but said that the benefit was so great that “everyone should take this class before they move on to a higher level”. According to her their academic ability was so enhanced by developmental that they recommend everyone take the course no matter of placement test score. Mya who said she had been out of school for over 20 years stated that it “built the foundation for my future classes and the foundation for me to get my degree”. Hank felt that the initial placement was a negative indicator of their performance and was very skeptical of the benefit. It was due to their experiences that changed their perception from negative to positive. Evan and Emily both talked about how the smaller class sizes help them the most due to the amount of “one on one instruction...in a small class I have more time to ask questions”. Table 6 shows some of the positive experiences reported by the students.

Table 6. *Post Enrollment Student Benefits*

<p style="text-align: center;">I feel more strongly about the class (Helen) It feels good (Helen) Helped me gain confidence (Hank) Becomes easy to use it to do well (Helen) Everyone should take this course before moving higher (Evan) Gained independence (Cory) Built my foundation (Edith) Small class size lets me ask more questions (Evan & Emily)</p>
--

Institutional Deficiencies

The current negative experiences found were based around the format of the course and the instructors that had taught the class. Ben said that it was important for them to have an in person class and that Xavier only offered “classes that are all taught on the computer”. The online or computer based modules are the only mode of instruction for developmental math in Virginia. They are taught by one instructor who has a large classroom with students at varied levels of developmental. Ben said they did not like the setup of the class because “I could do it at home on my own instead of being required to be here in class, sit there and have a computer lecture me all night long”. He went further by saying “we still have to show up for class so it’s almost like why am I having to pay to sit and let a computer lecture me when I could be at home or taking independent study on my own”. He then concluded by saying “it’s a flaw in the design...the purpose is great it just the way it’s set up”. Evan described the situation as being like the “one room schoolhouse where everyone is at a different grade level and the teacher must teach every level”. April stated that the computer based set up and their experiences with the teacher made them “get overwhelmed and it makes you just want to give up”. Sharing in those experiences Jacob spoke of a very extreme negative experiences with the mode of instruction, instructors, and the college. Jacob explained that their first negative experience came from the

college when they spoke about developmental being “below everyone else and not college level”. They felt that this meant that her courses were “not as important and the students were not as important since they would not be here long because they were not smart enough”. Helen was placed in developmental math where they had the computer based modules. They said “they do not need the computer. They do not need to use the person on the video. They need to get back to an actual classes with teacher who work it out and teach you how”. She went further to say that the college’s belief is “just watch the video and then you’re going to get it”. Jacob was also placed in developmental English where their experiences with a teacher created a negative experience. When they asked for help early on in the course the teacher “acted like I was a stupid as a rock...she looked at me like I was wasting her time I thought she did not want me here...she threatened to kick me out of the class since I wasn’t smart enough to get it and wasting all of her time”. Jacob also stated that the word developmental created a negative idea in their head “developmental means your development is not as high as others”. Table 7 illustrates the current negative student experiences.

Table 7. *Two Areas of Institutional Shortfalls*

Program Format	College or Instructor
Classes are all taught on the computer (Ben)	Below everyone else (Jacob)
I could do it at home (Ben)	Not on college level (Jacob)
Computer lecture me all night (Ben)	Students were not as important (Jacob)
Why pay to sit and let a computer lecture me (Ben)	Teacher acted like I was stupid as a rock (Jacob)
It’s a flaw in the design. (Ben)	Teacher thought I was wasting her time (Jacob)
Get overwhelmed and it makes you just want to give up (April)	Threatened to kick me out because I was not smart enough (Jacob)
They do not need the computer (Helen)	

Examining the current student experiences illustrated that students had both positive and negative reactions to the courses. Some students felt that it has greatly helped them academically and personally increasing not only their knowledge, but their confidence as well. Others felt that their experiences were negative. Those negative experiences stemmed from the way the college treated them in relation to being developmental, the mode of instruction, or the interaction with their instructors. The data showed that if students have the positive intervention that was mentioned previously their views of developmental may change. While if the interaction stays negative their perceptions stay firmly placed.

What Perceptions do Family Members Have about Developmental Education?

Student perceptions of developmental education are realized by the student when they are placed in developmental courses and implemented when they begin their classroom journey. Their perceptions are formed and molded by the college and their family members whether they are a parent, a spouse, or a child. Each of these play a key role in the students' perception development (Byrd & MacDonald, 2005; Miller, 2007). The family background of the student plays a significant role in how they view higher education, how they understand how it works, and how they view their place in the world of higher education (Miller, 2007). Students often look to their family members for advice and guidance on items they do not understand and within that advice is where the family members' view may be transferred to the student planting the seed to create their perception (Byrd & MacDonald, 2005).

In this study the family members who were interviewed consisted of parents, siblings who were legal guardians, and spouses. Due to the demographic of each of the colleges the majority of the students are first generation and often low socioeconomic status. The plethora of four year colleges and universities in Virginia allow for more student choices and the community

college system serves a large number of first generation and low socioeconomic students. These students are looking for access to higher education close to home and with the lowest economic impact to them. Due to this the family members who were randomly selected had similar backgrounds having never attending college themselves, low income, or both in many cases. The data collected from them was less specific than the student and the college administrators due to the fact they did not fully understand higher education, developmental education, or how it fits into their students' academic lives. The themes that emerged from the family interviews were purpose, what type of student needs developmental, what the college perceptions were, and the importance of developmental education.

Purpose of Developmental Education

Family members were asked a series of questions to determine how they perceived developmental education and what its purpose was in higher education. The family members interviewed demonstrated a minimal understanding of what it actually was, but did have some understanding of its intention. Mary stated that developmental education “basically gives you the tools you need to succeed in academic classes for higher education”. They further said the first time they heard of developmental was from their student. According to her their student described it as “courses to help with college so it would be like an extra English class maybe”. Further into the interview this family member spoke about the Student Development class, which is not developmental at May Community College and how it seemed to help the student. They then spoke about the developmental Student Development course and how their student liked it. When asked about developmental English or math specifically they responded “I only know about the one developmental course I’m not sure they have those in those areas”. This response clearly showed that there was a clear breakdown between the understanding of what a

developmental course was to this family member and it seems the student did not disclose their actual developmental course. The other family member interviewed, Ross, at May seemed to be in a very similar situation.

When asked to describe developmental education Ross defined it as “oh I don’t know...just maybe for them to you know learn...developmentally you know like learn the discipline”. When asked how developmental helps students he said “I would think helping them learn how to study and maintain what she studies, absorb it and keep it”. Both of these family members did not have a firm grasp on what developmental education was, its purpose, or how it directly affects their students. As stated previously, some of the family members interviewed never attended college and do not have any prior experience. May Community College serves a very poverty stricken area with many current college students being the first person to attend college in their family.

The family at Jean Community College were asked about the purpose of developmental education also. Carol described it as “a stepping stone for students to succeed...I’m not sure how really but I know it is a step to succeed”. Carol said “a step you got to go do then move on” saying that it is key the student not get “frustrated”. Leah stated that developmental was “a course that helps students go on to college classes...something to help them do better later”. They went on to say that it is intended for students who need “additional help due to many reasons not being prepared or not working hard enough in high school”. The family members at Jean seem to have a better grasp on the intention of developmental than May and they showed evidence they had supported their students in their developmental coursework.

The family members interviewed at Xavier Community College were asked the same questions about the purpose and the definition of developmental education. Nick said the

definition of developmental was “kind of like a thing which is strengthening like giving you strength before you actually do stuff. It’s opening your mind like hey this is basic, you have to start here to like develop your skills like prepare the students and make them ready”. Molly defined the purpose as “just to review some of them may need to review...review again is what developmental means”. She later phrased developmental as “they have to start here, it’s a refresher”. She then began to describe developmental through a very interesting lens which was “everyone must start at the bottom so students who start at the bottom are just getting ready for life”. This sentence said by the family member has two interesting points housed within it, first developmental is clearly perceived as the bottom of higher education to them and it is doing the students a service by starting as low as you can get. The idea of starting at the “bottom” being a positive result of students’ placement in developmental will be further discussed in the importance section. Xavier Community College has similar issues with defining developmental and having a strong grasp upon how it affects their students. The two main themes found in this section of the family interviews comes from the lack of clear understanding and the trust placed in the college to know how best to serve their students.

What Causes a Student to Need Developmental Education?

The next series of questions dealt with what type of student needs developmental and what causes a student to place into those courses. The results were comprised of two themes which were failure of the high school to prepare the students and the placement test puts them there. The family members from May Community College echoed each other’s reasoning in saying the school system had failed theirs and other students as well, while the family of Xavier students both felt that it was not the student’s ability or lack thereof it was simply the placement test.

May Community College family members felt very strongly that the reason why students need developmental is because the school system because they do not prepare them for college. Mary said “lack of preparation for courses for college from high school. Especially in this area” Ross agreed stating “because high school is a different setting than college...they have to learn how to do it since they were not taught”. Mary further explained the lack of preparation provided by the local high schools saying “high schools around here aren’t exactly to prepare people for college. They just give them the basic information. They don’t have anybody to tell them this what you need to know”. Each of these family members felt that their students’ academic difficulties were results of a poor secondary education.

The family members at Xavier and Jean stated that the reason why students need developmental is because of their scores on the placement tests. Nick said that a developmental student is one who “is told they are based upon what was taken from the test”. Molly had the same idea saying “my understanding is that it’s based upon their testing and that’s stuff they don’t use on a daily basis so that’s not fair”. Each of the Xavier family members felt that their students’ placement was due to the one test that is not really fair. Both spoke about how most students, including theirs, were placed into developmental because of the test. They said they felt this was wrong because their students were smart. Ben described their student as “too sharp for lower classes” and Molly said “my son is not an idiot, he just didn’t do well on the placement test”. Carol also said that “my student feels like, what am I doing? I was just in high school this is a waste of my time and it is for them”. Those two descriptions tell the story of how the family member feels about their students’ ability and their reason for placement each is a victim of bad placement because they are “too sharp” or “not an idiot” implying that actual developmental students would be of lessened academic ability.

How the College Perceives Developmental Education

Previously, this study talked about how the student felt the college viewed developmental based upon their experiences. The same questions were posed to the family members to see how they viewed the college perception. While the family members admitted they did not have a lot of exposure with how the college viewed developmental there were a few experiences that gave them some insight. While their responses were short what they said painted a very clear picture of how they felt the college perceived developmental. When asked about the college view Molly stated very bluntly that “to them, you know it like taking out the trash. Someone has to offer the classes and the college seems to think it is like taking out the trash”. While Molly had the most potentially inflammatory view of college, Mary also felt the college does it because they have to and it benefits them financially. She said that “it’s a benefit to the college because they have to offer it and it brings in students which brings in money and financial aid”. Carol said the biggest benefit to the college was “retention which keeps kids in school and the money coming in to the college”. To these family members the college looks at developmental as money coming into the college and having to “take out the trash”. The perceptions reported by the family members in terms of college perception affects social capital, status attainment, and institutional capacity. The family members view the colleges being most interested in the financial bottom line and seeing developmental as being a revenue stream. They also felt the colleges do not have a positive view of the courses. This belief by the family members will be passed down to the student and will influence their perceptions of the colleges as well. Additionally, the perceptions of the parents will impact students in status attainment as well. If the parents portray to the students that the college view it negatively and only care about the potential revenue then it could potentially make the students feel like they are not included in the college community.

The Benefits of Developmental Education

The last part of the family interviews dealt with the potential benefits of taking developmental education. Each of the family members interviewed said that developmental will help their student gain a better understanding of the subject and assist them in succeeding academically. Some of the family members felt that developmental would not only help their student academically, but could potentially help them get a job upon graduation. Mary said that the largest benefit would be “the communication part of those classes, almost every class has some communication part in it and developing those communication skills would help get employment later”. Carol stated that developmental would “create a good work ethic since they would have to start off at the bottom and work their way up and that is important to employers”. Molly agreed that developmental would help her student in their future employment, but would do so by teaching them a lesson very early on about the “real world”. She said that the “world is not fair” and if a student has any trouble being placed in developmental then “they have to get over that they have to understand that nothing is really fair”. As stated earlier, Molly liked the idea of the student “starting on the bottom” because to them every job you have to start at the bottom and work your way up. They explained further by saying “they got to understand what they are dealing with. They all think they will make a lot of money after graduation, but they won’t just like they thought they would not be in developmental well they were”. When asked about the academic benefits related to developmental they felt that while there were some defiantly “the starting at the bottom lesson was most beneficial”. While the academic benefits were reported by each of the family members others saw the potential for benefit inside the classroom that would transfer to the working world.

As stated earlier the perceptions of the family members have the potential to greatly affect the student's perceptions (Byrd & MacDonald, 2005; Miller, 2005). Family members all agreed that the purpose of developmental was to give the students help to succeed academically and in the future. They also felt that the need for developmental was a result of either the secondary schools not preparing the student or it was a result of the placement test which was "unfair". Family members admitted that they did not have very much exposure to the way colleges view developmental, but in their limited experiences one felt that it was viewed as "taking out the trash". They also felt the colleges viewed the courses as a way to bring in more students and in turn more revenue for the college. The last section was the student benefits of developmental. Some family members thought it was beneficial to the student gaining employment after graduation because of the skills it offers. One family member felt that the student "starting at the bottom" was most beneficial. While the family members had a basic understanding of developmental they lacked a strong grasp to help their student succeed. The family members never admitted that the reason why students were placed in developmental came down to aptitude or ability instead they relied upon the failure of the school system or the placement test. Overall, the family members' responses calls for colleges, in order to benefit students, help family members understand developmental so they can support their students. In order to help clarify the family view of developmental Table 8 gives the most common responses for family members.

Table 8. *Family Perceptions of Developmental Education.*

Purpose	What Causes a Student to Need Developmental Education?	How the College Perceives Developmental	Benefits of Developmental Education	Family View of Their Student
Basically gives you the tools you need to succeed. (Mary)	Lack of preparation for college from high school. (Mary)	To them it's like taking out the trash. (Molly)	Communication part of the classes will help them get a job. (Mary)	Too sharp for lower classes. (Ben)
Courses to help with college. I don't know. (Ross)	Due to high school they have to learn how to since they were never taught. (Ross)	They have to offer it so it brings in students which brings in money and financial aid. (Leah)	Developing communication skills. (Carol)	Developmental is a waste of their time. (Molly & Ross)
Maybe to help them learn. (Nick)	High schools here don't prepare people for college. (Ross)	Retention keeps money coming in. (Carol)	If they are placed in developmental then they must get over it. (Molly)	My son is not an idiot. (Carol)
Help them learn how to study and maintain what they study. (Ross)	Placement is based upon what was taken from the test. (Molly)		Helps them realize they must start at the bottom. (Carol)	
Giving you the strength before you actually do stuff. (Nick)	Placement is based upon the test and that's stuff they don't do on daily basis so that's not fair. (Molly)		Students think they will get a job and make a lot of money, but they won't just like they thought they would not be in developmental, well they are. (Molly)	
Review again is what developmental means. (Molly)			Creates strong work ethic. (Nick)	
Starting at the bottom gets students ready for life. (Molly)				
Stepping stone (Carol)				

What Perceptions do Community College Administrators have about Developmental Education?

When students enter into higher education they are often times engulfed in a world that is foreign to them and they look to the institution for guidance. This guidance is crucial to the formation of the student's perception of the college and the courses it offers. The college's perception of developmental education has a direct relation to the student's view of the course and their eventual success (Reichwein, et al., 2014). The perceptions the college displays to the students will have a positive or negative affect upon student success in higher education (Weinstein, 2004). This section will explore the college administrator's perceptions of developmental education. As discussed in Chapter 3, the interviews were conducted with two administrators from each college one senior level and one mid-level that directly worked with developmental education. The themes that emerged from the data were the administrator's perceptions of the purpose, what causes a student to need developmental education, and the benefits and negative impacts of developmental education.

Purpose

When the administrators spoke about the purpose of developmental education very similar definitions were given to those of the students and the parents. Each defined it as being for students who were behind and according to Don "brought up to speed on how college works" or in the words of Elena "go back and review". Terry defined it as "developmental education's purpose is to have students academically prepared to successfully complete college courses and function in everyday life". He went further saying that it has to "brush up students on basic information so they can succeed. I tell students it's a brush up course". Taylor said "it is to catch up or brush up to get to college level". The phrasing of "brush up" was used by other

administrators as well. Elena said “students must brush up on skills and information they need to succeed”. Hal defined the purpose of developmental as “re-introduce them to concepts and skills they should have already learned during their K-12 education so they can be prepared for college courses”. He went on to say “it could also be a reminder of things they forgot or may have never grasped in the first place”. Each of the administrators defined developmental as a pathway to get ready or prepare for college courses. In saying that the administrators implied that they did not see developmental as being a part of the college curriculum. Don felt that while it was not a part of the college it was important to the community college mission saying “it aligns with the mission because we are open door and we are supposed to help everyone”.

The college administrators also coupled the purpose of developmental education to the placement test. Hal stated that “overall the purpose can be to fix the problems found in the assessment score”. Terry also spoke about the placement test “the placement test, while I don’t like it and I think it’s wrong a lot, shows you the deficiencies and developmental is here to fix that”. Elena agreed stating that “the placement test shows what subjects they are behind in and determines if they have the skills needed to succeed in college. Developmental is supposed to address both of those areas so they can later graduate”. Ruby explained that developmental has to “align with the students’ needs based upon the test results”. After gaining an understanding of the perceptions related to the purpose the data shifted to the next theme which was what causes a student to need developmental education.

What Causes a Student to Need Developmental Education?

The college administrators can have a unique insight into what causes students to need developmental education since they are involved with the program over an extended amount of time. They have the ability to watch students go through developmental education and see the

trends that emerge or identify the most common reasons for the need. When the administrators began to describe the reasons why students would need developmental Hal, Elena, and Don all began by ensuring that not all developmental students are the same and emphasized the importance of acknowledging the differences. Hal said “there is no consistent description for the type of student needing developmental education. We have recent high school graduates with high GPAs test into both developmental math and English and we have those who have been out of school for thirty years test into it”. Elena said “all types of students need it, each come with different aptitudes” going further to say that people have diverse abilities “some are good at math, some at English, but developmental must fit them all”. She also highlighted that some students place into developmental for non-academic reasons “students are underprepared for many reasons and often it’s not academic. Sometimes a student’s personal life will influence how they place their experiences and their ideas about college will affect them”. The administrators made it very clear that developmental students can range from people who have been out of school for a long time, students who struggle with concepts, bad test takers, or outside influences affect their placement.

After explaining that there is no set criteria for the developmental student they began to describe some of the qualities they have seen in the students. The literature discussed some of the most common qualities they found in their research. The administrators then began to explain their perception of the two biggest reasons why students need developmental which were high school did not prepare them and the student’s personal difficulties. The administrators felt that the school systems that feed into the community college were not preparing students enough to succeed in higher education and often times making the college teach what they were supposed to. Terry said “we get students who read and write at the middle and elementary level

which means they get the lowest courses here. The schools never prepared them. I ask how can a student graduate and can't do simple sentence structure or read past a third grade level." He went on to add "we see a lot of students who were in special education and we are supposed to teach them. Students were given the answers and handheld through school now we got them". Adding to that, Ruby said that high schools foster "lack of student engagement in certain areas such as math and then students lose interest in the subject". The causation that Terry described seemed similar to the concept of "taking out the trash" discussed earlier. Don responded similar saying that "schools teach monkey math now monkey see monkey do and they have no concept of what that means they just memorize what they need to and they lack the needed foundation to build upon". Elena also said that high school preparedness is a major issue adding "they are not getting the information they need from high school, its pass them along and then they are the college's problem". The responses given by the administrators about the level of high school preparation painted a very vivid picture of their perceptions of the students' high school experiences.

The administrators also discussed the personal issues they saw with the developmental students. The perceptions ranged from apathy, dislike of going to class, the student's abilities, and their motivation. Hal said "some just simply think it's a waste of time and they never take is seriously. If you don't take it seriously why should we take you seriously?" Terry went further stating "students think they can just come in and turn something in and get a good grade they don't care enough to try. They have poor skill sets, they have time management problems, they procrastinate and they don't turn work in most of the time they are just too lazy". Don and Hal both felt that poor study skills were common in developmental students. Don said "if they had studied more in school or if they would realize they have to study for the placement test they

may not have needed developmental”. Hal agreed stating “developmental students, often times, lack not only the academic knowledge, but the personal discipline to study and learn the information themselves”. Ruby added that “test prep is not important to the students and they don’t have the information or ability to take tests well”. The perceptions of students by the administrators aligned with some of the previous research. These administrators felt that the students were underprepared not only by their schools, but lacked the personal discipline to succeed academically.

Benefits of Developmental Education

When speaking to the college administrators it was very clear that they believed their developmental programs were making a difference and greatly benefited the student. Terry said “with everything there are positives and negative and developmental education has both I do think it makes a difference if the students will allow it”. Hal said that developmental “provides a strong foundation on which students can build their program of study”. Elena stated that “developmental education increases study success. If you can support the student, give them confidence, help them through the process through the gatekeeper monster math, chemistry, or biology then they have their wings they can fly”. Taylor felt similar saying “it makes them independent people and independent students which allows them to succeed on their own”. Elena further argued “students who take developmental, then succeed in it, are much more likely to graduate and succeed in their education”. Don added to the argument saying “dev ed lays the foundation for these students and then they have the base level to succeed in any other course people who do not take dev ed may not have that foundation or at least as strong of a one”. Taylor also used the phrase “build the foundation” saying that with the addition of those skills future success was more likely. The benefits of developmental education were very strongly

instilled in the administrators' perceptions, but each answer hinged upon the student succeeding and making it through the course. After the benefits were revealed the administrators moved to the potential negative impacts of developmental education.

Negative Impacts of Developmental Education

While the administrators felt developmental education had many benefits they said they could also see the negative connotations for students as well. Their negative impacts were found in three themes which were the student feels they should not be in the class, being in developmental makes them frustrated, and the impact on financial aid. Each of these were very important potential student hindrances and the administrators said they understood why the students would feel the way they often do.

The administrators reported that one negative impact was that students feel like they have been misplaced in developmental and it affects their performance (Don, Hal, Sean, & Ruby). They said that this is a very common occurrence and they deal with it each semester. Don said "students will call me at the beginning of each semester saying they were not placed correctly and I will advise them to re-test if they are placed in developmental again they start to lose interest and it really begins to hinder their success". Terry shared similar experiences "students will come to my office and say I should not be in developmental I am too smart for this and I will have to tell them they need the help and they just start to shut down they no longer care and it immediately affects their chances of passing". Hal felt that students "don't realize they need help and they won't take it, they can't see this is just one step toward their degree. That doesn't seem to sink in they just keep saying I should not be in here". Ruby said that "students get lost and then they feel dev ed doesn't count. When they can't see how it helps it makes them feel just deficient and not good enough". According to the administrators many students feel like they

are not placed correctly and if they cannot move past that idea they struggle to succeed in developmental.

Another difficulty the students face is when they get frustrated by being in developmental. Elena said “it’s hard for these students to have had these subjects then have to retake them all over again it frustrates them”. Hal agreed that this is an issue saying “many students are discouraged by the additional classes required. This leads to frustration and a lack of desire to succeed or even complete”. Terry felt the same way stating “students will just drop out or stop coming to class, because they are so frustrated or disappointed”. Sean had seen similar situations where students repeat “to us they are called repeat offenders and they never come back”. Terry explained that the frustration can extend not only to having to take developmental, but having to repeat the courses multiple times. They described it as a “repetitive cycle English, math, or both stuck on a loop and no person is going to see the point in trying if they can’t get out of one class”. The administrators all reported that the frustration students feel is a major stumbling block for the students and often times they are lost by the college.

The last potential drawback to developmental discussed by the administrators was the impact it could have on the student’s financial aid. According to Terry, if a student is placed in the lowest level English and math then the student will lose most of their Pell award due to that. They said “if you place that low your Pell is gone even if you never have to repeat any of those classes its gone then how do they pay for the rest of their classes then we lose them because developmental took all their money”. Elena said “Pell will pay for developmental courses, but only so many and that’s one of the biggest issues with that”. They went further to describe how it impacts the student “if the student is relying upon financial aid to fund their education and they get off track and have to repeat a developmental course then they have lost the money for one or

two courses they will need to graduate”. Hal had the same experience and then talked about how he has seen many students “opt out of education simply because they took too many developmental and now they can’t afford it. It is sad when someone tries then holds up their end of the bargain because we make them take the courses then we say welcome to college courses please pay here with cash. We lose our students and it’s our fault”.

The perceptions of the college administrators helped to illuminate the way developmental is viewed on college campuses. It demonstrated their ideas of the purpose, what students needed the courses, the benefits, and the negative impacts. Each theme helped to build the entire perception of developmental education from the administrator viewpoint and furthers the understanding of how students and family members perceive the college viewpoint. Table 9 shows the comments of the administrators based upon the themes found.

Table 9. *College Administrator Perceptions.*

Purpose	What Causes a Student to Need Developmental Education?	Benefits of Developmental Education	Negative Impacts of Developmental Education
Brings students up to speed on how college works. (Don)	No consistent description. (All)	Supports the student. (All)	They fell misplaced and that hinders success. (Don, Hal, Sean, & Ruby)
Go back and review. (Elena)	Students come with varied aptitudes. (Elena)	Gives them confidence. (Elena)	Students don't see it's just one step to a degree. (Hal)
Have students academically prepared to complete college and function in life. (Terry)	Underprepared and not only academically. (Ruby)	Gives them wings so they can fly. (Elena)	Repeating developmental courses discourages them and often times they drop out. (Terry)
It's a brush up course. (Terry)	High school never prepared them. (All)	Lays out a foundation for them to build upon later. (All)	It eats away their financial aid. (All)
Re-introduce them to concepts and skills they should have learned in K-12. (Hal)	They have poor skill sets. (Terry)	Makes them more independent students. (Taylor)	If they are in the lowest level of English and math their Pell is gone when they get to college level courses. (Terry)
Reminder of things they forgot. (Hal)	Poor time management. (Sean)		
	Lack knowledge. (All)		
	Lack of self-discipline. (Sean)		

Summary

This chapter presented the findings of 24 interviews conducted at three community colleges in Virginia. The colleges chosen represented a sample of the Virginia Community College system including from each of the geographic descriptors (rural, suburban, and urban). Utilizing a phenomenological approach which allowed the data to come from the lived

experiences of the participants uncovering the knowledge as it appears in their consciousness (Hays & Singh, 2012). The interviews consisted of developmental students, family members of developmental students, and college administrators. Each interview was coded by the researcher and an external researcher to ensure validity. Themes emerged from each participant demographic, while some themes were the same each participant group had unique themes emerge as well. The themes will be discussed in relation to each participant group.

The themes that emerged from the student interviews were purpose of developmental education, placement, developmental education being a tool for success, benefits post enrollment, institutional deficiencies, and causation of placement. Additionally, in the themes were the inclusion of student identity formation, status attainment, and social capital. Students viewed the purpose of developmental to be a “baby step” toward college classes and to “catch you up”. They also described the purpose to be “teach you the basics” and “refresh what you learned in high school”. Students portrayed both negative and positive perceptions about developmental. The negative perceptions were more frequent than the positive describing it as “lower than everyone else” and “not on par with everyone else”. The students also identified how it made them feel to be in developmental. They described it as making them feel “dumb” or that they were “a failure”. One student, Cory, said “if you take developmental then you are dumb”.

Students said that the reason why they were placed in developmental was due to their lack of knowledge, bad experiences with the subject, or that the placement test put them there. The experiences that lead to their perceptions were found to be rooted in their high school education. Difficulty with the subject or a negative intervention with an instructor had begun the creation of their perception. Students also spoke of their current experiences which produced

negative and positive results. Students described their current situation as “helped me gain confidence” and “everyone should take this course before moving higher”. Other students were still having negative experiences saying that difficulty with the program format and the instructor were still issues that made them feel “not as high as others”. The next participant group that was presented was the family of developmental students.

The family group produced four themes which were purpose of developmental, causation of developmental need, the college perceptions, and the benefits of developmental. Family members described the purpose as being a course to give the tools needed to succeed in college and helping students absorb the information. Some family members stated they did not know what the purpose was and wasn't sure what areas developmental courses were offered. When the family members spoke about what causes the need for developmental they felt that it was caused by failure of the secondary schools to prepare them and the placement test score. Family members were divided on this topic some felt very strongly that the secondary schools did not prepare their student while others looked to the placement test scores as the only reason for developmental placement.

The perceptions of the college was another theme in the family interviews. The family members said that the college viewed developmental as “taking out the trash” something they did not want to do, but had to fulfill. Other family members said that the college sees developmental courses as a way to bring in students which would bring in more revenue to them. The family members did see benefits in the courses through helping students prepare for the job market and teaching them better communication skills. They felt that developmental would help give them the tools they need to succeed in the acquiring employment after graduation and functioning as an adult.

The last data presented was based around the college administrators' perceptions of developmental education. Like the students and family members their themes included purpose, causation of developmental need, and benefits. They added another theme which was the negative impacts of developmental on the student and on the college. College administrators described the purpose as "bringing students up to speed" and "going back to review". One administrator described it as a "brush up course" which meant that it was to re-introduce material that the students may have known before.

The view of college administrators on what causes students to need developmental had two parts. The first answers given by the administrators was that there was not a real definition of what a developmental student was or what type of universal background they shared. They emphasized that every student is different and students come to college with diverse aptitudes and needs. The administrators then moved into the second part which dealt with what qualities they have seen in developmental students. The qualities included underprepared academically as well as non-academic (Ruby), poor time management (Sean), and lack of self-discipline (Sean). The administrators said that the secondary schools were at fault in some cases, but students lacked the fundamental educational skills to succeed and developmental must teach them those skills.

The administrators also went into the benefits and negative impacts of developmental education. Some of the benefits were that if students were lacking ability in a subject matter or a skill set developmental would teach that student what was needed to succeed. One administrator said that it gave students a foundation to build upon in later courses while another said going through developmental would give them wings so they could fly. While the administrators illustrated some of the benefits they also discussed the negative impacts as well. The first

problem for students was when they felt they did not belong in developmental and was frustrated by the placement. When students are frustrated they lose interest and will either not do well in the course or drop their classes. Another potential pitfall was students had to repeat the courses over and the personal difficulty that creates on the student. The administrators felt that either of these scenarios would lead to students dropping out creating a loss for the college.

Developmental education also creates a negative financial impact as well they had found in terms of financial aid. If a student placed in the lowest level of developmental or had to repeat courses there is a potential that the financial aid will run out when they move on to other courses.

According to the administrators this is a major problem, because students will be forced to use all of their aid on courses that are non-credit and will create a scenario where they will not have the financial ability to complete a degree. One administrator said that “every developmental course they have to repeat is one college course they have lost”.

This chapter presented the perceptions of students, family members of developmental students, and college administrators. The themes that emerged were similar in each participant group each discussing the purpose, what causes the developmental need, and the effects of developmental. Each group had a unique viewpoint into the phenomenon and the perspectives of the participants which helps to paint a more complete picture of the perceptions of developmental education. The ideas, experiences, and perceptions of the participants join together to create well-rounded views of the developmental education stakeholders’ perceptions.

Looking to Chapter Five

The final chapter will begin with a summary of the study including an overview of the problem, review of the purpose statement along with research foci, review of methodology, and lastly summary of the major findings. The chapter will transition to how the findings of this study relate to the literature presented in chapter two. The chapter will conclude with a discussion of the implications for action and a call for further research related to this important phenomenon.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter will include a review the elements of the study including the purpose, foci, methodology, and findings. The results presented in chapter four will be discussed and compared to the findings of previous studies that was included in chapter two. In the conclusion, implications for actions and the call for further study in this area will be discussed.

Summary of the Study

Overview of the Problem

More than half of college students come to post-secondary education unprepared and need some sort of developmental education program education (Bachman, 2013; Barbatis, 2010; Capt & Oliver, 2012; Duranczyk, et al., 2006; Goeller, 2013; Grubb & Cox, 2005; Howard & Whitaker, 2011; Jaggars & Hodara, 2013; Koch et al., 2012; Miller, 2007; Reichwein, Schneider, & Onwuegbuzie, 2014; Schultz & Higbee, 2006; VanOra, 2012; Weinstein, 2004). However, developmental education programs appear to be missing the mark with most of participating students either not completing the developmental education courses, not enrolling in course bearing programs or not completing degree programs. We know a lot about these quantifiable markers, including quite a bit about what it is like to be a community college student. However, very little is known about the intersection of developmental education and community college in terms of the issues, experiences and perceptions of students who have to take developmental education courses. We further do not have a full understanding of the perceptions of the students' family members or the college administrators. While some research exists on the importance of the family members perceptions (Byrd & MacDonald, 2005; Miller, 2007) it does

not specially address their actual perceptions of developmental. Similar to the family, the research conducted on college administrators also reports their importance to the formation of student perceptions. The previous research expanded further with the college perceptions than those of the family members. This study adds to the body of research already established and furthered the understanding of students, families, and community college administrators perceptions of developmental education.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the perceptions of community college students, family members, and college administrators regarding developmental education at the community college.

Research Foci

In this study, I focused on perceptions of developmental education at community colleges. To guide this exploration, I detail five research foci that touch upon issues of student development, status attainment, institutional capacity and the linkages of social capital:

1. What are student perceptions of developmental education?
2. What experiences lead to students' perceptions of developmental education?
3. What are students' current experiences with developmental education?
4. What perceptions do family members have about developmental education?
5. What perceptions do community college administrators have about developmental education?

Review of the Findings

Student Perceptions

The perception of developmental education can play a significant role in achieving student success (Jaggars & Hodara, 2013). Howard and Whitaker (2011) found that students who were placed in developmental had different perceptions of their learning ability. Additionally, Koch et al. (2012) found that students who were placed in developmental felt like they were “dummies” or “stupid”. When students were asked about the purpose of developmental education students defined it as “a little baby step”, “review of the basics”, and “extra practice before you start college”. The students demonstrated that they viewed developmental as not being actual college and that others view it that way as well. Students went on to say that “weaker students” are the ones to take developmental since they need help “catching up to everyone else”. Students reported that they felt “lower than everyone else, like you are not as smart”. According to the students the idea of a developmental student not being an actual college student was created by the way colleges reacted to those courses. In their responses they spoke of how the colleges viewed it as lower than actual classes. Students reported they felt “dumb” and a “failure” due to their placement in developmental. These findings were similar to those found by Koch et al. (2012) along with Howard and Whitaker (2011) in relation to student perceptions of their academic ability. This section also dealt with the student identity formation and status attainment.

Some students reported a positive perception of developmental where its purpose was to “give extra help” where it was needed. To these students there was not any shame associated with the courses, because it was better for them to understand where they needed help and get it before they did poorly later. One student said that everyone should take developmental due to

how much it helped them and how potentially beneficial it could be to all students. Students having positive perceptions of developmental was also found in the literature. Goeller (2013) found that some students viewed developmental as a step toward their graduation and their perception was positive. Similarly, VanOra (2012) reported that some students felt that the courses better prepared them for future success and that it benefits them.

When asked why they were placed in developmental they reported it was due to their lack of knowledge and the placement test scores. Some students said they had taken a break from education and upon their return they did not know the information any longer. These students understood they had lost some of their previous knowledge base and needed help in those areas. The other section of students said the placement test was what put them into developmental. Students said they were good in the subjects, but their scores on the test was the reason they were placed in developmental. Students seemed to not understand the correlation between not understanding the information and their score on the placement test.

When exploring the current experiences of the students the data began to show that after the student enter the course they benefited from the experience. Students said they “feel better about the subject”, “became more independent as a learner”, and “it feels good”. The students used the word “foundation” in terms of a base knowledge they could build upon throughout their college career. While students demonstrated positive experiences some reported negative experiences as well. The basis for the negative was more about the format of the class and not the class itself. Students spoke about developmental math the most where the classes are taught in a computer lab by computer modules. The students said they preferred a face to face class and not on the computer. One student said this method was like a “one room schoolhouse” where students were on different levels and the teacher must teach to all levels. The student

perceptions were very interesting and very crucial for colleges to understand so that they can better serve the students. The next section will cover the family perceptions.

Family Perceptions

Family perceptions of developmental education help formulate the perceptions of the student through social capital. The family influence is just as important to the creation of student perceptions as any other factor (Byrd & MacDonald, 2005; Miller, 2007). Often time's students will look to their family members for advice and guidance creating social capital by transferring their knowledge and perceptions onto the student (Byrd & MacDonald, 2005). Family members produced similar themes to the students and began with the purpose of developmental. According to the family members, developmental "gave you the tools needed to succeed" and a "stepping stone" to get to real college courses. Each family member knew generally what developmental might be but, they did not fully understand its full purpose or how it fits into their student's academic lives. Similar to the students' responses, family members said that the reason why students were placed in developmental was due to lack of preparation by the high schools and their placement scores. One family member said "high school around here don't prepare people for college". This idea was common with the family members saying that their student was failed by the secondary school system. Some members also simply stated that the placement scores were the reason why they were placed in developmental. To those family members there was not a real connection between their student's ability and the score they received. Family members also spoke about how the college benefits from offering developmental education. To them, the colleges benefited by having more students which brought in more money and it allowed them to retain more students. Family perceptions are also very important to a student's

success, because they are the first people the student will turn to for help and guidance. The last section will cover administrator perceptions.

Administrator Perceptions

The perceptions of the college in relation to developmental education have a direct effect on student success and how they view developmental (Reichwein, et al., 2014). According to Weinstein (2004) students will look to the college administrators and faculty to help shape their view of college success. The exploration of administrator perceptions included student identity formation, social capital, status attainment, and institutional capacity. The first area explored, like with students and family members, was the perception of the purpose of developmental education. The purpose, as reported by the administrators, was very similar in definition than the student and family member responses. Administrators said it was to “brush up”, “go back and review”, and “catch up”. The overall purpose was to take a student who was not prepared for college level courses and give them the skill needed to succeed. The administrators coupled the purpose of developmental with the placement test. They reported that the scores on the placement tests allowed the college and the student to understand where they are academically and where they need to be to succeed. The administrators felt that the purpose was to create an alignment of the student needs and what the course teaches them. Student success seemed to be the core purpose of developmental to the administrator participants. One administrator said that the need for developmental was very important to the community college since it “aligns with the mission because we are open door and we are supposed to help everyone”. The responses clearly stated that developmental education’s purpose was to transition the student from being underprepared to either learning or refreshing their understanding of the skills necessary to succeed in college.

Next the participants began to speak about what causes students to need developmental. The consensus was that there was not a set definition for what a developmental student was since “each come in with different aptitudes”. The administrators spoke of some students who were coming straight out of high school that needed to be re-introduced to old concepts and the non-traditional student who had been out of school for some time and needed a refresher. They then began to explain that students who need developmental have often been underprepared by their high schools or they had personal issues that were not related to academics. One administrator said that “high schools did not prepare students for college and expected the college to teach what they were supposed to”. Another participant spoke about how students read or write at a middle or elementary level and then are expected to succeed in college. Another issue seen by the administrators was personal issues that were not related to their academic preparation. They reported seeing students having poor skill sets like time management problems and apathy. Some felt that if the students had studied more or tried harder they would have not been developmental and that responsibility was with the student.

The administrators who were interviewed also discussed the benefits of developmental education. One common benefit according to them was that developmental builds a strong “foundation for the students to build upon”. The administrators felt that taking these courses would allow for the student to create a strong base of knowledge that would allow them to succeed in future courses. One participant felt that developmental makes students more independent both as a student and as a citizen allowing them the ability to succeed on their own. The administrators also reported that succeeding in developmental would create students who were much more likely to do well in their future courses and graduate as well. The benefits

discussed by them put a strong emphasis on developmental laying a strong ground for the student to move on and build their knowledge bases on the foundation laid.

While the administrators spoke of the various benefits of developmental they also discussed the potential negative impacts as well. They reported three themes which were the student does not feel like they need to be in developmental, being placed there makes them frustrated, and the impact it can have on their financial aid. The participants told stories about how students would come in their offices and tell them they did not need to be in developmental. When they had to stay in the courses their interest declined and they often times did poorly in the courses. They also discussed how students can become frustrated with their placement which will also impact their academic performance because they “shut down” and no longer try to pass the class. Lastly, they illustrated how developmental can impact a student’s financial aid in a negative way. According to numerous administrators, students who have to repeat developmental courses face the risk of not having the adequate funds to finish their degree, because such aid as Pell is a limited resource. They each told stories about how their students would be in a “repetitive cycle” where they had to take courses over to pass and then they would not be able to finish their degree due to lack of funds. The finding reported by this study were very similar to those found by Capt & Oliver, 2012 in terms of the way administrators viewed the traits of a developmental student. The perceptions of the administrators are crucial to the success of the student. Their perceptions could form, enhance, or break the perceptions of incoming developmental students. Their ideas about the purpose and the type of student will set the tone for how developmental is viewed by the entire college directly affecting the student.

Limitations

One limitation of this study was the small sample size used with eight interviews from each college creating 24 over all interviews. With the small sample size it is possible not to have a representative sample to report on the phenomenon. To address this limitation the researcher chose schools from Virginia which is has the fifth largest number of community colleges in the United States. By choosing the state with the fifth largest number of community colleges a more representative sample could be achieved. With such a large amount of community colleges the researcher was able to find colleges that fit each of the college service demographics (urban, suburban, and rural) creating a more representative sample. One limitation to interviews is that the researcher assumes that the interviewee is knowledgeable about the subject and they are telling the truth. The researcher must trust that the interview participant is giving honest responses to the questions and that they in fact have the knowledge base to offer correct insight into the phenomena. Researcher or interview participant bias may be a limitation since the researcher already knew one of the participants. To offset this limitation the researcher and the participant were both made aware of the potential bias and used bracketing to offset the potential bias. Another potential limitation was that the data collections only occurred once and the answers may change if there were future interviews done with the same questions. The fact that there is only one researcher involved in the data collection is another limitation. To offset the effects of this limitation the researcher will utilize bracketing to isolate and limit any researcher bias and after data collection will have outside researchers to code and review the data to ensure the themes and patterns found are free of any researcher bias. Additionally, the researcher kept a journal of potential bias in an effort to control any bias so that it would not affect the results.

Delimitations

This study utilized data collected from 24 interviews conducted at Jean, Xavier, and May Community Colleges in Virginia. There are 23 community colleges throughout Virginia and the researcher purposefully chose to just conduct research at three of them. The three that were chosen represented the three classifications for Virginia Community Colleges which were rural, suburban, and urban.

The scope of this study was to examine the perceptions of developmental education and the researcher did not have any knowledge of the students' success in their courses or their past academic record. The students' academic achievement in developmental courses was not within the scope of this study and was not explored.

The study was conducted at the beginning of the academic semester with students who were both in their first developmental course and with students who were in subsequent courses. This was intentional by the researcher to gauge the student perceptions early in their exposure to developmental and to gauge their later perceptions when they have had experience in those course.

Conclusion

Implications for Action

The results of this study produced insights into the perceptions of students, family members, and college administrators in relation to developmental education. The perceptions found illustrated how each demographic views developmental and how that idea transitions to the classroom. Upon completion of the interviews, coding, and reporting the researcher has identified four core areas that call for action to help increase student success and decrease negative perceptions of developmental education. The four areas are changing placement and

classroom disconnect, curriculum, intervention, and language. Each of these cores will be discussed and recommendations made about how to improve each increasing success and positive perceptions.

Changing Placement and Classroom Disconnect

This section consists of three suggestions that are grounded in the data produced by the students and the administrators. The most common response from students, family members, and administrators about the reason why students need developmental was tied to the placement test. The state of Virginia changed its placement test from the Compass to the Virginia Placement Test (VPT) in 2012. The VPT was created by the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) and is used in every community college in the state. The reports over the past four years have been on the negative side with faculty in both English and math saying the test gives false results. The administrators at May and Xavier Community College both stated that their faculty took the test to see how accurate it was and both said it was not reliable. While the Compass test was not perfect studies showed that it was more reliable than the VPT in terms of accurate placement. One of the issues discussed in the results section pertained to students being wrongly placed in developmental. In order to correct this in the future community colleges must replace the VPT for more accurate indicators. Conley and Squires (2012) called for an assessment system that would allow for a more comprehensive evaluation of student ability. Bailey et al. (2013) built upon Conley and Squires (2012) and recommended that the placement test be revised or replaced for new assessment tools that would report more accurate results. Ley and Young (1998) recommended that all placement tests include a self-evaluation to ensure the student felt the results of the test reflected their true ability. The change in placement test would benefit social capital, student identity formation, and institutional capacity. Students and family

both reported that they felt the placement test did not accurately gauge their ability. If a change is made in the placement test to one that is more accurate it would directly affect social capital in terms of what perception would be transferred to the student (Don; Hal; Terry). Also, it would benefit student identity formation in that if students felt their actual ability was assessed then they would have a more positive view of their placement. Institutional capacity would also be benefited by the adoption of a new test to demonstrate to students that developmental is a priority and the college is dedicated to an accurate gauge of their ability.

The students who were interviewed in this study overwhelmingly felt that the mode of delivery for developmental math was problematic. Students felt that the current state of developmental math was a hindering student success. Currently, developmental math is taught via online modules housed in large computer labs. The average class size is 30 to 40 depending upon the size of the college with one instructor. The students who are in these classes are at different developmental levels representing all nine levels. The students' responses indicated that a need for change in this area is critical to the future of developmental math. Students said that they would find the courses more helpful if they were taught in smaller in person classes or exclusively online. They also said the "one room school house" (Evan; Sean) was not the right format. The classroom format plays a huge role in the perceptions and success of students along with furthering the stigma (Bachman, 2013; VanOra, 2012). With so many students at varied levels with one instructor it is an almost impossible task for each student to get the help they need. In order to increase student success in developmental math colleges must abandon the online modules and one room schools and transition back to traditional classrooms or online courses (Hank). In doing so, the college would have to increase the cost of developmental math and in the current financial state of higher education it will be difficult (Ruby). The financial

difficulty could be seen as a long term financial benefit according to Gallard et al. (2010). Gallard et al. (2010) stated that successful developmental education benefits the colleges financially by increasing allocation of funds from the state, increasing full time students, and with increased enrollment comes an increase in student fees. Even with the fiscal burden in order to increase student success in developmental and beyond they must adopt this as a priority. This implementation would benefit students through status attainment, social capital, and identity formation along with the college through institutional capacity. If the classes were held in person and not in the one room school or online with an actual instructor students would be able to have the connection to other students and the instructor (Elena; Molly). Students would build relationships with other students who were at the same point they are and would heighten their view of their developmental placement. Furthermore, the students could have a cohort or learning community that would help create their status as an actual college student. The institution would benefit by increasing student success and help offset the potential stigma surrounding developmental education.

Curriculum

The recommendations made about the curriculum are grounded in the data produced by the students and the administrators. The first recommendation would be the creation of hybrid developmental/college credit courses. This suggestion was mentioned by each of the administrators at Jean, May, and Xavier Community Colleges. For example, creating a hybrid English 3 or 5 that is dually enrolled with English 111. With this collaboration the student would be enrolled in both courses while they would have to stay longer in class each session they would be enrolled in the full credit college class. By allowing the student to enroll in English 111 with higher developmental courses this could both increase student interest and negate the stigma

around developmental (Don; Elena; Hal; Sean; Ruby). With the inclusion of hybrid courses the student's identity could be formed where they feel like they are a part of the college and an actual college student (Hank; Molly; Terry). With their enrollment in developmental and college level courses it would allow the student to have inclusion into the higher education setting.

The next recommendations involve the way students' progress through their developmental program. One of the difficulties of being placed in developmental is the feeling of anxiety or feeling alone in the process. If the colleges established guided pathways for the student this would greatly enhance the students understanding of the developmental progression. Guided pathways would be degree plans that detail out a student's progression through a selected program of study (Jenkins & Cho, 2013). This approach could be adopted for any degree program as well to aid students (Terry). With the developmental guided pathway students could see where they start, where they go to next, and when they exit the courses and go on to credit classes (Jenkins & Cho, 2013). The pathway would be customized for each student depending on their starting place in developmental and could show them how it will connect with their chosen program of study. This would help bridge the information gap between students not understanding how developmental fits into their academic career and how it actually helps them succeed in their chosen area (Carol; Cory; Morgan; Sean). The guided pathways could be further enhanced with the inclusion of learning communities or a cohort based system. By implementing a cohort or learning community students would have peers, at the same level, to progress through the courses with. It would offset some of the fear and anxiety and give them a built-in support system (Jenkins & Cho, 2013). The implementation of these curriculum changes could potentially increase a student's academic performance and also offset negative perceptions creating current positive experiences.

Intervention

The recommendations included in the intervention section were formed from the responses of students, family members, and administrators. According to Howard and Whitaker (2011) successful interventions can help to create positive perceptions of developmental education. Students who have positive interventions are more likely to succeed in developmental and then go on to succeed in college (Barbatis, 2010). The first intervention would come during the beginning of a student's developmental career at the college. The data showed that students and family members do not fully understand what developmental is or how it affects the student's college career (Emily; Hank; Mya; Ruby). Since family members are the people students look to most often for academic advice it is crucial to implement learning tools for students and their families (Byrd & MacDonald, 2005; Miller, 2007). In an effort to enhance this understanding colleges could mandate that all developmental students meet with an advisor who specialized in developmental education. The advisor would guide the student and their families, if needed, through the process and fully explain the purpose and benefits of the program. This would also give the student a home base to return to if they have any questions or difficulties. For many colleges this step would come with the creation of a new position in the college and would have to be funded through the college. This approach was adopted by Jean Community College in 2011 and other colleges have begun to explore this approach. Currently, there are grants available to fund positions that would fit this role both in the state of Virginia and nationally as well.

The next intervention would come when the student begins the actual course. This is a critical time for student success since fifty percent of developmental students do not return to complete their degree (Levin & Kater, 2013). One of the three colleges (Jean) studied instituted

a policy where students were immediately dropped from their course if they failed to show up the first day. The student would then have to meet with an advisor to get enrolled in courses that started one and two weeks later reserved for students who fit the criteria. This would allow for further conversations with the student about their potential difficulties. Often external factors will affect a student's ability to attend class or have enough time to study (Taylor). These factors could include day care, transportation, or work obligations that force them to miss the class or have the potential of missing future classes (Ruby). According to Jaggars and Hodara (2013) these outside factors can be the make or break moment for a student's success. The college can work with the student to help them offset these challenges. If the challenge is financial like taking on extra hours to pay a light bill or not having enough money the college could create a special fund where one time grants could be given to the student to keep them enrolled (Sean; Ruby). Lastly, the college should set up a system where the instructor of the developmental course can override the placement test score if a student was clearly misplaced (Sean). This would offset the issues facing a student who does not need to be in developmental, but may have not tested well on the given day. The intervention component of developmental is vital to the student and the college as well. If implemented the suggestions would allow for more communication between the student and the college (Mya; Taylor). Further it would allow for students to begin developmental earlier and enter college ready to complete their degree in a shorter time.

Language

The last recommendation is about the language used when discussing developmental education. College staff and faculty must understand that the way they describe and market developmental to students and their families creates a lasting impact (Bachman, 2013; VanOra,

2012). Students and family members spoke in detail about the language used to define the purpose, what student takes developmental, and what the college says about it. Students said that phrases like “caught up” or “test where you are” immediately made them feel inferior and “stupid” (April; Lucy; Mya; Hank). These responses from students echoed what was reported by previous researchers when students described their perception of a developmental student (Hoard & Whitaker, 2011; Koch et al., 2012). They all reported that the college used those terms to describe developmental to them when they were placed there. Colleges should made every effort to avoid using words or phrases that would imply that the student is deficient or not as smart as other students. For the most part the words used by the colleges or other people were not intended to be harmful or derogatory, but were to the student. When asked about how the colleges promote developmental education many administrators said they didn’t because who wants to advertise developmental. The promotion of developmental is another vital aspect that needs to be embraced. If the colleges do not acknowledge developmental then it will be viewed as a “secret” by the students and their families (Nick; Ross). If colleges embraced it and marketed it as a positive step for students to succeed in their college and professional careers some of the negative stigma would vanish.

The last recommendation is the changing of the name of developmental education. Before it was developmental the term was remedial education. Over time remedial became a negative description associated with underprepared students (Howard & Whitaker, 2011; VanOra, 2012). For that reason remedial was renamed developmental education to negate the past stigma. Now developmental has achieved the same connotation for students, family, and administrators. In order to move developmental away from its current state of being associated with a negative stigma a name change is necessary (Ben; Jacob). The new name should be

removed from remedial or developmental and should convey confidence. For example, developmental could transition into progressive education. In using the term progressive education students would view it as a progression toward their degree or career. It would invoke confidence in the students (Sean). Furthermore, courses are shortened in name either by the college catalog or in conversation progressive education could be shortened to pro ed. The need for a name change is important to the future of developmental education in order to place any negative perceptions in the past (April; Ross).

The changing of the language used by the college when discussing developmental and the potential change in name could benefit the students, family, and college greatly. The implementation of these suggestions ties back to helping create a positive student identity, helping students and their families with status attainment, build strong social capital, and enhance relations between the student and the college. If colleges change the language in both areas they can start to help students build their identity from a more positive place and allow the family members to better understand that they have established the status that was envisioned. Students will build social capital with peers, faculty, administrators, and their family members by having a positive experience from the beginning and allowing for the stigma of developmental to be diminished and eventually eradicated.

Further Research

The perceptions of developmental education is a very important area for colleges to explore in the future. The way a student, family member, or the college perceived developmental education is important to each stakeholder equally. One of the reasons why the researcher chose this topic was due to the gap in the developmental education literature. As can be seen from the literature review there were not many studies conducted that examined the

perceptions of developmental education. This study furthers the understanding of developmental education and added to the literature, but there is a plethora of research to be conducted involving perceptions. Further research should be done to examine student, family, and college perceptions more in depth. Focus groups, cohorts, and long term studies should be conducted to understand the student's progression through developmental education and how to improve every aspect of it. Changing the perceptions of developmental education requires further research to be conducted in regard to every stakeholder. Ideally, the topic of perceptions in developmental education along with other qualitative studies will be as represented as the current quantitative literature.

Conclusion

Perceptions of developmental education are crucial to the understanding of student success in developmental education. The understanding of how students, family members, and college administrators view it creates the narrative for others being introduced to developmental education. The importance of this study was to further the understanding of those perceptions and begin the process of learning how to improve perceptions in turn improving student success. The results of this study demonstrated that the perceptions of each population were complex while being similar in many areas, but different in others. Developmental education is viewed through many diverse lenses, but all meld together to create the total picture of developmental education perceptions. The understanding of developmental education perceptions is an essential key for colleges to create and implement new programs that will foster positive perceptions from students and family members. The subject of perceptions in developmental education is one that demands more research to be conducted. With more data and information students, family members, and colleges can create an environment of excellence in higher education.

References

- Andres, L., Trache, M., Yoon, E., Pidgeon, M., & Thomsen, J. (2007). Educational expectations, parental social class, gender, and postsecondary attainment. *Youth & Society, 39*(2), 135-163.
- Asera, R. (2011). Reflection on developmental mathematics-Building new pathways. *Journal of Developmental Education, 34*(3), 28-31.
- Ashby, J., Sadera, W., & McNary, S. (2011). Comparing student success between developmental math courses offered online, blended, and face-to-face. *Journal of Interactive Online Learning, 10*(3), 128-140.
- Bachman, R.M. (2013). Shifts in attitudes: A qualitative exploration of student attitudes toward efforts of remediation. *Research and Teaching in Developmental Education, 29*(2), 14-29.
- Bailey, T. (2009). Challenge and opportunity: Rethinking the role and function of developmental education in community college. *New Directions for Community College, 145*, 11-30.
- Bailey, T., Jaggars, S., & Scott-Clayton, J. (2013). Characterizing the effectiveness of developmental Education: A response to recent criticism. *Journal of Developmental Education, 36*(3), 18-25.

- Bailey, T., Jeong, D.W., & Cho, S. (2010). Referral, enrollment, and completion in developmental education sequences in community colleges. *Economics of Higher Education, 29*, 255-270.
- Bahr, P. (2012). Deconstructing remediation in community colleges: Exploring associations between course-taking patterns, course outcomes, and attrition from remedial math and remedial writing sequences. *Research in Higher Education, 53*, 661-693.
- Barnes, J. (2012). The first year experience impact on student success in developmental education. *Journal of Applied Research in the Community College, 20*(1), 27-35.
- Barr, J., & Schuetz, P. (2008). Overview of foundational issues. *New Directions for Community Colleges, 144*, 7-16.
- Barbatis, P. (2010). Underprepared, ethnically diverse community college students: Factors contributing to persistence. *Journal of Developmental Education, 33*(3), 14-24.
- Boylan, H. (2002). *What works: Research-based practices in developmental education*. Boone: Appalachian State University.
- Breneman, D., & Haarlow, W. (1998). Remediation in higher education: A symposium featuring developmental education: Costs and consequences. *Fordham Report, 2*(9), Washington D.C.: Thomas B. Fordham Foundation.

- Bremer, C.D., Center, B.A., Opsal, C.L., Medhanie, A., Jang, Y., & Geise, A.C. (2013). Outcome Trajectories of developmental students in community colleges. *Community College Review, 41*(2), 154-175.
- Brothen, T., & Wambach, C. (2012). Refocusing developmental education. *Journal of Developmental Education, 36*(2), 34-39.
- Byrd, K. & MacDonald, G. (2005). Defining college readiness from the inside out: First generation college student perspectives. *Community College Review, 33*(1), 22-37.
- Capt, R., & Oliver, D. (2012). Student-centered learning and an emergent developmental student taxonomy. *Community College Journal, 36*(10), 793-807.
- Carroll, R., Kersh, L., Sullivan, E., & Fincher, M. (2012). Developmental education in Arkansas: Practices, costs, and model approach. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice, 36*, 743-751.
- Cohen, A. M., & Brawer, F. B. (2008). *The American community college*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Coleman, J. (1998). Social capital in the creation of human capital. *American Journal of Sociology, 94*(1), 95-121.

- Collins, M. (2010). Bridging the evidence gap in developmental education. *Journal of Developmental Education*, 34(1), 2-25.
- Conley, A., & Squires, J. (2012). Data drives success: Defining a metric for developmental studies. *New Directions for Institutional Research*, 153, 13-20.
- Daiek, D., Dixon, S., & Talbert, L. (2012). Developmental education and the success of our community college students. *Community College Enterprise*, 18(1), 37-40.
- Duranczyk, I., Goff, E., & Opitz, D. (2006). Students' experiences in learning centers: Socioeconomic factors, grades, and perceptions of the math center. *Journal of College Reading and Learning*, 36(2), 39-49.
- Facts about May Community College, retrieved from the college website on October 20, 2014.
Please contact the researcher for the raw data.
- Gallard, A. J., Albritton, F., & Morgan, M. W. (2010). A comprehensive cost/benefit model: Developmental student success impact. *Journal of Developmental Education*, 34(1), 10-25.
- Goeller, L. (2013). Developmental mathematics: Students' perceptions of the placement process. *Research and Teaching in Developmental Education*, 30(1), 22-34.

- Goudas, A. M., & Boylan, H. R. (2012). Addressing flawed research in developmental education. *Journal of Developmental Education, 36*(1), 2-13.
- Granovetter, M. (1973). The strength of weak ties. *American Journal of Sociology, 78*(6), 1360-1380.
- Grubb, W., & Cox, R. (2005). Pedagogical alignment and curricular consistency: The challenges for developmental education. *New Directions for Community Colleges, 129*, 93-103.
- Hand, C., & Payne, E. (2008). First-generation college students: A study of Appalachian student success. *Journal of Developmental Education, 32*(1), 4-15.
- Hays, D.G., & Singh, A.A. (2012). *Qualitative inquiry in clinical and educational settings*. New York:Guilford Press.
- Hodges, R., Simpson, M. L., & Stahl, N.A. (Eds.) (2012). *Teaching study strategies in developmental Education*. Boston:Bedford.
- Houle, J. (2013). Disparities in debt: Parents' socioeconomic resources and young adult student loan debt. *Sociology of Education, 87*(1), 53-69.

- Howard, L. & Whitaker, M. (2011). Unsuccessful and successful mathematics learning: Developmental students' perceptions. *Journal of Developmental Education, 35*(2), 2-16.
- Hughes, K.L., & Scott-Clayton, J. (2011). Assessing developmental assessment in community colleges. *Community College Review, 39*(4), 327-351.
- Ignash, J. (1997). Who should provide postsecondary remedial/developmental education? *New Directions for Community Colleges, 100*, 5-20.
- Jacobs, J. (2012). States push remedial education to community colleges. *U.S. News and World Report*. Retrieved from: <http://www.usnews.com/education/best-colleges/articles/2012/01/13/states-push-remedial-education-to-community-colleges>
- Jaggars, S., & Hodara, M. (2013). The opposing forces that shape developmental education. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice, 37*(7), 575-579.
- Jenkins, D., & Cho, S. (2013) Get the program and finish it: Building guided pathways to accelerate student completion. *New Directions for Community College, 164*(1), 27-35.
- Kaufman, P. (2014). The sociology of college students' identity formation. *New Directions for Higher Education, 166*, 35-42.
- Koch, B., Slate, J., & Moore, G. (2012). Perceptions of students in developmental classes. *Community College Enterprise, 18*(2), 62-82.

- Kvale, S. & Brinkman, S. (2009). *Interviews learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing*. London: Sage.
- Ley, K., & Young, D. (1998). Self-regulation behaviors in underprepared (developmental) and regular admission college students. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 23, 42-64.
- Levin, J.S., & Kater, S.T. (Eds) (2013). *Understanding community colleges*. New York:Routledge.
- McMillian, V.K., Parke, S.J., & Lanning, C.A. (1997). Remedial/developmental education approaches for the current community college environment. *New Directions for Community Colleges*, 100, 21-32.
- Mellow, G.O., Woolis, D.D., & Laurillard, D. (2011). In search of a new developmental-education pedagogy. *Change*, 50-59.
- Miller, R. (2007). The association of family history knowledge and cultural change with persistence among undergraduate low income, first-generation college students.
- Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. London: Sage.
- Research & Teaching in Developmental Education*, 24(1), 29-45.

- Nunley, C., Sharlte-Galotto, M., & Smith, M. (2000). Working with schools to prepare students for college: A case study. *New Directions for Community Colleges, 111*, 59-71.
- O'Shea, S. (2013). Transitions and turning points: Exploring how first-in-family female students story their transition to university and student identity formation. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 27*(2), 135-158.
- Perin, D. (2002). The location of developmental education in community colleges: A discussion of the merits of mainstreaming vs. centralization. *Community College Review, 30*(1), 27-44.
- Portes, A. (1998). Social capital: Its origins and applications in modern sociology. *Annual Review of Sociology, 24*, 1-24.
- Pretlow, III, J., & Wathington, H.D. (2011). Cost of developmental education: An update of Breneman and Haarlow. *Journal of Developmental Education, 35*(1), 2-12.
- Quick Facts about Jean Community College, retrieved from CCC website on October 20, 2015. Please contact the researcher for the raw data.
- Reichwein, L., Schneider, C., & Onwuegbuzie, A. (2014). Instructors' perceptions about student success and placement in developmental mathematics courses. *The Community College Enterprise, 20*(1), 67-84.

Schultz, J., & Higbee, J. (2006). Reasons for attending college: The student point of view.

Research & Teaching in Developmental Education, 23(2), 69-76.

Schwitzer, A. (2005). Self-development, social support, and student-help seeking: Research

summary and implications for college psychotherapists. *Journal of College Student*

Psychotherapy, 20(2), 29-52.

Schwitzer, A., Ancis, J., & Brown, N. *Promoting student learning and student development at a*

distance. Lanham: University Press of America.

United States Government. U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare Office of

Education. *Race and Social Change.* Retrieved from

<http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED013493.pdf>.

VanOra, J. (2012). The experience of community college for developmental students: Challenges

and motivations. *Community College Enterprise, 18(1), 26-36.*

Weinstein, G. (2004). Their side of the story: Remedial college algebra students. *Mathematics*

and Computer Education, 38(2), 230-240.

Wilson, K. (2012). State policies on developmental education. *Journal of Developmental*

Education, 36(1), 36-36.

Xavier Community College Annual Report, retrieved from the college website on October 20, 2015. Please contact the researcher for the raw data.

APPENDIX A: CITI CERTIFICATION

CITI Certification

**COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI)
SOCIAL & BEHAVIORAL RESEARCH - BASIC/REFRESHER CURRICULUM
COMPLETION REPORT**

Printed on 10/23/2014

LEARNER Justin Necessary (ID: 2853695)

DEPARTMENT Community College Leadership

EMAIL jnece001@odu.edu

INSTITUTION Old Dominion University

EXPIRATION DATE 10/23/2016

SOCIAL & BEHAVIORAL RESEARCH - BASIC/REFRESHER : Choose this group to satisfy CITI training requirements for Investigators and staff involved primarily in Social/Behavioral Research with human subjects.

COURSE/STAGE: SBR 201 refresher/3

PASSED ON: 10/23/2014

REFERENCE ID: 13104564

REQUIRED MODULES DATE COMPLETED SCORE

SBE Refresher 2 – Federal Regulations for Protecting Research Subjects 10/23/14 1/1 (100%)

SBE Refresher 2 – Defining Research with Human Subjects 10/23/14 1/1 (100%)

SBE Refresher 2 – Research with Children 10/23/14 1/1 (100%)

SBE Refresher 2 – Research in the Public Schools 10/23/14 1/1 (100%)

SBE Refresher 2 – International Research 10/23/14 1/1 (100%)

SBE Refresher 2 - Instructions 10/23/14 No Quiz

SBE Refresher 2 – Informed Consent 10/23/14 1/1 (100%)

SBE Refresher 2 – Privacy and Confidentiality 10/23/14 1/1 (100%)

SBE Refresher 2 – Assessing Risk 10/23/14 1/1 (100%)

SBE Refresher 2 – Research with Prisoners 10/23/14 1/1 (100%)

Completing the SBR 201 Refresher Course 10/23/14 No Quiz

SBE Refresher 2 – History and Ethical Principles 10/23/14 0/1 (0%)

For this Completion Report to be valid, the learner listed above must be affiliated with a CITI Program participating institution or be a paid

Independent Learner. Falsified information and unauthorized use of the CITI Program course site is unethical, and may be considered research misconduct by your institution.

Paul Braunschweiger Ph.D.

Professor, University of Miami

Director Office of Research Education

CITI Program Course Coordinator

APPENDIX B: HUMAN SUBJECTS APPROVAL LETTER



OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR RESEARCH

Physical Address

4111 Monarch Way, Suite 203
Norfolk, Virginia 23508

Mailing Address

Office of Research
1 Old Dominion University
Norfolk, Virginia 23529
Phone(757) 683-3460
Fax(757) 683-5902

DATE: April 20, 2015

TO: Shana Pribesh

FROM: Old Dominion University Education Human Subjects Review Committee

PROJECT TITLE: [745044-1] Perceptions of Student, Family, and College Administrators on Developmental Education

REFERENCE #:

SUBMISSION TYPE: New Project

ACTION: DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT STATUS

DECISION DATE:

REVIEW CATEGORY: Exemption category # 6.1

Thank you for your submission of New Project materials for this project. The Old Dominion University Education Human Subjects Review Committee has determined this project is EXEMPT FROM IRB REVIEW according to federal regulations.

We will retain a copy of this correspondence within our records.

If you have any questions, please contact Ed Gomez at 757-683-6309 or egomez@odu.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within Old Dominion University Education Human Subjects Review Committee's records.

APPENDIX C: STUDENT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Student Interview Questions

1. What developmental courses are you taking?
2. Is this your first developmental course?
3. Why do you think you were placed in a developmental course?
4. How does it make you feel to take a developmental course?
5. What is the purpose of developmental education?
6. Imagine you had to describe developmental education to your grandparent, what would you tell them?
7. What do your parents think about you taking a developmental course?
8. Currently, you are taking a course in math/English, tell me about your experiences in this subject such as previous classes or teachers?
9. What experiences made you feel the way you do about the subject?
10. How do you feel about the subject now that you are in a developmental course?
11. How do you think you will use what you have learned in your developmental course to further your education and leading to getting a job?
12. What do you like about the course?
13. What do you dislike about the course?
14. How could it be improved upon?

15. In what ways, if any, does developmental education benefit students?

16. In what ways, if any, does developmental education hinder students?

APPENDIX D: ADMINISTRATOR INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Administrator Interview Questions

1. What type of developmental courses does your college offer?
2. What proportion of students require developmental courses at your college?
3. What type of student needs developmental education?
4. What causes students to need developmental education?
5. In what ways, if any, does developmental education increase student success?
6. In what ways, if any, does developmental education hinder student success?
7. What is the purpose of developmental education?
8. Imagine you had to describe developmental education to a parent or student what would you tell them?
9. Explain how you promote developmental education to students, parents, and the college?
10. Explain how the college promotes developmental education?
11. What role does developmental education play in a student's college career?
12. In what ways do you think developmental education can help students graduate?
13. In what ways do you think developmental education can help students find employment after graduation?
14. In what ways does developmental education impact student finances in terms of financial aid?

APPENDIX E: FAMILY INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Family Interview Questions

1. What developmental courses is your student taking?
2. Is this their first developmental course?
3. What type of students need developmental education?
4. What causes students to need developmental education?
5. What is the purpose of developmental education?
6. Imagine you had to describe developmental education to your student, what would you tell him or her?
7. Explain how your perceptions of developmental education may have influenced your student's perceptions?
8. What role does developmental education play in your student's college career?
9. In what ways do you think developmental education can help students graduate?
10. In what ways do you think developmental education can help students find employment after graduation?
11. In what ways does developmental education impact student finances in terms of financial aid?
12. In what ways, if any, does developmental education benefit the students?
13. What type of negative impacts might it have on students?
14. In what ways, if any, does developmental education benefit the college?
15. What types of negative impacts might it have on the college?

APPENDIX F: INFORMED CONSENT

Interview Protocols

Researcher:

My name is Justin Necessary and I am a doctoral candidate at Old Dominion University.

Contact Information:

Email: jnece001@odu.edu

Phone: 276-393-1932

The researcher may be reached at any point for questions or concerns regarding the project and participation within.

Purpose:

The purpose of this study is to explore community college student, administrator, and family perceptions about developmental education. This data collected will be used to complete my dissertation in partial completion of my doctoral program.

Risk:

There is no risk in participating in this project.

Process:

Your participation in the project will involve an interview with an estimated length of one hour. This interview will be electronically recorded for later analysis. Study will be conducted during the fall 2015 and spring 2016 semesters from November 2015 to April 2016.

Your Participation: Your participation in this study will consist of an interview lasting approximately one hour. You will be asked a series of questions about your perceptions of developmental education, purpose of developmental education, how developmental education benefits or hinders students and the college. You are not required to answer the questions. You may pass on any question that makes you feel uncomfortable. At any time you may notify the researcher that you would like to stop the interview and your participation in the project. There is no penalty for discontinuing participation.

Confidentiality: The interview will be electronically recorded; however, your name will not be recorded. Your name and identifying information will not be associated with any part of the written report of the research. All of your information and interview responses will be kept confidential through electronic security measures. The researcher will not share your individual responses with anyone.

By signing below you agree that you understand the above information and would be interested in participating in this study.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Researcher: _____

To be read before starting the interview.

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. Please be assured that the confidentiality of your identity and the responses that you provide will be kept strictly confidential. If, at any time during the interview you choose to opt out, I will respect your prerogative to do so. May I record the interview? Do you have any questions?

Study Description

Community College Student, Administrator, and Family Perceptions about Developmental Education.

Through my coursework at Old Dominion University the topic of developmental education has been a common theme. Currently, I in the process of completing my doctoral degree by conducting interviews that focus upon perceptions about developmental education. The interviews are a part of the completion process for my dissertation and the information gained in the interviews will serve as a vital piece of my final product. I appreciate your assistance in this process by agreeing to be interviewed.

Justin Necessary
276.393.1932
jnece001@odu.edu

Developmental education, for the purposes of this interview, means courses taken for the purpose of helping under prepared college students succeed in their college career.

Interview Questions

Student Based

What developmental courses are you taking?

Is this your first developmental course?

Why do you think you were placed in a developmental course?

How does it make you feel to take a developmental course?

What is the purpose of developmental education?

Imagine you had to describe developmental education to your grandparent, what would you tell them?

What do your parents think about you taking a developmental course?

Currently, you are taking a course in math/English, tell me about your experiences in this subject such as previous classes or teachers?

What experiences made you feel the way you do about the subject?

How do you feel about the subject now that you are in a developmental course?

How do you think you will use what you have learned in your developmental course to further your education and leading to getting a job?

What do you like about the course?

What do you dislike about the course?

How could it be improved upon?

In what ways, if any, does developmental education benefit students?

In what ways, if any, does developmental education hinder students?

Administrator Based

15. What type of developmental courses does your college offer?

16. What proportion of students require developmental courses at your college?

17. What type of student needs developmental education?

18. What causes students to need developmental education?

19. In what ways, if any, does developmental education increase student success?

20. In what ways, if any, does developmental education hinder student success?

21. What is the purpose of developmental education?

22. Imagine you had to describe developmental education to a parent or student what would you tell them?

23. Explain how you promote developmental education to students, parents, and the college?

24. Explain how the college promotes developmental education?

25. What role does developmental education play in a student's college career?

26. In what ways do you think developmental education can help students graduate?

27. In what ways do you think developmental education can help students find employment after graduation?

28. In what ways does developmental education impact student finances in terms of financial aid?

Family Based

1. What developmental courses is your student taking?
2. Is this their first developmental course?
3. What type of students need developmental education?
4. What causes students to need developmental education?
5. What is the purpose of developmental education?
6. Imagine you had to describe developmental education to your student, what would you tell him or her?
7. Explain how your perceptions of developmental education may have influenced your student's perceptions?
8. What role does developmental education play in your student's college career?
9. In what ways do you think developmental education can help students graduate?
10. In what ways do you think developmental education can help students find employment after graduation?
11. In what ways does developmental education impact student finances in terms of financial aid?
12. In what ways, if any, does developmental education benefit the students?
13. What type of negative impacts might it have on students?
14. In what ways, if any, does developmental education benefit the college?

15. What types of negative impacts might it have on the college?

Summary

Thank you for your time and participation. You have given excellent insight into developmental education and the issues surrounding this topic. I will now transcribe the data to ensure that your answers are accurately portrayed in the report that I will be composing upon the completion of the interview process. If you would like to add any other comments later please contact me and I will be happy to include your additional thoughts. If you would like I can share a draft copy of your interview with you to ensure that all of your ideas are represented. Do you have any questions or final comments? Again, thank you for your honest and candid responses to the questions.

APPENDIX G: STUDENT INTERVIEW BLUEPRINT

Student Interview Blueprint

Student Perceptions	Developmental Education	
	Student Identity	Feelings
Background	<p>What developmental course(s) are you taking?</p> <p>Is this your first developmental course?</p>	
Academic	Why do you think you were asked to take development (subject)?	<p>How does it make you feel to take a developmental course?</p> <p>- As a student</p>
Purpose	What do you think is the purpose of developmental (subject)?	
Description	Imagine you had to describe developmental (subject) to your grandparent, what would you tell him or her?	
Influences		Tell me about what your parents think about you taking a developmental course?
Topic	<p>You are taking a course in (subject). Tell me about your experience with this topic.</p> <p>- Ask about previous classes</p>	<p>Tell me about how your feel about (subject) now that you are in this developmental course?</p> <p>- Is it the teacher?</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ask about previous teachers <p>What experiences have made you feel that way –can you give me an example?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is it the material? - Parents?
Future	How will you use what you learned in Dev (subject)?	
Evaluation		<p>What do you like about your level course?</p> <p>What can be improved?</p>

APPENDIX H: ADMINISTRATOR INTERVIEW BLUEPRINT

Administrator Interview Blueprint

Administrator Perceptions	Developmental Education	
	Student Identity	Feelings
Background	<p>What type of developmental courses does your college offer?</p> <p>What proportion of students require developmental courses at your college?</p>	
Academic	<p>What type of student needs developmental education?</p> <p>What causes students to need developmental education?</p> <p>In what ways, if any, does developmental education increase student success?</p> <p>In what ways, if any, does developmental education hinder student success?</p>	
Purpose		What is the purpose of developmental education?
Description	Imagine you had to describe developmental (subject) to a parent or a student what would you tell him or her?	

Influence	<p>Explain how you promote developmental education to students, parents, and the college.</p> <p>Explain how the college promotes developmental education to students, parents, and the community?</p>	What role does developmental education play in a student's college career?
Future	<p>In what ways do you think developmental education can help student graduate?</p> <p>In what ways do you think developmental education can help students find employment after graduation?</p>	In what ways does developmental education impact student finances in terms of financial aid?
Evaluation	In what ways is developmental education beneficial to students, if any?	<p>In what ways is developmental education beneficial to the college, if any?</p> <p>How does developmental education impact the college in terms of finances?</p> <p>Is developmental education beneficial to students? Explain why?</p> <p>How about the college?</p>

		<p>What type of negative impacts does developmental education have on students?</p> <p>What type of negative impacts does developmental education have on the college?</p>
--	--	--

APPENDIX I: FAMILY INTERVIEW BLUEPRINT

Family Interview Blueprint

Family Perceptions	Developmental Education	
	Student Identity	Feelings
Background	<p>What developmental courses are your student taking?</p> <p>Is this their first developmental course?</p>	
Academic	<p>What type of student needs developmental education?</p> <p>What causes students to need developmental education?</p>	
Purpose		What is the purpose of developmental education?
Description	Imagine you had to describe developmental (subject) to your student what would you tell him or her?	
Influence	Explain how your perception of developmental education may have influenced your student's perceptions?	What role does developmental education play in your student's college career?
Future	<p>In what ways do you think developmental education can help student graduate?</p> <p>In what ways do you think developmental education can</p>	In what ways does developmental education impact student finances in terms of financial aid?

	help students find employment after graduation?	
Evaluation	<p>In what ways is developmental education beneficial to students, if any?</p> <p>What type of negative impacts does developmental education have on students?</p>	<p>In what ways is developmental education beneficial to the college, if any?</p> <p>What type of negative impacts does developmental education have on the college?</p>

APPENDIX J: PSEUDONYM CHART

	<u>Student</u>	<u>Family</u>	<u>Administrator</u>
Jean Community College	Evan Cory Emily Mya	Carol Leah	Sean Ruby Taylor
May Community College	Lucy Jacob Helen April	Mary Ross	Terry Hal
Xavier Community College	Edith Morgan Hank Conner Ben	Nick Molly	Elena Don

