Capitalizing on the Current Interest in Developmental Education

Jane Neuburger, NADE President
Inaugural Speech

Thank you for granting me the honor of serving as NADE’s 30th president. I am awed and humbled to be following in the footsteps of those who have held this position of responsibility before me. I have learned much from my current board members and look forward to serving with our new officers. We pledge to continue NADE’s good work.

NADE has significant strengths; in its leadership; in its influential scholars; in its members. Thank you to each of you for putting students first; for your leadership; for your learned research and conference presentations. Without such dedication, the opportunity we provide here in America of access to higher education is nothing more than a revolving door. And right now, we must use some of our combined vigor to move to another level; to become familiar with and talk with our state boards of education, our legislators, our system administrators. Because never before has there been such a national interest in “what we do” and in education in general. Never before has the case been made so clearly and so loudly: our entire nation’s future rests on increasing the educational levels of its citizens. If ever we wished to have more attention, we certainly have it now. How will we capitalize on this interest?

First, our combined voices and focused help are really needed. What do we know about programs that work? What programs have shown promise? Which ones might scale up to serve larger numbers of students? Which support systems provide just-in-time help? What are the barriers to getting reliable data? What is our own experience in interpreting raw data? In working with students, what institutional policies get in the way of progression? What sort of in and out-of-class assistance is needed? What state and federal policies complicate college completion? What sorts of alignments might we make with high schools, with Adult Basic and Secondary Education, with the courses that come after developmental? We have heard the students’ stories; we know the tribulations. How can our voices promote better programming and policy to assist students in their hopes for a more educated life?

First, if you were at conference, make a list of the points you heard during the Town Hall meeting and in your sessions. Select just five or six of the most pertinent. Call and make an appointment to talk to your dean about what you learned at NADE. Send that list out to the members in your department and invite questions. Become more connected with your local chapter. Send your list out to your chapter members through a newsletter or listserv. Share your voice. Stay connected.

Second, for your chapter conference this year, collaborate with one other chapter. We have much to learn from each others’ voices. Invite four state education board members and two or more legislators to your next conference or meeting, and arrange a VIP meeting with your executive board. Invite the developmental education researchers in your region and your chapter’s past presidents of the last 10 or more years. These folks increase the expertise base of your immediate leaders exponentially. Invite an Executive Board or Emeritus Cabinet member to help facilitate. Apply for a NADE chapter grant to do this. Talk together about what matters for our students. Share and listen.

Keep reading. Because of foundation and governmental funding, there is very recent data analysis on programs that show promise. Use that information, and go deeper. Bring your experience and your voice to the discussion of why and under what conditions a given policy or program might “work”. Develop talking points around educational issues: College and career readiness standards; transferability of credits within the state system; the Common Core Standards (and an advanced core); earlier assessment and more robust placement procedures; summer bridge preparation programs; advising; alignment of developmental and college curriculum; alignment of lower developmental courses with adult basic education, accelerated and redesigned programming, and more. Help your administrators and legislators advocate for change that matters.

Join an extra SPIN or committee; share your thoughts. Bring a SPIN session to your local chapter conference. Talk about what makes a difference in student learning. Bring the NADE Certification Training Institute to your chapter, institution, or region. Use your certification efforts to address regional accreditation, and emphasize student outcomes and student learning.

Kris Clerkin, an analyst from Harvard, summed it up this way: “NADE needs to be a spokesperson for the importance and effectiveness of developmental education. The risks of doing nothing are significant. NADE needs to be bolder, step forward, and take some risks.”

We invite you to take the risk of staying connected and sharing your voices. At the moment, developmental education is definitely in the spotlight. Let’s capitalize on that attention and make the most of it. Not for us, but for our students. For that, is a magic. That, is a labor of love. That will be our legacy.
A National Focus on Developmental Education
Rebecca Goosen, President-elect

We are poised at a crucial time for our profession. Across the nation, foundations, research centers, and education groups have all joined to study the effectiveness of developmental education and identify successful strategies. At the same time, we hear how developmental education is not as effective as it could be. We need to be in this discussion and lend our experience and research to the body of knowledge.

The problems seem enormous. The nation is focused on increasing the educational levels of the entire population as well as increasing the number of individuals that obtain a degree. Are you aware the United States lags behind 16 of the 30 industrialized nations in science scores for 15 year olds? In math, the U.S. trails behind 23 of 30 nations. Twenty years ago the U.S. was highest in the world in the percentage of adults holding college degrees. Now we are tied for 10th (Colvin, 2011). Many colleges experience the greatest enrollment in developmental mathematics. Data from Dr. Uri Treisman’s Statway Project, funded by the Carnegie Foundation, illustrates the depth of the struggle for mathematics students. Presently, for each 1000 students who enroll in a community college, only 410 are deemed college ready in mathematics. Of the remaining 590 students about half (240) are one level below college ready. Of those students that are three levels below college level, few actually persist.

The poor rate of students either remaining in college long enough or passing the entire sequence of developmental education and then ultimately earning degrees is why such groups as the Lumina Foundation (http://www.luminafoundation.org), Achieving the Dream (http://achievingthedream.org), and Bill and Melinda Gates (www.gatesfoundation.org) have been providing funding to discover promising practices to increase student success. Research from these projects and from the Community College Research Center (http://ccrc.tc.columbia) as well as the National Center for Developmental Education (www.ncde.appstate.edu) are identifying what appears to be the various instructional and program strategies that lead to greater student success. Complete College America (http://completecollege.org) seeks to increase the number of Americans with a college degree or credential. Accessing the Complete College America site will provide a look at each state and how they are doing with this agenda. We need to be informed about the research, how our individual states and colleges are faring and how we can add to that body of knowledge.

The entire nation is focused on increasing the high school to college progression, reducing the need for developmental education, identifying those students in the pipeline that appear to ‘disappear’ and increase the percentage of citizens holding a college credential. What would happen if we were proactive in that discussion, research, and contributing to the literature? Now is the time for us to act. Dr. Robert McCabe, former president of Miami Dade Community College, pronounced that 80% of new jobs in this century will require some post-secondary education and that there is an urgency to address the gaps in education (McCabe, 2000). One reason for this urgency is that our change cycles have accelerated. Much of what students learn today will become outdated within a few years. Technology is reducing the size of the world. What use to take us years to understand or discover can now be accessed by a keystroke on a devise that we carry in our pockets? Those devices are sometimes made in third world countries, which also are gaining some of the low skill job opportunities that were filled by American workers in the past. Because of this shift in employment our citizens need a credential or degree to provide for themselves and their families. Should we not be part of this discussion?

References


It is with great sadness NADE informs you of the death of Todd Phillips, NADE member and director of the Student Success Center at Truman State University. On March 31, 2011, he died as a result of a motorcycle accident. Todd will be remembered by those of us who knew him as an energetic person who enjoyed working with students and with professionals. He was a rugby player, a teacher of at-risk youth gang members in Los Angeles, and a volunteer in public schools. He became a chapter and national officer in order to give back to the profession. Todd was an alumnus of the Kellogg Institute, had served as president of MRADE and as chair of NADE’s Political Liaison Committee. NADE will miss Todd’s dedication, his expertise, and his leadership. Most of all, we will miss his laughter and his love of life. Contributions in Todd’s memory may be made to the NADE scholarship fund in recognition of his life’s work with students.

Where do we start? First, let us become partners in what most communities refer to as the P-16 pipeline discussions to ease transitions between middle school and high school and high school and college levels. We need to look at systematic change not just boutique experiences. What if a college committed to implementing developmental education promising practices on a large scale? We can advocate that student success courses be taught in the high schools so that students enter our doors prepared with the knowledge of the rituals of college study. Many high schools already give the college placement assessment to students so they can recognize their education gaps and work on them prior to enrolling in our postsecondary institutions. Again, what if we took what we know about developmental education and offered a refresher course for returning students to assist them in getting college ready? Aligning adult basic education programs with developmental education programs can also help bridge the gap. Finally, increasing advising contact with our students to provide an individual success plan for each student can have a positive effect on retention and graduate rates.

As developmental education practitioners, we need to be part of the conversation, and we need to invoke the concept of just one more. We need to ask one more question, write one more letter to our legislators, access one more research document, and provide one more solution. We need to participate together. I invite you to join in our quest to explore and use the very best in developmental education.
The Developmental Education Initiative consists of 15 Achieving the Dream community colleges that are building on demonstrated results in developmental education innovations at their institutions. Six states are committed to further advancement of their Achieving the Dream state policy work in the developmental education realm. Led by MDC, with funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Lumina Foundation, the initiative aims to expand groundbreaking developmental education programs that experts say are key to dramatically boosting the college completion rates of low-income students and students of color. The innovations developed by the colleges and states participating in DEI will help community colleges understand what programs are effective in helping students needing developmental education succeed and how to deliver these results to even more students. Many of the faculty at DEI colleges are NADE members, drawing on the support of that network to improve their practice.

In January, we launched an updated, more outwardly focused website that will accommodate a growing number of requests from practitioners outside of the initiative to share in what we’re learning. The majority of our resources are now available on the public side of the website, including Dev. Ed. talking points and communications tips. On the DEI blog, Accelerating Achievement, you’ll find posts about innovative practices, research, and highlights from the work being done in DEI colleges and states. Blog entries focus on seven main topics:

• DEI Dispatches spotlights what’s going on in the DEI network of colleges, states, and partners.
• Statewise tracks how DEI’s state policy teams, coordinated by Jobs For the Future, are pushing state community college systems and legislatures to change outdated and cumbersome rules, funding, and incentive structures that stand in the way of innovation.
• Talking About Dev Ed digs into the varied definitions and passionate opinions that can make conversations about developmental education tricky, developing messaging strategies for practitioners, college leaders, and policymakers.
• In the News is keeping an eye on media coverage of developmental education.
• Scaling Up presents the latest thinking on scaling from the social innovation and enterprise field, calling attention to tools and resources that can help colleges and states increase the impact of their innovation.
• Innovation Highlight features colleges inside and outside the initiative that are developing new strategies to get students through Dev. Ed. successfully.
• Tales of Technical Assistance showcases DEI colleges that are using our pool of Technical Assistance Providers to overcome barriers to expanding effective programs.

In the last few months, we’ve covered the latest news, reports, conversations, and meetings related to dev ed. We’ve also unveiled our ideas on scale, technical assistance, and how to talk about dev ed. We’ve even had some fun! There have been great contributions from practitioners outside of the initiative to share in what we’re learning. The majority of our resources are now available on the public side of the website, including Dev. Ed. talking points and communications tips. On the DEI blog, Accelerating Achievement, you’ll find posts about innovative practices, research, and highlights from the work being done in DEI colleges and states. Blog entries focus on seven main topics:

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We know how busy you are, so we’re making the Accelerating Achievement blog easy to follow. You can subscribe to receive blog updates via email, RSS, Facebook and Twitter. We encourage you to participate when you have an idea or comment, and submit ideas and materials you think will be useful to others in the field.

During the NADE conference in Washington, DC this past February, many attendees who hoped to meet with their elected representatives on Capital Hill were surprised to learn that most members of Congress were actually back in their home state that week. That was a little disappointing, but that fact also shows how easy it is for all of us to discuss our concerns with our members of Congress face-to-face by just scheduling a meeting during any of the standard “Constituent Weeks.” While the press refers to those times as congressional “recesses,” they are not vacations or days off but time for legislators to be back in their home districts to meet with individuals, speak to groups, and tour sites pertinent to pending legislation.

Thus, if you want to speak to your representative in Congress, you can press your case locally, thereby saving the time and expense of a trip to Washington. Depending on the size of the district, some members even have multiple offices, so most people are not even an hour away from a local congressional office. Also, home district meetings make it easy to include a carefully-chosen student or two, which then creates photo opportunities for maximizing the public relations value of your meeting.

Congressional schedules vary a bit every year, but the typical calendar for Constituent Weeks is:

*Two weeks mid-January
*One week around President’s Day
*Two weeks in March or April around Easter
*One week at the end of May for Memorial Day
*One or two weeks around July 4
*The entire month of August
*Mid-October through December

To contact your Member’s office, just go to www.house.gov and enter your ZIP code. Then, at your Member’s website, find the telephone number or e-mail address and ask the legislator's
scheduling to reserve a meeting time. Expect 10-15 minutes if you’re in DC, or up to 30 minutes in the home district. Be prepared, however, for last-minute changes, especially while Congress is in session.

Since my congressman, Steve Chabot, 1st District of Ohio, was back in Cincinnati during the NADE conference, I scheduled a meeting with him just before Easter. Instead of flying to DC, I had only a fifteen-minute drive to downtown Cincinnati, and instead of a rushed fifteen-minute meeting with him or an assistant, I got a full half-hour of his personal attention along with his education aide.

When we met, Mr. Chabot already knew what developmental education is and shared his concern for affordable access to higher education to maintain a viable workforce, although he cautioned me that budgetary concerns almost certainly meant possible reductions in financial aid. He was also knowledgeable about the proposed “Gainful Employment Act,” new regulations that would restrict aid for students attending for-profit career colleges such as my employer, Brown Mackie College. On that issue, too, he expressed an interest in preserving access to education and job training.

I had met Mr. Chabot on Capital Hill perhaps a dozen times in the past, but this was my first meeting with him in the town where we both live. I feel silly for having previously overlooked this convenient opportunity but would not hesitate to meet him locally anytime I have concerns that merit a personal meeting. All NADE members should consider similar meetings with their representatives. For further advice, feel free to contact me at jileptak-moreau@brownmackie.edu.

Capitalizing on Developmental Education

Aerial Cross
San Juan College, Farmington, NM

I had the distinct pleasure of attending the 35th Annual Conference of the National Association for Developmental Education (NADE) February 22-26, 2011 at the beautiful Marriott Wardman Park Hotel in Washington D.C. Summarizing personal highlights from the event would be near impossible. I walked away with a bag full of new tricks—both theory-based and practical classroom use related. However, this message comes to your newsletter on a less personal note.

On February 24th, before hundreds of educators, keynote speaker, Dr. Glen Dubois, Chancellor of Virginia Community Colleges, delivered a powerful speech entitled, “Capitalizing on Developmental Education.” The speech focused on NADE’s mission, as well as opportunities to learn, to make critical professional contacts, and to challenge the way community college instructors practice and implement developmental education. His words inspired my teaching methods and prompted me to ask him for a copy of his uplifting words to share with my colleagues back home in Farmington, New Mexico. Though my social graces fumbled, he handed me the speech, expressing, “It’s yours to share.”

To an audience assembled in a city viewed as the epicenter for the creation of national developmental education policy, Dr. Dubois noted early in his speech how Thomas Edison once stated, “Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work.” Dubois asserted that those in the room had the ability to elevate those who were once considered “not-college-material”. He went on to explain how community college enrollment nationwide continues to grow, yet state funding continues to dwindle. And, the Chancellor continued, “Although, we, America, share a distinction with Germany as the only industrialized nation that is replacing its current generation of workers with one that is less educated, improving student lives and academic goals now require a reengineering process focused on three simple elements: priorities, partnerships and results.”

“Half of our incoming students need developmental education.” Dubois stated. “Of that group, three out of four students fail to graduate or transfer within four years.” His words offered recommendations including reduction of the overall need for developmental education by focusing on partnership with those who work in K-12 education and the students served. “We need to bolster successful relationships between community college faculty and high schools and redesign developmental education courses to mastery based learning.” he continued.

Dubois ended by expressing, “Should our reforms fail, should it fall short of moving the needle, we will do it again and again and again until we get it right. Our success today depends on getting as many people as possible to reach their potential—and we make it tangible with a post secondary credential.” Dubois strained to stress that success is possible, and he indirectly conveyed—we shouldn’t be afraid to show off our overalls.

FACE

Craig Barto, Newsletter Editor

As many members of NADE know, developmental education is not confined just to the United States or even to North America, and NADE is not the only organization in the world working to advance the state of developmental education. In the United Kingdom, a similar organization, called Forum for Access and Continuing Education (FACE), has been working since 1993 as a UK wide network for all those involved and concerned with continuing education and lifelong learning. FACE encourages collaboration and partnership while challenging exclusion and fostering full participation in learning opportunities.

A key role for FACE is to facilitate the exchange and dissemination of information and practices among educators, hence supporting and maintaining a socially inclusive framework for lifelong learning. To facilitate this aim, membership in FACE is not limited to educators. Officials of local governments and members of various volunteer organizations are welcome to join. As a member-driven organization, FACE is involved in multiple activities. In addition to disseminating information and organizing events to aid in the development of educators, FACE also acts as a pressure group that attempts to shape national policy in the UK.

Since I feel it is important for all of us to know what is happening in our field world-wide, and not just in the USA or even North America, I plan to include in future Newsletter reports on the activities of FACE. For further information about FACE, refer to its website, www.f-a-c-e.org.uk.

Treasurer’s Report
D. Patrick Saxon, NADE Treasurer
May 2011

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Craig Saxon, NADE Treasurer
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- Publish timely information about NADE activities, e.g., the annual conference, professional development workshops, Executive Board meetings, and Committee, SPIN, and Certification Council activities.
- Publish information about Developmental Education activities across the country.
- Publish short articles and book reviews (500-1000 words) which provide information about the "state-of-the-art" in the field of Developmental Education.
- Publish general information about news of interest to NADE members.

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NCLA’s 26th Annual Conference

The National College Learning Center Association, a professional organization for learning center professionals, will hold its annual conference September 28-October 1, 2011, at the Westin Indianapolis in Indianapolis, Indiana. The theme of this year’s conference is “Learning Centers: At the Crossroads of Student Success”. For further information, contact Jenny Pippen, NCLA Professional Development Officer, at jlpippen@noctrl.edu.

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