Developmental Education: Pathways to Excellence

Irene M. Duranczyk
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Editors
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Dear Colleagues,

On behalf of the Executive Board, it is a pleasure to welcome you to the newest edition of the NADE Monograph. This edition represents a new pathway in our organization. This is the first time that the monograph is available to members through the NADE Web page. We hope that this pathway will enhance service to our members.

_Developmental Education: Pathways to Excellence_, the theme of this edition, aptly expresses the position of developmental education in higher education today and in the past. Through learning assistance, instruction, counseling, mentoring, and tutoring, our profession offers many pathways for students needing help to find their personal pathway to excellence.

This monograph explores both historical and modern aspects of developmental education and its position within higher education. As you read this monograph, you will see the trends (pathways) that have brought us to where we are today and foreshadow what we may become.

The Executive Board would like to thank our co-editors, Irene Duranczyk and William White, for their commitment to this project and to NADE. We would also like to thank the entire editorial board for their help and support in this project. All of these people have volunteered countless hours to bring this monograph to you.

NADE’s monograph series has provided an opportunity for professionals in our field of expertise to share their research, projects, and thoughts with colleagues. We hope that this edition will stimulate even more interest in sharing the pathways that each of us has discovered to excellence.

Susan E. Hashway
President, National Association for Developmental Education
2003-2004
Introduction

Irene Duranczyk

The ninth annual Monograph, Developmental Education: Pathways to Excellence, has two chapters. Both chapters provide an historical look at developmental education in the United States. Both chapters provide thoughtful reviews for developmental educators seeking pathways to excellence.

In the first chapter, Randy Moore focuses on how standards-based education has impacted and marginalized non-traditional students since its inception in the 1980s. He identifies some of the problems created in a standards-based approach to education and offers specific guidance on how to utilize standards and incorporate best teaching practices to empower students’ placed-at-risk.

The second chapter by Daryl Stephens focuses on the rich history of developmental education through the development of its professional organizations. He provides a summary history of developmental education from its earliest conception to present day trends and challenges. He highlights particular developmental education programs and research professionals that have made important contributions. It is a thoughtful and insightful review of our history and future challenges.

There were very few submissions for the 2003 Monograph. In December, it was decided to only produce an online copy for the year 2003. Hopefully, the electronic format will not diminish the value of this publication. Perhaps, increased publishing opportunities in the field caused a reduction of submissions to the monograph in 2003. NADE has developed a taskforce to study publications issues and make recommendations to the NADE Board on future directions for the Monograph and the NADE Conference Proceedings. Your input is welcome and would be appreciated.
Finally, I would like to thank my co-editor, William White, for his many hours of service editing this Monograph. Together, William and I extend a special thank you to our dedicated Editorial Board. They provided feedback, suggestions, and guidance in the Monograph’s production. The unpaid services of this board are invaluable to the authors and the editors. Thank you again for your continued commitment and generosity.
Do Standards-Based Reforms Penalize Developmental Education Students?

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Abstract

Although prescribed standards are the basis for educational reform in virtually all states, these standards penalize many developmental education students. Educational inequities preclude many students from having a realistic chance of success (i.e., “meeting the standards”), and the growing emphasis on prescribed standards often encourages many teachers to use pedagogies that marginalize at-risk students. We should try to use standards to (a) emphasize discovery-based learning, (b) promote attitudes and activities that engage students and lessen or eliminate cultural conflict and the devaluation of students, (c) help teachers improve their content-knowledge and their understanding of the importance of cultural and linguistic aspects of education, and (d) recruit more diverse and qualified teachers.

Although educators have repeatedly promised equitable opportunities for all students, none of the many one-size-fits-all reforms of education have eliminated the gap separating “traditional” (i.e., white, suburban) students from under-represented, underserved students (e.g., ethnic minorities, students from lower socioeconomic groups who attend urban schools). The latest incarnation of educational reform that promises equity is “standards-based reform,” an approach based on the assumption that large-scale prescribed interventions can produce large-scale improvements in education and leverage through standards-based assessments (Lynch,
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Most students who enroll in developmental education classes are the products of standards-based education. Thus, an understanding of standards-based education can be useful for developmental educators wanting to understand the academic histories of developmental education students.

Standards-Based Education

The “standards movement” began in the late 1980s with publications such as Standards for School Mathematics (National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, 1989), Benchmarks for Science Literacy (American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1993), and National Science Education Standards (NSES) (National Research Council, 1996). These documents prompted most states to develop their own educational standards. Although states such as New York and North Carolina modeled their state educational standards after national guidelines such as NSES, others such as California developed very traditional standards that emphasize lectures, repetitive drills, and worksheets (Leonard, Penick, & Douglas, 2002). Today, state-prescribed standards, the first significant statehouse-led effort to change classrooms (Cohen & Steinberg, 2002), guide educational reform in all states except Iowa, which continues to prefer local control to state-prescribed mandates (Lerner, 2000).

There are several potential benefits of state-prescribed educational standards. For example, prescribed educational standards (a) specify the desired outcomes that drive classroom activities, assessment tests, lesson plans, and curricular designs; (b) provide a basis for comparing states’ expectations of what students should learn; (c) tell parents what students should learn and how teachers help students learn; and (d) promote educational uniformity within a state, thereby easing the transitions for students who change schools. Standards are supposed to be the foundation of what students learn and are supposed to produce the states’ desired educational outcomes.

Although standards-based reform now “sweeps the country” (Falk, 2002, p. 612), the overwhelming emphasis on standards raises troubling questions, especially for students who are at-risk. These questions focus on whether all students have an equal opportunity to meet the standards, as well as whether the standards encourage teachers to use pedagogies that marginalize developmental education students.
Do All Students Have an Equal Chance to Meet Standards?

Today’s overwhelming emphasis on highly prescribed standards is based on the assumption that all students have an equal opportunity to learn and, therefore, that all students have an equal opportunity to succeed in a standards-based curriculum. This assumption appeals to our sense of equity but is a fantasy. Indeed, socioeconomic differences have resulted in richer (usually whiter and suburban) neighborhoods having better teachers, higher expectations, better facilities, and more educational opportunities than poorer (usually more diverse and urban) neighborhoods. There are enormous inequities regarding teachers, resources, and facilities, even in schools in the same areas (e.g., see Reid, 2001; Viadero, 2001b). The following are examples of some of the inequities that students from diverse, poor, urban schools often encounter.

**School Resources**

Urban students disproportionately attend schools having fewer or inferior resources (Clewell et al., 1995; Day, 1989, Kozol, 1991; Necochea & Cline, 1996; Peevely & Ray, 1989). Indeed, students in poor urban schools—that is, schools which enroll disproportionately high percentages of developmental education students—usually encounter outdated books, no laboratories, little or no equipment, and few extracurricular activities (Barton, 2001; Oakes, 1990). It has also been shown that teachers in poor, urban schools tend to include less technology in classes for lower-track students than in classes for high achievers (Reid, 2001). This penalizes these students, because the use of technology in classes correlates positively with improved grades and increased learning, regardless of the economic make-up of a school (Hoff, 2001b).

**Teachers’ Qualifications**

In poor urban school districts the percentages of uncertified and unqualified teachers often exceed those of certified and qualified teachers (Barton, 2001; Darling-Hammond, 1999), largely because most teachers consider urban schools to be inferior to suburban schools (Viadero, 2001a, 2001b, 2002a, 2002b). Thus, schools having the greatest percentages of at-risk students, and therefore the greatest need for good teachers, are those with either the least experienced or least qualified teachers (Viadero, 2002a). This inequity of teacher quality disproportionately penalizes at-risk students because increased academic performance correlates
positively with students having experienced, qualified teachers (Fletcher, 2001; Henry, 2001a; Hoff, 2001a, 2001b).

**Teachers’ Diversity**

Students who are taught by a teacher of their own race score higher on standardized tests (Borja, 2001). Although students in urban classrooms are highly diverse, the population of teachers remains overwhelmingly white and middle class (Norman Ault, Bentz, & Meskimen, 2001). Minority students account for 40% of the enrollments in K-12 education, but only 13% of their teachers are minorities (Borja). This mismatch of teachers and students often creates cultural conflicts that inhibit learning (Madsen & Mabokela, 2000; Norman et al.).

**Teachers’ Expectations**

Most at-risk students have high expectations for their futures, but their teachers and administrators do not. Indeed, many teachers consider low-income urban families to be academically deficient (Davies, 1987; Galley, 2001; Seiler, 2001). Students sense these low expectations (Galley), which restrict their ambitions and produce a deficiency-based curriculum and atmosphere that contributes to students’ poor academic performances and high drop-out rates (Tobin, Roth, & Zimmermann, 2001; Valencia, 1991). This curriculum and environment often encourages teachers to lower the rigor of and academic expectations in their courses, despite the fact that all students benefit from the high expectations associated with taking more rigorous courses (Adelman, 1999). Urban students improve their academic performances when they are exposed to a challenging curriculum (Henry, 2001b).

**Teachers’ Morale and Creativity**

Our growing emphasis on regimented standards often results in teachers being told what to teach and how to teach by administrators who are far from the teachers’ classrooms and struggles. Because teachers are often penalized if they do not produce good results on assessment tests, many teachers choose the path of least resistance. Instead of looking out for the best interests of their students, teachers resign themselves to a different mindset, namely, that if their students do not do well on the assessment tests, the school cannot blame the teacher, because he or she will have followed the standards. Rather than base their efforts on students’ needs, teachers try to satisfy the state-prescribed standards (Arey, 2002).
Clearly, not all schools are equal, nor do all students have an equal chance of success meeting the standards. These inequities are compounded by the fact that the growing emphasis on standards often encourages teachers to use pedagogies that marginalize developmental education students (Galley, 2001; Tobin et al., 2001; Valencia, 1991).

Does an Emphasis on Highly Prescribed Standards Encourage Teachers to Use Pedagogies that Marginalize Developmental Education Students?

State-prescribed standards are often touted as an effective way of ensuring that all students graduate with a common set of academic skills that are important for success. This is why graduation often requires that students satisfy state-prescribed educational standards. However, the standards and accompanying assessment tests that dictate instruction often stress rote memorization of pre-packaged facts and definitions rather than skills (Arey, 2002; Falk, 2002). Moreover, the standardization of outputs inevitably depends on standardized inputs and on a standardized curriculum that covers all of the material specified by the standards.

To ensure that they cover all of the facts and definitions prescribed by their states’ standards, teachers often limit supplemental activities, students’ questions, and inquiry-based instruction as they rush through their classes to cover everything. There is little time for non-traditional pedagogies, personal attention, exposure to new experiences, term papers, open-ended discovery, field trips, technology, or in-depth coverage that is often necessary for understanding and thinking critically about a subject (“Dividing Line,” 2001; Fitzhugh, 2002; Jorgenson & Vanosdall, 2002). The standards-based recipe for teaching, learning, and testing in many states has little to do with how students learn best, and nothing to do with how teachers teach best.

The emphasis on state-prescribed standards and their accompanying assessments has also prompted growing numbers of teachers to “teach to the test” (Jorgenson & Vanosdall, 2002, p. 602). For example, in Kentucky, assessment-related sanctions and rewards have caused teachers to “focus on whatever is thought to raise test scores rather than on instruction aimed at addressing individual student needs” (Jones & Whitford, 1997, p. 277). For example, all students learn best when teachers base their instruction on inquiry-based learning and an in-depth coverage of fewer topics (Moore, 2001). Most teachers know this but are frustrated by the fact
that such instruction is usually incompatible with a highly prescribed, prepackaged standards-based curriculum that demands that teachers cover all the material (Arey, 2002; Gerking, 2001).

The many problems associated with standards-based instruction help explain why teachers’ support for standards-based reform has dropped precipitously since 1999 (Olson, 2002). Although teachers know that it is in students’ best interests to experience science, they also know that such experiences may not necessarily improve students’ scores on standards-based assessment tests. The many teachers who have experienced the shortcomings of standards-based instruction are often frustrated (Arey, 2002). For these teachers, the teach-to-the-test approach demanded by a highly prescribed, standards-based curriculum is usually based on monologue-like lectures, drilling, and repetitive recall of definitions and facts. This approach to teaching and learning often alienates students by forcing them to be passive learners rather than active users and producers of knowledge (Haberman, 1991; Hewson, Kahle, Scantlebury, & Davies, 2001; Lemke, 1990; Seiler, 2001;). Moreover, this approach to teaching, which Haberman has called the “pedagogy of poverty” (p. 291), focuses on teachers and provides few opportunities for developing higher-order thinking skills. If teachers stray from the scripted drills and standards, they are often reprimanded by administrators for not following the prescribed plan. Not surprisingly, then, teachers follow the plan, despite knowing that the plan may bore students and be counterproductive to learning (Arey).

The emphasis on standards-based teaching has forced many teachers and school districts to abandon inquiry-based instruction and replace enrichment activities with practice testing. This approach diminishes learning while simultaneously reducing teachers to technicians who prepare practice tests and follow the standards-based cookbook curriculum (Falk, 2002). For example, in 1999 the Chicago Public Schools adopted a standards-based curriculum that specifies what students learn every day, what questions teachers should ask every day, what pages of the textbook teachers should cover every day, and which parts of assessment tests are addressed every day. In these curricula, administrators prescribe what topics are addressed in every discipline in every grade on every day.

Regimented standards often force teachers to ignore their professional judgments and students’ needs regarding the proper pace and method of instruction to ensure that they cover
everything demanded by the state’s prescribed standards. As one teacher noted, standards have shackled teachers’ jobs in a “straightjacket of outcomes” as administrators have used state standards to “teacher-proof” instruction (Arey, 2002, p. 32). Instead of strengthening teachers’ professional abilities and knowledge, administrators use standards to make teachers compliant robots who must follow state-prescribed rules to produce results (Falk, 2002). In these and other instances, the growing emphasis on prescribed standards impedes education and is not in students’ best interests.

Most standards-based assessment tests demand that students show a mastery of facts and definitions in just one way. This narrow approach to assessment negates efforts by teachers who use multiple ways of teaching and learning to broaden the groups of students who succeed and leaves behind students who are better able to show what they know and can do with an essay, presentation, or other project (Falk, 2002). In many schools, the pressure to improve scores on standards-based assessment tests has prompted teachers to disqualify the scores of at-risk students (Olson, 2002), thereby further encouraging teachers to continue to ignore the needs of at-risk students. As noted by Darling-Hammond and Falk (1997), “In the name of ambitious-sounding reforms, such standards-based initiatives are exacerbating differences between students from different backgrounds and placing constraints on education that undermine effective teaching” (p. 19). This especially penalizes developmental education students who often perform best with non-traditional pedagogies.

Standards-Based Reform and Developmental Education

The regimented teaching that accompanies standards-based instruction often frames students’ different learning-styles as a problem that must be contained, minimized, or ignored (Bohn & Sleeter, 2000). That is, regimented standards often make it difficult to deal with students’ individual needs when they have different perspectives or stray from the prescribed, standards-based agenda. This regimentation is not overcome by textbooks having largely cosmetic approaches to diversity, culturally homogenous teachers who often lack substantive exposure to the work of marginalized groups, or classroom discussions and textbooks that seldom acknowledge educational inequities and different social classes (Lipman, 1998, Sleeter and Grant, 1991). Students having different learning styles and cultural backgrounds (e.g., ethnic
minorities, students from lower socioeconomic classes) often feel unwelcome and invisible in standards-driven classrooms that emphasize covering everything rather than students’ needs for learning. This marginalization often makes it impossible or undesirable for at-risk students to feel that they belong in many classes (Brickhouse and Potter, 2001).

Contrary to the implied assumptions of conceptual change and other traditional approaches to science education, language and culture cannot be separated from learning (Lynch, 2001). Thus, our goal of education for all cannot be based on the one-size-fits-all approach of prescribed standards (Lee, 1999; Lynch, 2000; Lynch et al., 1996; Rodriguez, 1997). Although an emphasis on prescribed standards may work well for upper- and middle-class students, it often fails the 40% of U.S. students who are culturally, linguistically, or ethnically diverse, for such standards often ignore the social, cultural, and historical contexts of teaching and learning (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Lynch, 2001). The inability of the standards-based curriculum to meet the needs of diverse students helps explain why the academic success of minorities has continued to lag behind that of other groups, despite an emphasis on prescribed standards (Larabee, 1993), and why many high schools, especially large ones in urban areas, are “pathways to nowhere” (Wear, 2002, p. 16). As Adrienne Rich (1986) has noted, “When someone with the authority of a teacher, say, describes the world and you are not in it, there is a moment of psychic disequilibrium, as if you looked into a mirror and saw nothing” (p. 84). Many teachers interpret this disequilibrium as meaning that “those students” do not try and do not want to learn (Marriott 2001, p. 25). Rather than include appropriate cultural perspectives and corresponding pedagogies to involve these students in learning, teachers often assume that the students cannot succeed in school and route them to low-level classes and vocational programs.

Using Standards to Help At-Risk Students

Because standards are seemingly here to stay, it is more useful to try to use standards to improve education rather than oppose them. If we are to use standards to enhance the opportunities for at-risk students, we must abandon the notion that the highly prescribed standards-based reform will magically enable us to push more students through a system that now works for only a relative few. Instead, we must make the following changes if we are to expand the effectiveness of state-prescribed standards:
1. Replace traditional standards that emphasize rote memorization of facts and the cover everything mentality with standards that engage students and emphasize inquiry-based learning.

2. Supplement standards with attitudes and activities that lessen or eliminate cultural conflict and the devaluation of students (Norman et al., 2001; Spindler & Spindler, 1989). Teachers must have the training and freedom to address all barriers to learning.

3. Use standards to help teachers improve their content-knowledge and their understanding of the importance of cultural and linguistic aspects of education. Programs that have emphasized these aspects of professional development have enhanced the education of all students and have decreased the achievement gap that characterizes urban schools (“Inner City Students,” 2001). This type of professional development is critical, for many teachers of at-risk students do not know how to work effectively with students having special educational needs, limited language skills, or culturally different backgrounds. Today, these are the topics that are least common in professional development activities for urban science teachers (Wenglinsky & Educational Testing Service, 2000).

4. Use standards as a basis for recruiting more diverse and qualified teachers who have high expectations of their students. The diversity of teachers must more closely match that of students.

Some of these inequities can be solved with money. However, in most states, public schools are funded by taxes on local residents. Since poverty and at-risk students are disproportionately concentrated in urban areas, urban schools and their disproportionately large percentages of at-risk students will continue to have less money and, therefore, fewer resources and opportunities than other schools. To close this achievement gap, the per-student funding in urban schools must be made similar to that of suburban schools. However, herein lies the problem, for given the current methods for funding public schools, standards-based curricula and their accompanying standards-based assessments will almost certainly widen the gap between social classes (Apple, 1996) and perpetuate the inequalities that now characterize many schools (Moore, 2001). As Ayers (2000) has noted, our school system often exists as “two parallel systems–one privileged, adequate, successful, and largely White; the other ... disabled, starving,
failing, and African American” (p. 66). An emphasis on prescribed standards will exacerbate this dichotomy (Ayers).

Although standards are inexpensive and easy to propose (Apple, 1996), the most important part of education continues to be effective and creative teachers, not prescribed standards. When we use standards to take from teachers the chance to think, innovate, and respond to students’ individual needs, we deprive many students of a realistic chance to succeed, and deny teachers the feeling of satisfaction when students and teachers succeed. By the same token, we relieve teachers of responsibility when they fail (Arey, 2002). We should know by now that we cannot legislate good teaching with prescribed standards or anything else.

References


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Pathways through History: Underprepared Students Go to College

Daryl Stephens
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Abstract
This article traces the history of programs for underprepared college students, which, despite public belief to the contrary, are not a new phenomenon. Harvard admitted students who needed tutoring in Latin and Greek in the 1700s. The University of Wisconsin in 1848 was the first of many to establish a preparatory department for students who needed material usually taught in secondary schools. National legislation such as the Morrill Acts and the GI Bill, along with trends such as community colleges with open admissions and larger numbers of women, minorities, and older students helped increase the number of students attending college and needing additional help early on. The emergence of a research base and several professional organizations had helped bring developmental education into its own, although periodic moves to eliminate it surfaced, such as three cases in New York City, the University of Minnesota, and the state of Tennessee. Several prominent developmental educators discuss the future of such programs.

Despite the very best efforts of elementary and secondary school personnel, not every student who enrolls in an institution of higher learning is completely prepared academically to do college-level work on the first day of class. This fact is troublesome to college faculty and administrators as well as many politicians and members of the public. From time to time, an
elected official, college trustee or regent will discover that classes which are not on a college level are being taught at the institution and lament the fact, insist the practice stop, or blame the high schools for doing a poor job in preparing students for college. These courses go by various names but are often known as remedial or developmental courses.

Martha Maxwell (1979, p. 5), a noted researcher and practitioner in the field of developmental studies, noted “[w]e have always had academically weak, poorly prepared college students. Perhaps we have them in greater numbers today, but then, more students are currently attending college than ever before.” In the current climate in many states of budget cuts to higher education, it might be instructive to take a look back at the education of underprepared college students in the context of higher education history in the United States.

The Colonial Period and Early Nationhood

The earliest colleges in the American colonies, such as Harvard and the College of William and Mary, were founded by church groups. Consequently there were two purposes for these institutions. Perhaps the higher reason for these colonial colleges was the preparation of ministers, so the earliest colleges were to a large extent seminaries. They were also intended, though, to be “schools of higher culture for laymen” (Brubacher & Rudy, 1976, p. 6). Gradually, the college curriculum expanded: In the early 1700s, from half to 70% of the college students were preparing for the ministry; by the beginning of the nineteenth century, that figure had shrunk to about a fifth, and only a tenth by 1840 (Brubacher & Rudy; Casazza & Silverman, 1996). Entrance requirements for colonial colleges such as Harvard, Yale, William and Mary, New Jersey, and Kings in the seventeenth century were mostly limited to testing a student’s knowledge of Latin and Greek (Brubacher & Rudy) along with showing evidence of good moral character (Casazza & Silverman).

During this time very few children attended any kind of school or even had access to a school. Parents were mostly responsible for their children’s schooling, and some who could afford it provided tutors for their children, or at least for their boys. In some of the northern colonies, subscription schools would come into being for a while, or the townspeople (meaning the male property owners) might vote to support a school lasting a few weeks on a yearly basis (Mondale & Patton, 2001). Not surprisingly, then, there were very few students who could be
considered qualified to enter college. In fact, during the 1600s Harvard graduated only 465 students. In order to have enough students to sustain a college, colleges began admitting some students who did not completely meet all admission requirements and providing a modicum of additional help for them. Vassar College’s president complained of student achievement falling so far below scale as to be unmeasurable (Casazza & Silverman, 1996).

In the early nineteenth century, some of the oldest American institutions such as Harvard, Yale, and the University of Pennsylvania had become so expensive that only the very richest, most privileged families could afford to send their sons to college. New denominational hilltop colleges such as Williams and Amherst arose to cater to poorer students recommended by their ministers. Nathaniel Hawthorne described those students as “country graduates—rough, brown featured, schoolmaster-looking, half-bumpkin, half scholar, in black, ill-cut broadcloth” (Brubacher & Rudy, 1976, p. 40). These “country bumpkins” were among the earliest recipients of what we would now call financial aid. Most private colleges from the time of their founding provided a few poor students with scholarships and allowed others to work their way through school. Many also allowed a few children of their wealthiest alumni to be admitted regardless of their actual academic qualifications (Maxwell, 1979).

During the nineteenth century, college curriculum and entrance requirements steadily increased. No longer were Latin and Greek the sole requirements for precollege education. An illustration of the changes was the way mathematics fit into the curriculum at Yale. Yale did not require arithmetic as an entrance requirement until 1745. Euclidean geometry, presently studied by most college-bound high school students, was a senior-level course at Yale in 1720. By 1743 it had moved down to sophomore status; in 1825, it was studied by third-term freshmen; 10 years later Euclidean geometry was no longer offered at Yale and was soon part of the entrance requirements. By the mid-1800s, algebra had joined geometry as an entrance requirement at all the universities surveyed (Brubacher & Rudy, 1976).

As entrance requirements increased and a more rigorous college curriculum was implemented, more students arrived at college with insufficient academic preparation. In 1852, the president of the University of Michigan, Henry Tappan, lamented that colleges were teaching too many courses that belonged in secondary or even elementary schools. Admitting students
with such low skills, he argued in his inaugural address, lowered the standards of the university — an argument that has been repeated ever since — and made poor use of professors. It was absurd, he said, to take unruly youngsters and somehow transform them into professionals (Maxwell, 1979). In the mid-nineteenth century, though, many entering college students might only have been 13 or 14 years old.

The quandary of what to do with underprepared students who had to be accepted to assure enough income for the colleges led to the institution of preparatory departments, which could probably be considered the direct forerunner of developmental studies and learning support departments today. These preparatory departments were, in essence, secondary schools. One of the earliest and best-known was that of the University of Wisconsin, which ran a preparatory department from 1849 until 1880. It remained controversial throughout its entire existence. Colleges without preparatory departments still often offered courses or tutorials to bring students who had been admitted conditionally up to college level (Casazza & Silverman, 1996).

Increasing Access: Civil War to World War II

As the nation began coming into its own, the federal government became involved in higher education. The first Morrill Act, signed by President Lincoln in 1862 (previously vetoed by President Buchanan in 1859), gave 30,000 acres of land per congressman to each state to sell to fund agricultural and mechanical colleges or expand the mission of existing state colleges to include agricultural and technical studies. More majors thus became available, making access to higher education more widespread and affordable (Casazza & Silverman, 1996). Many of these new A&M colleges had to accept students just out of the common schools because public high schools still did not exist in many places (Brubacher & Rudy, 1976). A second Morrill Act in 1890 expanded the program, increased the aid available to such colleges, and prohibited states receiving the funding from discriminating in higher education (Casazza & Silverman). Access to higher education for more Americans was on its way to becoming a reality. “These colleges stood pre-eminently for the principle, increasingly important in the twentieth century, that every American citizen is entitled to receive some form of higher education” (Brubacher & Rudy, p. 64).
As the nineteenth century unfolded, there was for the first time some access for women to a college education. Although female seminaries and academies had existed in the previous century, these were not degree-granting colleges. The first women’s colleges were founded in the South, beginning with Wesleyan in Macon, Georgia in 1836. The first Northern women’s college was Rockford in Illinois in 1849. During this time the prevailing attitude still seemed to be that women had no business in colleges and were not truly suited for higher education. Opponents to educating women argued that admitting women to existing colleges would lower the colleges’ standards. Admission requirements to women’s colleges, then, were low due to the paucity of elementary and secondary education opportunities for girls. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, more and more public and private women’s colleges were formed. Thanks in part to the second Morrill Act, state universities in every state except Georgia, Virginia, and Louisiana admitted women by the early twentieth century (Brubacher & Rudy, 1976).

The Hatch Act of 1887 added the disciplines of applied science to the college curriculum and led to the formation of agricultural extension services and extension courses for farmers (Casazza & Silverman, 1996). These services were provided by the agricultural colleges and land-grant colleges made possible by the Morrill Acts. The second Morrill Act greatly increased funding for such services (Brubacher & Rudy, 1976).

By the end of the nineteenth century, college enrollment was quickly increasing. Between 1885 and 1895, enrollment at private colleges in the East grew by 20% and at state universities by 32% (Brubacher & Rudy, 1976). Enrollment at all colleges and universities in the U.S. in 1890 was around 157,000, representing 1.8% of the 18- to 24-year-old population (Cremin, 1977). Despite the increase in the number of secondary schools, with this swelling of college enrollment, a great many students were entering colleges and universities in an underprepared state. By 1870 the University of Michigan had set entrance requirements based on a minimum of a diploma from a secondary school, emulating the model of the German Gymnasium (Brubacher & Rudy). The next year, Harvard’s president, Charles Elliott, complained of the lack of grammar and composition skills among the freshman class, and an entrance exam was formulated. Half the students in 1879 who took this exam failed it and had to be admitted on condition (Casazza, 1999). In 1878, the New York Board of Regents introduced the Regents Exams, which evaluated
the students produced by the secondary schools and guided the schools in setting curricula for students to pass the exams. By the last decade of the nineteenth century the College Entrance Examination Board emerged as a product of the Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools of the Middle States and Maryland. The CEEB created testing centers to examine students for their readiness to start college, and many colleges began using its services.

Higher standards to bridge the gap between secondary and collegiate education were also a goal set when in 1892 the National Education Association (1969) commissioned a report by the Committee of Ten. This committee then appointed nine conferences on various subject areas in languages, sciences, and social sciences, also made up of 10 persons each, coming both from secondary school teachers and administrators and college faculty. The committee’s report included recommendations on course content for all high school students, including study of Latin, Greek, and modern languages; physical and biological sciences; history; and algebra and geometry or commercial mathematics. The report cautioned, “The preparation of a few pupils for college or scientific school should in the ordinary secondary school be the incidental, and not the principal object. At the same time, it is obviously desirable that the colleges and scientific schools should be accessible to all boys or girls who have completed creditably the secondary school course” (pp. 51-52). The committee urged better training of teachers, expressing confidence that the colleges and normal schools could rise to the challenge of producing better-prepared teachers. The overall recommendations of the Committee of Ten were for strengthening of the secondary curriculum, and moving of some topics much earlier into elementary school.

Colleges hoped that setting higher standards for secondary school students and teachers would mean only students who were fully prepared to enter college would actually attend. This, of course, did not happen. Despite higher entrance requirements, the majority of students who entered Harvard, Yale, Princeton, and Columbia in 1907 did not meet these requirements. Eight years later, the U.S. commissioner of education received a report that 350 colleges had preparatory departments, perhaps because most state money went to elementary schools and much less to high schools (Maxwell, 1979). Overall participation in elementary and secondary schooling was on the rise, however; by 1910, 74% of children ages 5 to 17 were in school (Cremin, 1977).
In part as a consequence of the Committee of Ten’s report, a stronger, more diverse secondary curriculum including vocational training was in place before the first quarter of the twentieth century had passed. Since more students were receiving a secondary education, proposals came about to shorten the amount of time spent in college, because in theory a preparatory program would no longer be needed for most students. In the 1910s the University of Chicago established a division of liberal studies that would provide only two years of college for those who were unable to continue studies beyond that point. This could be considered the birth of the junior colleges; by 1917 there were 76 such institutions (Casazza & Silverman, 1996).

The University of Minnesota established its General College in 1932 as an experiment to improve retention of undergraduate students. Over the years its purposes have included acclimating students to university life; teaching general education courses, including introductory courses in various fields; providing academic advising to students; providing courses leading to certificates and associate degrees (a task later moved to community colleges upon their formation); and working with underprepared students (Taylor, 2001).

During the first three decades of the twentieth century, many colleges were offering courses on how to study or improve reading skills. Some of these were so popular after their title was changed from remedial reading to the Reading Course that even upperclassmen, graduate students, and law school professors took them at Harvard (Casazza, 1999). During the 1930s many other colleges and universities had reading courses, following the institution of remedial reading courses in public schools. Maxwell (1979) speculated that the increase in reading courses was due in part to the growth of general survey courses in subjects such as the social sciences beginning in 1929. As an alternative to remedial college classes, some students took an extra year of high school after graduation or enrolled in a private preparatory school (Maxwell). Even with larger numbers of students attending college, and the growth in numbers of students receiving some sort of remedial or transitional help, in the 1930s less than 10% of high school graduates attended college (“Martha Maxwell,” 2000). That figure would soon change.

Changes occurred in the college curriculum and college life in the early 1940s during World War II. To allow quicker completion of college course work, courses were shortened to as little as eight weeks and intensive summer programs were introduced. The SQ3R (i.e., Survey,
Question, Read, Recite, and Review) method for reading was developed by Frank Robinson of Ohio State University to assist servicemen in speedier learning from these time-shortened courses (Maxwell, 1979).

**The GI Bill, Open Admissions, Civil Rights, and Increasing Enrollment**

One of the more sweeping changes to college education in the twentieth century came about in the post-World War II years with the passage of the GI Bill of Rights. The GI Bill, which was originally developed with the belief that very few GIs would actually use it, paid for veterans to attend college. By the fall of 1946, over a million veterans had taken advantage of this opportunity. The bill not only gave funding for veterans to attend college, but it also funded auxiliary services such as tutorial centers, academic advising and guidance services, and programs to help former GIs to improve their reading and study skills (Casazza, 1999). Access to college for many more Americans thus increased as a consequence of the GI Bill. Although many of these returning servicemen were originally considered underprepared, they “systematically outperformed their younger, selectively admitted classmates, and demonstrated a model of educational success that could come with greater maturity and a second chance” (McCabe & Day, 1998, p. 3). The success of veterans in returning to the classroom sparked a half-century of optimism resulting in more and more Americans being granted access to higher education, and ever more new students in need of some sort of transitional classes (McCabe & Day).

One such transitional program that began shortly after the GI Bill was founded at the University of Maryland. Following the model set by the General College of the University of Minnesota, in 1948 Maryland implemented a *Special and Continuing Studies* program for students admitted on probation. Most of these were returning servicemen. All had high school grade point averages less than 2.0 and had to take study skills classes along with a reduced course load. They remained in the program, which included special courses, tutoring in other classes, and counseling advising, until they had earned a GPA of at least 2.0 (“Martha Maxwell,” 2000).
A large gain in Americans' access to higher education came in the 1950s and 1960s with the advent of the civil rights movement. Students of color were now admitted to more colleges after Brown v. Board of Education (1954) and similar court decisions struck down “separate but equal” facilities and de facto segregation in schools at all levels. During part of the 1960s and 1970s—roughly from 1963 to 1973—many colleges were able to be more selective in their admissions policies due to the sheer population increase as the first students of the post-war baby boom reached college age, so proportionally fewer underprepared students were admitted to four-year colleges (Boylan, 1995). At about the same time, though, junior and community colleges were springing up all over the country, again providing access (and often open admissions) to Americans who wanted to begin a higher education.

By the 1970s, many of the students entering college were first-generation college students—those who had no family history of attending college. Many of these students scored in the bottom third of academic tests, but were eager to seek a higher education, seeing it as a way to rise to better career opportunities and live better than their parents did. New students could also be found who had special needs such as learning disabilities and health issues. Many came from poor families. An increasing number of women (many from these same categories) and students older than the traditional college student were also now attending college (Casazza, 1999).

**Emergence of Research Activities and Professional Organizations**

Beginning in the late 1960s, what was beginning to be known as remedial or developmental education began to be identified as a field of study which began a research base upon which later researchers built. One of the earliest and most prolific researchers of the time was John Roueche of the University of Texas at Austin, who along with his colleagues published the majority of books and articles on research in developmental education between 1968 and 1978 (Boylan & Saxon, n.d.). Roueche and his colleagues identified aspects of learning theory that fit in best with teaching remedial courses. Later studies confirmed and extended these earliest findings. Roueche and others found that successful courses used mastery learning, were highly structured, used a variety of teaching methods to accommodate varied learning styles, and
were based on cognitive theory. Successful remedial programs were part of a centralized program (that is, all remedial courses were housed in one department rather than taught separately in different academic departments) or at least were part of well-coordinated program, and were clearly defined. The successful programs included regular program evaluation, student counseling and advising, and tutoring (Boylan & Saxon).

As research in the field blossomed, it became more apparent that simply having remedial courses was not sufficient to ensure success for higher-risk students. Researchers found other factors besides high school academic preparation that led to successfully making the transition to college classes. As a result, even more college programs added learning centers, laboratories, assessment and placement into proper classes, advising and counseling—components which had earlier been seen in working with veterans. Personal and academic development components were often integrated into courses. “The result,” said Boylan (1995, p.1), “was much more than simple remediation of academic skill deficiencies. . . . Subsequently, this process became known as ‘developmental education.’ Developmental education is not a euphemism for remediation.” This approach, according to Boylan, is now the norm at most institutions serving underprepared students.

As developmental education began to be viewed as a field of its own with its own research base, some colleges became especially known for their research work in the field. One of the earliest was Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina (Spann, 1996). The Kellogg Foundation provided a grant to the university in 1976 to establish a consortium of four-year and community colleges in western North Carolina to help find ways to improve the way colleges served their underprepared students. The consortium soon expanded its service area to include the entire nation and became known as the National Center for Developmental Education. Its mission includes reviewing and evaluating developmental studies programs in institutions and entire states, providing staff development for developmental faculty and staff, evaluating and profiling diagnostic instruments used in placing students, and assisting institutions in improving their developmental studies programs. The NCDE founded and continues to publish two of the journals associated with developmental education: the *Journal of Developmental Education* (first published in 1978) and *Research in Developmental Education*
(begun in 1983). The NCDE is also known for the Kellogg Institute, which is a summer program for in-depth training of existing developmental studies faculty. Along with the NCDE, the college of education at Appalachian State also offers master’s and specialist’s degrees in education with a major in developmental education. The other universities that have established graduate programs in developmental education—at least one leading to a doctorate—are Grambling State, National-Louis, Southwest Texas State, and University of Missouri-Kansas City (Boylan, 2001).

The same year (1976) that the NCDE was formed, some Chicago-area faculty members who worked in programs for underprepared students met and formed an organization known for the first eight years as the National Association for Remedial/Developmental Studies in Postsecondary Education, or NAR/DSPE. The founding president was Dr. Gary Saretsky. Soon the term remedial education fell out of favor with practitioners in the field, although it is still used by many outside researchers, journalists, and government officials, and NAR/DSPE was renamed the National Association for Developmental Education (NADE). Local chapters outside the Midwest were soon formed, beginning with chapters in New York City in 1979 (which later dissolved) and South Carolina. During the 1980s the association began its tradition of annual conferences in different cities, bringing faculty, advisors, and directors together to share ideas on teaching, research, and program structure. The Journal of Developmental Education was adopted as the official journal of the association in 1983. By 1990 NADE had 28 chapters and had established several awards for outstanding developmental education programs, educators, students, and research. Individual membership grew from about 400 in 1980, to nearly 2000 in 1990 (Boylan, 2000). By 1999 the national membership had increased to 2551, with memberships in state and regional chapters numbering more than 4000 (NADE, 2001).

Other organizations also arose during 1960s and 1970s to bring together college and university persons working with underprepared students. The College Reading and Learning Association began in 1966 as the Western College Reading Association, made up mostly of professionals from the western United States. During the 1970s it grew into an organization billing itself as The Blue Chip organization for college reading professionals (CRLA, 2001). The association began to hold yearly conferences. In 1979 the name was changed to the Western
College Reading and Learning Association in recognition that many members worked not only with reading but also with advising, study skills, learning assistance, and mathematics. In the 1980s the association developed an international certification program for tutors. By 1989 membership no longer consisted solely of persons from the west, so the “Western” was dropped from the name to assume its current name. Today CRLA publishes the *Journal of College Reading and Learning* as well as a quarterly newsletter. It identifies its mission as a forum for improving “teaching, learning, and research in post-secondary environments” in “learning improvement services, courses, and programs” and encouraging “practical application to research . . . and innovative strategies that enhance college teaching and student learning” (CRLA, 2001, ¶ 2).

A third, slightly newer, major organization serving learning assistance professionals is the National College Learning Center Association (NCLCA). As did NADE and CRLA, NCLCA began in 1985 as a regional organization, the Midwest College Learning Center Association. The MCLCA began with 46 members at its first conference in 1986. In 1999, in recognition that its membership came from all over the United States and Canada, it voted to become the National College Learning Center Association. The major focus of NCLCA is on learning centers, which it defines as “place[s] where students can be taught to become more efficient and effective learners.” (NCLCA, 2001, ¶ 2) Learning centers encompass seminars, tutorials (human and computer-assisted), labs, and supplemental instruction. In addition to annual conferences, the association publishes the *Learning Assistance Review* and holds institutes for professionals.

By 1986 leaders in the field saw a need for the various organizations involved in helping underprepared students and in learning assistance to work together. The American Council of Developmental Education Associations (ACDEA) was formed as an alliance between leaders of NADE, NCLCA, CRLA, NCDE, and groups whose interests intersect with developmental education such as the College Reading Association, the American College Personnel Association, and the National Tutoring Association. The ACDEA is made up of the executive officers of the member organizations and encourages collaboration among the constituencies as well as recognizing members of the various groups who have made significant contributions to the field (Boylan, 2000; NCLCA, 2001).
These organizations help improve the teaching of underprepared students and boost the morale of faculty involved in this endeavor. Their national conferences and state or regional conferences allow developmental educators to network and exchange ideas. Through conferences and journals, the organizations encourage a continuation of research on ways to help students learn to learn.

**Developmental Education Today**

The National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) has done several national studies on the size and extent of programs for underprepared students in colleges today. The most recent was undertaken in 1995. In that year, remedial courses in mathematics, writing, or reading were offered by 100% of all public two-year colleges, 81% of all public four-year colleges, and 63% of all private four-year colleges. In all, 78% of higher education institutions with freshmen offered at least one developmental course. Open admissions policies were in effect in about half of all community and junior colleges, but only about a tenth of four-year institutions. Nationwide, some 41% of freshmen at two-year institutions and 22% of those at four-year institutions were enrolled in developmental courses (NCES, 1996). From the letter by Everett (1999) and NCES data, it would be safe to assume that even more students than that receive some sort of learning assistance such as tutoring or Supplemental Instruction. The NCES data also show that, on average, institutions offer two courses each of reading and writing and two to three developmental math courses.

NCES (1996) reported the percentage of freshmen enrolled in developmental courses has not increased appreciably during the 1990s: in 1989, about 30% of freshmen at higher education institutions were enrolled in at least one developmental class; in 1995, that figure was 29%. Not surprisingly, that figure was much higher in two-year institutions and lower in four-year colleges. NADE figures (Damashek, 1999a) indicate that 38% of incoming college freshmen need a developmental English class. For math, the figure is 44%, and reading, 34%. (Because not all institutions have mandatory placement for people needing developmental courses, these latter figures may reflect the need rather than the enrollment.) Persons of color had a higher representation in developmental enrollments. The average time students were enrolled in developmental courses was less than one year (NCES, 1996). Another national study from earlier
in the 1990s (Boylan, Bonham, & Bliss, 1994) gave additional insight into the faces of today’s developmental students: the mean age of developmental students was 23 at two-year colleges and 19 at four-year; slightly more than half (53% and 54%) of the students were female; most (77% and 98%) were seeking degrees, and nearly a third (32%) of two-year college students were attending part-time as opposed to 8% at four-year institutions. About two-thirds of the students were White, slightly less than in the general college population. The mean high school grade point average of developmental students was 2.40 at two-year colleges and 2.58 at four-year institutions, somewhat lower than their non-developmental peers. However, “they are able to persist, remain in good standing, and complete degrees” (McCabe & Day, 1998, p. 3). Garnett (1997, p. 3), in fact, cited a study of the Minnesota Community College System that showed that “students who complete developmental courses do as well as those who don’t need the courses.” This is an important accomplishment, Garnett noted, because “only about 35% of current high school graduates take college preparatory classes” (p. 2).

The increase in professional activities among developmental faculty has led to a body of theory as a basis for research. After several years of study, NADE in 1996 adopted its definition of developmental education, stating in part,

**Developmental education is a field of practice and research within higher education with a theoretical foundation in developmental psychology and learning theory. It promotes the cognitive and affective growth of all postsecondary learners, at all levels of the learning continuum. Developmental education is sensitive and responsive to individual differences and special needs among learners.** (NADE, 2001, p. 9)

Even as developmental education programs grew and became more defined during the 1990s, they also came under attack yet again, and some programs were cut or abolished. As always, the arguments were familiar: admitting underprepared students watered down the curriculum (echoing Tappan’s comments of 1852), and states were paying twice for students to learn the same material. Boylan (2001) noted that from 1990 to 2000, 34 states proposed eliminating developmental education to one degree or another. However, the proposals were voted down by legislatures in 29 of those states. Even in areas where developmental programs were to be discontinued, such as Sacramento and New York City, there were public protests.
against reduction of such programs, and the programs did not completely disappear but transformed in some manner. The experiences of the City University of New York and the University of Minnesota provide some examples of the kinds of changes that happened during the 1990s.

**City University of New York**

In New York City, after a proposal pushed by Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, the trustees voted in 1999 to virtually eliminate developmental classes at the City University of New York’s four-year campuses. Cronholm (1999), interim president of SUNY’s Baruch College at the time, expressed the view of those in favor of Giuliani’s proposal in an opinion article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*:

> Offering pre-collegiate work in colleges and universities is a grievous error. . . . Curricular deflation and grade inflation are two of the highest costs we pay. Teaching underprepared students unquestionably lowers standards. . . . The only way we can change the status quo—and the current excessive need for remediation of high-school graduates—is to reserve college for those who can do college-level work (Cronholm, 1999, pp. B6-B7).

Cronholm asserted that the presence of underprepared students necessitated lowering both entrance and graduation standards and is a sign of a lack of academic integrity. Students needing remediation tended to graduate at seriously lower rates, the article implied. Everett (1999), a former SUNY trustee, noted that even though the courses were eliminated, remediation was not. About a fifth of the students admitted to the college did not pass the SUNY entrance exams; those students were given other opportunities for catching up, such as tutoring. Everett noted that students “requiring modest amounts of remediation graduated at a rate only 1 percentage point lower than that for students requiring no help” (p. B3).

**University of Minnesota General College**

Another story of change in the light of concern over maintaining standards with a different outcome was the transformation of the University of Minnesota’s General College (Taylor, 2001). In 1986 a proposal was made to delete the General College as part of a proposal to eliminate redundancies in the university. After much debate and wrangling, the General
College was instead given a new mission in 1991. All developmental studies courses and introductory courses in core fields for many freshman students were made a part of the General College. By 1993, the General College established the Center for Research on Developmental Education and Urban Literacy, hired research scholars who, in addition to teaching, produced journals and monographs, received more than $1.5 million in grants, added a certificate program in developmental education to the university’s graduate programs, sponsored colloquia on future directions for developmental education, and created an advising system that became a model for other programs in the country.

In 1996, the president of the university wanted to improve the image of the University of Minnesota as a more selective institution by reducing the number of students admitted. He brought up two issues specifically related to developmental education: Is open access compatible with excellence, and is developmental education a field the university wanted to invest in? Eventually the regents of the university directed the president to keep the program, but reduce the number of developmental students admitted. The next year the president retired, and the new president mentioned the General College as an important asset to the university.

The State of Tennessee

The state of Tennessee has had a developmental education program for the colleges and universities in the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) system, which includes all public higher education institutions not part of the University of Tennessee and which has seen a number of changes over the years and will probably see more soon. In response to legislation and a lawsuit, the regents mandated a program for underprepared entering college students in 1984 based on ACT and placement test scores in math, composition, and writing. In addition to courses in those subjects, the programs also included advising components, study skills (later learning strategies) courses for those who were placed in remedial or developmental courses in several subject areas, periodic program evaluation, and professional development programs for faculty. Thousands of students made their way through the program and graduated at a rate comparable to their non-developmental peers (Bader & Hardin, 2002). From the early 1990s on, though, higher education was underfunded in the state, and the state encountered funding crises in 2001 and again in 2002. The Board of Regents was required by the legislature to “study their operations to determine how
they can operate more efficiently and with more limited resources” (TBR, 2001, p. 1). Several proposals of that report impacted developmental education: reducing the cost and funding of courses, moving the lowest level courses to community colleges only, and cutting the number of credit hours to three per course at each institution (TBR). Plans remain in flux until state funding is more secure, and proposals by some to cap admissions to colleges and universities and raise entrance standards could likely impact access for underprepared students. A master plan by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC, 2000) acknowledges that developmental education will always be needed for returning adult students but calls for those courses to be moved to community colleges with “exceptions only for universities that need to offer developmental programming to meet specific access and mission needs” (THEC, p. 7). University and college presidents note that higher education appropriations have dropped to less than 85% of the state funding formula in recent years while student tuition has risen by 42% in five years, with possible additional cuts to state funding resulting in cuts to personnel (Watson, 2002). One two-year college president said, “I think we’re going to reach the point where people cannot come” to college (Watson, p. 6).

**Future Directions for Developmental Education**

Although developmental programs have rarely been popular, they have served a function to increase access to higher education for generations of college students. But for as many years as extra help has been available, there have been critics within and outside of higher education who would rather not have the programs or students in college. At times, the debate becomes shrill. Funding levels have risen and fallen many times. Yet some sort of assistance has continued to exist in various forms. What do experts in the field believe lies ahead for developmental education?

John Gardner, who founded the First-Year Experience seminars and conferences, believes developmental education needs to expand to survive and be recognized by other faculty as a legitimate discipline (Spann, 2000). He sees a shift underway from “‘what do I want to teach?’ to ‘how do students learn?’” (p. 23). Some kind of freshman seminar offered by colleges could benefit not only underprepared students, but all new students. He sees the current backlash against developmental education as an extension of the attack on affirmative action: “If you want
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to help the disadvantaged, you’d better be doing something for all students” (p. 23). The field, he says, should broaden to help all undergraduate students, including juniors and seniors, to progress in their academic careers and even get ready for graduate school if they plan to continue their studies.

Gardner also points out a need for credentialing. Developmental educators would receive more respect if more had doctorates (in most cases, someone teaching developmental classes, even at a university, is required only to have a master’s degree) and their degrees were in a field other than education, because education is probably the next most maligned field in the universities. Along with a higher standard of preparation, focusing on more research would improve faculty standing. Developmental educators, Gardner thinks, would be the perfect candidates for guiding faculty and staff development programs, especially if they use some of the same innovations they use with their students. Finally, Gardner feels that developmental faculty need to recruit their successors, especially men. (Developmental education is one of the few areas in higher education where the vast majority of faculty is female.) Unfortunately, there is still a bit of sexism which gives lower status and lower salaries to female-dominated areas, so attracting more men so the numbers of men and women were equal would bring a little more respectability to the profession.

Damashek (1999a, 1999b) interviewed several recognized leaders in developmental education such as Martha Maxwell, Hunter Boylan, David Arendale, Diane Vukovich, Kaylene Gebert, and Silva Santiago for their views on the future of developmental education. Some studies have shown that students taking stand-alone developmental reading classes do not improve students’ reading skills and may actually lead to increased dropout rates. Maxwell anticipates that, in line with research results, more effective reading courses will be paired with a college core course.

To some, there seems to be calling for moving all developmental courses to two-year institutions. Boylan (Damashek, 1999a) does not see that as a trend—it has been called for in about 30 states, but only a handful have actually done so. He predicts that competitive state universities may eventually get rid of developmental programs, but others will keep them, especially in economically poor states (Damashek, 1999b). Maxwell believes more programs
will be moved to the community colleges, because they already provide the majority of remedial coursework, a trend she charts as having begun in 1980 (Damashek, 1999b). Maxwell (Damashek, 1999a) also believes that the practice of the 1930s of weak college-bound students taking an extra year of high school will return, and colleges (even two-year institutions) capping enrollments, meaning less-prepared students will have a harder time to get in to college.

In the near future, Arendale and Boylan (Damashek, 1999a, 1999b) both believe developmental classes will become part of an integrated system of support, supplanting stand-alone classes. Arendale is a staunch advocate of Supplemental Instruction as described above. Several authorities believe developmental programs will become comprehensive academic support or learning assistance programs encompassing such elements as professional development, program evaluation, a theory of developmental education, diagnosis and assessment of students before entering and throughout their class work, tutorial programs, supplemental instruction, paired courses, and short workshops for current classes as well as preparing for graduate admissions tests.

**Conclusion**

Developmental education has a long history in American higher education, albeit a constantly rocky one. For many varied reasons, generations of students have come to college inadequately prepared to do college-level work. Colleges have responded with tutors and special classes, eventually creating departments or programs geared specifically to dealing with these at-risk students, and turning out additional college graduates who might not have made it without the extra boost. For the last century, support courses and programs for underprepared students has been seen as expendable and temporary (Damashek, 1999a). The fact remains that there was never a golden age when all students came to college ready to do college work, just as there has never been a golden age in which all elementary and secondary students worked on grade level and learned everything they were supposed to learn. Even with all sorts of school reform, developmental programs have not gone away, nor are they likely to entirely disappear in the foreseeable future. High school students will continue to make poor choices of what courses to take, or fail to take the high school curriculum seriously. Life circumstances will change, and some adults will find themselves as suddenly single parents needing a college education to obtain
a job to support themselves and their children. Other adults will lose their jobs and realize a high school education is simply not sufficient to advance their careers. Still others will come out of military service or will retire early from work and decide to further their education after many years outside a classroom. All these people benefit from open admissions at community colleges and special admissions at four-year institutions. To be successful in college, most of these people will need at least some extra help beyond what is available in a college-level class, and they will receive that help in some manner, whether it is from specific courses or embedded assistance programs. And, thanks in part to developmental education, a significant proportion of these underprepared learners will become successful learners with at least one degree and contribute more to the American economy and enrich the American experience.

References


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2004 NADE MONOGRAPH

It was announced to the National Committee Chairs at the Leadership Congress on Wednesday, February 12, 2003 during the NADE 27th Annual Conference that there would be a suspension of publications for the 2003-2004 fiscal year. The Publication Committee Co-chairs and the Conference Proceeding Co-chairs were notified on December 18, 2002 that their positions and committees would be suspended as of February 15, 2003. Information regarding future NADE Publications may be announced in the NADE Newsletter. A special taskforce is presently charged with reviewing and making recommendations to the NADE Board on future directions for the NADE Monograph and NADE Conference Proceedings.
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