

UW-P

# THE LEARNING ASSISTANCE REVIEW

THE JOURNAL OF THE MIDWEST COLLEGE LEARNING CENTER ASSOCIATION

ISSN 1087-0059  
Volume 3 Number 1  
Spring 1998

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University of Toledo  
Scott Park Campus  
Toledo, OH 43606-3390  
Day: 419/530-3140  
Fax: 419/530-3343  
lmomenee@utnet.utoledo.edu

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**Shevawn Eaton**  
Educational Services and Programs  
Northern Illinois University  
Williston Hall East  
DeKalb, IL 60115-2854  
Day: 815/753-0581  
Fax: 815/753-6276  
seaton@niu.edu

### CORRESPONDING SECRETARY

**Jacqueline Robertson**  
Ball State University  
North Quad 323, The Learning Center  
Muncie, IN 47306  
Day: 765/285-8107  
Fax: 765/285-2167  
jrobe@bsuvc.bsu.edu

### TREASURER

**Jadwiga Piper**  
National-Louis University  
18 S. Michigan Avenue  
Chicago, IL 60603  
Day: 312/621-9650  
Fax: 312/621-1205  
jpiper@chicago1.nl.edu

### COMMUNICATIONS

**Kim Folstein**  
Alverno College  
P.O. Box 343922  
Milwaukee, WI 53234-3922  
Day: 414/382-6257  
Fax: 414/382-6354  
Kim.Folstein@alverno.edu

### PAST PRESIDENT

**Audrey Kirkwood**  
Ball State University  
North Quad 323, The Learning Center  
Muncie, IN 47306  
Day: 765/285-1006  
Fax: 765/285-2167  
ACKIRKWOOD@BSU.edu

### RECORDING SECRETARY

**Robin Remich**  
Oakton Community College  
7701 N. Lincoln Avenue  
Skokie, IL 60077  
Day: 847/635-1434  
Fax: 847/635-1449  
rremich@oakton.edu

### MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

**Susan Witkowski**  
Alverno College  
P.O. Box 343922  
Milwaukee, WI 53234-3922  
Day: 414/382-6027  
Fax: 414/382-6354

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

**Judith Cohen**  
University of Illinois at Chicago  
Academic Center for Excellence, Suite 2900  
1200 West Harrison, M/C 327  
Chicago, IL 60607-7164  
Day: 312/996-3460  
Fax: 312/413-7897  
judithc@uic.edu

### NEWSLETTER EDITOR

**James McNamara**  
Alverno College  
P.O. Box 343922  
Milwaukee, WI 53234-3922  
Day: 414/382-6328  
Fax: 414/382-6354

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## LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

To our readers:

Of interest to those of you new and experienced in the field, our current issue highlights the work and insights of one of the founders of the learning assistance field, Martha Maxwell. In an insightful interview, Piper brings you a rich and thoughtful discussion with Maxwell about the origins and current practices in learning assistance and developmental education. This interview allows us to reflect on our work through the experience of someone who has been a practitioner, researcher, and theorist for over 50 years. And, to help you get right back to work, Remich has reviewed Maxwell's book, *Improving Student Learning Skills*, a new edition of her earlier classic. Within a framework that traces the origins and development of learning assistance, Maxwell presents research based concepts, strategies, and approaches to everything from diagnosing skill difficulties to designing a learning center.

In two studies that address critical areas directly related to our work with students, Beyeler and Rose discuss how students choose and apply reading and study strategies, and the factors that influence persistence among postsecondary GED students. Beyeler's article offers insight into how students select study strategies, and what influences them to delve below surface level understanding of course content and concepts. It stresses the need for faculty involvement in teaching and emphasizing particular strategies. Noting that GED students are increasing among postsecondary students, Rose examines the risk factors that impact on these students' completion of college. Her findings caution us to look at student needs, particularly the nontraditional student, holistically. Academic concerns are a significant risk factor, but financial, social, career, and self-confidence issues also directly impact on whether a student remains in college.

In an article detailing their department's reinventing of itself, Higbee et. al. provide a model for formulating a new identity for learning assistance departments that includes new programs, initiates new relationships with students and faculty, and expands the very nature of whom we assist. The methodology followed here will certainly be helpful for those considering changes to existing learning centers, but will also inform those creating new centers.

Adding to the discussion of theory and practice in the field, Witkowski, in her *Join the Conversation* piece, formulates a philosophy of writing from a developmental education perspective. Writing from a viewpoint that all writing is developmental and that writing is but one communication mode, Witkowski invites your reflection and response so as to create a dialogue among learning center educators about the philosophy of teaching writing.

As always, we encourage your response to any of our authors, and invite articles about your research and teaching interests.

Martha Casazza  
National-Louis University  
18 South Michigan Avenue  
Chicago, IL 60603  
312/621-9650, ext. 3273  
mcas@whe2.nl.edu

Nancy Bornstein  
Alverno College  
3401 South 39<sup>th</sup> Street  
P.O. Box 343922  
Milwaukee, WI 53234  
414/382-6353  
nancy.bornstein@alverno.edu

By Julia Beye

This ethnographic study of students during and demonstrating reciprocal teaching activities studied

The information chosen and applied in the Introduction to and learning about and pass a course, strategies are more willing to

The purpose of a small two year study was to determine 70% of the students sought to determine strategies in a course to an Introduction to transfer of reading with instruction choices of students

## ARTICLES

### **RELUCTANT READERS: CASE STUDIES OF READING AND STUDY STRATEGIES IN INTRODUCTION TO PSYCHOLOGY**

*By Julia Beyeler, University of Akron Wayne College*

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#### **Abstract**

This ethnographic study documented the application of study strategies of four college students during one semester when strategies to improve reading and learning were taught and demonstrated. The prime comprehension monitoring strategy demonstrated was reciprocal teaching (Brown & Palinscar, 1985). Retrieval and support strategies taught were activities student use to monitor and schedule learning activities for test preparation.

The information gleaned from this study contributed insights into reasons college students chose and applied specific study strategies that were taught and demonstrated for use in Introduction to Psychology. The implication of this study for professionals planning reading and learning assistance for college students is that if surface level strategies are sufficient to pass a course, those are the strategies the students will utilize. However, when surface level strategies are utilized and the student does not obtain the desired grade, then the student is more willing to apply deep level strategies to improve the grade.

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#### **Objective**

The purpose of this study was to assist under prepared college students for college study at a small two year branch campus of a four year university in the rural Midwest where about 70% of the students plan to achieve a four year degree. The research guiding this study sought to determine the participants': (a) strengths and weaknesses of student study strategies in a conceptually difficult course, (b) ability to apply reciprocal teaching strategies to an Introduction to Psychology textbook with instruction, demonstration, and practice, (c) transfer of reading and learning strategies to other classes, and (d) changes in study strategies with instruction and demonstration. This study documents the participants' rationale and choices of study strategies in the above four areas.



## Perspective and Theoretical Framework

Retention of college students is a high priority at many colleges and universities. Some college students drop out because they are under prepared for college study and need assistance with reading and study strategies in order to pass their classes (Weinstein & Mayer, 1985). In addition, many students need strategies for time management, metacognition, and self-regulation (Dansereau, et. al. 1979). Students attending colleges and universities can benefit from strategy training (Dansereau, 1985; Grant, 1994). This study provided marginal students some strategies to deal with psychology concepts and the textbook.

The case study was based on the cognitive view of learning and followed the reciprocal teaching model pioneered by Annemarie Sullivan Palincsar and Ann Brown (1984). The process in reciprocal teaching involves students and teacher in dialogue about the meaning of a segment in a textbook. The dialog was structured to incorporate four components; *generating questions* about the content, *summarizing* the content, *clarifying* points, and *predicting* upcoming content from cues in the text from prior knowledge of the topic (Palincsar, 1987).

In addition to comprehension strategies, students need to become self-regulated learners (Zimmerman, 1990) and follow through with their learning plan. Self-regulation can develop through experience and example (Brown, 1978). When students learn how to learn, and how to manage and control their concentration, they discover that learning becomes easier and tend to improve in self-regulation (Corno & Rohrkemper, 1985). This study provided marginal students with study strategies and charted the participants use of strategies.

## Methods

This was a qualitative, action research study based on case studies of four students. This method was chosen to analyze how the students changed their study strategies during a regular semester when they were taught strategies. The number of participants was limited because the researcher needed to collect an enormous amount of data to document how the participants studied and changed their strategies during the semester. The researcher chose the participants and led the research study. The basis for choosing the four participants was their score on the reading placement test taken when entering the university. The score was immediately above the cut off for developmental reading. Previous studies of students with these scores indicate that many of them stopped out or had low grades. However, the school did not require them to take a remedial reading class. The participants included both sexes and traditional, ages 18 to 24, and nontraditional, ages over 25, students. Introduction to Psychology was chosen because it was conceptually difficult and reading the textbook was important in passing the course. In addition, the professor of the psychology class was interested in student study strategies and the relationship of the strategies to the final grade.

The participants agreed to meet one hour twice a week for one semester where learning strategies for the psychology class were demonstrated and discussed. The incentive for the participants to attend sessions was to improve their study strategies. They did not receive credit or grades for their attendance.

The four students began their study strategies class with a demonstration of reciprocal teaching using the psychology textbook. After the first session when the researcher demonstrated the four steps in reciprocal teaching, participants were assigned sections in the next chapter to demonstrate reciprocal teaching to the other participants with the exception of the prediction step. That step was done when the chapter was introduced and the sections assigned.

To aid the students with self-regulation, a Proximal Goal Questionnaire was given to them to complete each week. The Proximal Goal Questionnaire included a question asking for their learning goals for the week. The next question asked for specific actions or steps to accomplish these goals. The researcher looked for specific actions, for example, "I will organize the ideas of this chapter into a semantic map" as opposed to "I will read the chapter." The information from the Proximal Goal Questionnaire provided the researcher with study goals and strategies each week. Participants were given weekly feedback concerning the goals and the strategies they planned to use. Early in the semester the Operationalize Effort Questionnaire was given to each participant to provide the researcher with information of the participants' belief of effort versus ability. Questions on this questionnaire asked the participant to compare the importance of ability with effort, list behaviors that they thought described effort, and asked them to list how they put forth effort in the psychology class.

The Learning and Study Strategies Inventory (LASSI) was administered to the students as a pre- and post-test to document changes in study strategies (Weinstein, Schulte, & Palmer, 1987) and to compare with their written and oral statements describing their application of study strategies to their studying. The LASSI is a self-report that measures ten areas found to be significant for effective study. The areas include attitude, motivation, time management, anxiety, concentration, acquiring knowledge, reading strategies including locating main ideas and supporting details, self-testing and preparing for tests.

In helping the participants prepare for tests they were asked to write five multiple-choice questions from the unit chapters because the professor utilized multiple choice questions on the class unit tests. These questions were compiled and were part of a practice test that was typed and given to the participants during the study strategies class prior to the psychology class where the unit test was administered.

Triangulation was used when comparing final grade and class test results with study strategies identified on the Proximal Goal Questionnaire, (LASSI), evaluation of dialog in study strategy class, and formal and informal interviews.



### Data Source and Analysis

A portfolio (Valeri-Gold, Olson, & Deming, 1991-92) was established for each participant. Information on learning activities was gleaned from questionnaires, interviews, self-reports, observations, summaries, adjunct study aides, and scripts from the learning strategy class. The class discussions were scripted and dialog was coded for each participant using King's (1994) classroom discussion evaluation: knowledge restating, knowledge assimilation, and knowledge integration. The test questions the students generated were coded with Pearson and Johnson's (1972) taxonomy of questions. The three taxonomies were text explicit, text implicit, and script implicit. Each participant's portfolio was checked weekly for patterns, feedback on the study strategies, and analysis of study strategies. The reasons the participants gave for not choosing a study strategy were analyzed using Convington's (1992) description of "self-handicapping strategies."

### Case Studies

The following are the case studies of the four participants. The first three case studies are traditional students and the last case study is a non-traditional student. The names have been changed to protect the identity of the students.

#### Molly

Molly is a traditional first year, second semester female student. She works part-time at Wendy's. She also works at a public library in a small town stamping and organizing books. She rarely reads anything that is not required. When she does choose her reading, she likes to read biographies.

Molly reported at the beginning of the semester that her basic study strategy is outlining. On her first Proximal Goal Questionnaire she stated that she had trouble concentrating, thought the textbook was boring, did not think the terminology was difficult, but did learn some words. Later she stated that psychology is very complicated. As the semester progressed she read about some practical applications concerning stress, frustration, conflict, and health. She wrote, "I always thought that stress was a bad thing, but it isn't, it is perfectly normal. These chapters are getting more interesting."

Molly's ranking of satisfaction on her Proximal Goal Questionnaire for reaching previous goals on a scale of 0 to 25 went from an 18 at the beginning of the semester to a 6 at the end of the semester. Her confidence level for obtaining the goals she set for herself was low, 10 or below all semester. Molly believes that the responsibility for her grades is divided equally between her and the professor. The professor should explain what kind of test will be given, objective or essay, and then give study strategies for that type of test. The student is responsible for asking questions on the content of the course.

When Molly evaluated plan to study for nine selected the appropriate a lot more work that I n I will do bits and pieces study her notes and cla she stated that she stud differently than she do done better on the seco with three friends for s

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On the LASSI (Figure all ten areas. Her unit beginning of the semes grade indicates that he average. Her GPA at th she transferred her stud

#### Nevin

Nevin is a second seme is taking biology, che Introduction to Psycho not assigned. He usuall

When Molly evaluated her performance on her first unit test she said that she followed her plan to study for nine hours. She couldn't see any pattern to her errors and felt she had selected the appropriate study strategies. She said, "I may have studied a bit too hard. I did a lot more work than I needed to do. Next time I won't do my chapter objectives in one day. I will do bits and pieces of it during the week." She wrote that for the second test she would study her notes and class handouts and do the chapter objectives. After her second unit test she stated that she studied with friends for the test. She also stated that her friends study differently than she does and believed that if she had studied by herself, she would have done better on the second test. For the third and last unit test she reported that she studied with three friends for seven hours the Saturday before the test.

When Molly reflected on her study strategies during the semester, she indicated that the changes she made in her studying included studying more with other students in the class, using the chapter objectives from the psychology instructor, reading the summaries at the end of each chapter, using flashcards for terms, and trying to answer the questions within the chapters and at the end of each chapter.

She defined effort as, "doing everything you can." She stated that effort makes "all the difference." She wrote that for Introduction to Psychology effort meant, "read, study the notes, and reread." This information indicates that Molly was not specific in her study strategies and that she had general and global goals that were difficult to monitor.

In her interview at the end of the semester, Molly reported that she did not read the chapters in the psychology textbook, but did read the summaries at the end of each assigned chapter. She stated that she thought she gained a better understanding of psychology throughout the semester. When asked what determined her attendance in study strategies class she said it was time. If she got to her library job late, she had to make up the time. She described herself as a flighty person, who would go to study strategies class only if she felt like it.

On the LASSI (Figure 1 at the end of this article) she reported improved study strategies in all ten areas. Her unit test scores were, 81%, 84%, and 87%. Her average GPA at the beginning of the semester was 2.9 and her grade in Introduction to Psychology was B+. Her grade indicates that her Introduction to Psychology grade is above her previous semester average. Her GPA at the end of the semester of this study was 3.5 which would indicate that she transferred her study strategies to other classes.

### **Nevin**

Nevin is a second semester, first year traditional student. He plans on a nursing career. He is taking biology, chemistry, and computer and software fundamentals in addition to Introduction to Psychology. He stated that the newspaper is the only reading he does that is not assigned. He usually spends one and one-half to two hours per week on the newspaper.

During Nevin's first interview he stated that in high school he had a teacher who was a big influence in his study methods. This teacher told him to read and review his class material the same day the class met. He still follows this advice.

When Nevin was asked what determined his attendance in study strategies class, he said that if he thought he understood the class lecture and the textbook he would not go to study strategies class. He stated that he did not think study strategies class would make a difference in his grade.

Nevin indicated on one of his Proximal Goal Questionnaires that he was highly satisfied with reaching his previous goals and felt very confident that he would reach the goals he set for himself in Introduction to Psychology. He had taken Introduction to Psychology the previous semester and received an F. He is taking the course for a change of grade.

During Nevin's end of the semester interview, he stated that reviewing the tests in study strategies class was helpful. He could see where he misread questions. When he studied for tests he used the study guide for a previous edition of the psychology textbook. He stated that he usually answered the multiple-choice questions. He said that the application section of the multiple choice questions in the study guide were too hard, so he did not do those.

When comparing Nevin's LASSI scores (Figure 2 at the end of this article) from the beginning of the semester with those at the end of the semester, he reported lower scores in seven areas at the end of the semester. The three areas where he reported gains were information processing, use of support techniques and materials, and test strategies and preparing for tests. Nevin's unit test scores in Introduction to Psychology were 60%, 76%, and 48%. Nevin had a GPA of 3.4 at the beginning of the semester. He received a D+ in Introduction to Psychology. His GPA at the end of the semester of this study was 1.8. During his conference with his advisor in May he changed his major from nursing to education. His GPA indicates he did not utilize study strategies discussed or transfer them to other classes.

### **Bob**

Bob is a first year, second semester traditional male. Bob reads every day, even when he is not in school. He enjoys murder mysteries and the newspapers. He reported that during the previous semester he studied about six hours a day. He did not study in high school. Bob likes to listen to soft music while studying. When he reads a textbook he takes notes and fills in a study guide that follows the textbook if one is available. He finds the study guide for Introduction to Psychology confusing and overwhelming.

When Bob evaluated his test strategies, he stated in his journals that his problem was not enough time. He felt that he used the most appropriate study strategies, but for the second test he planned to study longer.

During the semester security guard and learning more since a good time for him

Bob believes he is able to the different tests he receives. During the semester he found most helpful to read every word helpful. He also said

On one Proximal Goal of meeting his previous or he was very satisfied. His goal is to "learn" Goal Questionnaire who can help him will he study in a

Bob suggested that over the notes rather this semester. He were helpful to him studying. On the 10 study categories use of support techniques unit tests were 5 final grade in Introduction

### **Roy**

Roy, a nontraditional he usually reads did not study in reads. First he is preparing for a test and the answers and one half to sometimes did he prefers learning

Roy reported on achievement on

During the semester he discovered that he studied best early in the morning. He was a security guard and he began taking his book with him on his rounds. He believed he was learning more since he was spending more time studying. He thought the early morning was a good time for him to learn.

Bob believes he alone is responsible for his learning. He stated that it was up to him to adjust to the different teaching styles of professors. He also stated that he earns the grades he receives. During Bob's end of the semester interview, he stated that the study strategies he found most helpful were highlighting and looking for bold type and words in italics. He used to read every word in the chapter, but now he thinks looking for bold type and italics is more helpful. He also stated that reading the summaries at the end of the chapters was important.

On one Proximal Goal Questionnaire Bob reported on a scale of 0-25 that his satisfaction of meeting his previous goals was 12 and on another questionnaire his satisfaction was 25, or he was very satisfied. He stated that he is somewhat satisfied with meeting previous goals. His goal is to "learn all he can." He states several times in the action section of his Proximal Goal Questionnaire, that he will study in all his spare time. He believes that the only person who can help him with his studying is himself. He will not ask anyone else for assistance nor will he study in a group.

Bob suggested that the study strategies class would be improved if time was spent going over the notes rather than the textbook. He stated that he learned to organize his time better this semester. He reported that the study strategies explained in the study strategies class were helpful to him. He did not explain which ones he used or how he applied them to his studying. On the LASSI (Figure 3 at the end of this article), Bob reported gains in five of the 10 study categories. He reported less use of strategies in motivation, anxiety, concentration, use of support techniques, and self-testing at the end of the semester. Bob's grades on his unit tests were 55%, 65%, and 64%. His GPA at the beginning of the semester was 3.0. His final grade in Introduction to Psychology was C-.

### Roy

Roy, a nontraditional, second semester sophomore, stated in his introductory interview that he usually reads about six hours a week. He especially enjoys reading historical fiction. He did not study in high school. He reported that he learns best outlining his textbook as he reads. First he highlights, then he makes his outline from the words he highlighted. In preparing for a test he writes questions from his outline. He writes the questions on one page and the answers on another page. He plans to study Introduction to Psychology about one and one half to two hours per day. Roy reported that for his algebra class last semester he sometimes did his homework twice to be sure he understood the problems. He stated that he prefers learning to memorizing.

Roy reported on his Proximal Goal Questionnaires that he was highly satisfied with the achievement on his previous goals and confident he would meet his current goals. He is in



college because he became disabled in his previous job. The disability caused him to seek another type of work. He believes college is his last chance to be productive. Experience has taught him that nothing comes easy. He reported that he was overwhelmed with the volume of assignments. One weekend he procrastinated because of the amount of work and then proceeded to rush through the assignments Sunday evening to get them done. The next weekend he planned shorter intervals of study and use of the whole weekend. In Roy's journal entries he describes his reading rate. He believes he is a slow reader because he tries to comprehend when he reads. This causes him to frequently go back over the material he has read for clarification. He also tries to highlight the items he deems important. Sometimes he loses his concentration and stops reading for a time.

The week before the first unit test, Roy reported that he had completed the assigned reading so he could concentrate on learning the material. He felt frustrated with all the material. His study strategy was to understand all the handout material, go over highlights in the text and learn the meaning of the major terms. After the exam he reported that he did not follow his study plan. The reason he gave for not following his plan was that he had three major examinations the same day. The amount of material he had to learn was overwhelming. He thought he missed some questions that were based on the lectures. He did not think there was a pattern to his errors. He reported that he had selected the most appropriate study strategies, but for the next test he would employ distributed practice rather than do all his reviewing at one session. He also planned to pay closer attention to class notes.

During his interview at the end of the semester, Roy stated that not until April was he able to make the connection between what he learned in the study strategies class and Introduction to Psychology. At the end of the semester he thought study strategies class would have been more helpful if the class had used the study guide more. He also wished that each person in the group would have come to class prepared to explain certain questions. He wished that the students would have been aware of the value of the study guide.

For the final unit test Roy planned to study independently. His plan included answering questions in the study guide and skipping the chapter objectives from the professor. He planned to do the multiple-choice questions in the study guide. This was a new plan for him. He changed methods because he decided that his previous strategies were not effective in helping him reach his grade goal.

Roy stated on the Operationalize Effort Questionnaire that effort is the absolute key to learning a subject. Talent and ability go to waste without effort. He stated that effort means reading to learn, striving to retain, applying material to life situations, and redoing, reading, and studying as often as necessary. When Roy operationalizes effort, he looks over the chapter to discover the main ideas, then he reads and highlights, reads the review points at the end of the chapter and checks to see if the answers are highlighted, and answers the self-test questions. On the LASSI (Figure 4 at the end of this article), Roy was above the 75th

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percentile in all ten categories in January, but in May he was below the 75th percentile in anxiety. His LASSI scores indicate that he used effective strategies in the other categories.

Roy's unit test scores were 83% on all three unit tests. Roy had a GPA of 3.8 at the beginning of the semester he received a B+ in Introduction to Psychology.

## Results

### Strengths and Weaknesses of Four Students in a Conceptually Difficult Course

Memorization was the main study strategy utilized by the four students in this study. The textbook, *Introduction to Psychology* by D. Coon, was difficult for the participants to read so they did not read the assigned chapters. They only read the summaries at the end of the chapters, certain sections within the chapters to answer the chapter objectives, and bold face print. The students were like the surface learners described in Entwistle and Ramsden (1983) who were "game players" trying to guess the questions on the unit tests. If they viewed the assignment as too difficult, they would skip the assignment. For an example, one participant did not understand the textbook and therefore did not read it or write the summaries. Another participant could not understand the application questions in the workbook and did not complete that section. Since reciprocal teaching involved reading the textbook, reciprocal teaching was not utilized as taught after the first unit text. The participants chose another method of study.

The change participants made in study strategies during the semester when they were presented and demonstrated were from one surface strategy to another. Surface strategies as defined by Saljo, and reported in Gibbs, Morgan, and Taylor (1982) include memorizing, acquiring facts, and learning terms. Examples of surface learning that the participants utilized were memorizing the responses to the objectives from the chapters that the professor gave them to guide their studying, selective reading of the textbook, looking up answers to questions, learning terms with bold face print, and memorizing their notes.

The participants were looking for the necessary facts and principles they needed to learn in order to pass the unit tests. There was very little application of psychological theory in their lives. One example was when they read the chapter on memory. Study strategies were in the chapter and they were taught, but the participants did not want to apply new strategies while studying. This is similar to a description of a student Rose (1989) described who was failing chemistry. The student Rose described could "memorize facts and formulas but not use them to solve problems" (p. 190).

One thing that seems important is that the surface strategies participants used may have contributed to their own "deskilling". Bintz (1993) refers to students who use surface level strategies rather than deep level strategies as contributing to their own deskilling. When students try to pass a course by memorizing facts and terms rather than understanding and

applying concepts they are depriving themselves of a learning opportunity. Their method of memorization will more likely be repeated in the future because of their past utilization and familiarity with the memorization skill. Students learned to utilize better techniques, but since these took more effort they chose not to use them as their primary motivation appeared to be merely passing the course with as little effort as necessary to get an acceptable grade.

The participants use of surface learning is further exemplified by their misuse of chapter objectives as study guides. The participants used the answers for material to be memorized rather than looking up related concepts in the textbook. This focused memorization strategy was also evident in a study by Marton and reported in Gibbs, Morgan, and Taylor (1982) that described the student's use of in-text questions. Marton noted that when students utilized in-text questions they used surface level processing. When students need to incorporate deep level strategies to aid better understanding of a textbook the questions need to come from the reader's background of knowledge and experience. Marton sees his research as helping teachers understand that it is important for students to ask their own questions and for teachers to be aware of how students conceptualize the subject matter.

In summary, the study strategies of the participants in the current study were surface level learning strategies. When they changed their strategies they tended to change to another surface strategy. When they viewed studying as difficult, they tended to skip that assignment. The participants thought that if they memorized the terms, chapter objectives, and notes they would do well on the test. They were not aware that they should be rehearsing, organizing, and elaborating their understanding of concepts in the chapters.

#### **Four Students Application of Reciprocal Teaching Strategies to an Introduction to Psychology Textbook with Instruction, Demonstration and Practice**

During the first unit the participants were beginning to utilize reciprocal teaching in their study group. However, after the first unit test they did not perceive that reciprocal teaching was helpful so they chose other study strategies. This decision by the participants is consistent with Saljo's description of students' concepts of learning as reported in Gibbs, Morgan and Taylor (1982). The participants' decision not to read the textbook made sense to them because they believed that learning was memorizing and acquiring facts. They also believed that the facts they needed to memorize were in their notes and the answers to the chapter objectives. They did, however, look in the textbooks for information on their chapter objectives. So they did selective textbook reading to look for answers to the objectives. This is also consistent with Bintz (1993) who noted that teachers operate on the assumption that reading is an integral part of content area courses, but students report that assigned reading is not meaningful or relevant to their personal lives. And, in addition, students believe that classes require "little more than routinized identification and memorization of isolated facts from texts" (p. 613).

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The summaries, questions and class discussion early in the semester as participants were learning reciprocal teaching showed progress. After the participants chose not to utilize reciprocal teaching, the responses indicate an increase in factual questions, lack of summaries, and the class discussion included fewer integration statements at the end of the semester than at the beginning.

#### **Four Students Transfer of Reading and Learning Strategies to Other Classes**

With the exception of Roy and Molly who utilized the application questions for the last test and spaced their study time, the participants appeared to use the strategy of memorization and cramming on all their subjects. These were the same strategies they said they used at the beginning of the semester. It was difficult for them to change to more effective strategies.

Participants stated that choosing isolated facts and memorizing them is a strategy they utilize in all their classes. They were comfortable with this strategy and the strategy had been effective in their previous classes. When their test scores were not as high as they had hoped for, they looked for different material to memorize for the next test. When different, effective strategies were demonstrated, they tried them if they were not too difficult and if they thought they were effective, used them. This is consistent with Palmer and Goetz (1988) who noted that when students feel a strategy is too difficult they refuse to utilize that strategy. However, when they did not think they were helpful or too difficult, they chose not to use them. The participants' choices of study strategies confirm the results in Entwistle and Ramsden (1983) who described students' choices of strategies as a relationship between context of learning and the approaches students use.

Some small changes did surface. For example, one participant stated that he planned to use a study guide that goes with a textbook when one is provided in the future. He also believed that the application questions were better preparation for the unit tests than memorizing the chapter objectives. In addition, he plans to think of life examples whenever he can in all future classes. Another participant plans to read summaries at the end of the chapters when they are available.

The participants did utilize reading and learning strategies that they thought effective in obtaining their desired grade. Basically, they looked for information they thought was going to appear on tests in all subjects rather than organizing and understanding the information. This confirms the research done by Nist, Sharman, and Holschuh (1996) to determine students' transfer of strategy instruction to other courses. The Nist study found that students seemed to prefer rereading a text to applying or modifying the more effective strategies they were taught.

### Changes in Study Strategies Four Students Made with Instruction and Demonstration

Although there were a variety of changes, the dominant one was using the chapter objectives as the basis of selecting material to memorize. They used these as a guide to their studying. The chapter objectives guided them in which sections of the textbook to read and what material to memorize for tests.

As the semester progressed, the participants became more selective in choosing sections of the textbook to read. One participant said that he now focuses on bold face print and italics. He also spends more time with the study guide.

All of the participants became more aware of time management. They tried to space out their study. However, they still crammed for tests. Some of the participants became aware of certain times of the day when they were more alert and concentrated their study during that time.

The significant factor in participants choosing or not choosing a strategy was how they thought it would help them achieve their desired grade. One participant noted that he had not achieved his desired grade on the first two unit tests and decided to change his strategy when studying for the third test. This information indicates that students are persistent in using surface level strategies and hope that changing from one surface level strategy to another surface level strategy will help them improve their grade. Also, if the strategy seemed too difficult, they did not use the strategy. This is consistent with Palmer and Goetz (1988) who noted that when students feel a strategy is too difficult they refuse to utilize the strategy.

### Importance of the Study

This study gathered qualitative information, which focused on the utilization of student's study strategies. The results can potentially help instructors in their awareness of how students learn and comprehend the content of their courses. The findings in this study can help college instructors in their understanding of how difficult it is to get some students to change their study strategies and to engage in deep-level processing of course material. In a study by Sherman (1991) describing a two-year project to improve learning strategies of college freshmen, he noted that when content instructors did not provide extensive support of the strategies taught in study strategies classes, the students did not utilize the new strategies. In the psychology class these students were taking, the instructor gave the students chapter objectives for review. The students perceived that defining the objectives was all that was necessary to pass the course. In effect, this meant that they did not need to read the entire chapter or utilize reciprocal teaching, but only needed to learn the material on the course objective sheet. This study indicates that students need to see a correlation between a study strategy and their final grade before they will utilize the strategy. The study also implies that the way an instructor organizes a class determines to some extent how the

students will study reluctant readers.

Figure 1. Molly's LASSI

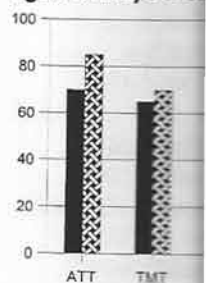


Figure 2. Nevin's LASSI

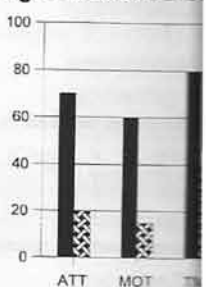
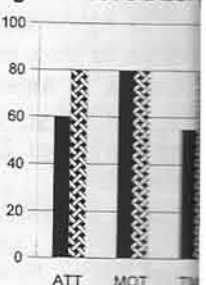


Figure 3. Bob's LASSI

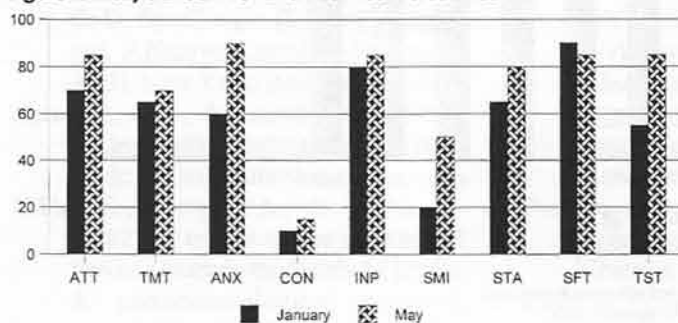


ATT - attitude and interest  
 MOT - motivation, diligence, study  
 TMT - use of time management  
 ANX - anxiety and worry about  
 CON - concentration and attention  
 INP - information processing  
 SMI - selecting main ideas and  
 STA - use of support techniques  
 SFT - self-testing, reviewing, and  
 TST - test strategies and preparation

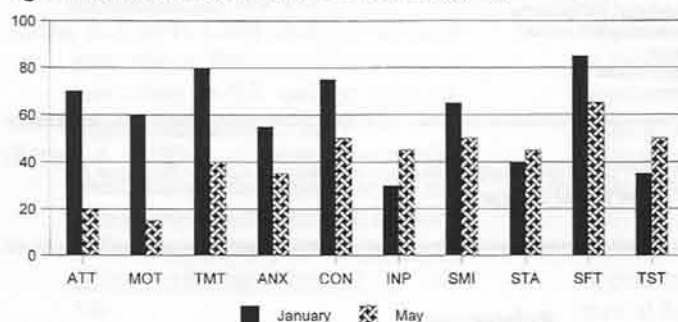


students will study for the class. This information is helpful to college faculty working with reluctant readers.

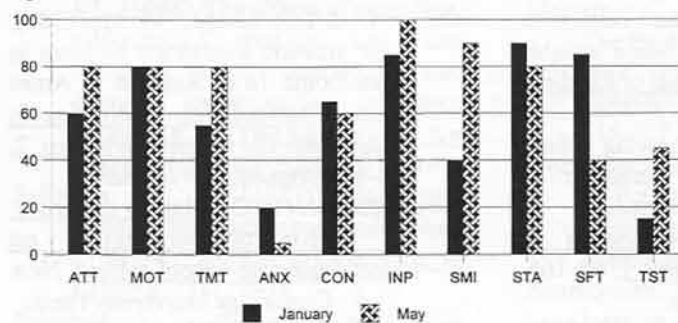
**Figure 1. Molly's LASSI Pre- and Post-Test Percentiles**



**Figure 2. Nevin's LASSI Pre- and Post-Test Percentiles**



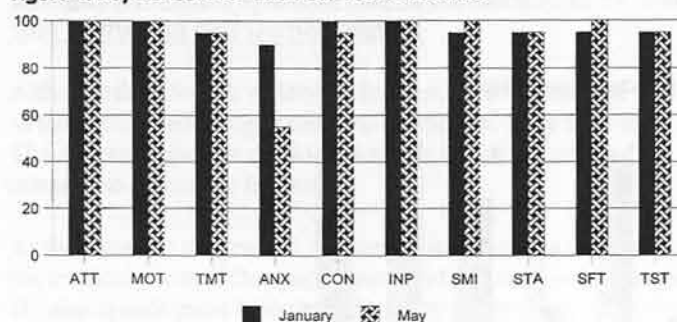
**Figure 3. Bob's LASSI Pre- and Post-Test Percentiles**



- ATT - attitude and interest
- MOT - motivation, diligence, self-discipline, and willingness to work hard
- TMT - use of time management principles for academic tasks
- ANX - anxiety and worry about school performance
- CON - concentration and attention to academic tasks
- INP - information processing, acquiring knowledge, and reasoning
- SMI - selecting main ideas and recognizing important information
- STA - use of support techniques and materials
- SFT - self-testing, reviewing, and preparing for classes
- TST - test strategies and preparing for tests



Figure 4. Roy's LASSI Pre- and Post-Test Percentiles



ATT - attitude and interest  
 MOT - motivation, diligence, self-discipline, and willingness to work hard  
 TMT - use of time management principles for academic tasks  
 ANX - anxiety and worry about school performance  
 CON - concentration and attention to academic tasks  
 INP - information processing, acquiring knowledge, and reasoning  
 SMI - selecting main ideas and recognizing important information  
 STA - use of support techniques and materials  
 SFT - self-testing, reviewing, and preparing for classes  
 TST - test strategies and preparing for tests

*Julia Beyeler, Ph.D., is the Director of learning Support Services and Adjunct Faculty Professor in Education at the University of Akron Wayne College.*

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## EXPANDING DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION SERVICES: SEEKING FACULTY INPUT

By Jeanne L. Higbee, Pamela V. Thomas, Christopher G. Hayes, Ann S. Glauser, and Cynthia R. Hynd, *The University of Georgia*

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### Abstract

In the current legislative and educational climate of budget parings and close scrutiny of developmental education programs, many developmental educators find themselves battling to preserve the integrity or the very existence of their programs. Other programs, however, use the varied expertise of their faculty to expand programs and services for all students on their campuses and, thus, further demonstrate the program's essential contributions to the educational mission of their institutions. This article reports the efforts of one developmental education program to seek faculty input regarding the provision of services.

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The mission of developmental education is changing. For many years practitioners limited their vision to serving under prepared or high risk students, using the terms "remedial" and "developmental" interchangeably to describe how and whom they taught (Clowes, 1982; Higbee, 1993, 1996). Today's leaders in developmental education are responding to current trends in higher education and paving new pathways for the future. Patricia Cross (1996) states,

There aren't many people on campus these days wearing rose-colored glasses. There aren't many who are blind to the criticisms coming from legislators, the media, and the general public. But higher education still has a serious vision problem. It has lost its focus on student learning. I believe it is time to develop some new lenses that will bring student learning back into view. (p. 4)

Similarly, David Arendale, past president of the National Association for Developmental Education (NADE), asserts, "There is a major paradigm shift occurring in higher education. After a long period of time of focusing on teaching, there is a healthy shift to focusing on learning" (1997, p. 1). He continues,

Another trend impacting upon higher education is a change in the focus of student academic support and enrichment. In the past, some institutions focused their attention by serving only students at the far extremes, developmental students and honors students. I think that the new trend will be to assist all students at the institution to achieve academic excellence and persistence toward achievement of their academic degrees. (p. 1)

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Who better to lead this change in focus than developmental educators?

Alexander Astin (1985) promotes the talent development model for higher education. He proposes that rather than placing primary emphasis on students' skills upon matriculation, institutions should focus on how they can promote the development of each student enrolled. Developmental educators possess the expertise to contribute to many aspects of the learning environment and to be instrumental in assisting students who strive to achieve to their fullest potential.

In keeping with the new mission of developmental education, NADE (1996) adopted a new definition statement:

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.

Similarly, NADE (1996) adopted a new goals statement that focuses on educational opportunity "for each postsecondary learner.... To develop in each learner the skills and attitudes necessary for the attainment of academic, career, and life goals.... To enhance the retention of students."

A review of recent literature reflects the expansion of the mission of developmental education to include providing services for specific populations, such as adult learners (Chumchal, 1996; Craig, 1997; Friedman, 1997), non-native speakers (Friedman, 1996), and students with disabilities (Kalivoda, Higbee, & Brenner, 1997; Schnapp, 1995). The new definition of developmental education includes services for all students on campus, such as supplemental instruction (Peled & Kim, 1995; Romoser, Rich, Williford, & Kousaleous, 1997; Visor, Johnson, Schollaert, Good Mojab, & Davenport, 1995), linked courses (Blinn & Sisco, 1997; Weinstein, 1995), and tutorial services (Krabbe & Krabbe, 1995). Several recent articles provide models for more comprehensive services and programs (Commander, Stratton, Callahan, & Smith, 1996; Farmer & Barham, 1996; Hendrix, Edenfield, & Alberton, 1995; Stratton, Commander, Callahan, & Smith, 1996).

### Statement of Purpose

In many states politicians are questioning the provision of developmental courses at postsecondary institutions, especially at research universities. They resent the notion of "paying twice" to prepare students for college. Many believe that if the high schools do not provide adequate preparation, it may be necessary to include developmental education in the mission of the two-year institution, from which students can transfer to four-year colleges and universities. Developmental education program faculty members feel threatened, concerned that their jobs are in jeopardy. At the University of Georgia, the administration and faculty chose the proactive rather than reactive stance. In the last five years, the Division



of Academic Assistance has made extensive changes in course offerings and expanded services, and has changed its name from the Division of Developmental Studies to reflect its mission in serving the academic needs of all students on the campus, not merely those considered at risk at the time of admission. The specific skills and instructional expertise of the faculty are being put to use in offering new courses to the student body as a whole on such topics as problem solving and writing research papers, as well as leading workshops, conducting adjunct seminars, supervising Academic Center personnel, conducting review sessions for core curriculum classes, providing individual and group counseling, and making classroom presentations.

In 1996 the Division of Academic Assistance at the University of Georgia received a semester conversion grant to determine how the Division might serve the University under the semester system and to determine other populations that the Division might serve. Although the initial purpose of the grant was to explore how to assist students and faculty in making the transition to the semester system, the committee members appointed to fulfill this task soon realized that the information they were gathering would be invaluable in developing recommendations for the future of the Division in general. The purpose of this effort was to determine students' academic needs as perceived by University faculty and how best to prepare students for a changing academic environment.

### Method

The committee constructed a one-page, two-sided questionnaire that was disseminated to a random sample of 50% of the faculty at the rank of assistant professor or above. The committee also created a one-page description of Division services to enclose with the questionnaire. An accompanying cover letter explained the questionnaire.

### Faculty Questionnaire Results

Of the 612 questionnaires mailed to faculty members in mid-June, eight were returned uncompleted because the faculty member had either retired or resigned. The number of returned completed questionnaires was 75, for a response rate of 12%. Although low, this figure is not surprising due to the unavailability over the summer months of many faculty members who hold nine month appointments. The 75 respondents represented more than 46 different academic departments and programs from most of the schools and colleges of the University. However, it should be noted that these respondents may not be representative of the faculty as a whole. Instead, they may represent faculty who show an interest in the purpose and services of the Division.

### Elements of Instruction

More than one-third of the faculty responding perceived that, because of the change from quarters to semesters, there would be a greater emphasis on the following elements of instruction: reading assignments, 57%; research paper writing, 55%; quantity of reading

materials. Although instructional materials would be used, they would de

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materials, 55%; critical thinking skills, 41%; problem solving, 41%; and essay writing, 40%. Although 41% of the respondents believed that changes in emphasis on various elements of instruction would not affect the level of difficulty in their classes, 27% thought their courses would be more difficult as a result of these changes, and 29% thought the level of difficulty would depend on the individual student.

### **Current Areas of Difficulty**

The areas in which the largest number of faculty members indicated that students are currently experiencing the greatest difficulty are critical thinking (i.e., using higher level thinking skills); essay exams; writing research papers; reading assignments; and problem solving. The high proportion of faculty expressing concern about current problems in the use of critical thinking skills becomes even more notable considering that 41% believed that there would be greater emphasis on this element of instruction following the conversion to the semester system. Complete results of this section of the questionnaire are provided in Table 1 below.

**Table 1. Current Areas of Difficulty for Students as Identified by Faculty**

<b>Skills Area</b>	<b>% of Faculty Responses*</b>
Critical thinking (using higher level thinking skills)	67%
Essay exams	52%
Research paper writing	48%
Reading assignments	41%
Problem solving	41%
Essay writing	39%
Motivation	35%
Time management	35%
Lecture note taking	27%
Test anxiety	24%
Objective tests	23%
Stress management	17%
Homework assignments	16%
Summary writing	16%
Reaction papers	16%

Skills Area	% of Faculty Responses*
Laboratory write-ups	13%
* Faculty were asked, "in which of the following areas are students currently experiencing difficulty in your classes? Check all that apply."	

### Current Use of the Division's Services

Perhaps the most informative result of this section of the questionnaire was the realization that many of the respondents had little or no prior knowledge of the variety of programs and services provided by the Division of Academic Assistance. Faculty respondents made numerous comments on this section, ranging from "I don't know" to "I will certainly recommend these services to my students in the future." The committee hopes that participation in this survey will enhance faculty knowledge of the services provided and result in an increase in faculty referrals. Table 2 provides the results of this section of the questionnaire.

Table 2. Use of Division Services as Perceived by Faculty

	Currently Used	Provided by Home Department	Helpful in Future
UNV Courses	9%	1%	25%
Academic Center	11%	4%	19%
Tutorial Service	21%	9%	17%
Academic Success Series	5%	0%	20%
Adjunct Seminars	3%	5%	13%
Review Sessions	11%	13%	11%
Writing and Grammar Workshops	11%	8%	27%
Classroom Presentations	3%	9%	19%
Group and Individual Counseling	11%	12%	21%

Another important outcome of this section of the questionnaire is the knowledge that despite some services being provided by the respondents' home departments (e.g., review sessions, classroom presentations, and tutorial services), fewer than 13% of the respondents indicated overlapping services in any area. Thus, it appears appropriate that the Division of Academic Assistance continue to provide these programs.

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### High Achievers Versus Low Achievers

Faculty members agreed about characteristics and behaviors that distinguish high achievers from low achievers. Of the 75 respondents, 85% checked motivation to achieve, 84% indicated the ability to use higher level thinking skills, 81% chose daily preparation for class, 81% selected class attendance, and 67% checked general academic aptitude. Complete results from this section of the questionnaire are provided in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Characteristics and Behaviors That Distinguish Between High and Low Achievers

Characteristics of Behavior	% of Faculty Responses*
Motivation to achieve	85%
Ability to use higher level thinking skills	84%
Daily preparations for class	81%
Class attendance	81%
General academic aptitude	67%
In-class preparation	56%
Effective use of study strategies	52%
Effective time management	52%
Note taking skills	45%
Test-taking skills	45%
Aptitude in subject area	39%
Test anxiety	11%

\* Faculty were asked to check all that apply.

### Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on questionnaire results. As we anticipated, many of the recommendations are not directly related to semester conversion. Although the upcoming change in the academic calendar provided the source of funds for this research, the committee perceived this as an opportunity to seek any feedback from faculty that would enhance the provision of services for students and for the institution as a whole. The recommendations reflect perceived needs, some of which will be heightened by the conversion from ten week quarters to fifteen week semesters.

### **Publicity**

There were many suggestions regarding publicizing Academic Assistance programs and services. In general, feedback indicated that many faculty members were not aware of our existence beyond the outdated image of the Division of Developmental Studies (i.e., providing a limited number of courses to students who were specifically targeted for services at the time of admission). Like many developmental education programs, the Division of Academic Assistance needs to do more to acquaint all facets of the University community with the classes and services provided under its umbrella. The committee recommended that the Division take steps to create a stronger identity on campus. Specific suggestions are as follow:

1. Assign a staff member to visit academic departments at the beginning of each academic year to speak with faculty about the Division's programs and services.
2. Develop a sophisticated publicity piece (e.g., brochure) to distribute to faculty, students, parents, and other services on campus that might provide referrals.
3. Participate in summer orientation. Lead a workshop for parents, who will then encourage their students to take advantage of the Division's services. Provide specific information about fall courses and programs.
4. Create a monthly newsletter to highlight services, publicize course offerings, and remind students and faculty regarding upcoming workshops. Devise a distribution system for the newsletter.
5. Establish a web site for the Division to advertise services and give study tips.
6. Network with the Housing Office to meet student's academic needs. Work together with Resident Assistants to provide centralized workshops.
7. Work with the Office of Instructional Support and Development (OISD) to educate faculty about how students learn. Share with the faculty a profile of attitudes and characteristics of current University students. Present seminars in the OISD luncheon series. Publish an article about programs and services in the OISD newsletter.
8. Seek invitations for faculty involvement on campus committees that influence policy formulation at the University.
9. Set up a system that would automatically mail a student with a low grade point average information about the Division's services.

### **Formal Cu**

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10. Establish and publish electronic mail (e-mail) addresses for all faculty in order to open another channel of communication with students, faculty, and staff throughout the campus.

### **Formal Curriculum: Courses and Adjunct Seminars**

At the current time the Division offers courses under two acronyms. Academic Assistance (ACA) courses in English, mathematics, and reading are required on the basis of placement testing. In addition, any student who places in two or more ACA classes must also enroll in an ACA counseling course. University (UNV) courses are electives offered for institutional credit only. The Division faculty also lead adjunct seminars that are paired with specific sections of core curriculum courses. Some of the recommendations related to courses and adjunct seminars included scheduling courses and adjunct seminars a full year in advance and making listings available to advisors and students for planning purposes. This practice would enable a student who is required to take American History, for example, to decide which semester to enroll depending upon when an adjunct seminar is scheduled. It would also allow students to plan to take special UNV offerings (e.g., Introduction to the Research Paper) in conjunction with other courses when it would prove most beneficial. Another recommendation was to expand UNV course offerings to include one, two, or three institutional credit hour courses on such topics as critical thinking, learning in a diverse academic environment, writing in the disciplines, preparation for statistics, and algebra review.

### **Workshops**

Faculty members throughout the University made numerous suggestions for the expansion of workshops. The Division currently offers one or more workshops per week, usually in the late afternoon, as part of its Academic Success Series. Topics include learning styles, note taking, time management, motivation, test anxiety, and writing the dissertation, to name but a few. The Division also provides a series of grammar workshops. Specific recommendations included: (a) conducting mathematics workshops on specific topics, such as fractions, exponents, or negative numbers; (b) developing review workshops for standardized admission exams for graduate and professional schools and investigating published computer programs for standard test review; (c) providing workshops on topics related to academic honesty, including how to avoid plagiarism; (d) creating new workshops on topics like how to study a foreign language, and classroom self-advocacy skills; (e) developing workshops for specific course needs; (f) meeting with disabilities support groups to provide workshops on topics such as test taking strategies; (g) providing a series of workshops specifically for international students.

### **Classroom Presentations**

The committee recommended that Academic Assistance faculty make themselves available to provide classroom presentations throughout campus as requested by faculty from various

schools and colleges of the University. A current example is test anxiety desensitization for the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) in American Language Program classes. Other suggestions included having Academic Assistance English or reading faculty instruct students on writing in-class essay exams or term papers or having reading faculty teach students note taking strategies specific to particular classes. Counseling faculty could provide relaxation training for public speaking courses or test anxiety reduction for any course on campus. In the fall an ACA math faculty member began conducting a special algebra review for astronomy students.

### **Group and Individual Counseling**

The Division is unusual in that there are three full-time permanent counseling faculty who teach courses, lead workshops, and counsel students on issues related to the affective domain. Based on faculty feedback, the committee recommended an expansion of services, especially for students seeking assistance with time management and adapting preferred learning styles to a traditionally text and lecture teaching environment. The committee encouraged enhanced services for international students and adult learners.

### **Academic Center**

The Division recently relocated to a renovated building that now houses an Academic Center on the first floor. Traditionally, the Division had maintained a lab that served only developmental students. The Center is currently initiating programs to serve the entire University community.

Two of the recommendations related to the Academic Center can be implemented with minimal additional expenditure or personnel. The first is to contact other academic departments regarding the placement of practicum and internship students in the Academic Center to provide individualized assistance to students, especially in areas like the development of reading and writing skills, time management, and stress management. The second recommendation is to investigate the possibility of networking the Academic Center's resources to the computer labs provided throughout campus. Other recommendations included purchasing software in academic areas where "gaps" are foreseen and offering more individualized assessment and study programs on the computers in the Academic Center, such as standardized test preparation, learning style assessments, and grammar review for those taking a foreign language. The committee also suggested establishing study groups for high risk courses, possibly forming study groups that pair exemplary and probationary students.

### **Tutorial Services**

The committee recommended that Tutorial Services should continue to be staffed by peer professionals who will engage in tutoring for specific courses, while the Academic Center should house graduate students and professional staff who will provide more general

assistance in skill development. The committee proposed expanding offerings to include tutoring for all high risk core curriculum courses and using members of honoraries and service groups to expand the number of tutors at a minimum cost.

### Future Directions

Rather than being in the position of justifying its existence, the Division of Academic Assistance at the University of Georgia is engaged in developing new programs and initiating new relationships with other departments and services. The information the Semester Conversion Grant Committee acquired through faculty questionnaires supports existing programs and the need for expanded services, even at the cost of additional resources. Through this process the committee has gained insights regarding faculty perceptions of the Division and the need for publicizing programs and services. It has received feedback and ideas for new programs and for improving or expanding upon current services, and has made contacts throughout campus to assist in implementing future goals.

The Division has made significant changes in response to the findings of the Semester Conversion Grant Committee. A new committee has drafted a revised mission statement. Although maintaining their separate identities and functions, Tutorial Services and the Academic Center are now coordinated by the same staff member, who has initiated a new intake procedure to ensure that students receive the assistance they seek. A \$100,000 computer network funded by a technology grant has been installed in the Academic Center and the Division has created its own web site. Recent publicity has also included a front page article in *Teaching at UGA*, a campus-wide publication. New elective courses in "Topics in Problem Solving," and "Enhancing Thinking Skills" are so popular that the instructors maintain waiting lists for students seeking to enroll during the drop-add period.

The Division continues to rely on faculty feedback as it plans for the future. New semester courses recently proposed to the University-wide curriculum committee include "Improving Grammar, Usage, and Style," "Basic Report Writing for College and Beyond," "Preparation for Statistics Based Courses," "Resources for Research," "Preparation for Pre-Calculus," "Text Comprehension and Vocabulary Improvement," "Improving Reading Rate," "University Success for Freshmen," and "Basic Composition for Multilingual Writers," as well as "Topics in Academic Assistance" for piloting new course ideas. The Division is also re-examining the benefits of required versus elective courses for high risk students. For Fall 1998 the counseling component has dropped its required course in order to be able to expand elective offerings for all students.

The Division of Academic Assistance at the University of Georgia provides a new model for developmental education programs at research universities. By seeking faculty feedback the Division has established a campus-wide support network that has played a vital role in shaping future directions.

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Jeanne L. Higbee, Pamela V. Thomas, Christopher G. Hayes, Ann S. Glauser, and Cynthia R. Hynd  
are faculty in the Division of Academic Assistance at The University of Georgia.

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## AN INTERVIEW WITH MARTHA MAXWELL

By Jadwiga Piper, National-Louis University

Recently I had the opportunity to talk to Martha Maxwell. In her fifty year career in learning assistance, Dr. Maxwell founded learning centers, taught students, and mentored learning center professionals. She is a consultant, a book editor, and the author of five books: Skimming and Scanning Improvement (1968), Improving Student Learning Skills (1978), Evaluating Academic Skills Program: A Source Book (1991, 1996); and her most recent work, Improving Student Learning Skills (1997) is reviewed in this journal.

As a new practitioner in the field of Developmental Education, I wanted to learn more about how it started and where she sees it going. I asked for her thoughts on the recent attempts at privatization; we touched on the chronic funding problems; and we discussed the ongoing question of developmental education's role on college campuses.

I found myself wanting to ask more questions as the conversation progressed, but time and space limited us. The following conversation provides her insights on the above issues.

**Question:** What attracted you to the field of adult education?

**MM:** I just sort of grew up with it. I left college at the beginning of World War II and returned to finish my bachelor's degree four years later along with the returning G.I.s who commented, "Martha, you still here!" So, I was a returning student myself. I dropped out of college during my junior year, after World War II started, to go to work to help my husband through medical school—later, the navy helped him. Then, in 1947 I studied for a Master's degree in counseling, working mainly with returning G.I.s who were trying to decide on college majors or careers. We found that many of those who were back in college needed a lot of help in study skills, so I got some experience working with them. My first job after I finished my degree was at the American University Counseling Center. I was told, "By the way, Martha, as part of the job, you are expected to teach a night course in reading improvement to adults." At that point I did not know anything about reading, but who was I to turn down such a huge offer—\$3,000 for a 12-month appointment.

Fortunately, my graduate school advisor had been teaching that same reading course, so he loaned me his notes, all on 3 x 5 cards to get me started. The class was a challenging one with students who ranged in background from the Deep South with minimal reading skills to a navy captain, who was a graduate of the Naval Academy. That is when I learned to individualize teaching.

Also, the American University president ordered me to start a reading lab because he thought the students needed to become better and faster readers. He had been sold a "reading machine" with blinking red and green lights and a sliding shutter that moved down to cover

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the page you were reading at different rates, but you had to tear all of the pages out of the book to read them on the machine. Needless to say, students never used the machine! When I commented that a reading lab needed some books and other reading materials, he reached over and handed me a stack of *The Communist Daily Worker*. Realize that this was in Washington, D.C. in the middle of the McCarthy hearings, and the FBI was rumored to be spread throughout our classes trying to locate flaming faculty liberals.

After another hiatus to have children, I returned to the University of Maryland where I taught reading and study skills to developmental students. We did not call them developmental students, but rather, "special and continuing education students." All had less than a "C" average in their high school courses and most were returning servicemen. I stayed in that position about 5 years and then set up a reading and study skills lab for all students at the University of Maryland.

**QUESTION:** Why did these men, I assume they were mostly men, come back to college? Were they seeking professional degrees or trying to get good blue collar jobs? Also, what was the gender make up of your students at that time?

**MM:** After the war, ex-servicemen could attend college or any school of their choice under the G.I. bill which paid for career counseling and tutoring services, as well as tuition fees. Many, if not most, were young men who had not planned on college but expected to return to the farm or some other job after the war. Others had been college students but had been called into service, disrupting their college plans, or were now able financially to attend graduate school. There were very few women in the service during World War II; in fact, I do not believe I counseled more than one or two women ex-G.I.s. During the war, women took defense jobs, like Rosie the Riveter, to free up men to go into combat.

**QUESTION:** Who particularly influenced or mentored you?

**MM:** My MA thesis director, Denzel Smith, was the son-in-law of a famous psychologist who studied reading, Guy T. Buswell. He helped me get started teaching the reading course I mentioned earlier.

**QUESTION:** How is adult education different now from when you first started practicing?

**MM:** There are many more programs in colleges and many professional organizations to support developmental education and learning assistance practitioners. It is becoming a profession with program standards and guidelines (e.g., CAS Standards for Learning Assistance Programs), and publications, but still there are only three or four universities that offer specific graduate training for people entering the field. It is still pretty much a matter of getting a job and learning what to do on the job as I did when I started in 1948.

I do not see much difference in the students, although there continue to be more of them. There are far more educational opportunities and choices for those who want to attend

college, like closed circuit TV, distance education, on-line courses, and the many national private colleges who are competing for adult students such as the University of Phoenix, Strayer University, and so on. Terms have changed, we did not talk about learning disabilities, educationally disadvantaged, etc.

QUESTION: Why were these needs/conditions not talked about?

MM: In those days, students with learning problems such as dyslexia were usually considered lazy even though the Orton studied and taught students with what was called minimal brain dysfunction. No one talked about making allowances for students with disabilities, neither physical nor mental, though there were many students with such problems. Learning disabilities were generally ignored or the student was thought to be dumb or lazy.

It was very difficult to get grant funding or research money for working with under prepared students in the 1950s. Government funding groups were interested mainly in doing more for the upper 10% as a result of the competition between the United States and Russia which began when they launched their first Sputnik. All of our outside grant requests for improving the skills of marginal students were denied.

QUESTION: Has the field stayed true to its purpose?

MM: Yes. There is no dearth of students who need to improve their learning skills; in fact, the number of students needing to improve their basic reading, writing, and mathematics skills has increased tremendously as the percentages of high school graduates have grown in our population.

QUESTION: What do you think is its purpose?

MM: Its purpose is to give those who want further education or have not been motivated previously an opportunity to go on to college, change careers, etc. The euphemism "developmental education" did not become popular until the 1950s, so we called students who entered college with below "C" high school averages "on-trial students" and enrolled them in a separate college called "Special and Continuing Education."

Some things have changed little, one being the propensity for administrators and politicians to make it more difficult for under prepared students to achieve. One of my staff members from 35 years ago has been teaching ABE [Adult Basic Education] via television for decades. His experiences illustrate what I mean. Although his TV literacy programs were doing well, producing 100-150 graduates per year, administrators decided to cut back the program. First, they scheduled it during the noon hour and enrollment dropped; then they changed the program to once a week and this further reduced the audience. He is persevering by putting videotapes in public libraries along with materials so those who know about the program can still use it.

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Recent political decisions like banning college for welfare recipients and cutting back on remedial college courses as CUNY [City University of New York] has done are further evidence that those in power think adult education is a waste of taxpayers' money.

**QUESTION:** How was the "separate college" separate? Where was it physically and who governed it?

**MM:** It was part of University Extension which is what the Adult Education branch of most universities is called. The director of the program was equivalent to the dean of the college. You will find a number of similar extension programs today where the director of developmental education is called the dean, e.g., University of Indiana-Purdue. We called our students "marginal students." Many were still returning veterans, but enrollment in the program escalated as more recent high school graduates were added. I stayed in the position about five years and then was asked to establish a reading and study skills laboratory in the Counseling Center for all University of Maryland students.

**QUESTION:** You refer to developmental education as a euphemism. Do you believe that it is simply a more positive term for something else or does it reflect a different philosophical approach? What does the term mean to you and how would you distinguish it from learning assistance?

**MM:** Unfortunately, developmental education has lost most of its original meaning. In the late 1950s, we considered developmental education a philosophy that applied to any student and assumed that all could improve their learning skills, and, in my university, we worked with a range of students from the weakest to the best. Unfortunately, more recently, developmental education has become a euphemism for remedial with all the negative connotations that word implies. So students with low scores or poor high school grades are required to pass college developmental skills classes or improve their grades on standardized tests before they can enroll in mainstream college courses. Today, students taking developmental courses are stigmatized; they usually resent taking the courses and both the students and teachers suffer. Another fact that detracts from its image is that in primary and secondary schools the term developmental education applies to programs for the mentally retarded. For example, in New York state, developmental education centers house the mentally retarded.

And the name changes continue. Programs, particularly those in public four-year institutions that are not permitted to offer remedial courses, disguise their developmental courses by renaming them achievement centers, transitional programs, etc. Virtually the same thing happened in the Midwest in the 1970s. Community colleges, forbidden by their state legislatures from offering remedial courses, renamed them "developmental" so they could continue to qualify for state funding.

Learning assistance has a broader meaning in that it refers to programs that offer academic skills help to all students—from freshmen to seniors and graduate students—from those who

need intensive work in reading to those preparing for graduate and professional examinations. Attendance in learning assistance programs tends to be voluntary and students in the program do not suffer from the stigma of being viewed as "dumb" as those taking remedial courses usually do.

QUESTION: In reading professional articles, I find that everyone has their own definition of "the under prepared student." How do you define such students?

MM: At the University of Maryland, like the University of Minnesota, which founded the General College in the 1930s, and Pennsylvania State University, which had a counseling college, programs were started as a result of public pressure to admit all high school graduates. At the University of Maryland we defined under prepared students as those who had not attained a "C" average in high school or who had failed college courses and were on probation.

QUESTION: Can you remember a student who made a particular impression on you?

MM: Many. One was a recent high school graduate whose father was head of a prominent real estate company. Jr. did not want to be in college; refused to study or participate in class; and flunked his first semester. Now, almost 45 years later, he is the head of his father's real estate empire and doing very well indeed. I often wonder how he handled his children when they got to college.

Many I still keep in touch with. They have gone on to teaching positions in high schools, universities or community colleges, or are working in a variety of businesses and are doing good things.

QUESTION: What is the worst advice you have ever received?

MM: As an undergraduate: "Don't major in psychology. Women do not have a chance in this field." (From the head of the psychology department.)

As a leader in the women's movement at Berkeley: "Don't worry, the FBI won't bother to tap your phone. They have better things to do with their time." (From a male friend.) P.S. They were tapping our phone conversations as we found out much later.

As a director of a learning center after I submitted my resignation: "Don't quit now on us. You are doing a terrific job!" (From my boss, an assistant vice chancellor.) Five months later the Vice Chancellor fired me. I fought it and stayed on for three more years.

QUESTION: What advice do you have for those of us just starting in the field, particularly considering the current trend of privatization of developmental education?

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**MM:** There will always be jobs for well-educated, capable learning professionals in college programs, and I hope that some of our best trained young people enter the private sector for they have much to contribute there. Often the privatized institutions are not so bound by tradition and attitudes about who can learn, so they can do a better job in encouraging and preparing students. In many colleges, learning skills program instructors feel that they are on the bottom of the academic hierarchy; they are overworked, suffer burnout, and get little recognition. Some of the private organizations lack the stigma that academia places on learning skills students and the faculty who teach them. You would then have more freedom to do a better job and be amply rewarded for it.

**QUESTION:** Which of your contributions to the field make you most proud?

**MM:** I have been rereading some of my earlier papers and find that most suggestions and results of studies are just as valid today as they were decades ago.

I have always been committed to including the student in his/her own diagnosis and in planning courses and programs to improve. Unless the student is motivated and understands what is needed, developmental programs will lead nowhere. Also, I believe that it takes different skills and strategies to teach adults than children and that college students are adults.

**QUESTION:** What has been your professional passion?

**MM:** I am most interested in the attitudinal, emotional, and motivational aspects of learning. These I consider equally important to exposure to good teaching and readable textbooks.

**QUESTION:** What do you see in the future of the field?

**MM:** There will always be students who will want and need some special help in adapting to college course demands. Some may need just to clarify their homework assignment or be reassured that their study approaches and habits are adequate. Others will need more intensive help on one or another aspect of their college work. After all, even if we raise standards and only admit highly qualified students, there is always a bottom 20%. Harvard has offered learning improvement services in its Bureau of Study Counsel for over 50 years and I doubt that they will abandon it in the future.

I do expect, however, that faculty in different subjects will integrate study skills in their introductory courses. This is already happening in some of the physical science departments where Ph.D. instructors are hired not only to teach basic courses like chemistry and physics but to work with students with problems, train tutors, help other faculty improve their courses so more students will learn. Supplemental Instruction (SI) in some colleges is offered by some academic departments, like biology, and regular faculty train SI leaders rather than folks in learning centers. Physics and chemistry professors as well as mathematicians are placing more emphasis on learning how students learn and how to

improve their teaching. Even some mathematics textbook authors are now offering a chapter on "how to study math" at the beginning of their books.

**QUESTION:** What is your opinion on the privatization attempts by Kaplan and Sylvan?

**MM:** I think competition in education is healthy and that they can do some things better than their counterparts in public colleges—we are often hindered by our perceived role on campus, and administrators often see our programs as the first to be cut and the last to be expanded.

Private agencies have more freedom to experiment; their instructors are more secure in their jobs; and they often have more money for necessary supplies, equipment, and space. The present political climate suggests that we will see more private organizations offering developmental education since many university systems like CUNY seem to be phasing them out. Eventually, employers or some other agency will have to pay for these programs. The American public has reached a point where they no longer are willing to pay for ever expanding colleges and universities as they have since World War II.

**QUESTION:** What would you like to accomplish, or direct someone else, to accomplish in the field?

**MM:** In 1948 I wrote a paper about improving the articulation between high school and college courses. Despite the 50 years that have passed, we still find students entering college without much information about, or skills on, how to study and how to learn. Sometimes efforts are made by college learning specialists to help high school students prepare for college in bridge programs or other special programs, but these reach only a small part of the students who eventually enroll in higher education. High schools, parents, and students must realize that today most students go to college. As many as 70% of high school graduates go on to college in some states—a far cry from the 1950s when only 10% went on to college.

Many of today's students are not ready for college and have not taken the appropriate preparatory courses but are certain that they will be admitted to some open-admission college. Hopefully this condition will change, although there is much to do to alter the ingrained attitudes of students and parents who feel that it does not matter what you learn in high school or what skills you have, all of your problems will be taken care of by remedial courses in college.

The need to bridge the gap between high school and college work is great if we want fewer students to fall by the wayside. We also need to place more emphasis on the importance of learning in the elementary grades. Too many parents believe that children should not be pushed or required to work hard when they are young, but that is when they are most responsive to learning new things and can build a solid basis for future learning. By the time they are in college it is often much too late.

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**QUESTION:** Learning centers have been your lifelong interest; where do you see them in the future?

**MM:** I think there will always be a need for an independent support program in large institutions where students can go to discuss their scholastic difficulties with supportive learning specialists who are not responsible for giving them grades. On-line courses and other aspects of distance education have a great deal of merit but cannot work alone. There must be some way for students to interact with each other and individually with a skills counselor as well as a professor. Almost all students may need help at some point in their college career. There should be no stigma attached to the services that provide it.

### In Conclusion

In many ways things have changed little in the past fifty years. It still is difficult to get funding, our work is often not valued, and we are frequently in the position to have to prove our contribution to the students' success in order to justify our existence.

On the other hand, more students attend college. The 60% increase in college attendance in some states since the 1950s mentioned here is what much of our work is about—providing educational opportunities to those who might otherwise not have them. Many students, such as the one mentioned by Martha, would not have made it through college without the assistance provided by dedicated learning center professionals. In recent years, we have developed professional standards for our work, and some universities offer professional degrees.

I would like to thank Martha Maxwell for providing her perspective on the issue of Adult Education. Her insight illuminates where the field has been, where it is currently and where it is going. Such a discussion is invaluable, because it allows us to see how the work of people in our field contributes to the success of adult learners.

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*Jadiga Piper, is a Coordinator in the Center for Academic Development at National-Louis University.*

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