SPECIAL REPORT

A CASE STUDY FROM SOUTH AFRICA

By Martha E. Casazza, National-Louis University

Introduction

This case study represents one of the research projects the author was involved in during her six month stay in Port Elizabeth, South Africa. It is quite striking how familiar this story looks. Elroy could be a student anywhere in the United States, or for that matter, anywhere in the world.

"You see a star in the sky and you want it but you are just hoping that one day it will fall down. But now like I've got a ladder, and I am on my way to get it." (Elroy Africander, August 2, 1999)

For Elroy, the University of Port Elizabeth Advancement Program (UPEAP) became the first rung in a ladder that he will continue to climb as he strives for his long held goals of owning his own computer company. Before his participation in UPEAP, however, that goal was a long way off. Half of his matric results (high school exit exams in content areas) were below 50%, and his performance at Vista University following matric (high school graduation) was, by his own description, "dismal". He knew two things for sure: he loved computers, and he liked the idea of owning his own company. What he didn't know was how to turn these interests into a personal reality. That's when he was invited into the UPEAP program.

Background

Following the end of apartheid, universities throughout South Africa were forced to open their doors to a wide range of students. Rather than simply accepting high achieving students from private academies, they suddenly had to grant access to students from a variety of secondary systems who spoke a multitude of languages. Students now enter the tertiary (postsecondary) system speaking one of twelve official languages and coming from schools that range from elitist college preparatory academies to township schools where there may be no electricity or books. In order to create a bridge for the students who arrive misprepared, universities are implementing a wide variety of support systems.

The University of Port Elizabeth (UPE) has a range of programs emanating from different departments designed to provide academic support to students, but the UPEAP program is the most comprehensive one. The UPEAP program was launched at UPE at the start of the 1999 academic year. One hundred and one students accepted the University's invitation to participate in this program that would help provide a foundation for further university study. Most of these students had applied for regular admission to the university but had failed to meet the traditional selection criteria. UPEAP would provide them with a second chance by offering one year of coursework along with a structured support system. Students were divided into small groups and scheduled all day every day. Everyone took an English course and a study skills/personal development course in addition to pre-college level content courses in either Commerce or the sciences. A small credit toward a future degree could be obtained by passing this coursework. Workshops were also required on a regular basis and addressed topics such as setting goals. Upon successful completion of this program, students would be admitted to one of three degree programs at the university. (Seventy of the one hundred and one students successfully completed the UPEAP program, and sixty subsequently enrolled in UPE as degree-seeking students.)

As a visiting Fulbright scholar at the University of Port Elizabeth in 1999, the author had the opportunity to be involved in one of the research projects developed to look at the program's effectiveness. Along with two colleagues, she designed a case study approach where each of them interviewed two students twice a term for about an hour each time. At the beginning of the first term, the researchers met with the program director, Prof. Maritz Snyders, to discuss the selection process for the six students. It was important for them to be as representative of the total group of 101 as possible in terms of gender, culture, and achievement level. To that end, three males and three females were chosen representing in equal numbers Black students and Afrikaans students. To determine achievement, instructors were asked to provide general indices of student progress for the first few weeks. Two students from each range of high, medium, and low were selected.

Once the six students had been selected, the three researchers met with them as a group to invite their participation in the study. The purpose was described along with the time commitment that would be required on the students' part. They were all told that participation was voluntary and that, if at any time during the study, they wanted to drop out, they were free to do so. The six all agreed enthusiastically to take part in the process.

The interviews began toward the end of the first term. A set of semi-structured questions (see Appendix A) was developed each term to cover the following areas of the students' lives: personal development, involvement in the UPEAP program, connection to the university in general, social life, and family. Each interview was audio taped and held in a private venue with only the student and the researcher present. Following the interview, the tape was literally transcribed and shared among the researchers. During third term, the researchers met to discuss common themes identified in the transcriptions and to agree on a format for writing the final case studies. They agreed to share the final reports with the students before disseminating them to others and also to solicit a written response from the students regarding the report.

Elroy Africander

"When I came here, I had to take some tests, and they weren't so good. I got a phone call and they told me I couldn't go into my program, but I could start in the UPEAP program. I was very upset, but my mother was right there when I got the phone call, and she told me it was okay ... At first I didn't think I wanted to come here; I would have gone somewhere else where I didn't need this program, but then I decided it was okay."

Elroy was reluctant about entering the University of Port Elizabeth (UPE) through the UPEAP program. He had already spent his first year after matric at Vista University where he did "poorly"; he had been totally unprepared for it. Elroy didn't want to experience Vista all over again.

Before applying to UPE, he had gone to the local library and researched universities to find the best one for him. He loved computers, perhaps in part because his father works with computers, and decided that UPE had "one of the best, THE best, computer technology program(s) around." Since he wants to someday own his own computer business, UPE sounded like a good fit to him. He decided that the UPEAP program might provide the opportunity he wanted at UPE.

Elroy described the first term as an "experiment phase," one where he became familiar with the campus and learned how to handle assignments and schedule his time. Even though he thought he knew how to study, he learned new strategies from the UPEAP program that helped him. His favorite was putting "little stickies" all over his wall at home with words that he needed to learn. He described the courses as "pretty easy" and expressed a concern that they needed to get harder in order to prepare him for the following year. In spite of this, by the end of the first term he was expressing how much ahead of the new students he would be in his second year and also how much his self confidence has grown.

One thing that he missed first term was having a teacher he could call at any time with questions related to work or even personal problems. He had someone like this in high school and felt it had made a big difference to him. Even though he had been out of high school for over a year, Elroy still stayed in contact with this teacher who had been a mentor for him.

Elroy often referred to individuals who comprised his personal support system. His mother is a regular source of support for him. He lived at home, and he told of how each day she would ask him about school and would try to "get me motivated" on the day of a test. He described studying in the evening at his "mother's long kitchen table," and when I asked what his mother did, Elroy said, "She likes to take care of us."

A significant source of support for Elroy at school in the UPEAP program is the counselor. He expressed very strongly that going to the counselor at least once or twice should be "compulsory" for every student in the program. His first appointment with the UPEAP counselor was at the start of the second term when he felt his energy was not the same as it had been. "This energy slump causes me to think I have to motivate myself. I actually had

a session with the counselor, and she gave me some tips." I listened to Elroy describe the risk he took when,

> "... I look at the counselor's door and thought 'no way am I going in there.' The feeling I got from the other students who went was that she was talking about your emotions and like any problems you had. This was a bit scary to like to talk to someone about your emotions ... I was totally terrified because I didn't know what she was going to ask ... but I had a couple of sessions, and I would really recommend it to students to like to go to the counselor ... you start realizing that she is only there to help you and I think the first thing she told me is that you want to help yourself."

Throughout our interviews, Elroy regularly referred to ideas and strategies that originated from the counselor's suggestions. In the second term there were times when he started to feel that the university just wasn't worth it. These feelings would surface when he had an assignment returned that he had worked hard on, but the grade was low. At those times he blamed himself and felt that maybe, "I made the wrong decision." Talking this through with the counselor provided support for him. Related to this was Elroy's continuous anxiety about achievement level and successful completion of UPEAP. He began to realize, after meeting with the counselor, that he didn't always need to "improve and improve"; once his achievement had reached a certain level, he should accept it as okay and simply try to "keep at that constant speed and pace and be happy with it." Indeed, he was satisfied following the first major set of exams; his 73% average put him at the top of the UPEAP program for academic achievement.

Elroy was still anxious, however, about successfully completing the UPEAP program. Going into exams, " ... it was a bit scary because there was only one thought on my mind that if I have to fail what would happen to me? But after I started writing exams, my self confidence actually came back to me ... It was like some sort of rush inside of me ... I think I was to try to prove to myself that I can get through the program. There is always this idea that if I fail this program, what will happen? At the moment no one actually knows what will happen to you if you fail this program ... there is always that fear in everybody's mind." He added that no one wanted to ask about the consequences of failure because the students were all afraid of the answer.

In the third term, Elroy talked about how much the counselor had also influenced him to set realistic goals for himself. He referred to it as part of his personal "transformation" when he learned that there were actually steps he had to initiate himself in order to meet his long term goals. He discovered that, contrary to the past when he hoped that "by some miracle I would actually get it," he had to rely on himself to realize his goals. Due to this insight, his goal of owning a computer company was strengthened, and he felt more motivated because he actually knew what he needed to do.

Related to support systems, or lack of them, Elroy expressed needs in three areas. First, he referred to the Supplemental Instruction system that was in place for first year UPE students and articulated how a program similar to that would be helpful to the UPEAP students. He

was primarily describing how supportive it would be to have an older student help with confusions related to coursework. Secondly, he expressed an interest in getting to know the other UPEAP students earlier in the program with the following statement, "The first couple of months the students didn't actually know each other that well because everybody was in his own group and classes were divided, but now (third term) we are actually sitting together in a classroom and all of us are actually sitting together and we don't actually know each other." He felt that more regular social events would solve this dilemma.

The last area of support that Elroy described related to race and culture. He described how some students felt "lonely and ... alone in the class" when they spoke a language different from the majority of the class members or when they were the only white students in a class of all black students. He was uncomfortable talking about this because he didn't want to be interpreted as "racist," but he felt that everyone needed a familiar support group. He related this issue back to getting to know everyone better and felt that if there were more social events, all students would talk to each other more and some of the cultural barriers might be broken down.

Increasingly, Elroy started to see himself as a source of strength more than he did first term. When I asked him at the beginning of third term what kind of support he thought would be helpful to him, he answered, "I'd say the biggest one will be myself ... " He continued to say that this was a change from earlier terms when he had relied on friends and others. Now, "I realize that I have to first start with myself." He was very comfortable with the gradual release of responsibility for learning that had come through UPEAP, and he associated it with learning to "become an individual." At the start of third term he articulated it as, "it's not that they are leaving you alone, but they are giving you the opportunity to be alone."

Elroy felt that the biggest thing he learned over the first few months of the UPEAP program was that he is an individual who is capable of solving his own problems and not always relying on others for help. As he described how his behavior would most likely change during the third and fourth terms, it seemed clear that he planned to take more responsibility for learning. One strategy he described was to clear up any confusions as they occur rather than waiting until just before exams. He came to realize that, "If I have problems, I will immediately try to sort it out. I will go to the lecturer or ask my friends." Until the UPEAP program, Elroy waited until the "last minute" to focus on any problem areas only to discover that there could be "a lot of problems." He was also preparing to act differently during the slower times when the lecturers gave students some "free time" with fewer assignments and no tests. He described his behavior during those times in the past: "You start to get bored; there is no more enthusiasm about the subject and then you start getting bad marks, but when the work starts increasing you perhaps leave a couple of chapters out and then the stress level starts increasing." Looking forward, Elroy planned to maintain a regular pace during the slower times in order to keep his stress level down when the work load increased.

Related to developing as an individual and assuming responsibility was Elroy's realization that his physical and emotional health are related to his success. He related with pride that not only had he scheduled a doctor's appointment for himself but that he was working out in the gym more often and also meditating. He felt that these aspects of his life are

significant and that his attention to them represented a major change from when he first entered the UPEAP program. He described his overall physical and emotional health at the beginning as below average; whereas, they are well above average.

"When you attend UPE, you don't just get an education, but you grow as a person. 'Cause when you finish with your degree, let's say you have a piece of paper but you need certain qualities in life to put you in the front line or above your competitors or something like that. So I tell them that this place won't just give you an education but how to develop yourself."

The above statement was Elroy's response when I asked him what advice he would give to a secondary student starting to look at university options. He added that when he spoke to others about UPE, it was with "a sense of joy and pride" and that he frequently recommended to his friends "that this place is best to start your education." It seems as if the UPEAP program made a real difference to Elroy, far greater than he imagined when he received the phone call inviting him to participate.

Elroy's Response to the Case Study

This writing prompt was given to Elroy following the first draft of the case study report:

> *Elroy,*
>
> *Please read the report I have written based on the interviews you and I have had over the past several months. I am very interested in your response to it and would like to know if you think it represents what we have talked about.*
>
> *Tell me what you think is most important in the report and what surprises you the most.*
>
> *I would also like to know if you have additional comments or recommendations for the UPEAP program that I should add to the report.*
>
> *Thanks, Elroy.*

After reading the report, Elroy gave permission for his name to be used and for the report to be read by anyone who might benefit from it. The following are literal excerpts from his written response:

- One thing that is important in report is that there were times that I was doubting myself and my performance in the program, and one way of avoiding this is to get a report every term indicating where I should concentrate more on (not referring to academic marks).
- One thing surprised me was I started changing as a student and as a person. Setting more realistic goals, etc.

- At the start of year the accepted UPEAP students should get some sort of evaluation report telling why they were not accepted into their degrees and ways of improving those weaknesses.

- At start of year all accepted UPEAP students should fill in some sort of form indicating into which career they wish to go and based on this, they should be divided into groups for example. But there should not be some sort of "click" between students.

Conclusion

Elroy is a success story. He successfully completed the UPEAP program at the end of the 1999 academic year obtaining two distinctions and is now enrolled at UPE as a full-time B.Sc. degree student taking courses in Mathematics, Applied Mathematics, Mathematical Statistics and Computer Science. His story underscores two significant components of student transition programs. The first is that academic achievement is only one piece of the whole. Programs must also provide support for the student's personal and emotional growth. Second, students have excellent insight into what works and what does not work. Practitioners should remember to ask them more regularly to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the programs that are designed to meet their needs.

Based on the developmental process that Elroy experienced and articulated, there are some implications for the future development of the UPEAP program. While these ideas come from the experiences of only one student, they can serve as a framework for looking at those of others. Elroy's case study seemed particularly valuable as he was an extremely reflective and articulate student.

Possible Ideas for Future Programming

- Meet individually with each student accepted into the UPEAP program at the beginning to explain its purpose and the rationale for their invitation, e.g., the results of their initial assessment;

- Integrate a mandatory, proactive component into the program that provides a "counseling" function where each student is assigned to a "counselor" (perhaps there could be small groups formed early on that would meet and establish a comfort level to facilitate future individual appointments; these small groups could continue throughout the program to discuss general personal concerns);

- Re-name the counseling component to something less threatening and personally invasive, e.g., mentoring or guidance;

- Hire more professional "counselors" to increase access for students and to provide a smaller ratio of "counselor" to student;

- Strengthen the overall support system by:
  - assigning a second or third year UPE student to small groups of UPEAP students to provide academic assistance and integration into the UPE culture
  - forming small study groups of UPEAP students early in the program and providing a regular time during the day for them to meet and study together
  - scheduling more regular social events from the beginning
  - addressing directly the issue of cultural diversity and respect
  - regularly inviting former UPEAP students to come back, tell their stories, and answer questions
- Provide regular advising/monitoring from the beginning, both in person and in writing, to inform students of their progress and the implications for their continuation at UPE;
- Emphasize the importance of forming realistic goals and continuously refining them;
- Gradually release the support systems provided through UPEAP but create a bridge when students formally enter UPE for their first year of regular study; and
- Provide a group orientation at the beginning of the program to the biokinetics center (on campus workout facility) with a personal evaluation and introductory membership to emphasize the importance of exercise and maintaining one's physical health.

General Implications for Transition Programs

Listening to Elroy's story underscores the importance of attending to a student's affective domain. Transition programs need to consider providing support systems that include personal advising, peer networks, counseling or mentoring within a positive framework, and regular feedback. The support system should be gradually released with students being encouraged to take responsibility for learning. This assumption of responsibility, however, will occur at different rates and the support cannot simply be withdrawn as soon as students exit the program; there needs to be a lifeline for those who continue to need it.

Martha E. Casazza, *is a Professor at National-Louis University in the Developmental Studies graduate program.. She recently spent six months in South Africa as a senior Fulbright Scholar with her colleague Sharon Silverman.*

First Interview

Opening: ▸ Wh
▸ Wh

General: ▸ Wh
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Family: ▸ Wh
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School: ▸ Wh
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UPE: ▸ Wh
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UPEAP: ▸ Ho
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Social: ▸ Wh
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Closure: ▸ Wh
▸ Wh
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Appendix A
Four Sets of Questions that Guided Interviews

First Interview

Opening:
- What is your understanding of why we are doing these interviews?
- What do you expect to get from doing the interviews?

General:
- Where do you live while studying at UPE?
  - If they stay off campus:
    - How do you get to UPE every day?
    - How long does it take you to get here in the morning? What time do you leave home in the morning?

Family:
- Where do you come from?
- How often do you go home to see your family?
- Tell me something about your family.

School:
- Where did you go to school?
- What are your feelings about the school?
- When did you finish school?
  - If they didn't come straight to UPE:
    - What did you do before coming to UPE?
- Did you stay at home while you were in school or did you stay with friends, family, or in the hostel?

UPE:
- Why did you come to UPE?
- How does your family feel about you being here?
- What did you expect UPE to be like?
- How does this compare to what it really is like?
- What did you expect of a university lecturer?
- How does this compare to what they really are like?

UPEAP:
- How do you feel about being in the program?
- What are your courses like?
- What are your lectures like?
- Do you think the program is well organized?
- Do you think the program is well managed?

Social:
- Who are your friends here?
- How did you make them?

Closure:
- What else can you share about UPE?
- Where do you see yourself next year?
- Where do you see yourself in 4 years time?

Second Interview

Opening:
- How have you been affected by the first interview?
- What did you do over the holidays?

General: (Fill in gaps from first interview.)
- Has anything changed from the first interview? Have you perhaps moved?
- Have you been successful in going up to lecturers?
- Do you feel more confident now? How?
- Is there anything in particular that you are worried about as the new term starts?
- Looking back at the first term, what was the most valuable thing you learned?
- What will you do differently second term?

Family:
- How did it feel to see your family again?
- How did they feel to see you?
- Were you able to describe your UPEAP experience to your family?
- Did they understand?

UPE:
- Do you use the resources, e.g., library?
- Have you been to the clinic? Would you go if you were sick?
- How safe do you feel on campus?

UPEAP:
- Why do you think UPE developed this program?
- Regarding the tests you have just written, were the results what you expected?
- How did you feel before, during and after the test?
- What was your first reaction when you received the results?
- How did you prepare for the first test?
- Would you prepare differently for the next test? How?
- How would you describe the difficulty level of the UPEAP program?
- Is it different from when you started?
- How is English this term compared to last term?
- How happy are you with your choice of direction?
- Is UPEAP what you expected? Why or why not?

Social:
- What are you doing at UPE that is not part of the program?
- Who have you met that is at UPE but not in the program?
- How did you meet them?
- (If in residence) How do you feel about being forced to socialize?
- What are the biggest problems you are facing in your life?
- What do you think about the student committee?
  - How well are they doing their jobs?
  - How do you use them?
  - What ideas do you have for them?

- How do you think the lecturers would react to suggestions made by the student committee?

Closure:
- What else would you like to share?

Third Interview

Opening:
- Describe how you feel at the end of the term about your decision to attend the university.
- Describe how you feel about your involvement in the UPEAP program.

UPEAP:
- How would you describe term two compared to term one?
- How have the academic demands changed?
- Was the stress level different in term two? Please describe any change.
- How do you feel about the exams coming up?
- How will you prepare for them?
- Is this preparation similar or different to how you have prepared in the past? Please describe.
- What support has been most important for you this term?
- What have you learned in term two that will help you in the future?
- What has been your favorite class? Why?

Social:
- Did you participate in the UPEAP outing last week? Why?
- How would you describe that event?
- Do you think events like that are important? Why?
- Do you think there should be more of them in the UPEAP program? Why?

Personal:
- What have you learned about yourself in term two that will help you in the future?
- How do you feel UPEAP has contributed to your personal development?
- How would you describe your level of motivation now?

UPE:
- Are you a different person now than you were when you entered UPE? Please describe the major change.
- How has the university contributed to these changes?
- Do you feel connected to the university beyond UPEAP? How?
- What do you expect will be most difficult next year after UPEAP? Why?

Closure:
- Looking back over your two terms in the UPEAP program, what has been the most important part? The least important part?
- If you could give Prof. Snyders one piece of advice about UPEAP, what would it be?

Fourth Interview

Opening:
- How was your vacation?

- Did you ever think about UPE? If so, what kinds of thoughts did you have?
- How did you feel when it was time to come back to UPE this term?

UPEAP:
- How did exams go for you?
- Are you pleased with the results? Why?
- How did you feel when you received the results?
- Did they surprise you? In what way?
- How will the results affect you third term?
- Will you do anything differently this term? What? Why?
- What do you expect to be the most difficult part of third term? Why?
- What do you expect to be the easiest part of third term? Why?
- What are you looking forward to the most this term? Why?
- What kind of support do you expect to need this term? Is this different from the first two terms?
- What do you expect from your lecturers this term?
- What do you expect from the student committee this term?

Personal:
- What is the most important thing you have learned about yourself since you entered UPE?
- Do you feel UPEAP has helped you discover this about yourself? How?
- Have you thought any more about your overall goals since last term? If so, what prompted you to do so and have they changed?
- How would you describe your current state of physical health? What are you doing about it?
- How would you describe your emotional health? What are you doing about it?

UPE:
- Do you talk about UPE to people when you are not here?
- When you do, what kinds of things do you talk about?
- How does it make you feel?
- What support do you think you will need next year?

Social: Do you think UPEAP should organize any social events this term? Why?

JOIN THE CONVERSATION

Commentary: Who is the Developmental Student?

By Jeanne L. Higbee, General College, University of Minnesota

Abstract

In 1993 Research and Teaching in Developmental Education published a commentary by Dr. Higbee titled "Developmental versus Remedial: More than Semantics," expecting a response from the readership that never materialized. In this article Dr. Higbee once again challenges developmental educators to reevaluate their mission and focus on semantics as they redefine the profession.

Introduction

One of the greatest challenges of developmental education is eliminating the stigma associated with programs and services designed to enhance academic achievement. The jargon embedded in the writing of developmental education professionals exacerbates the problem. Frequently the terms "developmental" and "remedial" are used interchangeably (Casazza, 1999; Higbee, 1993) to describe courses that are often considered pre-college level (Bohr, 1996), leading students, parents, faculty, administrators, government officials, and the public at large to question the appropriateness of their existence in colleges and universities throughout the United States (Hardin, 1988; 1998) and around the world (Hulmes & Barlow, 1995; Lemelin, 1998; Spriggs & Gandy, 1997). Casazza (1999) states:

> An examination of the word remedial and its meaning reveals many things. It is the most common term across educational levels used to describe student weaknesses or deficiencies. It implies a "fixing" or "correction" of a deficit. For this reason, it is often associated with a medical model where a diagnosis is made, a prescription is given, and a subsequent evaluation is conducted to see if the "patient," or student, has been brought up to speed. If the evaluation shows that the student needs a little more "fixing," then perhaps another course is prescribed or, more often than not, the student is asked to refill the prescription and retake the same course. As we are only too aware, this cycle can repeat itself again and

again until the student gives up, lowers expectations and simply puts in time until formal schooling is completed, or decides to drop out (p. 4).

Developmental educators have taken steps to more clearly define their work (Boylan & Saxon, 1998; Clowes, 1982; Spann & McCrimmon, 1998). For example, during the last decade the National Association for Developmental Education (NADE, 1995), under the leadership of Gene Beckett, created its own definition and goals statement, providing the following definition:

> Developmental Education is a field of practice and research within higher education with a theoretical foundation in developmental psychology and learning theory. It promotes the cognitive and affective growth of all postsecondary learners, at all levels of the learning continuum.
>
> Developmental education is sensitive and responsive to the individual differences and special needs among learners.
>
> Developmental education programs and services commonly address academic preparedness, diagnostic assessment and placement, affective barriers to learning, and development of general and discipline-specific learning strategies (NADE, 1995).

The goals of developmental education are stated as follows:

1. To preserve and make possible educational opportunity for each postsecondary learner.
2. To develop in each learner the skills and attitudes necessary for the attainment of academic, career, and life goals.
3. To ensure proper placement by assessing each learner's level of preparedness for college course work.
4. To maintain academic standards by enabling learners to acquire competencies needed for success in mainstream college courses.
5. To enhance the retention of students.
6. To promote the continued development and application of cognitive and affective learning theory (NADE, 1995).

Beckett (1995) observed:

> We have an identity problem. No, we have an identity crisis, and we developmental educators are greatly responsible for it....

> There are almost as many names for developmental education departments and programs as there are colleges and universities. Is it a wonder, therefore, that people outside our field are confused?
>
> It's past time we declare "developmental education" as the precise, definitive name for our field and discipline and all it encompasses... We have to let higher education know who we are and what we do. We have to resolve our identity crisis: not soon, but now (p. 1).

Five years later, the identity crisis seems to be even greater. During the past 24 months, discussions at the Harvard Symposium (Casazza, 1999), the University of Minnesota General College's first Intentional Meeting on Future Directions in Developmental Education (Lundell & Higbee, in press), and in think tank sessions held in conjunction with NADE's 2000 annual conference in Biloxi have revisited how the profession of developmental education defines itself. Many within the field agree that developmental education has expanded in myriad directions (Commander, Stratton, Callahan, & Smith, 1996; Dwinell, Higbee, & Antenen, 1993; Farmer & Barham, 1996; Higbee, 1999; Higbee & Dwinell, 1998; Higbee, Thomas, Hayes, Glauser, & Hynd, 1998; Simpson, Hynd, Nist, & Burrell, 1997; Spriggs & Gandy, 1997; Stockwell, Ament, Butler, & Henderson, 1992; Stratton, 1998b; Wilkie, 1993; Zinn, Morris, McEnery, & Poole, 1998), and is not limited to required courses in reading, writing, and mathematics. Other programs and services that fall under the umbrella of developmental education include, but are not limited to, learning centers (Chickering & O'Connor, 1996; Culbertson & Johnson, 1994; Gamboa, Gibson, & Thomas, 1992; McDaniel, James, & Davis, 2000; Young, Adams, Davis, Haase, & Shaffer, 1996); tutorial services (Kowal, Shaw, & Wood, 1998); mentoring programs; Supplemental Instruction (Anton, Dooley, & Meadows, 1998; Arendale, 1998; Martin & Arendale, 1993; Martin, Blanc, & DeBuhr, 1983; Peled & Kim, 1995; Visor, Johnson, Schollaert, Good Mojab, & Davenport, 1995; Zaritsky, 1998); paired, linked, and adjunct courses (Blinn & Sisco, 1996; Bullock, Madden, & Harter, 1987; Byrd & Carter, 1997; Commander, Callahan, Stratton, & Smith, 1997; Commander & Smith, 1995; Dimon, 1981; Resnick, 1993; Simon, Barnett, Noble, Sweeney, & Thom, 1993; Weinstein, 1995); workshops (Bader, 1995; Higbee, et al., 1998); many different types of learning communities (Carter & Silker, 1997; Cross, 1998; Dolan, 1998; Romanoff, 2000); strategic learning courses (Weinstein, Dierking, Husman, Roska, & Powdrill, 1998; Weinstein, Hanson, Powdrill, Roska, Dierking, Husman, & McCann, 1997); first year experience programs (Deppe & Davenport, 1996; Sanford, 1998); academic counseling programs and courses (Higbee & Dwinell, 1992, 1996); retention services; elective courses (Higbee, et al., 1998; Higbee, Dwinell, & Thomas, 2000); distance learning (Illingworth, 1996) and teaching on television (Hodge-Hardin, 1998; Koehler, 2000; Thomas & Higbee, 1998); critical thinking courses programs and courses (Chaffee, 1992; Thomas & Higbee, 2000); workplace literacy projects (Longman, Atkinson, Miholic, & Simpson, 1999; Wall, Longman, Atkinson, & Maxcy, 1993); summer bridge programs (Stratton, 1998a); high school partnerships (Spence, Autin, & Clausen, 2000); integrated courses (Long, 1997); and broad-based developmental education curricula such as those offered within the General College at the University of Minnesota (Brothen & Wambach, in press; Ghere, in press; James & Haselbeck, 1998; Jensen & Rush, in press; Wambach & delMas, 1998; Wilcox & Jensen, 2000) and the General Education Program at

Kean University (Best & Lees, 2000). A review of the related literature, as demonstrated above, supports the notion that developmental educators take an inclusive approach to their definition of their profession.

Given this broad interpretation of the definition and goals of developmental education, who is the developmental student? The answer includes the student who participates in Project College and Career (Illingworth & Illingworth, 1994) at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, the student who seeks assistance at the Tech Learning Center (TLC) at Muskingum Area Technical College or at the College Skills Lab at the College of Charleston, the student who enrolls in a critical thinking course at LaGuardia Community College or in "Topics in Problem Solving" at the University of Georgia, the student participating in an integrated reading, writing, and religion course at Bethune Cookman College or in an academic enhancement group at Central Michigan University, the student who meets regularly with a mentor at Indiana University Purdue University-Indianapolis, or the student who chooses to take a logic course in the General College rather than in the College of Liberal Arts at the University of Minnesota. Any student at any postsecondary educational institution can potentially be identified as a developmental student if she or he chooses (or is required) to take advantage of one of myriad developmental education courses, programs, or services. Thus, just as we do our students and our profession a disservice by using the terms remedial and developmental interchangeably, we stigmatize our students and our programs when we imply that all developmental students are high risk, under prepared, or academically disadvantaged. Nor can we relegate developmental education programs to specific types of institutions. Academic enrichment and retention programs are needed as much at highly selective research universities as they are at two-year open door institutions.

Most of all, we need to think before we speak. We need to take care when we represent our profession, whether orally or in writing. We must pay attention to how we describe the students we serve. And we must rethink our basic assumptions about our profession. Do we accept NADE's definition of developmental education? If so, why do we persist in applying a medical model to our work? Why, when exploring alternative labels for our profession, do we fall into the trap of using words reflecting a deficit model, terms like "assistance" and "support" that imply that students lack the means to help themselves? Why do we focus on the negative, rather than adopting terminology like "achievement," "enrichment," or "enhancement," jargon typically linked to programs for "gifted" students?

Even within the NADE definition statement, which is generally positive, stating that developmental education "promotes ... growth" and is "sensitive and responsive," there is mention of the "special needs of learners." It is truly unfortunate that in the field of education, "special" has become synonymous with "somehow deficient." Why "special" needs? Why give the impression that developmental education serves a "special" population, when the intent of the definition statement was to communicate that developmental education can enrich learning experiences among any and all postsecondary students? Even the use of the word "needs" connotes a lack of some skill, quality, or characteristic essential to achievement. The NADE definition and goals statement was an important first step, and Gene Beckett and his executive board should be commended for their foresight. However, the time has come for all professional organizations involved in the work of developmental

education to reevaluate the definition statement and create a description of the field to be disseminated widely both within and outside the profession.

Semantics is important, and it is critical to the future of the profession that developmental educators articulate their mission so that it is clearly understood by practitioners, administrators, students, parents, legislators, and the public. What parent would find fault with programs aimed at enhancing academic performance? What politician would criticize retention efforts in public institutions of higher learning, given the importance of educating the citizenry to be competitive in the age of information and technology?

Who is the developmental student? More appropriate questions might be, "Is there any student who would not benefit from courses, programs, and services designed to enhance academic achievement and promote the development of the individual to his or her full potential?" or "Why place any label on the students we serve?" Of what value is the term "developmental student"? Must we "define" our students? They do not seem to have an "identity crisis." Rather than continuing to focus their efforts on the labeling, testing, and mandatory placement of a targeted, and thus stigmatized, group of students in required "basic skills" courses, developmental educators interested in defending and protecting the profession, as well as their own jobs, should embrace a broader definition of their mission and wholeheartedly accept their role in promoting "the cognitive and affective growth of all postsecondary learners, at all levels of the learning continuum" (NADE, 1995). Developmental educators must devote more than "lip service" to their definition of their profession. They must apply theory and research regarding best practices to the provision of expanded services that are responsive to all students. All students are engaged in the developmental process.

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BOOK REVIEW

ALTERED DESTINIES: MAKING LIFE BETTER FOR SCHOOLCHILDREN IN NEED

Reviewed By Cecelia Downs, University of Illinois at Chicago

Maeroff, G. (1998). Altered destinies: Making life better for schoolchildren in need. New York: St. Martin's Press.

In his book Altered Destinies, Gene Maeroff makes a convincing case that children who live in poverty need more than good teachers, a strong curriculum, and access to tutoring. Children also need a network of support from the family and community if they are to succeed academically. Although the book focuses on enhancement programs within grade schools and high schools, the issue of how to address the needs of students from low-income areas has also challenged those of us who work with college students. Maeroff's book adds some interesting insights to the discussion.

Early on, Maeroff reminds us of the advantages that middle class students take for granted and that other students may lack: physical safety, health care, toys and books in the home, knowledgeable help with homework, lessons of various kinds, outings to museums and cultural events, and the awareness that others expect them to succeed and will help them in their efforts. Programs described in the book acknowledge the disparities in the after-school experiences of American schoolchildren. In response, the programs try to provide more than standard academic help such as tutoring; they also strive to increase the "social capital" of children in need.

Maeroff argues that children who live in poverty need enhancements in four senses: a sense of connectedness, a sense of well-being, a sense of academic initiative, and a sense of knowing. The book is organized into four sections based on these senses, with four chapters per section. There is a fair amount of overlap between chapters, and chapters such as "Linking Homes to Schools" and "Enlisting the Home" can be difficult to distinguish.

Altered Destinies is based on Maeroff's field research at locations throughout the country, primarily in two rural areas and in thirteen cities (sometimes at two or three schools or agencies in one city). The book describes programs offered by individual schools, as well

as programs sponsored by social service agencies in cooperation with schools. Maeroff's observations and interviews at the various sites are then presented thematically, with each program mentioned in several different chapters and with references to academic research included throughout. This approach to the topic is both a strength and a weakness of the book. We are able to pick up some fascinating pieces of information about various exemplary programs, but at times the presentation is hectic and superficial as we move—sometimes page by page—from one program to the next.

Some of the programs Maeroff introduces are impressive for their elegant simplicity. One school located in a dangerous neighborhood paid its librarian to stay an hour and a half after school. The library quickly became both a safe haven for the after-school hours and a place where children could study. A middle school instituted a homework hot line which parents could use if they wanted to hear a recorded description of the homework assigned in each class that day. Teachers and parents could also leave messages for each other in voice mailboxes. Many of the programs were much more elaborate, involving school clinics, psychological counseling, after-school recreation, and classes for parents.

For those of us who work in college learning assistance, the last two sections of the book—on a sense of academic initiative and a sense of knowing—offer particularly valuable information and insights. The eight chapters here include a good discussion of the importance of peers and mentors, as well as interesting descriptions of programs which attempt to increase the work ethic and self-discipline of students. We are told that various programs posted words of inspiration in the schools, required a disciplined commitment to the program, and enlisted graduates to speak to the newcomers about the benefits of participation.

As someone who teaches a course in study strategies, I was particularly intrigued by enhancements to social skills. Students were introduced to traditional concepts of manners, including the importance of thank-you notes. They were also invited to pursue interests in chess, golf, and the stock market. The point was to encourage students to believe they could explore milieus beyond the one they knew. In teaching my study strategies class, I have never discussed social skills, but Maeroff's book has given me some ideas I hope to pursue. My largely urban students come from a variety of backgrounds, and I am continually encouraging them to enlarge their world in various ways. Perhaps enhanced social skills can help them to feel more at home in this larger world.

The breadth of information in Altered Destinies is impressive, but at times a reader might have preferred a deeper analysis. Maeroff tells us that children living in poverty change schools more frequently than others and that, not surprisingly, mobility is associated with low academic achievement. He doesn't, however, tell us whether any of the enhancement programs are able to offset this tendency. One would imagine that schools which provide enhancements for both children and families might be able to hold onto their children longer, but we are not told whether this is true. On the college level, one wonders about the effects of "college hopping" and whether this might be lessened through our attempts to create relationships among our students and between students and faculty/staff.

Maeroff seems to assume that children from low-income neighborhoods are needy in all four senses and thus require a comprehensive program to address all of these needs. This is doubtless true for some children, but there are others who have more limited needs. It would be useful to understand how enhancement programs might adjust according to the needs of each child. Finally, given that parental substance abuse can so seriously interfere with parenting and a child's achievement, it is puzzling that none of the linkages of school and community resources involved treatment programs (a scarce resource in many areas).

Perhaps the most significant disappointment of Altered Destinies is that it provides no evidence, beyond the anecdotal, for the effectiveness of the various programs. Maeroff is interested in laying out a framework for the essential elements of an enhancement program, presumably with the idea that individual schools may then adapt the framework to their own situations. But because there is no information about effectiveness or cost, schools and agencies would be hard pressed to determine the best use of limited resources. Granted, it cannot be easy to measure the effect of programs which are holistic and long-term in their efforts. Still, as most of us have found at our universities, funding is drying up for programs that cannot demonstrate clear benefits. The need is far too great for our nation's schools to drop or ignore these important enhancement programs. They are not frills; they simply bring the notion of "back to the basics" to a level that is even more basic.

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The Learning Assistance Review

The Learning Assistance Review is a publication of the National College Learning Center Association (NCLCA). It is published twice a year, in the fall and spring.

The journal seeks to expand and disseminate knowledge about learning centers and to foster communication among learning center professionals. Its audience includes learning center administrators, teaching staff, and tutors as well as other faculty and administrators across the curriculum who are interested in improving the learning skills of postsecondary students.

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PUBLICATION GUIDELINES

As an official publication of the National College Learning Center Association, The Learning Assistance Review seeks to expand and disseminate knowledge about learning centers and to foster communication among learning center professionals. Its audience includes learning center administrators, teaching staff and tutors, as well as other faculty and administrators across the curriculum who are interested in improving the learning skills of post-secondary students.

The journal publishes scholarly articles and reviews that address issues of interest to a broad range of learning center professionals. Primary consideration will be given to articles about program design and evaluation, classroom-based research, the application of theory and research to practice, innovative teaching strategies, student assessment, and other topics that bridge gaps within our diverse discipline.

1. Prepare a manuscript that is approximately 12 to 15 pages in length and includes an introduction, bibliography, and subheadings throughout the text.

2. Include an abstract of 100 words or less that clearly describes the focus of your paper and summarizes its contents.

3. Type the text with double spacing and number the pages. Follow APA style (Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 4th edition, 1994).

4. Include your name, title, address, institutional affiliation and telephone number along with the title of the article on a separate cover sheet; the manuscript pages should include a running title at the top of each page with no additional identifying information.

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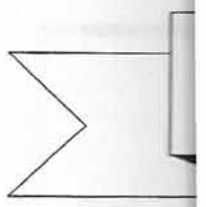
You will receive a letter of acknowledgment that your manuscript has been received. The review process will then take approximately three to six weeks at which time you will receive further notification related to your work. If your manuscript is accepted for publication, a computer disk or e-mail transmission will be requested.



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The mission of the National College Learning Center Association (NCLCA) is to support learning assistance professionals as they develop and maintain learning centers, programs, and services to enhance student learning at the postsecondary level.

What Does NCLCA Do?

- Promote professional standards in the areas of administration and management, program and curriculum design, evaluation, and research;
- Act on learning assistance issues at local, regional, and national levels;
- Assist in the creation of new, and enhancement of existing, learning centers and programs;
- Provide opportunities for professional development, networking, and idea exchange through conferences, workshops, institutes, and publications;
- Offer forums for celebrating and respecting the profession.

How Can I Participate?

The NCLCA Executive Board is anxious to involve as many learning center professionals as possible in achieving its objectives and meeting our mutual needs. Therefore, we invite you to become a member of the National College Learning Center Association. The membership year extends from October 1 through September 30, and annual dues are $40.00. Membership includes the NCLCA Newsletter and The Learning Assistance Review, discounted registration for the annual NCLCA Conference, workshops, in-service events, and announcements regarding upcoming NCLCA activities. We look forward to having you as an active member of our growing organization.

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