

FACULTY ATTITUDES TOWARD STUDENTS ENROLLED IN DEVELOPMENTAL
COURSEWORK

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my family—my ever-supportive partner Ryan, and the beautiful “bookends” to my doctoral program, Rhys and Kiernan. Thank you, Ryan, for the late nights, the early mornings, and the willing ear when I needed to rant something out. Thank you, Rhys, for being my study buddy as I collected the research I needed to complete this dissertation. Thank you, Kiernan, for timing things just right so that I could collect data and finish writing this dissertation during maternity leave. I love the three of you, and I’m thankful for your support in this journey.

ABSTRACT

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A transcendental phenomenological approach was used to explore faculty attitudes toward students enrolled in developmental coursework. This research was conducted at a mid-sized, urban community college in the southwestern United States. Participants were six residential faculty members, all of whom had taught developmental coursework for at least three years. The interview data were transcribed and analyzed to discover themes within faculty perceptions. The results of this analysis were used to develop a description of faculty attitudes toward students enrolled in developmental coursework. Five themes were identified within the data: *Diversity*, *Gaps*, *Barriers*, *Community*, and *Extra Work*. These themes were examined in the context of previous work in this area. Finally, implications for practice were discussed and recommendations for future research were made.

KEY WORDS: Faculty attitudes, Higher Education, Developmental Education, Students, Community college

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
DEDICATION	iii
ABSTRACT	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vii
I INTRODUCTION	1
Background of the Study	1
Statement of the Problem.....	4
Purpose of the Study	6
Scholarly Significance of the Study.....	6
Theoretical Framework	7
Research Question	9
Definition of Terms.....	10
Delimitations.....	11
Limitations	12
Assumptions.....	12
Organization of the Dissertation	13
II REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	14
Faculty Attitudes Matter	16
Faculty Attitudes Toward Students Enrolled in Developmental Coursework.....	20
Faculty Attitudes Toward Students with Disabilities	30
Faculty Attitudes Toward Non-Traditional Students.....	36

Faculty Attitudes Toward Students of Color	39
Faculty Attitudes Toward Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students	44
Faculty Attitudes Toward Student Veterans	47
Faculty Attitudes Toward Student Athletes	49
Summary	53
III METHOD	55
Research Design.....	55
Research Setting.....	57
Selection of Participants	58
Data Collection	59
Data Analysis	61
Role of the Researcher	63
Credibility	64
Summary	65
IV FINDINGS	67
Demographic Analysis.....	68
Themes	69
Diversity.....	71
Gaps	74
Barriers.....	76
Community	80
Extra Work.....	82
Summary	83

V DISCUSSION	84
Understanding Faculty Attitudes	85
Diversity.....	86
Gaps	90
Barriers.....	93
Community	95
Extra Work.....	96
Developmental or Remedial?.....	98
Implications for Practice	99
Recommendations for Future Research	100
Reflections on the Research Experience.....	102
REFERENCES	104
APPENDIX A.....	116
APPENDIX B	117
VITA.....	119

CHAPTER I

Introduction

Background of the Study

Despite a 380-year history in the United States (Arendale, 2011; Boylan & White, 1987), the field of developmental education has been maligned over the past 15 years as a major source of low graduation and retention rates, high costs, and wasted financial aid (Bailey, Jeong, & Cho, 2010; Jones et al., 2012). Developmental education has become a strawman: neoliberal policy makers, educationally-focused philanthropic organizations, and quasi-academic think tanks have set developmental education up as a problem easily solved, given enough money to pay for consultants. Groups such as the Community College Research Center (CCRC), Complete College America (CCA), the Lumina foundation, and the Bill and Melinda Gates foundation have published articles arguing that graduation and retention rates would improve if only students would attend school full-time or slightly more than full time (CCA, 2013). They noted that costs to deliver higher education would be reduced if institutions were not responsible for remediating underprepared students (Saxon, 2017). They also contended that Federal financial aid would not be wasted by students needing to take non-credit coursework if the students did that coursework somewhere else (Jones et al., 2012). All of these strawman solutions offer relief to the problems plaguing higher education predicated on fixing a broken student body. If only our students were different. If only our students were better. If only our students were less...developmental.

Developmental education as defined by experts in the field is explicitly holistic. Boylan (2002) defined developmental education as “courses or services provided for the

purpose of helping underprepared college students attain their goals” (p. 3). The National Organization for Student Success (NOSS, formerly the National Association for Developmental Education, or NADE), the major professional organization within the field, defines developmental education in their motto as “helping underprepared students prepare, prepared students advance, and advanced students excel” (National Organization for Student Success, 2019, para. 3). Although developmental education is intended to be inclusive of all students who need additional assistance with their cognitive or affective skills, developmental education in the United States tends to focus on remedial coursework instead of holistic developmental programs. Students enrolled in remedial coursework tend to belong to groups within the student body who already face disenfranchisement and disempowerment: students who are first-generation, have differing abilities, come from impoverished families, and who are, more often than not, students of color (Chen, 2016; Fernandez, Barone, & Klepfer, 2014).

In recent years, developmental education has typically been located within the community college (Chen, 2016; King et al., 2017). In some states it has been banned or defunded from 4-year institutions (Jenkins & Boswell, 2002). Meanwhile, funding within higher education has been decimated requiring faculty, staff, and students to do more with much less (Chen, 2017; Selingo, 2003). Funding to community colleges has been particularly reduced (Morris, 2017; Phelan, 2014; Smith, 2017). Yet many practitioners and so-called reformers within the field focus on the student and their status as underprepared, remedial, or developmental (these adjectives are often used interchangeably, and none of them lend prestige to the learner) as if legislators,

institutions, and underfunded systems of education were not major factors in the need for remediation at the tertiary level.

This cultural scapegoating of students within developmental education has permeated the landscape of higher education over the past decade. State legislatures across the country have begun taking steps to address the problem they perceive; that is, students who place into remedial coursework have significantly lower graduation rates than students who go directly into college-level coursework, with varying levels of competence and success (Mangan, 2013; 2016). Students have perceived the negative stigma of placing into developmental coursework (Diel-Amen, 2011). Faculty, staff, and administrators read the literature scapegoating developmental education, and if they have a strong background in research or in developmental education as a field of study, they may be able to perceive weaknesses in the conclusions drawn in CCRC or CCA publications. However, developmental educators are often practitioners, not researchers. The Higher Learning Commission, one of several regional accreditors of institutions of tertiary education requires faculty, with few exceptions, to hold a Master's degree (Higher Learning Commission, 2016). These faculty are highly qualified to teach in their discipline, but perhaps not to conduct research. Depending upon the requirements of the regional accrediting agency, some institutions may have instructors teaching developmental coursework with only a bachelor's degree (North Carolina Community College Jobs, 2018). The reports are frequently distributed by the CCRC and CCA as white papers, not published in peer-reviewed journals, and they are persuasive. The researchers authoring them have doctoral credentials from some of the best institutions in the world. Some of these organizations are housed at prestigious universities. Even a

strong critical reader might have trouble discerning methodological or inferential problems in papers with such authority.

Reports critical of developmental education have permeated the atmosphere of higher education. Faculty who read journals in the field have seen these papers referenced repeatedly in the major journal in the field, the *Journal of Developmental Education*. In some cases, they have seen refutation of the data and results reported in these white papers (Boylan & Trawick, 2015; Goudas & Boylan, 2012), but the white papers put out by the CCRC and CCA are frequently cited as foundational to modern reform efforts. They give faculty reading them a negative impression of developmental education and have contributed to the common misperception that students enrolled in below-100 level coursework are the major issue depressing retention and graduation rates. This in turn might negatively impact faculty attitudes toward students enrolled in developmental coursework.

Statement of the Problem

The demographic identities faculty hold (Dee, 2005; Egalite, Kisida, & Winters, 2015), their relationships with their students (Lundberg & Schreiner, 2004; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1978), their teaching strategies (Umbach & Wawrzynski, 2005), and their beliefs and attitudes (Eney & Davidson, 2012) matter. Faculty have the ability to impact student outcomes in a variety of ways: from direct (grades and assessments) to indirect (disenfranchising class policies). In particular, the negative attitudes of faculty can have a negative impact on student learning outcomes (Boylan, 2002; Eney & Davidson, 2012; Rounds & Andersen, 1985; Stewart, 1996). Stewart (1996) noted that “the lack of success in some [developmental] programs relates to the role and attitudes of the

instructors in developmental courses” (p. 3). Earlier research by Rounds and Andersen (1985) noted that developmental coursework was often taught by “poorly trained and unenthusiastic instructors who often had been drafted into remedial teaching because they were the newest hired or because they were part-timers” (p. 21). This is particularly concerning because in many programs, part-time or adjunct faculty teach the majority of developmental courses. Boylan (2002) reported that in best-practice programs that utilize adjunct faculty to teach developmental coursework only adjuncts who express a desire to teach developmental courses are hired to teach those courses.

Eney and Davidson (2012) argued that students are best served by faculty who have beliefs and attitudes compatible with the purpose and goals of developmental education. Harris (1983) noted that there is a particular need for developmental educators to understand “attitudinal phenomena” (p. 11). She wrote, “when teacher attitudes are positive, they lead to the eventual success of remedial students in their college experiences” (Harris, 1983, p. 11).

Every student deserves to have faculty who will help them attain their goals. Negative faculty attitudes toward students who are enrolled in developmental coursework have the potential to negatively impact students, institutions, and higher education within the United States. However, there is very little current research on faculty attitudes toward students enrolled in developmental coursework (Farrow, 1986; Harris, 1983). There is a need for additional research in this area. Roughly two thirds of all undergraduate students in the United States enroll in developmental coursework (Bailey, Jeong, & Cho, 2010). Faculty attitudes toward this significant population of students

need to be understood if faculty, staff, and administrators within higher education want to best serve these students.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore faculty perceptions of students enrolled in developmental coursework at a large, urban community college.

This college is part of a large, multi-college community college district in the southwest.

I defined faculty perceptions as the attitudes and beliefs held by faculty members as well as the experiences that have informed their perceptions.

Scholarly Significance of the Study

There are several ways that this research will impact the field. First, there is a gap in the research pertaining to faculty attitudes toward students enrolled in developmental coursework. Faculty attitudes toward many coinciding demographic identities (students of color, students with disabilities, etc.) have been studied (Costner, Daniels, & Clark, 2010; Dallas, Sprong, & Upton, 2014; Lombardi, Murray, & Dallas, 2013), but attitudes toward students enrolled in developmental coursework have not been. The research that does explicitly study faculty attitudes toward students enrolled in developmental coursework is three decades old (Farrow, 1986; Harris, 1983). There are a few more recent studies that look at faculty attitudes toward students in developmental mathematics courses (Mesa, 2012; Zientek, Schneider, & Onwuegbuzie, 2014).

In addition, the existing studies of faculty attitudes toward students enrolled in developmental coursework tend to be quantitative (Farrow, 1986; Harris, 1983; Mesa, 2012). There is a methodological gap in the literature for a qualitative study to be conducted. Although measurement of existing attitudes is an important segment of

research, there is an opportunity to gain better and deeper understanding of faculty attitudes by contributing qualitative research to the field.

This research is also significant scholarship because it studies a group of faculty who work with the majority of students enrolled in higher education. Sixty eight percent of first time to college students take at least one developmental course (Chen, 2016). Faculty who teach developmental coursework have the potential to improve higher education outcomes in the United States. According to Boylan (2002), faculty who work with students enrolled in developmental education can positively or negatively impact student grades, retention, self-esteem, and resilience. It is imperative that faculty and administrators better understand the attitudes of faculty who work with these students so that these faculty and administrators can consider how faculty attitudes are affecting student outcomes.

This study's findings provide a deep, rich, understanding of the complexities of faculty attitudes, which can provide a framework on which to build professional development for faculty and others who work with students enrolled in developmental coursework. Several seminal works in the field describe ideal attitudes and beliefs for faculty who work with students enrolled in developmental coursework (Boylan, 2002; Boylan & Saxon, 2012). By examining current faculty knowledge and the resulting attitudes, scholars can discover gaps in knowledge that can guide future professional development efforts.

Theoretical Framework

The present research rests partly on a theoretical framework constructed from the Knowledge-Attitude-Behavior (K-A-B) model developed by Baranowski, Cullen,

Nicklas, Thompson, and Baranowski (2003). The K-A-B model describes a very basic framework for how attitudes and behaviors change. K-A-B theorizes that knowledge contributes to attitudes, which guide behavior. K-A-B also theorizes that change can be achieved by taking in new knowledge, which slowly triggers changes in attitude, resulting in eventual changes in behavior (Baranowski et al., 2003).

In the context of this study, the theoretical framework means that faculty knowledge of or past experiences with students enrolled in developmental education contributes to their attitudes toward those students, which guides their behavior with those students. The existing knowledge base of practitioners might include information from their undergraduate and graduate programs, professional literature published in the field, and anecdotes shared by colleagues, in addition to their own experiences with students. New knowledge might include insights gained through targeted professional development. The present research is focused on faculty attitudes, and the questions asked of research participants will attempt to discover their previous knowledge, the sources from which they garner that knowledge, and their resultant attitudes toward students enrolled in developmental coursework. Faculty behaviors toward these students are outside the scope of this research, due to the complexities of gathering data about behaviors.

The dual-process attitude model utilized in Kumar, Kabernick, and Burgoon (2015) contains a more sophisticated approach to the complexities of attitude. While the K-A-B model is foundational, the dual-process model (Fazio, 1990) takes the complexities of attitude activation into consideration. Dual process theory argues that while some attitudes are activated from the reasoned and conscious application of

knowledge (as in K-A-B), other attitudes are “automatic and spontaneous” (Kumar et al., 2015, p. 534). Kumar et al. (2015) call these spontaneously activated attitudes implicit while the more “reflective[ly]” activated attitudes are explicit. Kumar et al. (2015) base their framework on Fazio’s (1990) MODE model: “Motivation and Opportunity are the two DEterminants of spontaneous versus deliberative attitude-to-behavior processes” (Fazio, 1990, p. 257). To put it more simply: the difference between a knee-jerk, spontaneous attitude (and resultant behavior) and a reasoned, considered attitude (and resultant behavior) is the desire and time to think. Kumar et al. (2015) argued that this impacts classroom attitude and behavior: a faculty member who is concerned with classroom management, grouping strategies, and providing adequate instruction on a complex topic experiences cognitive overload and, for example, “reduce opportunities to be mindful of their attitudes toward, and their potentially differential treatment of, students from nondominant cultural groups” (Kumar et al., 2015, p. 534). Although this study is not concerned with the classroom behavior of faculty, an exploration of explicit and implicit attitudes held by those faculty is a vital step in discovering how faculty might better serve their students.

Research Question

This study explored the knowledge and attitudes of faculty toward students enrolled in developmental coursework. These faculty teach at a single institution within a large community college district in the southwestern United States. This research was guided by a central research question: what are faculty’s perceptions of students enrolled in developmental coursework?

Definition of Terms

A brief set of definitions for important terms within this study is provided here. Many of these terms are also defined as they appear in the text of this study.

Attitude. Attitude is defined as “A relatively enduring and general evaluation of an object, person, group, issue, or concept on a dimension ranging from negative to positive.” Attitudes are “often assumed to be derived from specific beliefs, emotions, and past behaviors associated with those objects” (Attitude, 2018, para. 1).

Behavior. Behavior is defined as “an organism’s activities in response to external or internal stimuli, including objectively observable activities, introspectively observable activities (see covert behavior), and nonconscious processes” (Behavior, 2018, para. 1).

Belief. Belief is defined as “Acceptance of the truth, reality, or validity of something (e.g., a phenomenon, a person’s veracity), particularly in the absence of substantiation” or “an association of some characteristic or attribute, usually evaluative in nature, with an attitude object (e.g., this car is reliable)” (Belief, 2018, para. 1-2).

Developmental coursework. Developmental courses are often defined by practitioners as those courses that fall below 100-level and do not have transferability to a degree-path. Students are deemed in need of developmental coursework by some sort of placement assessment, whether that be a snapshot instrument like the ACCUPLACER, aptitude tests such as the SAT or ACT, high school grade point average, non-cognitive assessments, or multiple measures (a combination of one or more of these elements). These courses are often found in sequences of 2-3 courses that may serve as a prerequisite to some or all college-level coursework.

Developmental education. Developmental education is defined as a field of study that “supports the academic and personal growth of underprepared college students through instruction, counseling, advising, and tutoring” (National Center for Developmental Education, 2018). An alternate definition of developmental education is “the integration of academic courses and support services guided by the principles of adult learning and development” (Boylan, 1999). Arendale (2005) noted that an underlying assumption of the term is that all college students are developmental.

Knowledge. Knowledge is defined as “The state of being familiar with something or aware of its existence, usually resulting from experience or study” or “the range of one’s understanding or information. In some contexts the words *knowledge* and *memory* are used synonymously” (Knowledge, 2018, para.1).

Remedial education. A predecessor to more modern conceptions of developmental education, remedial education is a term still sometimes used interchangeably with developmental education. The term developmental will be used in this study. Arendale (2005) noted that remedial education “focused on specific skill deficits of students and educational approaches that addressed these identified needs (p. 68).

Delimitations

This study was delimited to faculty who teach at a single, moderately-sized institution within a large, multi-campus community college district in the southwestern United States during the semester the instrument is given. This research only included participants who teach developmental education, as I was primarily concerned with attitudes and beliefs within the field of developmental education. Although many faculty

who do not teach developmental coursework teach the students enrolled in developmental coursework, they were not included as participants in this research. This research is further delimited to faculty with three or more years of experience teaching developmental coursework, guided by the research question involving past experiences with students. A final delimitation is that data for this study was collected through interviews. In qualitative research, the researcher is the instrument, which means that my biases may have influenced the data collection and resulting analysis. Although pains were taken to minimize this bias, this study is still delimited to the data collected by myself via interviews.

Limitations

Although every effort was made to reduce limitations within this study, the results of this study were still limited in several ways. First, the responses were self-reported. Faculty may have reported different attitudes than those they express privately in an attempt to save face or not be perceived differently. I work in developmental education within the community college district and have previously facilitated professional development in the field, so faculty may have been influenced by their knowledge of me and my role. This study was limited to the perceptions of faculty selected to participate in this study. The results of this qualitative study should not be generalized to other faculty or institutions.

Assumptions

I relied on several assumptions in the development of this study. First, I assumed that developmental education will continue to be offered within the institution and district in which the research is taking place. The governing board and chancellor of the district

have previously articulated developmental education as a priority, but it is possible that this may change, given a different board makeup and chancellor. A second assumption was that professional development will continue to be offered within the institution and district. The research site has a long-standing tradition of financial and administrative support for professional development, particularly in the area of developmental education, and I assumed that this would continue. Finally, I assumed that faculty would be candid and truthful in their responses to interview questions. It is possible that faculty might have shielded their true beliefs and experiences out of a fear of losing face or that I would perceive them negatively. I took great care to assure participants of the anonymity of the research as well as to mitigate fears of being perceived negatively.

Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation is traditionally organized. The first chapter contains introductory material, including background information, the problem and purpose statements, the scholarly significance of the work, the theoretical framework, the research question, definition of terms, delimitations, limitations and assumptions. The second chapter is a review of the literature concerning the importance of faculty attitudes as well as faculty attitudes toward particular subgroups of students: those enrolled in developmental coursework, students with disabilities, non-traditional students, students of color, culturally and linguistically diverse students, student veterans, and student athletes. The third chapter contains the methodology of the study, including research design, participant selection, and data collection and analysis methods. The fourth chapter contains the results of the research. The fifth and final chapter contains a discussion of those results and implications for the field of developmental education.

CHAPTER II

Review of the Literature

This review of the literature is intended to provide an overview of research that informed the development of the proposed study. Suitable studies were initially identified by using the search terms *faculty attitudes*, *developmental students*, *remedial education*. Additional search terms such as *tertiary education* *higher education* *perception teacher* were added based on library index keywording. As promising studies were reviewed, additional studies for review were mined from the reference section of previous studies.

Due to the small number of studies looking directly at faculty attitudes toward students enrolled in developmental coursework, literature examining faculty attitudes toward other student populations for whom more data were available was reviewed. Demographic data for the site of this research were consulted to determine which student identities should be included in the literature review. I sought informal, anecdotal data from faculty at the institution about populations of students who are overrepresented in developmental coursework. Faculty noted students of color, students with disabilities, non-traditional students, linguistically or culturally diverse students, student athletes, and student veterans as populations which are overrepresented in developmental coursework. Student gender was not identified as a factor in this informal data.

The Institutional Research office of the research site produced data to determine whether these student populations actually tested into developmental coursework at disproportional rates. I asked for this data for student race/ethnicity, age, and status as a student athlete. Data for linguistic and cultural background, veteran status, and status as

a student with disabilities are not collected at this institution, but these identities were included in the literature review based on the perception from faculty at the research site that these student populations are overrepresented in developmental coursework.

I also asked for this data for student gender, despite gender not being perceived as a factor in overrepresentation in developmental coursework. At the research site, women disproportionately test into developmental mathematics coursework (75.07%) when compared to men (66.72%). In reading, men and women test into developmental coursework at a very similar rate: 21.25% and 19.96%, respectively. In English, women test into developmental coursework at a slightly lower rate than men: 37.27% versus 44.5%, respectively. Literature for this population of students was not included for two reasons: the data provided by Institutional Research office lacked directionality—there was not a clear in-group/out-group for gender. In addition, this characteristic was not identified by faculty as a perceived factor in disproportionate representation in developmental education coursework.

Empirical research that was relevant to the research question in this study was reviewed in depth for pertinent findings. Additionally, this research was used to inform the development of the background and purpose of the current study. Studies with a strong relationship to the theoretical framework or methods were also included.

The first section of the review examines literature that explores the question of if and to what degree faculty attitudes toward students matter. The next section explores the few studies that focus on faculty attitudes toward students enrolled in developmental coursework. The subsequent sections contain studies that examine faculty attitudes toward the specific populations of students identified as overrepresented in

developmental coursework at the research site, including students with disabilities, non-traditional students, students of color, students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, student veterans, and student athletes.

Faculty Attitudes Matter

Several studies (e.g., Kisker & Outcalt, 2005; Kozieracki, 2002; Umbach & Wawrzynski, 2005) on the general importance of faculty attitudes were reviewed. These studies examined the relationship between faculty attitudes and student outcomes (Umbach & Wawrzynski, 2005), differences in attitudes between community college and university faculty (Kozieracki, 2002), and differences in attitudes between faculty who teach honors and developmental coursework (Kisker & Outcalt, 2005). Each of these studies were reviewed to establish whether or not faculty attitudes have a demonstrable effect on students.

Umbach and Wawrzynski (2005) explored the relationship between faculty attitudes expressed through practices and student outcomes. The researchers wanted to deepen the available body of knowledge regarding educational practices on the part of faculty that predict student engagement. They were specifically interested in whether and how faculty created a learning context through their attitudes and behaviors, and to what degree these attitudes and behaviors correlated with institutional characteristics. The researchers investigated by analyzing two national data sets: the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), and a parallel study that explored the attitudes and behaviors of faculty at the NSSE institutions. Both surveys were administered in the spring of 2003. The sample of the NSSE was just over 20,000 seniors and just over 20,000 freshmen in attendance at the 137 institutions where data was collected. The

sample for the faculty survey was over 14,000 faculty members at the same 137 institutions.

Umbach and Wawrzynski (2005) used hierarchical linear modeling to perform a two-stage analysis of the data. The first stage investigated the relationship between faculty behavior and student engagement and learning. The second stage explored the relationship between faculty behaviors and attitudes and institutional demographics. They determined there were some differences in faculty attitudes and behaviors based on institution type. Faculty at Carnegie Classification liberal arts colleges were statistically significantly more likely to believe or engage in behaviors which lead to student engagement and learning: student-faculty interaction, active and collaborative learning, and academic enrichment. This finding was stronger in private colleges than in public colleges, and in suburban/urban colleges than in rural colleges.

An earlier study by Kozeracki (2002) examined faculty attitudes toward students in both the 2-year and 4-year settings using data from the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI), the National Opinion Research Center (NORC), the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (CFAT), and the Center for the Study of Community Colleges (CSCC). The data collected included demographic information (full-time/part time teaching status and highest level of education attained) plus questions about faculty commitment to students and to teaching, student preparation and performance, and the role of college. The data from HERI, NORC, and CFAT were examined to discover what, if any, differences exist in the attitudes of faculty at 2-year and 4-year institutions. Data from the CSCC were analyzed to see what, if any, differences exist between subgroups of faculty who teach at community colleges.

Kozeracki (2002) found that although community college faculty have a strong personal commitment to teaching, they are not satisfied with the quality of their students or their preparation for academic tasks. Larger percentages of community college faculty had concerns about student preparation and quality when compared to 4-year university faculty. Within the community college, full-time faculty took a dimmer view of student preparation than adjunct faculty.

In a later study, Kisker and Outcalt (2005) surveyed community college faculty to examine the relationship between the personal and professional characteristics of faculty who teach honors and developmental coursework. The survey instrument was administered in fall 2000: a random sampling of 2,292 faculty at 114 community colleges in the United States were asked to respond to 201 questions focused on faculty practices, attitudes, and characteristics. The survey was piloted with community college instructors before it was sent to participants.

The researchers (Kisker & Outcalt, 2005) cross-tabulated the results to see if there were demographic patterns with respect to the type of courses taught. Additional cross-tabulations were calculated to determine the differences in faculty variables (characteristics, beliefs, attitudes, and professional associations) between those teaching developmental and honors coursework. Finally, binary logistic regression was used to determine whether certain variables were predictive of the level of course taught.

This study (Kisker & Outcalt, 2005) revealed significant differences in the demographics of faculty who teach developmental versus honors courses as well as differences in attitudes. Kisker and Outcalt found that there were patterns in race and ethnicity that were statistically significantly different between developmental and honors

faculty. African American and Native American faculty were more likely than White or Asian faculty to teach developmental coursework. The researchers noted that this might be due to faculty of color “being employed to perform what historically have been the least desirable jobs,” it might also indicate “a respect and commitment to developmental education among minority faculty” (Kisker & Outcalt, 2005, p. 17).

Kisker and Outcalt (2005) also noted attitudinal differences between honors and developmental faculty. They reported that developmental faculty were more likely to show “an attachment to secondary school teachers, ideas, and methods” (p. 16), frequently had a background teaching at the secondary level, and relied on their colleagues in secondary education for advice. They contrasted this with the honors faculty, who were much more likely to conduct research, write grant proposals, and “engage in traditional scholarly and research activities” (Kisker & Outcalt, 2005, p. 16). Kisker and Outcalt (2005) argued that developmental faculty “might not expose developmental students to the types of instruction and disciplinary practices they will encounter in upper-division college courses” (p. 16). This research demonstrates the importance of the beliefs and attitudes of faculty teaching developmental coursework. Although this study did not directly examine faculty attitudes toward students, the research on faculty attitudes toward their profession based on class level taught is illuminating. It is possible that faculty attitudinal factors are driving the finding that developmental faculty are less likely to expose students to the types of learning they will encounter in upper-level courses.

The studies reviewed in this section are pertinent to the present research because they help demonstrate how important faculty attitudes can be. Whether faculty attitudes

affect students directly (Umbach & Wawrzynski, 2005) or indirectly (Kisker & Outcalt, 2005; Kozeracki, 2002), they do have an effect. This effect can be seen more directly in research that looks specifically at faculty attitudes toward students enrolled in developmental coursework.

Faculty Attitudes Toward Students Enrolled in Developmental Coursework

Several studies (e.g., Farrow, 1986; Harris, 1983; Mesa, 2012; Salem & Jones, 2010; Quick, 2008; Zientek et al., 2014) regarding faculty attitudes toward students enrolled in developmental coursework were identified and reviewed. Two of the studies (Farrow, 1986; Harris, 1983) are older than would typically be included in a literature review, but they are included due to the limited number of studies in this area, as well as their status as seminal studies in this particular area. Two later studies (Mesa, 2012; Zientek et al., 2014) focusing specifically on faculty attitudes toward students enrolled in developmental mathematics were also reviewed. In addition, two studies (Salem & Jones, 2010; Quick, 2008) examining faculty attitudes toward students enrolled in developmental literacy courses were also reviewed.

Harris (1983) explored the attitudes faculty members held toward teaching students in developmental coursework and how personal characteristics might affect those attitudes. She utilized a descriptive survey method to collect data from faculty teaching developmental coursework at 10 Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in North Carolina. Five public and five non-public institutions were purposefully selected for the study because they had made a strong effort to provide support for students whose high school preparation was insufficient and had provided a framework for college entrance through developmental programs. The dependent

variable in this study was teacher attitude and the independent variables were age, gender, years of teaching experience, knowledge of andragogy or learning theory, professional development in developmental education, faculty rank or tenure status, and willingness to teach developmental coursework.

The instrument in Harris (1983) was a modified version of Spickelmier's Inventory of Faculty Attitudes. The instrument contained 25 Likert-scale items ranked from one to five with a low score indicating a less positive attitude and a high score indicating a more positive attitude. A respondent's score was determined by summing the weight of each item, for a possible total out of 125. She sent a letter and copy of the instrument to the academic deans at all 10 institutions seeking permission to conduct research at their institution. She also requested a list of all faculty teaching developmental coursework at this time. Seven institutions allowed Harris (1983) to directly mail a cover letter, the survey, and a stamped return envelope to faculty members, while three institutions requested that she send all materials to the dean for disbursement. Two follow-up letters were sent to non-respondents at the two and four-week points.

Harris (1983) calculated descriptive statistics and distribution tables for each variable. To determine the relationship between variables, she ran a chi-square analysis. She found that faculty attitudes were generally positive. Although there were some differences in attitudes based on faculty age, sex, length of teaching experience, area of specialization, amount of professional development, rank, tenure, or professional assignment, none of the findings were statistically significant.

However, Harris (1983) reported a low-positive attitude toward students enrolled in developmental coursework. Items that skewed the data in a positive direction included statements about students being worthy of funding, a rejection of the idea that underprepared students threaten faculty teaching success, and the acknowledgement that remediation is an important element of their institution. Statements that skewed the data in a negative direction included agreement that increasing numbers of students in developmental coursework reduces rigor, an agreement that some students are not capable of academic achievement, that underprepared students do not assume responsibility for their learning, that there are too many underprepared students, and that faculty preferred to teach highly motivated students.

A similar study by Farrow (1986) determined faculty attitudes toward remedial instruction in post-secondary education. This research expanded on Harris (1983) by including a more diverse sample. The researcher sent questionnaires to all colleges in the United States with a Special Services program listed in the 1980 "Directory of Funded Projects: Special Programs for Disadvantaged Students". The directors of these programs were asked to distribute the questionnaire to faculty and administrators involved in providing remedial instruction at that institution. Farrow (1986) reused the instrument developed in Harris (1983), which contained an initial section of demographic questions, followed by a section containing 25 Likert-scale items asking about attitudes toward remediation.

Farrow (1986) used age, gender, years of teaching experience, institutional level, type of institution (public/private), area of specialization, and professional development in the area of remediation as variables in the study. Four hundred and thirty-seven

useable questionnaires were completed from 171 institutions in 44 states and Washington D.C. The sample was strongly weighted toward untenured faculty: only 19% of the respondents reported that they had tenure. The majority of the respondents reported English as their discipline (167), followed by mathematics (109), reading (97), and other (64).

Farrow (1986) used principal factoring with iteration and equimax rotation to analyze factors within the data. Then the mean and standard deviation of each variable were calculated within the sample and within each area of specialization. To determine the predictive value of the independent variables, a stepwise multiple regression analysis was run. The factors identified were program effectiveness, teacher enthusiasm, student characteristics, number of students requiring remediation, student participation in their own learning, and the impact of teaching remedial coursework on the faculty member.

Farrow (1986) reported that faculty had strongly positive attitudes toward the student participation and program effectiveness factors, positive attitudes toward teacher enthusiasm and the impact of teaching remediation, and less favorable attitudes toward the number and characteristics of remedial students. He found that although there was a statistically significant relationship between demographic variables and attitudes, the practical significance was minimal.

In addition to the seminal studies reviewed above, several newer studies (Mesa, 2012; Zientek et al., 2014) have focused on faculty attitudes with respect to students enrolled in developmental mathematics courses. Mesa (2012) compared faculty and student responses to a survey to determine the achievement goal orientations of students enrolled in mathematics courses and how they did or did not differ from faculty

perceptions. The sample consisted of 777 students enrolled in 40 sections of college-level and developmental mathematics at a large suburban community college in the Midwest. The 25 faculty who taught these courses were part of a self-selected sample who received an invitation to participate via email. The survey was administered during the 6th week of the fall 2009 and fall 2010 semesters.

Mesa (2012) found that there were differences between the reported goal orientations of students and the perceptions of their faculty. She noted that these results might indicate that faculty “systematically underestimate the motivation, goal orientations, and expectations” (p. 29) of their students. This finding was true in both college-level and remedial mathematics courses. When participants were shown the findings of the study, some noted that “they might have made an inappropriate generalization to the whole group based on a handful of students” (Mesa, 2012, p. 34). They also acknowledged a need to introduce opportunities in class to get to know their students better and thus better understand their motivations.

A more recent study by Zientek et al. (2014) also focused on faculty attitudes toward students enrolled in developmental mathematics. The researchers surveyed 89 faculty members teaching developmental mathematics at six community colleges and one state university in four states to discover what factors they believe impact student placement and students success in developmental mathematics coursework. An online survey asked participants to respond to two items: one on factors that contribute to student placement in developmental courses and another on barriers to student success in developmental mathematics. Responses were coded using constant comparison analysis to develop categories of response and assign responses into themes. Cluster analysis was

applied to the results, and the researchers discovered three clusters of success themes, which they categorized based on the literature available. The clusters were situational, dispositional, and academic behaviors/work habits. There were no clusters identified for placement themes.

Zientek et al. (2014) found that the question about student placement elicited two strong themes from participants and 13 less strong themes. The two strong themes were time delay from previous mathematics course and lack of basic mathematic skills, with 50.56% and 43.82% of faculty identifying these themes respectively. The lesser themes were all identified by less than 14% of the faculty, and are not discussed in depth in the study. The student success question elicited strong patterns in themes in all three clusters of responses. Almost two-thirds (67.4%) of faculty respondents identified academic behavior and work habits as a hindrance to student success, with the specific themes of study skills and attendance the most frequently identified. Nearly half (49%) of the faculty members identified dispositional factors such as motivation, anxiety, and persistence as barriers to student success. Finally, 42% of the faculty participants identified situational factors such as work or family responsibilities as detrimental to student success.

Using similar analysis strategies as Zientek et al. (2014), two researchers at Temple University (Salem & Jones, 2010) investigated faculty attitudes toward teaching writing in writing-intensive courses in the Spring 2009 semester. The researchers wanted to determine if these attitudes correspond with those already expressed within the literature, and to explore whether faculty member demographic information such as gender, rank, and years of experience correlate with particular attitudes. Salem and Jones

(2010) began their research by organizing a series of focus groups with a total of 25 faculty members who taught writing-intensive courses and who were representative of the larger group of faculty members who taught writing-intensive courses in terms of discipline, years of experience, and faculty rank. They engaged these faculty members in an open-ended script. The focus group conversations were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed for theme.

Salem and Jones (2010) used the resultant themes to design survey questions regarding faculty attitudes and beliefs. These questions, along with demographic information, and two open-ended response items were included in the final survey. This survey was available online, and a link was sent to all 298 faculty teaching writing-intensive courses at the research site. The response rate was 47%, and the respondent group was representative of the larger group.

Salem and Jones (2010) performed factor and cluster analyses of the data, recognizing that “attitudes toward individual issues are often linked to larger underlying beliefs that guide and pattern responses to groups of questions” (p. 65). Factor analysis isolated five factors that described faculty experiences: enthusiasm/lack of enthusiasm about teaching, confidence/lack of confidence in teaching ability, belief in the fairness/unfairness of the workplace, belief that grammar instruction belongs in the writing center/classroom instructors, and preference for teaching underprepared/prepared students. Cluster analysis of these five factors was performed to discover how these factors are mingled and distributed throughout the faculty respondents. This resulted in five clusters, which the researchers called “Undaunted Crusaders”, “Self-Critical/Humble

Colleagues”, “Confident but Resentful Colleagues”, “One-Time Victims of Poor Communication”, and “Outliers”.

The “Undaunted Crusaders” made up approximately 30% of the sample and were characterized by “strong enthusiasm for teaching, strong confidence in their own teaching ability, a negative view of the fairness of the workplace, and a negative view of student preparedness” (Salem & Jones, 2010, p. 67). The “Self-Critical/Humble Colleagues,” roughly 40% of the respondents, were characterized by being satisfied with the fairness of the workplace, but critical of their own classroom teaching. The “Confident but Resentful Colleagues” made up 20% of the respondents and were characterized by being happy with their teaching performance, but having low enthusiasm for teaching and a poor perspective on the support offered by the university.

The “One-Time Victims of Poor Communication” comprised only 9% of the respondents, and were characterized by reports that their students were prepared, but that they were not satisfied with their experience teaching a writing-intensive course. They also felt strongly that the writing center was not the appropriate location for grammar instruction for students. The researchers discovered that many participants reported that they had received the syllabus for the writing-intensive course only after the course had begun, frustrating them through a lack of communication. The fifth cluster, “Outliers,” consisted of only two respondents whose views the researchers characterized as “extreme on all counts” (p. 74). They reported that these outliers might represent the small number of university faculty whose views are both “strongly held and idiosyncratic” (p. 75). Salem and Jones’ (2010) final area of analysis was to see if there were trends in faculty member demographics among these five clusters. They reported that, contrary to their

expectations and previously published literature, there were no significant patterns in faculty member sex, age, number of years teaching, teaching status, or discipline.

In another study focused on the attitudes of literacy educators, Quick (2008) explored how the knowledge and attitudes of college faculty related to working with students who need additional support in reading and writing. Data for this study were collected between April and May of 2008 from 1200 full-time faculty at six colleges and universities in northwestern Pennsylvania. The instrument for this research was an online survey given modified from Joyce (1999) and Bourque (2004). The study instrument contained nine demographic items, sixteen Likert-scale questions, and five open-ended questions about faculty knowledge and attitudes.

The quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, and the qualitative data were analyzed using inductive analysis (Quick, 2008). Quick found that the majority of faculty agreed that assisting academically vulnerable students was important (80%) and pedagogically sound (78%), but only 42% believed that this assistance should fall to the faculty member. Most (82%) felt that this should be the task of the learning center, or that these students should attend community college to receive remedial instruction (58%). Roughly half of the faculty responded that they had received sufficient professional development in working with these students but this was not statistically significant when analyzed by institution type. Seventy-nine percent of faculty disagreed that academically vulnerable students were of below average intelligence. This finding was statistically significantly different between men and women, with more men believing that these students are of below average intelligence. This gender discrepancy was also found for an item regarding whether the time spent

preparing to work with academically vulnerable students took them away from other academic pursuits. Only 55% of the faculty felt that they were able to identify characteristics of struggling students. Quick also noted that faculty with 30-50 years of experience were more likely to be willing to serve as mentors and work with students outside of class. Faculty in the discipline of education were statistically significantly more likely to respond that they had adequate training and adequate background in teaching methods, but were also more likely to respond that the time they took to prepare differentiated instruction took away from other academic pursuits at their institution.

The qualitative questions in Quick's (2008) study asked faculty respondents to discuss barriers they encountered in providing effective instruction to academically vulnerable students: time was the most frequently discussed barrier, along with class size and student-centered issues (resistance, not taking initiative, not disclosing need, attitudes/hostility). When asked to discuss areas in which faculty felt frustrated with academically vulnerable students, time and these student-centered issues were again among the most frequent responses. Faculty also indicated that they had not received any formal training to teach academically vulnerable students, but that they felt their experiences had provided some level of training. Finally, faculty noted that more effective professional development in instructional methods and pedagogy was needed. The final qualitative question asked faculty to describe the characteristics of academically vulnerable students. The most frequent responses to this item discussed insufficient skill-base; high levels of absenteeism; non-cognitive issues such as fear, anxiety, being overwhelmed, and low-self-esteem; and poor organizational skills. Quick (2008) noted that among all qualitative items, issues of time, training, class size, and student-centered

issues were the most frequent responses. A common theme of faculty believing that “students should not be in college or are not capable of doing the work” (p. 69) was found in qualitative responses.

Although it is difficult to make comparisons across a set of studies that have such a wide range of methods, samples, and variables, one might note that many of these studies reported more negative attitudes toward students enrolled in developmental coursework (cf. Farrow, 1986; Harris, 1983). When asked to discuss the characteristics of students enrolled in developmental coursework, many of the responses were of negative qualities or known barriers to success (e.g., Mesa, 2012; Quick, 2008; Zientek et al., 2014.) These responses indicated that the faculty felt these students were lacking in many ways. This lack reflects what Arendale (2005) discussed as the medical model of remedial or developmental education that was common in the latter portion of the 20th century: students are assessed, their weaknesses diagnosed, and an effort made to fix or remediate their deficiencies. This contrasts strongly with a developmental model, in which all students are perceived as capable of additional development and the job of all educators is to move them along the continuum of development.

Faculty Attitudes Toward Students with Disabilities

Research regarding faculty attitudes toward students with disabilities was reviewed for findings pertinent to this study. This section of the literature review had the largest number of studies to review due to a series of connected studies using the Inclusive Teaching Strategies Inventory (ITSI). Two recent and representative studies (Dallas et al., 2014; Lombardi et al., 2013) that utilized the ITSI were included in this review. Several additional studies (e.g., Baker et al., 2012; Gibbons, Cihak, Mynatt, &

Wilhoit, 2015; Sniatecki, Perry, & Snell, 2015) that utilized a variety of methods and instruments were also reviewed to gain a comprehensive understanding of the research that has been done in this area.

Sniatecki et al. (2015) conducted a non-experimental quantitative study to determine faculty attitudes toward students with disabilities. The research site was a mid-sized public liberal-arts college in upstate New York. One hundred and twenty-three members out of 604 (20.4%) completed an online survey which included four demographic questions and 30 items regarding faculty attitudes towards students with disabilities.

The results of a one-way ANOVA and Tukey's HSD post-hoc analysis showed that different types of disabilities are perceived statistically significantly differently by faculty: physical disabilities are the most positively perceived, followed by learning disabilities, then by mental health disabilities (Sniatecki et al., 2015). The results also showed that faculty generally hold positive attitudes toward students with disabilities and believe in their ability to succeed and compete academically in college. There was a small minority of faculty (4.9%) who held negative attitudes toward providing accommodations for students with disabilities. Respondents reported a lack of knowledge of policies and some safety procedures regarding students with disabilities, including plans for evacuation in case of an emergency, ADA compliance issues, and general knowledge regarding students with disabilities and higher education. Participants also reported sensitivity to the needs of students with disabilities as well as available resources on their campus. Results on items related to services provided by the office for

Disability Resources were mixed: many faculty were unsure of procedures for requesting services.

A study by Gibbons et al. (2015) published in the same year focused on faculty attitudes toward students with intellectual disabilities and autism. The researchers surveyed 152 faculty and 499 students at a mid-sized, public, land-grant university in the southeast to determine their attitudes toward the inclusion of students with intellectual disabilities and autism in higher education. All surveys were completed online. The instruments used for this study were the Attitudes on Postsecondary Education for Students with Intellectual Disabilities and Autism Survey (APES-S for the student version, APES-F for the faculty version). The APES-S had 45 total questions, while the APES-F had 49 total questions.

Gibbons et al. (2015) calculated descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, and *p*-value) for all Likert-scale items. The statistics were compared between the student and faculty groups by item. The researchers found that both students and faculty were generally positive about the inclusion of students with intellectual disabilities in postsecondary education. Most faculty and students had had contact with a person with an intellectual disability, and most were in favor of a program for these students at the research site. Both groups disagreed in segregating these students into a special school to pursue higher education. When asked about the effect on the classroom, students had more positive attitudes toward including students with intellectual disabilities in the classroom. Faculty responses indicated that they were concerned with the amount of time and resources students with intellectual disabilities would need to be successful in class. The same was true of responses regarding the effect on the general campus: students were

more likely to have positive attitudes toward including students with disabilities in campus activities, organizations, and recreation facilities than faculty.

In a study with similar findings, Baker et al. (2012) surveyed faculty and student attitudes toward students with disabilities. The data were collected at a small women's college in Pennsylvania in Fall 2009. All faculty and students received an email inviting them to participate in the study. A convenience sample of roughly 400 participants responded. The response rate for faculty at the college was 75% and for students was 22%.

Participants in Baker et al. (2012) were asked to complete one of two versions of an online survey: one for faculty and one for students. All participants were asked about the general environment for students with disabilities at the institution. The second section of the survey asked participants to rate 10 items on their beliefs about students with disabilities on a Likert scale. The third section asked about classroom inclusion, the fourth asked about capability, and the fifth asked about student reactions to people with disabilities. The final section that was common to all participants asked about their familiarity with people with disabilities. The faculty survey contained an additional section that asked about beliefs and willingness to make accommodations: these items were rated on a Likert scale. The student survey contained an additional section that was only available to students who indicated that they had a disability. The survey was reviewed by a cohort of faculty and staff with knowledge in this area to establish content validity. A pilot was conducted to garner feedback on survey length and clarity.

Baker et al. (2012) analyzed the data via a series of independent *t*-tests to compare results from faculty and results from students. For items in which there was a statistically

significant difference on the *t*-test further analysis was performed via ANOVA and post-hoc Tukey tests. These secondary analyses were used to compare results from faculty, students with disabilities, and students without disabilities.

Baker et al. (2012) reported differences in faculty and student perceptions of the classroom. Faculty rated items on classroom inclusiveness, support, and a welcoming campus more highly than students. Faculty and students both rated items related to capability highly, indicating a positive perception. Students with disabilities rated items related to sharing their disability with their faculty lowly. The researchers noted that this finding might indicate a topic for future professional development.

Additional support for the idea that professional development is key for faculty working with students with disabilities can be found in a series of studies that examine faculty attitudes toward students with disabilities and inclusive teaching strategies (e.g., Dallas et al., 2014; Lombardi et al., 2013; Lombardi & Murray, 2011; Lombardi, Murray, & Gerdes, 2011; Murray, Lombardi, Wren, & Keys, 2009; Murray, Wren, & Keys, 2008). Dallas et al. (2014) surveyed 381 faculty members from a mid-sized, Midwestern, public research university in the fall 2011 semester to determine faculty attitudes toward students with disabilities. These faculty members self-reported their attitudes toward accommodations and Universal Design for Instruction (UDI) using the ITSI developed by Murray et al. (2008). For this research, three subscales of the instrument were used: Multiple Means of Presentation (MMP), Inclusive Learning Strategies, and Accommodations. Each subscale was measured using a 7-point Likert scale with a neutral option available. ANOVA tests were used to assess the relationship between variables, and Tukey's post hoc procedure was used to determine group differences.

Dallas et al. (2014) found that in general, faculty attitudes toward all three subscales were positive. Significant differences were found on the Accommodations subscale between faculty members with more teaching experience (13 or more years) versus faculty with less teaching experience (0-6 years). On the MMP subscale, the faculty of the colleges of Applied Science and Arts, Education, and Mass Communication and Media Arts had more favorable views than the faculty of the colleges of Science or Liberal Arts. On the Accommodations subscale, the faculty of the college of Education had more favorable views than the faculty of the college of Applied Sciences and Arts. Faculty members with 48 or more hours of training in a disability-related area had a significantly higher mean score on the MMP subscale.

Using the same instrument reported in Dallas et al.'s (2014) study, Lombardi et al. (2013) performed quantitative research to determine faculty attitudes toward disability-related topics and inclusive instruction. Using a sample of 612 faculty from two medium-sized, public universities (one in the northwest, one in the Midwest), the researchers administered the ITSI instrument described in Dallas et al. (2014) in the Spring and Fall 2011 semesters. The sample of 612 faculty included the 381 faculty from Dallas et al. (2014).

Lombardi et al. (2013) calculated descriptive statistics of subgroups by gender and prior training. They ran a hierarchical regression to determine the influence of gender and prior training on faculty attitudes. In addition, the researchers used hierarchical multiple regression to control for gender and variances due to institutional training opportunities.

Lombardi et al. (2013) reported that while there were some gender differences in scores on all scales of the ITSI, faculty who had participated in professional development on disability-related topic, regardless of gender or institutional affiliation, scored higher on all scales of the ITSI. They noted that this finding confirms that “training is most crucial in influencing faculty attitudes” (p. 229) toward students with disabilities and inclusive teaching.

The literature of faculty attitudes toward students with disabilities shows that faculty generally have a positive attitude toward these students (Baker et al., 2012; Dallas et al., 2014; Gibbons et al., 2014; Sniatecki et al., 2015). Some studies showed slight differences by gender (Lombardi et al., 2013) or teaching experience (Dallas et al., 2014), and studies that included student attitudes showed that faculty attitudes were slightly less positive than student attitudes (Baker et al., 2012; Gibbons et al., 2014). This may be due to reported faculty concerns about students with disabilities in the classroom: several studies reported faculty concerns about the amount of training they had in working with these students (Dallas et al., 2014; Lombardi et al., 2013; Sniatecki et al., 2015). In addition, faculty in Gibbons et al.’s (2014) study reported concerns about the amount of time and resources needed to ensure success for students with disabilities. The concerns about inadequate training, time, and resources are not unique to faculty working with students with disabilities: these three areas are also cited as concerns for developmental educators (Boylan, 2002).

Faculty Attitudes Toward Non-Traditional Students

Several studies on non-traditional students were located for review in this section. Although outcomes from this segment of the student population are frequently studied in

comparison to traditionally-aged students, there is little research on faculty attitudes toward these students. Research from Brinthaupt and Eady (2014) and Day, Lovato, Tull, and Ross-Gordon (2011) was particularly pertinent to the present research because the data from the Institutional Research department for the site of this study indicated that non-traditional students were overrepresented in all developmental courses, but to varying degrees.

Brinthaupt and Eady (2014) explored the attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors of faculty members toward non-traditional students. They administered a survey to 171 participants. Ninety-eight participants were faculty at a large, public 4-year university in the southeastern United States, while 73 participants were faculty at the feeder school for the university, a large state community college. The university and community college had 34% and 30% non-traditional adult learners respectively during the year data was collected. The researchers administered an online survey to which all faculty at both institutions were invited via email. The instrument included a section for demographic information (how long they had taught in higher education, what level of student they typically taught, and their typical course modality). The next section contained 20 items that measured attitude and perception. Each item was scored on a 5-point Likert scale where 1 was strongly disagree and 5 was strongly agree. The third section of the survey contained nine items that asked about class-related behaviors regarding non-traditional students. The fourth and final section asked participants to give information about their professional development experiences over the past two years. Data were analyzed using one-sample t-tests in which the item mean was compared to the scale midpoint.

Brinthaupt and Eady (2014) reported that faculty had positive attitudes toward non-traditional learners: they appreciated the diversity they brought to the class, found them to be more motivated and better at time management, and thought that they were able to work more independently than traditional students. They found that faculty “like and appreciate the adult learners in their classes and think that they differ from their traditional students in several positive ways” (Brinthaupt & Eady, 2014, p. 136). The faculty did not have many professional development experiences related to non-traditional learners, and fewer than half were interested in learning more about these learners and their needs. The researchers found that “community college teachers report[ed] greater adult learner interest, but not more relevant professional experiences, than university teachers” (Brinthaupt & Eady, 2014, p. 137).

These findings are similar to those elaborated upon in Day et al. (2011), who conducted interviews with community college and university faculty in Texas to explore faculty perceptions of adult learners and their preparation for teaching these learners. Data for this research were collected during the spring 2009 semester in one-on-one interviews in the participants’ offices. The sample for this study was purposeful to target experienced faculty who taught in areas with high concentrations of adult learners and to ensure adequate representation from both the university and community college. After sending an invitation via email, three university faculty and five community college faculty were selected to participate. Interviews lasted between 45 minutes and an hour, and were recorded digitally. The interviews were semi-structured, with an interview guide being used to focus consistent topics of questioning while allowing the interviewer to modify as appropriate. The interviews were transcribed verbatim, then manually

coded. The researchers used open, descriptive coding for their first round, then used axial coding to link categories and subcategories.

Day et al. (2011) found three major themes with multiple subthemes. The major themes were conceptions of adult learners, teaching adults, and preparation for teaching adults. Conceptions of adult learners were positive, with adult learners perceived as generally prepared and invested in their education. Although faculty did report that many of these learners had to juggle multiple roles outside of the classroom, the overall perceptions were positive. Participants noted that when teaching adults, it is important to build on their life experience, use active strategies, and ensure that the class is structured. However, when asked, faculty remarked that they had received limited formal preparation for working with adults.

The findings in Brinthaupt and Eady (2014) and Day et al. (2011) show positive attitudes toward non-traditional students, but a lack of preparation or professional development designed to help faculty meet their needs. This lack of professional development is illuminating: faculty at institutions of higher education are frequently selected due to their excellence in their field, not necessarily their andragogical knowledge. Although the field of developmental education counts andragogical knowledge among the best practices (Boylan, 2002; Boylan & Saxon, 2012), it is obvious that this is not an area of focus for professional development at some institutions.

Faculty Attitudes Toward Students of Color

Several studies regarding faculty attitudes toward students of color are reviewed in this section. The studies were selected due to their similarities in context (e.g., Costner et al., 2010; Katchanovski et al., 2015) or theoretical framework (Kumar et al., 2015).

The context for this study is a minority-serving institution where students of color are both a majority at the institution and disproportionately represented within developmental education coursework. The research site provided data indicating that students who identify as Black, Hispanic, or American Indian test into developmental coursework at much higher rates than their White counterparts.

A study by Katchanovski et al. (2015) analyzed data from the 1999 North American Academic Study Survey (NAASS) to determine the effect that national and role-based factors had on faculty and student attitudes toward race, gender, and affirmative action. The NAASS is a matched telephone survey conducted in 1999-2000 in the United States and Canada. The survey utilizes a structured random sample of 1,644 American faculty members, 1,514 Canadian faculty members, 1,632 American undergraduate students, and 1,509 Canadian students (due to differences in the classification systems in the U.S. and Canada, it is possible that some of the Canadian students were not undergraduates). The researchers were interested in determining whether nationality or position was a more important determinant of attitudes toward race, affirmative action, and gender issues.

Katchanovski et al. (2015) calculated descriptive statistics to collect a basic picture of the data, then ran multivariate analyses to explore the differences in attitudes by nationality and position. The researchers found that Americans were statistically significantly more likely to agree that they lived in a racist society. They also determined that non-White American faculty were statistically significantly more likely to agree to this statement than White American faculty. In general, the researchers noted, nationality had a larger effect on racial attitudes than position. The authors did clarify that the data

for the NAASS is older, but argued that these attitudes are grounded in core values, which change gradually.

Costner et al. (2010) surveyed faculty attitudes toward teaching African American students to help educators understand how their attitudes can create achievement barriers for their students. The sample in this study was 221 English (developmental and college-level), mathematics (developmental and college-level) and history faculty at community colleges in the Mid-Atlantic United States. These participants completed a modified version of the Teaching African American Students Survey (TAASS), consisting of 21 items that assessed willingness to teach African American students, openness to using cultural resources in the classroom, and recognition of African American students as a distinct cultural group. All items were assessed using a 6-point Likert scale.

Factor analysis showed that the *Willingness to Teach African American Students* scale was reliable, but the *Cultural Sensitivity* subscale was not (Costner et al., 2010). The *Cultural Sensitivity* items were treated as individual items during subsequent analysis. An ANOVA was run to discover any statistically significant relationships between faculty demographic information and survey items. The researchers found that there were statistically significant relationships between faculty race and discipline and their willingness to teach African American students, openness to using cultural resources in the classroom, and recognition of African American students as a distinct cultural group. They determined that although community college faculty were willing to teach these students, they were not willing to use pedagogy that had been proven effective for these students. The majority of the faculty surveyed did not recognize African American

students as a distinct cultural group, which the researchers discussed in the context of classroom implications.

A later study (Kumar et al., 2015) examined relationships between teacher attitudes toward White and non-White students and their classroom instructional practices. The purpose of this study was to test a model of the relationship between teacher attitudes and practice. The data were collected from 241 White teachers at 12 middle schools in the Midwest. Seventy-two percent of the respondents were female. The middle schools were part of two districts with culturally diverse students: one has had a recent influx of Arab immigrants while the other has had a sizable and diverse Middle Eastern population for decades.

Participants were given instructions to complete the Implicit Association Test (IAT) plus additional survey items regarding explicit attitudes and beliefs anonymously online (Kumar et al., 2015). Sixty-eight percent of the respondents completed both the IAT and the additional items. The IAT determines the strength of automatic associations. Participants were briefly shown positive words, negative words, the face of a White child, or the face of an Arab child. They were instructed to hit “E” on the keyboard when positive words or a White child was shown, and “I” on the keyboard when negative words or an Arab child was shown. Later, these pairings were reversed, and the participants were asked to hit “E” when positive words or an Arab child were shown, and “I” when negative words or a White child was shown. The difference in reaction times was measured and faster reactions to positive/White or negative/Arab were determined to indicate an implicit preference.

Explicit attitudes were measured by three seven-point Likert scale items that determined participants' stereotypical beliefs about minority students or students from low-socioeconomic backgrounds compared to White students (Kumar et al., 2015). Three additional scales assessed the emphasis instructors placed on developing mutual respect among their students. These items were assessed on a five-point Likert scale, and included a scale on promoting respect (five items), instructor responsibility for resolving interethnic conflicts (three items), and instructor responsibility for culturally responsive teaching (seven items). The final scale of the instrument measured instructor's mastery or performance-focused instructional practices. These items were assessed using a five-point Likert scale and contained five items on the mastery-focused scale and seven items on the performance-focused scale.

Kumar et al. (2015) calculated descriptive statistics of all variables as well as correlations between exogenous and endogenous variables. The proposed model was then tested for fit using path analysis. The initial fit of the model was poor, so the researchers respecified the model to one that better fit the data. They found that instructors' implicit attitudes and focus on mastery or performance-based pedagogy was mediated by their attitudes toward promoting respect among their students as well as their feelings of responsibility toward their culturally diverse students. This was not true for explicit stereotypical beliefs and pedagogical practices. The researchers note that "teacher behavior in the classroom results from a blend of conscious and unconscious processes, and that each is important in its own right" (Kumar et al., 2015, p. 541). An additional finding of the research was that teachers in this study who had more favorable attitudes toward White students than Arab students were less likely to engender inter-

racial respect and were less likely to take on culturally adaptive practices for solving conflict between students of different races.

The studies reviewed in this area draw conclusions that are important to understand in the context of this study. Katchanovski et al. (2015) found that there were differences between White and non-White Americans in terms of societal racism. The questions in this study are being investigated in a context in which the students are majority non-white and the faculty is majority white. This difference may be important to the results and discussion of the findings of this study. Costner et al. (2010) found a lack of faculty willingness to use culturally-relevant pedagogy when teaching African-American students. Kumar et al. (2015) found that faculty who are less favorable toward students of color are less likely to use culturally adaptive practices. Students of color (particularly African-American students) are enrolled in developmental coursework at a disproportional rate at the research site, and a lack of willingness to teach using culturally-relevant pedagogy may be significant to the findings of this study.

Faculty Attitudes Toward Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students

There were very few studies available exploring faculty attitudes toward culturally and linguistically diverse students. Pertinent studies were identified and reviewed for this section of the literature review (Cao, Li, Jiang, & Bai, 2014; Starkey, 2015). Although the phrases “International Student” and “student who speaks English as a Second Language” are more frequently used in the literature, the researcher uses the phrase “culturally and linguistically diverse students” in this section. Many students speak English not as their second language, but as their third, fourth, or fifth language. The phrase “linguistically diverse” honors all of these students.

Cao et al. (2014) examined faculty member attitudes toward international students and internationalization. Participants were 471 faculty members from two universities in the United States: one on the east coast and one in the western half of the country. Data were collected over a one-month period in 2011. Respondents to the online survey were diverse in age, gender, rank, teaching status, and discipline. The instrument contained over 90 items and asked participants to respond on a five-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly negative) to 5 (strongly positive).

Data for Cao et al. (2014) were analyzed using Partial Least Square analysis with secondary analysis conducted via a measurement model and a structural model. The researchers found that faculty attitudes had a statistically significant effect on their behavior toward international students in their practice: faculty with positive attitudes had more positive behaviors and vice versa. They also found that adjustments to faculty teaching practice could impact the academic performance of international students—adjustments that promoted internationalization had a positive impact. Finally, Cao et al. (2014) noted that improved student learning outcomes can raise faculty satisfaction levels with regard to teaching international students: that is, if international students have better outcomes, faculty are more satisfied with teaching them.

Starkey (2015) used a grounded theory study to explore faculty attitudes toward ESL Nursing students. The research questions were explored via 13 semi-structured interviews and a focus group with three educators teaching in accredited schools of nursing (associate, baccalaureate, and graduate programs). This researcher was interested particularly in the factors that influence faculty attitudes and perceptions, as well as how those attitudes and perceptions are affected by student diversity. Data were collected in

the summer of 2013. The interviews were audiotaped, transcribed, and reviewed by the interviewee as a member-checking method. Open coding was used to code each interview as it occurred. Axial and selective coding were used in subsequent coding rounds to form themes and determine relationships between those themes.

Starkey (2015) reported that the process of conscientization was the major theme revealed in analysis, with subthemes of overcoming, coming to know, and facilitation. The researcher defined conscientization as a development of a “critical awareness of social reality mediated through common reflection, dialogue, and action” (Starkey, 2015, p. 722). The faculty reported linguistic and cultural barriers (accents, vocabulary issues, and comprehension issues with academic material were specifically cited) and spoke of the need for students to overcome these barriers. Student attitude, desire, and responsibility were also cited as lesser issues that needed to be overcome. The second subtheme was concerned with faculty feeling unprepared for a diverse student body in the nursing program. Many participants discussed their growth during this process in which they came to know their students and their needs. The final subtheme found in this research was facilitating, which had to do with the strategies faculty used to help their students mitigate barriers. Faculty expressed a desire to balance their assistance to students to help them, but maintain rigor (particularly in the context of the exam to earn a nursing license).

The findings in Cao et al. (2014) and Starkey (2015) show a variety of attitudes toward students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Cao et al. (2014) provide evidence that positive faculty attitudes are related to positive faculty behaviors. The qualitative research by Starkey (2015) gives the reader a rich understanding of

transformation of attitude from a focus on the barriers students need to overcome to an awareness of strategies they can use to help students overcome those barriers.

Faculty Attitudes Toward Student Veterans

I reviewed several recent studies on faculty attitudes toward student veterans. This is an area of study which is slowly getting more attention as veterans from the Iraq and Afghanistan conflict seek out a college education, but the research studies in this area are still scarce. Two studies in particular contained findings that were pertinent to this study.

Gonzalez and Elliot (2016) surveyed 160 faculty from a community college and 4-year university to determine predictors of faculty attitudes toward student veterans. Data were collected in the Spring 2012 semester. The instrument had five sections: faculty member's contact with the military, faculty member's contact with student veterans, faculty member's attitudes toward student veterans compared with other students, faculty member's treatment of military-related issues in class, and a demographic section. Items in the first four sections were ranked on a Likert-type scale from which a mean and standard deviation was calculated. The researchers ran a confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling to determine relationships between items and develop a model. Model fit was analyzed using Comparative Fit Index, root mean square error of approximation, and the ratio of Chi-square to degrees of freedom.

The major finding in the study by Gonzalez and Elliot (2016) was that faculty members who had background or increased contact with the military in their personal lives were more likely to both discuss the military in class and assist student veterans.

The researchers found that these faculty members were more likely to be found at the community college. They also found that faculty with more positive attitudes toward student veterans were more likely to help them. The researchers noted that this research provides important insights regarding the improvement of veteran's experiences at institutions of higher education. The special needs that student veterans may have may be best served by improved faculty training in military culture.

An earlier study by Barnard-Brak, Bagby, Jones, and Sulak (2011) examined the influence of faculty perceptions and self-efficacy on students who are post-9/11 veterans with symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). This research utilized a convenience sample of 596 faculty members from 28 institutions across the United States. The survey contained only five items, all scored on a five-point Likert scale. Two of the items asked about faculty attitudes toward the military and veterans, while three items asked about faculty self-efficacy in working with student veterans with symptoms of PTSD.

Barnard-Brak et al. (2011) reported that faculty who had negative attitudes about serving in the military were less likely to feel that they are prepared to work with veteran students who demonstrate signs of PTSD. This effect was mediated if these faculty members responded positively to the item "regardless of my perceptions about the war, I respect the service of veterans" (p. 33). This research shows an association between faculty attitudes toward the military and veterans and their self-efficacy working with student veterans.

The studies reviewed in this section provide evidence that faculty who have more positive attitudes toward student veterans are more willing to work with them and meet

their unique needs. Although no data were available from the research site of this study regarding the enrollment of student veterans in developmental coursework, faculty at the research site perceived student veterans as an overrepresented group within developmental coursework. The findings in this section that correlate positive attitudes with a willingness to help these students echoes similar findings regarding faculty willingness to work with students enrolled in developmental writing classes (Quick, 2008), non-traditional students (Brinthaup & Eady, 2014), African-American students (Costner et al., 2010), and international students (Cao et al., 2014).

Faculty Attitudes Toward Student Athletes

Several studies on faculty attitudes toward student athletes were reviewed to learn how this issue has been researched and what, if any, findings are pertinent to the current research. Many of the articles reviewed share a common methodology and instrument. The Situational Attitude Scale (SAS) was investigated to see if it would be appropriate to the current research. The SAS was developed in Sedlacek and Brooks (1970, 1971) to measure prejudice against particular groups. The SAS would be a useful extension of this research in the future, however, the research question developed for this study require qualitative methods to gain an understanding of faculty knowledge, experiences, and attitudes. Although the SAS did not guide the methods of this research, the results of research using the SAS were helpful in understanding faculty attitudes toward student athletes. This is especially important in light of the perception of faculty at the research site that student athletes are more represented in developmental coursework than they are: institutional data from the research site for student athletes enrolled in developmental coursework indicated that student athletes were generally less represented in

developmental coursework than non-athletes. Literature for this population of students was included based on the discrepancy between the anecdotal reports given by faculty at this institution and the data given by the Institutional Research office.

Engstrom, Sedlacek, and McEwan (1995) used the Situational Attitude Scale (SAS) to examine differences in faculty attitudes toward student athletes versus the general student body. This research took place at a large public research institution in the eastern United States with a National College Athletic Association Division 1-A program. The sample consisted of 126 faculty members.

In Engstrom et al.'s (1995) study, the instrument had three forms, identical except for language which identified a student, a male student athlete playing a revenue sport (football or basketball), or a male student athlete playing a nonrevenue sport (lacrosse, wrestling, golf, etc.). Each form had 10 brief situation descriptions followed by 10 Likert-type bipolar semantic differential scales (good/bad, happy/sad, etc). Participants indicated their reaction to the situation described by picking a point along the semantic differential scale. The researchers calculated the mean of each scale for each item and compared the means between forms. Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to further analyze the data.

Engstrom et al. (1995) found that there were statistically significant differences between forms for seven of the ten situations. Those situations were related to students driving an expensive car, getting an "A" in class, receiving a full scholarship, being admitted with lower SAT scores, pursuing a program of study at a reduced pace, having their accomplishments featured in the campus paper, and the creation of an expanded tutoring program (Engstrom et al., 1995). In six of these seven situations, faculty

attitudes were more negative toward student athletes than general students. Only the situation in which students pursued a program of study at a reduced pace was seen more positively for student athletes than the general student body. The general conclusion of the researchers was that faculty at the research institution do hold prejudicial attitudes toward student athletes. They reported more negative attitudes toward student athletes' academic ability as well as situations in which student athletes received perks or additional services.

In a later study, Baucom and Lantz (2001) examined faculty attitudes toward student athletes at a NCAA Division II school in the Midwest. The sample in this research was 119 members of the faculty at the research institution. Faculty were randomly assigned one of three forms of the SAS to complete. The version of the SAS in this study was very identical to that in Engstrom et al. (1995): it contained the same 10 situational items with a single bipolar differential scale (e.g. happy/sad) yielding a score between one and five for each situation. Just as in Engstrom et al. (1995), the three forms of the instrument were identical with the exception of the language used to describe the students: form A referred to a male student, form B to a male non-revenue athlete, and form C to a male revenue athlete.

Analysis of the data included the calculation of descriptive statistics for each item by form as well as a MANOVA analysis to determine if there were difference by form (Baucom & Lantz, 2001). A follow up ANOVA found that there were statistically significant differences for four items: those concerning expanded tutoring, receiving a full scholarship to attend the institution, admission despite low College Board test scores, and the featuring of student accomplishments in the campus paper. A Tukey's post hoc

analysis was conducted, which revealed that faculty had more negative perceptions of both types of student athlete when compared to non-athletes.

Baucom and Lantz (2001) found that faculty hold more negative attitudes toward student athletes than non-athletes. Faculty in this study were particularly concerned that student athletes with poor academic qualifications may be let into a selective university based on their athletic prowess. This concern over the admission of underprepared students speaks directly to the need for this study.

Comeaux (2011) later used a modified form of the SAS described in Engstrom et al. (1995) to determine whether faculty held negative attitudes toward student athletes. The research took place at NCAA Division I research university. The SAS used in Comeaux (2011) contained eight items that described a scenario containing a hypothetical student, followed by five semantic differential scales (positive/negative) that were scored between 10 (the most negative) to 50 (the most positive). The major difference in this study is that four versions of the SAS were sent to participants instead of the three versions described in studies by Engstrom et al. (1995) and Baucom and Lantz (2001). The four versions were identical except for the language describing the student in the hypothetical scenario. Form A described a neutral student, Form B, a male revenue athlete (football or basketball player), Form C, a male nonrevenue athlete (tennis, swimming), and Form D, a female athlete. 464 faculty from the research institution returned the instrument.

Comeaux (2011) ran a two-way multivariate ANOVA to determine if there was a main effect for form. Follow up analysis was conducted using univariate ANOVA to determine differences between forms. He found that there was a statistically significant

main effect for form. There were statistically significant differences between forms in seven of the eight situations. In all but one scenario, faculty had statistically significantly more negative attitudes toward student athletes than they did toward a neutral student. In seven of the scenarios, the scores of the male revenue and male nonrevenue students were statistically significantly more negative than the neutral form.

The literature on faculty attitudes toward student athletes was illuminating, particularly in the context of the perceptions of research site faculty. The erroneous belief that student athletes were overrepresented in developmental courses may be explained by the findings that show faculty concern over admitting underprepared students for their athletic skills. The research site for this study is an open-enrollment community college, but the pervasive belief described in these studies that student athletes may receive preferential treatment in the admission process may explain why faculty perceived student athletes as overrepresented in developmental coursework.

Summary

The studies reviewed in this section represent recent or seminal research that informs this study. Literature on the importance of faculty attitudes as well as faculty attitudes toward students enrolled in developmental coursework, students with disabilities, non-traditional students, students of color, students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, student veterans, and student athletes was summarized and pertinent findings discussed. It is difficult to generalize the findings of such a diverse array of studies, but there were some trends in the literature, as well as confirmations/disconfirmations of the initial perceptions of faculty at the research site.

One trend in the literature is a low-positive to negative perception of students enrolled in developmental coursework. This perception can be linked in many studies to the deficit model discussed in Arendale (2005): faulty responses often noted the skills and habits that students enrolled in developmental coursework lacked. Perceptions of many of the other student sub-groups explored in this literature review were mixed or not directly studied. Student with disabilities were viewed positively, although some faculty viewed accommodations less positively. Non-traditional students were viewed positively, although faculty felt under-trained in andragogical techniques. Attitudes toward students of color were not directly measured, although the studies in this section did find differences between the attitudes of white and non-white faculty members as well as differences in willingness to adopt culturally-relevant practices. Similarly, there were differences in faculty behaviors toward international students that correlated with faculty attitudes toward these students. For faculty teaching student veterans, there was an increased willingness to help these students from faculty members who had more positive attitudes toward student veterans or the military. Studies that focused on faculty attitudes toward student athletes found more negative perceptions of student athletes than the general student body. As discussed above, this may inform the inaccurate perception of faculty at the research site that student athletes are overrepresented in developmental coursework.

CHAPTER III

Method

The purpose of this study was to explore the knowledge and attitudes of faculty toward students enrolled in developmental coursework at a large community college district in the southwestern United States. This research was guided by the following question: what are faculty's perceptions of students enrolled in developmental coursework?

Research Design

I used a transcendental phenomenological approach (Moustakas, 1994) via structured interviews to explore faculty perceptions of students enrolled in developmental coursework at the participant institution. The transcendental phenomenological approach was drawn from Moustakas (1994), based on the work of Edmund Husserl. Husserl described many of the important early concepts of phenomenology: the phenomenon, the Epoche, and intentionality. Moustakas (1994) distilled this work into three essential processes: Epoche, Transcendental-Phenomenological Reduction, and Imaginative Variation. This approach was selected as the most appropriate due to the need to synthesize the experiences of multiple individuals into a description of faculty attitudes toward students enrolled in developmental coursework.

Epoche is a first step toward removing the judgement and knowing of the researcher so that a phenomenon can be visited "naively" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 32) without preconceived thoughts or perceptions. This process is also known as bracketing and consists of a narrative written by the researcher in which prejudices or biases are named and explored. An Epoche was written before data collection for this project

begins, and the document was updated as necessary and reviewed before each subsequent interview. The Transcendental-Phenomenological Reduction process removes repetitive statements to produce “a textural description of the meanings and essences of the phenomenon” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 33). This was done by synthesizing participant data to achieve a composite textural description. The Imaginative Variation attempts to derive a description of the essence of the experience by synthesizing textural descriptions of the data with structural descriptions. In this project, this was done by varying the possible meanings of the data. Data were examined from a variety of perspectives and through varied structural lenses (Moustakas, 1994). This is the final step in a transcendental phenomenology, and a major distinguishing feature of this qualitative approach.

Creswell (2013) described the essence of an experience as the “essential, invariant structure” (p. 82) that is common to the participants’ experiences. Moustakas (1994) noted that in the particular approach outlined in his method, the structural essence developed in the Transcendental-Phenomenological Reduction and the textural essence developed in the Imaginative Variation are synthesized to approach the essence of the phenomenon being explored. The final product of this research is a rich, thick description that attempts to capture the lived experiences of the participants with respect to their attitudes toward students enrolled in developmental coursework.

The transcendental phenomenological approach was chosen after carefully reviewing the purpose and central research question. My interest in faculty descriptions of their beliefs and attitudes indicated that a qualitative approach was appropriate (Creswell, 2013). Furthermore, the intent to distill multiple faculty descriptions of their

lived experiences down into a common description of their lived experiences necessitated a phenomenological approach (Creswell, 2013).

In addition, the transcendental phenomenological approach was selected because it gave me the ability to address a wide variety of shared experiences. Creswell (2013) notes that phenomenological research seeks to “understand several individuals’ common or shared experiences” (p. 81). The research question was focused on the broader experiences of faculty who teach developmental coursework. This research was grounded in participant narratives of their lived experiences. In many cases, those experiences were colored by their conversations with colleagues, or their professional readings of literature within the field. The interview protocol for this research focused on experiences within the classroom that inform faculty attitudes toward students enrolled in developmental coursework, but did not exclude attitudes informed by other experiences.

Research Setting

The site for this research was a mid-sized, urban community college in the southwestern United States. This institution is part of a larger community college district which consists of 10 diverse colleges. These colleges vary from small, rural campuses (full-time student equivalent of 2,149 in Fall 2016) to large suburban and urban campuses (full-time student equivalent of 10,576 in Fall 2016) (Fast Facts, 2016). The student population of each campus varies in terms of gender ratio, racial makeup, average student age, and percent of students testing into developmental coursework. Developmental education in this district is not centralized at the district level, and each college has a differing structure and level of engagement with its developmental education programs.

The campus where this research took place is located in the urban center of a large metropolitan area in the southwestern United States. The study site is over 90 years old and is considered the flagship of the district in which it is located. The institution had a full-time student equivalent of 6,019 in Fall 2016 (Fast Facts, 2016). The site offers 150 degree and certificate programs and has a robust transfer agreement with a local 4-year university. The campus has approximately 145 residential faculty and over 700 adjunct faculty. This institution is a Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) with 48.8% of students identifying as Hispanic in 2016, the most recent year for which data were available. During 2016, 57.3% of the students were 24 years old or younger. This percentage has stayed roughly the same over the past 10 years of enrollment. In the same year, 61.9% of the students at the research site were female and 36% were male, with 2.1% of the students not declaring their gender. This ratio has stayed steady over the past 10 years of enrollment. Seventy-three point four percent of the students in 2016 were part-time students: a declining trend over the past ten years. The percentage of full-time enrollment has varied slightly over the last decade, but is generally increasing. Just over 74% of students enrolled in 2016 were primarily daytime students-this percentage has been steadily increasing over the last decade from 64% in 2007. Sixty-four percent of the students in 2016 were enrolled in academic programs, with 36% enrolled in vocational programs. This ratio has remained fairly steady over the last 10 years.

Selection of Participants

In this research, I utilized a purposeful sample. This type of sample is one in which the researcher first identifies the characteristics of interest, then identifies individuals who have those characteristics (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). All

participants were current residential faculty members at the target institution who had taught developmental coursework for at least three years. Potential participants were identified by using the publicly-available “find a class” tool for this institution’s developmental courses. The potential participants were asked via email to confirm that they had taught developmental coursework for at least three years before being invited to participate in the research. Creswell (2013) noted that this sampling strategy is valid for phenomenological research due to the need for a shared experience of the phenomenon being studied. The planned sample size was seven to ten individuals, following the sample size recommendations for phenomenological research in Creswell (2013) and Dukes (1984). The final sample consisted of six individuals.

Data Collection

Data were collected through interviews. The interview questions (see Appendix A) were developed in response to the problem, purpose, theoretical framework, and central research question described in Chapter I. During the development process of this research, several data collection methods were considered. The two data collection methods that seemed most appropriate were interviews or anonymous open-ended online questionnaires. After reviewing the literature and considering the scope of this research, interview was selected as more appropriate due to the standards of phenomenology, the frequency of this collection method in related studies, and the ability to ask follow-up questions to keep the focus of the data on participant narratives of lived experiences. The open-ended online questionnaire had the advantage of being anonymous, which might have elicited more candid responses, but the inability to member check responses made this the less prudent data collection method. I took every care to encourage the

forthrightness in the semi-structured interviews by reminding faculty that will remain anonymous in any write-up of the research, and that they will have the opportunity to member-check the transcribed interview and researcher interpretations.

No interview questions were available in the reviewed literature, but qualitative written-response questions from a similar study (Zientek et al., 2014) were used as a guide in conjunction with the Spradley (1979) and Moustakas (1994) models for developing interview questions. There were eight total questions written into the interview protocol. Questions one through three followed the Spradley (1979) model of grand tour questions to allow the interviewee to discuss their broad view of students enrolled in developmental education as well as their sources of information about students. Questions four through six were mini-tour questions to elicit responses on the characteristics they perceive these students to have as well as the ways in which these characteristics positively and negatively influence student success. Questions seven and eight were drawn from Moustakas (1994) and serve to close out the interview and perhaps inform new directions for research. Several of the questions had potential follow-up questions that prompted the participant to recall particular examples to illustrate their previous responses, per Moustakas (1994). These questions were piloted in an interview with a participant who met the participant criteria, but whose responses were not used in the final study.

After obtaining IRB approval, I identified participants who met the purposeful sampling criteria as described above. Potential participants were contacted via email to ensure they meet the sampling criteria. If they met the criteria, the faculty member were asked via email to review an attached informed consent. After the participant reviewed

the consent and agreed to participate in the research, I used email to arrange meetings with interviewees at a place and time convenient to them. I explained the research objectives and obtained informed consent from the participants. I had previous experience in conducting qualitative interviews. I received training at my institution to act as a facilitator for focus group interviews, have completed a doctoral-level course on qualitative methods, and served as the principle investigator for an IRB-approved research project that involved interviewing students in 2017.

Interviews for this research were recorded on two separate devices to prevent a failure of the technology: one device was a digital recorder with a lapel microphone that was attached to the interviewee, and the second device was my fully charged mobile phone. I used the pre-designed interview protocol to conduct a semi-structured interview of the participant, probing or asking follow-up questions where appropriate. The interviews took between 23 and 60 minutes each. A single interview was planned, although clarification and participant-checking took place at the participant's convenience. I transcribed the interviews word-for-word. I confirmed that all transcripts were accurate and contain word-for-word transcriptions. The digital files of the audio and the transcriptions are stored on my password-protected home computer and backed up using a flash drive. The identifiable audio data will be stored for two years after the research is conducted, then destroyed.

Data Analysis

Creswell (2013) outlined a recursive data analysis approach that informs the analysis of data for this research. After transcription, I read through all data in their entirety to get a feel for the general direction of the corpus of research. During this

process, I developed initial codes and kept an analytic memo to capture first impressions about the data as well as personal reflections about the data (Saldaña, 2016). After getting a sense of what the data said, I began to code that data using in vivo coding (Saldaña, 2016). In vivo coding uses a word or phrase from qualitative data for the first round of coding (Saldaña, 2016). Saldaña (2016) particularly recommends in vivo coding for studies in which the voice and vocabulary of the participants is important. In vivo coding is emergent: the codes are developed as the researcher reads through the data. The use of emergent coding is justified due to the limiting nature of a priori coding—the participants' words guided the development of coding in this research (Creswell, 2013). I engaged in a recursive coding process in which the codes are reviewed and revised over several rounds of in vivo coding to form the first cycle codes. These first cycle codes were member checked (Saldaña, 2016) by participants to ensure fidelity in the initial analysis.

After the first cycle codes were established, I reviewed the codes to see if they could be synthesized into themes and/or subthemes. This process occurred through code mapping and code landscaping. In the code mapping process, the researcher attempts to find meaning and structure in the first cycle codes (Saldaña, 2016). These codes were organized into a categorical structure. The first cycle codes also went through code landscaping using an online word cloud generator. This might have allowed me to see a graphical representation of the frequency of each code. This graphical perspective might have led to new insights regarding the relationships between codes (Saldaña, 2016).

In the second cycle of coding, I used pattern coding to organize in vivo codes into themes (Saldaña, 2016). Pattern coding pulled first cycle coding data into groupings that

have a more meaningful form and structure (Saldaña, 2016). I attempted to maintain the in vivo codes during this process to preserve the voice of the participants as themes begin to emerge from the data. After the second cycle of coding ended, I began to interpret the data to develop a description of faculty attitudes toward students enrolled in developmental coursework.

Role of the Researcher

I approached this research from a perspective which influenced everything from the development of the research question to the methods used to gather and analyze data to the interpretation of the results. I teach developmental reading at the study institution. My students are largely members of marginalized groups. My work with these students has led to my philosophical position as a critical theorist with an interest in transformative research. My interest in this work stems from my desire to improve faculty attitudes toward students enrolled in developmental coursework via professional development. An underlying observation that informed my work is that faculty attitudes toward students enrolled in developmental coursework are negative and in need of improvement. In order to improve attitudes, higher education professionals must first know what attitudes exist. This philosophical perspective has led directly to the research question in this project. I was a participant observer in this research—I work within the system that I am trying to study and improve.

My philosophical beliefs also influenced the type of study I conducted. I chose to conduct qualitative research because I believe that attitudes and perspectives are best studied with the researcher as the key instrument: aware of his or her biases and privilege, and thus able to comment reflexively on the process and interactions of the research and

the researcher as the project progresses (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). The particular biases that I need to bracket in this research are: (a) that there is a disconnect between age, socio-economic status, and race in the faculty (generally older middle-class white women) and the students (younger students of color from impoverished families, first in their families to attend higher education) at the research site, and (b) that this disconnect can lead to negative perceptions about the abilities of students to succeed.

Credibility

Credibility was established in several ways. Saldaña (2016) recommends a triumvirate of credibility-building methods: develop initial codes as the research is transcribed, keep copious analytical memos regarding the analysis of data and the development of codes, and encourage participants to member-check analysis and interpretation of the research. Initial codes were developed during the transcription and first read-through of the data. I kept an analytical memo during the data collection, transcription, coding, member-checking, and analysis processes to ensure that biases and other reflective thoughts were captured to lend context to my role in the study as needed (Creswell, 2013; Saldaña, 2016). Member-checking was utilized after the first round of coding of individual transcripts to ensure that participants' meanings were being correctly interpreted in the study

I wrote an Epoche to “set aside prejudgments, biases, and preconceived ideas” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 85). According to Creswell (2013), a researcher's ability to bracket his or her bias does not remove the researcher completely from the research being conducted, but rather “identif[ies] personal experiences with the phenomenon” so that readers “can judge for themselves whether the researcher focused solely on the

participants' experiences in the description without bringing himself or herself into the picture" (Creswell, 2013, p. 78-79).

I engaged in three major strategies while writing the Epoche during this research. First, I was mindful of participant selection. The participants in this research were purposefully chosen to meet certain criteria, but I attempted to select individuals who I did not know well or have preconceived notions of. This allowed me to go into the data collection phase with fewer biases than if I selected individuals with whom I had worked closely. Next, the previously discussed analytical memo allowed me to document my own feelings, attitudes, and beliefs both before and after collecting data from participants. Creswell (2013) compares this experience to that of a juror who has heard evidence in a trial that a judge later orders the jury to disregard.

Finally, I engaged in a short period of meditation before and after each interview. Both Moustakas (1994) and Creswell (2013) recommend approaching the Epoche/bracketing process with a clear mind and open self. Moustakas (1994) in particular uses the language of meditation to describe the Epoche. He notes that it "gives us an original vantage point, a clearing of mind, space, and time [...] anything whatever that has been put into our minds by [others]" (p. 86). I have over three years of experience with meditation and used this strategy to help take a naïve view of each participant interview.

Summary

This transcendental phenomenological study was intended to explore the knowledge and attitudes of faculty toward students enrolled in developmental coursework at a large community college district in the southwestern United States. Using a

purposeful sample, I conducted interviews with developmental faculty members at the research site, transcribed those interviews, and then analyzed the resulting transcripts. The data went through a recursive data analysis in two stages, which resulted in a thick, rich description of participants' lived experiences as developmental faculty at the research site.

CHAPTER IV

Findings

The purpose of this study was to explore faculty perceptions of students enrolled in developmental coursework at a large, urban community college. This research was guided by a central research question: what are faculty's perceptions of students enrolled in developmental coursework?

I conducted one-on-one interviews with participants in their campus office or a nearby classroom, with interview durations ranging from 24 minutes to 50 minutes. A semi-structured protocol with eight questions was used to interview participants. I kept notes, reflections, and analytical memos written before, during, and after each interview. I transcribed all audio of the interviews and gave transcripts of the interviews to the participants to member-check accuracy and to give them the opportunity to clarify their meaning if desired. None of the participants requested adjustment or addition to their transcript. After receiving confirmation from each participant, I began data analysis.

Participant responses to interview questions were coded and themed using the central research question as a guide. I made some initial notes about potential codes during the data transcription process and continued to identify in vivo codes as subsequent interviews and transcriptions were completed. Although most codes used the in vivo language of the study participants, a few codes were created to simplify concepts that the participants discussed but for which the participants did not use common language. I attempted to use code landscaping via an online Word Cloud program, however, the mixture of in vivo codes and descriptive codes meant that the Word Cloud did not give a meaningful graphical representation of the data. The code mapping

process was more meaningful and provided an initial schema of themes found within the data. This initial schema provided a starting point for the second coding cycle, in which codes are themed. I went through three major thematic revisions during the second coding cycle. The final version of the theme schema can be found in Table 2.

I closely followed the research design proposed in Chapter III of this dissertation and approved by the University IRB Committee. Credibility was ensured using the three methods suggested by Saldaña (2016): transcripts were member-checked to ensure accuracy; extensive analytical memos were written before, during, and after data collection, coding, and analysis; and initial coding occurred as data were collected via interview notes as well as during the transcription process. Each of these methods were intended to strengthen the internal validity of the study. External validity was not a goal here, as this phenomenological research is not intended to be generalized to a larger population.

Demographic Analysis

Participants were residential faculty at the research site who have taught developmental coursework for at least three years. Two participants were faculty in the Reading department, three were faculty in the English department, and one was faculty in the Mathematics department. Five of the participants were female, and one was male. Years of experience teaching developmental coursework in their field ranges from 22 years to three years. The demographics of the sample are summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Demographics of Sample

Participant	Discipline	Gender	Years of Teaching Developmental Coursework
Participant 1 (P1)	English	Female	22
Participant 2 (P2)	Reading	Female	6
Participant 3 (P3)	Reading	Female	3
Participant 4 (P4)	English	Female	12
Participant 5 (P5)	English	Male	4
Participant 6 (P6)	Mathematics	Female	5

Themes

Table 2 displays the themes, sub-themes, and codes found with regard to the central research question. Five themes were identified in the data: Diversity, Gaps, Barriers, Community, and Extra Work. Several of these themes also had distinct sub-themes emerge from the data.

Table 2

Emergent Themes, Sub-Themes, and Codes for the Central Research Question

Theme	Sub-Theme	Significant Codes
Diversity	Demographics	Diverse; Age; Immigrant; Race
	Personal Attributes	Advocacy; Confidence; Learning; Work ethic
	Motivation	Motivation; Career; Inherent value; Success
Gaps	Content Area Knowledge	Content; Math; Need competencies; Practice
	General Academic Skills	Test taking; Time management; Study habits; Organization
	College Resources	Unaware; Lost
	Communication Skills	Lacking communication skills
Barriers	Language	Language barriers; EFL; ELL; SLL; Don't speak college
	Life Issues	Home issues; Support; Instability
	Cognitive	Learning; Struggle
	Metacognitive	Metacognitive; Reflective
	Mindset	Previous strategies aren't successful here
Community	Community with Peers	Building community; Working together; Sharing
	Relationships with Faculty	Office hours; Break through
	Belonging	Ability to ID with and belong in college; Trying to find belonging
Extra Work		Extra time; Extra support; Extra assistance; Additional challenges; All students, but DevEd more

Diversity

The theme of diversity was ubiquitous in the interview data. Participants noted that it was very difficult to generalize about students enrolled in developmental coursework because they are not monolithic. As Participant 3 put it: “they’re in the same class, but they’re there for very different reasons.” Students enrolled in developmental coursework were described as diverse in terms of demographics, but also in terms of personal attributes and motivating factors.

Participants frequently spoke of student diversity in terms of demographics, however, there was very little agreement on the demographics of students in developmental coursework, even though all participants teach at a single institution at the same time of day. Although it is possible that there are differences in the demographics of students by course, subject, or even faculty member, it is also possible that different faculty perceive different demographic populations as representative of the students enrolled in their developmental courses. One area that faculty did agree upon was that students in developmental coursework are largely students of color. With regard to age, students were described as either very young or older, non-traditional students. One faculty participant noted that older students tended to be “from another country.” This perception was shared by several of the participants, who observed that many of their students enrolled in developmental coursework were “recent immigrants,” “not native to the U.S.,” or “students from another country.” Participant 5 discussed this as an area of strength: “students who [understand] several different languages and [have] lived in and worked in several different cultures” have been “given various perspectives on issues and ways of operating in the world.”

Students enrolled in developmental coursework were also perceived to be from low socioeconomic backgrounds. For one participant, this was coupled with the observation that many of the students enrolled in developmental courses were from the “inner city high schools” of the metropolitan area in which this research was conducted. Finally, participants perceived students enrolled in developmental coursework to be first generation students: among the first in their family to attend college. This was often noted with the previously-discussed subtheme of family support, with the students’ first-generation status as a possible cause for a lack of support from family members who might not fully understand the rigors of the college experience. Participant 6 said that “for many of them [...] they've told me their parents maybe didn't even graduate high school. So, they're sort of navigating [college] alone.”

An additional subtheme under the theme of diversity is personal attributes. This was another subtheme in which there was little consensus and great diversity in the perception of students. One personal attribute that was mentioned by several participants is an unwillingness or inability to self-advocate. Students enrolled in developmental coursework were perceived as “really not confident in their ability” by Participant 6. One participant commented that students enrolled in developmental education are content with “doing the bare minimum to get by” in their classes, while another discussed students’ desire to avoid the scrutiny of their teachers. The participant opined that in high school, many students who later enroll in developmental coursework work just hard enough “so their teacher doesn’t pay attention to them,” then attempt to repeat this strategy in developmental coursework.

In many ways, faculty had some very positive perceptions of students' personal attributes. Student enrolled in developmental coursework were described by Participant 5 as “totally open [...] eager to learn” with the “desire to do well.” Several of the participants spoke reverently about their students' openness, particularly with regard to their willingness to share their lives through writing assignments. Students enrolled in developmental coursework were perceived as driven and persistent. However, these impressions were contrasted by other participants who described students enrolled in developmental coursework as individuals with “chip[s] on their shoulder[s]” and bad attitudes. They were described as “not wanting to be [at the college]” and that in many cases, their presence there was “not about learning.”

A final subtheme of motivating factors was also identified under the theme of diversity. Participants perceived students enrolled in developmental coursework to have varied motivations. Several study participants spoke of career as a motivating factor for students. This was seen as a motivating factor for both young students and non-traditional students. The younger students were perceived to be motivated by their future careers. Non-traditional students were perceived to be motivated, in many cases, by a need to re-career or gain additional skills for a higher paying job. One participant observed that there was an air of “desperation” for many of the older students in developmental courses—their success in the course affects not only their GPA, but potentially their livelihood.

In addition to being motivated by their career, faculty also conceived of students enrolled in developmental coursework as inherently motivated to attend college. Participant 5 noted that students “see the inherent value” and importance in college.

Another participant opined that the foreign students in developmental classes are particularly motivated to learn. This sentiment was shared by several participants who perceived immigrant/refugee students as particularly motivated and industrious.

Gaps

All of the participants discussed their belief that students enrolled in developmental coursework had gaps. These gaps were conceived of in several different ways and cover a variety of areas of the student experience. As Participant 6, a math instructor, said when asked to describe students enrolled in developmental coursework: “they are students that can definitely learn math. But they have some gaps. And I would even throw in there that usually they have some, like, I don't know what the word is that I'm looking for, but like a life gap that they are missing.”

One prevalent subtheme was the faculty perception that students enrolled in developmental education have gaps in their content area knowledge. Although the participants hailed from different departments and taught different subjects and courses, nearly all of them agreed that the students enrolled in their developmental courses had gaps in their knowledge of the academic content for that course.

Another subtheme under the *Gaps* theme was gaps in general academic skills. Participants singled out time management in particular as a gap for students enrolled in developmental coursework: every participant interviewed for this research mentioned time management as a gap, some multiple times. Other perceived gaps in the area of academic skills are study habits, including organization (of materials as well as content knowledge) and the ability to practice their skills. Participant 2 stated that “students think that you have to spend hours and hours a day, when it could be a few minutes

throughout the day—intervals of time” but also highlighted the importance of organization: “anytime [students] have downtime, [they should be] able to access the information that [they] need to study.”

Students enrolled in developmental coursework were also perceived to have a gap in their knowledge and understanding of college resources. This subtheme was pervasive, with nearly all faculty noting that students struggled because they were unaware of, unable to, or unwilling to access college resources. A few faculty also noted that students enrolled in developmental coursework often had inaccurate perceptions of the college experience. “They haven’t quite figured out how to navigate college life,” indicated Participant 5, “they come to us not being fully aware of all of the services that we can offer them to help them be successful, or how to access those services, or what those services really mean to them.” Participant 3 observed that students in developmental courses would frequently benefit from “things like joining clubs and seeing their instructors for help, and things like that, but they’re really not used to that sort of thing.”

A final subtheme under the larger *Gaps* theme was regarding communication skills. Faculty perceived students enrolled in developmental coursework to have gaps in their communication skills or a gap in understanding appropriate communication skills for the academic context. Participant 3 reflected that “a lot of [students enrolled in developmental coursework] lack [...] communication skills in an academic environment [...] everything from speaking to writing in an academic context, and knowing the difference between an academic versus social environment, is something that they struggle with.”

Barriers

All participants in the study mentioned barriers as one of the pervading themes regarding their perceptions of students enrolled in developmental coursework. As Participant 5 put it: “[developmental students] many times face additional challenges and potential barriers in comparison to [college-level] ready students.” These barriers or obstacles were typically, but not exclusively, perceived as preventing student success. Several subthemes were identified in the data regarding barriers.

Language barriers were the most pervasive subtheme within the *Barriers* theme. Faculty perceived that students for whom English is not a first language faced a barrier to success in developmental coursework. There was no common language used to describe these students (various participants used the terms “second language learners,” “EFL [English as a Foreign Language] students,” and described “ELL [English Language Learner] barriers”), but nearly all participants described students who faced language as a barrier to success. Participant 5 recalled an older student who had come to the country as a refugee:

He had been, he and his wife, both had been practicing lawyers, just like, brilliant guy—had a little bit of a language barrier. But that really taught me like, I can't make any assumptions about levels of education [...] they're not always necessarily in a developmental English class because they don't have the prior education they need to be successful in [English] 101. In this case, this guy had education beyond my [own], it was just that there was a little bit of a language barrier there.

Participant 3 relayed a similar experience:

One student that stands out in my mind was a student named Ali (pseudonym) and he was from Iraq. And he moved to America. He was a pharmacist in Iraq and he held bachelor's and master's degrees in his home country, but he was trying to get a job in the United States, but his English skills were not up to par. And so he was taking remedial reading courses, English courses, tried to get his English to a point where he would be able to get a job or even, you know, hold an AA or even a Bachelor's degree in America to open more opportunities for him.

The language used within the college context was also alluded to as a language barrier for many students. Participant 5 commented that

I read this [National Public Radio] article that was saying a lot of students don't come to office hours because they don't understand what you do in office hours, like what that means. So, I think as instructors, we make a lot of assumptions that are not always necessarily true for our students and their understanding. So not only do they have to sort of overcome many of their own barriers, but they have to overcome the barriers that we unknowingly put in place for them.

Another subtheme that was discussed by nearly all participants was the barrier presented by students' life issues. The work/school/life balance of students enrolled in developmental education was mentioned several times as a barrier to success. These students were perceived to have trouble managing all of the elements of their lives successfully. This subtheme was often discussed in tandem with time management. Participants noted that students enrolled in developmental coursework were often students, workers, partners, and parents all at once, and sometimes had difficulty

navigating and balancing those roles. Participant 1 opined that many students enrolled in developmental coursework tended to have “overcomplicated lives.”

In addition to their busy lives, students enrolled in developmental coursework were perceived as having a variety of life issues outside of balancing work, school, and home. Their home lives were often singled out as unsupportive or unstable. Participant 3 spoke of her experiences with students who had an “unstable home environment where they moved around a lot and were not supported in their home—education was not supported in that way.” Faculty perceived this instability as a barrier to their success in developmental coursework. These life issues were often discussed along with student knowledge gaps regarding college resources meant to help them ameliorate the impact of life issues. Participant 1 observed that

It's this stuff in their lives that they don't know how—they can't roll with the punches the way other students can, every little thing sabotages them, and then they tend to give up [...] what creates developmental students [is] not knowing how to deal with those issues.

Another subtheme identified under the larger theme of barriers was cognitive barriers. Several participants discussed cognitive barriers as a concern for students enrolled in developmental coursework. Faculty discussed cognitive barriers rather generally as “cognitive barriers,” “cognitive issues” or a “struggle with learning.” One faculty participant who taught developmental reading identified a small vocabulary as a particular barrier to success for students enrolled in developmental courses. Another faculty noted that students enrolled in developmental coursework are “not necessarily

slow learners [...] but just have, you know, a very distinct barrier kind of holding them back.”

In addition to cognitive barriers, faculty also identified a lack of metacognitive or reflective skills as a barrier to student success. Participant 2 spoke extensively of this barrier, noting that few students enrolled in developmental courses are

able to look back at a quiz and say, oh, I missed this, or I got this wrong because look, I'm not doing so hot when it comes to these particular skills. Or really going back and reflecting on what they got right, what they got wrong [...] I always go over quizzes, or any kind of assessment, or homework rather thoroughly. And then you have some students who are like, okay, I really want to know how you got that answer. And will question what they got, if it's different from what the answer is, or what they should have, what direction they should have taken help to ask questions, but then a lot of students not even really paying attention to that.

The final subtheme identified under the theme of *Barriers* is barriers presented by student mindset issues. This was discussed largely in the context of Carol Dweck's work on mindset theory: a fixed mindset is one which a person believes their abilities are innate (I'm just not a good writer), while a growth mindset is one in which a person believes that abilities can be developed (I don't understand subject/verb agreement...yet). Faculty observed that students enrolled in developmental coursework had a fixed mindset with regard to college and subject-matter. In addition to Dweck's fixed or victim mindset, several participants also discussed mindset in terms of students "failure mentality." This was frequently brought up in conjunction with a discussion of student's negative previous educational experiences—faculty perceived that students enrolled in

developmental coursework had failed so often in previous educational experiences that it was often hard for them to believe that they could be successful in a developmental course. Participant 6 spoke at length about fixed mindset in students enrolled in developmental math: “their mindset is so fixed: math is just something I don't have the innate ability [to do]...It takes a lot to change their mindset of that, because they just have so many years [of trying to learn math].”

Community

The next found in the interview data is Community. Student enrolled in developmental coursework were perceived to be effective community builders, but also to yearn for community and belonging in the college environment. Participants noted that building community within developmental classroom was a key strength of the students enrolled in these classes. Participant 5 spoke extensively about this trait:

They build community really well. I think, because oftentimes, they need a little bit more assistance, kind of getting into the swing of things. And they can all sort of relate to one another in that they are facing some additional challenges they tend to kind of, naturally, after a while—it takes some prompting to get them to open up—but they form really strong community. And I feel like just in general, the greatest sense of community I've ever had in a classroom has often been in those developmental classes.

Faculty observed that students enrolled in developmental coursework excelled at working together and were willing to share strategies and resources with their classmates.

Participant 2 gave an example from a student enrolled in a developmental reading course who

on her own made flashcards for vocabulary words that were coming up, that were going to be assessed, very thorough flashcards with pictures and things were highlighted—a lot of information, not too much, but just enough to make sure that she got what the word meant—[she] had them on a ring, brought them to class all the time, you could see that she was constantly reviewing and really encouraged other students, like, it's not that hard, you just kind of take a look at this. And, and so, I think having that those models in the class is really important. So the students can see that that actually works.

Participant 4 shared similar thoughts: “an environment where students are willing to share those experiences, I think, helps everyone in the class find some common purpose and some common opportunity to see that they can get through something that’s historically been difficult for them.”

A few participants also noted that students enrolled in their developmental classes were eager to build relationships with their faculty as well. Although all faculty stated that they would like more students to attend their office hours, several participants stated that the students enrolled in their developmental classes seemed to be more willing to attend office hours. Faculty perceived these students to be reaching out for connection and help within the campus community.

Faculty also saw students enrolled in developmental coursework as seeking a sense of belonging. This was seen as both an inherent desire, and a desire particularly identified with their placement into developmental coursework. Participant 3 stated "in the school system, they've often lacked belonging in the past. And so unfortunately or fortunately, that's a feeling that isn't necessarily new to them when they arrive to [our

institution]. And so that's just kind of what school feels like to them.” Participant 3 continued that placement into developmental coursework “shakes [student’s] ability to identify with and belong in a college setting.” Several participants perceived that their students enrolled in developmental coursework lacked a sense of belonging but were intensely interested in finding a feeling of belonging on their college campus.

Extra Work

Faculty participants perceived students enrolled in developmental coursework as extra work. This was noted repeatedly: students in developmental coursework were conceived of as needing extra time, extra help, extra support, and as having extra challenges. Sometimes students enrolled in developmental coursework were explicitly compared with students enrolled in non-developmental coursework, but often the comparison was implicit. Participant 5 stated that teaching students enrolled in developmental coursework “requires a higher level of patience, because they want to learn.” Participant 6 noted that teaching students enrolled in developmental coursework meant “trying to hand-hold a little bit more” to ensure students were picking up appropriate learning strategies. Participant 5 observed that these students “need a little bit more assistance” when entering the college environment. Participant 5 also observed that while these students genuinely do want to learn, they can “require a higher level of patience [...] it may take a little extra time and energy and help to get them there.” The general feel of this theme in the research was that faculty were willing to put in the extra work to help these students, but that this work was above and beyond the amount of work they would be putting in if they taught only non-developmental coursework.

There was a pervading theme in this data that many of the gaps and barriers faced by students enrolled in developmental coursework are shared by all students: the difference is one of degree. As Participant 6 put it, “I don't think that if you're DevEd, you're the only ones with this gap [...] but I feel like they even more seem to struggle with that.” Participant 4 stated that “I think [the need for assistance finding a work/school/life balance] is true for DevEd as well as any other student who's a freshman in a college program.” Participant 3 stated that students enrolled in developmental coursework are similar to those enrolled in non-developmental coursework in that they are “trying to find themselves, they're trying to find where they fit” in the college environment. Participant 5 opined that all students struggle with balancing school with work, travel time, and family obligations, “but especially my DevEd students.” This paired set of beliefs was espoused by nearly all of the participants: students enrolled in developmental coursework have many of the same needs as students enrolled in non-developmental coursework, but the former groups' needs are in many ways amplified.

Summary

Analysis of the data collected from faculty participants revealed five themes. *Diversity* was a major theme, with several sub-themes identified in the data: demographics, personal attributes, and motivation. Another theme was *Gaps*, with subthemes of content area knowledge, general academic skills, college resources, and communication skills identified in the data. The third theme was *Barriers*, with subthemes of language, life issues, cognitive, metacognitive, and mindset. *Community* had three sub-themes identified (community with peers, relationships with faculty, and belonging), while *Extra Work* did not have any discernible sub-themes.

CHAPTER V

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore faculty perceptions of students enrolled in developmental coursework at a large, urban community college. The intention was that this research would both provide a current perspective on faculty perceptions as well as provide qualitative data to enrich the findings from previous quantitative studies in this area. Students enrolled in developmental coursework comprise a significant portion of the students enrolled in higher education, and it would behoove those in the field to have a better understanding of current attitudes toward and perceptions of these students. This research may be helpful in guiding professional development for all faculty and staff who work with students.

The findings represent the perceptions of six faculty members from a single institution who have taught developmental coursework for at least three years. The study revealed that students enrolled in developmental coursework are seen as very diverse in terms of demographics, but also in terms of needs and motivations. These students are perceived to have gaps in their knowledge, skills, and frequently in their understanding of college resources that present a challenge to both student and instructor. There was also a general consensus that students enrolled in developmental coursework faced barriers to success. These barriers were varied: some linguistic, some cognitive, some reflective, and some grounded in students' complicated lives. A common thread woven through the participants' perceptions is the strength of community and relationships within developmental classrooms. Faculty noted that students enrolled in developmental coursework were particularly adept at building relationships with one another to provide

support and resources to their classmates. Another common thread was the perception that students enrolled in developmental coursework had previously had negative experiences within education that affected their academic journey. As an overlay to these perceptions, all of the participants in this research noted that the gaps and barriers they described were present not only in students enrolled in developmental coursework, but within all students: however, they perceived these gaps and barriers to be more prevalent and more intense for students enrolled in developmental coursework.

Understanding Faculty Attitudes

The theoretical framework of this research rests on the K-A-B model as described in Baranowski et al. (2003) and the dual-process attitude model described in Kumar et al. (2015). Collectively, these models describe the general development of attitudes and attitudinal change. The K-A-B model theorizes that knowledge informs attitudes, which guide behavior, and the dual-process model describes difference in how attitudes are activated. Kumar et al. (2015) called the attitudes that were activated from a conscious application of knowledge explicit and those that are activated spontaneously implicit. In this study, I asked faculty participants about their experiences with students enrolled in developmental coursework. The interview protocol was not provided to any participant in advance, and the participant responses were given extemporaneously in hopes of exploring more implicit attitudes.

In embarking on this research, I was aware of a preconceived notion that might impact the results of this research. As discussed in Chapter III, a bias was bracketed, that (a) that there is a disconnect between age, socio-economic status, and race in the faculty (generally older middle-class white women) and the students (younger students of color

from impoverished families, first in their families to attend higher education) at the research site, and (b) that this disconnect can lead to negative perceptions about the abilities of students to succeed. Although the first part of this bias is supported by the demographic data for faculty and students at the research site, the second was a prediction based on previous experiences and observations. There was no direct evidence found in this research that supports the idea that this disconnect in demographics causes negative perceptions. However, as in Kumar et al. (2015), faculty do hold at least one implicit attitude toward students enrolled in developmental coursework that might speak to a disconnect between these two groups. Students enrolled in developmental coursework were frequently othered within the data: they were seen as intrinsically different from the faculty participants. Faculty participants implied a comparison between these students and an unspoken second group: students who are enrolled in college-level coursework. The data on *Gaps* and *Barriers* faced by these students as well as the perception that they are *Extra Work* were areas in which this implicit attitude was particularly strong. This othering by the faculty participants is one possible manifestation of the disconnect between faculty teaching developmental courses and students enrolled in these courses.

Diversity

One unexpected element within the data was the sophistication with which the faculty participants addressed issues of diversity. Student diversity was discussed with real depth, not simply within the context of student demographics. The faculty interviewed for this project did not have a unified understanding of their student

demographics, although, as previously noted, it is likely that student demographics are not uniform throughout class sections and instructors.

Another interesting avenue of this research was the way in which faculty participants explicitly tied their discussion of diversity and diversity issues into the social justice movement. One participant noted that she was rushing to make our appointment due to a professional development opportunity on equity that had run late. She also noted that moving so quickly from the training to our interview was coloring her view of the questions I asked: she remarked that it was hard not to reflect on my questions using the social justice lens that she had been using in the equity discussion. Another participant referred to the “wokeness” of his students to indicate their awareness of social issues—this term is used frequently in colloquial discussions of social justice and equity issues.

Equity has been an explicit goal of developmental education since the 1970’s (Arendale, 2005; Boylan, 2002). However, a renewed push in the early years of the 21st century to close so-called equity gaps in higher education has renewed and refocused this conversation. This new/renewed perspective on diversity as an aspect of a larger conversation on equity and social justice is also reflected in recent literature.

This renewed focus on equity may be partially in reaction to the work of entities such as the CCRC. Although their early work tended to conflate remediation and true developmental education to conclude that the latter was actively harming students, their more recent work demonstrates a more nuanced understanding of the field and how in many cases the “additional student supports” they recommended in lieu of developmental coursework are the same supports for which developmental educators have been seeking funding for decades. Although their research is often worthy of critique (Goudas &

Boylan, 2012) and, in some cases, their conclusions have been used to promote poor educational policy (Smith, 2015), they have perhaps helped turn a lens toward equity gaps in college success for students who are placed in developmental courses.

Faculty participants in this research identified student demographics as one subtheme within the larger theme of diversity. Demographics included student age, race, national origin, and socioeconomic level. Some of the findings of this research reflect those in Brinthaupt and Eady (2014), who found that faculty appreciated the diversity that non-traditional aged students brought to class. Similarly, older students were described very positively in this study: several faculty noted that their older students tended to be immigrants, and characterized them as particularly hard working and industrious.

Faculty were particularly adept at discussing the variances in student personal attributes, including the positive attributes that many students bring to the table. The recognition that students enrolled in developmental coursework bring diverse perspectives on global citizenship to the classroom is not often mentioned in the literature on students enrolled in developmental education, so it was gratifying that the faculty participants were so clear about this student characteristic. Faculty participants also acknowledged their students' willingness to make themselves vulnerable by sharing their experiences through writing, as well as their willingness to share resources for learning. These positive attributes of students enrolled in developmental coursework are not typically discussed in the literature of this field, so it was satisfying to see that faculty perceived and wanted to talk about this more diverse range of student attributes.

Early research in this area found generally low-positive attitudes toward students enrolled in developmental coursework, but the faculty surveyed in that research felt that

underprepared students did not assume responsibility for their learning (Farrow, 1986; Harris, 1983). These findings were echoed in this study within some of the more negative faculty perceptions of student characteristics. Although no faculty spoke directly about assuming responsibility for learning, faculty perceived of some students enrolled in developmental coursework as having bad attitudes and being in the college for a reason unrelated to learning. The unspoken implication was that these students might be attending school as a way of gaining access to Federal Financial Aid funds.

Research by Quick (2008) had a more detailed discussion of specific personal attributes that faculty perceived negative. Quick (2008) noted that faculty perceived student characteristics such as not taking initiative, not disclosing need, resistance, and even hostility as barriers for academically vulnerable students. Although the faculty in this study did not discuss these student characteristics in terms of barriers faced by students, nearly all of these characteristics were discussed by faculty at one point. Students enrolled in developmental coursework were frequently characterized as unwilling or unable to self-advocate. They were perceived by some faculty as having chips on their shoulders or bad attitudes.

Another *Diversity* subtheme was motivation. Participants spoke of the diversity of student motivations from social expectations of attending college to the very strong internal motivations that might guide students into a certain area of study. Zientek et al. (2014) found that faculty feel that a lack of motivation can serve as a barrier to student success, but participants largely perceived students enrolled in developmental coursework to be motivated to attend and be successful in college.

The faculty participants in this study noted that careers (both future careers and changing careers) and an inherent desire to attend college were major motivating factors for students enrolled in developmental coursework. This contrasts with Mesa's (2012) study, in which faculty were found to underestimate the motivation and goal orientations of their students. The faculty largely perceived their students to have motivation, though that motivation varied, and was not perceived to be universal. In Mesa's (2012) study, when faculty were shown the findings of the study (that students were more motivated than faculty perceived them to be), they acknowledged that their perceptions might have been generalizations based on a small number of students. The faculty participants in the present study, while still willing to generalize about students enrolled in developmental coursework, were frequently self-aware enough to note that the diversity of this population made generalizations difficult.

Brinthaupt and Eady (2014) found that faculty perceived non-traditional students to be more motivated. Although the faculty in this study did regard non-traditional students as motivated, particularly those for whom re-careering was their primary motivation for attending school, they were not spoken of as more motivated than traditionally-aged students. Participants also noted their immigrant and refugee students enrolled in developmental coursework to be particularly motivated: these students were also typically perceived to be older, non-traditional students.

Gaps

One unsurprising element of the findings was the participant focus on the gaps that students enrolled in developmental education experience. Previous literature (Arendale, 2005; Boylan, 2002; Boylan & White, 1987; Chen, 2016) on the topic

indicates that faculty frequently conceive of developmental education as remediation for academic weaknesses. The universal perception that students were lacking in something (academics, support, knowledge of resources, etc.) indicates that this deficit model is still ubiquitous within higher education. Although participants did discuss the strengths that students enrolled in developmental coursework bring to the table (relationship and community-building were the most prevalent themes that spoke to these strengths), much more time was spent detailing the ways in which students enrolled in developmental coursework were missing pieces in their lives, in their background knowledge, or in their educational journey. At times, participants expressed frustration at the lack of skills that their students brought to their college experience. This is understandable, but begs the question: if all students came to higher education with the skills we teach in higher education, then why would we need higher education? The underlying assumption of those who teach and those who enter college is that it will change us somehow: students who walk across the stage at graduation should not be the same people they were when they registered for their first class, or else what was the point of their years of hard work?

One subtheme of *Gaps* was the gaps that faculty perceived in the content area knowledge of students enrolled in developmental coursework. Previous studies reported on faculty attitudes toward students in developmental math courses (Mesa, 2012; Zientek et al., 2014) and developmental literacy courses (Quick, 2008; Salam & Jones, 2010). In each of these studies, faculty noted that students enrolled in developmental coursework were in some way lacking content area knowledge.

Zientek et al. (2014) reported lack of basic math skills as a strong theme related to student placement in developmental math courses. Although only one participant in this

study was math faculty, she agreed that most of the students enrolled in developmental math courses had gaps in their math skills. The Reading and English faculty reported similar attitudes toward students enrolled in developmental courses within their respective disciplines.

Another subtheme of *Gaps* was the gaps in students' general academic skills reported by faculty. Faculty perceived students enrolled in developmental coursework to have gaps in academic skills, with particular focus on time management skills: this was mentioned by every faculty interviewed for this project. In Brinthaupt and Eady (2014), faculty perceived non-traditional students to have better time management skills. This finding was not replicated in the present research—faculty did not differentiate time-management or any general academic skills by student age.

In addition to time management, faculty participants reported gaps in study skills and habits such as organization and practice of skills. Similarly, Zientek et al. (2014) reported that a lack of academic behaviors and work habits, with study skills singled out in particular, hinder student success in developmental math coursework. Although they were not discussed in great detail in this study, every participant spoke at least briefly of study skills as a gap in student knowledge. Notetaking was the only specific study skill mentioned: faculty perceived the lack of a cohesive notetaking system to be an academic skill gap for students enrolled in developmental coursework.

In Harris (1983) faculty reported that some students are not capable of academic achievement. Gratifyingly, this was not reported within this study: faculty did have some negative perceptions of gaps and barriers to students' success, but none believed that success was out of reach for their students enrolled in developmental coursework. The

unspoken implication was that if students could fill their perceived gaps in knowledge and if the perceived barriers were removed, every student was capable of success.

One final subtheme that emerged from the *Gaps* theme was gaps in students understanding of and ability or willingness to access college resources. Faculty noted the inability to navigate the college and the various resources as a particular gap in the knowledge base of students enrolled in developmental courses. Two faculty participants related lack of knowledge in this area to the perception that many students enrolled in developmental coursework are the first in their families to attend college, and they may not have generational knowledge of college resources passed down to them in the way non-first-generation students do. One possible solution to the issue of students not being familiar with campus resources is to ensure that their faculty are familiar with campus resources. Boylan (2002) describes ideal developmental programs as those that centralize or highly coordinate developmental courses and campus support services, including regular meetings of all involved faculty and staff and the integration of courses and support services.

Barriers

Barriers was another theme identified within the data from faculty participants in this research. Discussion of barriers, both the barriers to success that students face and the removal of those barriers to success has long been central to the field of developmental education. In Boylan and White (1987), historic barriers to higher education are outlined: barriers related to linguistic fluency (Harvard and other early universities required students to understand Latin), race, gender, proximity to an educational institution, and socioeconomic status. Other research (Becker, Kordel, &

Tucker, 2009; Corno & Anderman, 2015) has outlined various cognitive and non-cognitive barriers faced by students in their pursuit of success in higher education. In this research, faculty spoke of barriers of language, life issues, cognitive and metacognitive barriers, and mindset barriers.

One subtheme that was mentioned by several participants was the barrier faced by students who come from diverse linguistic backgrounds. Starkey (2015) found similar attitudes: faculty in that study reported linguistic and cultural barriers and spoke of the need for students to overcome these barriers. Accents, vocabulary issues, and comprehension issues with academic material were cited as particular barrier to success (Starkey, 2015). In these data, one faculty participant spoke at length about a lack of vocabulary as a barrier to student success.

Another frequently mentioned subtheme within *Barriers* was life issues. Faculty cited unstable and unsupportive homes, students' "overcomplicated lives" due to balancing work, school, and family commitments, and lack of support from their homes as barriers to student success. This attitude can also be found within earlier studies. Zientek (2012) noted that faculty feel work or family responsibilities are detrimental to student success. Research conducted by Day et al. (2011) indicated that when the learners are non-traditional students, they are perceived positively, especially with regard to juggling multiple roles outside of the classroom. One area for further exploration might be the ways in which this faculty perception is tied to students' age or other factors such as perceived time management skills.

The perception of students enrolled in developmental coursework as living in unstable and unsupportive homes is worthy of further discussion. In the district in which

the research site is located, 64% of students experienced food insecurity and 49% experienced housing insecurity (Wisconsin HOPE Lab, 2016). It is not surprising that students' lives might be in flux as they or family members change jobs, homes, or both in an effort to make ends meet. To remark on this trait as characteristic of students enrolled in developmental coursework might be emblematic of the ways in which faculty are capable of confusing the barriers of poverty with traits inherent to their students or their families—this barrier was frequently discussed as both a barrier and a student trait. One way to reframe this conversation might be to focus on the remarkable resilience of students who face food or housing insecurity. This is one area which is particularly fertile for professional development and training.

Community

Faculty participants reported that one of the greatest strengths of students enrolled in developmental coursework was their ability to build strong classroom communities. Although the perceptions elucidated by the faculty in the data were limited to the classroom, there is a great deal of research indicating that students who feel a sense of connection with their faculty and campus community are more successful in college. Astin (1993) and Tinto (1987) both note the importance of the communities that students build both within and outside of the classroom.

The participants in this research considered students and their community with their peers to be one area of strength for students enrolled in developmental coursework. This is one area of opportunity that faculty must seize upon to leverage student strengths in the classroom. Faculty participants noted in particular that students in developmental coursework were generous with their resources with each other, noting that students

would share strategies and tactics that they found particularly helpful in navigating their classes. Faculty should create more opportunities to highlight this strength and allow students to use each other as resources when appropriate.

Faculty participants also reported that students enrolled in developmental coursework were adept at building relationships with their faculty. This was not seen as a universal truth of all students enrolled in developmental coursework, however, several faculty did discuss their rapport with students as well as students' participation in office hours. Although two faculty noted that they would like to see more student participation in office hours, one participant was adamant that the students enrolled in his developmental courses were much more likely to take advantage of office hours than students enrolled in his non-developmental courses.

A final area in which faculty discussed the *Community* theme was in the sense of belonging that students enrolled in developmental coursework yearn for. This finding is also in earlier literature: a sense of belonging is alluded to in Astin (1993) and Tinto (1987), but more recent scholarship (Strayhorn, 2018) confirms the importance of a sense of belonging for students, particularly for students of color (Hausmann, Schofield, & Woods, 2007; Hurtado & Carter, 1997; Maestas, Vaquera, & Muñoz Zehr, 2007; Nuñez, 2009). Caution in this area, however, is warranted. Baker et al. (2012) found differences in faculty and student perceptions of how welcoming a campus was: faculty tended to believe that it was more welcoming than students did.

Extra Work

The theme of *Extra Work* was present in nearly every interview conducted for this research. Faculty perceived students enrolled in developmental coursework to require

more work or time to teach—comparison with students in non-developmental coursework was implied, but not explicitly stated. This finding echoes the work of Quick (2008), in which the researcher found that university faculty agreed that helping academically vulnerable students was both important and pedagogically sound, but that they also largely believed that it was not their job. Most felt that this task should fall to a learning center, or, ironically, that the students should attend a community college for remediation. While the community college faculty interviewed for this research did not articulate the belief that developmental education was not their job—in fact, many of them spoke with pride of their status as developmental educators—the articulated belief that students enrolled in developmental coursework are “extra work” instead of just being the work that we do demonstrates this implicit comparison. Quick (2008) also found that time was the most frequently cited barrier to providing effective instruction to academically vulnerable students. Faculty noted that they needed extra time in particular to figure out how best to meet student needs. This finding is also present in a study which looked at faculty perceptions of students with disabilities.

Although concerned with a different population, Gibbons et al. (2015) reported that for students with intellectual disabilities, faculty were similarly concerned with the amount of time and resources students would need to be successful in class. Although students with disabilities and students enrolled in developmental coursework are obviously not synonymous, faculty perceive both populations as requiring more time to be successful. Again, the comparison to students enrolled in non-developmental courses or students who do not have disabilities is implicit.

Developmental or Remedial?

One interesting facet of this research was a tension in the findings between participant recognition that students enrolled in developmental coursework are very diverse and a tendency to treat them as ubiquitous. Every participant referred to “DevEd students” as if there were such a monolith. This is, in part, a function of the research being conducted—the interview protocol asked participants to make generalizations about students enrolled in developmental education, and several participants noted the difficulty of such a task when the students enrolled in developmental coursework are so varied.

However, this grammatical construct is also a standard practice within the field of developmental education: too often we discuss “developmental education students” instead of “students enrolled in developmental education”. We might do well to learn from our colleagues in disability studies, who frequently (although not uniformly) cate for student-first language: “students with disabilities” rather than “disabled students” (Flink, 2019). As Dr. Robin Ozz, the past president of the National Association for Developmental Education (NADE, now the National Organization for Student Success) is fond of saying: “there is no such thing as a developmental student, we are either all developmental, or none of us are” (personal communication, August 30, 2019).

Indeed, the findings of this study reflect some of the tensions within the larger field of developmental education: what is our scope? What is developmental education? How should we refer to ourselves and our students? Arendale (2005) noted the patterns of use of terms such as preparatory, compensatory, and remedial in the 19th and 20th centuries before the field settled on developmental education in the 1970’s. We may be

living in the end times for the term developmental education: in March 2019, NADE announced that it would change its name to the National Organization for Student Success (NOSS). This was done partially as a pragmatic reaction to the fact that constituents reported having trouble getting funding to attend a conference with “developmental education” in the conference name, and partially as a somewhat-frustrated response to the general misunderstanding of the term “developmental education”. As the NOSS motto indicates, developmental educators help “underprepared students prepare, prepared students advance, and advanced students excel” (NOSS, 2019, para. 3). Perhaps the tension between recognizing the diversity of students enrolled in developmental coursework and speaking of developmental students as a monolithic entity is fueled by the frequent misunderstanding that developmental education serves only the first group—those students who are underprepared for college.

Implications for Practice

There are several opportunities to improve future practice that are illuminated by the findings of this research. First, faculty must leverage the strengths of students enrolled in developmental coursework. The major strength noted by the participants in these data was community (e.g. sharing notes, building relationships, and attending office hours) but asking faculty to consider the strengths of their own student population will likely reveal other opportunities to use the strengths that students already have.

Another facet that faculty must consider is the importance of language in shaping the discourse on developmental education, higher education, and our students. Using student-first language and educating faculty about the complex meanings and history behind terms such as “remedial” and “developmental” as well as how they differ from

true developmental education will go a long way in destigmatizing our work.

Destigmatizing our work can only help our students.

From an administrative perspective, there are also several actions that could be taken to improve future practice. First, administrators should be supportive of professional development, particularly experiences that focus on developmental education as a holistic approach to student success for all students and show faculty and staff how to leverage the strengths of all students. Programming that helps to develop community and build relationships between students and the campus community and resources would also be particularly helpful.

For campuses that are already discussing issues of equity and diversity in higher education, enriching those conversations with institutional data should be a focus. Participants in this research did not have a unified vision of student demographics at their home institution. Although the individual demographics of their courses might vary, an understanding of the makeup of the institution might help expand the conversation.

Additional and continued training in the history, philosophy, and academic field of developmental education is also advisable. For many faculty, both within this research and within the literature, developmental education is still synonymous with remedial education. A more thorough education in the philosophical underpinnings of the field might help to alleviate some of these misconceptions.

Recommendations for Future Research

There are several avenues for further research suggested by this study. Various faculty populations might have different perspectives on students enrolled in developmental coursework. It would be particularly illuminating to explore the attitudes

of adjunct faculty who teach these courses. Adjuncts often teach at different times of day and with different professional development experiences than residential faculty. Faculty who have taught developmental courses for fewer than three years might be another population of interest. How does their relative newness to the field inform their knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors? Finally, the perspectives of faculty who do not teach developmental coursework at all would be a fascinating extension of this research. How do their perspectives differ from those who are teaching in this field?

This research might also be replicated with non-faculty participants such as tutoring or learning center staff, as well as those in a student services role, particularly in advisement, to discover what perceptions these vital roles have toward students enrolled in developmental coursework. Finally, it would be very interesting to see what students enrolled in developmental coursework believe about faculty perceptions toward themselves. What attitudes do students perceive in their faculty, both in developmental and in non-developmental courses?

In addition to changing the participants in this research, future studies might explore faculty attitudes at different institutions or districts. This research was conducted at a single institution that is part of a larger community college district. Widening the scope of the research to encompass multiple institutions might yield different perceptions of students enrolled in developmental coursework. It might also be revelatory to conduct this research at a local four-year institution to see how perspectives resonate or differ at nearby partner schools.

Finally, this research might be interesting to continue as a longitudinal study. As various institutions (including the institution in this study) change their approach to

developmental education, it would be interesting to study the changing perceptions of faculty toward students enrolled in developmental coursework over time. This approach would be especially rich if completed before, during, and after such a change with a diverse range of participants. This study was completed just after such changes were announced at the study site, and with a relatively narrow range of participants, but a follow up in several years may serve to illuminate the ways in which the particular changes at the study site affected faculty perceptions of students enrolled in developmental coursework.

Reflections on the Research Experience

As I reflect on the process of planning this research project, collecting and analyzing the data, and writing up my findings and discussion, there are a few observations that seem worthy of further consideration. First is the bias of the researcher-as-instrument that is inherent to qualitative research. Although great effort was made in this dissertation to remove my biases from the research process, the truth is that I am a practitioner in the field, and I brought with me to this research my own thoughts and opinions formed over my decade plus in higher education.

The origin of this dissertation was my bad habit of eavesdropping on conversations outside of my office door. I so frequently overheard passersby discussing students in developmental coursework—my students—in derogatory terms that I started to get a little chip on my shoulder about it. The chip on my shoulder became big enough that I started to complain to my friends and colleagues about it. The complaining became frequent enough that my friends and colleagues encouraged me to go back to grad school, write a dissertation about it, and leave them in peace. Although I feel confident that the

findings and conclusions of this dissertation are logically and fairly drawn from the data collected, it is possible that another researcher might have seen different patterns or themes in the data based on their varying background and experiences.

Next, I am happy to observe that I was pleasantly surprised by some of the results of this research. I was perhaps too pessimistic in my expectations of how my colleagues would respond to interview questions about student characteristics: I expected a disproportionate focus on negative qualities and characteristics with only a small discussion of positive characteristics shared by students enrolled in developmental coursework. Instead, to my delight, I was treated to complex and varying discussions of the strengths that faculty perceive in the students enrolled in developmental coursework. This focus on the strength of community and relationship building has given me a fresh perspective on how I teach my developmental courses—I now do much more to leverage these strengths in my students than I did before embarking on this research. The participants in this research helped me to refresh the perspective with which I view the students enrolled in my developmental courses. I am grateful for the opportunity to speak with and learn from these educators, and I look forward to continuing my exploration of attitudes toward students enrolled in developmental coursework.

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APPENDIX A

Interview Protocol

- Please tell me a little bit about yourself and your background as a developmental educator.
- Please complete the following: “In general, students enrolled in developmental coursework are...”
 - Can you tell me about a time that led you to this belief?
 - What other responses come to mind?
- Besides your experiences as an educator, what sources of information inform your background knowledge about students enrolled in developmental coursework?
 - Prompt as needed here: Professional Development, Books, Journals, Webinars, Memberships, discussion with colleagues?
- In general, students enrolled in developmental coursework share the following characteristics: _____.
 - Prompt as needed here for demographic, cognitive, non-cognitive characteristics?
- Which of these characteristics do you see as positively influencing student success?
 - Can you tell me about a time that led you to this belief?
- Which of these characteristics do you see as negatively influencing student success?
 - Can you tell me about a time that led you to this belief?
- Is there anything else you’d like to tell me?
- Who else should I talk to about this?

APPENDIX B



Date: Mar 4, 2019 12:22 PM CST

TO: Jennifer Ussery

Nara Martirosyan

FROM: SHSU IRB

PROJECT TITLE: Faculty attitudes toward students enrolled in developmental coursework

PROTOCOL #: IRB-2019-16

SUBMISSION TYPE: Initial

ACTION: Approved

DECISION DATE: March 4, 2019

ADMINISTRATIVE CHECK-IN DATE: March 4, 2020

EXPEDITED REVIEW CATEGORY: 6. Collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes.

7. Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Greetings,

The above-referenced submission has been reviewed by the IRB and it has been Approved. This decision expires on March 4, 2020. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a project design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

Since Cayuse IRB does not currently possess the ability to provide a "stamp of approval" on any recruitment or consent documentation, it is the strong recommendation of this office to please include the following approval language in the footer of those recruitment and consent documents: IRB-2019-16/March 4, 2019/March 4, 2020.

Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the project and insurance of participant understanding followed by a signed consent form. Informed consent must continue throughout the project via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require each participant receive a copy of the signed consent document.

Modifications: Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by this committee prior to initiation. Please submit a Modification Submission through [Cayuse IRB](#) for this procedure.

Incidents: All UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS involving risks to subjects or others and SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported promptly to this office. Please submit an Incident Submission through [Cayuse IRB](#) for this procedure. All Department of Health and Human Services and sponsor reporting requirements should also be followed.

Study Administrative Check-In: Based on the risks, this project does not require renewal. Rather, you are required to administratively check in with the IRB on an annual basis. March 4, 2020 is the anniversary of the review of your protocol. The following are the conditions of the IRB approval for IRB-2019-16 Faculty attitudes toward students enrolled in developmental coursework.

1. When this project is finished or terminated, a **Closure submission** is required.
2. Changes to the approved protocol require prior board approval (**NOTE:** see the directive above related to **Modifications**).
3. Human subjects training is required to be kept current at citiprogram.org by renewing training every 5 years.

Please note that all research records should be retained for a minimum of three years after the completion of the project. If you have any questions, please contact the Sharla Miles at 936-294-4875 or irb@shsu.edu. Please include your protocol number in all correspondence with this committee.

Sincerely,

Donna M. Desforges, Ph.D.
Chair, Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects
PHSC-IRB

VITA

Jennifer Ussery

Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX.

- Ed.D. Developmental Education Administration, Graduation expected Fall 2019

Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ.

- M.A. Curriculum and Instruction: Literacy Education, May 2014

California State University, Fullerton.

- Graduate Certificate in Post-secondary Reading and Learning, May 2013

California State University, Fullerton

- M.A. English Literature, May 2008

California State University, San Bernardino

- B.A. English Linguistics, June 2005

HIGHER EDUCATION EXPERIENCE

- Residential Faculty, Phoenix College, Phoenix, AZ. Fall 2014-Current
- Adjunct Faculty, GateWay Community College, Phoenix, AZ. Spring 2012-Spring 2014.
- Director, Learning Enhancement Center, Mesa Community College, Mesa, AZ. April 2014-August 2014
- Student Success Coordinator, GateWay Community College, Phoenix, AZ. January 2011-January 2014
- Adult Basic Education Instructor, Las Artes de Maricopa (YMCA), Glendale, AZ. August 2008-January 2011

SELECTED CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- “Moving Upwind of the CRAAP Test.” NADE Conference, February 2017, Oklahoma City, OK.
- “Universal Design for Learning.” NADE Conference, February 2015, Greenville, SC.
- “Collaborate or Stagnate.” AADE Conference, January 2015, Phoenix, AZ.
- “Universal Design for Learning.” Student Success Conference, October 2014, Phoenix, AZ.
- “Early Alert Success on a Shoestring Budget.” NADE Conference, March 2014, Dallas, TX.
- “LINC and STAR: Two Peer Mentor Programs at GateWay Community College.” 2012 MCCC Student Success Conference, October, 2012, Phoenix, AZ.

- “GateWay’s Title V Program - a Collaboration of Academic and Student Affairs.” Arizona Academic Administrators’ Association Conference, October 2012, Phoenix, AZ
- “GateWay Community College’s Early Alert System: Success and Retention.” AACRAO Technology Conference, July 2012, Chicago, IL.
- “Title V at GateWay Community College: Student Success by Starting Strong and Staying on Track.” Maricopa Community College District 2011 Student Success Conference, October 2011, Phoenix, AZ.
- “Historiography in Early Modern Works.” Shakespeare Association of America, March 2008, Dallas, Texas.
- “Textual Differences in Variants of ‘Tam Lin.’” CSU Fullerton Research Competition, February 2008, Fullerton, California.
- “The Construction and Reconstruction of Joan la Pucelle in 1 Henry VI.” California State University Research Competition, May 2007, Dominguez Hills, California.
- “A ‘Woeful Pageant’: The Manipulation of History in Shakespeare’s Richard II.” Acacia Group 2007 Conference, April 2007, Fullerton, California.
- “Adjective Ordering: A Semantic Analysis,” California State University, San Bernardino Annual Student Research Conference, May 2005, San Bernardino, California.

INVITED TALKS

- “2015 McGraw-Hill Education Kellogg Institute Scholarship Series.” Web Exchange, December 2014, Online.
- “Career Pathways and College Success.” Boys and Girls Club of Metro Phoenix, October 2014, Phoenix, AZ.

AWARDS AND HONORS

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION

- William G. White Jr. Graduate Study Scholarship, 2016

KELLOGG INSTITUTE

- Advanced Kellogg, 2017
- Kellogg-Certified Developmental Educator, 2014
 - Awarded the McGraw-Hill Emerging Leader Scholarship

MARICOPA COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

- Maricopa Institute for Learning Research Fellowship, 2017-2018
- NISOD Excellence Award, 2015
- Maricopa Summer Institute Facilitator, 2013-2015
- Maricopa Summer Institute Participant, 2012
 - Certified Developmental Educator
- Women’s Leadership Group

- Awarded the Dr. Gina Kranitz Memorial Scholarship, 2013

ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

- Marilyn Day Vesely Scholarship, 2013

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FULLERTON

- 2008 President's Associates Outstanding Graduate Student
- State of California University Grant, 2007-2008
- State of California University Grant, 2006-2007
- Student Research Conference Honorarium, 2007

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SAN BERNARDINO

- Graduated with Departmental Honors, 2005
- Graduated with a Letter of Distinction, 2005
- Sigma Tau Delta, 2005
- Student Research Conference Honorarium, 2005

TEACHING AND RESEARCH INTERESTS

- Developmental Education
- Adult Literacy
- Digital Literacies

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

- National Association for Developmental Education (NADE)
 - Reading Network Chair, 2017-Current
- Arizona Association for Developmental Education (AADE)
 - Founding Board Member, Treasurer
 - President-elect, 2015
 - President, 2016
- College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA)
- American Educational Research Association (AERA)