IN IT TO WIN IT:

AN EXAMINATION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE DEVELOPMENTAL STUDENTS

ENROLLED IN COREQUISITE REMEDIATION ENGLISH COURSES

A Dissertation

by

KIMBERLY S. CARTER

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Chair of Committee,	Yvonna Lincoln
Committee Members,	Vicente Lechuga
	Krista J. Bailey
	Ben Welch
Head of Department,	Mario S. Torres

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative dissertation explores the experiences of developmental English students at a large community college who are enrolled in corequisite remediation English courses. The goal of this research was to examine those experiences using the lens of Schlossberg, Lynch, and Chickering's (1989) Theory of Transition to determine how the students adjust to the transition into college, the personal and academic demands of college life, and the factors that facilitated the students' success or acted as barriers to that success. The mindset of the students as reflected in their beliefs about learning was examined using Dweck's Theory of Mindset.

Sixteen students, four faculty, and six advisors on three Texas community college campuses were interviewed. The students identified their motivation for entering college and their academic and career goals and described their experience in the admissions and testing processes and their motivation for enrolling in corequisite remediation English classes. They also described their experiences in those courses and explained the factors that contributed to their success and their struggle to succeed. Faculty and advisors explained their role in supporting these students as they move into and through the community college arena and what they believe are the factors that facilitated the students' success or served as barriers to that success.

Support emerged as the most important factor to the students' success.; it impacted the students' perception of their situation, themselves, and their implementation of strategies. Personal and institutional forms of support were critical to the students' formation of beliefs about their ability to succeed in college and the strategies they implemented to do so.

The students' beliefs about learning were influenced by the students' mindset. The students demonstrated more growth mindset beliefs than fixed mindset beliefs. They were proactive in their strategies, sought the help of their professors and other institutional personnel

as well as help from their family members, and engaged in other strategies that facilitated their success. Ultimately, the students demonstrated the belief that effort would lead to learning, and this belief was connected to the belief that they could achieve their goals because they were supported in their efforts.

DEDICATION

To Tom, who supported me in this quest long after it was reasonable to do so.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the 2014-2015 academic year, 1,108 American community colleges were responsible for educating 12.3 million students with 7.3 million of those students enrolled in credit programs (American Association of Community Colleges, "2016 Fact Sheet," 2016). However, approximately 60-68 percent of those students began their programs underprepared for college-level work and were referred to developmental classes in reading, writing, and mathematics prior to beginning their credit-level coursework (Bailey, 2009; Bailey, Jaggars, & Jenkins, 2015a, 2015b). An important component of the mission of the community college is to prepare the academically underprepared for the rigor of college courses and college programs; however, the execution of this mission has recently come under fire. In 2009, in response to growing criticism of low success and completion rates of developmental students, (Bailey 2009; Bailey, Jeong, & Cho, 2010; Bettinger & Long, 2005) and the high drop-out and stop-out rates of these students (Bailey 2009; Bailey, Jeong, & Cho, 2010; Martorell & McFarlin, 2011), several states — Connecticut, Florida, Colorado, and Texas — have acted to revamp their developmental education programs. This study focuses on the reform effort in Texas.

In 2009, the Texas Legislature directed the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to examine developmental education programs in the state and recommend improvements. Because of the study, THECB determined that the success of developmental students was impeded by a lack of standardization in testing and placement across institutions, a lack of attention to individual students and their academic needs, and lengthy, burdensome developmental course sequences. THECB issued the "2009 Statewide Developmental Education Plan," which, after the conclusion of several pilot programs and research, was updated and

retitled the "2012-2017 Statewide Developmental Education Plan." The vision statement for the 2012-2017 Plan is as follows:

> By fall 2017, Texas will significantly improve the success of underprepared students by addressing their individualized needs through reliable diagnostic assessment, comprehensive support services, and non-traditional interventions, to include modular, mainstreaming, non-course competency-based, technologically-based, and integrated instructional models (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2012b).

The vision statement reflects the goal of THECB to reduce the number of students in developmental education courses, accelerate the progress of students in developmental education courses through the developmental sequence, and improve the success rates of students who enter college with weak academic skills in reading, writing, and mathematics.

The 2012-2017 DE Plan lists nine goals, each of which addresses parts of the vision statement above and sought to shore up current deficiencies in developmental education. One deficiency cited by scholars (Bailey, Jaggars, & Scott-Clayton, 2013; Bailey, Jeong, & Cho, 2010; Boylan, Bliss, & Bonham, 1997) is the lengthy sequences students must work through to successfully complete their developmental requirements. Students who test into the lowest levels of a developmental education sequence may spend two years in coursework before enrolling in credit-bearing courses. Researchers argue that the longer students languish in developmental math, reading, and writing courses, the less likely they are to complete their programs (Bailey, Jeong, & Cho, 2010; Bailey, Jaggars, & Scott-Clayton, 2013). Time spent in developmental courses results in economic hardship and lost time (Burley, Butner, & Cejda, 2001), and students often give up before they enter the curriculum required by their programs (Bailey, Jeong, & Cho, 2010). Goal 3 of the 2012-2017 DE Plan is to "scale promising practices and/or programs that

improve access, acceleration, and success of underprepared students" (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2012b) and encourages institutions to enable students to enter credit-bearing math, reading, and English courses as quickly as possible.

Goal 7, "improve the assessment and placement of first-time-in-college (FTIC) students," (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2012b) requires community colleges to implement the new Texas Skills Initiative Assessment (TSIA) and use the resulting scores to place students in developmental or credit courses; however, this placement is not as straightforward as it was in the past. Prior to Fall 2013, institutions simply looked at students' admissions test scores and placed those students in the appropriate classes as determined by THECB and the individual institutions. Placement was simply a matter of consulting a chart. Now, institutions are encouraged to define "bubble students," students whose test scores are very close to the next level up and are therefore on the bubble of the next level, and use developmental advising strategies to determine the appropriate placement for those students. The expectation is that either many of these students will be placed into courses that are one level up from their test score placement level, thus skipping one level of developmental coursework, or be placed into credit-bearing courses with support and skip developmental classes altogether. Taken together, Goal 3 and Goal 7 require institutions assess students using the Texas Skills Initiative Assessment (TSIA), implement developmental advising processes to evaluate each student individually, and place students into the highest-level course in which the student is deemed likely to be successful even if that means that students test into developmental courses but are placed into credit level courses with institutional support. This strategy is intended to reduce time in developmental sequences. Institutions must be very thoughtful about how these bubble

students are placed, however, to maximize the chances of student success and minimize the chances of failure.

Institutions in Texas are charged with supporting students who are moved up one level in their coursework, and one mandated form of support is the Non-Course-Based-Option, or NCBO. The Texas State Legislature defines the non-course-based option:

> Non-course-based developmental education includes developmental education interventions that use learning approaches that, compared to traditional lecture-only classes, more effectively and efficiently prepare students for college-level work. These interventions must be overseen by an instructor of record; must not fit traditional course frameworks for contact hours; and cannot include advising or learning support activities such as tutoring, supplemental instruction, or labs connected to traditional courses where a student incurs tuition costs (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2012a).

NCBOs are intended to be institutional methods by which students are accelerated through developmental education and put into credit-level courses as soon as possible.

In 2017, THECB issued a new mandate, charging institutions in Texas to place 25 percent of students who test into the highest level of developmental math and English courses into credit-level courses with NCBO support in Fall 2018. In Fall 2019, that number increases to 50 percent, and by Fall 2020, 75 percent of the students who test into the highest level of developmental math and English must be placed into credit-level courses and a supporting NCBO (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2017) This mandate will require institutions to dramatically scale up their NCBO offerings within the next two or three years, which will require English faculty to be trained to teach these courses.

In 2017, THECB also mandated a change in English cut scores, dropping the writing score for the objective portion of the TSIA by 10 points and the essay score by one point. These lowered cut scores went into effect on the first day of classes in Fall 2017, but the institution in this study applied the new cut scores to all incoming students that semester and moved students who qualified for English 1301 under the new score requirements into English 1301. The result was that more students qualified for credit-level English 1301 because the cut scores for writing were dramatically lower than they were previously, and the students who did not qualify for English 1301 failed to do so primarily because of their reading score.

Taken together, the mandate to increase participation in corequisite remediation and the importance of the reading score on the TSIA will have a significant impact on students and faculty. The majority of the students who will qualify for corequisite remediation in the future will be weak in reading. The faculty who teach these courses, generally composition faculty, will need to learn how to teach reading strategies to meet the needs of their students.

NCBOs can take many different forms, but a characteristic common to all is that students must be co-enrolled in an NCBO and credit-level course for which the NCBO is preparing the students in the same semester (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2017). The most common forms of NCBOs are the boot-camp NCBO, which is designed to help students increase their TSIA test scores quickly, usually prior to the start of the semester, so that they can move up one or more levels, and the linked NCBO, which is offered to students who have tested into a developmental level of math or English but who choose to take the next course up with institutional support. The linked NCBO is usually a specific section of targeted developmental education connected to a specific section of college-level math or English. Students enrolled in this type of NCBO are the focus of this study.

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A further refinement of the linked NCBO model is the corequisite model pioneered by Community College of Baltimore County in the 1980s. This model enrolls students who tested into Developmental English classes into credit-level English that also enroll credit-level students and supports those developmental students in another course that is limited to those developmental students. This model accelerates those developmental students into credit-level English, allows them to form connections with their peers in credit courses, and offers them support in a small group environment. This model, although relatively new in Texas, has been very successful in Maryland and has been adopted by at least 67 community colleges across the nation (Accelerated Learning Program, n.d.).

The push to move under-prepared students through developmental education courses quickly has developmental education advocates worried (Boylan, 1999; Boylan, Bliss, & Bonham, 1997; Boylan, Calderwood, & Bonham, 2017; Fowler & Boylan, 2010; Goudas & Boylan, 2012; Saxon & Boylan, 2001). One concern is that limiting the remediation time of under-prepared students and enrolling them into credit courses will result in disaster. How will these under-prepared students cope with the rigor of credit-level coursework? Will these students get enough support in math and English NCBO courses to succeed in credit-level courses, or will they simply be overwhelmed and either fail or drop out? Are we pushing these students into the deep end of the postsecondary education pool without teaching them the skills they need to keep their heads above water?

The students most affected by the new policies are first-time-in-college students (FTIC), who are deemed to be under-prepared. These students have multiple challenges (Becker, Krodel, & Tucker, 2009; Brown & Rivas, 2011; Mellow & Heelan, 2008; Morest, 2013). They must learn how to be college students and navigate the unfamiliar world of postsecondary education;

additionally, they must strive to succeed in classes for which, according to their TSIA scores, they are not prepared. One transition, moving into the college arena as developmental students, is difficult enough, but these students are expected to navigate two transitions at once: the college environment and college-level coursework. Because the recently implemented developmental education policies are unique to Texas, there is little literature on how these policies have affected students. This study focuses on the experiences of Texas community college students who are navigating both transitions at once, those students who are classified as underprepared by their TSIA scores but who are enrolled in credit-bearing courses with NCBO support, and examines how they navigate the new environment of college as well as cope with the rigors of NCBO-supported college-level work.

Theoretical Framework

All students entering college for the first time must learn to navigate an alien world, and the required adjustment is difficult. Navigating this transition from high school to college or the workplace to college is so difficult that in in 2009, 87 percent of 1000 surveyed community colleges offered student success or first-year experience courses that teach students how to become successful at navigating the challenges of college life (Padgett & Keup, 2011). Students who test into developmental education classes but who are then placed into credit-level courses must make greater adjustments, first to college life and all that it requires, and second, to courses for which they are unprepared. They have goals that require attending college, so they must be successful in college to reach those goals. They must be prepared to face challenges and work through those challenges in order to be successful in meeting their goals, which require a particular mindset, strategies, and resources. This study aims to examine the mindset, strategies, and resources of developmental students who are enrolled in NCBO-supported credit-level

English classes, how that mindset shapes the students' perceptions of self, their situation, and their resources and shapes the coping strategies that these students employ.

This study is guided by two complementary frameworks: Dweck's theory of mindset (Dweck, 2006) and Schlossberg's transition theory (Schlossberg, Lynch, & Chickering, 1989), both of which provide a lens through which I examine the experiences of developmental students who are enrolled in NCBO-supported credit-level courses and how these students cope with the transition into college and the stress that it places on their lives. I use Dweck's framework of mindset to examine students' perceptions of themselves and their experiences in college-level English within the framework of the four dimensions of Schlossberg's theory of transition.

Schlossberg's Theory of Transition

Schlossberg's theory of transition describes a transition as "any event, or nonevent that results in changed relationships, routines, assumptions and roles" (Schlossberg, Lynch, & Chickering, 1989, p. 14) and the process of navigating transitions as "moving in, moving through, and moving out" (p. 15). This study concentrates on developmental students in the "moving in" and "moving through" phases of transition navigation, specifically with how they cope with moving into and through the college arena and college-level courses.

Schlossberg's model (Schlossberg, Lynch, & Chickering, 1989) identifies four factors that influence how people navigate transitions—situation, self, support, and strategies—which are collectively referred to as the "4-Ss" (p. 17). The context of college enrollment for each student and his or her perception of that context (situation), each student's experience and self-concept (self), the external resources such as financial assets, family, and friends that each student can use as resources (support), and the various strategies that each student employs to cope with transitions (strategies) all work together to maximize the chances of either success or

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failure for each student. Strengths in any of these areas facilitate one's ability to navigate transition; conversely, weakness in any of these areas hinders one's ability to navigate transition. Schlossberg, Lynch, and Chickering (1989) argue that we can examine "the balance and deficits in each of these categories" to predict how well a person will cope with transitions (p. 17). The participants in this study all navigated several transitions: the transition into college, the transition into identifying as developmental students, and lastly, the transition into their credit-level classes. These transitions or situations impacted their sense of self, and they implemented strategies and leveraged support as they dealt with the challenges of each transition. How well they did so was in part dependent upon their mindset. Dweck's theory of mindset was used to complement Schlossberg's transition theory, to deepen my understanding of these students and how they coped with the challenges they faced.

Dweck's Theory of Mindset

In her theory of mindset, Dweck (2006) argues that people have either a fixed or growth mindset. According to Dweck, those with a fixed mindset tend to avoid challenges, give up easily when they are faced with challenges, view intelligence as a fixed trait, and therefore see effort as either pointless or an indication that they are not capable. People with a fixed mindset ignore negative feedback and advice that would require them to expend effort, and they feel threatened by the success of others because they see the success of others as an indication that they themselves are less. However, people with a growth mindset tend to embrace challenge and rise to meet it. They also tend to be gritty (Duckworth, 2016), persisting despite setbacks and viewing setbacks as learning opportunities. People with a growth mindset see effort as the primary path to mastery, and they are willing to learn from negative feedback. Finally, growth

mindset learners are not threatened by the success of others; rather, they are inspired by it and learn from it.

Mindset research provides an excellent framework for examining developmental students because these students are new to the college environment and may not view themselves as college students, face great challenges, have been told by way of a standardized placement test that they do not have the skills to be successful in college, and must devise strategies to be successful. In short, they must put forth great effort to be successful because they are starting out at a deficit. Students who do not see themselves in the role of student, students who do not believe in the value of their effort and its contributions to their intellectual growth, are less likely to commit to the requirements of the role of student and are therefore less likely to be successful (Dweck, 2006; Becker, Krodel, & Tucker, 2009; Morest, 2013). Their success is dependent upon how well they navigate the transition into college, which is in turn dependent on how they view challenges and meet those challenges. Dweck's framework of mindset may explain how students navigate the transition into college both personally and academically, specifically how they navigate Schlossberg's four dimensions as they relate to entering college and taking their English courses (situation), how they deal with challenges (strategies), such as seeking help (support), and how they view themselves as college students (self).

This study focuses on the experiences of students who test into developmental courses but who are placed into credit-bearing courses with a non-course based option (NCBO) as a form of institutional support. I examine how these students cope with the transitions that college requires using Schlossberg's 4-S model—situation, self, support, and strategies—as a lens, focusing on how the mindsets of these underprepared students in NCBOs and NCBO-supported credit courses impact their view of each of Schlossberg's factors.

The interview questions are aimed at discovering how the four concepts of Schlossberg's transition theory are realized in the students' actual experiences, and how each student answers the questions reveals much about his or her mindset. Students with a growth mindset should be more likely to view college as an intriguing challenge, a puzzle to be enjoyed and solved, and an opportunity for personal and intellectual growth. Students with a fixed mindset may find college to be a scary undertaking, confusing, and out of their control. They may also view college as a competitive arena where they must achieve more than their peers to look superior and feel worthy.

Both Dweck's theory of mindset and Schlossberg's transition theory are used as the foundation for the research questions, and both are used as a lens through which I analyzed the data.

Research Objectives

College students face a difficult transition as they move into the college arena as they must cope with an unfamiliar environment and culture and academic demands, and they must balance their academic lives with their personal lives. Developmental students placed into NCBO-supported credit-level English courses occupy a space in-between developmental education and credit-level courses, and they face an additional layer of difficulty as they must learn to deal with academic work for which they have been deemed unprepared. In this study, I examine how these in-between students navigate the transitions into college life and the transition from unprepared for college life and college academics to prepared for either or both, and I examine how the students' mindset as defined by Dweck (2006) influences the students' perception of this transition. The research questions are listed below.

Research Questions

This study will be guided by the following research questions:

1. How do community college developmental students enrolled in NCBO-supported credit-level English courses cope with:

    a. the transition into college life?

    b. the academic demands of college?

    c. personal demands that may interfere with college success?

2. What do student-participants identify as contributing factors, both personal and institutional, to their academic success?

3. What do student-participants identify as the personal and institutional factors that function as barriers to their success?

4. What do the student responses reveal about their mindsets?

5. What do faculty who teach these students and advisors who advise these students identify as:

    a. resources, both personal and institutional, that aid these students?

    b. barriers, both personal and institutional, that impede success for these students?

    c. strategies that these students employ to cope with the transition to college life and college academics?

    d. attitudes about learning and college that reveal either a growth or a fixed mindset?

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The education of remedial students, now called developmental students, is almost exclusively the responsibility of the community colleges, and these students comprise a significant percentage of the community college student population. Studies indicate that almost 60 percent of community college students require at least one developmental course (Bailey, 2009; Community College Research Center, 2014a). Bailey, Jeong, and Cho (2010) found that 59 percent of students entering 57 community colleges were referred to developmental math courses, and 33 percent were referred to developmental writing and/or reading. Of the 12.8 million community college students enrolled in 2012, about 7.6 million students were enrolled in at least one developmental course (Community College Research Center, 2014a). In 2012, Texas community colleges enrolled 732,112 students, almost 6 percent of the nation's community college students (Texas Association of Community Colleges, 2014). Of those students, 115,503 were first-time-in-college students (FTIC), and more than half of those 59,274 or 51.3 percent did not meet the standard to enroll in credit-level courses in at least one area (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2014a). Developmental education is a significant component of the community college mission, and it must be understood within that context. This study focuses on students who tested into Developmental English and who subsequently enrolled in corequisite remediation courses designed to move them into credit-level English as quicky as possible.

Developmental Education Defined

What is this subset of higher education, and why does it go by different names? What is the difference between the terms "remedial" and "developmental"? In the United States,

institutions of higher education have implemented remediation for entering students since Harvard was established in the seventeenth century, and incoming students required tutoring in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew to be prepared for university studies (Rudolph, 1990; Thelin, 2011). Parker, Bustillos, and Behringer (2010) explain that historically, these courses were tools for remediating academic deficiencies in students; however, in the 1970's practitioners began to use the term "developmental" to indicate that these courses "are geared toward developing the students in both the academic and affective domains" (p. 4). Students in developmental education were to be developed into fully functioning college students, not remediated or repaired. The term "developmental" is softer, more positive and pleasing, and it indicates a belief in taking someone where he or she is and moving that person forward along a developmental path rather than fixing a deficiency, which is negative (Arendale, 2005). Boylan, Calderwood, and Bonham (2017) contend that critics conflate remediation and developmental education, failing to distinguish between the two in their reform efforts. The result, they say, is that situational, demographic, and affective factors are ignored in reformers' efforts to streamline remediation, but these factors have significant negative impact on student success. However, Parker, Bustillos, and Behringer (2010) contend that regardless of what the curriculum or the structure is called, the reality is the same it has always been; students who fail to place at a certain level at admissions are put into courses that aim to get the students ready for college-level work. The courses, by any other name, are still remedial in that they function to remediate deficiencies in college preparedness as identified and defined by standardized diagnostic assessments.

Generally, developmental education focuses on the three "Rs," reading, writing, and arithmetic, and each discipline may be broken down into course sequences. Students who are the

weakest in a discipline may be referred to the first course in a multi-course sequence and must pass all the courses in a sequence to qualify to enroll in credit-level courses in that discipline. For example, at the Community College System in Texas (CCS), the site for this study, developmental math is broken down into three courses, MATH 0306, 0308, and 0310. Students who test into MATH 0306 are typically at a middle school level in math. Until Spring 2014, English was broken down into two reading courses and two writing courses. Students who test into the lower levels of reading and/or writing are typically functioning at an elementary or middle school level. This means that a student who tests into the lowest level of reading, writing, and math must take three semesters of math and two semesters each of reading and writing. Thus, this student will not be able to enroll in credit-level courses for one year and will have to enroll in sequential developmental math courses for three semesters or a year and a half. Bailey, Jeong, and Cho (2010) examined 57 Achieving the Dream colleges and found that 61 percent offered three levels of developmental math, and 35 percent offered three levels of reading. With this sequence, students who test into the lowest levels face at least 18 months of developmental coursework.

The philosophy behind developmental education is firmly in line with the belief that the door to upward mobility through higher education is never closed. A person who was not successful in high school can still work toward a college education because the opportunities to learn and improve academic skills are never taken away. But does developmental education work? Are the students who are referred to developmental classes successful in shoring up their deficiencies and moving on to successfully complete their credit-level classes and ultimately complete degrees? Critics, such as Complete College America, the Charles A. Dana Center, and the Community College Research Center argue that developmental education is a significant

drain on the taxpayers, a waste of time and money, and serves as a barrier to success for students rather than a facilitator for success (Charles A. Dana Center, Complete College America, Inc., Education Commission of the States, & Jobs for the Future, 2012; Community College Research Center, 2014b; Complete College America, 2012; Terry, 2007). The research studies conducted by these groups and others are explained in this this chapter.

Costly for Taxpayers and Students

Several powerful national organizations have criticized developmental education as a waste of tax dollars (Complete College America, 2012; Terry, 2007). Taxpayers have funded public high school education, and Americans assume that if students are successful in achieving a high school diploma, they should be college ready. This is a false assumption. Students who do not take rigorous academic courses in high school will not be college ready upon graduation from high school. The reality is that students have choices about what courses they take in high school and how well they do in those courses. In Texas, there are several different diploma tracks from which students can choose. If students choose a basic track, they will not be prepared for college. Currently, 38 states define what students should know and be able to do to succeed in college-level courses, but they do not require students to take a curriculum that will prepare them for college, and only 23 states award advanced diplomas for students who go beyond the standard graduation requirements (*Education Week*, 2013). Interestingly, Merisotis and Phipps (2000) found that even students who enroll in college preparatory programs in high school often require at least one developmental course when they enter college. If college preparatory programs are not preparing students for college-level work, it is doubtful that students taking basic high school courses will be prepared for the rigors of college.

The second argument is that the taxpayers have paid for students to matriculate through high school, and then the taxpayers subsidize developmental education. Community colleges are supported by local and state taxes, so the taxpayers are forced to pay twice for what they consider to be the same education (Merisotis & Phipps, 2000). This is a common refrain of low taxes/no taxes groups such as Complete College America (2012), which argues that states and students spent more than $3 billion on remedial courses in 2011, a figure that is supported by Terry (2007), who writes for the Texas Public Policy Foundation (TPPF). Terry (2007) cites the Alliance for Excellent Education, which estimated that remedial education costs the nation $3.7 billion per year in direct costs of remediation and lost earning potential. Terry (2007) also cites Dr. Christopher Hammons, who says that "Texas loses over $13.6 billion a year in lower earning potential, poor productivity of workers, increased spending on social programs and direct costs of remediation." These numbers do not quite add up, as according to TPPF, Texas seems to be losing about $10 billion more than the entire country, but regardless, critics argue that remediating students is expensive both in time and money.

But how expensive is developmental education within the context of the overall higher education budget? Saxon and Boylan (2001) analyzed five studies on the cost of developmental education and found the following:

1. Overall, in the 1995-1996 academic year, the cost per student was lower in developmental programs than in credit programs, a finding supported by Merisotis and Phipps (2000).

2. The total costs were typically less than 10 percent of the total higher education budget for each state and often only represented one or two percent of the total state budget for higher education.

3. The total costs were less than 12 percent of the community college budget in every state studied except for Texas, which allotted 18.8 percent of its community college budget to developmental programs.

4. Finally, many developmental programs bring in more revenue than they cost to maintain.

Developmental education programs may cost a lot of money, but they represent a fraction of both the total budget for higher education and that of community colleges (Merisotis & Phipps, 2000; Saxon & Boylan, 2001).

Although the cost to taxpayers is considerable, the cost to students is greater, according to critics (Calgano & Long, 2008; Levin & Calgano, 2008; Martorell & McFarlin, 2011). While in remediation, students must pay for tuition and books for classes that do not count toward a degree, and they may use up their financial aid on these courses, which will hurt them later when they run out of the financial aid that they need to complete a degree. Students in remediation may spend one semester or more taking developmental courses, which costs them time and delays degree attainment and subsequent entry into the professional workforce; however, the cost of not providing remedial education is greater because our economic and social welfare is so closely tied to a well-educated workforce (Leslie & Brinkman, 1988; Merisotis & Phipps, 2000; Nationals Governor's Association, 2014).

Barrier to College Success

The effectiveness of developmental education has been thrown into question. If students who are enrolled in developmental courses finished the developmental sequences and then went on to be successful in their college-level courses, there would not be a problem. In other words, if remediation worked, the states would be more comfortable paying for it, and there would be

fewer arguments against it. However, the completion and success rates of developmental students are dismal. According to Bailey, Jeong, and Cho (2010) only about 33 percent of students referred to developmental math and 46 percent referred to developmental reading complete their developmental sequences. Failure to complete these sequences prevents these students from attempting college-level courses. Unable to begin, these students are prevented from completing a certificate or degree program.

In its report, "Remediation: Higher Education's Bridge to Nowhere" (2012), Complete College America (CCA) defines four problem areas within the developmental education structure that the organization has termed "exit points" or "dropout exit ramps," the points at which developmental students exit from postsecondary education. First, CCA (2012) argues that too many students begin in remediation, and many of these students simply do not show up for classes because they are frustrated by how long it will take them to get into college-level classes. According to a joint statement issued by the Charles A. Dana Center, Complete College America, Inc., Education Commission of the States, and Jobs for the Future (2012) — all big money entities that seek to influence American higher education — 30 percent of students who are referred for developmental courses do not show up to take the courses, nor do they attempt to take the next courses in the sequence, developmental or gateway courses. This claim is supported by Bailey, Jeong, and Cho (2010), who found that fewer than one third of the students in their sample who were referred for developmental education enrolled in a developmental course within three years. It appears that developmental education leaks students before they even begin taking courses, working as a cooling out mechanism that freezes students out of postsecondary education.

The second exit ramp, CCA (2012) argues, is that developmental education does not work because approximately 40 percent of developmental students do not complete their developmental courses. Furthermore, 72 percent of the students who were advised to take developmental courses because of their placement test scores but who ignored that advice and enrolled directly into gatekeeper credit-level college courses passed those courses (CCA, 2012); however, only 27 percent of the students who were advised into developmental courses and took them went on to complete gatekeeper courses (Bailey, Jeong, & Cho, 2010).

The third exit ramp cited by CCA (2012) is that too few students who begin in developmental courses complete gateway courses, those freshman courses such as freshman composition and college algebra that typically mark the beginning of college-level work and that signify a student's chances of completing college. CCA (2012) argues that fewer than 25 percent of the students who complete a developmental sequence are successful in their gateway courses, and CCRC (2014b) states that only 11 percent of those assigned to the lowest level of developmental math will complete the first college-level gatekeeper course, introductory algebra.

Last, CCA argues that developmental students are not graduating from college, stating that less than one in 10 students who began post-secondary work in developmental classes graduate within three years and only slightly more than a third graduate with a bachelor's degree in six years. The completion rates are correlated to the level of remediation required (Bailey, Jeong, & Cho, 2010) with the students who place into the lowest levels of a developmental sequence demonstrating the lowest completion rates.

Critics also argue that a disconnect exists between admission test scores, placement into developmental classes, and outcomes (Bailey, Jaggars, & Jenkins, 2015). Bailey (2009) argues that students who are referred to developmental classes but choose to skip the sequence and

enroll directly into college-level courses do just as well in those college-level courses as students who take developmental courses before enrolling in the college-level courses. CCA (2012) maintains that institutions should not rely on one admissions test to determine student academic ability; rather, institutions should employ multiple measures to assess students' college readiness prior to enrollment into developmental sequences. Bailey (2009) concurs, arguing that students who score just below the cut off and students who score just above the cut off are too like each other to warrant different placement and that the students should receive holistic advising to aid in correct placement.

The problem of low completion, success, and graduation rates has captured the attention of organizations that seek to influence the structure of higher education in this country. Complete College America (CCA) is a national nonprofit that works with states "to significantly increase the number of Americans with quality career certificates or college degrees and to close attainment gaps for traditionally underrepresented populations" (Complete College America, 2014), and the organization is partnered with several prominent organizations such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Achieving the Dream, and the Community College Research Center (CCRC). CCA and its partners have worked hard to pressure the states to reform developmental education, and the states are listening. The critics of developmental education have been busy and loud, and the stage has been set for developmental education reform.

Reform Efforts Across the Country

Several states have made dramatic changes to their developmental education programs because of the research that reveals low completion and success rates and the efforts of powerful political groups such as CCA and CCRC to put that research front and center. The results are mixed. In 2013, Florida passed legislation that exempts recent high school graduates and active-

duty military personnel from placement testing and allows nontraditional students who test into developmental education to opt out and enroll straight into college-level courses (Fain, 2013). By 2015, Miami-Dade College reported that although enrollment in gateway math courses was up by 25 percent, the pass rate was down by almost nine percent (Smith, 2015). Success rates were worse at two-year colleges. St. Petersburg College reported that of the students who were advised to take developmental math but who opted to take credit-level math instead, only two out of 10 passed that gateway course (Smith, 2015).

In 2013, Colorado Community College System implemented four fundamental changes to developmental education in the state. It reduced developmental math and English course sequences to one course each, integrated developmental writing and reading into one course, created two separate math pathways that were tailored to different major requirements, and created various support services and curriculum options to give students who tested into developmental education classes a "soft landing" approach that would enable them to quickly qualify to enroll in college-level courses and be successful (Michael & McKay, 2015). By 2016, Colorado was reporting decreases in the number of students enrolled in developmental classes (-4 percent despite increases in overall enrollment) and dramatic increases in student success both in Developmental English (from 36 percent to 60-64 percent) and developmental math (from 16 percent to 28-30 percent) (Tammone & Sacks, 2016).

In 2012, Connecticut passed Public Act 12-40, which required community colleges and state universities to reconfigure the delivery of developmental education by reducing developmental math and English sequences to one course each, providing embedded support for students in gateway, credit-level classes, and providing free, non-credit intensive courses designed to prepare students for either developmental education courses or credit-level courses

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with corequisite support (Turk, Nellum, & Soares, 2015). The new policy also requires colleges to use multiple measures, such as high school transcripts and high school GPA in addition to admissions test scores, to determine who needs remedial support (Connecticut General Assembly, 2012).

<div align="center">**Developmental Education Reform in Texas**</div>

Developmental education reform in Texas has been a long time coming. In spring of 1996, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) contracted the National Center for Developmental Education to evaluate developmental education in the state and specifically examine the use of the Texas Academic Skills Program (TASP) test for admissions, the number of students taking developmental courses, and the number of students who complete developmental courses. The TASP test was a test developed for Texas to assess the academic skills of incoming postsecondary freshmen. In 1997, THECB was directed by the Texas Legislature to extensively evaluate developmental education in the state. This was followed by another study in 1998 and then again in 2010. In response to the growing criticism of developmental education, in 2008, THECB received funding from the 81st Texas Legislature to study developmental education in the state and make recommendations for its improvement.

In 2011, the 82nd Texas Legislature enacted House Bill 3468, which directed the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board "to study and analyze practices regarding assessment of student academic skills and subsequent study placement in developmental education programs as well as to recommend improvements to improve efficiency and cost-effectiveness." This study resulted in the 2012-2017 Statewide Developmental Education Plan, which "calls for Texas to significantly improve by 2017, the ultimate success of underprepared students in college by meeting their individualized needs through reliable diagnostic assessment, comprehensive

support services, and non-traditional interventions, including modular, Emporium-style, mainstream, non-course competency-based, and integrated models" (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2012c). The results of the 2010 evaluation are in line with the arguments of Rutschow and Schneider (2011), who recommended that states adopt models of avoidance, acceleration, contextualized instruction, and supplemental supports. In other words, states should help students avoid developmental education if possible, or if students must enter developmental sequences, their progress should be accelerated, and they should receive contextualized instruction and supplemental supports to maximize their chances of success. These recommendations have been used as the template for developmental reform in the state. The components of the reform are discussed below.

Texas Success Initiative Assessment: One Test for Texas

Although the Texas Legislature authorized the use of the TASP test for admitting students into community colleges in 1987, Boylan and Saxon (1998) found that most community colleges in the state were using some other form of assessment. Prior to Fall 2013, each community college was free to use one of several admissions tests for placing students in addition to the TASP, and although the state set the minimum admissions score ranges, the colleges could raise the admission score standards. Colleges used Compass, Accuplacer, and Texas Higher Education Assessment (THEA) tests primarily and often interchangeably, which resulted in a hodgepodge of placement tests all over the state. A student could test at one college in El Paso, take a class or two or not at all, and enroll in a different college in Amarillo or San Antonio. If the college used different cut-off scores, the student could find herself behind or ahead, both of which can be detrimental. Also, because each college could create different developmental sequences in math and English, students could not be assured that the first course

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in a sequence at one school would be equal to the first course in a sequence at another, and because the admissions scores were not standardized across the state, students could not predict how their scores would affect them if they switched schools.

THECB (2012c) also found that only 30 percent of the institutions in the state were using the assessments diagnostically. There was little analysis of the scores of individual students; students were simply placed in courses according to their test scores, and no effort was made to meet individual student academic needs beyond the course sequences into which they tested.

After extensive evaluation in 2012, THECB mandated that in Fall 2013, all community colleges would use a new test, the Texas Skills Initiative Assessment (TSIA) to admit students, and all community colleges were mandated to use the same score ranges to place students into developmental sequences and college-level courses. THECB (2012c) states that certain students are exempt from taking the TSIA, including veterans, students with ACT or SAT college readiness scores, students with previous college credit, or non-degree seekers. The new TSIA aligns to the Texas College and Career Readiness Standards and aligns to national adult basic education standards.

To assist in placement, the TSIA produces a diagnostic profile for each student who tests at the lowest levels that can be used to provide targeted remediation (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (2012d)). Students have the option of brushing up on those skills that were identified as weak and retesting or taking the course determined by the TSIA score. The state encourages colleges to offer refresher courses to those students whose TSIA scores reveal them to be close to leveling up either from adult basic education level courses to developmental education courses, from one course in the developmental sequence to a higher-level developmental course, or from developmental education courses into college-level courses.

With the TSIA, the state standardized the test and the admission scores across the state, cutting down on the confusion about admissions testing in Texas. The TSIA was the only placement test used in-house on the first school day of Fall 2013 for all institutions of higher education in Texas, and the original plan called for the cut score ranges to be phased in over six years, becoming most stringent in Fall 2019. In June 2017, however, THECB reversed itself and announced that it is considering lowering scores to increase the number of students who qualify for credit-level math and English with no developmental interventions at all.

Adult Basic Education: Reclassifying and Tracking the Weakest Student

Because developmental students are less likely to finish their developmental courses, less likely to move into credit-level courses, and less likely to graduate from both two-year colleges and four-year colleges with either a certification or a degree than their college-ready counterparts (Bailey, Jeong, & Cho, 2010; Complete College America, 2012), and because these students are expensive to educate (Terry, 2007), the state is under pressure to both reduce this population of students and increase their success rates. In response to this pressure, THECB has adopted a classification scheme that reduces the number of students identified as "developmental" by creating a new class of student comprising students who test at the lowest levels on the TSIA.

Using the new TSIA and the standardized cut-off scores, THECB has limited access to developmental education courses to those students who test above a developmental cut-off on the TSIA. Students who test below that level fall into a new class of education called adult basic education (ABE) and may be tracked to workforce and certificate programs. ABE is defined as levels 1–4, which represent grades 0-8.9 on a literacy scale, and developmental education students fit into levels 5 and 6, which represent grades 9-12 on the same scale (THECB, 2014b).

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Table 1 below lists the TSIA test levels and the corresponding higher education tier and grade equivalency for each level.

Table 1

Texas Success Initiative Assessment higher education tiers and grade equivalencies

Higher Education Tier	Levels	Grade Equivalency
Adult Basic Education	Level 1	Grade equivalency 0-1.9
	Level 2	Grade equivalency 2-3.9
	Level 3	Grade equivalency 4-5.9
	Level 4	Grade equivalency 6-8.9
Developmental Education	Level 5	Grade equivalency 9-10.9
	Level 6	Grade equivalency 11-12
College Ready	Credit-level	Above grade 12

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (2014b)

Prior to Fall 2013, ABE did not exist as a classification in Texas community colleges. By creating a TSIA score range that correlates with the ABE national standards, THECB drastically reduced the number of developmental education students in the state simply by redefining part of the population, limiting it to those students who score above a certain level on the admissions test, and reclassifying those students who test below the developmental education cut-off. With one policy, the THECB has made more than half of the developmental reading, writing, and math students disappear (THECB, 2013a). See Table 2 below.

Table 2

Projected changes in developmental education enrollment in Texas as a result of TSIA

implementation

	Adult Basic Education	Developmental Education	Credit/College Ready	Exempt
Math				
Fall 2012	N/A	32%	10%	58%
Fall 2013-2017 projections	21%	12%	9%	58%
Reading				
Fall 2012	N/A	22%	17%	61%
Fall 2013-2017 projections	13%	9%	17%	61%
Writing				
Fall 2012	N/A	22%	16%	62%
Fall 2013 forward	14%	5%	19%	62%

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (2013a)

Reclassifying a large population of developmental students is only one part of a complex plan to reform developmental education in Texas. Brief explanations of several other strands of the reform effort are below.

<div align="center">

Integrated Reading and Writing

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After close analysis of the dismal completion rates of students who begin their higher education academic work in developmental education classes, THECB implemented policies to reduce the number of exit points, defined as points within a program at which students tend to drop out. To achieve this end, THECB revamped the developmental education curriculum and reduced the number of courses that developmental students must take prior to enrolling in college-level courses, thereby reducing the number of points at which students will drop out.

One area of focus is Developmental English, which has traditionally been divided into two strands: reading and writing. Students who test into Developmental English typically test into developmental reading and developmental writing or both, and these two strands have been taught in separate courses in the past. For example, at all the colleges within the CCS, Developmental English is broken into two levels of developmental reading (ENGL 0304 and 0305) and two levels of developmental writing (ENGL 0306 and 0307). Therefore, students who test into the lowest levels of Developmental English must take four courses that are four hours each before they get into credit-level English. This represents two semesters at a minimum, one academic year, and financial aid expenditures for four courses that do not count toward a degree.

THECB stated that these English courses will no longer be funded after Spring 2015. Instead, the state will only fund integrated reading and writing courses (IRWs), which teach both reading and writing. Thus, students who test into the lowest levels of Developmental English will only be required to take two Developmental English courses—ENGL 0309, which is a combination of ENGL 0305 and 0307 and ENGL 0302, which is a combination of ENGL 0304 and 0306—rather than four. (Technically, the lowest levels will be considered ABE, but again, we do not know how the transition from developmental education to ABE will transpire yet.) Although this reduction in the number of required developmental courses will save students money, it will still require students to take two courses consecutively, so the state is also asking that institutions implement creative scheduling and offer options, such as accelerated courses, boot-camps, and NCBOs, that allow students to complete their developmental requirements more quickly. For those students who were taking more than a year to complete their Developmental English courses, the reduction in the number of courses required will save time. THECB sees

this as a way to reduce the number of points by which students exit prior to beginning their credit-level coursework and reduce barriers to completion for these students.

Non-Course-Based Options

Lastly, beginning in Fall 2013, THECB requires that institutions implement non-course-based options (NCBOs), an intervention model that is a form of supplemental instruction intended to assist underprepared students who are close to college readiness but who need some additional instruction to get there. Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board defines NCBOs in report to the Texas Legislature:

> [NCBOs are] interventions that use innovative learning approaches designed to address a student's identified weaknesses and effectively and efficiently prepare the student for college-level work. These interventions muse be overseen by an instructor of record, must not fit traditional course frameworks, and cannot include advising or learning support activities already connected to a traditional course. Interventions may include, but are not limited to, tutoring, supplemental instruction, or labs" (2013b, p. 7)

Suzanne Morales-Vale, the Director of Developmental Education and Adult Basic Education for THECB gives a more detailed explanation of NCBOs and the THECB's rationale for mandating them:

> The NCBO model is an alternative to the traditional course and is based on students' demonstrated weaknesses and faculty content experts' estimate of the range of time it would take for students to address those weaknesses. . . . NCBOs are unlike traditional courses, which generally meet 48 contact hours, 2-3 times per week for 15 weeks and follow a static course syllabus whereby every student, regardless of his or her demonstrated mastery of certain outcomes, must address the same learning outcomes

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often in the same ways. The most consistent measure in a traditional course is the required seat time. The NCBO, on the other hand, provides flexibility for institutions to design more individualized interventions that are based on ranges of contact hours depending on the student's needs, with the most consistent measure being the mastery of previously identified weaknesses. Because students' instruction, practice, and feedback are focused on mastering weak skills, their intervention is targeted and accelerated, supporting a quicker path towards college credit coursework. (personal communication, August 6, 2014)

The NCBO model serves as a tool to move students through developmental education and into credit-level courses more quickly while providing support to those under-prepared students so that they maximize their chances for success. Both aims are in line with the goals stated in THECB's "2012-2017 Statewide Developmental Education Plan."

THECB (2013b) states that NCBOs should be provided to students who test within a few points of the credit-level cut-off courses, students whom researchers show are very like students who score just above the credit-level cut off and have roughly the same chances of success in credit-level students as their slightly higher-scoring counterparts (Bettinger & Long, 2005; Calgano & Long, 2008). THECB has not mandated a specific NCBO strategy, and community colleges are free to design their own NCBOs in the subjects tested in the TISA, such as math, reading, writing, and ESOL.. NCBOs can be used to achieve the following purposes:

1. Assist students who test into lower-level developmental courses test into a higher level. (Boot-camp version NCBO)

2. Assist students who test into developmental education test into credit-level courses. (Boot-camp version NCBO)

3. Assist students in shoring up specific academic weaknesses, such as grammar or factoring. (Modular-type NCBO)

4. Support students who test into developmental courses but who opt to take credit-level courses. (Linked version NCBO, also known as mainstreaming)

The purpose of NCBOs is to give a form of funded support to developmental students who need extra help in their math and English courses without requiring them to take a traditional 16-week class that is both time-consuming and expensive.

Texas colleges are free to create their own NCBOs. This flexibility has resulted in several different NCBO options. At CCS, the site for this research study, students who test into developmental math or English courses can take one-week NCBOs held prior to the start of a semester to brush up on their skills in those areas identified by the TSIA as weak. The hope is that these NCBO boot-camps will allow more students to improve their TSI score and allow them to either move from a lower-level developmental course to a high-level developmental course or move from developmental into credit-level courses and skip developmental courses altogether. Students can also take modular NCBOs that focus on specific skills such as factoring in math or grammar in English.

The Corequisite Remediation or Accelerated Learning Program Model

This study will focus on students enrolled in a form of NCBO, the linked NCBO, which focuses on supporting developmental students who are mainstreamed into credit-level courses. This form of NCBO is designed to support students who test into developmental courses, either English or math, but who opt to take NCBO-supported credit-level courses, thus moving directly into credit-level and bypassing developmental courses.

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The format for the linked NCBO was created by the Community College of Baltimore County (CCBC) in the early 1990's and is called the Accelerated Learning Program (ALP). Peter Adams, an English faculty member at CCBC, who was alarmed by talk of budget cuts, became curious about the effectiveness of Developmental English and examined the success rates of students who were enrolled in the highest level of Developmental English offered at the college. What he found was that in a four-year period from the 1988–1989 academic year to the 1992–1993 academic year, only 33 percent of the students enrolled in the highest level of Developmental English went on to be successful in the first freshman composition course. Of the total number of students who began in English 052 in 1988–1989, 57 percent either dropped out of failed their English courses within four years, a result that he describes as "disappointing" (Adams, n.d.a)

To investigate the reasons why students were dropping out, the college distributed surveys to students enrolled in developmental courses. Students were asked to identify reasons that would cause them to drop out, and their answers did not match faculty expectations. Instead of citing difficult coursework as expected, the students listed various life reasons, such as financial, medical, and legal issues, and they cited affective issues such as feelings of discouragement and isolation. The faculty felt that they should design a program that supported the academic needs of the students who tested into the higher levels of Developmental English, created a safe community for these students, a place where they could interact with students with similar needs, but at the same time, engage with strong students and participate in college-level courses and earn credit for them. To meet these demands, they created the Accelerated Learning Program (ALP), which has a unique structure that meets the academic and affective needs of

developmental students but does not cost them nearly as much time or money as traditional full-semester academic courses (Adams, n.d.b).

The structure of the linked-course NCBOs at CCS is based on the unique structure of the ALP courses as designed by Community College of Baltimore County. Several sections of English 1301 are designated as linked sections. These course sections are divided into two sections, one that enrolls 15 students who have tested directly into English 1301 and one that enrolls 10 students who tested into the highest level of Developmental English but who have opted to take English 1301 with NCBO support. The structure of the courses at linked courses at CCS is illustrated below:

Figure 1

Accelerated Learning Program model

Students who tested into
credit-level English:

XXXXX
XXXXX
XXXXX

Students who tested into
Developmental English:

XXXXX
XXXXX

Students who tested into
Developmental English:

Same students

XXXXX
XXXXX
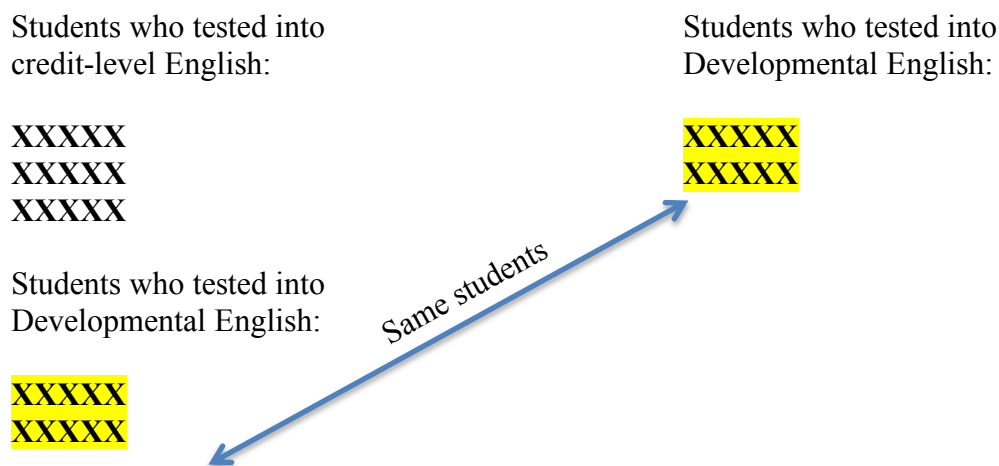
For example, two sections of English 1301 are built, and both are scheduled for the same time and in the same classroom. Both sections are taught by the same professor. One section has a cap of 15 students; the other is capped at 10 students. The first section enrolls students who have tested directly into English 1301. The smaller section enrolls students who tested into

Developmental English. These students are required to co-enroll in an NCBO, English 0115 or

English 0117 or English 0119. (In the original iteration of corequisite remediation English

courses at the study institution, the course number indicated the focus of the course—reading,

writing, or integrated reading and writing, respectively. However, as the program matured, the

institution eliminated ENGL 0115, which focused on reading, and ENGL 0117, which focused

on writing, and only offered ENGL 0119, which integrated reading and writing and reflected the

developmental INRW course, ENGL 0309.) This NCBO is scheduled right after the section of

English 1301, is 50 minutes twice a week for eight weeks, which satisfies THECB's 16-hour

requirement. This NCBO is meant to serve as a support, a resource for the students who tested

into Developmental English. It is in this course that students can get the additional help that they

need to succeed in the credit-level English course for which the TSIA has deemed them

underprepared.

The NCBOs and linked credit-level English courses are built and staffed in a way that

supports student success. The section of English 0119 that is linked with English 1301 meets

right after English 1301 so that the students go directly from their credit-level course to the

NCBO. The activities in the NCBO are designed to assist the students with the requirements of

English 1301. Both courses, English 1301 and the NCBO, may either be taught by the same

instructor, or each may be taught be different instructors who meet to coordinate lessons. At the

study institution, the credit-level course and the NCBO are taught by the same instructor.

Students receive grades for both courses, and they may fail one but not the other or fail or pass

both courses. Although institutions can create their own grading and passing policies, at CCS,

students can pass English 1301 and fail English 0119 and still receive college credit and move to

the next course. This policy is in line with the intention of THECB, which is to create an

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environment that promotes student learning and success rather than preventing students from moving forward in their coursework.

The corequisite remediation model seems to be successful on several levels for students who test into Developmental English. According to the CCBC Institutional Research and Evaluation department, success rates in the English 101 more than doubled in Fall 2007 when 69 percent of the developmental students enrolled in ALP passed their credit-level English course compared to 28 percent of the students enrolled in English 101 who had previously taken a traditional Developmental English course (Scott, Miller, & Walker, 2013). By 2010, 74 percent of the students enrolled in ALP passed their credit-level English course, almost tripling the success rates of traditional Developmental English courses at that institution. In the early stages of the developmental education reform effort, researchers were looking at the corequisite model as a scalable option and found similar success rates. Cho, Kopko, Jenkins, and Jaggars (2012) found that 38.5 percent of the students who took a traditional developmental writing class passed their first credit-level writing course, but 74.7 percent of students enrolled in ALP passed the same freshman composition course, which is a dramatic increase. Examination of student success results in Georgia, Indiana, Tennessee, and West Virginia reveal that although only 22 percent of developmental students nationally go on to complete their college-level gateway English course, between 61 and 64 percent of the students enrolled in corequisite remediation English courses complete their gateway courses, more than double the national rate (Complete College America, 2016). Furthermore, the students in corequisite remediation performed as well in their second credit-level English course as the students who took a traditional path through Developmental English (Cho, Kopko, Jenkins, & Jaggars, 2012; Jenkins, Speroni, Belfield, Jaggars, & Edgecombe, 2010).

The corequisite model positively impacts student engagement. Data show that students who participate in corequisite remediation English courses experience increased engagement as measured by their self-reported experiences with active and collaborative learning, effort, academic challenge, student-faculty interaction, and support for learners, according to the Center for Community College Engagement (2016).

There is also evidence that enrollment in ALP is financially beneficial for developmental students. Jenkins, Speroni, Belfield, Jaggars, and Edgecombe (2010) found that ALP is a more cost-effective route when compared to the traditional path through a developmental sequence, saving the students about $442 in higher education costs. They contend that the benefits of ALP, such as completion and retention rates, are more than double its costs. These findings were supported in a similar study conducted in Tennessee in 2016 (Belfield, Jenkins, & Lahr, 2016).

Overall, the data show that the corequisite remediation model works. It prepares students for credit-level academic reading and writing, increases their engagement in learning, and saves them time and money. For these reasons 2017, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board mandated that in the 2018-2019 academic year, 25 percent of developmental math and English students enrolled at an institution of higher education must be enrolled in corequisite remediation classes. In the 2019-2020 academic year, 50 percent of the those students must be enrolled in corequisite remediation models, and in 2020-2021 academic year, the number rises to 75 percent and remains there (THECB, 2017a). The pressure is on institutions of higher eduation to scale up their corequisite remediation programs in math and English and provide quality education to students who enter higher education underprepared in math, writing, and reading.

From Access to Completion and the Birth of Pathways

Recent changes in the focus of higher education have impacted developmental education. Prior to 1990, the focus was on providing access to higher education for all Americans, especially those living in poverty. College enrollment was the metric for success, and colleges measured their success via enrollment numbers. The focus gradually moved from access to quality, and the first metric for quality was the graduation rate. In 1990, Congress passed the Student Right-to-Know and Campus Security Act, which required colleges to provide information such as graduation rates to the U.S. Department of Education to qualify for federal financial aid. These graduation rates were published in 1995, and by 2000, all two-year colleges had to make their graduation rates available to students. This focus on graduation rates was uncomfortable for two-year colleges because students who enroll at two-year institutions with the intention to transfer to a four-year university often do so without graduating from their two-year college; thus, it is not uncommon for two-year institutions to post single-digit graduation rates. Graduation rates, said the two-year colleges, are not an appropriate measure of college quality, and eventually different metrics were created.

In 2004, Lumina Foundation partnered with the American Association of Community Colleges, Community College Research Center, and others to form Achieving the Dream, a national reform network that helps community colleges implement evidence-based, student-centered programs to improve community college student success and completion. Among Achieving the Dream's 14 focus areas is college readiness, which lists six developmental education principles that outline the foundation of developmental education reform. Principles 3 and 4 support acceleration through developmental education by advocating for direct placement into credit-level courses with support or "rigorous, streamlined remediation options" for students

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for whom supported direct credit-level placement is not appropriate (Achieving the Dream, 2016).

In 2008, President Obama unveiled his plan to tie all federal financial aid programs to a rating system that assesses colleges on their affordability, student completion rates, and the earnings of graduates (Fain, 2013). This new focus on student completion rates evolved into an examination of student completion rates at key stages in the matriculation process from college admission to graduation. Key performance indicators (KPIs) are data points used to measure college quality, and KPIs are chosen from these stages in the matriculation process. Close examination of the success, retention, and completion rates of developmental students revealed that developmental education placement and failure in developmental education classes are exit points for many of the students placed in it. Thus, reform of developmental education in the form of acceleration through developmental classes became a goal of those working to improve the higher education experience of community college students. Developmental education reform was necessary to facilitate the success and completion of students who begin college underprepared for the rigor of college-level work, and KPIs that measure developmental education student success are used to indicate the success of a college or state in its developmental education reform efforts.

Eventually, the entire process of reforming the experience of community college students from admission to graduation or transfer to employment was dubbed "a pathway," and the pathways movement spread nationally with each state working to improve success and completion rates by improving the student experience at each point along the path.

Because around 60 percent of community college students are placed into developmental classes, and because developmental education has been found to be an exit point for so many

students, reform of developmental education has become a key plank in the pathways platform. States that operate under performance funding models have lead the way in implementing system reform to create tighter, more efficient pathways for student success, including more efficient paths through developmental courses and into credit-bearing courses. This focus on developmental education is not aimed at eliminating it completely; rather, experts have suggested ways of restructuring it so that it supports those students who enter college unprepared but facilitates their entry into credit-level math and English as soon as possible. The goal is get students into credit-courses as quickly as possible without sacrificing their chances of success.

Local Pathways Efforts: Houston Guided Pathways to Success

In 2014, Complete College America formed a partnership with University of Houston, University of Houston Downtown, the University of Houston Clear Lake, and four nearby community colleges — Houston Community College, Lone Star College System, San Jacinto College District, and Wharton County Junior College — for the purpose of creating "an integrated system of cohesive strategies that must be implemented collectively in order to accomplish the full benefits of the effort, namely significant improvement in college completion rates and substantial narrowing of attainment gaps" (Houston Guided Pathways to Success, 2014). Together, these community colleges serve more than 190,000 students in the Houston area, so this project represents a massive undertaking with the potential to improve the completion rates of thousands of students. The project had nine overarching implementation areas: aligned mathematics, meta-majors, remediation, default degree plans, articulation agreements, intrusive advising, career and academic advising consolidation, structured schedules, and tracking student progression. The team assigned to the remediation implementation area set an ambitious goal that most remedial students will be enrolled in

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college-level, gateway English and mathematics courses with mandatory, built-in support, which can consist of single-semester, college-level gateway courses with corequisite support, college-level gateway courses streteched over two semesters for the least prepared students, and certification programs that will assign remediation to skill levels necessary for success in chosen fields (Houston Guided Pathways to Success, 2014). The emphasis of the Houston GPS task force on streamlining developmental education in math and English through corequisite remediation reflects the impact of the research on the inefficiency of the traditional developmental education model. The Houston GPS task force is still working to achieve its goals, but it is against this backdrop of developmental education reform on the national, state, and local stages that this research was conducted.

Theoretical Frameworks

All students entering college for the first time must learn to navigate an alien world, and the required adjustment is difficult. Navigating this transition from high school to college or the workplace to college is so difficult that in in 2009, 87 percent of 1,000 surveyed community colleges offered student success or first-year experience courses that teach incoming, first-time-in-college students how to navigate the challenges of college life (Padgett & Keup, 2011). Students who test into developmental education classes but who are then placed into credit-level courses must make greater adjustments than college-ready students, first to college life and all that it requires, and second, to courses for which they are unprepared. They have goals that require college completion, so they must be successful in college to reach those goals. They must be prepared to face challenges and work through those challenges to be successful in meeting their goals, which require a certain mindset, strategies, and resources. This study aims to examine the mindset, strategies, and resources of developmental students who are enrolled in

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NCBO-supported, credit-level English classes how that mindset shapes the students' perceptions of self, their situation, and their resources and shapes the coping strategies that these students employ.

This study is guided by two complementary frameworks: Dweck's theory of mindset and Schlossberg's transition theory, both of which provide a lens through which I examine the experiences of developmental students who are enrolled in NCBO-supported, credit-level courses and how these students cope with the transition into college and the stress that it places on their lives. I use Dweck's theory of mindset to examine students' perceptions of themselves and their experiences in college-level English within the framework of the four dimensions of Schlossberg's theory of transition: situation, self, support, and strategies. Both theories are used as the foundation for the research questions, and both are used as a lens through which I analyzed the data.

Schlossberg's Transition Theory

Schlossberg's Transition Theory describes a transition as "any event, or nonevent that results in changed relationships, routines, assumptions and roles" (Schlossberg, Lynch, & Chickering, 1989, p. 14) and the process of navigating transitions as "moving in, moving through, and moving out" (p. 15). This study concentrates on developmental students in the "moving in" and "moving through" phases of transition navigation, specifically with how they cope with moving into and through the college arena and college-level courses.

Schlossberg's model (Schlossberg, Lynch, & Chickering, 1989) identifies four factors that influence how people navigate transitions — situation, self, support, and strategies — which are collectively referred to as the "4-Ss" (p. 17). The context of college enrollment for each student and his or her perception of that context (situation), each student's experience and self-

concept (self), the external resources such as financial assets, family, and friends that each student can use as resources (support), and the various strategies that each student employs to cope with transitions (strategies) all work together to maximize the chances of success or failure for each student. Strengths in any of these areas facilitate one's ability to navigate transition; conversely, weakness in any of these areas hinders one's ability to navigate transition. Schlossberg, Lynch, and Chickering (1989) argue that we can examine "the balance and deficits in each of these categories" to predict how well a person will cope with transitions (p. 17).

Researchers have applied Schlossberg's Transition Theory to their study of different groups of college students, such as women experiencing career loss (McAtee & Benshoff, 2006), veterans (Wheeler, 2012), athletes (Henderson, 2013; Wheeler et al., 1996), students on academic probation (Tovar & Simon, 2006), and nontraditional male college dropouts (Powers, 2010) in their effort to understand how these subsets of college students utilize Schlossberg's 4-Ss to cope with moving into, through, and out of the transition. Application of the theory has resulted in a rich body of literature that helps us to understand how these specific groups of students experience their situation, utilize support and strategies, and view themselves as they move into, through, and out of the transition. However, despite the vast number of research studies conducted on developmental students, no one has applied Schlossberg's Transition Theory to students enrolled in corequisite remediation courses.

Dweck's Theory of Mindset

Dweck's mindset theory states that we hold implicit beliefs about our abilities, and those beliefs cause us to react to challenge in particular ways. Students who believe that their abilities are fixed and unaffected by effort are less likely to commit to the requirements of the role of student and are therefore less likely to be successful (Dweck, 2006; Becker, Krodel, & Tucker,

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2009; McClenney, Marti, & Adkins, 2007; Morest, 2013). However, their success is dependent on how well they navigate the transition into college, which is in turn dependent on how they view challenges and meet those challenges. In contrast, students who view their intelligence and abilities as directly impacted by their effort and who view challenge as a puzzle to be solved are more likely to be successful in college. These two very different perspectives, fixed mindset and growth mindset, are the basic categories identified by Dweck's theory of mindset. Dweck's (2006) mindset framework may explain how students navigate the transition into college both personally and academically, specifically how they navigate Schlossberg's four dimensions as they relate to entering college and taking their English courses (situation), how they deal with challenges (strategies), such as seeking help (support), and how they view themselves as college students (self).

Dweck's mindset theory rests on the foundation of Weiner's theory of attribution (Weiner, 1985). Weiner (1985) explains how people explain the cause of an event, specifically achievement or the lack thereof, which can be applied to how students view their own success or failure. Weiner (1985) argues that attributions are arranged along three causal dimensions:

1. Locus—internal versus external—determines the location of the cause. The student has control of effort but not task difficulty.

2. Stability—stable versus unstable—designates that causes are constant or varying over time. Students often believe that ability is stable but that effort is not.

3. Controllability—controllable or uncontrollable—refers to whether the person can control the cause. Again, ability is often thought to be fixed and therefore uncontrollable, but effort is not fixed and is controllable.

Weiner's attribution theory offers a framework with which to view motivation. Students with an external locus of control believe that events such as success in school, are out of their hands. They cannot control and therefore take responsibility for their own success and failure. These students tend not to put forth much effort because such effort is pointless. Furthermore, they believe that their failures are not their fault and that their successes are due to a force that is not within their control. Students with an internal locus of control see their successes and failures as within their control. They see their own efforts as the cause of their success and failure, and because they have control of their efforts, they have control over their successes and failures.

In their research on motivation, Diener and Dweck (1978) focus on mindset and learned helplessness, which is a state that develops when children attribute failure to a lack of ability, which they perceive as stable and uncontrollable. Using Weiner's (1985) three causal dimensions as the basis for her theoretical framework, Dweck (2006) argues that an internal locus of control, belief that intelligence and ability can be cultivated through effort, and belief in the controllability of this effort are characteristics of a growth mindset. In contrast, a fixed mindset is characterized by external loci of control and belief that ability is stable and fixed and that effort is a characteristic of the inferior. People with a fixed mindset blame outside forces for their failures and ascribe their success to their innate intelligence and abilities. They are also less able to withstand being challenged; they are less gritty (Duckworth, 2016), less able to persevere when things get tough. Because they do not see effort as valuable and because effort and change are integral to growth, people with a fixed mindset do not grow and cannot adapt to change.

Research on the usefulness of teaching mindset theory to students, especially disadvantaged students who are most likely to fail or drop out, is known as lay theory intervention. Lay theory are the beliefs that people hold that they use to guide their behavior. Lay

theory interventions are deliberate efforts to change those beliefs to change behavior. Teaching mindset theory to students is a beneficial form of lay theory intervention (Claro, Paunesku, & Dweck, 2016; Yeager et al., 2016). There is evidence that presenting mindset theory to students results in increased academic success and decreased drop-out rates for disadvantaged students. Claro, Paunesku, and Dweck (2016) conducted a study on mindset intervention that involved all public-school students in Chile who answered at least one item on a mindset survey (n=168,203). The results were that "at every socioeconomic level, those who hold more of a growth mindset consistently outperform those who do not—even after holding constant a panoply of socioeconomic and attitudinal factors."

Yeager et al. (2016) connected transition, college students, and mindset in a study that examined the effect of lay theory intervention on first-year college students as a strategy for increasing students' feelings of belonging and increasing their academic and extracurricular engagement, and they examined the impact of lay theory intervention on advantaged and disadvantaged students. The findings suggest that students who were classified as disadvantaged at both the public and private universities reported increased social and academic integration on campus in that first year than the control groups and were more involved in extracurricular groups and made greater use of academic support services (Yeager et al., 2016).

There is evidence that exposing community college developmental students to the principles of growth mindset has a positive impact on their academic performance. Bryk et al. (2013) embedded a growth mindset intervention into the first three weeks of a developmental math curriculum and found that students' interest in math increased, and their uncertainty about their ability to learn math and their anxiety about math decreased. Yeager et al. (2013) administered a growth mindset intervention to 715 community college developmental math

students in Los Angeles. The students who received the intervention posted significantly higher grade point averages and were retained at higher rates than the students who did not receive the mindset intervention.

Understanding the mindset of students in the corequisite remediation English classes may help to explain their views about the transition into the unfamiliar arena of college. Students who tested into developmental education classes are beginning their college work with a deficit. They are at least one semester and often more behind the starting line. Furthermore, they were told that their performance on the placement test has revealed weaknesses in their academic preparation, which impacts their view of themselves and their ability to learn. The academic success of the students in this study is dependent on how well they navigate the transition into college, which is in turn dependent on how they view challenges and meet those challenges. Dweck's (2006) framework of mindset may explain how students navigate the transitions into college both personally and academically. Students who do not see themselves in the role of student, students who do not believe in the value of their effort and its contributions to their intellectual growth, are less likely to commit to the requirements of the role of student and are therefore less likely to be successful (Dweck, 2006; Becker, Krodel, & Tucker, 2009; McClenney, Marti, & Adkins, 2012; Morest, 2013). According to Dweck's research, these students have a fixed mindset and are more likely to drop out of college when they encounter difficulty (Dweck 2006). However, students who exhibit a growth mindset, who believe that they have a place at college and work to make their place, who believe that their success is determined by their degree of commitment and effort, who see challenge as exciting and interesting and who respond to that challenge with determination, are more likely to be successful (Duckworth, 2016; Dweck, 2006).

This study focuses on the experiences of students who test into developmental courses but who are placed into credit-bearing courses with a non-course-based option (NCBO) as a form of institutional support. I examine how these students cope with the transitions that college requires using Schlossberg's 4-S model as a lens, focusing on how the mindsets of these underprepared students in NCBOs and NCBO-supported credit courses impact their view of each of Schlossberg's factors, situation, self, support, and strategies. Table 3 below details how Schlossberg defines each of the 4-Ss and how each is applied in this study.

Table 3.

Application of Schlossberg, Lynch, and Chickering's (1989) theory of transition and Dweck's (2006) theory of mindset to corequisite remediation English students.

4S	Schlossberg's description of each factor (Schlossberg, Lynch, & Chickering, 1989)	How each factor was applied in this study. The researcher examined the following:	Mindset (Dweck 2006)	
			Fixed Mindset	**Growth Mindset**
			Students with a fixed mindset:	Students with a growth mindset:
	How the student sees the transition, as positive or negative, desired or dreaded, expected or unexpected.	The context of entering college and how that decision fits within the context of the students' lives.	See college as an insurmountable obstacle or an arena that proves self-worth and ability.	See transition as a welcome challenge, something to be worked through.
		How the students perceive placement into college at the developmental level.	Perceive entering college as something that is expected and a means to an end.	See college as an arena for learning and growth.
Situation	The context of the transition. Whether the transition is affected by other stressors and is voluntary or imposed.	How the students make the decision to attempt credit-level courses and what factors affected that decision.	Perceive the testing process as one that reveals fixed ability and self-worth.	See testing as a welcome challenge, part of the learning process, a mechanism for revealing where more work is needed.
		How the students see the transition into college, in particular, how the students see the transition into corequisite developmental English and credit-level English.	Decide to take credit-level course because they are smart enough to do so.	Decide to take corequisite English courses because they are willing to work hard, learn, and be successful. Confident in the value of effort to achieve difficult goals

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Table 3 Continued

4S	Schlossberg's description of each factor (Schlossberg, Lynch, & Chickering, 1989)	How each factor was applied in this study. The researcher examined the following:	Mindset (Dweck 2006)	
			Fixed Mindset	**Growth Mindset**
			Students with a fixed mindset:	Students with a growth mindset:
Self	The student's previous experience in making a similar transition.	The students' concept of self-as-student prior to admissions testing and after.	View ability as fixed and the admissions test as a tool that reveals level of ability. Testing into developmental English is seen as a sign of low ability or a sign that the test is wrong.	View ability as changeable with effort; therefore, view placement test as indicator of ability at the time of the test, and ability that will change with experience and effort.
	Whether the student believes there are options.	The students' level of optimism or pessimism as they move into and through corequisite English.		
	The student's level of optimism or pessimism and ability to deal with ambiguity.	The students' concept of self as the students move into and through corequisite English.	Become discouraged easily. Any setback increases pessimism or reinforces students' belief that they are not cut out for college. Success will confirm believe in students' intelligence.	View successes and failures as indicators of how much effort is required. Successes are viewed as evidence of growth and learning. Failures are viewed as evidence that more effort is required or that strategies should be adjusted.
	The student's sense of self.			
Support	The student's external resources, such as financial assets, and emotional support, such as encouragement, from others. Support should outweigh sabotage.	The students' perception of external support, such as that of family and friends.	Perceive institutional support as unnecessary because the students should have the ability to succeed on their own.	See faculty, advisors, tutors, and other institutional personnel as valuable resources.
		The students' perception of peer support, particularly support given by classmates in the corequisite English classes and other students enrolled at the college.	See other students as competition or yardstick by which to measure their own abilities or self-worth.	See other students as valuable resources who can serve as study partners and sources of advice.
		The students' perception of institutional support, particularly advisor and faculty support, that the students receive as the students move into and through the corequisite English classes.	See family and friends as judges.	See family and friends as resources.
Strategies	Students' ability to use a variety of strategies to cope with the transition including changing the situation and changing the meaning of the situation and deal with stress associated with the transition.	The strategies that students employ to maximize success (or not) in corequisite remediation English courses.	Will not develop adequate coping strategies, may give up easily, may perceive effort as a sign of inability or lack of intelligence.	Develop good coping strategies, perhaps a variety of strategies, and adjust strategies when necessary. Recognize the value of effort.

The interview questions are aimed at discovering how the four concepts of Schlossberg's Transition Theory are realized in the students' actual experiences as listed in column three of the above table, and how each student answers the questions reveals much about his or her mindset. Students with a growth mindset should be more likely to view college as an intriguing challenge, a puzzle to be enjoyed and solved, and an opportunity for personal and intellectual growth, and they will not be afraid to ask for help, to take advantage of institutional resources. Students with a fixed mindset may find college to be a scary undertaking, confusing, and out of their control. They may also view college as a competitive arena where they must achieve more than their peers to look superior and feel worthy, and they may not want to ask for help or avail themselves of institutional resources such as their professor, the tutoring center, or the advising office.

Conclusion

For the past 15 years, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) and the Texas Legislature have focused their attention on developmental education in the state. THECB recognizes that not all students who aspire to postsecondary education are ready to meet the challenges of their college-level courses, and community colleges in the state are required to utilize the best practices as identified in the 2012-2017 Statewide Developmental Education Plan.

Given the benefits of the Accelerated Learning Program, it is no wonder that THECB recommends this model as one form of NCBO for developmental students in Texas. It seems to be a program that will fulfill the goals of the Statewide 2012-2017 Developmental Education Plan: move developmental students into credit-level courses quickly and support them academically to maximize their chances for success and the likelihood that these students will

continue in their pursuit of higher education and complete their degrees. Implementing the various mandates will be difficult for the community colleges; however, the hope is that the implementation will result in an improved system of developmental education for underprepared students in Texas community colleges.

This study is an effort to fill a hole that has formed amidst the flurry of research on developmental student retention, success, and completion rates. Decisions are being made about how to place students and educate them in the best and most efficient ways possible, and corequisite remediation has emerged as a course structure that that offers the most financial, time, and curricular benefits to students who need extra support. However, there is very little data on how the students view these support courses and how they view themselves within the context of these support courses and their experiences as developmental students in a credit-level English course.

We tend to examine our programs by looking at the numbers. How many students entered developmental education? What were their placement scores? How many completed their courses? How many went on to enroll in gateway courses? How many were successful in their gateway courses? These numbers are important, and they give us insight about the quality of our programs. However, it is important that we look deeper than the enrollment, retention, success, and completion rates of these students. We must take the time to listen to the students' voices so that we understand who these students are and what they are experiencing in the programs that we design for them. We need to understand how we are impacting their lives partly because we have an ethical responsibility to do so and partly because it will help us to improve our programs and benefit the next cohort of students entering our institutions. The best way to hear their voices

is to talk with them about their experiences in the accelerated Developmental English courses so

that we can learn how they navigate the program we designed for them.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides an overview of the methodology used to conduct this study, including the research design, site selection, recruitment of participants, data collection procedures, and methods of ensuring trustworthiness.

Study Design

Because this study focuses on the participants' understanding of their realities, and these understandings are unique to each participant (Lincoln & Guba, 2013), a qualitative constructivist design was employed to capture and interpret how developmental students experience their first semester in corequisite remediation English courses. Lincoln and Guba (2013) argue that "a construct is a mental realization—a 'making real'—of an apparently singular, unitary entity or relationship; . . . constructions are the end products of individual (and sometimes group) efforts at sense-making, and hence they are inherently subjective" (p. 47). Corequisite remediation programs are emerging as the best way to accelerate the progress of developmental students and support them in their gateway English courses; however, most of the current research on developmental students and corequisite remediation focuses on enrollment, retention, and success rates. We know that the corequisite remediation model works for more students than does pre-requisite remediation; the numbers bear that out. We do not know how the students experience the program or how they adjust to what we assume is a big leap in entering unprepared for college reading and writing to taking a college gateway English course. There is no research on students in corequisite remediation that incorporates the students' voices. This research study is an attempt to address that void. I examined developmental students' experience in transitioning into college and constructions of their experiences during their first semester of

college in a corequisite remediation English course as well as the perceptions that the students'

advisors and English professors hold about these students and the corequisite remediation

English courses in which these students are enrolled. Each participant's understanding of these

experiences will be filtered through his/her understanding of reality and will be dependent on

how each participant makes sense of his/her experience.

I also asked the students' advisors and professors about the students and the linked

classes to get the institutional perspective. The advisors are the first-line institutional employees,

who are tasked with presenting the corequisite option to qualified students. The faculty members

design the curriculum and guide the students through the classes. The advisors and faculty gave

me a different perspective on the students who are enrolled in these classes and an understanding

of how these students are viewed by the members of the institution charged with educating them.

Research Questions

The purpose of the study was to explore students' experiences in corequisite remediation

classes within the larger context of their transition into college and their identification as

developmental students who are enrolled in college-level English with support.

This study will be guided by the following research questions:

1. How do community college developmental students enrolled in NCBO-supported,

   credit-level English courses cope with:

   a. the transition into college life?

   b. the academic demands of college?

   c. personal demands that may interfere with college success?

2. What do student-participants identify as contributing factors, both personal and

   institutional, to their academic success?

3. What do student-participants identify as the personal and institutional factors that function as barriers to their success?

   a. What do the student responses reveal about their mindsets?

4. What do faculty who teach these students and advisors who advise these students identify as:

   a. resources, both personal and institutional, that aid these students?

   b. barriers, both personal and institutional, that impede success for these students?

   c. strategies that these students employ to cope with the transition to college life and college academics?

   d. attitudes about learning and college that reveal either a growth or a fixed mindset?

The answers to the research questions can be used to strengthen the corequisite remediation program. By listening to the students describe their experiences, the barriers, both personal and institutional, that they encountered, the strategies they employed to navigate both the college experience and their courses, and the forms of support that were available to them, and by listening to the faculty and advisors explain their perspective on those topics, I can design a better program and better prepare faculty to teach these students. Retention, success, and completion rates only provide part of the picture. To understand their experience, I must listen to the students, advisors, and faculty. To answer the research questions, I conducted interviews, one per student, advisor, and faculty member, and then unitized and categorized the resulting data.

Role of the Researcher

My personal experience as a faculty member and a department chair played a part in my selection of the experiences of corequisite remediation students as a research topic. My teaching

experience primarily lies in teaching gateway English courses, English 1301 and English 1302; however, as a department chair, I create corequisite remediation linked classes and staff them. As a program-creator and program-builder, I have a responsibility to ensure that I am creating the best options for students, that the right students are advised to take those classes, that the very best faculty are assigned to teach them, and that the faculty and staff are supported so that they can in turn support students. The faculty I select to teach the linked classes must be given professional development opportunities that prepare them for the challenges of creating curriculum that is suited to the needs of these students. We spend much time debating which students are right for these courses, but the faculty selected to teach these courses must be the right faculty as well. They must be student-ready because the TSIA has shown that these students are not college-ready. The faculty must be able to straddle the gap between developmental writing and college-level writing, and they must be willing and eager to do it. Although I had spent a lot of time thinking about how to set up these courses and recruiting faculty to teach them, I had not spent any time talking with students about the outcome of my work. How does the program that I have built work for the students who are impacted by it? How do they experience it? This research study was my opportunity to find out, and I relished the opportunity to talk with students about their perspectives.

Site Selection

Community College System (CCS) is a large community college system in Texas composed of multiple colleges and satellite centers. Each of the colleges has its own service area and serves a student population that is racially and economically diverse. All the colleges in the system offer core classes that transfer to four-year institutions, and each has developed certification programs that meet the needs of its workforce-oriented student population.

All the CCS colleges were implementing some form of an English corequisite remediation course in Fall 2014 in compliance with the mandate of the state board of higher education, and the large number of students enrolled at CCS as well as the diversity of the students enrolled at each college and the diversity of colleges themselves make it an ideal site for this research. The CCS colleges are free to experiment with different corequisite remediation models, and after I examined the corequisite models implemented at all the CCS colleges, I chose to focus on the students enrolled in corequisite remediation models at three colleges that were the most similar to each other, models that were based on the Accelerated Learning Program model created at Community College of Baltimore County. At each of the colleges, the students were assigned to one professor, who was responsible for both the credit-level class and the developmental class and worked with the students throughout the semester in a traditional classroom setting. This structure allowed the professors to get to know their students and allowed the students to bond with each other, two features of the ALP structure that the ALP creators argue accounts for most of the program's success (Accelerated Learning Program, n.d.).

These three colleges differ in size and student population. College A is located on a suburban plain outside a large city in Texas. It is a large community college, enrolling just over 20,000 students in Fall 2014. Hispanic students comprise 41 percent of the total student body, White students 28 percent, African American students 15 percent, and Asian students 10 percent. The college has experienced rapid growth recently with the Hispanic student population experiencing the biggest surge. Fifty-seven percent of the students are female, and 70 percent of the students are enrolled part-time. Of the 3,331 students who enrolled with zero college credit in Fall 2014, 803 tested into developmental reading and 860 tested into developmental writing.

College B is much smaller, enrolling 9,361 students in Fall 2014. Located in a small town north of a large city, its student body is 49 percent White, 25 percent Hispanic, 15 percent Black, and 5 percent Asian. Sixty-three percent of the students are female, and 69 percent of the students are enrolled part-time. Of the 1,305 students who enrolled with zero college credit in Fall 2014, 293 tested into developmental reading, and 318 tested into developmental writing.

College C is the newest, fastest growing, and most diverse campus of the three in this study. Located in several multi-story corporate buildings in a population-dense area outside a large city, Campus C has grown between 20 and 25 percent each year since 2012. Of the 9,261 students enrolled here in Fall 2014, 31 percent are White, 35 percent Hispanic, 16 percent Black, and 11 percent Asian. Fifty-seven percent of the students are female, and 70 percent are enrolled part-time. Of the 1,522 students who enrolled with zero credit in Fall 2014, 300 tested into developmental reading, and 315 tested into developmental writing. Table 4 below show the student demographic data at each of the study sites.

Table 4

Fall 2015 student demographic data at the study sites

Total student enrollment Fall 2015		Campus A	Campus B	Campus C
	Headcount	20,384	9,361	9,261
	White	28%	49%	34%
	Black	15%	15%	19%
	Hispanic	41%	25%	34%
	Asian	10%	5%	7%
Ethnicity	Other	6%	6%	6%
	Under 20 years	38%	33%	39%
	20-24 years	33%	31%	33%
	25-29 years	11%	13%	12%
	30-39 years	11%	15%	11%
Age Range	40+ years	7%	8%	6%
	Female	57%	63%	57%
Gender	Male	42%	36%	42%
	Full-time	30%	31%	30%
Enrollment status	Part-time	70%	69%	70%

Corequisite Remediation Course Models Implemented at Study Site Institutions

I selected these three colleges to serve as research sites because they implement a similar corequisite model to accelerate students who tested into the highest level of Developmental English. College A and College B both utilize the model created by Community College of Baltimore County called the Accelerated Learning Program (ALP). In this model, ten Developmental English students are mainstreamed into a credit-level English course with 15 credit-level students. The ten developmental students take an additional Developmental English

course that is taught by the same instructor and immediately follows the credit-level course. In this developmental course, the students receive additional support from their instructor. At both College A and College B, the credit-level English course is 80 minutes long, twice a week, for 15 weeks. The developmental course, also called an NCBO, is only 50 minutes per day, twice a week, for eight weeks. By the end of the NCBO, the developmental students should be prepared to finish their credit English course without additional support. This model only allows for the acceleration of ten developmental students per section, which is a drawback.

College C utilizes a slightly different model to accelerate students who test into the highest level of Developmental English. Instead of being mainstreamed with credit-level students, the developmental students are placed into a special credit-level English course that is capped at 20 students and a Developmental English course that runs for 30 minutes twice a week at the same time as the credit-level course. Together, these courses are scheduled 110 minutes twice a week for 15 weeks. There is no separation of time that delineates the developmental course from the credit-level course, and all the students enrolled in these two courses are developmental students. This model allows the college to accelerate 20 developmental students per section, but the students are not mainstreamed with credit-level students. Table 5 shows the number of first-time-in-college students who are enrolled in Developmental English and who are enrolled in the ENGL 0119 NCBO and linked English 1301 courses.

Table 5

Student enrollment data for first-time-in-college students in developmental English and English corequisite remediation courses at study sites.

Developmental English and corequisite remediation enrollment at research sites	Campus A			Campus B			Campus C		
	Fall 2014	**Fall 2015**	**Fall 2016**	**Fall 2014**	**Fall 2015**	**Fall 2016**	**Fall 2014**	**Fall 2015**	**Fall 2016**
Total enrollment	19,544	20,384	21,636	8,862	9,361	9,013	7,297	9,261	12,024
Number of first-time-in-college students	3,319	3,382	3,424	1,305	1,095	1,114	1,522	1,641	1,413
Number of students enrolled in English 0304 (Developmental Reading)	209	216	186	99	70	106	135	99	43
Number of students enrolled in English 0306 (Developmental Writing)	275	199	210	188	135	137	142	114	96
Number of students enrolled in English 0309 (Integrated Developmental Reading and Writing)	463	449	453	190	211	184	259	324	321
Number of students enrolled in linked corequisite remediation English	10	10	8	17	28	76	45	60	106

To get permission to conduct research at these colleges, I contacted the college presidents, who gave me permission to fill out the Institutional Research Board (IRB) paperwork required by CCS. I also initiated the IRB process at Texas A&M University. After I received permission both from the CCS IRB committee and the Texas A&M University IRB committee, I contacted the faculty teaching the courses to obtain their consent to participate in an interview and permission to contact their students.

Study Population: Students, Faculty, and Advisors

The study population consists of community college students who test into developmental courses using the TSIA and who opt to take a corequisite credit-level English course in their first semester of college work. Only students who fit these criteria and are enrolled at any of the CCS campuses were eligible to participate in this study. Students enrolled in the boot-camp-type NCBOs were not considered.

Only faculty who were currently teaching the corequisite remediation English courses were considered for recruitment. At the three colleges, there were only four faculty members teaching this course, and all agreed to participate in the study.

Advisors with experience in advising first-time-in-college (FTIC) students eligible to participate in the study. At the time, the CCS advising model required all advisors to be knowledgeable about FTIC students and the options available to them, so I had a large pool of advisors, around 40 total, from which to choose.

Participant Recruitment: Students

Lincoln and Guba (1985) point out that in qualitative research, sampling design is emergent; "there can be no a priori specification of the sample" (p. 201), and that a researcher should "[provide] for orderly emergence of the sample" (p. 234). Students were eligible to

participate in this study if they tested into Developmental English but opted to take credit-level English 1301 with corequisite support. Because the colleges from which I chose to recruit participants offered very few sections of corequisite remediation English, I could speak to most of the students enrolled in these courses at all three colleges in Spring and Fall of 2015.

I spoke to six classes in all in Spring 2015 and Fall 2015: one at College A, two at College B, and three at College C. Because I am an insider at these institutions, I knew the instructors of these courses very well, so it was easy for me to contact them and obtain their permission to speak to their students by going to their corequisite classes. When I contacted the faculty members about participating in the study, I also asked their permission to present my study to their developmental students to recruit student participants. All four faculty members granted their permission to speak to their students.

In all six cases, the faculty informed the students ahead of time and gave them a summary of why I was speaking to them, so the students were not surprised when I showed up. I told the students that I needed their help because I was working on a capstone project that was like their own capstone project in English, the research paper. I told them that my paper was longer and required original data, so I could not just go to the library like they could. I also told the students that I am just as eager to graduate as they must be. This seemed to help them understand that I am just a student like they are. I also assured them of complete confidentiality, and I told them that they could back out at any time, that there is no commitment expected of them. I handed out a document on which they indicated their willingness for me to contact them. Out of respect for the students' wishes, I did not contact any students who noted that they did not want to be contacted.

I quickly learned that students are not as likely to answer their email as they are text messages. After I did not hear back from a few students I emailed, I began texting them on their mobile phones. In each text message and email, I introduced myself again, reminded the student of who I was, and invited him or her to participate. The students were eager and excited to participate. I texted or emailed 21 students, and I interviewed all 16 who responded. In one memorable recruiting flurry, I texted ten students on a Friday evening, and by Saturday afternoon, I had appointments with six of them the next week. Those are my last six interviews, which I completed in Spring 2016.

My original plan was to select a few students to participate, gather data, and analyze that data to determine which kinds of participants to select next, focusing on those participants who will yield the most relevant data as recommended by Lincoln and Guba (1985). However, the students who agreed to participate have diverse backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives. It was impossible to determine who would yield the most relevant data without talking to the students, and in fact, their stories are so unique to them that it became difficult to determine what was most relevant across the group. These are the stories of students, not widgets, and for each of them, everything that we discussed about their academic and life goals, strategies for success, and resources was important.

I set out to select participants whose paths of entry into NCBO-supported credit-level courses are as diverse as possible. Schlossberg's Transition Theory Model divides students' higher education experiences into three main categories: moving in, moving through, and moving out. This study focuses on community college students who, during the moving in process, are found to be at the developmental education level, and who then quickly move into and through NCBO-supported credit-level courses; however, routes that the students take to get

into these courses and onto the traditional degree track will vary, reflecting the porousness of community college entry. These different types of students offer a different perspective on the "moving in" process, and the students recruited for this study represent a cross-section of the entry experiences. Several of them tested into the lowest level of Developmental English and after passing their lower level reading and writing classes, jumped over the upper level and into credit English with developmental support on the recommendation of their professor. Several others enrolled in the corequisite class on the advice of an academic advisor, and one student even argued her way into the class after she realized that she qualified for it. I made every effort to capture the broadest view of participant experience and perception as possible by purposefully selecting students whose paths from developmental education into NCBO-supported credit-level courses were as diverse as possible.

I encountered a problem early in the recruitment process, a problem I had not anticipated. After I presented to the first NCBO class, a student approached me and stated that he wanted to participate. We arranged to meet, and prior to the start of the interview, we went over the purpose of the study. When we got to the questions about testing into Developmental English, about mid-way through the interview, he corrected and informed me that he had never tested into Developmental English; rather, he tested into credit-level English, failed it twice, and was advised to take the NCBO as a support course so that he would increase his chance of passing credit-level English. I had not anticipated that any students would do this. In fact, his decision to take the NCBO runs counter to the common refrain of policymaker and researcher, Kay McClenney, "Students don't do optional" (Fain, 2012). This student did optional, and when I discovered that he did not fit within my study population, we had covered just over half of the interview questions and were having a good time. We finished the interview.

I wish I could say that this only happened once, but it happened again, with the second participant, in fact. Again, this student had failed English 1301 and was told about the NCBO as a possible strategy for improving his chance of success, so he enrolled in it. Both students finished both the NCBO and English 1301 and passed both courses. After the second participant revealed that he had not tested into Developmental English, I made a point of asking students up front about their placement test results. Of the 16 student participants, only those two students tested directly into credit-level English.

My dilemma was whether to use the data provided by these two student-participants or toss it out. On one hand, the students were never developmental students and therefore did not fit the parameters of the study. On the other hand, these are students who failed English 1301, one more than once, and they are experiencing the courses that form part of the context for this study. Perhaps they have insight about the courses. In the end, I used their interviews, but these students are noted in my analysis, and their situations are discussed honestly. Their situations are interesting, their struggles are important, and their perspectives are worthy of attention.

Participant Recruitment: Faculty

I interviewed four faculty members at the three research sites to get their perspectives on both the courses and the students enrolled in them. I am an insider at all three institutions, so I was able to call the faculty of the corequisite remediation courses directly to solicit their participation in the study. All four faculty, three full-time faculty members and one adjunct faculty member, agreed to be interviewed about their courses and their students. I conducted semi-structured interviews with them separately on their college campuses. Semi-structured interviews allowed me to guide the general direction of the interview in a predetermined fashion

but also gave room for the participants and me to go in unexpected directions and explore what I did not know that I did not know (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Faculty members who teach both the NCBOs and the NCBO-supported credit-level sections offered their insight about the students who enroll in these courses and their strategies that either increase or undermine the students' chances for success as well as insight about the program itself. I did not interview the faculty about individual students who participated in this study; the purpose of interviewing the faculty is to get contextual information about the corequisite English program and general information about the students who take these classes.

Participant Recruitment: Academic Advisors

The academic advisors at CCS are the "front-line" institutional members as they are the first people to sit down with prospective students and discuss the students' academic plan. Students with no college experience learn about the corequisite remediation classes from academic advisors, who are expected to know about all the options available to the students and familiarize themselves with each student by utilizing developmental advising techniques and present each student with the appropriate options. The academic advisors also meet with students during the semester as part of a student success course that is mandatory for all FTIC students. During these meetings, the advisors help the students plan for the following semester. Students enrolled in the Level I Developmental English course might be candidates for the corequisite course, so the advisors must be familiar with the program so that they know who to advise into it or away from it. I felt that the advisors would be able to offer a unique perspective on the corequisite remediation English program and how it affects students.

To select advisors, I asked the student advising and registration gatekeeper at each CCS campus to identify the advisors who specialize in the admissions of developmental students. I

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called or emailed each advisor recommended to me as ask for their participation. I also asked

each advisor I contacted individually how much they know about the NCBO program and

interviewed the advisors who were most knowledgeable. The gatekeepers recommended one or

two advisors per campus, and in one case, an advisor at Campus B recommended that I talk to

two FTIC specialists, which I did. Those two advisors felt more comfortable participating in the

interview together. This was the only interview that involved more than me and one participant.

Ethical Considerations in Selecting Participants

Although I believed that my roles as a department chair and Faculty Senate President at

one of the CCS colleges would not influence the student participants at all, I was concerned that

these roles may influence the faculty and advisor participants, especially those participants at my

home campus. The participant who would have been most affected is my colleague in the

English Department who is teaching NCBO-supported English classes. However, I assured him

and the other participants that nothing they said will have a negative effect on them either at the

college or outside the college. I stated to all participants that participation in the study is entirely

optional, and I informed them that their participation will have no effect on their grades or

employment. I also assured my colleague that participation or lack thereof would not affect his

future teaching schedule. He laughed and assured me that he was not worried about his

participation impacting him negatively. I told the participants that everything that they said to me

would be held in strict confidence and that the interview data would be securely safeguarded.

Student Participants

I interviewed 16 community college students from three different community college

campuses within the same system, and they represent a diverse cross section of the general

community college population. Ten were interviewed in Spring 2015, the same semester in

which they were enrolled in the English 1301/English 0119 linked courses. The last six students were interviewed in Spring 2016, the semester after they took the courses. The demographic information of the student participants is summarized in Table 6 below.

Table 6

Demographic data of student-participants

Demographic Data of Student-Participants		
Gender	Male	11
	Female	5
Race/Ethnicity	Hispanic	5
	White	4
	Vietnamese	3
	Black	2
	Arab	1
	Pacific Islander	1
Age	18-20 years	8
	21-25 years	3
	26 +	5
Marital status	Single	11
	Married	4
	Engaged	1
Children	Yes	3
	No	13
Employment status	Full-time	1
	Part-time	8
	Not employed	7
First generation college students	Yes	7
	No	9

Eleven of the 16 students were female, and all but four were from an ethnic minority group. Eight of the students entered college the same year in which they graduated from high school. Five were married, and three had children, with two of the student participants caring for three children each. All three students with children were female and were partnered with the father of their children. Nine of the 16 students were employed in part-time jobs.

The student interviews ranged from 40 minutes to 90 minutes, and the students seemed to enjoy them very much. I established trust and rapport with the students by engaging them in social chit chat prior to the interviews. At the end of each interview, I thanked them for their time, and most of them thanked me for asking them to participate. They said that they enjoyed talking about their experiences in depth, and they enjoyed being heard. A brief description of each student-participant is given below, and even these short descriptions reveal the wide diversity of this group of participants. They are listed from youngest to oldest. All students were given a pseudonym.

Saul

Saul was an 18-year-old white male who worked part-time at a convenience store and lives at home with his parents. His mother had degrees in nursing and psychology, and his father had a Master's degree in "something," according to Saul, and works at a nearby tech company. Saul graduated from high school in Spring 2014, tested into credit English that summer, and enrolled in English 1301 in Fall 2014. He failed the course and was advised to re-take English 1301 with English 0119 to increase his chances of passing the course. He was enrolled at CCS to get an Associate of Science degree, although he does not have a specific career goal.

Julieta

Julieta was an 18-year-old Mexican-American female who lived with her aunt, her primary caregiver for the previous seven years. Her mother was 16 years old when Julieta was born, and both lived with Julieta's maternal grandparents for several years. Julieta lived with her uncle for a time and finally moved in with her aunt while her mother raises her siblings. Shuffled around among family members, she had to switch schools often, which made her K–12 education difficult and somewhat disconnected. She referred to the difficulties with her family life several

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times during the interview, and it was clear that the chaos of her upbringing had a deep impact on her. She was undecided about her major in Biology and unsure of her career path, but she said that her family members were supportive of her decision to attend college, she said, "Because I'll be the first one." She graduated from high school in Spring 2015, tested into English 0309, and enrolled in English 1301/0119 linked courses in Fall 2015 on the advice of a counselor in the admissions office at the college.

Serafina

Serafina was an 18-year-old Hispanic female, who lived with her mother, a Mexican-American, who owned her own automobile title transfer business. Her father was from El Salvador and lived in San Francisco, where he worked as a photographer. She said that her father had some college, but her mother did not graduate from high school. Her major was nursing, and she was determined to get her Bachelor of Science in Nursing. At the time of the interview, she was even looking ahead to getting her Master's degree so that she could be a nurse practitioner. Active in Future Farmers of America and enrolled in Advanced Placement classes in high school, Serafina graduated in Spring 2015 thirty-second in her class of more than 700 students and was admitted to Texas A&M with a full scholarship in what she thought would be the nursing program. When she learned that she would not be admitted into that program until she graduated with a degree in Allied Health, she decided against attending Texas A&M and switched over to CCS so that she could get a nursing degree more quickly and cheaply despite the lack of prestige of a community college education. That summer, she took the TSIA and tested into English 0309, learned about the English 1301/0119 linked corequisite remediation course from reading a flyer on the course, and talked her advisor into letting her enroll in it. At

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the time of the interview, Serafina was working in the financial aid office at her college and was enrolled in Honors English 1302.

Sarah

Sarah was a 19-year-old Hispanic female whose family hailed from Nicaragua and France. She was single, had no children, and volunteered 15 hours per week at a gymnastics studio while she attended school. She graduated from high school in Spring 2014 and only attended CCS to get her "basics done" before she transferred to The University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa, which she cited as her "dream school." The third sibling of four children to enroll in college, she lived with her parents and began her studies at CCS in Fall 2014, majoring in nursing. Sarah tested into ENGL 0304, the lowest level of developmental reading and did so well in the course that her Developmental English professor recommended that she skip English 0309 and go directly into English 1301 with English 0119 support. She said that her professor told her, "Don't waste your time anymore. Go do this." She said about taking the linked courses, "I knew that I would be fine."

Allison

Allison was a 19-year-old White female who graduated from high school in Fall 2014. She lived with her parents and her older brother, who had Down Syndrome. Her father was an engineer at a nearby tech company, and her mother was an elementary school librarian. Allison tested into the lowest level of developmental reading and writing and began her studies in Summer 2014. After she passed English 0304 and English 0306, her counselor recommended that she take the English 1301/0119 linked courses so that she could "get English out of the way." She cited her ADD as a barrier that she had struggled with since elementary school, but she stopped taking her medication because she did not like how it made her feel. She was

undecided about her major and cited a desire to go into marketing, but if that didn't work out, she wanted to be a middle school history teacher. After she earned her associate degree, she planned to transfer to a local four-year university.

Isaac

Isaac was a 20-year-old African American male who graduated from high school in Spring 2014. He lived at home with his mother and worked part-time at a fast-food restaurant. He was working for an Associate of Science degree, but was considering applying for the veterinary technician program after he took a graphic design class and realized that graphic design was not his dream career after all. Isaac tested into the lowest level of developmental writing and passed English 0306 in Fall 2014. His Developmental English professor recommended that he skip English 0309 and enroll in the English 1301/0119 linked courses. In between studying and slinging chicken fingers, Isaac trained and competed as an independent athlete in track in the hopes of getting an athletic scholarship to either a two-year or four-year college.

Ula

Ula was a 20-year-old female from Pakistan who emigrated to Canada when she was a toddler and then to the United States when she was five. She lived with her parents and worked part-time as a counselor's assistant at her former high school. Her father was unemployed at the time of the interview, and her mother worked at an elementary school as a teacher's aide and had a degree from a school in Pakistan that is not recognized in the United States. Ula's plan is to do her "basics" at CCS and transfer to a local four-year university. She was majoring in business but said that she was not sure what she wanted to do in business. Ula cited her mother's decision to pull her from elementary school for four or five years to memorize the Quran as something that

held her back academically because when she returned to school in the seventh grade, she thought, "Oh my God, what am I learning? I didn't even know anything. . . I had to learn everything from the beginning." She said that she was "scared" when she tested into Developmental English and thought, "What am I going to do? Like, that's wasting time, you know?" An advisor told her about the English 1301/0119 linked courses, and she said that her English 1301 professor "just changed everything, like made it easier for me to write essays now."

Terrence

Terrence was a 20-year-old African American male who lived with his paternal grandparents and worked part-time at a pet supply store. He moved to the area from a coastal town after graduating from high school in May 2015. His grandmother encouraged him to enroll right after he graduated and told him to "just hop right into it." Terrence said that she was worried that he would begin slacking off if he did not enroll in school right away and conceded, "She was right." Both of his paternal grandparents graduated from college. Terrence said that his grandfather is glad that Terrence is attending college because, Terrence said, "I'm actually like the first out of my family, on both sides, to go to college." Terrence's mother graduated with a nursing degree but is currently unemployed because she has a disability following a car accident. Terrence hoped to either enter the law enforcement academy or the emergency medical technician program. Terrence was not surprised that he tested into English 0309 because of his low reading score, but the advisor recommended that he take the English 1301/0119 linked courses. About the course, he said, "I took their advice, and I got into it, and it actually did help me a lot."

Calvin

Calvin was a White 21-year-old male who lived with his adoptive parents and several foster siblings. He had just gotten a part-time job at a large grocery store as a greeter. Neither of his parents had a college degree. His mother was a stay-at-home mother, and his father worked for a uniform company. Calvin graduated from high school in Spring 2012 and started college that fall. He tested into the lowest levels of developmental reading and writing, passed both courses, and sat out in Spring 2014 to brush up on his skills by watching Khan Academy videos. His parents adopted three children, all boys, and at the time of the interview, were caring for six foster children. Calvin admitted that it was painful when his foster siblings would leave the home. His goal was to get his Associate of Arts degree and transfer to a local four-year university and major in Hospitality. He admitted that his career goals were probably influenced by his home life, and his desire to create a warm welcoming environment for strangers came from a lifetime of extending hospitality to foster children. Calvin was the only student who refused to meet with me in person, and he also refused to allow me to record the interview. However, he was insistent on participating, so we compromised by conducting the interview via Skype, and I took careful notes. Like other student-participants in this study, Calvin struggled with Attention Deficit Disorder but had not taken medication since high school. Although he knew that he was academically weak before he started college, he was still shocked by his low placement test scores. After he passed English 0304 and English 0306, he found out about the corequisite remediation classes from a friend and requested that his advisor allow him into the courses.

Tony

Tony was a 22-year-old White male who lived with his grandmother and her husband and was unemployed. He graduated from high school in Spring 2011 and began college in Fall 2012. He said that that period in his life is difficult for him to remember because he was diagnosed with hyperthyroidism at that time, and he said that he struggled with "depression, loss of memory, and the inability to focus." In elementary school, he was diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder and was on medication. His mother moved often, which meant that he bounced from school to school. Tony said, "I grew up in very diverse neighborhoods. I was a minority in my neighborhoods. I worried about how I was going to walk home." Tony did not have a specific career goal, but he said that he wanted to learn about computer systems and earn a certificate rather than transfer to a four-year university. He originally tested into English 1301, took it in Fall 2011, and failed it. Tony failed English 1301 twice more before finally taking English 1301 with English 0119 support in Spring 2015 at the suggestion of an advisor. He passed both courses with an A. Tony cited his previous failures as his greatest strengths, saying, "I failed so much. I know where I made my bad decisions. Now I can go back, figure out where I went wrong, and do something else."

Talia

Talia was a 24-year-old woman from California who lives in Texas in with her mother, stepfather, and aunt in a family compound. She was born to a Samoan father and a half-Irish mother, so identified as biracial. Talia was diagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder in her junior year of high school, but she no longer took medication for it, instead choosing to organize herself to stay focused. After graduating from high school in 2010, Talia began her college academics in California in 2011, but the overcrowding in the school coupled with her family

being so far away caused her to move to Texas to start over. She waited a year before enrolling at CCS so that she could establish residency in Texas and pay in-state tuition. Her aunt graduated from CCS with a nursing degree and helped Talia apply. Both parents had some college, and her mother worked at a bank but did not help Talia with money. Talia has not spoken to her father in four years. Talia worked two part-time jobs, both at major women's fashion retail stores, and logged about 60 hours per week at work. She got financial aid but complained that it covered less and less of her tuition and books each semester. Talia admitted that she had to "basically start over" when she moved to Texas because she had forgotten everything she learned in college in California. She tested into the lowest level of developmental reading and writing, but her Developmental English professor recommended that she skip English 0309 and take English 1301 with English 0119 for support. Talia said that she wanted to be a nurse but was not sure of the correct route to achieve that goal. She said, "When you are my age, you want to rush things, so I'm on the fence. Should I rush the process of being a nurse and take the shortest route, or should I do the longest route of basically getting my bachelors?"

Thuy

Thuy was a 28-year-old Asian female who immigrated from Vietnam four years earlier. At the time of the interview, she had no children and was engaged to an accountant, who was very supportive of her efforts to attain a college degree. She came from a large family, and her parents were proponents of higher education. Employed part-time in a nail salon, she was majoring in nursing because she wanted to get a job, but she was not certain that a career as a nurse would make her happy. She was thinking about changing her major to business, but she could not see a clear path in business that would lead to a steady and substantial paycheck. This dilemma concerned Thuy so much that she asked me how I decided on my career path. Thuy

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believes that her biggest barrier is the English language and said, "English is hard. . . Yeah, the more I learn, the more I think I need to improve more English. Then there is the barrier of immigration. When you move from another country to here, here around 20 or 30, it's very hard for you." For Thuy, transitioning into college was just another challenge connected to transitioning to life in the United States.

Opal

Opal was a 29-year-old Hispanic female. She is married with three children, two biological children and one stepchild. She was unemployed at the time of the interview. She was majoring in education, specifically in early childhood development, and wanted to teach elementary school. Her goal was to finish her core classes and transfer to Our Lady of the Lake in San Antonio. I asked her why she chose that university, and she said, "We used to live in the west side, which is the poorest side of San Antonio, and we used to pass through [the campus], and I used to always see college students with their backpacks. I said, 'One day, I'm going to college, and I'm going to go there.'" Her mother provides childcare for her so that she can attend school full-time, and her husband is likewise supportive of her academic efforts. However, her father, who does not live with the family, told her more than once that her place is in the home caring for her husband and children. Opal's belief is that his attitude comes from their Hispanic culture, and her response to his criticism is to rise to the challenge. She said, "Your race is stereotyped as losers. You can't accomplish anything. We work hard, but we get paid pennies. . . And the fact that it's taking a while, and I want to prove to everybody that I can do it. And I'm stuck. It's taking a while, so I have to keep reminding myself and keep looking at my plan, and I'm almost there." Unfortunately, Opal's plans may have to change because her husband enlisted in the Army, which may require the family to move. Opal tested into the lowest level of

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Developmental English, and because of her superior performance in that class, her professor recommended that she skip English 0309 and go directly into English 1301 with English 0119 support. About her professor's confidence in her, she said, "If she thought that she was confident enough in me that I could pass it, or take it, I think that I should have given myself more. . . I should have believed in myself a little more, and I think that's why I took it, too."

Kristina

Kristina was a 30-year-old Hispanic female from El Salvador. She was married and had three children at the time of the interview. She did not have a job. Her mother does not have any college and works as a kitchen assistant, but her husband is working on a bachelor's degree in business at a for-profit university. She commented that her mother was not supportive of her decision to attend college, saying, "My mom did not really encourage me to come to college . . . It's more like you work and do something else or something." Kristina lived with her grandparents for 11 years in El Salvador prior to immigrating at 14, along with her younger brother, to the United States to join her mother. She admitted that living in the United States was "different," she said, "like a culture shock." She said that her English was "nothing" when she first arrived, and she had to learn everything "from scratch." When she first arrived, she said, she did not intend to stay, but she learned that she had to stay for her own sake. "I could have gone to college in my country, but after that, what do you really do? What do I aspire to? To marry somebody wealthy or. . .?" Kristina first attempt at postsecondary education took her to an expensive trade school, the Bradford School of Business, where she earned a certificate in a medical assistant program and racked up $20,000 in student loan debt. She was working on an Associate of Science degree at the time of the interview and was considering applying to a nursing program. When she tested into English 0309, she said that she thought it was for the best

because she needed a refresher; however, when an advisor told her about the English

1301/English 0119 linked courses, she decided to enroll because, she said, "I'm always up for a

challenge, so I thought, yes, let me take on this class."

Mai

Mai was a 30-year-old Asian female who immigrated to the United States from Vietnam

when she was 20 years old. She was married and has one child, a daughter, and like the other

student-participants who have children, her mother helped her with childcare. Mai had two

siblings, both of whom were attending CCS. Her brother was working toward a machinery

certificate, and her sister was working toward a nursing degree. Mai was majoring in nursing and

plans to earn her associate degree at CCS before transferring to a local university to earn her

bachelor's degree. Like the other student-participants from Vietnam, Mai was certified as a nail

technician, and she worked about 20 hours a week at a nail salon. She also owned a Laundromat,

which she was trying to sell because she felt it took too much of her time. Her husband was a

distributor of commercial laundry equipment, and although he told her that she was free to attend

school, she said that he was "not really" supportive because, she said, "He's not an educational

person. He don't graduate high school, but he thinks he's a success in business, so he thinks

that's good enough." Mai decided to enroll in college because she cannot help her husband in his

business, and she is not sure that she will stay in the marriage. She explained that she needs a

degree so that she can fend for herself:

> All I know is to just come there and pick up the money. I can't control my business.
>
> Everything else, he has to do it. He has to fix the machines, so that's the most important
>
> thing, but I cannot do it. A woman cannot fix the machine, so that's why I think that I am
>
> not in control, so that's why I want to go to school and get a degree so I can be on my

own. It depends on how life is going, you know? I don't what is in the future. That's the

point, too. I don't know what is in the future if I stay with him or no, so I want something

for me to back up."

Mai sees school as a way to secure her potentially independent future. Like Thuy, Mai decided to

major in nursing because the path to employment is unambiguous. Mai tested into the lowest

level of Developmental English and learned about the English 1301/English 0119 linked courses

from her professor, who also taught the linked courses. She said, "Because I took Ms. E, and she

had the bridge class, and she said my level is able to take that bridge class, I [took] it because I

don't want to waste another semester."

Hwa

Hwa was a 36-year-old Asian female who immigrated to the United States from Vietnam

in 2014 to be with her fiancé. She married in 2014, and her husband has an engineering degree

from the University of Houston. Her mother is a housewife, and her father is a farmer. Both are

in Vietnam, as are her three brothers, who work as an accountant, a businessman, and an

engineer. Hwa was unemployed at the time of the interview and was working toward an

Associate of Arts degree with an emphasis in business, after which she planned to transfer to a

local university. Hwa explained that she had earned a university degree in business in Vietnam,

but it was not recognized in the United States, so she had to start over after she immigrated here.

Hwa felt that her husband is very supportive of her studies and explained that while he was in

school, she did all the housework, but after she started taking classes, he did much of the cooking

and the housework on the days that she had class. Because Hwa's TSIA scores were very close

to placing her at college-ready, her advisor recommended that she take the corequisite

remediation English courses. Like the other students in this study who originally hailed from

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Vietnam, Hwa cited the English language as her biggest barrier, and said, "My sorrow, language," but she also noted that her knowledge of English, which she received in Vietnam, allowed her to enroll in an American college. She said, "It also gives me the [skill in] English to [open] the door to attend this college and the knowledge." She was able to recognize that although her imperfect English is a source of struggle, her knowledge of the language is also the key to her current success, and improving her English skills is the key to her future success.

Faculty Participants

The four faculty-participants represent all the faculty who teach the corequisite remediation classes at the three study-site institutions. Three were interviewed in May and June 2015, and the fourth was interviewed in November 2015. Three were full-time English faculty; one participant was an adjunct. One had a doctoral degree in English, two had Master's degrees in English, and one had a Master's in education. One of the faculty members was had been trained in the Accelerated Learning Program strategies in a professional development program designed by Baltimore County Community Colleges, and he worked with the adjunct faculty member on curriculum when she first started teaching the classes. The other two faculty members were given basic information about course outcomes, and they designed their own curriculum. Each faculty-participant was given a pseudonym. Table 7 presents the basic demographic information about the faculty-participants, and a brief description of each participant is below.

Table 7

Demographic data of faculty-participants

Demographic Data of Faculty-Participants		
Gender	Male	3
	Female	1
Race/Ethnicity	White	3
	African American	1
Employment status	Full-time	3
	Part-time	1
Level of education	Doctoral degree	1
	Master's degree	3
Years of experience teaching corequisite remediation English	5 years	1
	3 years	1
	2 years	1
	1 year	1

Bennett

Bennett was a 39-year old African-American male who had been employed as a community college English professor for 13 years at the time of his interview. He began as a Developmental English professor, but because he had a Master's degree, was asked to teach college-level English as well. He worked at Campus B for three years and was in charge of building and staffing the corequisite remediation classes at his institution. Of the four faculty-participants interviewed for this study, Bennett had the most experience in teaching corequisite remediation classes. He began teaching corequisite classes using the Accelerated Learning

Program model and attended ALP training in Summer 2010; however, he changed the structure of the courses on his campus after experiencing dissatisfaction with the basic ALP model.

Julie

Julie was a 54-year old White female who had formerly taught high school English and who had been teaching English at the community college for three years and corequisite remediation classes for two years at the time of the study. She had a Master's of Education in Curriculum and Instruction and was recruited by Bennett to teach the corequisite remediation classes at Campus B because of her experience in teaching both Developmental English and credit-level English. Julie was passionate about her students, and it was clear that she spent much time thinking about how to meet their needs. The student-participants who were enrolled in Julie's class expressed their appreciation for her care for them and her willingness to communicate with them at all hours.

Dylan

As the lone corequisite remediation instructor at the largest institution in this study, Campus A, Dylan was responsible for developing curriculum for all three sections that he taught. Dylan was a 48-year old White male with a Master's degree in English, seven years of experience in teaching English at the community college, and three years of experience teaching corequisite remediation classes. He had not attended any professional development training on teaching the corequisite courses. At his college, Developmental English and credit-level English were housed in two different divisions, so Dylan was the only faculty member to bridge the gap between the two departments. Dylan was a relaxed instructor, whose students described him as "a cool guy."

Kenneth

Kenneth was a 36-year old White male full-time faculty member at the smallest institution in this study, Campus C, and at the time of the study, like Dylan, he was the only faculty member teaching corequisite remediation classes at his college. Kenneth was the only faculty-participant to have earned a doctoral degree. He had been teaching community college English for only three years. He also had the least experience in teaching the corequisite remediation classes; at the time of the study, he had been teaching the corequisite remediation classes for only a year and had not attended any professional development on corequisite remediation. Kenneth was respected and liked by his students who were interviewed for this study. His relaxed attitude helped them to feel comfortable in his classes.

Advisor Participants

Six advisors were interviewed for this study, all of them full-time employees of the community college system. Two of the advisor-participants worked for Campus A, the largest college involved in this study, one for Campus B, and three for Campus C. The advisors are a diverse group and a broad spectrum of experience and perspectives. Five of the six were female, and they were evenly split between White participants and Hispanic participants. Their community college work experience ranges from 15 years to two years, and their experience as advisors rages from 13 years to two years with most having served as an advisor for two to four years. Table 8 below summarizes the basic demographics of the advisor participants.

Two of the advisors, Jane and Trisha, insisted on being interviewed together because they were both learning about corequisite remediation and wanted to learn from each other. They decided that this interview could serve as a learning opportunity for both. Their department had just undergone reorganization, and neither felt that they knew everything required to advise

students about the program. They were the only advisors to participate in a group; everyone else was interviewed individually.

Table 8

Demographic data of advisor-participants

Demographic Data of Advisor-Participants

Gender	Female	5
	Male	1
Ethnicity	White	3
	Hispanic	3
Years of community college experience	Fewer than 5 years	2
	6-10 years	2
	10+ years	2
Years of advising experience	Fewer than 5 years	4
	More than 10 years	2

Each advisor was given a pseudonym. A brief description of each is given below.

Catherine

Catherine is a White female who had worked in the community college arena for twelve years and as an advisor for four years. She was previously employed at a community college center before being asked to serve on the main campus of the college. She worked at Campus A.

Elena

Elena is a Hispanic female, who worked at Campus A with Catherine. Elena had the most experience of the advisor-participants having worked for 15 years at a community college and 13 years as an advisor.

Raoul

Raoul is a Hispanic male, the only male advisor interviewed for this study. Raoul had worked at a community college for 3.5 years had been advising for only two years. He worked at Campus B and was the only Campus B advisor to be interviewed.

Ally

Ally is a Hispanic female at Campus C, the smallest college of the three. She had 9 years of experience at the community college level and had been advising for four years.

Jane

Jane, a White female, had the least experience of the advisor-participants. She had been working at the community college as an advisor for only two years at the time of her interview, but both she and Trisha were part of a reorganization that would make them responsible for admitting first-time-in-college (FTIC) students.

Trisha

Trisha, a White female, had been at Campus C for 9 years at the time of her interview, but she was also new to advising. She was originally hired to develop and manage a leadership program for middle and junior high school students, then managed a partnership program that connected local businesses with the college before moving into recruitment. At the time of her interview, she was learning the ins and outs of advising FTIC students as director of admissions.

Data Collection

Lincoln and Guba (1985) define the semi-structured interview as "the mode of choice when the interviewer does not know what he or she doesn't know and must therefore rely on the respondent to tell him or her" (p. 269). Because the primary objective of this study is to explore the experiences of students in a particular context, their perceptions of these experiences, and their perceptions of themselves as a result of these experiences, the primary data collection method is interviews of student participants. To balance out the students' perspectives of themselves and their experiences in the corequisite remediation classes, I also interviewed their professors who teach these classes and the academic advisors whose job it is to help students select these courses.

I began the student interviews by asking a giving a broad prompt, and I closed each interview by repeating that prompt, which created a circular effect that the students seemed to enjoy. Several of the students remarked that their responses to the prompt, "list five words that describe you as a writing student," changed by the end of the interview. All the interviews started with "grand tour" (Spradley, 1979) questions that required the participants to describe their experiences leading up to either enrollment in the corequisite remediation course. This allowed the participants to relax and warm up in the interview process. I created very broad questions about the student-participants' academic experiences prior to college, their decision to enter college, their experiences with the admissions and testing process, and their decision to take an NCBO-supported credit-level course. I also prompted students to explain their support systems and coping strategies. Finally, I asked students to describe how their experiences in their credit-level course(s) have affected their academic and career aspirations as well as their conception of themselves as college students. Although these questions are targeting specific subjects, I could

not predict how the students would respond or exactly in what direction the interviews would go; therefore, I approached the interviews with a degree of flexibility and allowed myself to be guided by the participants.

I followed the same basic interview pattern for the faculty and advisor interviews. The faculty answered the same prompt, "list five words that describe the students in your corequisite remediation classes," at the beginning and end of their interview. Both the faculty and advisor interviews began with grand tour questions that asked them to reflect on their professional experience as faculty and advisors before we discussed their experience with corequisite remediation classes. I wanted to let them establish their expertise in their fields and relax before we discussed the corequisite remediation program.

I asked and obtained consent to record each interview with a Livescribe smart pen, and I took notes. One student, who also preferred to be interviewed via Skype, asked that I not record the interview, so I only took notes while we talked. His was the only interview that differed from the others in method. Immediately following each interview, I reviewed the field notes and wrote down anything information of note that was missing. I transcribed the recordings and field notes of each interview as quickly as possible; however, after I transcribed the first ten interviews, circumstances prevented me from transcribing the remaining interviews, so I revised my IRB application and hired a transcription company to transcribe the remaining interview recordings.

Test scores and documents on placement processes were also collected. I have access to student academic information such as admissions test scores and grades as well as the success rates of the classes for the semesters that I collected data.

I gathered records to document information obtained in response to questions to faculty

and advisors, as well as chairs, deans and other administrators regarding the admissions and

placement processes within the college system and at individual colleges.

Data Security

The participants are not named in the study or given pseudonyms that would make them

identifiable. They are not identified in the notes. The notes are not saved on a college hard drive

or network, thus protecting the data from the laws and policies associated with the Freedom of

Information Act Open Records Request. As a department chair, I have access to confidential

student information, including admissions test scores, grades, and academic history as part of my

role at the college, so no special access must be granted for this research study.

One side effect of snowball sampling is that students who recommend participants may

then know who is participating in the study. This cannot be avoided, especially if the students

took classes together and told each other that they are participating; however, none of the

interview data or academic data has been revealed by me to anyone else, nor have I shared the

names of the participants with other participants.

The transcription company used to hire to transcribe several of the interviews signed a

nondisclosure agreement to protect the confidentiality of the participants.

Instrumentation

I created an interview protocol that lists the questions used in the semi-structured

interviews; however, I allowed the participants to deviate from a strict adherence to the protocol.

The participants were encouraged to share whatever information they felt was relevant and were

only guided by the questions on the protocol, not governed by them. After I interviewed several

students, I realized that I needed an additional question about the students' parents' educational

level and employment. I amended my IRB, and after receiving IRB approval, I administered the revised interview protocol. See Appendix A for the interview protocol.

Data Analysis

After each interview, I transcribed the recorded interviews and typed up the field notes. The data were then unitized (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), printed on note cards, and sorted by themes. After the first three interviews, the themes were evaluated for authenticity. This required me to re-sort the units, create new units, and create new themes. The next three participants were purposefully sampled based on the themes that emerged from the data, and the process was repeated with the data from the next three interviews. I repeated this process for all the interviews, examining the units and creating, deleting, and resorting themes after three-interview blocks. Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, and Allen (1993) refer to this method as the "interactive process" (p. 122), and it is in line with the methods advocated by Lincoln and Guba (1985), who refer to this process as an iterative one. Because I interviewed fewer faculty and advisors, I examined the themes presented in those interviews after each interview, but I followed the same basic interactive process. In all, I interviewed 16 students, five faculty members, and six advisors in one year.

I developed another strategy to examine the data for mindset analysis. I created one document that contained all 16 student interviews and examined the raw data, looking for statements that related to mindset. I specifically looked for statements about challenges, obstacles, effort, criticism, and the success of others that revealed mindset orientation as per Dweck's (2006) research. I color-coded statements that revealed a growth mindset and a fixed mindset. Fixed mindset indicators include statements that reveal self-consciousness or guilt about taking up too much of the instructor's time, such as when Pearl said, "[My professor] was really

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good, but I asked a lot of questions, and I don't want to irritate her and take up someone else's time that they paid for." Thuy said something similar: "I feel bad. Because another student [understood] what to do, but I don't. I asked a lot of questions, and I feel guilty when I ask her a lot of questions." Students with a fixed mindset also indicated that their beliefs about themselves began early. Tony said about his elementary, middle, and high school experiences, "Teachers told me I was smart. I relied on that because they told me that I was smart, so I didn't study. I thought that I didn't have to study because I did so well on tests." Pearl said, "[K-12 teachers] passed me along, and it made me feel stupid." Students with a fixed mindset were challenge averse. Ula repeated the word "scared" 16 times when describing how she felt about challenging assignments, and Chris admitted, "I honestly did not like hard."

Students who exhibited a growth mindset made statements that indicated a willingness to embrace challenge, such as Pearl, who said, ""I think that the harder the struggle, the sweeter the success," and Kristina, who said, ""I like that challenge thing. . . Sometimes, I'm like, man, extra work!" Growth mindset students indicated that they were willing to revise their papers to correct their mistakes and did not believe that making mistakes meant that they should quit. Mai said about her papers, "I feel very. . . [appreciative] when I get honest feedback so that I know where my weakness is and improve it," and Allison said about a difficult writing assignment, "It's a challenge, but it's something that you overcome with the writing."

Growth mindset students focused on their personal growth, did not let themselves be defined by failure, and recognized that their success was dependent on hard work and therefore fully within their control. About his previous failures, Tony said, "I know where I made my bad decisions. Now I can go back, figure out where I went wrong, and do something else." Pearl

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realized the core tenet of Dweck's mindset theory when she said about performing well in college, "It's definitely more the effort you put in than intelligence."

Organization of the Data

The data were organized into themes built around Schlossberg's theory of transition for the first research question. I organized their responses into two overarching categories—moving into college and moving through college and broke those categories down into sub-categories organized by the four factors of Schlossberg's theory—situation, self, support, and strategies. For example, students were asked about their support in their decision to enroll in college, the support they experienced during the process of getting admitted and enrolled, and their support as they moved through college and their college courses. The students' responses to these questions were organized into the themes that emerged for each category and factor.

Trustworthiness

To establish trustworthiness, I employed triangulation, an interactive process of data analysis and purposeful sampling during before and during the analysis processes, referential adequacy materials, and peer debriefing. During the interviews, I utilized member checks, "whereby data, analytic categories, interpretations, and conclusions are tested with members of those stakeholding groups from whom the data were originally collected, is the most crucial technique for establishing credibility," according to Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 314). At key moments, I repeated the participants' interview responses back to them to make sure that I understood them correctly. I also read back participants' responses to other participants to test congruence in the participants' experiences and understanding of those experiences. None of the participants wanted to review their interview material after their responses were transcribed, which made my real-time efforts to check their responses very important.

To triangulate, I gathered information from various sources, such as the student participants who are enrolled in NCBO-supported credit-level courses, faculty and advisors who are familiar with the NCBO programs and the testing and course placement policies and processes, and documents that pertain to those programs at the state, institution, campus, and classroom levels. Institutional materials related to the students' admissions, placement, and support processes was gathered and analyzed. Reports on testing and placement were examined, as were the documents related to the implementation of NCBOs, including syllabi, course descriptions, and required books. This provided information about the institutional context and processes that influence the students' personal stories.

I used documents, such as syllabi and explanations of processes to further describe the context for the students' institutional experiences but relied primarily on the students' descriptions of their own experiences, especially those that give background information on the students' perceptions of their personal and individual situations, including their support structures, their strategies, and their self-concepts.

During the theme creation and categorization process, I engaged in discussions with a trusted peer about the emergent findings. Lincoln and Guba (1985) define peer debriefing as "a process of exposing oneself to a disinterested peer in a manner paralleling an analytic session and for exploring aspects of the inquiry that might otherwise remain only implicit within the inquirer's mind" in part, to keep the researcher "honest" and give the researcher a fresh perspective (p. 308). My peer debriefer was a colleague who has more than 20 years of experience in working with Developmental English students and was working on her own dissertation on developmental education policy. Her mission was to challenge my perspectives and my analyses. She examined the data with a fresh perspective and caught mistakes in my

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analyses, especially mistakes that come from assumptions, biases, or a flawed understanding of the processes. Both processes of member checking and peer debriefing provide authenticity and balance to the analysis of the data and the conclusions.

Definitions of Terms

The following terms are used in this study, and their definitions are given.

- Advisor: Person employed by the college who is responsible for assisting the students with the admissions and enrollment processes.

- Corequisite remediation course: A developmental course intended to support and prepare students for the next credit-level course in the sequence. Students take the developmental course and the credit-level course in the same semester, often concurrently. In this study, students who tested into developmental English but who were registered for corequisite remediation English were registered in English 0119, the developmental support course, and English 1301, the college-level English course, simultaneously.

- Developmental advising: A process in which the academic advisors help students reach their academic potential by engaging in information exchanges with the students so that the students can make course selection choices that will maximize their chances for success (King, 2005). This process is used by advisors to determine which developmental students are good candidates for acceleration into corequsite remediation courses and which would benefit from enrolling in developmental education courses instead. Advisors using developmental advising processes ask the students questions about their prior academic success, motivation, and personal responsibilities rather than just test scores to assess students' readiness for college-level work.

- Developmental English: English courses that do not count as college-level courses. They are considered remedial courses or preparatory courses for college-level English courses.

- Holistic advising: An advising model that requires the advisor to take into account all the various issues that may impact a student's academic progress, such as emotional, financial, personal, developmental, and cultural issues and assist the student in balancing those issues with his or her academic requirements (Murthy & White, 2013). For example, a holistic advisor would ask a student about his or her work schedule or childcare responsibilities when assisting that student in choosing courses. A holistic advisor would also ask a student about his or her feelings about reading habits or high school English grades when trying to determine a student's suitability for acceleration through developmental English.

- Instructor: Person responsible for teaching the classes described in this study. This term may refer to someone employed full-time or part-time. In this study, "instructor" and "professor" are used interchangeably.

- NCBO: In Texas, this term refers to "non-course-based option." This is the developmental support course that is paired with the college course and is designed to help the students perform successfully in the college-level course. In this study, the NCBO is English 0119.

- Nontraditional student: College student who waited more than one year to enroll in college courses after graduating from high school.

- Traditional student: Student who enrolled in college within one year of graduating from high school.

Limitations of the Study

The results of this study are not generalizable to the entire population of developmental students enrolled in corequisite remediation English classes. In my efforts to recruit student-participants, I spoke to five classes and around 50 students. Only 20 indicated a willingness to be contacted, and of those 20 students, only 16 responded to my attempts to contacts them personally. I do not know why the other 30 students did not want to participate. It is possible that the opinions and perspectives of the students who volunteered to participate do not reflect those of the students who declined to participate in the study and therefore are not generalizable to the entire population of students taking corequisite remediation classes. However, the conclusions drawn from this research may be applicable to similar students in similar programs at other institutions. Guba and Lincoln (1985) state that although generalizability is not a goal of qualitative research, "the degree of transferability is a direct function of the similarity between the two contexts, what [they] call 'fittingness,' [which is] the degree of congruence between sending and receiving contexts" (p. 124). Corequisite remediation programs are proliferating across the country, and the perspectives of students enrolled in them may be useful to others even if these conclusions are not generalizable.

Another limitation is that the landscape of developmental education in Texas changed since the interview data were obtained. In 2017, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board issued a mandate that 25 percent of all students who tested into the highest level of developmental English and Math be placed into corequisite developmental courses paired with college-level courses. By Fall 2020, 75 percent of these students must be placed in corequisite developmental and college-level courses. This mandated scale-up will significantly impact how

students are advised into these corequisite programs, and it may impact how these courses are

taught. Only time will tell.

CHAPTER IV

DATA ANALYSIS

The purpose of this study is to examine the "moving in" and "moving through" experiences of

community college students enrolled in corequisite remediation English courses and examine the

mindset of these students that may have influenced their success in navigating both the

challenges of entering and moving through college and their English course. The focus of this

study is on students and their experiences; thus, the first four research questions are aimed

squarely at the students. However, because faculty and academic advisors play such an

influential role in shaping student experiences, the fifth research question seeks to gather their

perspective on this group of students as they undergo the admissions process and acceleration

into credit-level English. This chapter reports the findings of this study, which was guided by the

following research questions:

1. How do community college developmental students enrolled in NCBO-supported credit-
   level courses cope with the transition into college life, the academic demands of college,
   and personal demands that may interfere with college success?

2. What do participants identify as contributing factors, both personal and institutional, to
   their academic success?

3. What do participants identify as the personal and institutional factors that function as
   barriers to their success?

4. What do the student responses reveal about their mindsets?

5. What do faculty who teach these students and advisors who advise these students identify
   as resources and barriers—both personal and institutional—that aid in or impede success
   for these students, strategies that these students employ to cope with the transition to

college life and college academics, and attitudes about learning and college that reveal

either a growth or a fixed mindset?

The interview material was transcribed, unitized, and analyzed for themes. The themes are organized by into two overarching categories: the participants' experiences in moving into college and moving through college, focusing on their moving into and through their credit-level English course with corequisite remediation. Due to the personal nature of the participants' stories, each participant has been assigned a pseudonym to protect his or her identity.

The following section presents the experiences of the student-participants as they moved into and through their first semester of community college and their corequisite English classes and the perspectives of the faculty and advisors who serve these students. The data are reported for each research question. First, the themes associated with moving into college are explored followed by the themes connected to the students' experiences in moving through college and more specifically, moving through their English 1301 and English 0119 classes as those experiences relate to Schlossberg's resource framework, also known as 4 Ss—situation, self, support, and strategies. Next, I present the factors the students identified as crucial to their success, followed by the factors the student identified as barriers to that success. I then present the data that indicates the mindset of the students, growth or fixed, as mindset relates to teach of Schlossberg's four factors. Last, I present the perspectives of the advisors and faculty members on the students' transition into college and their adjustments as they move through college, specifically through corequisite remediation English courses. I used the language of the participants as much as possible to maintain the authenticity of their voices and perspectives. The students, faculty, and advisors were open and trusting when they shared their fears, failures,

lessons, triumphs, and frustrations with me, and my goal was to present their experiences authentically.

Research Question 1: Coping with the Transition into College

The following section unpacks the students responses to questions about their transition into college. Specifically, this section examines data that pertain to research question 1, which is as follows: How do community college developmental students enrolled in NCBO-supported credit-level courses cope with the transition into college life, the academic demands of college, and personal demands that may interfere with college success?

Situation: Moving into College

From the first inkling that they were going to attend college, through the admissions and enrollment process, the students participated in the "moving into college" phase that Chickering and Schlossberg (1995) say "involves letting go of the way you were and creating a new identity" (p. 5). These students determined that college enrollment was the best decision for them, navigated the admissions and enrollment processes, which involved testing, and attended class on that first day. They had to learn a new environment with its own set of unique rules, and they had to meet new people. They also had to adjust their lives to accommodate this new role. In short, they had to begin the process of adopting a new role and becoming something new: college students. This phase is transition-dense, and for many students, successful navigation of the "moving into" phase is critical to their future success. In this section, the students' decision to attend college, their reaction to their placement in Developmental English, and their decision to enroll in an accelerated English course are unpacked and analyzed.

The decision to attend college. Schlossberg, Waters, and Goodman (1995) define a transition as "any event, or non-event, that results in changed relationships, routines,

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assumptions, and roles" (p. 27). There are three types of transitions: anticipated transitions, which are those that are predicted and expected, unanticipated transitions, which are not predictable, and non-event transitions, which are expected but do not occur (Anderson, Goodman, & Schlossberg, 2012). A trigger is anything that sets the transition in motion, the catalyst for change, or in the case of a non-event, that event that did not occur. The student-participants in this study experienced two trigger events that precipitated transitions. The first trigger caused the students to enroll in college, and the second trigger occurred when they learned that they had tested into Developmental English rather than credit-level English. The second trigger led to their enrollment in the linked corequisite remediation classes.

The decision to enter college impacted students differently, and this impact was generally determined by the age of the student. For the traditional-aged students, the trigger to enroll in college was graduation from high school. This trigger was anticipated by these students and their families, and enrollment in college was the logical and expected outcome. These students were expected to do something constructive after they graduated, and college enrollment was encouraged by their family members and friends. Isaac, Julieta, Sarah, Serafina, Terrence, and Allison were all expected to attend college by their caregivers, and there was no real debate about it in their households. Isaac summed it up best: "My mom always says it's not an option to do nothing, so either I attend school, or I need to find something else to do, like military, navy, or something, but just to sit at home and do nothing is not an option." The traditional students cited their desire to earn a degree that would prepare them for a career as the reason for their enrollment, and their families agreed with and encouraged this decision. Because these traditional students were still living with parents, grandparents, or caretakers, family support was important.

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At 18 years old, Serafina is a traditional college student, but her journey to a community college was triggered by a non-event, her decision to not enroll at Texas A&M and reject a scholarship to that university because of what she learned about the program she had chosen. She was admitted to the four-year university and attended an orientation there. At the orientation to her program, however, she learned that she would not be admitted into the nursing program until she graduated in Allied Health. Because she wanted to go directly into the nursing program and did not want an Allied Health degree, and because attending another local four-year university would have necessitated $11,000 in student loans, Serafina chose to attend a community college. She said that telling her mother that she was not going to attend Texas A&M was very emotional for her. She said that her friends from high school knew that she was supposed to attend Texas A&M, and her mother was disappointed because, Serafina said, "She had that mentality of her daughter going to university, all prestigious and stuff." Ultimately, both Serafina and her mother recognized the benefits that Serafina enjoyed at her community college, such as small class sizes, a work-study job on campus, and a closer relationship with faculty and administrators who can help her access resources, and they became reconciled to the circumstances.

The nontraditional students experienced more diverse triggers, and these triggers occurred at different times in the students' lives. When asked about their decision to enroll in college, the nontraditional students cited situational reasons such as their need for better career opportunities and a higher salary as well as the desire to achieve more than they had achieved previously. These students were working prior to their college enrollment, and their decision to enroll represents a rejection of their circumstances and a move toward a new way of life. For the nontraditional students, the decision to enroll required more planning and more negotiation with their family members. However, for both groups, family support was an important, even

necessary, component of their decision. Without the support of family, few or none of these students would be able enroll in college and remain in college until they earned a credential or degree.

At 30 years old, Mai is a nontraditional college student. Mai's trigger to attend college came when she realized that she had no control over her own professional life. She worked for her husband's business, a Laundromat supply company, but he had control of the business and the technical expertise to repair the machines. Mai could not help with that part of the business. She explained her predicament:

> It's not good enough for me because this business is from his original. . . he knows a lot, all about this, but I don't. All I know is to just come there and pick up the money, like that. I can't control my business. Everything else, he has to do it. He has to fix the machines, so that's the most important thing, but I cannot do it. A woman cannot fix the machine, so that's why I think that I am not in control, so that's why I want to go to school and get a degree so I can be on my own.

Mai wanted her own career, one that interests her and gives her independence from her husband.

For Opal, a 29-year old Hispanic female, her trigger came when she was working at a bank and realized that her job was a dead end. She explained how she arrived at the decision to enroll in college:

> I was working at the bank, and I didn't feel smart enough, and I felt that school is going to be my only way out, and that's when I realized that making, you know, $15 an hour wasn't going to cut it anymore. I really needed to get a career, and I really wanted out of the banking, and that's when I decided, I don't want to. . .. I don't think it's fair to cheat myself from working and slaving and things like that for someone who has their Ph.D or

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their Master's degree in whatever field they have, and my kids are at home, and I have to work late, and it is just wasn't fair. I felt that I am a hard worker, and I am dedicated, but at the same time, I want to make time for my kids and give them a better life, so that's when I realized, I think it was in January of last year, when I realized I didn't want to do just that anymore. I want something more.

Opal's frustration with what she perceived as a lack of equity and her desire to do something more with her life led her to enroll in community college. It is interesting that she felt that she was not as smart as the educated people around her, so she enrolled at a college to improve her circumstances and her options.

Kristina realized that she needed to pursue a college degree after she graduated from a for-profit business school with a certificate in medical assistance but could not find a job. She said, "I didn't really feel that I was going to get too much out of that." When her husband decided to attend the University of Phoenix, she decided that she would also enroll in college. She chose to major in science and was considering a major in nursing.

The nontraditional students experienced trigger events that prompted them to change their circumstances and increase their opportunities through higher education. For them, this represented a move from one path to another. The traditional students simply continued the path that they were already walking, path that took them from high school straight into college. For these students, college was not as significant a life change as it was for the nontraditional students. Of the traditional students, only Terrence changed his living arrangements to attend college. He moved from his hometown on the Texas coast to live with his grandparents in the Houston area to pursue his studies, but the other traditional students simply continued living with parents or guardians as they had done previously.

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Reaction to developmental English placement. The first trigger for the student participants caused them to enroll in college. The second trigger occurred for 14 of the 16 student participants who took the TSIA and learned that they were not college-ready in English. Several of the students also learned that they were not college-ready in Math. The first event, enrolling in college, was within the students' control, and can be considered an anticipated transition, even for those nontraditional students who enrolled later in life. None of them were surprised by their decision to enroll in college; however, learning that they had tested into Developmental English was a shock for many of them, a trigger that resulted in an unanticipated transition from one path—college-level classes—to another—Developmental Education classes—and caused anger and self-doubt for several of the participants.

Sarah, Calvin, and Thuy were shocked and angry when they learned that they tested into Developmental English rather than credit-level English as they expected. Sarah and Calvin believed that their skill level exceeded their academic placement. Sarah said, "I was upset. I'm not going to lie. . . I felt like I was in a middle school English class. Grammar stuff and all the stuff that we had to do. I was like, this is too easy for me." Calvin echoed that sense of betrayal and said, "I was shocked. I thought that I knew how to read and write really well. I didn't know how much I didn't comprehend."

Thuy's anger stemmed from her sense of urgency at getting through school on specific timetable. She explained, "I can't waste time. Yeah, I was very upset. I planned to go to school for about two years, but because of ESOL, I need to stay longer, so that's why I was disappointed the first time." Her enrollment in the English corequisite remediation classes enabled her to stay on track to finish her program on time.

Testing into Developmental English triggered feelings of self-doubt in Ula and Allison. Allison said that she felt "sad" at her results. Ula said, "I was scared, honestly. I was like, 'What am I going to do?' That's wasting time, you know? I wanted to take the TSI again, but then again, I was like, 'What if I don't make it?' I felt a little bit nervous or not as smart." Ula also imagined that she was not as smart as students who have passed the TSIA and said that her results made her feel "uneasy."

Serafina was angry when she learned that she placed into Developmental English because her placement did not match her understanding of her abilities, which was based on her prior experience. In high school, she had taken Advanced Placement classes and had graduated in the top ten percent of her class, so her failure to place into college-level classes shocked her. She said, "I felt really bad. . . I was agitated, because I did so good [*sic*] in high school, and I was good at writing." She immediately began to poll her friends about their results, and when she learned that most of her friends also failed the reading portion of the test, she concluded, "Okay, so it's not me. That's when I started to look, like re-evaluate, and I was like, 'Okay, so I'm not sure. . .' And they went to high school with me, you know, so there's obviously something. . ." After talking with her friends and reflecting on her own experience, Serafina concluded that her high school did not prepare its students for the TSIA. She said that she thought, 'Okay, maybe it's not me then.' So then I just accepted it, in a way, but not really." Her confidence unshaken, Serafina lobbied to be admitted into the English 1301/English 0119 linked courses so that she could earn college credit in English and said that when she was accepted into the course, "I was happy. I was in 1301."

Several student-participants either anticipated their placement into Developmental English or immediately accepted it. For these students, Developmental English placement was

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almost a non-event. Kristina cited the 12-year gap between high school and college as the reason for her placement and said, "I like the idea that I have to take a developmental class because I feel out of touch. It's been years since I graduated, so I didn't mind it. I didn't want to set myself up for failure." Talia echoed the sentiment that years away from academics contributed to her developmental placement. She had taken Developmental English in California years before, so her placement was a surprise to her, but she said, "I guess because of the time I had taken off from college, I wasn't 100 percent surprised." Terrence attributed his placement to his weak writing skills and said, "I wasn't really too shocked. I knew I wasn't that strong at doing stuff."

Two of the three students who had immigrated from Vietnam immediately accepted their placement into Developmental English because they knew that their reading and writing skills in English were weak. Mai said that when she was told of her test results, she thought, "I felt this is my level to complete my writing skill. I may not like complete, but [it] helped me to be better with my level." Hwa felt the same way, saying, "I know my limitation is English, so it's okay. It's fine with me." Both Mai and Hwa believed that their corequisite remediation placement was the right placement for them.

Learning about English corequisite remediation. Fourteen of the 16 students enrolled in English 1301 with NCBO support via one of three paths supported by the institution. Seven of the 16 student-participants tested and enrolled into the lower level of Developmental English and because of their excellent progress, were recommended by their English professor to skip the next level of Developmental English, English 0309, and enroll in credit-level English and English 0119. These students learned about the accelerated option from their professors, who assessed their abilities and recommended that they skip the next level of Developmental English. The next set of students tested into the upper level of Developmental English, English 0309, but

learned about the accelerated option from an advisor. Five of the student-participants fit this category.

The third set of students tested into credit-level English but failed the course and were told about the linked English 1301 with English 0119 option by their advisors, who felt that the students needed the additional support. For these two students, the linked courses do not offer acceleration; they offer much-needed academic support to ensure success in a course in which these students have already struggled. For most of the students, the institutional processes for the linked courses worked as they were intended to work; however, this was not always the case, and at least two students were forced to advocate for themselves when the faculty and advisors did not recognize them as candidates for accelerated Developmental English.

Seven of the students were recommended to enroll in the English 1301/0119 class combination by their Developmental English professors. These students tested into the lower level of Developmental English but performed so well in Developmental Reading and Writing that their professors recommended that they skip the upper level of Developmental English and enroll straight into English 1301 with English 0119 support. This vote of confidence boosted the morale of these students, and they trusted the opinions of their professors. Opal's professor told her that she "would be really good in that" and that Opal's hard work in Developmental English "paid off." Sarah's teacher was impressed with Sarah's work in his Developmental English class and told her, "Don't waste your time anymore. Go do [English 1301/0119]." Talia proudly related that her professor recommended that she bump up to English 1301 with 0119 support twice after reading Talia's papers. Without the advice of their professors, these students would not have known about the opportunity to enroll in credit-level English, nor would they have had the confidence to consider taking the linked courses; however, they trusted their professors, who

told them that they were ready for English 1301, and this gave them the confidence to take the leap into college English.

Five of the students found out about the English 1301/0119 option from an advisor. Seven of these students learned about the course option when they registered for their first semester of classes. The advisors looked over their TSIA scores and discussed course options with the students. Ula's experience was the most representative of how students were advised into the courses. Ula said that after getting her TSIA scores, she met with an advisor about enrolling in courses that semester, and after talking with Ula and looking at her scores, the advisor told her that there was a way for her to skip Developmental English and take college English instead. The advisor then explained the English 1301/0119 linked classes to Ula. The students who learned about the class from an advisor were told that these linked classes would allow them to move into credit-level English and bypass an entire semester of Developmental English. This process requires the advisor to evaluate the student's potential for success in the accelerated class.

Two students found out about the corequisite remediation option from either printed or electronic college materials or friends and were forced to advocate for themselves for a place in the classes. Serafina arrived in the advising office right after she turned down a scholarship to Texas A&M with a high school transcript that showed that she had successfully taken Advanced Placement courses in high school. Her TSIA scores in reading and writing put her in range to be considered for mainstreaming into English 1301 with 0119 support, but her advisor told her more than once that she would have to enroll in English 0309. At first, Serafina accepted what she was told, but this changed as she looked at the materials that explained the English and Math course options for students in their first semester. She explained her experience with her advisor:

> But as I was looking at the paper that [the advisor] gave me, with all the scores, and I was looking at the computer—I don't know if I should've done that—but I was like, "Look, these two scores are almost identical to each other. They're just a few points away." And so, she compares the two, and she was like, 'Oh, yeah, then you may be eligible for NCBO. You can do 0119 and 1301."

Serafina said that at first, "There was no option. It was like that didn't exist, not until I pointed it out." Had Serafina not advocated for herself, she would have been enrolled in an entire semester of Developmental English that she did not need. It is worth noting that after she made top marks in both English 1301 and 0119, she went on to take honors classes in English and History.

Like Serafina, Calvin was forced to self-advocate when he learned about the English 1301/0119 linked classes through a friend. He had tested into the lowest levels of Developmental Reading and Writing and had taken those classes in two semesters. When his friend told him that he could skip English 0309 and take English 1301 and 0119 instead, he said that he went straight to his advisor and asked to switch into those classes. Without his friend's helpful advice, Calvin would not have known about the opportunity to accelerate into credit-level English.

Institutional employees were instrumental in enabling 14 of the 16 student participants to enroll in the corequisite remediation classes. For these students, the system worked the way it was designed to work. Professors and advisors alerted the students to their options and made recommendations. Without the assistance of these student-centered college personnel, these students would not have known about the opportunity to accelerate their progress through Developmental English, and they would have spent one additional semester in a Developmental English course that they did not need.

Many of the participants quickly turned the negative experience of testing below college-level English into a positive experience by deciding that developmental placement would enable them to improve their reading and writing skills. They expressed belief that the test results indicated that they needed to improve, so placement in a developmental class gave them the opportunity to do so. Allison said about her placement, "It is what it is, and I'll just get better." Thuy explained, "It's not bad because it lays the foundation. I review what I learned [in Vietnam]." Mai said that this will help her to be better, and Terrence concurred, saying, "[Developmental] would just help me develop my writing skills and help me to do better in the next—in a higher class." Kristina admitted that she had not thought about academics during her years as a stay-at-home mom, and admitted, "I felt good. I think I need a refresher on everything." These students quickly moved from shock to acceptance or directly to acceptance upon receiving their test results and saw Developmental English as a tool to improve their reading and writing skills, skills that were entirely within their control. By taking a class and learning the curriculum taught in the class, they thought, they would get better at reading and writing.

Serafina's reaction to her placement in Developmental English was probably the most complex. She was very angry because her prior experience in Advanced Placement classes in high school, her high grade point average in high school, and her top ten percent placement in her high school class all indicated to her that she was a good student and a good writer; however, her TSIA score stood in direct contradiction to her prior experience. She did not take the math section the first time she took the test. She believed that studying would help her get the best score possible, so she studied math, reading, and writing and retested in reading and writing, raising her score in writing but still scoring in Developmental English on reading. That she

determined her own efforts would impact her TSIA score is a sign that Serafina has a growth mindset perspective. When she earned a low score in reading for the second time, Serafina polled her friends from high school to see how they did, analyzed their scores, and concluded that her high school failed her and her high school classmates. She said, "I'm not sure if they really prepared us because I had not a clue I had to take this exam . . . I'd just say the critical reading part is where they did not prepare us." Instead of assuming that the problem was with her, she analyzed the situation, researched and gathered data, and concluded that she was poorly prepared by her high school. Then she made sure that she got into the best situation possible by arguing her way into the corequisite remediation class. Serafina was not shy about advocating for herself, and when she was finally given permission to enroll in the corequisite remediation class, which allowed her to stay on track, she relaxed. Serafina is a good example of someone who knows the value of effort. She studied to get the best possible score on the TSIA, reasoned and argued her way into the English 1302 and English 0119 linked classes, worked hard, earned two A grades, and earned a place in Honors English and earned a merit scholarship.

Ula's response to her placement revealed her fixed mindset. She admitted that her placement made her feel scared. She thought about taking the TSIA again to improve her score, a strategy that is commonly advised for students who test within a few points of credit-level, but she said that she was afraid to re-test and said that she thought, "What if I don't make it?" This is not an entirely reasonable fear because there are no consequences for retesting into Developmental English other than the time and small expense associated with retesting. Her immediate comparison of herself to other students who outperformed her on the test coupled with her reluctance to subject herself to the challenge of the test again and to the negative

experience of testing below college-level, and her fear that she would not test into college-level the second time indicate a fixed mindset.

Situation: Moving through College

This section focuses on the students' experiences in their corequisite remediation classes. Overall, the students reported that the purpose of the courses was to help them improve their writing and research skills, and all the students felt that these goals were achieved. They attributed their positive experiences in the course to the course structure, their professors, who they said demonstrated care for them in their interactions with the students and in the quality of their teaching. All of the students said that they learned in their accelerated English classes, both in the credit-level course and in the corequisite remediation course.

Experience in English corequisite remediation. The students described the factors that impacted their transition into corequisite remediation English courses.

Course structure. The students indicated satisfaction with the structure of the corequisite remediation courses. All three campuses utilized the Accelerated Learning Program model developed at Community Colleges of Baltimore County. The ALP structure is explained in detail in Chapter 2. In brief, the ALP model mainstreams developmental students with credit English students in a credit English class and requires the developmental students to take a developmental support course immediately following the credit English course. Both the support course and the credit English course are taught by the same professor, and the structure of the model helped the accelerated student to form close connections with their peers and instructor.

The students enrolled in the ALP-type courses indicated that they enjoyed the advantages of the ALP model. The ALP model gives the developmental students a safe environment in which to learn by segregating them in a small group environment in the developmental support

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class. Because enrollment in the English 0119 course was limited to those students who were accelerating into English 1301, the students in English 0119 were not self-conscious about being developmental students; rather, they formed bonds with their peers in the class. Opal said, "We have each other for support. That helped a great amount."

Although the English 0119 support course was an extra course that required the students to stay 50 minutes per day after their English 1301 course for 8 weeks, the students indicated that taking an additional course was helpful rather than burdensome. The students explained that their professors used the English 0119 course as time to practice the skills that the students need to complete their English 1301 assignments. In English 0119, the students practiced writing thesis statements, setting up quotes and paraphrases and integrating them into paragraphs, completing rough drafts, and engaging in the peer review process. Tony did not feel that the English 0119 course added to his load because the class reviewed what was covered in English 1301 and gave him time to work on his English 1301 assignments. He viewed it as an opportunity to ask questions and practice his writing skills, which he felt gave him the structure he needed to be successful. He did not think of it as more work, just more time and more support so that he could get his work done. Opal and Isaac agreed and said that in their English 0119 class, the professor simply explained in more detail what was covered in English 1301. Both students said that in the corequisite developmental course, their professor "broke down" the English 1301 assignments into smaller stages and gave them more resources and tools to complete their assignments. Allison, who was enrolled in Bennett's class, revealed a similar experience and referred to her English 0119 class as a lab. She said, "When we go into lab, he helps us with the writing because he [explains], 'This is how you should start it. This is what a thesis statement is. This is the main point." Sarah said, "The best thing was that we had more time."

The students also enjoyed the one-on-one time with their professors. Sarah explained, "We had our teacher, [Professor Dylan], who gave us basically private tutoring. He would go one by one and help us revise our rough drafts." Tony agreed that the small group environment was beneficial because he felt more comfortable asking questions with fewer people in the room. He said, "It is a lot easier to take up the teacher's time asking questions because [the professor] can get to everyone individually even if I take up 20 minutes of his time." The students felt that the small-group environment allowed them to get more individual attention.

Campus B created another model for the corequisite remediation classes. In this model, the accelerated students were not mainstreamed with students who tested directly into English 1301; rather, they were enrolled in a section of English 1301 designed just for them that was 110 minutes long for the entire semester. Because the enrollment for the courses was the same and because there was no start and stop time for either English 1301 or English 0119, the students enrolled in this course model could not differentiate between English 1301 and English 0119. The courses blended together into one 110-minute period, and the enrollment cap was 20 students. At Campus B, this model was taught by Julie. These students enrolled in Julie's classes did not mention the structure of the course because the structure was not any different than that of any other course. They simply stayed in English for 110 minutes per day twice a week. Neither the students who accelerated into the course from the lower levels of developmental English nor the students who accelerated into the course via TSIA test scores understood that the structure of the courses was unusual because the structure was not evident. Where Julie differed from the other corequisite faculty was in her use of the online learning management system (LMS). Julie's students indicated that the work for the developmental support course was confined to the online environment rather than embedded in the work that they were doing in the

face-to-face class. Kristina said that taking both courses together "feels like a hybrid. Because you do have to get online and do your assignments [for English 0119]." Mai noted that the materials posted online for English 0119 were meant to support what she was learning in English 1301 and said, "It is connected to 1301. I can use the knowledge from that to complete my 1301 homework or assignments." The understanding of the purpose of English 0119—to support their learning in English 1301—was shared by students enrolled in either corequisite model.

Teaching strategies. The students cited specific teaching strategies utilized by their professors that they enjoyed. The faculty members' use of entertaining lectures, personal stories, technology, and guidance through the writing process were cited by students as being particularly helpful.

According to Julie's students, Julie told relevant stories from her own life to connect to students and connect students to the material. Julieta explained that Julie would post readings to the LMS, discuss them in class, and then tell a story from her own life that helped the students connect the readings to the lecture and then to their own lives. Personal story-telling was how Julie made the content relevant to the students. Serafina explained what made Julie's stories especially relevant to her students:

> Yeah, and then she would, like, tell us her past experiences, her mistakes when she was doing her masters, and, yeah, her undergrad. She would be like, "Don't do this. Don't screw up, like me."

Terrence cited Julie's strategy of bringing in one of her old college papers to class to use as an example as something that helped him to see that writing is a process that can be learned and improved through hard work. He said, "We were actually writing on the same thing. . .She's our teacher, but she actually had to sit in the same seat like we are right now and do the same

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work." Julie's personal examples helped her students to see that education is a process that many people undergo, including their professors. Terrence realized that if his professor had to learn how to write in college, then he could, too. Mai stated that she found Julie's strategy of using her own life experiences to explain the importance of learning especially meaningful to her. She said, "Prof. Julie, she teaches me, and she also shares her life experience. So I think different[ly] than before. I think she affect me to be a positive person."

The students cited the professors' use of technology as helpful and interesting but also challenging. Allison cited Bennett's use voice notes for giving feedback and You Tube for class assignments as particularly engaging. Ula explained that Julie used TED talks as nonfiction essays and asked the students to analyze them. Ula enjoyed analyzing the text of videos. Kristina explained that Julie took pictures of the notes on the board and posted them online in the learning management system so that students could consult them later.

Julie also put much of the English 0119 material online, and her students had to learn how to log in to the LMS, access the course, and complete the assignment. She was the only corequisite English professor to use the learning management system this extensively, and her students mentioned the importance of learning how to use the LMS to be successful in her class. Julieta mentioned that a few of her peers in her class did not know how to use the LMS, but, she said, "[we would] have to check D2L almost every day. And the one day that you don't check it, you really have to." The students who were unfamiliar with the LMS struggled, and both Thuy and Hwa admitted that they were two of the struggling students. Neither were familiar with how to use the LMS, and they did not realize that there were additional assignments posted online that they were responsible for completing. Because they did not log in regularly, they missed these assignments. Finally, they learned how to access the LMS, and both students caught up. Both

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students said that once they learned how to use the LMS, they found the resources that Julie posted online useful. Mai cited Julie's use of the LMS to post the readings for the class as being particularly helpful.

Several students stated that they found their essays easier to write when they knew exactly what their professor wanted. Dylan, Julie, and Bennett were cited by students as being particularly clear about their expectations. Ula described Julie's communication of expectations:

She guides us through everything. Like if we're given an essay to write, like for example a five-paragraph essay or something then she guides us through it step-by-step of like what exactly she wants us. Once she gives us a format page, basically a paper with what she wants in an essay and like how she wants it and what type of structure you know? Just basically the structure and what kind of structure she wants in the essay.

Allison said virtually the same thing about Bennett, stating that in the lab, Bennett explains each facet of essay writing so that the students know exactly what to do.

Isaac explained one of Dylan's unique lessons in which Dylan showed pictures to the class and asked the students to use the pictures to create vivid descriptions. The professor then taught the students to storyboard their narratives as an organizational strategy. Isaac said that he remembered that the picture he wrote about appeared to be of a homeless man, but he was not sure. The ambiguity of the visual image captured Isaac's imagination, and he remembered the lesson vividly.

Allison was the only student to cite group work as a particularly helpful teaching strategy employed by her corequisite English professor, but she was adamant that Bennett's use of group work in her English class helped her learn. She said that she learned that she was a group learner

by taking a learning styles test, so she appreciated her Bennett's frequent use of groups for classwork, including peer review.

Cool professors. All sixteen students interviewed for this study indicated that they genuinely liked their corequisite English professors because their professors were interesting people. All four professors were described as "cool" by their students, and several students indicated that their professors were entertaining in some way, which kept the students' interest. Isaac said that Dylan was "not boring" and explained that Dylan's "personality makes the class more alert and fun [so that] the students actually want to be involved and learn something." Allison said that her professor, Bennett, "makes the class fun" and "exciting." Julie's students agreed that Julie's personality helped to make her classes interesting and entertaining. Serafina said, "I don't know, she's not crazy, but she's like, *[Claps]* 'All right, guys, let's do this.' She'd just be in her own little world. She's entertaining." Serafina added, "You want to watch her at all times to see what's going to happen next."

Instructor care. The students expressed the belief that their English professors cared about them and their success and that this care was demonstrated by the accessibility of the professors and the sentiments expressed by the professors themselves.

Julie's availability was lauded by her students, who said that they appreciated her immediate responses to their texts and emails. Kristina described Julie's availability:

> [The class] is helping me a lot. And my professor is really good. She tries to help. She can be available whenever [I] need her. I can email her, and she will email me back or text if I have any questions during the weekend. That helps a lot.

Hwa agreed that Julie was very accessible and said that she spent a lot of time with Julie after class to get clarification about assignments. She was also reassured by Julie's availability via

text, which was something that most of Julie's students brought up in their interviews. Thuy noted that Julie responded to her at 11:30pm when Thuy had a question about her essay. Sarah said that what she found most helpful was that her professor took the time to help individual students, which she thought indicated a high level of care.

Sarah said that what contributed to her success in her corequisite English classes was her professor's willingness to help each student individually. She said that Professor Dylan told the students that if they emailed their rough drafts to him at least 24 hours before the essay was due, he would give the students his opinions and advice about how to improve the paper. Sarah felt that Dylan's willingness to look over their rough drafts revealed his care for his students.

The care that the instructors demonstrated for their students resulted in the students being at ease in their English classes. They were comfortable with their professors, and this comfort helped them to be receptive to the learning process and the hard work that learning entails. Tony cited his comfort with Kenneth as an important factor that contributed to Tony's success in the course. He explained that he felt connected to Kenneth:

> The experience has been really good because I believe that I personally connect on some level with the teacher whether it be the way we think about things on a very simple level or like common thought processes or maybe he's just really good at understanding what I'm saying. It's been an incredible help.

Ula stated that Julie's personality eased her fears about writing and about college. Ula admitted that she was scared of writing when she was in high school, but she said about Julie, "with her, it was easy. I was never scared. I was never nervous. I knew what I was doing. I knew what she wanted in the essay. I had my mind set to what she wanted." Ula liked Julie so much that she

tried to take Julie for the next course in the English sequence and was disappointed to learn that Julie was not scheduled to teach the course that Ula needed.

Dylan told his students that their success was important to the him. According to Isaac, Dylan told his students that he was invested in their success. Isaac said, "He wants us to pass. He always tells us that." Serafina said that Julie worked hard to motivate her students and would give speeches intended to pump them up and get them excited about learning.

Learning. All the students interviewed for this study indicated that they learned in their corequisite remediation classes, but most had a hard time articulating exactly what they learned other than briefly stating that they could write thesis statements, organize their ideas, and use bigger words. They knew that the purpose of the classes was to teach them how to write college-level essays, and all the student-participants reported that they finished the courses better writers than they were when they started, but only a few students could think beyond the specific assignments they completed to explain what they learned overall. The *Lower Division Academic Course Guide Manual* lists the student learning outcomes (SLOs) for English 1301:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of individual and collaborative writing processes.

2. Develop ideas with appropriate support and attribution.

3. Write in a style appropriate to audience and purpose.

4. Read, reflect, and respond critically to a variety of texts.

5. Use Edited American English in academic essays. (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2017b)

The students tended to focus on SLO 1 and SLO 5, which are lower-order outcomes. Only one or two students could explain that they learned how to think critically, organize an argument, and support assertions with evidence; most students were more comfortable describing

the specifics of assignments and how they performed on those assignments. One surprise was the students' focus on vocabulary, which was a learning outcome for English 0119. A few students said that their vocabulary improved after taking the corequisite remediation courses; other students said that their lack of vocabulary was a weakness that hindered their success.

One student learning outcome of English 0119 states, "Upon successful completion of this course, students will comprehend and use vocabulary effectively in oral communication, reading, and writing" (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2017b). Several student-participants reported that taking accelerated corequisite English helped them to increase their vocabulary. Opal said that she could use big terms that she learned in class, which she said gave her confidence when she talked to other educated people, and Talia said her professor's mini-lessons on vocabulary were enjoyable and useful. Terrence said that learning new words made him feel smarter.

Allison, Kristina, and Thuy stated that their lack of vocabulary was a problem for them. Both students reported that their failure to use correct or varied vocabulary made writing difficult and brought their essay grades down. Kristina said that she should have read more because, she said, "My vocabulary is not. . . where it needs to be. [Vocabulary] helps you with finding the correct word to express your thoughts." These students indicated that they had trouble writing because they had trouble finding the right words to express their ideas. Thuy's problem stemmed from her struggle to write in English, a second language for her. She said, "I cannot make a mistake on the verb."

Individual and collaborative writing processes are covered by SLO 1. The students talked about the essays they wrote in their English classes and the processes that they learned to write those essays both individually and with classmates. Several students mentioned learning how to

write thesis statements and organize their ideas into paragraphs. Ula recounted Julie's step-by-step method for writing thesis statements.

Student learning outcome three requires students to learn different types of essays styles or formats that would be appropriate for different audiences and different purposes. None of the students explained how to address different audiences, but they did list the different types of essays that they learned. Allison described a comparison-contrast essay for which she had to examine two advertisements on YouTube. Thuy, Serafina, and Terrence listed the annotated bibliography as a particularly difficult project, but Serafina explained that by the time she had learned how to write an explanatory synthesis proposal, a review, and a critique, she was prepared for the annotated bibliography. When Mai was asked about what she learned in English, Mai simply responded, "Three kinds of essay styles. . . Explanatory, compare-contrast, and argument."

The students spoke more specifically about assignments that resonated with them. Allison cried when she talked about a narrative paper that she wrote about a family friend who died, and after she explained the essay, she was able to recall the specific feedback her professor gave her about that essay. Thuy's explanation of her literary argument paper and her process for writing it was the most specific explanation given and probably came the closest to matching what the faculty said was the ultimate learning outcome for English 1301. Thuy became animated when she explained an essay she wrote on "Cinderella." She said, "My thesis is that nothing is for free. For Cinderella to receive magic, she had to do something to get that magic. She is good. You have to be good so that you can receive the good back. If you are bad, you don't receive anything." Thuy went on to say that for the literary analysis of "Cinderella," she had to learn how to narrow her topic and support her argument with evidence in the story and from outside

sources, all of which is covered by all five SLOs. She said that supporting her assertions with evidence was the most important skill she learned in English 1301 and English 0119, and it was the toughest thing for her to learn. She said, "[In essays] you need to research a lot of things to prove that you are right, to prove your opinion." For Thuy, learning to support her own opinion was both difficult and liberating. She had to learn to find evidence and use it appropriately, but the process also meant that she could put forward her own opinions and expect to be taken seriously as long as she supported her ideas correctly. She saw the process as a mechanism for making her voice heard, which is ultimately the point of good writing and the ultimate SLO of English 1301.

None of the students expressed dissatisfaction with the courses or indicated that they did not learn in the courses. All of the students stated that their professors taught them how to approach essay-writing methodically and helped them to improve their writing skills. They also stated that their confidence in their writing improved as a result of taking the corequisite courses. Ula stated that Professor Julie "was the best. She just changed everything, make it easier for me to write essays now." The students' claim that they learned how to write college essays is borne out by their success in the next English course in the sequence, English 1302. Twelve of the sixteen student-participants passed English 1302, and one student, Serafina, was admitted into the Honors Program.

Self: Moving into College

Schlossberg, Lynch, and Chickering (1989) define "self" in two ways: the personal or demographic characteristics that influence how a person views life and himself or herself and the psychological factors that also influence that view. In this study, I examined the students' confidence in their ability to succeed in college during the moving into phase when they decided

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to enroll in college and in the beginning of their first semester, and then during the moving through phase after they were more experienced college students. Later in this chapter, the students' reaction to challenges they faced in college and their confidence about continuing college and taking more credit-level classes are covered.

Confidence upon admission. The students reported varying levels of confidence when they entered college. Six students used the words "scared" and "nervous" to describe how they felt when they entered college with one student, Ula, using the word "scared" 11 times and "nervous" eight times in her interview. She explained that people told her that college is very difficult, which caused her anxiety about failing:

> Before I started taking college courses I thought it was going to be really hard for me. That like because I would always hear you know students, I mean college people saying, "Oh college is really hard. You know once you get into college, you're going to wish that you were back in high school and everything." So I was always scared.

She reported being afraid when she was taking the TSIA because she said she was "fresh out of high school" and accustomed to her old high school teacher. She was also scared of taking the accelerated English classes that were recommended for her because she was afraid of failure. She said, "I was scared that I wouldn't be good. You know, like academic-wise, you know? I would be good and everything." Her fears were not limited to English. Ula admitted to feeling fear in her math class as well and said that the online assignments cause her anxiety.

Most of the students who described feeling fear also indicated that their fears eased as they became comfortable in the college environment. Julieta said that she felt "new and scared," but her feelings of fear dissipated quickly. She said that she wanted to learn, and she explained that when she walked into class on the first day, she felt "a little bit more okay." When she saw

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that a few of her peers started dropping out within the first week or two, she felt better about her own progress. She said she remembers thinking, "Okay, I outlasted [them]." Julieta compared her progress to that of her peers and evaluated herself favorably.

Allison doubted her ability to succeed in college math because she struggled in math in high school. She said that as she drove to the college on the first day of her first semester, she was thinking, "I don't want to go. I don't want to go." She said that she knew that she needed to attend college, so she did not turn the car around and go home that first day. When she learned that a friend from high school was in her education class, she relaxed and realized that she was not alone in a strange place. The knowledge that she had a friend in the same situation gave her courage to continue.

Kristina reported that her lack of confidence came from a lack of knowledge about college. She explained, "Before I started coming to college, I decided that it was going to be hard. Harder than I thought. At first, I [could not] imagine that I would be able to go to college. I didn't really know. That I would fail or something." Because she did not know what college entailed, she assumed that it would be too difficult for her. Like Kristina, Terrence explained that his lack of knowledge contributed to his fears as well. His only information about college came from what he saw on television and movies, so he thought that the college environment was completely free; however, a few of his friends told him, "College is not what they said on TV." This was the extent of Terrence's understanding of the college environment, so he was nervous when he applied for admission, enrolled, and showed up on the first day.

Opal mentioned several times that she feared being found unworthy of admission, and because she had been turned down for financial aid in the past, she was very worried about not qualifying for financial aid again. Opal could not afford to attend college without financial aid.

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She viewed each step of the admissions and financial aid application processes as a potential hurdle that could prevent her from being admitted to the college, and the anxiety that she felt at successfully clearing each hurdle translated into a tremendous sense of relief when she was finally admitted and enrolled. She described what she felt at the time:

> I applied for financial aid, and they accepted it. I really thought it was going to fall through, and I wasn't going to actually attend. I thought, "Okay, they're going to tell me that something is going to come up, and I'm not going to be able to go to college." I'm determined, and I'm getting my hopes up, for what? They are going to do the same thing as [another community college], and say, "Nope, I'm sorry. You can't come." When they accepted me and I went to orientation, I was waiting for the lady with the little notepad to tell me, "I'm sorry." And she said, "You are good." Literally, I wanted to cry, and I was like, 'You did it!'"

Successful navigation of the admissions and financial aid application processes felt like a personal victory to Opal, one that she earned through perseverance.

Self: Moving through College

This section presents the data that describe how the students' sense of self changed as they moved through college. The students began taking ownership of the new role of college students, and they became more confident in themselves and their ability to succeed in the college arena. Several students explained that their first semester or two of college and their exposure to a diverse student body and diversity of perspectives and opinions had already begun to reshape their world view, but several students reported that they had not changed during their short time in college.

Ownership of the role of college student. In addition to grappling with their anxiety about college, as they moved through college, the students had to take ownership of the college student role, internalize it, and accept that the role of college student is not just something that they do; it is something that they are, and taking full ownership of a role requires full engagement with that role. For some, the change in their self-perception was significant. Tony explained this phenomenon the best:

> When I came into college, I kind of just viewed it as this is something that other people [who] are willing to pay for me to live want me to do, so I'm going to do it. It seemed like something I should do rather than something I needed or wanted to do. And now it's more of, "Let's see if I can even do it. Let's do this for me instead of anyone else."

He went on to explain how his perception of himself changed, and said, "I actually consider myself a college student now. Before, I didn't see myself as a student. I didn't see myself as someone who was here to learn, and now I do." Tony has transformed from someone who attended college because he was expected to by others into someone who attends college to achieve his own goals, both academic and professional. His locus of control shifted from external to internal, this shift resulted in an increase in his motivation and focus.

Opal's feelings of inadequacy clung to her well into her first semester before her success changed her self-perception. She said that in her first semester, she thought to herself, "What if something comes up? There is always that 'what if' that I always think of. [What if] they tell me that I can't return." She felt like an outsider, an imposter, who was going to be discovered and ejected at any moment. However, with one successful semester under her belt, Opal said about her self-concept, "It's changed a lot. I'm proud of myself, and I didn't think that I would be as proud as I am and as focused and determined as I am now from when I first started. . . It changed

a lot. I want to say for the better." When she described how she has changed, she said that she feels smarter and that she can help her family members and others go to school. She participated in the student-mentor program at her college and acted as a mentor for incoming students. Opal went from feeling like an imposter masquerading as a college student to a higher education advocate and mentor in two semesters.

Before Terrence started college, he envisioned himself as a lazy person. In high school, he did not work hard, and he did not see himself working hard in college. In fact, he said that his plan was to "slide by with low grades." However, that plan did not work out for Terrence, and soon after starting college, he became a hardworking, conscientious student, one who voluntarily put away his Xbox because it was distracting him from his work. He said about his new attitude, "Now that I'm here, I'm seeing that I don't want to just slide by. I want to get better so that I could be at the top of my class." Terrence's desire to be at the top of his class has resulted in changes in his strategies. Terrence stopped procrastinating. He explained, "Now, when I'm supposed to do something, I used to just wait. And now I just get up and just go do it and get it over with." His new work ethic has even positively impacted his health. He started to care about his appearance, and after he started taking the stairs instead of the elevator, Terrence lost weight and began to feel better about himself.

Increase in confidence. Several students indicated that their self-confidence increased because of what they have learned in college. Talia said that she is a better writer and has more confidence in her writing after going through the accelerated English course. Hwa cited her increase in knowledge as a confidence-booster for her. She listed concepts that she learned in biology, government, and English that she did not know before attending college as evidence that her knowledge has grown through her studies. She also explained that her expanded

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understanding of the English language has helped her to grow. She said, "When I listen, and I hear people talking, knowledge is more." For Hwa, "more" comes from knowledge and from learning.

Ula, who reported feeling extreme fear and anxiety when she entered college, said that she gained confidence in herself during her first semester in college. She explained that she became more extroverted and confident as she became more comfortable in college:

> Yeah, it did change me a lot, because when I was in high school I was the type of person that was always shy, scared in everything, but when I started to get involved with like other people and activities in college, I started to gain my confidence. I started to gain a lot of confidence. I didn't have that much confidence when I was in high school. I was always scared. I was always scared of doing stuff, meeting new people and everything. But I don't really talk to anyone here still, but it's just I'm not scared anymore the way I used to be. If I want to do something here, I can just do it myself. I don't need someone to help me out with anything.

Ula went on to say that before she started college, she doubted her ability to do college-level work, but after a successful semester, she said, "I'm confident. I know I can do it. I know I can get it done."

Like Ula, Kristina's feelings of inadequacy changed with experience. She explained that after her first successful semester, she understood that hard work is the key to success in college. She explained, "And now that I am in college, it's hard if you don't work, if you don't do anything, or if you just don't care, but if you make an effort to do your [work], it shouldn't be hard. Even though I don't really know a lot, I feel confident that I can learn now. I have steps. I

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know I can do it." Kristina's new confidence comes from her understanding that success in college is a matter of taking small steps, implementing strategies in a logical and organized way

All the students said that they felt confident enough to enroll in credit-level classes for the following semester, and all but one of the student-participants did enroll the next semester.

Change in world view. Two students, Julieta and Serafina, explained that college has changed how they view the world. Julieta explained her new perspective:

> I've noticed that I've become a little bit more open-minded. . . When you are taking those classes, you are just gaining more knowledge and about your peers and professor. So that's what I'm kind of learning right now, just getting through college and having these experiences, because you only get them once.

Julieta's belief that college has exposed her to different perspectives has helped her to become more open-minded than she was before college.

Serafina said that college has given her the tools that she needs to think critically about the world around her, and she indicated that this new ability has changed her, has helped her to grow. She explained how college has changed her perspective:

> In college, you have a new paradigm in the way you look at life. . . I think that you grow in college, so you start having opinions and reasonable opinions. When I was in high school, I really didn't—I mean, I knew who I was and everything, but I feel like gradually, I'm starting to grow. . . I'm starting to grow, and you start maturing, and you know, for example, your political views change depending on the education that you get, or whatever surrounds you. . . I have changed, the way my mind thinks, reasonably and logically.

Both students believed that their new open-mindedness, their growth and maturity, can be attributed to their experiences in college.

No change. Several students seemed baffled by the question, "Have you changed since you started college," and six answered that they had not changed at all. They seemed to view the idea of changing negatively and did not reflect on whether change in the form of growth or maturity could be a positive outcome of college. When asked if he had changed, Calvin replied, "Not that I can tell." Allison said that she is the same person that she was when she started taking classes. She said that she is trying very hard to do well in school, in part because her father pays her for every A she earns. Allison thinks that this external motivation helps her to keep her grades up. Isaac said that he envisioned himself working hard and succeeding, and because he has done exactly as he planned, he does not think that he has changed. Sarah indicated said that she had not changed at all, but then she backtracked to say that she has matured, but she is still the same. About personal growth, these students were the least introspective of the student-participants.

Support: Moving into College

According to Chickering and Schlossberg (1995), support is critical for college students. They need the support of others to handle the stress associated with the demands of college, and this support can be categorized as personal or institutional. When asked about the single biggest contributor to her success in college, Opal responded, "My support on campus and at home."

Personal support comes from those people who are important to the students but who are not associated with the institution, such as family, significant others, friends, and co-workers. Most of the student participants reported that their family members—parents, spouses,

significant others—supported their decision to enroll in college, either emotionally, financially, or both. This is covered in the "Moving into College" section.

As they moved through college, students experienced both personal and institutional support. Family members and friends provided emotional support as well as tangible support in the form of money, housing, childcare, academic advice, and tutoring from family members. Institutional support came from people employed by the institution, such as advisors and faculty, and programs associated with the institution, such as tutoring, advising, counseling, and financial aid. Students reported that they utilized the programs provided by their colleges as they moved through college. Both personal and institutional support is covered in the "Moving Through College" section.

Students also encountered sabotage, both personal and institutional. Sabotage is defined as any act by another person that inhibits the students' efforts to succeed in college. A few of the student-participants reported sabotage by family and friends as they moved into and through college. One student, Serafina, encountered institutional sabotage as she moved into college and was forced to fight for a spot in the corequisite program.

Forms of support and sabotage experience by the students, both personal and institutional, are described below.

Emotional support. The traditional students, those who had recently graduated from high school, reported that their families expected them to attend college. It was the natural next step after high school graduation; thus, the transition from high school to college was an anticipated one because the students knew it was coming; their family members announced it in explicit terms ahead of time. In response to the question, "Did your parents support your coming [to college]," Saul said, "Yeah, it was more, 'You have to go to college' kind of thing." Sarah

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reported a similar sentiment in her family, saying, "Well, that wasn't a question for me. I've always wanted to go to college, and they've always wanted me to go to college." Isaac's mother made it clear that he had to do something, either join the military, get a job, or go to college. Terrence said, "I thought I was gonna take some time off, but my grandma said, 'Just hop right into it. . .'" His grandmother was so enthusiastic about Terrence continuing his education that she researched the program in which he was interested, law enforcement, and the local college that offered that program. About the rest of his family, Terrence said that if he does not do something with his education, "they're gonna beat me upside my head." Allison said that her family members "actually encourage me to do my work and stay focused." For these traditional students, the transition into college was one for which they had mentally and emotionally prepared with the help of their family members, who insisted that they do something constructive after high school. These students reported that this family support was important to them, and they mentioned their family members repeatedly throughout their interview.

One student's prior failure impacted his grandmother's support for his college enrollment. Tony had failed college courses in the past, and he was uncertain about how his grandmother felt about his attending college. He said, "My family is supportive, [but] I am not sure how Grandmother L feels about it. She seems supportive. I think that she is happy I'm going, but she might be worried because I have failed before." Tony's acknowledgment of his grandmother's concern is honest, and he had taken steps to improve his chances of success by taking the English 0119 support class.

The nontraditional student participants reported that they received emotional support in their decision to enroll in college as well; however, college attendance was not something that was expected of them at this stage of their lives, and family support was more complicated for

these students than it was for the traditional students. The decision to enter college was a disruption of their normal routine, a change in course rather than a continuation of a path begun in kindergarten. The decision to enroll in college required conversations and negotiations, but Opal, Kristina, Thuy, and Hwa reported that their spouses fully supported their entry into college. Thuy's husband told Thuy, "'You need to go to school." Thuy said, "I told him that I do not want to work [at a nail salon], and he said to go back to school and get a degree. 'When you have a degree, you can earn a lot of money.'" Opal said that her husband wanted her to attend full-time. Hwa's husband was just as supportive of her goals. She explained that before she started school, cooking was her responsibility. Once she began college, however, her husband began cooking dinner so that she could study. All four women were appreciative of their spouse's support of their goals.

Financial support. Fifteen of the 16 students who participated in this study lived with and were financially dependent on family members. Tony, Julieta, Saul, Isaac, Sarah, Allison, Calvin, Ula, Julieta, Serafina, and Terrence all lived with at least one parent, grandparent, or guardian, and their basic needs, such as food, clothing, and shelter, were paid for by parents, grandparents, or guardians. Opal, Kristina, Mai, and Hwa were married and lived with their spouses, and Thuy lived with her fiancé. Seven of the 16 student participants were unemployed, and eight were employed part-time. Three of the five married or engaged students were unemployed with only Mai and Thuy holding down part-time jobs at nail salons. Several of the student-participants who worked part-time only worked for the feeling of independence and the freedom that having money that they earned themselves brings.

Of the 16 student-participants, only one, Talia, worked to support herself. Talia said very specifically, "I don't ask my mom for help when it comes to money." She also said that she

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thinks that her independence is a curious surprise to her mother. Talia said, "I think my mom is a little surprised that I'm in college, actually. Because I've never really asked her for help, so I think she kind of wonders how I do this on my own. She's never really asked me the question, [but] I can just tell when I tell her about school." Although Talia was relatively independent, she was renting a small home in the family compound, so she was not too far from her family members.

At the time of the interview, Talia was working two jobs to pay for her rent, car, and medical insurance, and she was the only student-participant to discuss finances. She explained that the price of books keeps going up, and she bought a car from her grandmother, but the engine went out, and she had to buy another car so that she could get to school and work. Also, the cost of her health insurance through the Affordable Care Act was going up as well. Talia explained that she had been paying $20.00 per month for health insurance, but now she is paying $90 per month. Talia was receiving some limited assistance from family in the form of her housing arrangements. She was renting a small home from her aunt that was located behind her aunt's home, but it was not free housing. These factors required Talia to keep both jobs, which forced her to work around 60 hours per week.

For most of the students in this study, money did not seem to be an overwhelming worry. Only Talia brought it up as a barrier, and although Serafina was a work-study student, she said that she thought that she was lucky to be as financially secure as she was even though she worked two jobs, one at the college and one at a restaurant. She said, "a college student is broke, but I'm not really that bad, right now compared to other students because they literally like, don't even have money for food at times. But because I live here with my mom, and you know. . . I'll always have that."

All the students mentioned that they enrolled at a community college to save money, including the students whose parents are paying for their education. The relative inexpensiveness of the community college was cited as the number one reason for their choosing to enroll there, which indicates that all the students, even those who are not paying for their education themselves, were conscious of cost.

Childcare. Two of the student participants who are mothers, Opal and Mai, rely on a parent to provide childcare for them so that they can attend classes. Mai indicated that her mother's help with her daughter was important to her. Opal concurred and said that her reliance on her mother contributes to her desire to finish quickly. She said, "I felt pressure finishing school with my children because my mother watches them, so it kind of adds [to] the pressure. I need to hurry up and finish, but at the same time I need to take my time so that I don't overwhelm myself and end up dropping out." In Opal's case, her mother's support and the guilt that Opal feels about her mother watching her children puts pressure on Opal to finish quickly. Both students cited the children as responsibilities that interfere with their schooling, so their mothers' willingness to take care of the children was an important contributing factor to the success of these students.

Admissions and financial aid. Most of the students reported that family, friends, and college faculty and employees helped them with the admissions process. The help given to the students ranged from assistance with the admissions and financial aid processes phase to choosing a major or program of study.

Several of the students reported that they had relatives who were in college, both at CCS and other institutions, at the time that they applied, so those relatives were their best resource for admissions information. Tony's grandmother and step-grandfather took continuing education

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classes at the college and were familiar with the campus and the college admissions procedures. Saul's mother teaches for one of the CCS colleges. Calvin had a brother who attended CCS as did Ula, albeit a different CCS college. Talia reported that her aunt graduated from CCS as well. Sarah's siblings were in two different universities, and she planned to transfer to be closer to one of them. These students reported that their siblings were helpful in navigating the admissions process.

Opal was a widow, and her late husband's family members pushed her to go to school and helped her with the process. Opal explained that her former sister-in-law assisted Opal with her online application for the college, helping her navigate the website and fill out forms and gather documents. During the admissions process, however, Opal realized that she needed help from the college, and she was not afraid to ask for it:

> I kind of just said, "I need help. I don't know what I'm doing. It's my first time. No one in my family has ever gone to college, and I need to know what I can do to start bettering myself in my future," and from there, they basically started to help me. My teachers, professors, and my advisor actually started to help me, and I realized the friendliness and the dedication that they had to their students, and it made me want to stay.

Opal's declaration of need was heard by the college advisors and professors, and their reaction to assist Opal solidified her decision to attend that college.

Terrence's grandmother acted as career counselor, advisor, program researcher, and admissions counselor for him. Terrence said that after talking with him about what career he wanted, his grandmother found the program in law enforcement at a nearby community college and helped him get admitted and enrolled at that college. Terrence's grandmother researched local institutions and programs, advised Terrence about his personal strengths and weaknesses,

discussed his career options, and helped him to choose a program that seemed reasonable for him at a local college. Without her help, he might still be floundering, uncertain about how to form a long-term career goal and then take steps to achieve it.

Like Terrence's grandmother, Isaac's mother helped Isaac decide what he wanted to do. His mother told him that he had to go to school, and he said that they decided together that enrolling at a community college would both save money and put him on a path to a bachelor's degree. He said that both parents helped him with applying for financial aid, and Isaac got a few grants to help pay his tuition.

Except for Talia, who conducted her own research and knew how to apply for admissions because of prior experience in higher education in California, all the students were assisted by family and friends during the entry process. The students whose relatives had experience in college could rely on those relatives for advice and assistance, but Opal and Serafina had to rely on the institutional resources in the form of college personnel and the college website to help them navigate the admissions process. Opal identified herself as a first-generation college student who was floundering so that she could get special attention from college personnel.

Sabotage. Not all the students enjoyed familial support for their decision to attend college. Several students reported that close family members attempted to undermine their progress through college by either questioning the need for college or by expressing hostility and opposition to the students' college enrollment.

Kristina reported that her mother sabotaged her decision to enroll in college by refusing to help her fill out a financial aid application. Kristina wanted to attend college after she graduated from high school, but she needed information from her mother to fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). She said, "My mother was not really supportive,

so it was kind of hard. You know how they ask you for your income, things about your family, where you live, and she wasn't really helping me with that. . . She wouldn't help me." Kristina had to get a student loan for $20,000 to pay for a medical assistant certification from a trade school. Unfortunately, she could not get a job after she finished the certificate program, so Kristina decided to enroll in college, and because she was 30 years old at that point, she was able to do so without her mother's help. Kristina's entry into college was delayed 12 years, and Kristina was burdened with a loan for a certificate that did not result in employment.

Mai's husband does not act to hinder Mai's progress through college, but he regularly questions the necessity of it. She said, "He always say, 'Whatever I want to do.' Because he's not an [educated] person, he [didn't] graduate high school, but he thinks he's a success in business, so he thinks that's good enough." Mai believes that her husband's lack of education hinders his ability to understand why she wants to go to college. Mai maintains the attitude that "he cannot stop me," but she indicated that the situation is emotionally draining. She is not sure that she will stay in the marriage and realizes that she may need a college education so that she can support herself in the future if the marriage does not last.

Opal's father is openly hostile about her goal of achieving a college education. Opal said that "he does not approve" of her college enrollment. She revealed, "He says I'm too old. Too old to be attending school. I need to work and make a living and hustle to provide for my children and support my husband, and if I'm not going to work, then I need to stay at home and take care of my children. So my dad is pretty, I guess old school, where women are concerned." She realized that her father's perspective is in part a cultural one. To Opal, her father represents certain Hispanic values about women's roles.

Despite the lack of support from these male figures or perhaps because of it, both Mai and Opal view college as the best way for them to achieve the ability to support themselves and their family. Mai indicated that she was not sure if she would stay in the marriage and wants her education as a back-up plan in case she has to fend for herself. Opal's response to her father's criticism is to view it as a challenge. She related a conversation that she had with him in which she fired back:

'My husband supports me. My mom supports me. It doesn't matter. Because in the end, when you go to my graduation, you are going to see, and you are going to be proud of me,' I go, 'and I'm sorry, but I can't thank you for pushing or supporting me. I have to thank my mom.' . . . I did tell him, 'Thank you for belittling me because it's just pushing me to succeed.' I see it as kind of a motivation. He wants me to fail, but I'm not going to fail.

Support: Moving through College

Personal academic support. Many of the student-participants explained that their family members and friends provided academic support in the form of homework help, tutoring, and academic advice. Tony's step-grandfather is a textbook author, and Tony indicated that he could turn to him for help. Isaac's parents were his go-to resources for help with English and Math. He said, "My mom is real good at English, which is why I think I'm real good at English. Because when I need help with a paper, I start it off, reword it and stuff, and she know how to put it all together when I'm like a little bit off, and my dad is pretty good at math. He can help me with it." Sarah cited her parents and older siblings as resources. Her brother and sister were both attending universities while she was enrolled in community college, so when Sarah had questions, she would turn to her siblings for answers. She said, "They help me with all my

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classes." Saul's mother is a professor, and he said that she has repeatedly offered to read over his papers; however, Saul prefers to keep his writing to himself and work with the professor to revise his essays. Allison said that her parents are her number one resource for tutoring. Her father is an engineer, so he can help her with math, but Allison said that he is also good with revising papers, as is her mother.

The students also turned to friends for academic assistance. Opal has a friend who helps her with her math homework and encourages her throughout the semester. Opal met him in the peer mentoring program at her college, and she said that "he is very supportive" of her. Saul said that he had a friend who has a college degree who is good at the subjects that Saul says are his weaknesses, such as history and English.

Institutional academic support. The student participants also cited institutional forms of academic support, specifically in the form of institutional resources such as tutoring and advising, and they emphasized their professors' role in providing academic support. Their professors served as academic support in two main ways: they either provided front-line support to the students in the form of academic advice on the work they required or they connected the students to institutional resources such as tutoring and other programs that might interest and help the students.

Several students cited their English professor as their best form of institutional support. Kristina and Thuy had the same English professor, and both were impressed that she gave them her cell phone number and encouraged the students to text her when they had questions. The students were very grateful for the accessibility of their professor and appreciated her commitment to them. Thuy described a time when she texted her professor at 11:30 at night and got a helpful reply. Her professor's commitment to Thuy impressed her. Allison also cited her

English teacher as her best resource because of how he teaches the class, saying, "He makes it exciting."

The student participants indicated that their English professors encouraged them to take advantage of institutional resources such as tutoring, both online and in-person. In response to a question about resources at the college, Isaac replied, "Resources here? My teachers. They always guide us to the library or the student-learning center, where we can go to get help on our essays or something like that. The online tutoring, and we also have my math lab, that like a part of that also helps us out and gives us different problems and stuff to work out just to show us step by step and everything." In all, 11 of the student-participants indicated that their professors had recommended tutoring, and the students found the tutors helpful. Opal concurred, and said about the English professor she and Isaac shared, "He is really big on having us go to the writing center and submitting a lot of our research papers and things like that to them. So it kind of helped us to, okay, we have that second support, second resource we can go to when he is not able, or later on he is not going to proofread our paper or go over it. We have the writing center."

Students also listed the electronic resources recommended by their professors as useful tools for improving their writing. Allison cited several resources recommended by her instructor as being particularly helpful, specifically, the audio notes that the instructor uses to give feedback on essays and a program called Paper Rater. Allison said that her essay grades improved after she used the program. Her instructor included the link in a list of resources posted to the online shell of her face-to-face English class.

Opal listed several programs at her college that she said helped her learn how to be a successful college student. Opal connected with the peer mentoring program through her education professor and could mentor new students and "show them resources and how to email

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and things like that, get more involved with college life and just basically cover the campus."

She said that she benefited from her participation as a mentee and reveled in the opportunity to

mentor other FTIC students after her first semester.

Opal said that she enrolled at Lone Star because of the employees who helped her get

admitted to the college and enroll in classes, and Opal has maintained a relationship with her

advisor. "I can always go and talk to him even though he is busy. I can go talk to him, and he

emails me back or calls me," she said. This personal contact with her advisor was meaningful to

Opal as it affirmed that she was important and connected to another human being at the college.

Institutional sabotage. Two students reported experiencing institutional obstacles.

Serafina had a problem with her advisor, and Julieta brought her paper to a tutor who gave her

bad advice about her essay format.

When her advisor recommended that she enroll English 0309 on the basis of her TSIA

scores alone, Serafina examined her options and fought to get into credit English with English

0119 support. She realized that a semester in Developmental English would delay her progress

an entire semester, but her extensive experience in Advanced Placement classes and her previous

success in English in high school made Serafina confident about her ability to success in credit

English. Reflecting on that situation, Serafina said, "But at first, it was like, 'There's no option.'

It was like [the corequisite program] didn't exist. So, not until I pointed it out, and I was like,

'Look. . .'" If Serafina had not looked for another option and pushed for a place in the

corequisite program, her advisor would have enrolled her in English 0309, and she would have

been one semester behind in English.

Julieta explained that the writing center tutor at her college gave several students bad

advice about the format of their papers. Julieta explained the situation:

And we told the tutor, "It's supposed to be in this kind of format," but she was like –

"No, it should be this way." And I went – "Okay." I'm not going to argue, but, yes. She

messed up a few people's format. It was really bad. It's not our fault, but. We were like,

"Yeah, we had our paper the right way."

Both students overcame these obstacles. Serafina argued her way into the corequisite program,

and Julieta passed her class and learned which tutor to avoid at the writing center. Both students

emphasized that these experiences were important to them, but they did not significantly impede

the students' academic progress.

Strategies: Moving into College

Chickering and Schlossberg (1995) define strategies as those actions people take to

achieve a goal. Strategies may be used to alter a situation, create supports, or deal with sabotage.

The students explained the strategies that they employed both in the admissions process as they

entered college and as they managed their lives and worked to succeed in college as they moved

through it. Those strategies are explained below.

Choosing a major. One of the most important decisions college students make after they

are admitted into a college is choosing a major. Students must consider their strengths and

weaknesses as well as their interests and balance those against their future financial needs and

the job market. For many students, choosing a major is difficult, and many change their major

several times before settling on one that they complete. Changing one's major adds one or more

semesters to a program of study, and students who change major more than once, especially late

in a program, can expect to add years of additional study and thousands of dollars of expense;

therefore, the best strategy for each student is to determine the best major as early as possible and

remain in that major until graduation (Bailey, Jaggars, & Jenkins, 2015; Jones & Jones, 2014).

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Often that course of action is not possible for students who do not formulate academic and career interests until after they begin college (Freedman, 2013; Jones & Jones, 2014).

Seven of the student-participants had chosen a major and were confident that they would finish in that major. Three students, Sarah, Calvin, and Opal, had chosen majors that connected to their experience with family, and Sarah and Opal had even thought years ahead and chosen their transfer universities and planned for graduate school. Of all the students in this study, Sarah was the most certain of her major, her academic plan, and her career. Sarah's father was a doctor, her mother ran her father's office, and her aunt had a doctorate in nursing, so for Sarah, majoring in nursing was her first big step toward moving into the family business. Sarah was also admitted to the University of Alabama and was planning to enroll in courses for the fall in early April. None of the other students had made plans this concrete so far in advance.

Calvin's major was also informed by his family. Calvin was adopted, and his siblings were all adopted. In addition, his parents took in foster children and at the time of the interview, Calvin was sharing his home with six foster siblings and his adopted brothers. Calvin said that his goal was to get his Associate of Arts degree at Lone Star and major in hospitality at the University of Houston. He said that he wanted to open his own hotel, and he explained that his choice of major was influenced by his parents' making a home for so many children who needed one. Calvin was inspired to create a warm, welcoming environment for others, albeit in the form of a hotel. Opal's choice of major was likewise influenced by her experiences with family, but she was influenced by her children, not her parents. Opal's experiences in raising her children and stepchild piqued her interest in education. Opal planned to become a teacher in grades four through eight and pursue a master's degree in early childhood development.

Serafina, Terrence, and Hwa were also certain about their majors, but they did not explain what drew them to those programs. Serafina chose nursing and like Sarah and Opal, was very clear about her plans. Serafina planned to complete her associate in nursing at the community college and then transfer to a four-year school to finish her bachelor's. Later, she said she wanted to get her master's degree and become a nurse practitioner. Serafina did not say why she wanted to become a nurse. Terrence's grandmother found the law enforcement program for him, and he was excited about the prospect of working in law enforcement. Hwa chose to major in business.

Talia was comfortable with her decision to major in nursing, but she was unsure about which program to enter. Talia was 24 years old at the time of her interview, and she wanted to get into the workplace quickly, in part because she was supporting herself and did not have the luxury of spending more time in school. She was weighing the pros and cons of entering a shorter certificate program, which would prepare her to be a registered nurse in two years or earn a Bachelor of Science in Nursing, which would take her four or more years to complete. She explained her dilemma:

> When you are at my age you want to rush things, so I'm on the fence. Should I rush the process of being a nurse and take the shortest route, or should I do the longest route of basically getting my bachelors? But I just figured if I did the short route, which I wouldn't necessarily even become an RN by doing that, but I could get some experience just to find out if this is what I really want.

Talia admitted that she needed to spend some time discussing her options with the program director, who could give her sound advice about what to do.

The remaining nine students interviewed for this study were either exploring their options or undecided and conflicted about it. They all wanted to major in something that would lead to a good job, but they were uncertain about what would make them happy. Finding the balance between employment and career satisfaction weighed heavily on these students, and they felt anxious. Julieta's explanation summed up the money-happiness conflict these students felt. She said about her choice to major in biology, "I'm not sure if I want to do this. Am I going to get a job afterwards? That's like the main thing. Am I going to be happy with this job versus spending my time in a major that obviously, yeah, I'm going to do it, and then decide, oh wait. This isn't what I wanted." These students were keenly aware that their choice of major would impact their lives significantly, and they wanted to make the right choice.

Thuy expressed the most anxiety about not knowing what she wanted to do, and the impact of her indecision emerged early in the interview when she confessed to being lazy because of her uncertainty about what she wants to study. Her lack of a specific goal, she explained, prevented her from focusing on her studies. She said, "I am still very confused about the major, so that is why I am lazy. . . I'm confused about my major and my future. I don't know what want, so that's why I don't spend too much time on my studies right now." She said that she chose to major in nursing because she knows that she will be able to get a job in nursing. The nursing degree leads to a job in nursing, and Thuy liked the certainty of knowing what she would do when she graduated. However, she did not know if she wanted to be a nurse. She was concerned that she did not speak English well enough to succeed in the nursing program and was worried that learning the specialized medical vocabulary would take too long. Thuy explained that she is creative and has lots of design and marketing ideas. She said, "I have a lot of ideas in another field . . . I want to do something better, for example, for your computer case. I can do

better. I can do marketing for that case. I have some ideas." It became clear that marketing is her passion, but Thuy kept circling back to the certainty of a nurse's salary and said, "So that's why when I go to school, my time here is just to get the degree to get money, to get the nursing degree. That's it." I asked her if she thought that would make her happy, and she replied, "Yeah, it can maintain my life. Like you have bills to pay, right?" Thuy needs to decide whether she will stick with nursing, for which she may not be suited, or pursue her passion in creative design and marketing.

Mai experienced a similar conflict when she had to choose between majors in nursing and business, but her prior experience in business as well as her negative experience in her first business class helped her to decide on nursing. She explained her rationale:

At first, I think that business is the fastest way to get the degree. That's why I choose business. But then, as you say, I changed my mind to nursing. After this semester because I feel like with business, if I have money, I can invest into anything. Like right now, I have a business. So, I think that there is not point. If I get a degree in business, I have to work for something and sell for them, so I don't think I like it. If I am in business, I will open my own, like that. So that's why I changed my plan.

Mai felt that she could invest the money she earns as a nurse into a business venture of her choosing, and a degree in business is not required for investment. Mai was comfortable with her current knowledge of business, did not enjoy being a businesswoman, and did not enjoy the first business class she took in college, so she decided to do something different. However, she admitted that she would have to get used to the idea of changing bedpans and inserting needles into veins, and she was not sure that she would be comfortable doing those things. Experience may help her settle the issue.

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The other eight students were also undecided about their majors. Isaac was contemplating a veterinary technical certificate and had researched the program at another campus after changing his mind about being a graphic designer. Allison was thinking about majoring in business marketing but thought a social studies education degree would be a good backup plan. Saul chose to get an associate of science because he did not know what he wanted to do, but he knew he liked science, a sentiment echoed by Kristina, and Ula said almost the exact same thing about her business major. She knew that she liked business but was not sure what specific career she would pursue.

Of all the students who had not chosen a major or program, Tony was the most relaxed about his lack of commitment. He said, "I don't really have a major right now. I'm trying to figure out what I want to know more about. I want to learn more about computer systems. I'm not looking to transfer. I'm looking at certificates, the AAA certificate." Tony said that he was "exploring" and said, "I want to find out what I want to accomplish." Tony was the only student who articulated that this was a period of exploration and self-discovery. The other students were focused on choosing a major as a path to a specific career, and they were trying to define the career they wanted. Tony, however, was trying to define himself, and he figured that a decision about his career would follow.

Deciding to enroll in English corequisite remediation. Once students learned about the opportunity to skip Developmental English and enroll in English 1301 with support, they had to weigh their options and determine a course of action. These students all decided that the best strategy for moving through their programs was enrolling in the mainstreamed, accelerated English courses. For some students, this decision came at the "moving into college" phase because they made the decision just prior to their first semester of college, their entry semester.

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For the students who tested into the lower levels of Developmental English, this decision came at the "moving through college" phase because the students made this decision at the end of their first semester after they were successful in Developmental English. However, for the sake of simplicity, both groups of students will be covered in this section.

These 16 students all decided to take the linked courses, but their reasons for doing so differ: to learn more challenging material for personal advancement, to avoid taking an extra course and save time, and to get much-needed support to avoid failure. All the students expressed confidence in their ability to succeed in English 1301. For some, this confidence came from within and was supported by the students' experience, which reinforced their confidence. Of the 16 student-participants, eight began in Developmental English and were very successful. Their professors evaluated their performance in Developmental English and encouraged them to accelerate into credit-level English with support, which helped the students believe that they could be successful in the course.

Three of the student-participants cited their desire to learn as their prime motivation for enrolling in credit-level English rather than the Developmental English courses into which they had tested. Their responses reflected their perception that credit-level English has a cachet that is not found in Developmental English classes or at least offers a level of education that is more appealing to these students. Julieta said that she thought that "it would be cool" to accelerate into English 1301 because she did not want to take Developmental English. She said, "I just wanted to learn, and I just wanted to see how it went pretty much and see what I would like to learn more about, like from the professor, and other classmates, and how they find like what they think."

Hwa's response echoed this perception that accelerating into credit-level English presented a learning opportunity that was not present in Developmental English. She said that she took the courses "because I want to study more . . . I want to get more advanced." Terrence's response most clearly reflects the connection between learning and growth. When asked why he took the linked courses, he responded, "To see how far I can—how much I can develop it. How much I can develop my writing and reading." For Terrence, Julieta, and Hwa, acceleration into credit-level English was an opportunity to develop their skills and they happily accepted the challenge. Their desire to learn was also predicated on their confidence in their ability to learn advanced material, and they thought that accelerating into credit English would give them that opportunity.

For Opal, Sarah, Calvin, Ula, and Serafina, the decision to take credit-level English instead of Developmental English was a practical one. These students referred to time as their motivation. They said that they wanted to move through their coursework quickly and efficiently, so they leapt at the opportunity to skip one level of Developmental English and go straight into credit-level. Opal said that she wanted to "hurry up. . . and get closer to finishing [her] pre-reqs." Chris said, "I wanted to get rid of Developmental as quick as I could and get on level." About her decision to take the courses, Serafina said, "Because I would get my 1301 credit, and I would get 0309 credit. And, I think, knock two birds with one stone." Even early in their college experience, these students recognized the importance of moving through their coursework as quickly as they could. They did not want to languish in Developmental classes, which would not count toward their degree; rather, these students wanted to accelerate into credit-level English and earn credits that count. These students were also confident in their ability to succeed and "knock out" the accelerated English courses and move forward in their

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programs quickly. Sarah's response reveals her practical focus on time, and her confidence in her abilities. She said, "I just didn't want to waste my time anymore. I have an A in the English class right now. I knew I would be fine."

Another group of students lacked the self-confidence necessary to make the decision without advice so relied on their professors to guide them. Opal, Talia, and Isaac were told by their Developmental English professors that they should skip the next level of Developmental English and go straight into credit-level English with support. This was a signal to these students that they had the ability to succeed in English 1301. All three students explained that they internalized the confidence of their professors and became confident in themselves as a result. Opal said, "If [my professor] thought that she was confident enough in me that I could pass it, or take it, I think that I should have given myself more, . . . that I should have believed in myself a little more. I think that's why I took it, too. If a stranger can, so can I." Isaac also relied on his professor's opinion and said, "If she thought I could move up, then I thought I could move up, too." These three students looked outward for validation of their abilities and were not able to judge for themselves even though for at least two of them, the signs were there that they could handle credit-level work. The first sign was that they were making top grades in their Developmental English classes, but there were other signals that these students could handle more advanced work. Opal explained that her advisor recommended that she test out of Developmental English mid-semester because she was doing so well in her Developmental English class, and her teacher discussed accelerating into credit-level with her twice before she decided to pursue it. Isaac noted that his TSIA scores were just a few points below the credit-level threshold, and he said that he thought to himself at the time, "Damn, this is just a few points. I could be in freshman comp." These signals went unheeded, however, until their

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professors advised them that they should go for it and enroll in English 1301 with support. For these students, the care and attention of their professors enabled them to skip a semester of coursework and get on track to finish their programs on time.

Two students who were not mandated to take the support course, English 0119, did so as a deliberate strategy to shore up either deficient writing skills or deficient self-discipline. Saul and Tony enrolled in the accelerated English courses as a strategy to prevent further failure. Both students had previously failed English 1301, and when they learned about the English 1301 with linked English 0119 support, they thought that these courses would provide them with the help they needed to succeed. Saul said that the advisor told him that the course would help him. About his reasoning, he said, "I was like, yeah, I definitely need some help because I don't want to take this again." Tony echoed that sentiment and said, "I failed the first time. I didn't want to do that again." Saul and Tony knew they needed help, and they thought that the extra class, the English 0119 section, would give them that help. For these students, enrolling in the support course was a purposeful strategy to prevent failure.

These students made the decision to accelerate into English 1301 for different reasons and with varying levels of confidence but all of them were successful and completed credit-level English one semester ahead of schedule, thus shortening their time in Developmental English. For these students, the strategy was a good one.

Strategies: Moving through College

In the "moving through college" phase, the students developed strategies to help them manage every aspect of their lives that were impacted by their college attendance. The students explained strategies that they implemented in their classes, on the college campus, and in their personal lives designed to help them manage their academic course work, time, and their own

behavior and focus. The strategies they devised reflect what the individual students thought worked for them, as well as strategies that instructors encouraged the students to implement, and they vary from student to student. None of these strategies are different from what most students implement to succeed in school, but what is important is that these students who are considered high risk began implementing these strategies in either their first or second semester of college, and all were successful in their accelerated English classes. Their implementation of these strategies also reflects their transformation into college students. They became college students by doing what college students do to succeed.

The basics: doing what they are supposed to do. When the students were asked what they had done to be successful in their classes, they seemed surprised by the question, and several cited basic strategies such as attending class, doing the assigned work, and submitting assignments on time. Isaac's response was typical: "Um. . . I would say just turn my work in on time, do what needs to be done, pay attention to what [the instructor] is saying, and if everything is good, then I'll be good, and I'll do good on the papers and essays and all that and the homework, which is not hard at all, really." Sarah's response was similar: "Um, I do my homework when it's assigned." These are all basic strategies of students and could be categorized as "doing what needs to be done." Mai said that she completes her homework on time and makes sure that she understands the material or the instructions. Kristina said, "Doing what I'm supposed to do" is how she achieved success and seemed puzzled by the question. The students seemed unsure if doing the assigned work and turning it in on time could be considered strategies.

Students learned how to manage their own engagement with their classes in several ways. Sarah said that she answered so many of the questions the instructor asked in her Developmental

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English class that the instructor finally asked her to give the other students a chance to answer, and one day, he asked her for advice on how to get the other students to participate. Tony said that he also made a point to speak up in class and ask questions.

Students cited taking notes as a basic strategy that will help them succeed. Tony said that he tries to write everything down, including his thoughts about the material. He even wrote notes to himself when he disagreed with his own notes. In this way, Tony ensured that he was fully engaged in lecture and the readings.

Utilizing the instructor. The students indicated that their main go-to strategy was asking the instructor for help. These students said that their English instructors were people with whom they felt comfortable asking questions in class, after class, during office hours, and even via text and email. One adjunct faculty member gave her students her cell number so that students could contact her when they had questions, and her students said that they felt comfortable contacting her in these ways.

The students said that their English faculty set the tone for these interactions by creating a comfortable, safe environment that allowed the students to ask questions and seek help. Tony said, "It's been an incredible help whether it be with being able to be open and ask about how I write things or just issues I'm having. With a lot of other teachers, I just felt bad about having to say, 'Hey, I need help with this' where with him, it's just like, 'Hey, okay.' It's an incredible help."

Using the instructor's feedback. The students in this study indicated that they used the instructor's written and oral feedback on their essays to improve their writing. For these students, the feedback of the instructor was important, so much so that several students could recount the professor's feedback on specific assignments.

Ula discussed the feedback on her critique assignment and admitted that the format of that paper was wrong and that she had only summarized what the author had said rather than critiqued the author's ideas. About the feedback he received on her first paper, Terrence said, "[The instructor] said that I did okay, but [I] need to stop using these little kid words and go into a higher vocabulary." Kristina said that her professor told her to explain herself better and improve her punctuation and grammar.

Students used the feedback to improve either the original assignment if the professor allowed them to revise the paper or on subsequent assignments. Mai said that the feedback was helpful and knew that its purpose was to make her writing better: "I feel very helpful and appreciate when I get honest feedback so that I know where is my weakness and improve it. Because I think that my first one, I used a lot of transitional words, and I changed that." Calvin simply said, "Feedback helps me." He added that feedback gives him motivation to try harder on the next paper. These students recognized the purpose of feedback, which is to improve subsequent endeavors.

Opal said that she tried to re-do some of her assignments to improve them and looked at her instructor's notes to understand what she did wrong. She said, "I try to play his voice in my head when I'm writing something. That helps!" Opal tried to "hear" her instructor's voice in her head. Bennett, a corequisite faculty member, actually created feedback videos for his students so that they could literally listen to his feedback online.

Utilizing tutors. The students indicated that their English instructors recommended that they visit the tutors available on campus, and most of their instructors encouraged and supported this strategy by offering extra credit when the students provided proof that they visited the tutors. Opal explained, "[The instructor] is really big on having us go to the writing center and

submitting a lot of our research papers and things like that to them. So it kind of helped us to have that second support, second resource we can go to when he is not able, or later on [if] he is not going to proofread our paper or go over it. We have the writing center." Isaac echoed Opal and said, [My teachers] always guide us to the library or the student learning center, where we can go to get help on our essays or something like that. The online tutoring, and we also have math lab."

Overcoming deficits. The students who spoke English as a second language indicated that they spent time looking up words and researching concepts so that they would have a better understanding of the curriculum. They knew that they had to work harder than the native English speakers to have the same understanding of the material, and they accepted this.

Hwa admitted that she has to ask the professor and other students to repeat words so that she can understand what they are saying. Hwa explained the process she used to translate in class and its impact on her classroom performance:

I have the knowledge for that question but when the professor asks, I need to transfer to my language, my old language, to understand what he asks, and then I translate back to the answer, so that took me a long time so I can't raise my hand to answer. Already people raise their hand, so I slow.

Hwa also said that she looked words up in the dictionary often and said that what took other students five minutes to do took her more than 30 minutes because she had to learn the meaning of English words. Kristina was in a similar position. She explained that looking things up is helpful to her:

Because I have to, I do have to look up like for example, the MLA format. I really didn't know what it was. That's an extra step that I had to take versus everyone else in class

already knew what that was. So, there are extra steps that I have to take. When I study,

when I do my homework. And then the language, you know, the whole [time] I have to

look up words because sometimes I don't know what they mean, so, it's extra work. But,

I feel good. It's helping me a lot.

Although most of the non-native English students accepted that their limitations with English

required them to work harder than native English speakers, Thuy felt inadequate about her

failure to understand the material. She said that the teacher told her that her MLA citation was

incorrect, so she looked in the book, but she said, "I didn't understand." I asked her how this

made her feel, and she explained:

I feel bad. Because another student understand what to do, but I don't. I asked a lot of

questions, and I feel guilty when I ask her a lot of questions. You know, you just imagine

that no one asks questions, it means that they all understand. They know what to do, but

just you ask a lot of questions, and then you still don't know what to do. So then you feel

stupid.

Thuy felt inadequate on several levels. First, she did not understand part of the

curriculum, specifically, the Modern Language Association format for essays, which bothered

her. Second, she also believed that the other students understood everything because she thought

that they had learned MLA in school, but because she immigrated from Vietnam, she had never

heard of MLA prior to it being a requirement in her college English course. Because of this gap

in her knowledge, she believed that she compared unfavorably to the other students. Her

response was to shut down. She was reluctant to ask more questions because she thought that

asking questions would reveal her to be stupid.

Thuy's feelings of inadequacy and comparison of herself to her classmates reveal her to have a fixed mindset. She did not see gaps in her knowledge as opportunities for growth; rather, she viewed the exposure in her knowledge gaps as experiences in public humiliation. Furthermore, her decision to limit her questions also limited her ability to learn. In contrast, Kristina and Hwa accepted that they would have to work harder than other students to overcome their limitations in English. Hwa recognized that her need to translate questions and responses from English to Vietnamese and back again made it difficult for her to respond in class quickly, but she said that this made her "slow" not stupid. Like Hwa, Kristina utilized a dictionary to help her learn new words, but she said that it was good and was helping her. Both Hwa and Kristina believed that language acquisition was a skill that they could build through hard work. Thuy felt that her lack of fluency made her look stupid to others, and she let this feeling influence her strategies in a way that would inhibit her learning.

Management of time. These strategies require time management, which was the number one strategy cited by the students. Opal said that she wrote everything down in a planner and on a wall calendar. Several students also cited strategic scheduling to manage time. Talia began taking time off work and designating those days as study days. Mai must run her business two days a week, which means that she must schedule her study and homework time around those days. Both Tony and Saul said that they got up early on days that they had homework.

Management of self. Time management and focus require self-discipline, and the students had to adopt strategies to force themselves to do their work. Tony had to set aside time for himself to do school work around his shifts at the convenience store. This required him to get up early those mornings. He said, "I know when I have something to do, I will wake up early this day and do it, and I'll be done." Terrence said that he had to stop playing his Xbox. He said, "For

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me to do well in college, so I can do better, I actually unplugged my Xbox and put it up in my grandmother's room." He said that his grandmother was shocked when he did this, and he laughed about it. He said, "That actually helped because I would not want to look [at his Xbox]. I will actually open up a book and read it."

Both Allison and Sarah set up a reward system for themselves. Allison said, "Whenever [my professor] gives the assignment out, I like to do that before I [spend time with] my boyfriend or watch TV or do the fun stuff. I have to do that before I get to do the fun stuff." Sarah said that she will not allow herself to go out until she studies for an upcoming test or completes an assigned project.

Management of learning disabilities. All the students who self-identified as having either Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) or Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD) chose to stop taking their medication before entering college. All cited the side effects of the medication as the reason for stopping. Allison said that when she was taking the medication, she stopped eating. Allison also did not like the way the medication made her feel and said that her friends told her that she was "like a zombie" when she was on the medication. Talia cited a lack of appetite, nausea, and high blood pressure as the reasons she stopped taking her medication. Calvin simply said, "I like life without it better."

These students described purposeful coping strategies that they utilized in the place of taking medication. Talia said that she drinks coffee instead of taking medication because the caffeine helps her to focus. Staying organized also helps Talia stay focused because, she said, being unorganized causes her to experience stress, and stress causes her to lose focus. Allison developed strategies that she claimed helped her to focus in class, but she admitted that playing

on her phone in English class may not actually help her to focus. She conceded that she may need to start taking her medication to get through math class.

None of the students had filed a request for academic accommodations with the disabilities services office at their colleges. None of the students were receiving accommodations from their instructors, nor did they indicate if their instructors even knew that the students had a learning disability. Allison explained her rationale for keeping this information about herself private:

> None of my teachers know I have ADHD, so it's like, they don't know and also it's good to, like, it's I don't need the support. I had it in high school, and they gave me study guides with the answers on it or sometimes the page numbers, so, I need to do this myself. I don't want the extra help. I don't want to go in the testing room downstairs, so . . . Yeah. It's like, the real world, somewhat of the real world. It's like, you need to do the, do yourself what you can do, and not depend on other stuff.

Allison was clear that she did not want to take her tests in a special room away from the class. Like Allison, the students who discussed their learning disability preferred to start college with a clean slate. They knew that they could apply for services but wanted to start college with no accommodations and evaluate their performance before they approached disability services about receiving accommodations.

Management of the environment. The students learned that they had to manage their environments to reduce distractions and increase their focus. Terrence put on music in the background while he studied, but only played instrumental music so that the lyrics would not distract him. He said "I would just study. I don't understand it, but I came to liking to study."

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Talia needs a quiet space to write papers. She said, "I have to be in a quiet room. . . [with] not a lot of lighting in the room just to concentrate and put everything out and focus on the paper."

Tony talked about reducing distractions in the classroom by sitting up front in his English 1301 class. He said, "I've also made sure to position myself at the very front simply because it reduced my ability to be distracted. There is not much to look at; there's not stuff moving everywhere, just the teacher and the blackboard."

Strategic scheduling. Just like their peers, these students were devising strategies to move through college by figuring out how to schedule their courses in such a way that would maximize their success and their learning experience. A few of the students were advised to retake the TSIA so that they could skip either Developmental Math or Developmental English. Because Opal had an A in her Level 1 Developmental English course, her advisor told her to take the TSI again so that she could skip English 0309 and go directly into English 1301 without the English 0119 support course. However, Opal did not agree that retesting, and accelerating up without support was the best option for her. She said, "I think it's good that I stay just as a refresher." She said that she felt rushed taking the test the first time, which she thought contributed to her low score, but she added, "On top of the 12 years I haven't been in school plus rushing back to work because my boss says that if I'm not there, I'm going to be fired. It's a lot of pressure. The test itself is pretty much self-explanatory. It's difficult, but you know, I guess what I need to do is me." The "me" that Opal decided to do was stay in Developmental English and learn all that she could to improve her reading and writing. This commitment to learning earned her an A in her Developmental English courses and helped her to accelerate into English 1301 with support, where she earned A grades in both courses.

Isaac said that he missed going into credit-level Math by "more than a few" points, but he decided not to retest, saying, "I didn't want to go into something that I was going to struggle in, so I decided to stay where I was."

Two students, Tony and Saul, reduced their semester load in response to failing courses the year before. Because he previously failed courses, Tony only took English the semester he was interviewed because he wanted to focus on only one class, and in the previous semester, he only took Math, again because he wanted to maximize his chances for success after failing Math. He said about his scheduling rationale, "So I basically whittled it down and down and down, and I'm trying to work my way back up now that I'm focused." His scheduling strategy seemed to work for him because his grades improved; however, he increased his total time in college by taking only one class a semester for two semesters. This lengthening of his total time in college did not seem to bother Tony, who was more focused on success than speed.

Like Tony, Saul reduced his load after failing several classes. The semester he was interviewed, he was enrolled in only English and Math "to make sure that I passed those classes because those classes restrict me from taking basically all the other classes."

Few students reported dropping classes as a strategy. Opal's struggles in math led her to drop one of her math classes, which she said helped her to focus on her remaining courses.

The students reported that they asked their English professors for advice about professors teaching the next required course in the English sequence, English 1302. Several tried to take their English 1301 professor for English 1302 both because they were so pleased with their experience and fearful of taking another professor who was unknown to them. When asked about her English 1301 professor, Opal admitted, "I will probably take his class because I'm scared. I don't know if I get a different professor, and I fail." However, when they were not able to

schedule the same professor for the next course in the English sequence, they either scheduled the professor recommended by their English 1301 instructor or they relied on Rate My Professor to pick the best professor for them.

Several students were looking far into the future and mapping out their path to their degree. Isaac was working out exactly what he needed to do to reach his goal of an associate degree. He explained, "Earlier today, I was looking at how to go ahead and sign up for my major and which degree I am going to get, and everything, so that's the Associates of Science degree, I believe, that I have to get into. I'm not sure if I have to take a test in order to get into that program yet. I have to talk to my advisor because I'm trying to take, now that I've gotten in, now that I'm in college algebra for next year, and I have to finish freshman comp, I'll be able to take all my other classes. Science and history and all that. I'm trying to take a few classes over the summer just to get ahead." Sarah was pushing hard to get finished quickly so that she could enroll at the University of Alabama the following year. She said that she took five classes the previous semester and six classes the semester she participated in the study. She was planning to take a three-week course prior to summer and another course in the summer. Sarah had made a plan and was executing it successfully.

These students all cited factors that are within their control as their most important strengths and advantages, which indicates that these students have a growth mindset. They are aware that their behaviors, such as study habits, submission of work on time, and engagement in classes, are all within their control. Their motivation, focus, and commitment, more abstract factors than observable behaviors, are also within their control. Their determination to succeed rests with them, and the choices that they make—the choice to study, read, write, complete and submit projects—all contribute to their success.

Only one student cited a factor that is not entirely within his control. When asked about his biggest strength or advantage, Saul said, "My logical thinking ability, I guess. . . I know people who are smarter than me, but I can out-think them sometimes." Saul did not say if he works at logic or thinking, but he did attribute his success in physics to his ability to think logically. If Saul thought that he was born with the ability to think logically, then this would indicate a fixed mindset. However, if thinking logically were something that he worked on, this would indicate a growth mindset.

Research Question 2: Factors that Facilitate Student Success

The following section presents the students' responses to questions about the factors that contributed to their success. Specifically, research question 2 asks the following: What do student-participants identify as contributing factors, both personal and institutional, to their academic success?

The students were asked the following question: What do you think are your greatest strengths or advantages that will help you succeed in college? Several students focused on behaviors that were within their control such as their work ethic; others focused on assets that are outside of their control such as the support of family and friends. Students also cited resources, people and tools that were available for their use rather than qualities or characteristics that they possess or behaviors that they can control that they believed contribute to their academic success.

Good Behaviors

Eleven of the students cited behaviors or choices within their control, such as their communication, study habits, or engagement in class as factors that will lead to their success. Allison said that "asking questions in class [and] asking for help when needed" helped her succeed. Sarah echoed Allison and said, "I'm really organized. I communicate well with my

professors. If I miss a day, I will email them to ask questions." Calvin said that "taking good notes" is the key to his success. Julieta says that being a good student, "just listening," and engaging in class discussion are what help her to succeed. Talia, Kristina, and Pearl both discussed the importance of time in college. Talia said, "Just finishing things on time" was what she did well, and Kristina said, "I do take the time out to work on my assignments."

Pearl and Allison have systems for getting their work done, and both cite these systems as a strength. Pearl says that she does not procrastinate. Instead, she gets started on her assignments as quickly as possible. Allison explained her strategy of managing herself. She set up a reward system that requires her to study before she can "have fun and do pleasure stuff." She said that so far, her system is working, and she is getting all of her work done.

Isaac summed up his biggest strength when he said, "My work ethic. I'm a hard worker. I just try and do the best I can, strive for success in everything, really. Sports, school, anything I put my mind to. And just try and pass."

Motivation

Students also cited their motivation as a strength. Opal wants to prove to others, such as her father, mother, children, and society, that she can reach her goal. She said, "I want to prove to everybody that I can do it. And I'm stuck is one of the hardest because it's taking a while, so I have to keep reminding myself and keep looking at my plan, and I'm almost there. I am very determined to finish and to have my mom and my kids proud of me." Opal also cited a desire to overcome cultural stereotypes as her motivation. She said, "And because I'm a Hispanic woman." I asked her what that had to do with her motivation, and she replied, "[I] don't want to be stereotyped as most Hispanic women live off welfare or depend on government assistance. I want to show that I am independent, and I can take care of my children."

Thuy's motivation comes from within. She said, "I just want. I just know that I want to get the degree, and then I think that my greatest strength is that. I just want to get the degree. That's it. That's my target." Kristina explained that her commitment to her goal would see her through college. She repeated it like a mantra, "Commitment. I know. I know. I know. I want to do well." Serafina recognized that her motivation comes from within herself. She said, "I'm self-determined, and I have a goal, and I have to look at it like, 'I have to accomplish this goal.' So, stay motivated." Thuy's internal locus of control fueled her motivation.

Vision of the Future

Mai's response was probably the most poetic and beautiful. When I asked her to state her greatest strengths or advantages, she simply said, "My bright future." When I asked her to explain that, she said, "I always think that when I try to study hard, get good grades, and get a degree later, so I will have. . . at that time, I'm going to have big, how you call it? Something permanent there to back up. I don't have to work that I'm going to be unemployed. I said, "So your greatest strength is your bright future." She replied, "Just thinking about that, yeah." Mai's vision of her future was enough to keep her on track and working hard.

What these students have in common is identification of factors that are within their control as their greatest strengths and advantages, which indicates an internal locus of control.

Prior Experiences

Two students, Tony and Hwa, cited their prior experience as their greatest advantage. For Tony, his previous failure was his strength. He said, "I failed so much. I know where I made my bad decisions. Now I can go back, figure out where I went wrong, and do something else." The semester he was interviewed, he was in English 1301 for the second time, and he took the English 0119 support class that semester because he was determined to pass the class and knew

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that he needed additional support. Really, Tony already figured out where he went wrong and took steps to make sure that he would pass the class the second time. Tony's final grade of A in the course proves that he was successful.

Hwa felt that her experience in college in Vietnam prepared her for college in the United States. She said, "I think it's also the advice I get from Vietnam also support me to success in college. It also give me the knowledge for English to get me in the door to attend this college, and the knowledge somehow I also get from the grades in math in Vietnam, so it was similar here. So I know how to deal with it, and I just get familiar with the way to study more effectively."

People at Home

All the students cited people as their most important personal and institutional resources, with family members cited more often than college personnel. Fifteen of the students utilized their family members as proofreaders, schedule advisors, motivators, childcare providers, math and English tutors, and translators. The students who came from college-educated families indicate that they rely on family members for academic help. Thuy said that her husband helps her research online, but she does not always understand what she reads. She said, "When I ask, 'What does this mean,' he just translates to me." She said that this was a huge help to her when she was writing a research paper for her English 1301 class. Isaac said he also turned to his mother for help in English and said, "My mom is real good at English, which is why I think I'm real good at English. Because when I need help with a paper, I start it off, reword it and stuff, and she knows how to put it all together when I'm like a little bit off." Allison and Isaac both said that their fathers are their best resource for learning math, and Calvin also listed both his parents as his math tutors at home. Sarah explained that she turned to both her parents and her

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older siblings when she needs help, and said, "[When] I don't understand something, I'll just call them and make them help me. Because I have an older sister who is a junior in college and is also at the University of Alabama, and I have a brother who is a senior right now at UT, and he's about to graduate in May. They help me with all of my classes." Tony's step-grandfather is a textbook author, and Tony said that he asked him for help several times. Opal's stepfather is a high school teacher, who encouraged her to go to school. She said, "That's what pushed me to go to school. My step-dad."

Interestingly, Saul cited his mother, a nursing instructor at the college, as his personal resource, but he said that although she asked to read his papers, he did not show them to her. He said, "It's just like, I'll write something down, and I'll know that it's bad, but I don't want other people to tell me that it is because I already know." He admitted that he does not know how to fix his papers when they are bad, but he does not want his mother to read his writing either, thus nullifying her potential impact as an actual academic resource.

Family members also helped in other ways. The students with children, Opal, Kristina, and Mai, utilized their mothers for help with childcare so that they could attend class. Opal was unequivocal about the role of her mother in her academic life: "My mom. She is my biggest resource. She watches my children while I'm at school and while I am at home and doing homework. She helps me a lot with them. . . She also helps me with dinner and stuff like that when she knows that I can't, and I have a bunch of homework. She will cook dinner for herself, and I am studying and doing homework." Opal also recognized her husband's contribution and said, "My husband, he works. He pretty much puts food on the table and gives me money for when I'm rushing to school." Isaac said that his parents helped him with financial aid.

A few students cited friends outside of school as resources. Mai explained that she had a friend who is majoring in Petroleum Engineering at a local university, and she utilizes Skype to contact this friend for help when she gets stuck in a subject. Sam also cited a friend who is a college graduate and a police officer. Sam said, "I could probably ask him about anything. He'd probably give me a good answer because he's got the opposite side. I'm science, and he's history and English." Sam recognized that this friend has a different perspective and different strengths from his own, and he utilized those strengths to broaden his own knowledge and understanding. Opal cited the motivating support of a peer who was supposed to attend college with her but did not. Even though he was not in school with Opal, he still encouraged her and tutored her in math. She said, "He helps me a lot. He keeps telling me, 'You are almost there. You are passing me,' and things like that. He is the one who actually helps me too with my math. He says, 'You are almost there. You got it.' He is very supportive." Isaac, who was training in track and field in the hope of getting a scholarship to a university, said that his coach is his motivator and his advisor. He said, "My coach always . . . points out opportunities." His coach also helped Isaac understand the importance of good grades by explaining that if a sports program has to choose between two equally talented athletes, they will always choose the one with the higher grade point average.

People at the College

The students cited institutional employees as important resources. The students cited their professors as their number one institutional resource, but they also listed counselors and the librarians as helpful. The more connected the students were to their respective institutions, the more likely they were to list institutional personnel as resources.

Nine of the students cited their professors as their best resource at the college. Serafina described both her English professor and her math professor as "awesome." Isaac's immediate

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response to the question about school resources was, "My teachers. They always guide us to the library or the student learning center, where we can go to get help on our essays or something like that." He viewed his professors as access points to other college resources. Thuy and Julieta went to their professors for help on their papers. Julieta said, "I asked a couple of the professors, 'What can I do to make this better?' Or what should I do next time, and if they could help me out on a certain problem, like a question that I didn't really get to ask during class and just do it after." Thuy's professor, Julie, allowed her students to text her with questions, and Thuy took full advantage of that access. She said, "I email her. I text her. . . But not too many professors give you their personal number. But I like [Prof. J] because I always text her." Allison felt that her professor was her best resource simply because he taught her class well. She said, "He makes it exciting, and he gives us handouts all the time." She felt that he was her best resource just by being an excellent teacher.

The students listed other college personnel as helpful. Three students cited advisors and counselors as helpful to them, although Ula noted that she was never assigned an advisor despite being enrolled in EDUC 1300, a course that links advisors and students specifically to aid students in planning their academic pathway. Instead of going to an advisor, Ula said that she sees a counselor who helps her decide what classes to take and where to go for academic assistance. Serafina knew that the librarians are excellent at assisting students with research.

Serafina, who worked in the financial aid office at her college, cited the director of the financial aid department as a valuable resource because he helped her with her schoolwork, a peer review, and connected her to other resources. When she asked him for help with a law review article, he responded, "Oh, do you want me to call my friend? She's in law school. She can help you." He also offered to connect her with authority figures at the college, such as the

Vice President. Serafina understood that knowing one person who can help and who also who knows other people who can help is a tremendous benefit. She also understood that her work-study job at the college affords her unique access to people who can help her, this gaining valuable networking experience.

Personal Tools

When they were asked to list their personal resources, nine of the students listed two key tools that help them with their academics: the internet and computers. They reported that they look up information online for their papers, and their professors required them to type all of their papers. The students who were enrolled in Julie's class were required to do their English 0119 work on the learning management system (LMS), which required internet access. When asked about personal resources, Julieta immediately said, "My laptop. It helps me out because some of the questions I have on there are hard. We have to [do] a module." Talia reported that she got two new laptops for Christmas and said with a laugh, "I went from zero to two!" For these students, computers and access to the internet are the most necessary tools for doing their academic work.

Institutional Tools

Access to computers and the internet at the college were cited by students as important and appreciated resources. Saul noted that he had used the school computers to write his papers, and he said about an essay he needed to finish, "Well, I had already rough-drafted it somewhat, but it wasn't finished or typed up. So, I was like, I'll just come here, and I'll definitely do it." In addition to internet access, the students noted that access to electricity at the college so that they could use their own computers was important to them. It seems like a basic thing, but the more available electrical outlets a college offers, the easier it is for students to do their work on their

own laptops and mobile devices, and several students said, "power" when they were asked about college resources.

The students also listed the math and English tutoring centers and the library as resources designed to help them with their academic work. Julieta said that the math center tutors helped her "a whole lot. And if I don't understand something," she said, "I'd go and ask them, and they'd help me with the question." Hwa said that the English tutors "are helpful to give me for the instruction how to improve my essay." Sarah attributed an improvement in her essay grades to the assistance of a tutor and said, "We used [the tutoring center] for English. You can see that it helps you [get] a whole different letter grade in the class." However, Mai explained that an English tutor once gave her bad advice that resulted in a lower grade, so she is wary of completely trusting a tutor. She said about the tutoring center, "It's helpful, but some tutors, not that right. Sometimes they make mistake, but [Prof. Julie.] say that if you know they're wrong, don't follow them." Isaac used online tutoring, and he said that it worked well.

Although nine of the students cited the library as an important resource, only two students, Serafina and Julieta, said what they used the library for—conducting research—and Serafina also knew that the librarians could help with research projects. She revealed that her Honors English teacher admitted that the librarians know the databases better than the professor did, which made the librarians valuable resources for students conducting research. Saul and Sarah cited the library and the librarians as institutional resources but admitted that they had not made use of either yet. Saul said, "Well, there's the library, but I haven't used it yet. I know that it's there, but I just need to use them."

Institutional Opportunities

Three students mentioned opportunities offered by the college: information about extracurricular events and seminars. Kristina cited the posters advertising seminars for students and information posted online as important to her. She saw it as a form of encouragement from the college, something that indicated to her that the college cared about her success. Opal recognized that if she needs help with anything, there are different events at the college at which she can get information, including information on organizations at the college.

Personal Financial Aid

Both Serafina and Kristina recognized that living at home gave them some advantages. Serafina said, "A college student is broke, but I'm not really that bad, right now. Compared to other students because they literally, like don't even have money for food at times. But because I live here with my mom. . ." Kristina said, "I don't have a job, so that helps me a little." She knew that not working gave her time to devote to her studies.

Saul works because he likes the freedom it gives him, and he admitted that his parents do not want him to work while he is in college. He said, "My parents are kind of against me working. They are like, 'You need to focus on school.' But I like working." He said that he prefers not having to depend on his parents as much for gas and groceries if he has his own money, and he likes the feeling of independence. For Saul, working means more freedom, not less, because he lives with his parents, who meet his basic needs.

Institutional Financial Aid

Several students mentioned federal and institutional financial aid as a resource. Isaac, Opal, Talia, and Serafina discussed the importance of financial aid to their continued college enrollment. Isaac said that he was "lucky" because he had grants. Talia indicated that she could

not attend school without financial aid, but said that she had to work two jobs because her financial aid money was shrinking each semester. She said, "Well, every year so far, I've qualified for financial aid, but it seems like every year I get less and less and every year I work more and more." She spoke of financial aid as both a shrinking resource and a challenge because she said she did not know how it worked when she first came to college and at the time of the interview, she was still struggling to figure it out. About financial aid opportunities, she said, "I always see these things about grants and all that, but I don't know." For Serafina, financial aid is an important resource, but she needs help understanding how to access it.

Serafina admitted that turning down a full scholarship at a four-year university and enrolling in a community college was a difficult decision that meant that she would have to figure out how to pay for school. She qualified for a Pell Grant her first year and got a work-study job at the college, which paid her a small wage and covered her tuition and books. Additionally, she viewed that job as an opportunity to be an insider at the college with access to information about how things are done at the college and access to people who could help her. Serafina enrolled in Honors English 1302 the semester after she took the English 1301/English 0119 linked courses, and because of the high quality of her academic work, she earned a merit scholarship through the Honors College. She was delighted by the opportunity and was determined to fight for her place in the Honors College.

Research Question 3: Barriers to Student Success

The following section presents the students' responses to questions about factors that function as barriers to their success. Research question 3 is as follows: What do student participants identify as the personal and institutional factors that function as barriers to their success?

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The students were asked, "What do you think are your greatest weaknesses or disadvantages that could act as barriers to success for you here?" Barriers are defined as anything that can act as an obstacle for the students in their efforts to achieve their academic goals. Their responses varied greatly, and they cited barriers that I classified into two major categories: personal or institutional. Personal barriers are those that are unique to each student, such as family life, poverty, or learning disabilities. Personal barriers are further broken down into internal and external types. Internal barriers are those factors that contribute to failure or difficulty that come from the within the student, such as academic weaknesses, learning disabilities, language barriers, medical issues, bad choices, and feeling overwhelmed. External personal barriers also contribute to failure or difficulty, and are unique to each student but are generally out of the students' control, such as family issues, a lack of family support, unstable families, employment issues, or poverty. Institutional barriers are external barriers that are presented by the academic institution such as failure to communicate relevant information, problems with the learning management system, and inadequate parking. In this study, the students overwhelmingly cited personal barriers as their source of struggle, and they most often cited factors that are within their control as barriers.

In the section below, potential barriers are explained. Many of the barriers listed were specifically cited by students as potential obstacles to their academic success, but the students also revealed barriers in answering other questions as well, and those are included here.

Academic Weakness

Several but not all students cited their own academic weaknesses in Math and English as potential barriers to their success. It is not surprising that academic weakness would be cited given that 14 of the 16 student participants tested into Developmental English, and the remaining

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two students failed English 1301. What is surprising is that only two students brought up academic weakness when they were asked about barriers that they face in achieving their academic goals. Although all the students were enrolled in a developmental writing course, only two students, Serafina and Mai, identified reading and writing as academic weaknesses that could function as barriers to their college success. Serafina said, "Another weakness would be my writing. I don't feel like I'm a really good writer. There are times where I'm like, 'Oh, I think this is a really good paper,' and, 'I know how to write.' But then, I look at other people's, [and think] "Oh, never mind." So maybe insecurity – yeah." Serafina began by saying that her writing is a weakness but finished by attributing her perception of her writing to insecurity rather than weak writing skills. Mai simply indicated that she makes mistakes in her writing and needs help, but she did not elaborate. Serafina also identified weak reading skills as a potential barrier and said that she "always struggled with reading" when she was a child.

Math was identified as a potential barrier by several students. Opal was blunt about her struggles with math. She said, "Math has always been my weakness. I'm very ignorant of math. I'm not proud to say that I'm not good at it. . . I'm just trying to get that, not perfect, but fair enough to get me through."

What is significant is that few of the students identified academic weakness as a barrier. Fourteen of the sixteen student-participants were required to enroll in the Developmental English support class as a condition for enrollment in credit-level English, and many were enrolled in Developmental Math as well, but few of them indicated that their identified weaknesses in reading, writing, and mathematics could prevent them from being successful in college. The perceptions of the students are in stark contrast to the analysis of their professors and advisors,

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who indicated that the students' academic weaknesses are the biggest factors standing between the students and academic success.

Learning Disabilities

Four students cited Attention Deficit Disorder and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder as potential barriers to their success. All four were diagnosed in elementary or junior high school, and they were experienced in dealing with their inability to focus for long periods of time. None of the four students were currently taking medication for these issues; all four indicated that they preferred being off the medication that helps them to focus because of the side effects. Calvin said that his struggles with ADD cause him to have problems studying, but said, "I like life without [the medication] better."

Talia was diagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) in junior high school and said that she did not enjoy reading or writing because she said, "I could never get into a book. I would read the first couple of pages and then just give up. . . The same with writing. My writing would just be everywhere." She said that in her senior year, when she started taking medication to help her with the symptoms of ADD, she began reading books in their entirety, and she began to enjoy reading. In her first year of college, she read a 500-page book in two weeks and got good grades on the test. This was a big achievement for Talia, a turning point for her, and she related her accomplishment with pride. Like Calvin, Talia was not taking medication at the time of the study. She felt that the side effects, such as weight loss and high blood pressure, were not worth the benefits, so she was self-medicating with coffee and practicing the organizing strategies that she learned while on the medication to help her focus. She said that being on the medication helped her learn how to function without the medication.

Tony and Allison cited Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) as personal issues. Tony never fully explained how ADHD impacts his college studies, but he did say that he was on medication in elementary and middle school. Allison was much clearer about how ADHD impacts her academics and how she manages it, but like the other students, she had stopped taking medication in high school. Like Talia, Allison cited the undesirable side effects of the medication and said that when she was on the medication in high school, she was told that she was "like a zombie," and she rarely ate. Now that she is in college, Allison does not want ADHD to be an issue in the classroom, nor did she want to take advantage of the services available to students with identified learning disabilities. She explained:

> None of my teachers know I have ADHD. I don't need the support. I need to do this myself. I don't want the extra help. I don't want to go in the testing room. It's like, the real world, somewhat of the real world. It's like, [I] need to do the, do [myself] what [I] can do, and not depend on other stuff.

Allison did concede that she may have to go back on medication to get through math, but she was not happy at the prospect.

All four students believed that although their learning disabilities required management, they were manageable and would not prevent them from achieving their academic goals. All four believed that they knew how to manage their symptoms—restlessness, lack of focus, boredom— by practicing behavioral and organizational strategies rather than by relying on medication. Talia said, "Being unorganized is a big thing for me, and being more organized helps me be able to focus. I don't have to worry about not being organized." Talia has figured out how to manage herself, and the other students believed that they could as well.

Bad Behaviors and Bad Choices

Students indicated that they had problems with self-discipline with several students citing procrastination as their most common success-inhibiting behavior. Saul and Sarah instantly said, "Procrastination," when they were asked. Sarah explained, "It's always in English, but I don't know why. With English essays, I always do them last minute. . . It's always been like that my whole life." She added that she liked to go out a lot and socialize with friends, which contributed to her tendency to procrastinate. She admitted that this has been a problem in the past, saying, "I'm really outgoing, so I like to go out a lot and party a lot, and that kind of gets in my way. That's always been since high school." Ula said that "slacking off" in her work is a problem for her. She stressed that she never skipped class, but she did not always do her work or do it well.

Students also cited distraction, which is related to procrastination, as their barrier to success. Isaac said that social media could be a barrier for him, but he controlled it himself. He explained, "[I] get distracted easily, but I tend not to be on my phone a lot." Opal said that she was often distracted by hunger. She said that she thought about food often while she was in class.

Tony recognized that he is responsible for his attitude about his classes. He said that he had lost motivation to work hard in classes that he did not want to take, especially if those classes prevented him from taking classes that he wanted to take. He recognized that it was important for him to push through and take those courses seriously. He said, "I have to set aside my personal wants. I don't know what that is called. Self-discipline? Yes, that's it." Tony recognized the barrier in his own level of motivation and knew what he had to do to overcome that barrier. The key is his self-discipline.

Opal employed an odd rationale to make an important decision. Opal was enrolled in a class and learned that it was assigned to a professor that Opal had already had. Opal felt as

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though she had asked too many questions in the previous class with that professor, and because she did not want to "irritate" the professor and the other students in the class, she dropped the course. Opal explained, "I had the same professor, and I didn't want to irritate her. I felt so bad. She was good. I learned stuff that I thought I forgot not that long ago, and it was kind of. . . She was really good, but I ask a lot of questions, and I don't want to irritate her and take up someone else's time that they paid for and things like that." Opal's decision to drop the class even though she like the professor was based on Opal's insecurity and self-consciousness about her own academic performance and skills. Her rationale that she took up too much of the professor's time and interfered with the quality of the classroom environment for the other students caused her to make a decision that may have interfered with her own academic progress.

Cultural Pressure

Of the five female Hispanic students to participate in this study, only Opal said that she experienced cultural pressure to drop out of school. She explained that pressure and the cultural stereotypes that she believes are associated with her ethnicity: "I don't really feel the pressure as to stay in school. I feel the pressure as to drop out because of the fact that you hear your own race say, you know, 'You're good in the kitchen. You should just do that.' Your race is stereotyped as losers. You can't accomplish anything. We work hard, but we get paid pennies. That's pretty much the hardest pressure." Later, Opal described this pressure as a challenge that motivated her. She said, "I want to prove to everybody that I can do it."

Stress and Role Strain

Four female students cited stress as a potential barrier to their success—Kristina, Opal, Mai, and Serafina—and of the four, only Serafina is not a mother. The stress that all four women described can be attributed to role strain (Anderson, Goodman, & Schlossberg, 2012), which is

when the responsibilities of one role interfere with the responsibilities of another. Kristina, Mai, and Opal all said that they experienced stress when they tried to balance the demands of motherhood and marriage with the demands of being a college student. Kristina said that she did not take too many classes at once, because, she said, "I can get overwhelmed quickly. She continued, "I'm calm, but I didn't want to overwhelm myself. And it's so overwhelming. Because I do, I have my husband to do paperwork for his job, and then the kids, and the house chores." Assisting her husband with his job and taking care of her children must be balanced with doing her own schoolwork. The result was that she did not take a full load each semester because she did not want to become overwhelmed and do poorly in school.

Opal explained that she is always rushing to take care of her children. She said, "Managing my time with my kids and school kind of interferes sometimes. And rushing. Rushing home to pick up my daughter from school. Or when she is sick, it's one of my greatest weaknesses for me because I drop everything and run to her and make sure that she is fine. Even if she is fine, I want to wait a few extra days just to be sure because it happens that she gets sick again." Opal puts the health of her daughter before everything, and she is aware that this causes difficulties. Mai echoes this sentiment. She said about her barriers, "I think . . . marriage life, when I have a kid. It's made me have to take care of her, think about them, and make sure my studying is not going to affect the time with them."

Although Serafina is not married, nor does she have children, she also described the symptoms of role strain when she discussed the stress of managing her part time job at the college, her responsibilities at home, and her studies. She said, "My weakness—I would say that sometimes I get really overwhelmed and really stressed out, and I just want to give up because

of the workload, and then I have to bring myself back up. Because of the all the stress—you know, there's stuff at home, here, work."

All four women struggle with the conflict and stress that multiple roles bring to their lives. They repeated the words "overwhelmed" and "stress" as they explained what they think were biggest barriers to their success in college. They were having a hard time balancing the demands of all their roles and making sure that neither the people in their care or their own academic progress are suffering because of their commitments.

Lack of Time

Students cited a lack of time as a barrier. Mai said that a lack of unscheduled time is a problem for her. She works, cares for her husband and child, and is attending school, which fills up every available minute. I asked her if she had enough time to get her work done, and she replied, "I have enough time. I just that I do not have enough time to sleep."

Terrence and Isaac both indicated that they are not getting enough sleep, and both said that their jobs were the cause of their tiredness. Terrence said that he schedules his classes around his work, but that work still interferes with his education. He said, "When I was scheduling for the times, I had to consider my time at work, too, 'cause it was like – I had to work from 5:00a—sometimes from 4:00a to 11:00a. And some of my teachers would be mad at me, because when I'd come in, I'd be about to drop to sleep."

Talia also said that her employment schedule was a problem for her. She immediately stated "too much work" when asked about potential barriers to her success. She held down two jobs and put in at least 60 hours per week, so she had very little time for her studies and had to schedule classes around her work schedule. She indicated that last semester, she did not realize

that she could take time off work at the end of the semester so that she could study for exams; however, she realized her mistake when her coworkers asked for time off just before final exams.

Lack of Family Support

Although all the student participants could cite support for their academic efforts, several experienced sabotage as well. Several students indicated that family members such as parents or spouses were either hostile to or not supportive of their academic endeavors and sabotaged the students' efforts to pursue higher education. This phenomenon is discussed previously in the section addressing the findings on pages 138 to 140.

Mai's husband questioned her decision to attend college and expressed doubt that a college education was necessary for Mai. Opal's father openly derided Opal's decision to enroll and tried to persuade her that her roles of wife and mother were more important than that of student. Both women used these attempts to sabotage their efforts as fuel for their motivation. Mai was not sure that she would remain married to her husband and knew that she needed to be able to support herself, and she believed that a college degree would equip her to do that. Opal crafted the narrative that her father's hostility to her academic aspiration was a force against which she would prevail. She told him that when she graduated she would thank him for motivating her to succeed despite him.

Thuy's husband expressed support for her academic goals; however, she reported that on weekends, he asked her to spend time with him even though she needed to study. She indicated that his demands on her time caused her to experience stress, and she was not sure how she should handle it.

Kristina's mother's lack of support resulted in practical problems for Kristina. Because her mother did not fill out the FASFA form for her years before, Kristina had to take out a

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student loan for a worthless degree. She was struggling to pay that loan even as she attended

community college in pursuit of a degree that would help her attain a good job.

Of the four women, Mai and Thuy seemed to have the least personal support. Both cited

their professors as being sources of support, but neither woman cited anyone in their personal

lives. Opal and Kristina had spouses and other family members who encouraged them and

countered the sabotage that could have undermined their efforts, but Mai and Thuy were on their

own.

Language

Five of the student participants were immigrants, and three immigrated to the United

States in adulthood. These students faced a host of difficulties that the American students did

not. Becoming fluent in English, cultural adjustments, and losing all college credit earned in their

home country were all cited by these students as issues that caused them difficulty. Table 9

summarizes the immigration data on these students.

Table 9

Immigration information on student-participants

Student-Participant	Country of Origin	Age at Time of Entry into United States
Ula	Pakistan	1 year
Kristina	El Salvador	14 years
Mai	Vietnam	19 years
Thuy	Vietnam	24 years
Hwa	Vietnam	34 years

For Kristina, Mai, Thuy, and Hwa, mastering English to the degree that they could function in an American college classroom was difficult, and all four students discussed their struggle with listening, speaking, and writing in a foreign language. Because Ula immigrated when she was very young, she grew up speaking English and did not have trouble with the language; however, her parents' insistence on adhering to cultural traditions complicated Ula's academic progress. The immigration-related issues that these students faced and their strategies for handling those issues are discussed below.

Kristina, who was the youngest of the four when she came to this country from El Salvador at 14, was the most comfortable with taking classes in English of the student-participants for whom English was not their first language. She discussed her struggle with learning English in high school and said that because she knew no English when she moved to the United States, she had to learn English "from scratch." About that time, she said, "It took me a little over a year to learn English, like fully understand it," but she admitted, "There are some words that I still have to look up, you know? Because it's different. I already know how to speak Spanish, and I know a lot of words in Spanish, and sometimes I think oh, this is kind of what it is but not really because they are not exact." She said that she carries a dictionary so that she can look up words she does not understand.

Three of the student-participants emigrated from Vietnam in adulthood, and struggled more than Kristina with language acquisition. Mai, Thuy, and Hwa spoke about the difficulties of mastering English. All three had taken English language classes in Vietnam and studied English grammar and sentence structure, but none of them felt as though they were fluent enough. Thuy even referred to the problem as "the English Barrier" and cited it as the number one problem facing students who have immigrated to the United States. She described the impact

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the English Barrier had on her confidence when she first enrolled in college, saying, "Because I'm a good student. I learn not bad, though. But because of the . . . in Vietnam, I a good student, but when I come here, I come here I lose the confidence because of the English." For Thuy, despite her previous success in education, she feared she could not overcome her lack of fluency in English. Hwa said that she had trouble following conversation and lectures because her classmates and professors use words, especially slang words, that are unfamiliar to her.

Hwa, Mai, and Thuy explained their struggles with reading and writing. Hwa explained that it takes her much longer than the average student to understand assignment directions and assigned readings because, like Kristina, she must look up words in her dictionary. Mai said, "I know that I'm going to make those mistakes [in writing] because usually my mistakes are sentence structure and the word use. My professor always say that because I'm bilingual, so I have to take time to study about that. Master that." Thuy agreed with Mai, saying, "I think I'm frustrated because I don't have enough vocabulary and then maybe I don't understand clearly what the author says. So that is called the English Barrier for immigration." Thuy went on to explain about her struggle with the English language, "Yeah, the more I learn, the more I think that I need to improve my English. . . Yeah, English is hard."

Hwa was the most eloquent about her difficulty with the language. When she was asked about potential barriers that could impact her success, she immediately responded, "The language. My sorrow, language."

The students who emigrated from Vietnam lost post-secondary education that they attained in their home county. Both Thuy and Hwa had earned university degrees in Vietnam. Thuy had a bachelor's in Tourism and Management, and Hwa had a degree in Business from Foreign Trade University, but neither degree was recognized in the United States, which forced

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Thuy and Hwa to start over in an American college. Thuy explained, "Like me, I graduate in Vietnam already, but when I go here, I think that with my degree in Vietnam, I can't work anywhere, so I think that I have to go back to school. . . I have a bachelor's degree. But I can't use the bachelor's degree in here. . . It doesn't count." Interestingly, neither student expressed resentment about this loss of time and college credits. Both students seemed to accept the nontransferability of the degrees earned in their home countries as part of the price of immigration.

All three Vietnamese students spoke about adjusting to the western style of education prevalent in American college classrooms. They explained the style of education in Vietnam, which focuses on memorizing lectures that are delivered by the professor, and contrasted that style with what they found in their classes at the community college. All three mentioned that their American college classes require them to be more independent, to ask questions, to give their opinions, and support those opinions, which is something to which these students had to adjust. Mai said, "It's more independent. In Vietnam, they force you to do—to do like what the teacher wants, yeah. They don't listen to student ideas or anything." Thuy explained the routine in the Vietnamese classroom: "The teacher write down everything on the board, and then students write them down on the books, and then we just learn by heart, and then when a test is coming, it, it not . . . for example, he gives me the question, I have to write down everything that I already learned. That's it. We cannot open the books, like in here. It's not like exactly Western. I can get A, B, C. You get A, and you write down blah blah blah, what he write down on the board. That's it. That's how we learn in Vietnam."

Thuy further explained that she was uncomfortable in her American college classes at first because she was afraid to be wrong. She said, "Because I did not like it because what I think

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might be different from what you think, so if I do not think right, the pressure… So you need to share more information about that. And if you write, you need to prove it when you write. So that's the way." She did not know how to express her opinion, and she worried about having a different opinion from the professor. She had to learn that the professors expected her to have not just an opinion but a supported opinion, so she learned how to research to find support for what she thought. She said that in Vietnam, education was "easy" because little thinking was expected of the students, but about education here, she said, "Oh gosh! Too many things! You need to research a lot of things. To prove that you are right. To prove your opinion. Yeah, to prove your opinion."

These three students had to adjust to western-style education that focuses on critical thinking rather than memorization, but their prior education in Vietnam prepared them to work hard. Hwa said that she believes that the western style of teaching students to think critically better prepares students for the workplace. When she was asked which style of education she prefers, she said, "Here. [The education here] trains me to get informed [about] the workplace immediately. In Vietnam, the Vietnamese student feel not confident when they involved in the job, so it took them a long time to get acquainted with the work. Here, when the student here, they're so confident when they show up in the workplace, and they talk and their character shows so confident with their knowledge. So that's a good way to train a student."

Ula's struggle was not with language; rather, her parents' decisions about her education that were based on their cultural and religious beliefs caused Ula to fall behind academically. Her parents immigrated to the United States from Pakistan, and they brought their traditions with them to their new country. As was traditional in her family, Ula and her siblings were pulled out of school for four years so that they could memorize the *Quran*. Ula left school prior to the third

grade and did not return to school until the seventh grade, and at that point, she said, "I believe I didn't know anything . . . like Math or English. You know, I didn't know anything. I didn't even know how to multiply. I didn't even know how to divide." She went on to explain that when she returned to school, despite losing four years of education, she was placed only one grade level below where she would have been had she stayed in school, which put enormous pressure on her to catch up. She said, "In the beginning, I was like, 'Oh my God, what am I learning?' I didn't even know anything. My math teacher, she would sometimes get frustrated because I didn't know basic multiplication… So I had to learn everything from the beginning." Her parents' decision to pull Ula out of school for four years meant that Ula had to catch up in junior high, and she felt that she was still trying to catch up in college.

Indecision about Major

Although 10 of the 16 student participants were undecided about their major, two students were so anxious about it that they brought it up during their interview, and one student perceived it as a barrier to her success. Mai and Thuy had identical problems. They were both majoring in nursing, but neither was enamored at the prospect of being a nurse. Both chose nursing because they viewed a nursing credential as giving them a clear pathway to a stable, lucrative job; however, both women were attracted to business majors and believed that they would be good at business. However, neither woman could envision what she would do with a business degree. The possible career paths were too vague for them, and this lack of clarity made them uncomfortable. This conflict bothered Thuy, and she said that if she could not resolve it, she would probably drop out of school. She said that she could feel her motivation waning because she was so uncertain about majoring in nursing but anxious at the prospect of majoring

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in business because she could not envision a business career path. She wanted to know what to do and even asked me how I knew what I wanted to major in when I was in college.

Lack of Mental Health Counselors at the College

Julieta was the only student to mention the need for mental health counseling in her interview, a viewpoint shared with professors Dylan and Kenneth and advisor Elena. Julieta candidly discussed her childhood, which was traumatic for her. She was born to a 16-year-old single mother, and she moved frequently throughout her childhood because her mother would go from relative to relative in search of a place to live. Julieta did not just change houses frequently; she also changed school districts, and her education was frequently interrupted. When she was interviewed, she said that she was living with her aunt in a stable environment and was seeing a therapist. For Julieta, access to mental health counselors was important. Julieta said that faculty should have an awareness of mental health issues, but she said that she was not sure if there were counselors on staff. She said, "I just feel like I need, like some people need mental help. . . because I feel like I need it because some days, I'm just like a kid. I don't want to go to school. I don't feel like doing anything, so it's really hard for me." Although she was seeing a therapist once a month outside of school, she said that having someone she could talk to at school would be reassuring to her. Unfortunately, the college did not provide mental health counseling to the students.

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Research Question 4: Student Mindset

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The next section addresses research question 4: what do the student responses reveal about their mindsets? The student responses were examined using Dweck's theory of mindset as a framework for analysis.

All people approach a goal with an attitude about both the goal and what is required to attain it. Dweck (2006) argues that we approach goal attainment with either a growth or fixed mindset and that mindset influences how we perceive our circumstances and therefore how we react to our circumstances, the decisions that we make, and the strategies we employ. According to Dweck (2006), students with a fixed mindset are more likely to view their intelligence as fixed and unchangeable, view challenges, obstacles, and criticism as threats to their self-image that should be avoided, and effort and the success of others evidence of inferiority. Students with a fixed mindset are likely to give up quickly when success is not easily obtained. Students with a growth mindset are excited by challenges, devise strategies to overcome obstacles, see effort as the way to mastery, and criticism as an opportunity for improvement. These students are not threatened by the success of others; rather, they find inspiration and lessons in that success. Students with a growth mindset are likely to believe that they can learn by investing time and energy into learning, become motivated by academic challenges, accept feedback from their professors and apply that feedback to improve, and persist in their academic goals. Dweck (2006, 2015) argues that one's mindset is not permanent and unchangeable. Mindset can change, and there are strategies that can be implemented to effect a change in mindset. See Table 3 on page 52 for a representation of how Dweck's theory of mindset (2006) is situated within Schlossberg's theory of transition (1989) in this study.

The students in this study entered college with the goal of achieving a degree; however, all of them found themselves delayed in achieving that goal either because they tested into either the lower or upper levels of developmental English (14 of the student-participants) or because they failed English 1301 and had to take it again (2 student-participants). They entered college with a mindset, an attitude about learning and their role at the college, and as they moved

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through college, they either maintained that mindset or adjusted it based on their experiences and their growth as a result of those experiences. This section examines the students' mindsets at the time of their participation in this study. Most of the students expressed both fixed and growth mindset beliefs about learning. At least one student reflected on how his mindset changed as a result of his experiences in college, specifically his failures.

It is important to note that none of the student-participants demonstrated a predominantly fixed mindset, which may be due to selection bias. Students with a growth mindset simply may be more likely to volunteer for research studies involving interviews than students with a fixed mindset. Students with a fixed mindset might be wary of revealing their flaws, being judged, and would avoid situations that could reveal that they do not belong in college. However, students with a growth mindset might see being asked to participate in a research study as an opportunity for growth, an exciting new experience. Indeed, that is how many of the student-participants seemed to view their interview. All arrived at the interview location on time, except for Calvin who Facetimed in promptly, expressed pleasure at being asked to participate, and thanked me after their interviews were over. It is therefore not surprising that this group of students expressed more growth mindset beliefs than fixed mindset beliefs.

Table 10

Instances of student-participants' expression of growth and fixed mindset belief statements

Four factors of Schlossberg, Lynch, and Chickering's Transition Theory	Number of growth mindset beliefs statements expressed by student-participants	Number of fixed mindset belief statements expressed by student-participants
Situation	51	20
Self	27	18
Support	44	7
Strategies	40	10

Below are the mindset profiles of three students: Opal who expressed fixed mindset beliefs; Kristina, who expressed growth mindset beliefs; and Tony, whose description revealed his journey from having a fixed mindset to a growth mindset. Although Opal demonstrated fixed mindset beliefs, it is important to note that she does not have a fully fixed mindset, and she demonstrated quite a bit of grit in the face of familial opposition to her goal of educational attainment.

Following the profiles is an analysis the students' mindset organized by Schlossberg's four factors of transition adjustment: situation, self, support, and strategies using student interview data.

Fixed Mindset: Opal

Opal was a 29-year-old Hispanic woman who was married with three children: two biological children and one stepchild. She was majoring in education, wanted to teach grades four through eight, and planned to get her master's degree in early childhood development.

Although Opal demonstrated determination to succeed in college and increased resolve in the face of her father's opposition to her enrollment in college, Opal still revealed significant fixed mindset beliefs in her interviews.

When asked about her elementary, middle, and high school experiences, Opal revealed that she hated elementary school because she believed her teachers were promoting her despite her lack of learning. She said, "They passed me along, and it made me feel stupid." Opal said that she was tested for special education, but she said, "I didn't make it." Opal felt that she fell through the cracks. She did not qualify for special education, but she struggled nonetheless. She said, "I just didn't understand lot of the main, I guess, math and things like that. I just didn't understand. Math has always been my weakness. I'm very ignorant of math. I'm not proud to say. I'm not good at it."

Opal's struggle with math followed her into college. She tested into both developmental Math and developmental English, and she was struggling in her math course. She failed Math 0306, the lowest level of developmental Math, the first time she took it, and she said, "I was really disappointed. I beat myself up to the point that I kind of wanted to drop out." She saw her failure in Math 0306 as an indication that she could not cut it in college, but she also admitted that her previous experiences in math tainted her attitude about her developmental Math class, which contributed to her failure.

Opal then sabotaged herself the second time she took Math 0306 by dropping the course because she accidentally enrolled in a section taught by her previous professor. When students react this way to the prospect of taking a professor twice, it is usually because they do not like the professor. Opal's reason was different. She explained her rationale:

I was about to take it again when I dropped it because I had the same professor, and I didn't want to irritate her. I felt so bad. She was good. I learned stuff that I thought I forgot not that long ago, and it was kind of. . . She was really good, but I ask a lot of questions, and I don't want to irritate her and take up someone else's time that they paid for.

Opal admitted that the professor was good several times in the interview, but she dropped the professor's class after she failed it the first time because she felt as though she were a burden to the professor and the other students in the class because she asked questions, "a lot of questions," according to Opal. She also did not recognize that like the other students, Opal also paid for the professor's time, which should have meant it was perfectly appropriate for her to ask questions about the material; however, for Opal, the number of questions she asked exceeded whatever number Opal considered appropriate. Opal also viewed the number of questions that she asked in class to be more than the other students asked, which to her meant that she was less able than her classmates, another indication of fixed mindset. Although she did not say so explicitly, Opal was probably also embarrassed by her failure in the course the first time and did not want to face that professor again.

It is also possible that Opal was not being entirely truthful about why she did not take that math professor for a second time. Opal stated that she was hoping to take her corequisite English professor, Dylan, for the next course in the sequence, English 1302. She explained, "I'm hoping he might be teaching 1302. I will probably take his class because I'm scared. I don't know if I get a different professor, and I fail." Opal connected her success in English to her English professor, so it makes sense to conclude that she connected her failure in math to her math professor, and that may be why she dropped the class.

Regardless, Opal's struggle with math and her fear of math caused her to plan to postpone taking her math courses until the end of her program. She said, "I would probably take my math classes at the end once I finish all my prereqs because math is really my hardest subject." Her avoidance of math may haunt her throughout her program. It is a better idea to attack the issue head on and take the course by itself over the summer and get it over with. She should also see a counselor who can assist her with techniques that can help her handle her math anxiety.

Opal struggled with imposter syndrome (Clance & Imes, 1978). Although she knew that CCS was an open admissions institution and that she qualified for financial aid, during the admissions process, she was convinced that she would be told that she was not accepted, and she was concerned that she would be denied financial aid. She explained what was going through her mind, "I really thought it was going to fall through, and I wasn't going to actually attend. I thought, 'Okay, they're going to tell me that something is going to come up, and I'm not going to be able to go to college'' . . . I'm getting my hopes up for what? They are going to say, "Nope, I'm sorry. You can't come." She admitted that these feeling that she should not be in college plagued her throughout her first semester and said, "I always think, [what if] they tell me I can't return." Testing into both developmental math and developmental English only seemed to confirm her suspicion that she was "stupid," not college material. It took time and experience for her perception of herself to change. Opal admitted that those feelings of being found out diminished her first year of college after she was successful in developmental English, and her professor recommended that she skip English 0309 and enroll in the corequisite remediation class instead.

The encouragement of Opal's developmental English professor and her success in her developmental English course and English 1301 were the catalyst for Opal's shift from fixed to growth mindset. She began to view herself differently and began to believe in her own abilities. She could see a difference in herself, for example, her ability to conduct conversations on complex topics with her family members, that she attributed to her college education. She said that she "feels smarter." Her attitude about overcoming challenge revealed her move toward growth mindset. When she talked about her goals, which were to provide a better life for herself and her children, Opal said, "I think that the harder the struggle, the sweeter the success."

Growth Mindset: Kristina

Kristina was a 30-year-old Hispanic female who immigrated to the United States from El Salvador when she was 14. At the time of the study, she was married with three children. She used the word "step" or "steps" nine times in her interview, and these words serve as a metaphor for how she approaches challenges. Kristina's interview revealed her to be a methodical task-oriented problem solver who was not afraid of challenge. Her experience in immigrating to the United States and being forced to learn English when she was in high school taught her that she could handle the difficulties that came her way, and she applied that can-do spirit and a step-by-step system of problem-solving to her college studies.

When Kristina tested into developmental math and English, she did not interpret the event as an indication that she did not belong in college; rather, she said, "I felt good. I think I need a refresher on everything." She knew that she had been out of school for many years, and she was comfortable with reviewing the math and English that she had forgotten in the time since high school.

When she was told about the corequisite remediation English courses, she said that she was intrigued by it. She was told that the corequisite classes were experimental, and she was intrigued by the idea of being part of an experiment. She also immediately moved toward the challenge. She said, "I'm always up for a challenge, so I thought, yes, let me take on this class. I like the challenge thing."

Kristina's comfort with challenge is probably due to her practice of attacking problems head on, her practice of applying methodical solutions, and her willingness to work hard. She admitted that even though she had been in the United States for 16 years, she still looked up words in the dictionary to expand her working vocabulary. In college, she had a habit of looking in the LMS for resources, and when she was stuck on a paper, she went back to review the material her professor gave her. She said that she researched things that she did not know and made sure that she did what she was supposed to do. She admitted that she did not know what MLA formatting was, nor did she remember the components of an essay, so she looked these topics up and learned them. Just as she viewed her placement in developmental English as an opportunity to review what she may have forgotten, she viewed other gaps in her knowledge as opportunities for potential growth rather than indications that she should not be in college.

When I asked her how she will encounter future challenges, her answer was simple and straightforward: "First, I will identify the problem, and just go from there and see how I can solve it. What do I need to do? Which is just kind of how I have been doing. And prioritize." Most of Kristina's answers to questions about her strategies were simple and straightforward. She attended classes and never missed a day, even when she got into a wreck on her way to school. She took notes. She did her assignments and handed them in on time. She studied. In short, she did all the things that most successful students do. She even looked into the future

methodically. She said about taking the next English class, "I felt clueless at the beginning, and at least now I have some knowledge and in going forward to the next class, I know that I'll do well because of the steps I'm taking now."

Kristina also loved learning. When she described herself as a writer, she said, "I like finding new words and meanings. It's fun. That's how you learn so many things." She was the only student in the study to say that learning was fun and to admit to purposely engaging in learning outside of school. This focus on learning and learning as a fun activity is a characteristic of a student with a growth mindset.

Growth mindset students see faculty and peers as sources of support. Kristina said that she communicated with her professor whenever she had a question, and she was grateful that Julie, her professor, was so available. Communication with Julie was one of the key steps that Kristina implemented when she was stuck on an assignment. Kristina also acted as a resource for her classmates. When they missed class, she said, she would try to catch them up. She attributed her helpfulness to motherhood and said, "I'm a mom, so I'm always trying to help them." By acting as "catch-up mom," Kristina assumed a leadership role in the class.

Like all incoming college students, Kristina was nervous about what she was facing. She was worried that college would be hard. After one semester, she recognized the key ingredient to college success: hard work. She explained:

Before I started coming to college, I decided that it was going to be hard. Harder than I thought. And now that I am in college, it's hard if you don't work, if you don't, if you don't do anything or if you just don't care, but if you make an effort to do your, to take your steps, it shouldn't be hard.

After her first semester in college, Kristina was confident that she would do well. She had confirmation that her strategies were working, and she was not afraid of hard work. She knew that if she continued to do what she was already doing, she would be successful. All she had to do was take it step by step.

From Fixed to Growth Mindset: Tony

Tony was a 22-year-old white male who did not test into Developmental English but took the linked courses because he had failed English 1301 twice before and did not want to fail it a third time. He believed that taking the Developmental English support course would give him the support that he needed to get through English 1301 successfully. Tony's responses reveal that he began college with a fixed mindset, but his experiences changed his perspective on himself, learning, and his goals. When Tony's motivation changed from external to internal, his mindset changed from fixed to growth. It must be noted that analysis of Tony's college experiences is complicated by his poor health in the first year of his college enrollment, Fall 2011. Tony had trouble concentrating and focusing on his schoolwork, and his grades from Fall 2011 through Spring 2013 reflect his struggle. He was finally diagnosed with hypothyroidism and took a year off from Summer 2013 through Summer 2014. He returned to school in Spring 2015, and at the time of his interview in Fall 2014, Tony said that his health issues were under control and that he felt great. Although his health problems probably played a significant role in his academic performance, Tony did not attribute his early academic struggles to his health problems; rather, he described his attitude about school and his anxiety about his writing being judged unsatisfactory and his subsequent disconnection from his professors as the reason why he failed English 1301 twice. It was his fixed mindset that set him up for failure in the past, and his newly

developed growth mindset that helped him work to succeed when he returned to school in Fall 2014.

He talked a little bit about his elementary, middle, and high school experiences and revealed what his teachers thought of him and how it affected him. He said, "Teachers told me I was smart. I relied on that because they told me that I was smart, so I didn't study. I thought that I didn't have to study because I did well on tests." Tony went on to say that he "just stopped doing high school," and he did not care about learning, but not caring, Tony explained later, was just his way of expressing his anxiety. He cared, but he retreated because school made him anxious. He passed only because he did well on tests. Tony's response to his teachers' praise of his intelligence is supported by Dweck's research (2006). She explains that children who are praised for being smart begin to value what they perceive as their innate intelligence more than effort and perceive effort as evidence that they are not smart. They therefore refuse to put forth effort because they want to protect their image of being naturally smart. Effort undermines that image. Told that he was smart by his teachers, Tony began to develop strategies common to students with a fixed mindset. He disconnected from learning when it required effort and instead relied on his innate intelligence to pass tests.

The bad habits and the fear of looking less than perfectly smart that he developed in high school impacted his performance in college. In his college English course, he did not turn in papers because he did not think that they were good enough, and he feared looking stupid. He explained, "I was not confident about my writing, so I did not turn anything in. I read a lot, and I would read things and then compare what I was writing to that, and mine just wasn't good enough to turn in." Although Tony was engaged in learning and compared his writing to those of professionals, he did not consult his professor for feedback because he was afraid that his

professor would think that he was a bad writer. I told him that it sounded like he just stayed in his own head, and he responded, "Yes, I did not ask for help. I was ashamed. I read a lot, and my writing felt forced." Tony was engaged. He wrote, compared his writing to that of others, and evaluated his work, which signifies a high level of engagement; however, Tony's fear of coming up short prevented him from submitting his work, and he failed his writing course.

Tony's relationships with his teachers reveal his past insecurities. In high school and in his first semesters in college, Tony preferred to keep his teachers at arm's length. He said that his teachers cared about him and tried to give him advice, which made him uncomfortable. He said, "I did not want that. I wanted to learn. I wanted them to stop caring about me and just teach. It was not professional. It was personal." When he began college, he maintained that distance between himself and his professors to his detriment. He explained how he felt about asking for help, saying, "With a lot of other teachers, I just felt bad about having to say, 'Hey, I need help with this.'"

Tony's lack of active participation in college in those first few semesters may perhaps be attributed to his motivation for enrolling in the first place. Tony decided to go to college because it was expected of him, not because he wanted to go. He said, "I was not confident. I only came to college because I felt that I should come, not because I wanted to come. I was indifferent to it." Tony did not fully engage in college for because he did not know why he was there in the first place. The prospect of failing only added to his stress.

When Tony returned to school, he had a different perspective on learning and his role as a college student. He compared his previous attitude about college to his new attitude, saying, "[College] seemed like something that I should do rather than something I needed or wanted to do. And now it's more of, let's see if I can even do it. Let's do this for me instead of anyone

else." Tony's motivation became internal. He was then in college for himself rather than for others. Tony was not just doing college; a college student was something that he had become. His wording also suggests a metamorphosis, a profound change he recognized. "I actually consider myself a college student now," he said. "Before, I didn't see myself as a student. I didn't see myself as someone who was here to learn, and now I do. It's the most drastic change, I guess, that I could describe."

Tony's new ownership of the role of college student was reflected in how he interacted in the classroom. He was more willing to take risks than he was before because he was less concerned with how people viewed him than he was about learning for the sake of learning. In his English class, he asked questions. He thought that active participation was facilitated by the small size of his English 0119 support class. He said that the professor could easily get to everyone in the class even if Tony asked questions for 20 minutes. Tony was no longer as concerned about whether his professor thought that he was stupid. It was not that Tony did not think that he may be stupid; rather, he was no longer inhibited by the possibility. He said, "I make sure that I've spoken up about any questions that I've had. I've left it to the teacher to decide whether or not he's going to answer them. No matter what the question is, I'll ask it, and if he deems it not relevant, I'll leave it up to him to say that. If it is relevant to the class, he can answer it, and no one loses." Tony also took a leadership role in the classroom and viewed it as his responsibility because as he said, "No one else in the damn class or groups will speak up." Tony went from being a disengaged student to being a leader in his English class and felt that it was his responsibility to set the tone in the classroom, which is a risky leap to make for someone who was so afraid of being judged two years earlier that he refused to turn in his papers or interact with his professor.

Tony's lack of anxiety also influenced his attitude about learning unfamiliar material. When asked about how he deals with challenges, Tony replied, "In the past, it would have made me, if not anxious, then I wouldn't have cared. But now, I feel like I want to find out if I can do it. Not confident . . . curious." Tony replaced anxiety with curiosity, and he replaced retreat with attempt and effort.

Tony moved from a fixed to a growth mindset. Although he did not make the connection explicitly, he mentioned his previous failure several times, and this was probably the impetus for his shift in attitude about his role in the learning process and the strategies that he would employ to be successful. He enrolled because he developed goals that required a college education to fulfill, he fully embraced the role of college students, and he became more willing to take risks to learn. His new mindset has paid off. Tony's grades from Fall 2014 to present are significantly better than his grades from Fall 2011 to Spring 2013, and Tony has been continuously enrolled since Fall 2014. He is on track to complete his program.

An Examination of Mindset Using Schlossberg's Four Factors as a Lens

One measure of the students' mindset orientation is the number of growth mindset statements they made compared to the fixed mindset statements. On all four factors of Schlossberg's transition theory—situation, self, support, and strategies—the students expressed more growth mindset beliefs than fixed mindset belief. See Table 11 below for a comparison of the number of instances of growth and fixed growth mindset belief statements. Across all four factors, students expressed far more growth mindset beliefs than they did fixed mindset beliefs, especially in the support and strategies factors. They were more likely to expressed fixed mindset beliefs when they expressed beliefs in the "self" factor, such as beliefs about their ability to be self-disciplined and beliefs that their intelligence is confirmed by their success; however, in that

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factor they still expressed more growth mindset beliefs than fixed mindset beliefs. Overall, these sixteen students believed that they would be successful in their programs, that effort was more important than intelligence or talent, that they could utilize support systems either at home or at their respective colleges or both, and that their strategies, which were entirely within their control, had a direct impact on their success.

It was difficult to determine to which category certain belief statements applied. The students' perceptions of their situations were inextricably intertwined with their perceptions of themselves and their support, and all three contributed to their decisions about strategies. Did Hwa and Thuy's statements of frustration about their lack of commitment to a major which contributed to their apathy about their studies belong in situation or self? Likewise, did Julieta's view of her classmates as competition belong in self or support? Likewise, does Opal's reaction to her father's demand that she stay home rather than attend college belong in self or support? There was considerable overlap between the categories. Entire subsections of this part of the analysis were moved around several times, and ultimately, I am still not sure if all the material is in the correct place. Certainly, arguments can be made that my analysis in each transition theory factor could be reworked and applied to a different factor.

Situation. How students viewed their situations, defined in this study as their decision to enter college, the placement testing experience, their test scores and subsequent placement in developmental English, and their experience in corequisite remediation English, were dependent on their mindset. Students with a growth mindset were more confident about the challenge of college, viewed their placement in developmental English as an opportunity for growth, and were more positive overall than the students who demonstrated a fixed mindset.

Situation: Growth mindset. Students with a growth mindset adjusted to the situation, both the larger situation of college and then their developmental English placement and subsequent decision to take corequisite remediation English. They looked forward to entering college and saw the transition into college and corequisite remediation English as a welcome challenge to be worked through. All the students in this study had already made the decision to enter college, and they were comfortable with that decision. They may have been nervous prior to their first semester, but by the time they were interviewed for this study, they had adopted the role of college student and were simply refining their strategies. Even Serafina, who had to come to terms with enrollment in community college rather than university, adjusted her plans and applied for a work study job at the community college. She later said that she believed she was getting a better education at a community college than her university counterparts because of the individual attention she received, access to resources, and the low teacher-student ratio.

Several of the growth mindset students saw college as an opportunity for personal growth, were excited about learning, and were not very focused on college as a means to an end. Of these students, all but Kristina had chosen a major. Kristina was not concerned about not having a clear path, however. She planned to get her associate degree and assumed that she would figure out what to major in when she got to a university. Both Tony and Kristina are covered previously in this section. Tony said that his attitude about college changed for the better after he made the decision to attend for himself rather than enrolling because other people wished him to do so. He recognized the connection between his self-agency and his attitude, saying, "Let's do this for me instead of anyone else." Julieta expressed her feelings about learning when she said, "When you're taking those classes, you're just gaining more knowledge. . . So that's what I'm learning right now, just getting through college and having these

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experiences because you only get them once." For these students, learning and growing are their motivation for enrolling in college. They view college as an experience to be savored and enjoyed.

The students who exhibited growth mindset accepted their placement in developmental English as an opportunity to improve their writing skills. When she got her placement test scores, Kristina thought, "Good. Okay, I get to refresh." Mai said, I feel this is my level to complete my writing skill," and Thuy said, "[English 0119] lays the foundation" for good writing. Calvin said that the best things about being in the developmental support class is "learning to write essays the correct way." Julieta simply said, "I wanted to learn."

Although Terrence was not initially thrilled with his developmental English placement, his reaction to his test scores indicate a belief in the value of effort. He immediately asked the testing coordinator, "Could I take [the test] again to improve [my scores?" He did improve his scores, and that is when the advisor recommended that he take the corequisite English classes. At that point, Terrence said, "I said I wouldn't mind doing that because I know my writing skill wasn't that strong." About the challenge of credit-level English, Terrence said, "I face it head on. I'm motivated to do better. I'm motivating myself to improve and to overcome challenges."

Serafina was excited about how much she had already grown in one semester in college, and she was anxious for more, more challenge and more growth. She set her sights on the honors program right after she completed her first semester, and she was accepted into the program. She knew that her honors classes required a long project and presentations, and although she was nervous at the prospect of both, she was also excited to face the challenges that the honors program would provide. Serafina approached honors work the same way she approached

Advanced Placement courses in high school: as an interesting challenge and opportunity to push herself to new heights.

Situation: fixed mindset. Although none of the students were delighted by their developmental English placement, only one student viewed the test as a mechanism for revealing intelligence. When Serafina got her scores, she immediately assumed that the test was incorrect and began polling her friends from high school to see how she fared in comparison. She believed that the test revealed something fundamental about herself and that she was being wronged. She said that when she got her TSIA scores back and learned that she tested into developmental English, she thought, "Dang, I guess I'm not that smart." Once she talked with her friends and learned that many of them had also tested in developmental courses, she focused her ire on her high school and declared that there must be a problem with high school education if she graduated unprepared to college-level work. She turned that frustration into action, however, when she argued her way into English 1301 with English 0119 support, learned everything that she could in the courses, and parlayed that success into admission into the Honors program.

Most of the students admitted to being at least a little anxious when they started college, but they learned that they could handle the challenge that college presented. Ula, however, repeated over and over that she was "scared." Her negative experiences with English composition in high school caused her to fear college English. She admitted that she does not handle challenge very well, saying "My weakness, I would say that sometimes, I get really overwhelmed and really stressed out, and I just want to give up because of the workload." Rather than rising to the challenge, Ula gave up. She stated that she depended on a friend to push her through the difficult times because she did not have the inner fortitude to push herself through.

Her fear that she would not succeed in math caused her to put off enrolling in math, which is not a good strategy for success.

Self. According to Schlossberg, Lynch, and Chickering (1989), one's sense of self can be broken into two categories: personal and demographic characteristics, which affect how one views life, and psychological resources such as ego development, outlook, commitment, and values. Both definitions of self will be addressed in this section.

Self: growth mindset. According to Dweck (2006), students with a growth mindset view themselves as able to learn through hard work rather than beings with fixed intelligence. They view ability as changeable with effort. They are confident in their ability to navigate the transition, in this case enter college, and confident in their ability to succeed. None of the students mentioned that their backgrounds, which they could not control, would function as obstacles to college success, and they were all confident that they could and would do well in their programs. Talia was the only student to mention work as a barrier, and she put the responsibility for that on herself, saying that she should have made more of an effort to scale back her work hours during finals week the previous semester, which she planned to do just that in subsequent semesters.

The students in this study were demographically diverse. The youngest was 18 years old and the oldest 36 years old. They varied racially and ethnically and represented six races or ethnicities. Four were married, and three had children. None of them were completely financially independent, and only one, Talia, worked to support herself although nine of the 16 students were employed. Seven were the first in their family to attend college. Most lived with their parents or grandparents, and the four who were married lived with their spouse and were self-supporting. Only Talia was completely independent, and even she lived in a home she rented

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from her aunt and which was located in a family compound. Julieta lived with her aunt, who she called her "caregiver." None of the students cited anything in their background that could prevent them from completing college, and in fact, they all seemed determined to succeed despite personal obstacles such as learning disabilities and their lack of commitment to a particular pathway.

Opal saw herself as a Hispanic female, wife and mother, and she saw negative connotations in all four roles. She knew that as a Hispanic female who was also married and a mother, people expected her to stay home and care for her family rather than attend college and pursue a career. In fact, her father told her as much when he tried to discourage her from pursing a college degree. However, Opal saw his efforts to discourage her as motivation. She recounted a conversation that she had with her father and said that she told him, "I can't thank you for pushing or supporting me" but "Thank you for belittling me because it's just pushing me to succeed."

Opal also regarded the perceptions of others as a motivating factor. She said, "I don't want to be stereotyped as [a] Hispanic woman [who lives] off welfare or depend on government assistance. I want to show that I am independent, and I can take care of my children." Opal strove to define herself differently from the stereotypes that she felt were being applied to her not only by her traditional father but by others both within her culture and outside it. She wanted to be more than a Hispanic stereotype, and she believed that a college education was the best way to do that.

Four students, Tony, Allison, Calvin, and Talia, coped with ADD or ADHD, and Tony had to drop out of college almost three years prior to the study when he was diagnosed with

hyperthyroidism. Once Tony got his medical issues under control, he felt that he was ready to return to college, this time to succeed.

Several of the students admitted that their struggles with Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) made college difficult for them. Tony, Allison, Calvin, and Talia all said that learning was difficult for them because of their learning disability; however, none of them felt that their learning disabilities were significant enough to prevent them from being successful in college. They saw themselves as students who coped with ADD or ADHD, not people who were prevented from being students because of ADD or ADHD.

They were so confident in their ability to manage their learning disabilities that all had stopped taking their prescribed medication and were either self-medicating with coffee (Talia) or implementing strategies to help them focus and stay organized (Allison and Talia). None of the students with ADD or ADHD reported their disability to the Office of Disability Services on their respective campuses, nor did they ask their instructors for accommodations. Allison said, "None of my teachers know I have ADHD. It's good, too. I don't need the support." They admitted, however, that focusing and learning required extra effort because of their learning disabilities.

Schlossberg, Lynch and Chickering (1989) state that the ability to deal with ambiguity is a characteristic of one's sense of self. Students with a growth mindset can deal with ambiguity, such as uncertainty about one's college major. Tony was unsure about his major and had only narrowed it down to an associate of science, but he was not worried about the end goal. Rather, he was enjoying the process of personal and intellectual growth. Talia was also unconcerned about her lack of commitment to nursing and had formulated a plan. She said that she was

pursing an associate degree in nursing so that she could get into the field and work sooner, thus saving herself two more years of school before she learned if she liked being a nurse. If she liked the field, then she planned to return to school and earn a bachelor of science in nursing degree. Likewise, Allison was unsure if she wanted to major in business or education, so she decided to start with business and consider an education degree as her backup plan. Kristina was also unconcerned about her lack of commitment to a program. She said that her goal was to get and associate of science degree and then "see from there" what she wanted to do next.

Most of the students in this study indicated that their confidence increased after their first semester in college. Ula's increase in confidence was especially profound. She described herself as high school student and beginning college student as "scared," but she said that changed after she had one semester of college under her belt. She said, "When I started to get involved with other people and their activities in college, I started to gain my confidence, you know? I started to gain a lot of confidence." Ula became so confident that the pursued admission into the honors program. Opal said that after one semester in college, she "feels smarter." She said, I feel smarter, like I can actually help other people, like my family members, go to school, and I just know that it's preparing me for the real world." Terrence believed that his increase in knowledge was directly connected to what he was learning in school, which gave him confidence. He said, "I saw a huge improvement in [my vocabulary] and my reading."

Self: fixed mindset. Students with a fixed mindset saw college only as a means to an end, a path to a job rather than an arena for learning, or they only entered college because it was expected of them. These students focused more on their intelligence than their effort and believe that their intelligence would determine their success. These student-participants were not focused on college as an experience or an opportunity for growth and learning. These students were

stressed, in part because they saw college as a means to an end, but they had not determined the end yet.

Both Mai and Thuy were majoring in nursing, but neither thought that they would like being nurses. Both women thought that they would prefer majoring in business; however, they could not see a clear path from a business degree to a job. They did not know what kinds of jobs to pursue if they had a business degree, but they could see a clear path from a nursing degree to careers as nurses. For both Thuy and Mai, the purpose of going to college was to get a degree and then get a job. Mai wanted to be able to support herself if she decided to get a divorce, and Thuy was just anxious about getting a job. They were not interested in growth and finding themselves. They wanted diplomas and then jobs; however, they were stressed at the prospect of majoring in something that they did not like, and both women believed that their interests were in business. They felt that their lack of a decision about their majors disconnected them from the experience of college. Thuy said that her confusion about a major made her "lazy," and She said, "I don't know what I want, so that's why I don't spend too much time on my studies right now." Mai said that if she earned a C or a D in a course, she would quit.

Support. Schlossberg, Lynch, and Chickering (1989) define support as the students' intimate relationships such as family, friends, and partners as well as those connections students have to communities and institutions. Students with growth mindset seek help and accept help from family and friends and take advantage of resources provided by the institution in the form of instructor help and tutoring. Students with a fixed mindset view asking for help as a form of weakness that indicates that they cannot succeed. They will not ask for help from their family or friends, and they will not meet with their professors or go to tutoring. They see institutional support as unnecessary because they believe that they should have the ability to succeed on their

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own. They may also view peers as competition or a yardstick by which to measure their own abilities or self-worth

In this study, students listed their family members, friends, partners, professor, advisors, tutors, and peers and valuable support resources. In fact, many of the students identified their support people as the key to their success in college and their greatest assets; however, several admitted that they were uncomfortable speaking up in class, asking questions, seeking help from the Office of Technology Services, or going to the tutoring center. One student even dropped a class because she felt that she was a burden to her instructor, who had taught her in another class the previous semester. A few students admitted to feeling competitive with their peers. How that sense of competition impacted them varied, however. Two students used this sense of competition as a motivator. Several others, however, compared themselves negatively to their peers and allowed this sense of competition to erode their self-confidence.

Support: growth mindset. Most of the students indicated that they had plenty of support both as they moved into college and moved through college. Most of them said that their family members encouraged them to go to college, and Thuy said that when she told her parents she was enrolling in college courses, they said, "Good for you!" Even the students who encountered resistance from members of their family could still count on other members to support their efforts both emotionally and with tangible support such as child care. Opal and Kristina both described the sabotage they experienced when family members did not support their college aspirations, but both also found support in others, Opal in her mother and husband, and Kristina in her husband.

Most of the students were comfortable asking their family members, classmates, and their instructors for academic help and general life assistance. Isaac went to his mother for help with

English, and Allison's father helped her with her math homework. Terrence said that his grandmother helped him learn new words. He said, "She'll have me look it up, so I'll know it for myself. Really, my grandmother is like my teacher. [She is] a teacher to me at home." Opal was grateful to her mother for taking care of her children while Opal was in school, and she indicated that she could not attend school without her mother's assistance.

Three of the four married students indicated that their spouses were supportive of their college studies. Hwa's husband took over the cooking and cleaning on the days that Hwa had school so that she could concentrate on her classes. She was happy that he did this. Hwa reported that he told her, "Study. If you are not finished your studies, let me do [the cooking]." Opal's husband gave her extra money so that she could get food on campus.

The growth mindset students also formed connections with their peers and participated in study groups. Terrence discussed one of his study groups: "Like my criminal justice class, we had a little group, and every time, after class, we'll meet up and we'll study. We'll read each other's notes on our key words that will help us understand other words." Serafina and Ula partnered on their English assignments and encouraged each other so much so that Ula asked me if I thought that they were cheating when they gave each other ideas about how to write their essays. (They were not.) Serafina said, "Ula and I had our own little team. We would jigsaw everything. We would help each other. And once we were done writing [our] papers, we'd both do peer review."

Kristina, Allison, and Tony assumed the role of support person for their classmates. Tony became a leader in his class during class discussions. He said that he felt frustrated because the other students would not speak up in class, so he asked questions and made decisions during group work. Both Allison and Kristina helped their classmates catch up when their classmates

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missed class by providing them with class notes and assignment directions. Kristina said, "Sometimes, I try to catch them up, and they are a little lost when they miss class. I'm a mom, so I'm always trying to help them." Allison performed the same function in her classes. She said, "I'm the person that relays information to friends that need it." She explained that she texted a classmate the notes that he needed for a take home quiz in math. Rather than viewing their classmates as threats or competition, these growth mindset students took the time and put forth the effort to help their peers succeed.

Serafina looked to other successful students as role models and inspiration for her own aspirations. She viewed other students, especially students in the Honors College, as being smarter than she was, which she found intimidating, but she did not allow that to discourage her. She attended an Honors College forum and described the experience of meeting the Honors students:

> I went to a forum, last Friday, and I'm gonna be honest with you, the students that are in there, I am kind of jealous. 'Cause intellectually, like, their intelligence – or maybe the way how they speak, or whatever – but it's, like, "Whoa," you know. But it's kind of weird, because everybody knows what they're doing, and I came from, you know, my past. I knew what I was doing, I had everything in line, FFA, bla bla bla, you know, I was an officer. And so then, you look at these students, and you feel like you're not at the top of the triangle, anymore, but now you're at the bottom. And you have to go back up, so – Well, I know I'm not at the bottom, but the way how I feel – like, there's this one girl, she's gonna go to a conference, to the Honors conference, or something like that. And so, I was like, "Wow, that would be so awesome to do that." But you have to get up there, you have to make people know you.

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Although Serafina felt intimidated by these students who she perceived as being very intelligent and well-spoken, she also drew from her own experiences in high school as a leader and a successful Advanced Placement student and knew that she had to work her way back up to the "top of the triangle." She knew what she had to do: "get up there" and make people know [her]. This was within her control, so even though she was a bit intimidated, she had already figured out her strategy. The Honors students gave her a goal: she wanted to be like them, and she was ready to work to achieve that goal.

Growth mindset students were willing to seek help from their instructors, and they indicated that they were grateful for the help that they received. In fact, the instructors were the number one support person cited by the students as being most helpful to them with their academic work. From assistance with assignment directions to how to work the learning management system to essay-writing help, the students turned to their instructors as the first line of support. Julie's students indicated that Julie was very accessible, and Thuy said that she texted Julie at 11:30pm to ask a question. Julie texted back and offered advice. Julieta said that she asked her professor, "Is there a way that I could probably do this better?" She said that her professor recommended a *YouTube* video to help her. These students indicated that they visited their professors during office hours. Julieta said that after she met with Julie for a one-on-one conference, "I felt more helped out, supported. I think the way she helped me out was a lot better."

Students said that their teachers' expectations were also a form of support. Isaac, Opal, and Talia were recommended to take the corequisite remediation classes by their developmental English instructors who believed that these students could handle credit-level work. These students indicated that the confidence that their instructors had in them was an important form of

emotional support that gave them the confidence they needed to take that extra step into credit-level English. Opal said, "If she thought that she was confident enough in me that I could pass it, or take it, I think that I should have believed in myself a little more, and that's why I took it. If a stranger can [believe in me], so can I."

Most of the students took advantage of the tutoring services offered on their campuses. In fact, tutoring was the resource most commonly cited by the students. Their professors encouraged them to visit the tutors for help on their rough drafts and even offered the students extra credit for doing so. The students gave the tutors mixed reviews. Overall, they said that the tutors were helpful, but Julieta explained that the tutor that helped her and her classmates gave them misinformation about the required essay format, and the professor had to correct what the tutor told the students. Sarah admitted that she only went to the English tutor twice because her English professor offered extra points, but she was enthusiastic about the math tutor. She said, "The tutoring center really, really helps for math. For calculus."

The student-participants who possessed a growth mindset were comfortable seeking help from family members, classmates, professors, and tutors, and they recognized the benefits of utilizing the people in their lives who could help them. They were unashamed of their need for help, and they were grateful that the support was available to them.

Support: fixed mindset. Students with a fixed mindset were self-conscious about seeking help from both family members and formal institutional support structures, such as tutoring services and their instructors. They also admitted to feeling self-conscious around their peers, especially when they felt that their peers were more successful or more knowledgeable than they were. They were less likely to ask for help from their instructors, and they did not seek out assistance from institutional structures designed to help them, such as tutoring.

Saul stated that he never allowed his mother to read his papers even though he knew that she could help him improve them. He explained his discomfort with letting others read his writing:

Saul: Well, my mom keeps telling me to let her read over my papers.

Interviewer: Do you let her?

Saul: No. I really should, though.

Interviewer: Why don't you let her?

Saul: I don't know. It's just like, I'll write something down, and I'll know that it's bad, but I don't want other people to tell me that it is because I already know.

Interviewer: Well, if it's bad, don't you know how to fix it?

Saul: No. I know when it's bad, but I don't know how to fix it all the time.

Saul's reluctance to let his mother help him would be fine if he went to tutoring when he needed help, but he did not go to tutoring either. Saul's determination to go it alone because he does not want other people to tell him that his writing needs work even when he does not know how to fix it himself limits his ability to improve. Saul was not the only student to avoid the tutoring centers. Tony did not go to the tutoring center for help with his papers, nor did he go to the library to do his research where he could get help from the librarians. Of the three students who avoided the tutors, Saul, Tony, and Paige, both Saul and Tony had previously failed English 1301 and were retaking it. They should probably rethink their avoidance of institutional resources.

Thuy admitted that she refused to talk to the support staff designated to help students learn how to use the learning management system. She contacted Julie, her professor, about how to use access the online course materials, but when Julie recommended that she call the IT

department for help, Thuy responded, "Oh my gosh! Why do I have to talk with them?" She finally asked a friend for help after struggling with the problem for a day. She could have saved time if she had simply availed herself of the institutional support designate to help her with that specific problem.

Several students admitted that they allowed their perceptions of other students to negatively color their perceptions of themselves. Julieta stated that she assumed that most other students tested higher than she did on the TSIA, and she said, "I felt a little bit nervous or not as smart [as] other kids who might have passed or made a higher grade than me. A little bit uneasy." Later, as she moved through that first semester, she continued to compare herself to other students in her classes, and as they dropped out while she succeeded, she felt better about her own progress. It was not her grades that gave her all her confidence; it was how she believed she was faring compared to other students. Julieta turned her classes into a form of *Survivor*. She said, "There were some kids not showing up, and I was like, 'Okay. Maybe I can do this.' The ones that didn't want to progress, they dropped out. And I was like, 'Okay. I outlasted.'" When she stayed in while others dropped out, Julieta felt that she was successful. A problem with this approach is that if she finds herself not faring well in comparison to another student or group of students, she may conclude that she is not suited for the rigors of college even if this comparison is unfair.

Thuy and Hwa admitted to feeling intimidated by the students in their classes who could answer questions more quickly than Thuy and Hwa because they were fluent in English. Thuy did not like asking questions in class because she thought that she was the only student who did not understand. She said, "You just imagine that no one asks questions [because] it means that they all understand. They know what to do, but just you ask a lot of questions, and then you still

don't know what to do, so then you feel stupid." Both women admitted that they just needed to work on their English, but they also said that the language barrier might be something that they cannot overcome. Hwa referred to her difficulty with English as "my sorrow, language."

Strategies. According to Schossberg, Lynch, and Chickering (1989), students should be able to use a variety of strategies to cope with transitions. Students who can employ different strategies and adjust those strategies to fit different situations have a growth mindset. Students who either do not employ different strategies or who employ poor strategies have a fixed mindset. The students in this study demonstrated growth mindset in their use of a variety of strategies as they moved into and through college.

Strategies: growth mindset. All the students in this study employed a variety of strategies to succeed in their courses, including making use of supportive resources such as family, friends, instructors, and tutors, which is covered in the previous section. They learned new skills, such as how to use the LMS, revised their papers to get higher grades, used their professors' feedback to adjust their writing, and looked up words and background information when they felt that their background knowledge was lacking. Several also adopted leadership roles in their English classes and made a point of speaking up in class and helping their classmates.

Moving through college required the students to learn new skills, and the skill that required the most adjustment was learning how to use the learning management system, Desire2Learn (D2L). Several of the students stated that this was a big adjustment for them, and it did not always go smoothly. Of the four instructors interviewed for this study, Julie used D2L the most, and her students reported that learning how to navigate the online environment and learning to check the online course regularly was important. They quickly learned to check D2L for resources, such as assignment instructions and other resources. Kristina said, "If I need a

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refresher, I go to D2L, and there is information there for me to look up. If I'm a little stuck writing something, I'll go back and view the material." Mai said that it was important for her to learn to check D2L because Julie posts all the material online, so it was critical that Mai check the course in D2L for the readings. Thuy agreed that learning how to use the LMS was important, but she also said that it was a difficult adjustment for her. She said that the LMS "kept [her] confused" until she finally asked a friend to show her how to use it. Once the students learned how to navigate the online environment, they turned to the resources available to them in the online course regularly and became accustomed to checking the online course for lecture notes and assignment directions.

Almost all the students stated that they revised their papers to get higher grades, a strategy called mastery learning that was encouraged by their professors. Allison, Ula, Kristina, and Serafina said that they engaged in peer review with their classmates, and then they revised their papers using the feedback that they received from both their classmates. They also asked their instructors for feedback. The students explained the weaknesses in their writing that were pointed out to them by their classmates and instructors, and they said that they worked to shore up those weaknesses. Calvin said, "Feedback helps me," and Julieta said that the feedback that she had gotten from her professors was the number one form of support that would help her get through college. Without that feedback, she said, she would not improve.

Another strategy that the students employed, especially Julie's students, was contacting their instructors for help. Although this is covered in the support section, it is important to note that making use of available support is an important strategy for success. Students said that they met with their instructors during office hours, before class, and after class. They emailed their instructors and asked questions, and Julie's students texted her because Julie gave them her cell

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phone number and encouraged them to contact her via text when they had questions. Thuy stated that she texted Julie at 11:30pm when she had a question about her paper, and Julie responded immediately.

Drawing on his previous experience in English 1301, which ended in failure, Tony adjusted his behavior in class and engaged in class discussion and asked questions. He even made a point to sit up front and said, I've also made sure to position myself, at least in the credit course, at the very front simply because it reduced my ability to be distracted. . .When we are put into groups, I make sure that I take some kind of role—I wouldn't say leadership—but a speaking role and inquiring role." This behavior was purposeful. Tony analyzed his mistakes from his previous semester and adopted strategies that were more likely to result in success.

The students who were learning English as a second language admitted that they utilized strategies to learn the language. They had to work harder to learn words and gain background knowledge that they felt the other students had because they were born in the United States. Kristina said that she had to teach herself MLA format because she did not learn that in high school, but the other students in her class were familiar with it. Kristina, Mai, Thuy, and Hwa said that they had to look up words in the dictionary so that they could understand their notes. All four women used this strategy to expand their vocabulary. Kristina called this "an extra step" that her classmates did not have to take because they were native English speakers. These women adjusted their strategies to meet their needs, and their greatest need was to learn the language.

Strategies: fixed mindset. Few of the students stated any fixed mindset beliefs associated with strategies, but there were several notable instances of fixed mindset beliefs influencing students' decision-making. Opal indicated that she planned to take math courses at the end of her

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program because she was afraid of them. This type of scheduling strategy is not recommended by advisors, who advise students to tackle their math courses first so that students do not forget all the math they learned before they have to tackle college math.

Fear was the basis of two of Ula's key decisions. After testing into developmental courses, she decided against taking the TSIA again because, she said, "What if I don't make it?" There was little to lose by taking the test again, but she decided against it because she was afraid of more failure. She also rushed through the test because she thought the TSIA was a timed test, but it was not timed. Her fear of failure resulted in bad strategies, which resulted in a low score. Her fear became a self-fulfilling prophecy. She said, "Whenever I take a test, I get nervous really fast. I get scared that I'm not going to pass it." Her low score put her in developmental classes, and it was only the opportunity presented by corequisite remediation that allowed her to take English 1301.

Ula also admitted that she blew her A in English 1301 by choosing to not study for the final exam. She said that Julie told the class that if they did well on the midterm, they would probably do well on the final exam. She said, "So I didn't even bother worrying about the final. I was like, 'Oh, whatever." I didn't even bother studying." She did poorly on the final exam and earned a B in the course. Ula's repeated use of bad strategies—rushing through her work and deciding not to go an additional step—have consistently yielded bad results, and her insistence upon using these strategies and her acceptance of them as typical of herself reveal fixed mindset beliefs.

Summary

Overall, the students demonstrated more growth mindset beliefs than fixed mindset beliefs. They navigated the transitions into and through college with confidence, utilized the

support available to them, and employed strategies that helped them succeed. Saul and Tony indicated that their experiences helped them change their beliefs about learning from fixed to growth in orientation. Even Ula and Opal, who were fearful of new experiences and their ability to navigate college and be successful, moved forward despite their fears, experienced success, and became more confident in themselves as a result.

Research Question 5: Faculty and Advisors Weigh In

The last section of this chapter addresses research question 5: What do faculty who teach these students and advisors who advise these students identify as resources—both personal and institutional—that aid these students, barriers—both personal and institutional—that impede success for these students, strategies that these students employ to cope with the transition to college life and college academics, and attitudes about learning and college that reveal either a growth or a fixed mindset? Faculty and advisors at all three study-sites explained what they believe about corequisite remediation students based on their experience in teaching and advising these students.

Faculty and Advisor Participants

Four faculty members from the three study sites agreed to participate in this study. All four were experienced community college Developmental English and credit-level English faculty, who taught English 1301 and the English 0119 support class for students who tested into English 0309. These faculty participants represent three community colleges in Texas. Three of the faculty participants were full-time faculty; one was an adjunct faculty member. All four faculty members had experience in teaching English 1301 to students who test into the course. Three of the faculty had extensive experience in teaching Developmental English. Only Kenneth

did not have experience teaching Developmental English prior to teaching the English 0119 linked course. The faculty participants are described on page 81.

Six advisors from the three study sites agreed to participate in this study. The advisor-participants varied in work experience and represent diversity of perspectives on incoming students who qualify for the corequisite remediation program and understanding the program itself. The advisors participants are described on page 84.

Personal Resources

The students' personal resources are defined as those people or tools that the students can use to succeed in college that are not provided by the institution. These resources can be family members, computers, cars, or money. When asked about the students' access to personal resources, neither the faculty nor advisors indicated that they knew much about the students' family support or access to technology outside of the institution. Both groups said that they knew that the students struggled with financial issues, and they talked about the extra cost of the corequisite remediation class and the cost of developmental classes in general. The advisors focused on onboarding the incoming students by getting them admitted, into an orientation, and through the scheduling process, and they were aware of the limitations of students who work many hours during the week. They endeavored to get these students into fewer classes in the first semester and concentrated on enrolling the students into their Developmental English and math classes first. Ally listed what she believed the students need to be successful in college and the impact on students who do not have what they need:

I feel that if they have the support from their family or from school that they'll be successful. But if they don't have any support— and support, I mean, being at home, if they have that opportunity to be at home and be able to study versus if you have your

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family, issues outside of school that prevent you from being successful, studying or

preparing for a test or for a paper or anything, and stress, that would be— I'm just trying

to put myself, if it's stressful, it affects everything.

In Ally's experience, the students need support at home to be successful in college. Raoul

agreed. When he was asked about the important factors that influence students' success or

failure, he replied, "[It is important that] they have family support because without it it's kind of

difficult for the student to be successful."

The English faculty had no knowledge of the students' personal resources outside of their

personal qualities, such as their level of motivation and organizational skills. They were

unfamiliar with the details of the students' lives outside the classroom except for those that

negatively impacted the students' ability to succeed in their courses.

Institutional Resources

Institutional resources are defined as tools or services provided by the colleges to assist

students in being successful in college. The faculty and advisors were much more knowledgeable

about the institutional resources available to students than they were about the students' personal

resources. Members of both groups listed the same resources: tutoring, advising, counseling, and

financial aid. One faculty member and one advisor described the library as an important resource

for the students. Both groups of participants saw themselves as key student resources, each

functioning in a specific way to help students navigate the challenges of college. The advisors

provided information about navigating the college processes such as testing, enrollment, and

financial aid, and faculty were providers of the curriculum, individual personal tutoring and

assistance, and academic resources, such as writing, plagiarism, and grammar check tools.

Tutoring. The faculty and advisors were unanimous in their assertion that tutoring was an important institutional resource for the students enrolled in corequisite English classes, and all demonstrated their belief in the value of tutoring students by either encouraging or requiring the students to visit the tutors on their respective campuses. Bennett required that his students seek tutoring. Kenneth said that he walked his students to the tutoring center to ensure that they know where it is. Dylan offered five extra points per paper to students who sought help from a writing tutor. Catherine, an advisor, said that tutoring is the first thing that she would recommend to any student who was struggling academically, a sentiment echoed by the other advisors. Raoul pointed out that students also have access to TSIA tutoring for students who want to prepare for the TSIA or who want to increase their score and test out of developmental classes.

Despite this encouragement from the faculty and advisors, not all students took advantage of tutoring. Bennett stated that some students who need to go to tutoring do not go. He said that for some students, "tutoring is mandatory. . . That has been my concern. There are a couple of students I told very specifically, 'You must go to tutoring for this,' and they just didn't go." Although Bennett believed that tutoring was an important institutional resource, not all his students utilized it, which frustrated Bennett. He pointed out that the international students tend to seek the help of a tutor when he asked them to do so.

Advising. The advisors pointed out that they function as institutional resources, not only as the personnel in charge of onboarding students at the very beginning of the admissions and enrollment process, but also as advisors attached to the student success course that all first-time-in-college students are required to take at the study institution. Each advisor is assigned several sections of this course, and all students in those sections are required to meet with that advisor twice in the first semester to develop an overall academic plan and a plan for the following

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semester. The advisors spend an hour with each student twice a semester in what Catherine called "comprehensive advising sessions," so it is then that the students get individual attention. Raoul referred to these advisors as "retention specialists" and "advocates" because their job is to ensure that the students are given all the support they need to complete their first semester and enroll the following semester.

Catherine pointed out that a relationship is built between the students and the advisor through the student success course advising requirement. Although students can see any advisor, they are most likely to request an appointment with an advisor they know and trust. Ally agreed, saying, "You see them, and they're attached to you now because they liked the way that you advise them or for whatever reason." The comprehensive advising sessions give the advisors the opportunity to build that relationship.

Counseling. Three of the advisors and one faculty member discussed the importance of the counseling department to assist students with mental health needs. Dylan said, "Some of the students definitely need counseling, both advising counseling, life counseling, but also sometimes psychological counseling." Dylan went on to say that sometimes, the students ask him for psychological counseling, which is how he knows that they need that help. Catherine said that the counseling office helps students "with personal issues that are getting in the way of their success," and she added that the counseling department also offers career counseling for students who are not sure of their ultimate goal.

Financial aid. The advisors and faculty mentioned financial aid as an important institutional resource with the advisors exhibiting more knowledge about financial aid. This makes sense because the financial aid department at all three institutions is housed within the advising and counseling offices, and the advisors and the financial aid officers work together

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closely during the intake and enrollment processes. Raoul stated that he worked in the financial aid office at both the study institution and a nearby university, so he was tuned in to the financial aid needs of the students. Jane and Trisha said that they took the FTIC students through a "[the] least you need to know about financial aid" orientation session during the application process.

The faculty members were unfamiliar with the specifics of their students' financial aid situations, but they believed that many of their students depended on financial aid to pay for tuition and books. Dylan knew that students also have access to emergency funds that can be used to pay for what Dylan called "basic needs, textbooks, maybe some other things."

Faculty. When the faculty members were asked about institutional resources, they made it clear that they were the first-line resource to which their students should turn when the students needed help. They discussed the assistance that they provide their students in class, and several made it clear that they expect their students to contact them for help outside of class as well. Julie made it easy for her students to get in touch with her by giving them her cell phone number and encouraging them to text her questions. Julie described her accessibility to students via text:

> And I'm a texting machine. They're allowed to text me. Of course, e-mail is standard. But they're allowed to text me when they're working on their stuff, when they get stuck, so that I can get them unstuck. And I'll use—for instance, when we were having the synthesis essay and they were having trouble figuring out what type of sources, I'll send them some stuff and have them read it and then text me back, tell me what you thought. But we do a lot of [question/answer] over testing, because that's just the nature of them. And I have found that very helpful. And that's – they all text me.

Indeed, both Kristina and Thuy, two of Julie's students who participated in this study, indicated that Julie's accessibility was what they most appreciated about her.

Bennett and Julie made time for conferences with their English 0119 students. At least once during the semester, Bennett scheduled time to meet with the students individually so that he could discuss their progress in his course. He said, "In the NCBO, there's one class day that does conferencing, but there are also times in the semester when I'm talking to the students while they are doing other things. And I don't necessarily do that in the regular 1301 either." The low ten-student cap in the English 0119 course allowed Bennett to work with students one-on-one during class, which is something that he said he could not do in his larger English 1301 classes.

Julie's conferences were built around paper revisions. When Julie gave a student a grade of "R" on a paper, the student was required to meet with her to discuss how the student should revise the paper. Julie explained her rationale for the conferences: "And when I hand them the paper back and they get the R, they have to have a meeting with me. They can't just—they actually have to sit down. And so, this is the room we use, and they would go on *10 to 8* and book conference time with me. It was a booking tool. And I would always be here when they booked—and they all came streaming in. But they knew that they had my undivided attention at that time." Bennett and Julie's students benefitted from this one-on-one time with their professors and knew that their academic work and their success mattered to their professors.

Bennett and Julie looked for ways to utilize technology to assist students. Julie posted all of her class notes on the learning management system (LMS), and her students were expected to utilize the LMS tools such as the drop boxes and posted notes as well as complete homework assignments online. Julie also utilized *Grammarly,* an online tool that points out grammar, sentence structure, and spelling errors and explains how to correct those errors. Julie's international students who participated in this study were grateful for the help that *Grammarly* provided and cited it as a particularly helpful tool. Bennett gave the students verbal feedback

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through electronic voice notes to assist his students with learning disabilities, and he posted links to Turnitin.com and PaperRater.com in the online course materials. Allison, one of Bennett's students, specifically cited *PaperRater* and Bennett's voice notes as tools that she found especially useful when she was revising her essays.

Kenneth saw himself as a connector of students to resources. His practice of walking students to both the tutoring center and the library was his way of emphasizing the importance of these institutional resources. He said that he asks the librarians to give his students an overview of the library services and devotes a class period to this presentation each semester. His personal endorsement of tutoring and the library sends a message to the students that these resources are valuable.

Both the faculty and the advisors believed that the students were given ample resources by the institution. Elena said, "Success and failing, it starts with us encouraging and giving them the resources that they need to be successful in school." She focused on connections between the students, and she said, "Everybody. The advisors, the counselors, the teachers, professors...So I believe this school has a lot of resources." Kenneth indicated that he was pleased overall by the services provided to students by the institution and said, "I think most of the advisors do a good job… Yeah, I don't know, tutoring, writing center, librarians, and then all of the administrative stuff they'd need, bursar, advising, financial aid; they always seem to be separate and seem to be fairly punctual."

Personal Barriers

Personal barriers are any obstacles that impede the students' progress through college that are not associated with the institution. Barriers can include academic unpreparedness, immaturity, learning disabilities, dependents, a lack of motivation, and mental health issues. The

faculty and the advisors focused on different types of obstacles when asked to articulate the barriers that these students face with the advisors citing external factors as barriers, such as employment and childcare, and the faculty citing internal factors such as immaturity and motivation issues. However, both groups cited academic under-preparedness as the number one barrier that the students must overcome. Simply put, they are not ready to tackle college-level work when they enter college.

Academic under-preparedness. Faculty and advisors stated that the students' biggest barrier was their academic under-preparedness. All felt that the students entered college unprepared for the academic work that was expected of them, which is what landed the students in the English 0119 support class in the first place. Bennett said about the English 0119 students, "I think it is that they are typical dev-ed students, and that just means that they are just unprepared for college-level reading and writing." Dylan described the writing skills of his English 0119 students as "poor to barely average" and compared his English 0119 students to his traditional English 1301 students:

> Their writing tends to include more grammatical errors. It tends to include more sentence structure and boundary errors. They also don't have as good an understanding of structure as far as if you want to call it the five-paragraph essay, where to put a thesis statement, maybe where the thesis statement belongs, and the fact that it needs to have reasons to support it. Those things need to be taught to them to a great degree. Little to no understanding of MLA, quoting, direct quotes.

Dylan lists the ways that the corequisite students are deficient in their preparation for college writing, but it is important to note that these skills can be taught and learned, and in fact, that is the point of the corequisite remediation classes, which is Kenneth's ultimate focus. Kenneth's

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belief that the English 0019 students are overall only slightly less prepared than the students who tested directly into English 1301, but he stated that they make great gains because of the linked corequisite classes. He said, "I think on the whole in terms of how they do versus the 1301 students, maybe just slightly below average on the way in, but that's no longer the case after the NCBO. And it's not really about intellectual ability; it's more about a lack of exposure to college academics and writing." Kenneth accepted that the students come in less prepared, and he focused on getting them prepared.

Julie referred to her English 0119 students as "academically immature," a theme that underscored the faculty members' analyses of the students' lack of academic preparation and their struggle to think critically. Bennett explained that his English 0119 students had trouble coming out of themselves and their own experience to write objectively about a topic on which they had strong feelings. They could not separate their emotions from their argument and use evidence that was separate from their emotions when crafting an argument, which he felt was due to their academic immaturity. Dylan agreed and said that his corequisite students struggle to write about "topics instead of themselves as a subject." The students are uncomfortable with writing about topics outside of their own experience and examining different perspectives.

Julie agreed with Kenneth that the students can be helped to overcome that lack of preparation for higher education and their academic immaturity, which impacts every aspect of their academic lives, and she took on the task of helping them become more mature college students and more proficient at navigating the college arena. She said, "But until we teach them how to do it—I have students that never have—they can't have a conversation with a professor. They don't know how to stand still enough to do that. Or the language that they use is so deplorable . . . And we work a lot on appearances—appearances orally, appearances written—

just discourse in general." Julie saw her role as helping the students not only become academically prepared for the rigors of college work but to also gain those soft skills, such as speaking with professors, sending emails, and dressing appropriately, that would also help them to be successful in college.

Lack of motivation. The faculty participants also described the students' level of motivation, which they said varied. Bennett and Kenneth stated that the English 0119 students were not any more motivated than the traditional English 1301 students. Kenneth even described a few of them as "disconnected," a state that he attributed to their perception that they did not need to be in English 0119 and their subsequent resentment at having to take the course, and point with which Bennett disagreed. Bennett stated that his English 0119 students were more motivated than his English 0309 students because they wanted to pass English 1301 and were happy to be given the option of accelerating out of English 0309.

Kenneth said that a few students were intimidated by academic writing to the degree that they shut down or made excuses when faced with a formal writing assignment. He said, "The NCBO students were more likely to have an excuse that was a strange excuse for not having the work done." He described a student who cited her mother's cooking as a distraction and her ADHD as reasons why she could not complete an assignment. Bennett revealed that his students have a hard time identifying exactly what they need to work and cite what they perceive as their inability to write well as their main excuse for not completing their work. He said, "They just kind of say that they are bad writers," a form of circular reasoning that is frustrating for faculty whose job it is to help the students improve their writing skills.

In contrast, Dylan believed that his English 0119 students are more motivated than the traditional English 1301 students, and he attributed this level of motivation in this group to how

the students were recruited for the course at his college. He explained that many of his students were recommended to take the course by their English 0306 instructors because those students proved to be exceptional writers, who would probably fare well accelerating straight into English 1301 with support. He said about his students, "They're more attentive to their grades and tend to be more responsible. They advocate more clearly for themselves and are less shy about doing so probably because they've been rewarded by professors before as being exceptional students or good students." Opal was one of Dylan's students who was recommended into the accelerated course by her English 0306 professor, and she fits Dylan's description of a motivated English 0119 student.

Life issues. The faculty mentioned life issues that they believed impacted the students' success in college, and these life issues paralleled what the students indicated were their biggest barriers, such as struggles with ADD and ADHD, break-ups, and family drama; however, the faculty varied in their perceptions of these life issues. Julie, Dylan, and Bennett, all of whom were experienced Developmental English instructors, believed that the English 0119 students had fewer personal obstacles to overcome than the students enrolled in their Developmental I English courses, but they felt that the students' life issues did impede their success in college. Both Dylan and Julie talked about students who came to class under the influence of drugs. Julie described students bringing their children to class when the children were on school holidays. Kenneth believed that the English 0119 students did not struggle more with life issues than did other students:

> I mean I don't think their issues are different than anybody else's collectively. I think
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> they have jobs and they have family members who die and they have illness. They have
>
> kid-watching issues. they have all that stuff too. I get it. You hear it more as a professor

because it's a smaller class, right, and there's a little bit more maybe of a comfort level or

something. But I don't think of them as coming to the door with more baggage than the

other students necessarily.

Kenneth did not see his corequisite students as fundamentally different from the students who

tested directly into credit-level English and that their personal struggles were the same as those

of most of his students.

The advisors had more knowledge of the students' personal commitments outside of

school than the faculty did because it was their job to formulate the best possible schedule for

each student. The role of the advisors was to help the student create a plan for each student's

academic program semester by semester, so the advisors saw the bigger picture of each student's

life, whereas the faculty were focused on the students' progress in their class. The faculty learned

of students' personal struggles if the students brought them up in conversation or wrote about

them, but the faculty did not make personal inquiries. The advisors, however, were trained to ask

questions about the students' lives outside of college, so they were more cognizant of the

personal situations of each student they advised. Elena explained how she determines the level of

responsibility each student has outside of school so that she can gauge how many classes the

students should take:

But I do ask them how many hours a week do they work, how many—do they have a

family. . . are they gonna have a family? Do they have children? What other

responsibilities do they have? Because I usually let them know that it's not just coming to

class. They also have to make time to study, and that's what I usually kinda tell them

without looking at where to put my information, but that's what I usually go by. And ask

them, it's mostly do you work full-time? Do you work part-time? How many hours a

week do you work? How many hours a week do you also spend in other activities? Church, do you have family? You have to spend time with your family. And how many classes do you want to take per semester? It depends on how many credit hours, how many hours a week they work and it depends on how many credit hours they're taking. Let's say they're working 40 hours a week, I usually recommend to start off maybe two and then if they can handle it and they can balance everything in their life together.

For example, Catherine noted, "Let's say they work full time, they can only take two classes. That's the maximum amount of time they have." Part-time enrollment becomes a barrier, however, when it requires students to work two or three times longer than a full-time student for the same degree.

Institutional Barriers

Institutional barriers were those obstacles that were created or put into place by the colleges and impeded the progress of the students. The advisors revealed more institutional barriers than did the faculty. These barriers included the advising model, the small size of the corequisite program at one college, inconsistency among the advisors in determining what type of students are best suited for the program, inconsistency in understanding how to place students using TSIA scores, and the lack of knowledge about the corequisite program itself.

      Too little time with advisors for first-semester enrollment. When asked about the process for moving students into college, three advisors admitted that time constraints limited their ability to meet the needs of individual students. The students went through orientation in groups before meeting with the advisor to create their schedules. Because the orientations accommodate large numbers of students, this means that these students would arrive at the advising office at the same time. The advisors at Campus A, Catherine and Elena, revealed that

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the advisors only spent about three to four minutes with each student, which was not enough time to truly learn each student's individual needs. Catherine explained the limitations of advising new students, saying, "We are generally seeing these students during new student orientation. And there could be 60, 70, 80, 90 students sitting there, waiting for their visit with the advisor. We don't have time to ask multiple questions. And discussion type questions."

Raoul admitted that he had a similar problem during what he called "peak time," which was the two weeks before classes began. Typically, this is when many community college students undergo the admissions process, which means that the advising offices are flooded with FTIC students during these two weeks. The advisors try to handle the volume by reducing the number of minutes they spend with individual students.

The time constraints that impact the advisors' ability to spend time with the students advising them about their first semester schedule could cost the students an extra semester in Developmental English classes that they do not need. The individual advising sessions that come later that semester as part of their student success course cannot make up the time lost if students who could have been enrolled in corequisite remediation courses are instead advised to take Developmental English because the advisor did not have time to dig more deeply into the students' individual abilities and needs.

Not all the advisors reported significant time constraints. Ally, Jane, and Trisha said that that the advisors on their campuses spend about 30 minutes with each student after the students completed orientation. Jane and Trisha were the front-line advisors, who armed the students with as much information as possible before sending them to meet with the advisors who would assist with course scheduling. They did not indicate that time was a problem for them, and they took pride in the amount of time that they spent with FTIC students. Ally's claim that she spent about

30 minutes with each student was supported by her explanation of how she determines who is right for the corequisite remediation program, which involves asking students questions about their prior academic history, TSIA experience, and level of motivation.

Failure to scale. Small program size was a barrier at the largest college in this study, Campus A, which enrolled more than 20,000 students in both the Fall 2014 and Fall 2015 semesters but only enrolled 10 students in the corequisite remediation program. The two smaller colleges in this study, Campus B and Campus C, accelerated more students than did Campus A in both semesters, and after those colleges scaled up their programs in Fall 2016, their enrollments in the corequisite remediation classes more than tripled those from Fall 2014; however, Campus A corequisite enrollments remained flat at 10 students. The advisors at Campus A, Catherine and Elena, said that when the corequisite English 0119 sections filled, no more students could be enrolled in the program on that campus. Catherine explained the problem: "My understanding is we had one section of it and it was capped at something like ten students. And so apparently, it filled up really quickly, because those students were, I guess the ones we talked to about it first, filled it up." With slots for only 10 students, it is doubtful that Campus A is offering the option to accelerate to all the English 0309 students who qualify.

On Campus A, only one faculty member, Dylan, was enlisted to teach corequisite remediation English classes, which contributed to the smallest program size at the largest study institution. Campus A's enrollment was high, over 20,000 students, but the institution only served 10 students per semester in corequisite English classes. Neither the advisors nor Dylan knew of efforts to grow the program.

The problem of limited slots in corequisite classes was not limited to Campus. A. Raoul, an advisor at Campus C said about the program, "It might be full. Like I said, if we only have

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two sections of it and it's full, then we can't make the department chair create more." It might be possible to build more sections if the section builders know about the demand for the program. Raoul was not sure of how to increase the program availability, but he knew that it was a problem.

Advisors are uninformed about the program. In addition to having too little time to work with students in scheduling their first semester, a few advisors revealed a lack of understanding about different aspects of the corequisite program, such as student placement in the course and the curriculum.

Two advisors revealed misperceptions about who was eligible to go directly into English 1301, and tied this eligibility to the lack of space in the corequisite program. About running out of space in the existing sections, Catherine said, "And the understanding I got was if students, if we brought them up, and then that class was full, then they didn't have to take it. Because we couldn't offer it to them. We didn't have any more sections to offer, so we shouldn't penalize them for the fact that we didn't have any more sections to offer." Catherine went on to explain why she did not fully understand the program, saying, "We don't get that much information about that at new student orientation, which is where we sign up most new students into developmental classes. There's not a lot of information that we get about that, about that course." Elena's responses about the program supported Catherine's assessment. She said, "What I know is that it is very limited. There's not many classes available. And what I know is that I'm not sure we're doing this correctly. If we could do the bubble and we could still put them in college level English without the NCBO. I'm not sure if we could do that or not. I have not done that, but that's when we have to tell them that they have to retest if they want to take college English." Catherine and Elena were incorrect in their understanding that the students would not have to

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take the corequisite class if there were no more slots open. Because the course was geared toward students who test into English 0309, students who could not take the corequisite classes would have had to enroll in English 0309 instead. They were not eligible to take English 1301 without the English 0119 support course if they tested into English 0309.

Ally, Elena, and Raoul had gaps in their knowledge about the course curriculum. Ally spoke about the course in general terms, saying, "It's college level as it would be for the other courses, but at a different level. If that makes any sense. That's the way I see it, the way I understand it. It's for the students who do need the extra help. It's not going to be as advanced as honors or a regular English 1300 course where everyone doesn't need that extra help." She went on to say, "If they're not understanding something, and I don't know if that's – that's the way I explain it to them. If they are not understanding something in the English course, I feel like this lab helps them understand that. They get stuck at some point, they have that additional resource to get unstuck. Is that how it works with the course?" Elena spoke about the linked courses in similar terms, saying, "I believe it's wonderful because it's gonna [*sic*] actually teach them whatever skills they're actually teaching to be successful in your writing skills. And I explained this to them. I said a lot of your courses are gonna [*sic*] be writing, so you might as well get this done correctly." Raoul admitted that although he understood how the course is built from a scheduling perspective, and he knows that it is for students who test into English 0309 but who could pass English 1301 with extra support, he does not really know what is taught in the course. He said, "The only thing I don't know is how it's really done within the classroom… I've never really gone into the course or the class, but I think that's something I want to do, too." Catherine was not sure how the class was taught and said, "And actually, I try to explain what I know about it, and my understanding, now that I'm thinking back, is that basically, it's a lab where there's no

lecture, and the students are using a CD, self-paced learning module. Does that sound right?"

Catherine confused the English corequisite program with the math lab that used Pearson's My

Math Lab computer program.

For Raoul and Ally, the two advisors who knew the most about the corequisite program, information about the program came from the English department chairs or the deans. Catherine and Elena indicated that no one was giving them information about the program on a regular basis. However, all the advisors were supportive of the program, and all understood that its purpose was to accelerate developmental students and give extra support to those students so that they could earn college-level English credit. Ally expressed her support for the program:

> I think it's great. I think it's a great opportunity for students who need that extra push.
> Even if they are ready for college English but they're scared, because they're scared of
> taking that next step, it gives them a little bit of support. That way if they have any
> questions or anything, they have that there with them. I think the math and English, I
> think they're great ideas.

If the advisors do not understand the programs they are advising the students into, it is more difficult for them to match students to the program and give the students a clear idea of what they are undertaking. The advisors needed information about the corequisite program from either the department or the faculty teaching the courses so that the advisors could appropriately advise students into the courses.

Little communication about the program college-wide. The advisors' confusion about student eligibility for the program may have impacted enrollment of the students for whom the program was designed. The program was originally designed for students who tested one level below credit-level English, and of those students, those who tested within two points of the TSIA

cut-off score for English 1301 would be advised into the accelerated program, thus skipping one level of Developmental English. However, of the 16 students interviewed for this study, only six students followed that path. Eight students were bumped into the accelerated program after they were successful in their lower-level Developmental English courses, and their professors recommended acceleration, and the remaining two students tested into English 1301, failed the course, and decided to take English 0119 as a support course.

Julie, one of the corequisite faculty members, explained that she had able to "cherry pick" students for her corequisite classes in the past because she taught the lower-level Developmental English classes. She recommended the program to her best students, students with whom she was familiar.

It is a testament to the success of the program that students who were successful in the lowest levels of Developmental English could use this course as a path to accelerate their progress into credit English and as a support for their success, and likewise, that students who tested into credit English who believe that they need extra support enrolled in the program to maximize their chances for success. These paths of acceleration and support were not originally envisioned when the program was created, but the more students whom acceleration can help, the better.

The concern is that too few students who qualify for corequisite remediation were being recommended for the program because the advisors do not have a clear understanding of what the program is, how to advise students into it, and who should be advised into it. However, students were learning about the program, just learning about it haphazardly. Two advisors stated that students find out about the program through word of mouth. Both Raoul and Ally said that students find out about the course in two ways: either through an advisor, who recommends the

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program to the students, or by searching for English classes on the online course listing, and then going to the advisors for information. Raoul said, "They'll find out on their own when they're searching for their classes and they'll ask what is this? And so we'll tell them that it's a class that's kind of tied together, so they'll get interested and they'll say they'll want to take the class." Elena admitted that students also find out about the program through their peers or "word of mouth" and go to the advisors with questions. She said that students will come to her and say, "'I know I qualify for the bubble.'" She then explained what the bubble is and ascertained their eligibility for the program.

Of the six student-participants, two had to self-advocate into the corequisite program: Calvin and Serafina. Calvin had taken Developmental English and did not get a recommendation from his professor; however, he found out about the program from a friend and asked to be enrolled. His path was not the typical path, and he was not let down by the institution. However, Serafina's fight to enter the program reveals a flaw in the advising system. Serafina was an Advanced Placement student in high school who was admitted into a local university. She should have been advised into the program by an advisor from the very beginning; rather, Serafina explained to the advisor that she was eligible for the program that she learned about from a sheet on the advisor's desk. Thankfully, Serafina was able to advocate for herself and land a spot in the program where she was very successful.

The gaps in the advisors' understanding of the program and whom to advise into the program may hinder enrollment of the students who test into English 0309, and the program may only be thriving at two of the three study institutions because professors are recommending students for the program and students may be self-advocating for acceleration. The target

audience, however, might be better served if the advisors have more information about corequisite remediation and who should be enrolled in it.

Confusion about Texas Success Initiative Assessment scores and student placement. The advisors' responses revealed a focus on TSIA scores, which makes sense because the scores are used to make most of the first-semester scheduling decisions. All the advisors discussed the TSIA cut scores and how they use those scores to place students. There were several complicating factors associated with using TSIA scores for placement, the first of which is that it was not clear how the scores should be used. The TSIA gives three basic English scores for each student, a multiple-choice reading score, a multiple-choice writing score, and an essay writing score. The state determined how these scores should be used, but gave the colleges latitude in determining placement in accelerated courses designed to move students from developmental education into credit-level courses with support. To further complicate matters, the colleges in this study had chosen different placement scores for the corequisite programs, and furthermore, the advisors were encouraged to use holistic advising strategies but were not given tools specifically designed to help them to place students in the program. The advisors realized that it was their responsibility to place the students in the course that would most likely lead to success for the students, so they were reluctant to take risks and place the students up. As a result, they tended to use the bubble score rubric rather rigidly. Their thinking was that if students placed in English 0309, then they would probably benefit from enrolling in English 0309. The advisors did not want to put the students in a situation that would lead to failure, and they perceived the risk of failure as higher for students who are placed up than for students who are placed at level.

Catherine's convoluted explanation of her process is an accurate representation of the advisors' struggle to interpret TSIA scores and correctly place students:

Okay. So we have this option, if their reading or writing TSI score is within two points of the next class up, we have the option of giving them permission to take the next class up. We can't play with the essay score, however. The essay score has to be on target for whatever level. So the essay score cannot be below what this chart says. But the multiple-choice score can be two points below. Now, I'm not really comfortable with this bubble, because I—no, I'm not comfortable with ambiguity. I prefer to follow the rules. However, we do have this option. I will look at the other scores. Let's say the student scored two points below in reading or writing. I will look at the other subject and see how they scored there. If they scored two points below, or one point below in the other subject, I will not bump them up. But let's say reading, they scored two points below, writing they scored college level and got a four or a five on their essay, then I'll ask some questions. Tell me what kind of grades you got when you were in high school, if this is a recent high school graduate. What were your English grades, you know, how did you do with essay writing, or—not well, not if it's reading. So I'll just get a good take of their— you know, impressions of their success in high school English subjects. And actually, I'll look at their math score too. If they've got a whopping great math score, it could be that day to just miss something on the reading tests. But I really look for some other indicator that this student is going to do fine, if I suggest one course up. And I don't always bump them up. I think maybe some people do, or students tell each other—hey, I got English 1301 without the right score, you probably can too. But I really try to take into account the other factors. And another one that I'll ask about is work schedule.

It is important to remember that Catherine and Elena do all this in the three or four minutes allotted to advising each FTIC student. Other advisors contend with the same confusing tangle of

test scores and balance writing scores against reading scores and multiple-choice scores against essay scores, but they have more time to work with the students individually to assess, outside of the TSIA scores, the students' eligibility for accelerated work in English.

Too few counselors. Advisors and faculty members cited life issues as personal barriers for the students, but Dylan pointed out that the college does not have enough counselors to support the students who struggle with psychological issues. He said, "Some of the students definitely need counseling, both advising counseling, life counseling, but also sometimes psychological counseling, so all of the above. We don't have enough staff for that. We're woefully underfunded when it comes to that. I think we have two counselors. This is pathetic for a campus of 20,000 people. It's horrible." Dylan viewed the failure of the college to provide the counselors for students who struggle with mental health issues as a barrier.

Strategies the Students Employ to Cope with the Transition to College Life

When asked about strategies that the students employ to cope with the transition into college the advisors and the faculty hesitated. Several faculty said that they really did not know how the students deal with moving into college. One faculty member, Julie, described students who failed at navigating the transition, and three advisors discussed how they help students think about the importance of balance between school, work, and home.

One faculty member discussed how well the students adjust to the transition of college life by describing students who struggled. One of Julie's students was late to class because of her therapy appointment; another cited her ADD as the reason for her inattentiveness. Another student dropped out because, she said, "He couldn't get the technology. He was completely overdone on the technology. It just blew him away." Another one of Julie's students began crying in class after Julie reminded her of her absence policy after the student had missed four

class periods. Julie described a student she said started associating with "the cool kids," but his association with these students negatively impacted his grades. His friends, the negative influence, eventually dropped out of college, leaving Julie's student to try to improve his grade. Julie's analysis was that these students really did not transition into college; rather, they brought their high school behaviors with them. They scheduled their appointments during class time, spent more time socializing with friends than paying attention in class, failed to learn the requisite skills for succeeding in college, and were absent frequently. Despite these examples of maladjustment, Julie believed that her corequisite students were more mature in general than the students who tested directly into English 1301, perhaps because these were the students who chose to take on an extra challenge.

The advisors agreed that rather than adjusting their lives to fit in college, college was adjusted to fit into the students' lives. Semester schedules were built around the work schedules of the students and often their spouses and childcare schedules. The advisors made a point to ask questions of the students about their work schedules and other time commitments so that they could help the students formulate schedules around these commitments and would recommend that the students cut back on the number of classes they took so that they would not get overburdened. Raoul explained what he explains to the students about managing their time:

> Oh, yeah. I ask them what's their workload—I do that anyway right now with the Education 1300, so that's kind of a question. How many hours are you working during the week? What other responsibilities do you have outside of class that's not work-related or home-related because you do have to balance, they have to coexist school, studying, working, having time for yourself, having time for your family – everything has to kind of coexist together.

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Raoul's belief in the importance of school/work/home balance echoes Elena's advice to students that they must consider balancing their lives by taking fewer classes and Ally's belief that students need support at home to manage the stress of life and school. By presenting the idea of balance to these students, the advisors are helping these students navigate the transition into college.

Strategies the Sudents Employ to Cope with College Academics

The faculty and the advisors had different vantage points regarding the students' academic strategies. The advisors admitted that they were not knowledgeable about strategies the students employed to succeed in their classes. Their focus was on schedule-building and guiding the students through that process; however, the advisors mentioned the importance of tutoring and working with the professors.

The faculty were not familiar with the strategies that student employed to succeed in their courses other than the strategies that were embedded in the curriculum and were taught to the students by the faculty. The faculty members stated that the students who applied what they were taught succeeded. All the faculty participants offered the students revision opportunities and said that the students who revised their papers did better than those who did not. The faculty encouraged the students to visit the tutoring centers on their respective campuses, and they said that the students who did so were more successful than those who did not.

Bennett noted that he recommended *PaperRater*, an essay checking program, to a few students, but word of the program spread among his students, which meant that the students were working together and offering each other helpful advice. He said that students indicated that they found the electronic essay checking programs helpful, so he knew that they were using them. In her interview, Allison stated that she found the programs very helpful. Likewise, Julie, a faculty

member, was a proponent of the program *Grammarly*, and Thuy, one of Julie's students, stated that *Grammarly* was a particularly helpful tool.

All the faculty appreciated it when students asked for help. Julie commented on the number of students who took advantage of her generous communication policy by texting her at all hours. She was glad to help them when they reached out, but she set a limit by ignoring texts that came in the middle of the night. Julie also noted when students came to her for help with the online component of her course.

Dylan described the transformation that he saw in his students but admitted that he did not know what strategies the students used to develop their writing other than what he taught them. He said, "As far as the strategies that they develop as far as what they create, I've seen them change from writers that don't understand the structure of what they're writing to having a purpose in their writing, and understanding how to produce meaning on a page, and then the fact that there has to be some sort of reasons to end up supporting that, and that they understand that they have to do that on their own. I don't understand the strategies that they actually employ to get there, to tell you the truth. I'm being honest. I really don't know."

The faculty also did not know much about the students' classes or classwork outside of the English class that the faculty were teaching. Julie stated that she did not like this isolation and felt that the college should employ "vertical teaming" to help the English faculty prepare the students for writing in other classes. She argued that her role is to help the students write well so that they can succeed on their essays assigned in all their classes, but because the English department had not built partnerships with other disciplines, she did not know what was required in the other disciplines and felt that this hindered her ability somewhat to prepare her students for that work.

The faculty and the advisors were unanimous in their opinion that if the students simply employ the strategies that the faculty and advisors suggest, students will be successful in their courses. Both the faculty and the advisors recommended resources to the students such as tutoring and electronic tools, but it was up to the students to use these resources. Whether or not the students actually took the advice was in part dependent on their attitudes about learning and effort.

Attitudes about Learning

Student attitudes about learning are important in academics, and both the advisors and the faculty noted that the attitudes of the corequisite students played a role in determining how the students approached college and the strategies they either implemented or avoided. Advisors and faculty encountered both fixed and growth mindset students at both the moving into and moving through college phases. Advisors were more likely to work with students at the moving into phase, and they described some incoming students as fearful of the unknown and unwilling to take risks. Faculty encountered students in the moving through phase and described some of the students in their corequisite classes as fearful of writing and of research because these students felt that their writing skills were weak, and they did not know how to improve. These students were afraid to seek help and formative feedback and became discouraged when they received low grades. They were reluctant to revise their papers, and they did not visit tutoring, nor did they seek the help of their professors. These descriptions from advisors and faculty describe students with a fixed mindset. These students were less likely to succeed because their anxiety about college and their performance caused them to reject strategies that could help them improve their performance. In contrast, advisors also described incoming students who expressed excitement about college, who expressed interest in taking on the additional challenge of credit-

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level English despite their low TSIA scores, and who were confident that they could handle credit-level work. Likewise, faculty described students who believed that their writing could be improved and were willing to work hard to improve it. They worked with their professors to revise their papers and used the feedback of the professors when revising. These students had a growth mindset and were more likely to succeed because their attitude about learning dictated their behaviors, and their behaviors led to success. Below, the advisor and faculty descriptions of the corequisite students are analyzed using the four factors of Schlossberg's Transition Theory (Schlossberg, Lynch, & Chickering, 1989)—situation, self, support, and strategies—as a frame and Dweck's Mindset Theory (2006) as a lens.

Situation. Although the faculty had more time than the advisors to get to know the students and analyze their mindset, the advisors also gauged mindset in the brief time that they spent with the students during the first-semester scheduling process, and they used mindset in an interesting and ultimately important way: to determine eligibility for the corequisite remediation program. The advisors met the students before the faculty did and determined their eligibility for the program. Because the advisors used the students' attitudes about learning and challenge as a measure of suitability, it is probable that the advisors are weeding out many of the students with fixed mindsets and enrolling the fixed mindset students into English 0309 rather than the accelerated corequiste remediation classes. Ally explained her process for using student attitude as a step in determining program suitability for students otherwise eligible because of their TSIA scores. If students were close to the cut-off score for credit-English, Ally would mention the corequisite remediation program. Their reaction helped her to decide if they were good candidates:

When I explain it, they have a good reaction. Some, they're hesitant, because they're like, "Wait, I don't know if I'm ready for English yet." If they're hesitant, then I don't recommend it for them. But if I get a good reaction from them, they're like, "Oh, really, we offer that." Yes, we do. You don't have to be scared. You don't have to be afraid of it, because you have the support, so if you feel like you're ready for the course, then I think you should take it.

Ally stated that she explains the program to prospective corequisite students and told them that they would be supported by the professor in the courses, but if students were still fearful, she deemed them unsuitable for the program and recommended that they take English 0309 rather than accelerate into English 1301 with support.

Raoul's explanation of how he uses students' reactions to their test scores to determine their suitability for the program mirrors Ally's process. He explained, "When we told them their test scores, they feel like, "Man, I have to take a developmental class." But then we give them this option, and they're like, "Okay, I'm gonna take this, and I'm gonna pass it." Not only do these students take on the challenge credit-level English, despite their admissions test scores, they are confident that they are going to pass it. Raoul went on to say that that when they pass the class, their confidence is greatly increased by passing their English 1301 class, an observation that is supported by the students' assessment of their experience. Confidence begets success, and success begets confidence.

The result of this advising strategy at these institutions is that most of the students who register for corequisite remediation possess a growth mindset, either because they determine that they are ready for the challenge and pursue enrollment in the program or because they are deemed suitable for the program by an advisor who has gauged their attitude about learning and

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deemed them willing to accept the challenge. The faculty descriptions of their corequisite students reveal more growth mindset students than fixed mindset students, which makes sense if the advisors are using mindset as a criterion for program suitability. Overall, the faculty described their students as motivated, determined, and willing to be challenged. They may enter the corequisite remediation classes academically underprepared, but they are ready to take on the challenge of improving their writing skills and getting on-level. The faculty responses also reveal their attitudes about their role as instructors of both groups of students, those who are confident and those who are anxious. Kenneth described his classes as mixed, and he asserted that his corequisite students are not a homogeneous group; rather, these students enter his classes with a range of attitudes about learning, the act of writing, and themselves as learners. He feels that he has a responsibility for both groups. He explained:

> It's a broad scope. It's not as if you have these NCBO students. You have some who are I guess intimidated. You have that group, and I think you also have the individuals who are academically excellent or for whatever reason have ended up in the supplemental course that they don't necessarily need to be in. I seem to have a lot of disconnected high performing students. I have some eager and earnest students who genuinely improve, and then I have some who are really either shut down period or the ones you can actually help. I think they're intimidated by the formal writing classroom or just the whole idea of academic argument in college. Those can be helped.

Kenneth's statement that he can help the students who are anxious or who have shut down, which he uttered twice, sums up his attitude about his role as a professor. He feels a certain responsibility to look after those students who are fearful about writing. Julie also believed that it was her job to help her students embrace the opportunity to accelerate through developmental

English. She compared the attitudes displayed by her corequisite remediation students to that of developmental students and found that her corequisite students are much more accepting of their situation, their enrollment in an extra course that allows them to simultaneously enroll in credit English, in part because she took an active role in helping students accept their situation and embrace the opportunity to accelerate through developmental English. She explained, "The animosity that we used to see in a dev student having to take a dev class is just not there with these guys. And I think that's me setting the tone. That is the way I have presented the class--that it is not a detriment, and I don't harp on it." Julie wants her students to see the course as an opportunity rather than an extra burden or a signal that they do not belong in college. Bennett said that his corequisite students expressed similar sentiments, saying, "I've met students who were glad that the option is available."

The faculty believed that the structure of the course was appealing to those students with a growth mindset. Kenneth argued that the shortened length of the English 0119 course at his college, just eight weeks, worked in the students' favor by imbuing them with a certain urgency to learn what they needed to learn so that they could succeed in the credit-level English course:

> I think it. . . invests them in their writing suddenly at the beginning of the course. There's a little more urgency for them. I only have a certain amount of time, and once they start to realize it's valuable, "Oh wait, I have access to a professor that I don't normally have," then a lot of them will jump on board with it. It just keeps the pulse of the class and their interest in it. I think if it was too much longer it would start to wane.

The students in the corequisite developmental course are told that working hard in that course would earn them a good grade in the corequisite course and help them to be successful in the credit-level English course, thus giving them an additional benefit. For an additional 16 hours of

work per semester, they avoid enrollment in English 0309, which is a 64 hour course that lasts an entire semester, and once they pass that, they would then have to enroll in English 1301. The 16-hour corequisite developmental course is a good investment, and the students can see the benefits of it. Kenneth explained that the students can calculate the return on their investment in taking the corequisite course and that giving the students the opportunity to accelerate through developmental English empowers them to take charge of their academic trajectory:

> I think it is beneficial in a sense that they really do get out of it what they put into it. I kind of like that idea of they have authority here, how much is it really going to help them versus, "I have to pass this 3-hour math class because it's on my degree plan." I think it's a different level of investment that is really maybe more akin to how the 'real world' works.

Students with a growth mindset appreciate being able to control the speed at which they progress out of developmental English and into and through English 1301. They relish having that level of control over their academic trajectory.

The faculty responses supported the students' contention that they enjoyed having extra time with their professor in the English 0119 support course. Bennett said that in his first semester of teaching corequisite remediation courses, he scheduled the English 0119 support course on Fridays for one hour. As students got their skills up and began writing on level, he would excuse them from the Friday classes. However, he said, these students were unwilling to give up the support they got from him on Fridays:

> See what I've learned is that the students, for the most part, they kind of need the extra remediation throughout the entire semester, or some of them, actually just want it. So

even that first semester when I told some students that they didn't have to come back on

Fridays, they still came anyway.

This behavior, attending a class on Friday for which the students have been excused, conflicts

with Kay McClenney's contention that "students don't do optional" (Mangan, 2013). It is more

accurate to say that growth mindset students will take the necessary steps to succeed, even if

those steps are optional. If growth mindset students see the connection between a strategy and

goal achievement, they will implement that strategy. Both Kenneth and Dylan, experienced

corequisite remediation professors, said that each semester, a few on-level students in their

English 1301 classes ask if they can attend the English 0119 class because when the students

learn about the class, they also want the opportunity to get one-on-one tutoring with their

professor and the extended seat time that corequisite remediation students are getting. These

students also want to do optional.

Ultimately, the faculty feel that the structure of the corequisite model implemented at all

three colleges contributes to the success of the students, and the faculty believed that although

the students enter underprepared, they emerge on-level and ready for the next course in the

sequence. Kenneth explained why he thinks that this model works for these students:

> I see tangible improvement from the course. I think they're gaining confidence, they're
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> gaining engagement, they're gaining an awareness of what their shortcomings are and
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> starting to understand how to – okay, how do I fill in those gaps. Confidence probably. I
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> think they're also gaining – I don't know if I want to put it that way. I guess they're better
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> prepared for college research and writing than they were in August or whatever. I mean
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> they come out of it I think ready to – having closed the gap on the rest of the general

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population of 1301 and they're no less disadvantaged after that point than any other student.

Self. The faculty and the advisors discussed the students' sense of self as exhibited by the students' levels of confidence and motivation as they moved into college via the admissions and enrollment processes and through college via their corequisite remediation courses, and their sense of self impacted their attitudes about learning. In the previous section, I discussed how the advisors use student attitudes as a metric for placement into either Developmental English or the corequisite remediation classes. Students who lacked confidence, who were excessively fearful or anxious about their writing, were advised to take English 0309. The students who expressed confidence about their abilities or determination to succeed were more likely to be advised to take the corequisite remediation class and English 1301. Elena, an advisor, summed up her opinion of the effect of motivation, saying, "The ones that are motivated, the ones that they think they're gonna do it, they're gonna be successful." Dylan agreed with Elena's assessment of the connection between motivation and success, saying, "I enjoy teaching the students. . . I enjoy it because students tend to be very motivated, dedicated to their studies, and I have full confidence that many of them are going to end up succeeding because of that." Dylan viewed this motivation as "an unwillingness to fail" and described it in almost poetic terms:

> The ones that I talk to one on one, made it seem like this was their mission. They couldn't
> fail. They wouldn't allow themselves to fail. It was almost like they're in battle. They're
> gonna do it. They're just gonna do it even if they're the first person in their family, which
> oftentimes they are. That's it, they're doing it. So I guess I would call that confidence, in a
> way, but it's different than confidence. It's an unwillingness to fail.

For Dylan, the determination of the corequisite remediation students set them apart from the students who tested into English 1301 and was probably characteristic of growth mindset students. These students embraced challenge and were determined to succeed in courses for which they were told they were underprepared.

Not all students enrolled in the corequisite remediation classes were confident, however. Many students demonstrated fixed mindset conceptions of themselves as writers, that they were terrible at writing and that there was nothing to be done about that state of affairs. The faculty reported that many of their students demonstrated anxiety and fear about writing, and the faculty had to help the students understand that practice and work would help the students become better writers which would then lead to increased confidence. Kenneth stated his beliefs about the impact of confidence, saying, "I think getting them comfortable, getting acculturated, getting confidence is just as important as these are the direct lessons that are going to make your academic writing better." Bennett asked his students to write about their feelings about writing, their fears about writing and English class in general. He said, "Either they don't like it, [or] they don't do it well. They've had bad experience. There are very few who actually like to write it or read." Bennett explained that the low confidence students use "all negative words to describe their writing." Kenneth agreed and described how the students talk about writing and themselves as writers:

> "It sucks." Sometimes they go with that one. "I suck at writing," that gem. "I'm a terrible writer." Yeah, I don't know if it's stated, it's more body language, but sort of a nervousness. It takes them longer to get over that.

Dylan agreed with that assessment and explained that he has a process for helping students overcome their fears of writing, a process of breaking it down into steps, which his students described when they explained what they like about Dylan's classes.

> This process is demystified for them, and I respect them, and separate the work from who they are, meaning the skill of writing. Your skill as a writer is separate from who you are as a human being. When you're five years old, you're writing things down. You're not writing the same way and about the same things as you were writing when you were five years old. You developed, right? That's the whole point of education. So to demystify that process rather than using it as a [weapon], like, "I'm smarter than you, and you're dumb." To communicate that in any way to a student is so horrible.

A key factor in both Kenneth and Dylan's teaching philosophy is that they respect their students and care for them, and the students know that. It is evident in everything that Kenneth says that he believes that his students are capable of learning and that it is his responsibility to teach them. Isaac stated that he knows that Dylan wants his students to be successful because Dylan tells his students this. Dylan's teaching style reflect his beliefs that writing is a learnable skill and that his students are capable of learning how to do it. Opal's explanation of Dylan's teaching style, his focus on breaking down essay writing into smaller chunks, matches Dylan's description of his curriculum, and it is what his students said helps them the most. This focus on small steps gives the students more opportunities for success, and success builds their confidence, which in turn builds their motivation. For Dylan's students, success begets a strong self-conception, which begets more success.

Dylan, Bennett, and Julie were experienced developmental English professors, and they believed that there are differences between students in developmental English and students in the

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corequisite classes, difference that they attributed to the acceleration opportunity. Both Bennett and Julie believed that students in developmental English feel ashamed of their placement in developmental English, which impacts their motivation. Bennett stated that students placed in developmental English feel "stigmatized," "frustrated and resentful because they don't want to be in developmental English, but they have been placed there. Julie stated that students placed in developmental English demonstrate "animosity" about their placement. Bennett and Julie's analysis of the students' feelings about being stuck in developmental English is supported by the students' own statements about how they felt when they learned that they did not test into credit-level English. However, students who are given the opportunity to take credit-level English with corequisite support, according to Julie and Bennett, have a much different attitude. Rather than feeling stigmatized and angry by their placement, they are motivated by the challenge, especially those students who started in the lower levels of developmental English and were bumped up at the recommendation of their developmental English professors.

Dylan discussed how the corequisite students compared to their English 1301 counterparts, and his descriptions of these students were descriptions of growth and fixed mindset students. The corequisite students demonstrated more motivation than the students who placed into English 1301, according to Dylan. He said, "They're more attentive to their grades and tend to be more responsible. They advocate more clearly for themselves and are less shy about doing so probably because they've been rewarded by professors before as being exceptional students or good students." Dylan did not say that these students were rewarded for being exceptional writers; he said they were rewarded for being exceptional students. The distinction is important because it implies that the students' behaviors, their work habits and their effort which led to their good writing are what earned the students their professors' praise. Dylan

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went on to say that the English 1301 students who enter the class better writers, or as he put it "are talented in writing. . . tend to be lazier. . . not as motivated, take their skill for granted, and they don't develop quite as much." This characterization fits Dweck's description of fixed mindset students, students who believe that they are naturally talented, in this case at writing, do not need to work on their writing to succeed in their classes, and see no merit in working to improve. Dylan went on to say that those students who have, as he put it, "an overinflated sense of their skill level," tend to do worse than the students who know that they need to improve to be successful, which is also characteristic of students with a fixed mindset. Dylan summed up the problem with these students when he said, "it doesn't matter how smart or how well of a writer you are, if you don't put forth the effort and do anything."

The English faculty agreed that the corequisite students are weaker than the students who tested into English 1301 in one specific way: creating their own meaning on a page, especially if that means thinking critically about ideas held by those they consider to be an authority figure, which is anyone who has published anything. They tend to accept the arguments presented in the readings assigned for class, and they are uncomfortable questioning or challenging those arguments, which their professors find frustrating. Kenneth described this weakness in the corequisite students:

> That's something that I think as a whole they don't do as well as the other 1301 students. They don't want to step on toes. They haven't moved past summary. They're more reticent to call somebody out even if they are Mark Twain, Bertrand Russell, whoever. They're less reticent to call them out. That kind of hump is a big thing to get over.

Dylan explained that he spends time forcing students to create meaning for themselves and supporting that meaning with evidence. He described a specific assignment that he gives in his

corequisite classes. He shows the students a picture of a sand art sculpture, and the students are asked to write an analysis of it without being given any information about the piece. They are only told that they must defend their analysis with evidence. At the end of the exercise, the students want to know the correct answer, but Dylan tells them that there is no correct answer. Whatever they came up with is the correct answer, and there are many correct answers. Dylan explained the transformative process experienced by the students:

> And for them to go from whatever they thought that meaning was to, "I don't think it's right. I'm not right" to, "No, you are right. You were creating something because you defended it. I asked you to describe what you saw, come up with exactly what the meaning of this was, and then why that meaning existed, and as long as it was logical, your reasons were logical, you were creating meaning."

Dylan's purposefulness in teaching the students the power in critical thinking mirrored Bennett's efforts to teach his students the importance of audience. Bennett found that his students have trouble writing for audiences other than themselves, which is related to the weakness Kenneth and Dylan described: the students' inability to form their own analysis independent of what others have argued. Bennett states that his primary goal is to get the students "to think on their own," which is exactly what Dylan and Kenneth do as well.

Julie attributes this reluctance to challenge authority to the students' academic immaturity and lack of confidence. They do not have the tools to challenge scholarly authority, think on their own, and create their own meaning until they are given the tools to do so, practice in a safe environment where they can mature academically, and have the confidence to use those tools to join the political and academic conversations happening around them.

The faculty interviewed for this study claimed that the corequisite students emerged from the classes more capable of thinking on their own and more proficient at writing college essays than they were when they entered the corequisite English classes, indistinguishable from the students who tested into English 1301 at the outset of the semester. Kenneth said that the best corequisite students are those who "start to self-detect their recurring issues," their frequent writing mistakes, and they self-correct. He described the transformation of the corequisite remediation students from unsure, anxious, academically immature students to more experienced, more confident students who understand the process of learning:

> Those questions that show a building of self-awareness and the fact that they give a you-know-what, those two things combined, those are the best kinds of questions. I see tangible improvement from the course. I think they're gaining confidence, they're gaining engagement, they're gaining an awareness of what their shortcomings are and starting to understand how to – okay, how do I fill in those gaps. Confidence probably. I think they're also gaining – I don't know if I want to put it that way. I guess they're better prepared for college research and writing than they were in August or whatever. I mean they come out of it I think ready to – having closed the gap on the rest of the general population of 1301 and they're no less disadvantaged after that point than any other students.

Being "no less disadvantaged" may not be the most glowing of endorsements for corequisite remediation classes, but for Kenneth and the other corequisite faculty, the students' acquisition of an awareness of their mistakes, the realization that they have to account for different perspectives, and the confidence to create their own meaning and support it are all huge leaps for

college freshmen to make in one semester, and these advances are connected to a maturing sense of self as learner, self as college student.

Support. All three groups of participants, faculty, advisors, and students, indicated that support is critical to the success of the students, and the degree to which students sought help and were receptive to help were indications of the students' attitudes about learning and their role as students. The faculty explained that support required two key ingredients: the faculty offering support, which can take several forms, such as belief in the students, challenging curriculum, and time with each student, and the students accepting the support and acting on it such as by going to tutoring, seeking advice from their professors, revising their papers, and completing extra credit assignments. Faculty support of students required student participation to be effective and was a shared responsibility. Often, faculty did not learn how their support impacted students until much later, if ever.

Belief in the students is the most basic form of support, and how that belief manifests itself becomes the tangible support that students experience. Elena described one student's experience at her college that started with the most basic form of support, belief in the student's abilities, and grew into a life changing experiencing for that student. Elena said that the student, a veteran, told her that all through high school, the student was told that she was not smart enough for college. She enrolled at CCS but was afraid that she would fail. She connected with her psychology professor, who encouraged her and convinced her to take and IQ test. The results of that test revealed that the student had an above-average IQ. This was a surprise to the student. Then the student's English teacher nominated her for a writing contest. Elena said that the student started crying in her office and said, "You have encouraged me. My professor has encouraged me." What started out as a simple connection between an advisor and a student and a

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professor and a student became forms of support—an IQ test and a writing contest nomination—that gave that student much-needed affirmation that she belonged in college.

Support and self work together. Ultimately, the support that the student received from her advisors and professors impacted her perception of her abilities and improved her chances of succeeding in college. The support she received changed her perception of self. This phenomenon is supported by the students in this study who stated that they began to believe in themselves when their professors indicated belief in them. Talia said that she was told twice by her developmental English instructor that she should enroll in English 1301 with support and skip English 0309. Isaac and Opal reported a similar experience. These students said that if their professors believed that they could do it, they realized that they needed to believe it, too.

Holding the students to a high standard and demanding that they work to achieve that standard by revising their papers may be viewed as simply teaching to some, but it can also be viewed as a form of support. Julie explained that she challenged students by giving them an "R" grade on their papers when she felt that they should revise their papers. She said that the students did not like this strategy and that they told her that they preferred to get a grade; however, Julie reported that at the end of the semester, students would stop her and say, '" I can't tell you how much that R helps me, that you made me do this.'" Julie's strategy that she summarized as "I'm going to make you go back and do it" was viewed by her students support-by-force or intrusive support, but by the end of the semester, they were grateful for it. All of Julie's students who were interviewed for this study expressed gratitude for her methods and stated that they knew that she cared about them and their success.

Dylan used differentiated instruction to challenge his best students and support their learning with individualized assignments. He encouraged those students to do more complicated

assignments than the other students so that they could go beyond what they were learning in the support course and English 1301. This is a more difficult way to teach, especially for a faculty member who is the instructor of record for five or more classes. Dylan said that the quality of their work at the end of the semester and their notes to him reflected the pay-off of hard work. He said that his students thanked him for challenging them, pushing them to write more complex papers on deeper topics than they were initially inclined to do.

Bennett noted that faculty support cannot make up for the work that students do not complete. There are no tutoring, one-on-one talks, or deadline extension that will suffice if students do not complete their assignments. Bennett discussed the limits of support and noted that the student has a responsibility to work for his or her success:

I think my role is to be there to support and to offer some type of guidance. But I learned that that guidance and support needs to be – I guess, the student has to want it, you know. I can only do so much, and I just have to just realize that I can, when it comes to a point where I feel like I'm more concerned about your success than you are, I have to kind of step back.

Bennett went on to say that he felt guilty about stepping back from students who have consistently failed to do their part to ensure their success and recounted a conversation that he had with a student who was not doing the work in his English class. He asked the student if the student thought that Bennett cared about him. At first, the student replied that no, he did not think that Bennett cared about him because this was Bennett's job. Bennett pressed him on the point, and finally the student admitted that yes, Bennett did care about him. Bennett told him that he cared but that he needed the student to "get it together." Bennett said that the student tried but was not successful in the class.

Ultimately, the faculty and the advisors agreed that it was their job to offer support to the students, but it was the responsibility of the students to both take them up on those offers and do the work. Bennett stated it best: "A lot of it has to do with how much work the student puts in. . . I can easily identify which students need what particular remediations. And I help them as much as I can. But I found that those who don't pass, really it's because they didn't do all of the work. They didn't turn everything in, or they didn't put in a lot of effort." Many of the students interviewed for this study indicated that they spent time with their instructors getting writing advice and visited tutors, and all the students in this study passed both their corequisite classes. They took advantage of the offered support and learned.

Strategies. The strategies that the students employed to succeed in their courses were dependent, in part, on their situations, their conception of themselves as college students, and the support that they received. When the first three factors—situation, self, and support—are added together, the stage is set for the students to do something, to implement strategies that will aid in their education. Specifically, this section examines what the faculty and advisors say the students do to learn.

In the previous section on support, I discussed the students' responsibility to seek out support from faculty, advisors, and other support personnel such as the tutors. Taking advantage of the services offered by the college is a strategy that the faculty deemed necessary for success. Catherine indicated that she thought one of the most important factors that impacted the students' success was their willingness to seek out help through the support services on campus, and Kenneth explained that "engaging all the resources and relationships that [they] need to get through college successfully" is a critical strategy that all students need to employ.

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Many of the strategies that the students said that they employed were noted by their professors. The students attended tutoring and gave their tutoring slips to the professors. The students met their professors for their office hours or before and after class for individualized advice about their papers. They emailed their professors, and in Julie's case, because she was the only faculty member to give the students her personal cell phone number, they texted in the middle of the night to ask questions about their essays. In short, they did all the things that college students are supposed to do.

Because these basic behaviors were recommended by the professors and were expected by the students as a matter of course, the faculty did not note them as special. They simply expected that the students would do these things. A failure of the students to implement these strategies was noted by the faculty, however, because the faculty attributed students' failure to implement the strategy as the reason subsequent failure in the course. Kyle highlighted a failure to proofread as his biggest pet peeve. He said that he covered the importance of proofreading, but he said that some students "undermine their authority by not proofreading what could be a good argument." He said that he tells the students, "You thought at this level, and then you just threw it away" by not proofreading and correcting basic writing errors. The faculty lamented that the students who failed were those who did not do their work or take the steps that they needed to submit quality work.

One of the most basic strategies employed by the corequisite students was revising their graded essays although how students viewed the revision process differed from the faculty perspective on revision. All four faculty members required that their students revise their essays, and the faculty said that the successful students did revise. The students interviewed for this study noted the importance of revision, not just because it positively impacted their grades but

because the act of revising improved their writing and helped them improve their writing skills. However, when the students discussed revision as a strategy, they focused on revising their final graded drafts for a higher grade rather than revising their papers in the drafting process prior to handing it in. Dylan contrasts the behaviors of two groups of students in his class, and his description of them reveals his perspective on the role of revision in the writing process:

> "Can I go ahead and redo this essay for more points? Are there more ways that I can show improvement? How can I get better on my own?" They'll do three, or four, or five drafts, right, of an essay, if that's what it takes, 'cause they learned from me that revisions are exactly what – whereas the other students will still be doing their same old high school stuff, typing it up at 4:00 in the morning.

For Dylan, revision is an ongoing process that a writer does throughout the drafting process. Dylan said that his best students asked him for permission to revise before he even presented it as an option, but fixed mindset students did not try to achieve mastery or a higher grade by taking advantage of the opportunities to revise when those opportunities were presented. The students who approached him about revisions because they want to improve are demonstrating growth mindset behavior. They wanted to improve and were willing to work for that improvement. Likewise, they did not wait passively for the professor to suggest a strategy; rather, they approached the professor with suggestions of their own. They also wrote and rewrote multiple drafts of their papers and expected the professor to read every draft rather than waiting to do the paper the night before in one marathon writing session, which indicates their belief that good writing takes work and is not a manifestation of innate talent that simply is. Interestingly, the students did not mention creating multiple drafts of their essays before handing in the final

draft. Although they mentioned seeking feedback from their professors prior to handing their final drafts in, they did not indicate that they engaged in an extensive drafting process.

Students shared resources. When I mentioned to Bennett that I heard he used a program called Paper Rater, he laughed and said that he did not mention it to the students the semester I interviewed him; however, previous students told his current students about it, and before he knew it, all the students were utilizing the program with great success.

Students will go above and beyond the basic requirements when they recognize that they need to do so to succeed. Bennett explained that he originally built the English 0119 as a Friday class, and as individual students learned the material and became successful in English 1301, he excused them from attending on Friday. However, several students who were dismissed from the Friday class attended anyway because they wanted the extra help that Bennett provided at that time. Bennett said that those students wanted the extra remediation and were willing to attend school on Friday to get it.

Summary

This chapter explains how students navigate the transition into college life and cope with personal and academic demands as they move into and through college. The students indicated that for them, support was the key. The students took advantage of personal support given to them by their family members, and as they navigated college, institutional support in the form of their instructors, advisors, librarians, tutors, and others. There were some differences in how traditional and nontraditional students entered college, but once they were enrolled, they all engaged in the same strategies to succeed in their courses. The students expressed mostly growth mindset beliefs, and as they earned success in their courses, their focus on effort and successful

strategies increased. They became more proficient countering their barriers and learned to seek help from their professors, tutors, family members, and other institutional support personnel.

According to faculty and advisors who work with these students, corequisite remediation English students may enter community college underprepared, but by the end of the corequisite remediation courses, they are as prepared as other students who are successful in credit-level English, and they are confident in themselves and their ability to succeed.

In the next chapter, Chapter 5, the findings, implications for practice and further research are discussed.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR

PRACTICE AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Introduction

The purpose of this research was to understand how community college students enrolled

in credit-level English with corequisite support cope with the transition into the role of

community college student and into college English, what they perceive as resources that aid and

barriers that impede their college success, and how their mindset influences their perceptions of

their experience. This study was conducted at three campuses in one community college system

located in Texas. The participants included sixteen community college students all enrolled in

corequisite remediation English classes, four corequisite English faculty members, and six

advisors. My goal was to talk with these students, learn more about them, and try to understand

their experience in corequisite remediation English classes. Faculty and administrators spend

much of their time talking about students and making decisions about policy and process that

impact students' lives, but we do not spend much time talking to them about how they

experience the implementation of our policies and processes. Additionally, most of the research

on developmental English students, especially the literature focused on developmental education

reform, is focused on numbers. Success rates, completion rates, retention rates, these only tell

part of the story. What I was really curious about were how these students experienced their first

semester or two of college and specifically how they experienced corequisite remediation

English courses. I wanted to know how they came to enroll in community college, how they felt

after they tested and learned that they were deemed underprepared for college by virtue of a

state-mandated test, and how they decided to accelerate into college-level English. I also wanted

to know how they experienced their corequisite remediation classes, how they felt about their professors and the lessons they learned in their English classes, and how they felt about themselves as college students before, during and after they completed their first semester of college courses. In short, I wanted to know who they were and how they experienced college. After talking with sixteen students enrolled in these classes, I have a much better sense of who these students are and what they experienced on their college campuses as new community college students learning how to write college-level essays.

In Chapter I, I provided the statement of the research problem, the purpose, significance, and scope of the research study, and the research questions that guided the study. In Chapter II, I provided a comprehensive explanation of the developmental English landscape both at the state and national levels, focusing on corequisite remediation courses as the latest strategy to accelerate developmental students into college-level English courses, and I present two theories that guided the study, Schlossberg, Lynch, and Chickering's theory of transition (1989) and Dweck's theory of mindset (2006). Pairing the two theories allowed me to analyze the students' responses about navigating transition through the lens of mindset. The students' viewpoints do not exist in a vacuum, and their perspectives can be analyzed using their mindset as a focusing lens. In Chapter III, I explain the design of this study and the methodology I employed to collect and analyze the data. In Chapter IV, I present my analysis of the interview data organized by research question. In Chapter V, I discuss the implications of my findings and provide recommendations for practice and further research.

Discussion of Findings

In this section, I discuss the findings, which are organized by research question. The most salient finding is that support, both personal and institutional, is critical to the students' enrollment in

college, their adjustment to college and the demands it places on them academically and personally, and their perceptions of their ability to be successful and reach their goals.

Findings for Research Question 1

Research question one asked how corequisite remediation English students coped with the transition into college life, the academic demands of college, and the personal demands that could interfere with their college success. The students reported that support was the key, both personal support at home and institutional support at the college. All but one student was dependent to some degree on family members or spouses for financial support. The traditional students lived at home with their parents or caregivers, who set the expectation that these students would enroll in college after graduation. The nontraditional students lived with their spouses. The students with children were completely dependent on family and spouses to care for their children so that they could attend school. For these students, college enrollment was not an expectation; rather, it represented a departure from the norm that required negotiation and permission. Family members also gave advice about navigating the admissions process and program choice. All sixteen students reported having someone in their personal lives to whom they turned to get advice about moving into the college arena.

Institutional support was critical in helping these students navigate the moving into processes, especially in regard to enrollment in corequisite remediation English courses, and the faculty role is important. The students who the lowest level of developmental English were recommended by their professors to skip the upper level and go straight into credit-level English with the developmental support class, which was an option that they did not discover on their own. This recommendation by their professors impacted the students' perception of themselves and their abilities and gave them confidence to take on the challenge of credit-level English.

Several students reported with pride that their professors believed in them and their abilities. For them, this was a significant event that shaped their self-perception.

Support was also the key to coping with the academic demands of college, and the faculty were the key support providers to students by both giving them support themselves, by connecting students to other resources on campus, and by teaching students how to tackle their assignments in a way that the students could handle. The students cited the availability of their instructors as critical to them. Julie's students repeated that she responded to texts. This was how they contacted her for help, and she always responded, even late at night. Instructors held individual conferences with students, encouraged students to meet with them before and after class and during office hours, and answered emails.

The students and the faculty described projects that were broken down into manageable parts; several students indicated that this method of organizing assignments helped them to adjust to their assignment workload. This made college-level work, which the students initially perceived as being very difficult, less frightening and do-able. The students then revised their opinions about the rigors of college. They initially viewed college work as difficult, rigorous, and above their heads; however, after their instructors taught them how to tackle it, they realized that it was not too hard. This then caused them to revise their perception of themselves. If college work was not that difficult, and they believed they could handle college work, then they were real college students. Their place in college was affirmed.

The students indicated that their instructors either required the students to visit the tutoring center and the librarians or encouraged them to do so. Most of the students mentioned tutoring, and several mentioned the librarians as important support personnel, especially for the research paper project. By requiring the students to use these services, the instructors are giving

them valuable connections and teaching them strategies that the students can utilize throughout their time in college.

The students interpreted the support of their instructors, support that includes availability, connection to support services, curriculum quality and learning strategies, as a form of caring, which helped them to connect to their instructors and motivated them. They spoke of their instructors with affection and respect, and the opinion of their instructors mattered to them. Their instructors' positive evaluations of the students either by recommending that they accelerate into credit-level English or by encouraging them in the corequisite English classes, affirmed the students' decision to enroll in college and their role as college students.

Support was also the key to countering sabotage. Of the four students who experienced sabotage, the two who experienced serious sabotage were able to rely on family members who supported them. Although Opal's father was hostile to her college enrollment, her husband and mother gave her critical support. Kristina's mother also cost Kristina time and money, but Kristina's husband helped her financially and with the children. It helped that Kristina's children were all in school, so her days were free. The sabotage experienced by Thuy and Mai by their husbands presented problems for the women. Of the two, Thuy was most likely to be derailed by her husband's lack of support because her resolve was weakened by her inability to decide on a major. Mai was planning for a potential divorce, so she has a goal.

The implication of these findings is that institutions need to include personal support persons in orientations and information sessions so that they can refer the students to the correct resources at the institutions. We know that students turn to their family members and caretakers for assistance, so it makes sense to arm them with information about programs and college resources. Also, the importance of faculty cannot be overstated. Faculty need to be informed

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about institutional resources available to students, and they need to be aware of their role in students' perception of the curriculum and their ability to succeed in college.

Findings for Research Question 2

Research question 2 asked what student identify as contributing factors, both personal and institutional, to their academic success. For question 1, the students cited support as key. For question 2, the students first pointed to themselves as instrumental in their own success, their strategies, and then they cited support from others, such as their instructors, and other support services at the institutions. They also cited their material resources such as technology.

When asked about factors that contribute to their success, the students cited their own behaviors and strategies, people in their lives who function as sources of support, personal and institutional tools, institutional services, and financial aid, both personal and institutional, as factors that contributed to their success in college. These students also revealed that they have access to resources both at home and at their institutions.

Most often, the students cited factors that were within their control, such as their work ethic, study habits, willingness to communicate with their instructors and ask for help, and participation in class. The students believed that the key to their academic success was doing the work. For these students, it was that simple. Other factors that the students listed were motivation, prior experiences that shaped their perception of school and how to move through it, and keeping their goals firmly in mind. These are all factors that are personal to each student, but they reveal that the students had an internal locus of control; they did not believe that their academic success was due to circumstances beyond their control; rather, they believed that their success was dependent on their decisions and their behavior.

Institutional resources were tied to the students' behaviors or strategies and thus were also tied to their internal locus of control. The students stated that they chose to see the tutors, that they had to ask the librarians for help, and that they had to visit the advisors when it was time to make scheduling decisions. Again and again, the students indicated that their success was dependent on their decisions, their choices, and these students were choosing to be successful.

Next, the students cited the people in their lives, both at home and related to their colleges, as resources that are important to their success. Of the sixteen students who participated in this study, nine were traditional students, and of those nine, five were first generation college students. First generation college students are thought to be without personal resources or support because their family members are less likely to encourage them to go to college or able to give advice about planning for and attending college (Horn & Nunez, 2000); however, each of the students in this study named someone in their lives who supported their efforts to succeed in college. Parents, grandparents, siblings, friends, were important sources of support for the traditional students, including those students who were first generation college students. The traditional students could rely on their parents for financial, emotional, and even academic support. Parents and grandparents provided financial support so that these students were not forced to work full time and support themselves while they attended school. These students also received practical assistance with school, such as Terrence, whose grandmother researched the community college program to which he applied, and Allison, whose father provided math tutoring. The traditional students were encouraged by their family members to attend school. For them, the pursuit of postsecondary education was an expectation held by their family members.

Seven nontraditional students participated in this study, and all were first generation college students. The encouragement of important people in their lives was invaluable to them as

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they pursued higher education. The married students depended on spouses for income and worked only part-time. Only one nontraditional student worked forty-plus hours her week, and she was not married. Two of the student participants who had children depended on their parents for childcare, which made school attendance possible. The nontraditional students were more likely to seek tutoring and assistance from the professor rather than rely on family for help with academics. They were more independent in their school work than the traditional students, but they still needed the help of others to cope with the demands of their conflicting responsibilities.

People at the institutions were important resources. The faculty members were cited most often as key support persons, followed by tutors, advisors, librarians, financial aid advisors, and counselors. The students stated that their instructors implemented strategies to help them connect with both the instructors themselves and with tutors, by either requiring the students to visit the writing tutors or offering extra credit. This helped the students to learn about the resources on campus and either forced or encouraged them to use the tutoring services, thus increasing the chances that the students would continue to avail themselves of the resources on campus. In this way, the instructors connected the students to the tutors, and the tutors helped the students with their writing. The hope was that the students would see the usefulness of the tutors and continue to make use of them on their own. The students recognized that their instructors were connecting them to resources on campus, and they said that this was helpful.

The students cited their professors as key to their success. They depended on their professors for academic help and texted and emailed their professors when they needed help. Several students cited one-on-one conferences as particularly helpful, especially when they were working on essays. Several students cited specific lessons or assignments as examples of high

quality teaching. The students could tell that their professors cared about their success as this care was evident in their teaching, their actions, and their words.

The students revealed that they were not without material resources as well. They all cited technology as important to their success. All the students had personal laptops or desktops and access to the Internet, which they said were important tools. They also cited access to computers and especially the Internet at school as critical to their success.

Finally, financial aid, both personal and institutional, was cited by students as important to their success in college. Many of the students, such as Calvin, Allison, and Terrence, lived with their parents or caregivers and were dependent on those people for their financial support. Because of this financial support by family members, only one student, Talia, had to work full time to support herself. Four students, Isaac, Opal, Talia, and Serafina, received federal grants to cover the cost of tuition and books. Serafina also worked at her college in a work-study program. These students were all dependent on some sort of financial aid to pay for college.

The student believed that their resources created the conditions for success, and the students took advantage of those conditions and made decisions and implemented strategies that led to success. The students who admitted to squandering their resources in the past, Tony and Saul, believed that they had learned from their mistakes. They said they were making better choices the second time around. These two students even viewed previous failure as a resource in the form of experience.

In their analysis of the factors that contribute to their success, most of the students cited internal factors and then worked outward. They first attributed their own decisions and behavior, doing the work, as the key to their success, and then they cited resources outside themselves,

such as people, tools, and money, as important factors. In general, most students saw their own agency as the key to their success.

Findings for Research Question 3

Research question 3 asked the students to identify personal and institutional factors that could act as barriers to their success in college. Their responses were divided into internal and external barriers.

Just as most of the students cited internal factors as key to their success in college, such as their own motivation strategies, they also cited internal factors as potential barriers to their success. Students cited their tendency to procrastinate and their inability to focus as problems for them. These students were aware that self-management was important, and they also knew that this was a potential area of failure. They countered this perceived potential for failure with the solution for it: they said that they made sure to do their work and hand it in on time. The factor they most often associated with success, doing their work, was the solution to the factor they most commonly associated with their potential for failure, not doing their work.

All the students who disclosed that they had a learning disability such as Attention Deficit Disorder or Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder stated that their learning disability could function as a barrier to their success. However, these students also explained how they manage their learning disabilities, and they felt that they managed them well. None of the students who identified themselves as learning disabled were taking medication to manage their disability, and they all indicated that they had learned how to manage their disability without the help of medication by implementing strategies that helped them to focus and organize. Again, they believed that their decisions and behavior would help them to overcome the potential barrier their learning disabilities presented.

Although 14 of the 16 students were underprepared for college-level work, few of them identified academic weakness or academic under-preparedness as a potential barrier. The students believed that their work ethic and strategies, identified in research question 2, were more likely to lead to success than their academic weaknesses were to function as a barrier. This attitude is positive. The students' focus on their strategies, such as attending class and turning in assignments, is exactly how they could overcome the potential barrier of academic weakness. They could control their behavior, and by controlling their behavior and implementing sound strategies, they mitigated the potential barrier of academic weakness, thus nullifying it and making it not worthy of mention.

Several students did mention academics as a potential barrier. Opal talked about her struggles with Math, and the ESL students, Thuy, Mai, and Hwa, candidly discussed their struggles with reading, writing, and speaking English as a second language, a struggle Thuy called "the English Barrier." The ESL students admitted that English was a problem, but they concentrated on how to solve the problem. They knew that their assignments would take more time, that they would have to look words up and seek the assistance of tutors and get help from their instructors. They were resigned to the extra work and just accepted the situation, including Hwa who described her struggles with English as "my sorrow, language."

Ten student-participants had either not chosen a major or were uncomfortable with the major they had chosen. Although only one student identified her indecision as a potentially serious problem, all ten students expressed some level of anxiety about their lack of certainty about their academic pathway. Current pathways research indicates that undecided community college students should choose a meta-major or exploratory major in their first semester of college, (Bailey, Jaggars, & Jenkins, 2015b). They then they should be guided to choose a

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specific program on timeline specified by the institution rather than allowed to explore on their own semester after semester. Without guidance, students who lack a clear vision about their goals are less likely to complete their degree (Bailey, Jaggars, & Jenkins, 2015b). At the time of the interview, however, only Thuy articulated this issue as a potential barrier to success. She recognized that her lack of commitment was adversely impacting her motivation.

The students listed the following external barriers with which they were forced to contend: lack of time, stress and role strain, and lack of family support. A lack of time was a problem for both male and female students, but role strain and lack of family support were problems that afflicted only the female students.

Both male and female students indicated that time was a problem. Students who worked, Mai, Terrence, Talia, and Isaac, said that juggling both their jobs and their academics was a problem for them, and Terrence even admitted that he fell asleep in class more than once. Only Talia worked full-time, and she indicated that she was learning how to manage her work schedule and would take time off from work during final exams in the future.

Three married mothers, Kristina, Opal, and Mai cited time as a problem because they had to juggle motherhood, marriage, and school. Their complaints about time were part of a larger issue: role strain. These students indicated that their role as mothers and wives conflicted with their role as students. They had to meet the needs of their families while studying and doing homework. One ramification of this conflict was a lack of time. There was simply not enough time for them to manage their households, meet the needs of their children and spouses, and complete their schoolwork without experiencing great stress. These students did not state that they could not handle the difficulty of caring for their children and assisting their spouses with work and the household while going to school, but they were frank about the stress that they

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suffered. Even with supportive spouses and family members, they all felt the palpable effects of role strain.

Although every student in this study stated that he or she could count on the support of someone such as family members or friends, several students cited family members who acted as barriers to their success. Kristina struggled to pay off a student loan because her mother refused to fill out a FASFA form years earlier. Mai's husband disparaged her decision to go to college, deeming it unnecessary. Opal's father was hostile to her academic aspirations and told her that she should stay at home and care for her family instead. Thuy's husband encouraged her to attend school but then pressured her to spend time with him on the weekends when she needed to study. Of these four women, only Thuy did not indicate that she had personal support to offset her husband's sabotage.

None of the students who struggled with barriers believed that these barriers would prevent them from being successful in their academic pursuits; however, they recognized that they had to deal with the potential obstacles, including those that originated from themselves. Their own attitudes, decisions, and behaviors were the key to mitigating the negative effects of these obstacles. They had to attend class, pay attention, do their homework, manage their time, and find people who would support their decision to go to college. The students were matter of fact about the issues that they faced, and they were quick to explain how they handled these potential barriers to their success.

The implications of these findings support the argument that community college students benefit from enrollment in a student success course in their first semester so that they can learn effective strategies for college success, such as time management, connecting with their

instructors and student support services, planning their academic programs and entry into the workforce.

Findings for Research Question 4

Research questions 4 asked what the student responses revealed about their mindset. According to Dweck (2006), students with a fixed mindset would reject effort and view it as a sign of weakness or lack of intelligence. They would reject help from their instructors, tutors, and other support services personnel and would view their classmates as competition. These students would see setback as a sign that they were not cut out for college. Growth mindset students would view effort as the key to success and learning and classmates as potential study partners and opportunities for further learning rather than competition. They would not view challenges or setbacks as indications that they should quit, rather signs that they should either change their strategies or work harder.

Although a few of the students in this study showed signs of fixed mindset beliefs, they primarily expressed growth mindset belief statements, especially when they explained what they believed would contribute to their success. The students believed that their own actions would be the most contributors to their success, which indicates that they believed that their success is within their control and dependent on their efforts. They saw support as a resource, not a sign of their own inadequacy. They sought help from their instructors, student support service personnel on campus, and their family members, and they cited this support as crucial to their successful navigation of the transition into college and through college. They formed connections with their classmates, and several students even shouldered the responsibility of helping their classmates succeed. They became leaders in the classroom.

The students differed in how they viewed their developmental English placement. Several saw it as an opportunity; others saw it as a setback. However, all jumped at the chance to accelerate through developmental English by enrolling in the corequisite remediation English courses, a strategy that revealed their confidence in their abilities and their willingness to take on challenge. The students admitted that they were nervous when they enrolled in the corequisite courses, but they moved forward anyway. One student said that she was excited at the prospect of learning college-level material; she was excited by the challenge. This is a classic sign of growth mindset.

Two students, Tony and Saul, both English 1301 students who opted to take the corequisite classes to get extra assistance so that they could pass English 1301 the second time they took it, demonstrated movement from fixed to growth mindset thinking. That both students opted to take the support class is an indication that they were willing to work hard to succeed. Tony went from not speaking in class or to his instructor to being a class leader. He explained that his motivation changed when he determined that he was in college for himself not for the people in his life who expected him to get a degree. He was also comfortable with the uncertainty of his major. He knew that he would get a degree in a science-related field, but he was mostly interested in learning rather than aiming himself at a specific degree. Both students stated that failing English 1301 taught them what not to do, and they applied that newfound knowledge to their corequisite classes, which they passed. Both students learned that hard work is the key to succeeding in college. Saul even said about what he learned through his experiences of failing and then succeeding, "It's definitely more the effort you put in than intelligence," which is the growth mindset mantra. He figured that out on his own.

The students stated that they learned in their corequisite classes, that the material was difficult, but that they implemented strategies that helped them, including seeking help, and that they worked hard. All the students passed their corequisite English classes, and several said that they were more confident about college now. They figured out that college success is not a mystery. Do the work, hand it in, and attend classes. That is how several of them summed up their strategies for success.

Faculty played a role in cultivating growth mindset beliefs. They emphasized the importance of revisions in the writing process and required the students to complete several drafts and participate in peer critiquing sessions. They also either required or encouraged the students to revise their graded papers for higher grades, thus communicating that effort leads to learning. The students recognized the importance of revisions in the learning process, and they communicated that they handed in multiple drafts of their essays and revised their papers when they had the opportunity to do so.

Several students expressed fixed mindset beliefs. Opal struggled with imposter syndrome and admitted that it took her a long time to accept that she could be and would be successful in college. Ula's narrative about herself included the word "scared" over and over. Thuy was self-conscious about her weak English skills. However, both Opal and Ula experienced tremendous success, which helped them to change their perceptions about themselves as college students. Opal was recommended for the corequisite program by her developmental English professor, and she participated in a mentor program in which she was mentored before becoming a mentor herself. Ula applied for the Honors Program and stated that she learned a lot in her corequisite English classes and felt prepared to tackle harder work. Thuy knew that she could and would learn English by practicing it.

The implications of these findings indicate that these students would benefit from learning about mindset theory. Research on motivation and perseverance reveals that grit, the tendency to persevere despite challenge, can be grown, and fixed mindset beliefs can be replaced with growth mindset beliefs. Once students recognize the beliefs that they hold as being fixed or growth mindset beliefs, they can work deliberately change their fixed mindset beliefs and change those behaviors that are manifestations of those beliefs. Faculty emphasis on hard work, revision of essays, and the importance of seeking help can also teach students the strategies that lead to success.

Findings for Research Question 5

Research question 5 asked what the faculty and advisors who work with these students identify as resources and barriers to these students, strategies that the students employ, and their attitudes about learning that indicate their mindset. The faculty responses revealed one significant gap between the students' understanding of their situation and the faculty members' understanding of the students' situation: the students did not cite academic weakness as a potential barrier, but that was the first barrier cited by faculty and advisors. Structural weaknesses in the implementation of the corequisite remediation programs were also revealed in the faculty and advisor interviews.

The faculty and advisors listed the same resources that the students listed, and all three groups of participants cited faculty as a first-line resource. They all agreed that when students need academic help, they should first turn to the instructors. The faculty believed that they were the best source of assistance with both academic issues and to connect students to other institutional resources such as tutoring and library services and technological resources such as *Grammarly* and *Paper Rater.* The advisors listed themselves as the best source of help with

scheduling decisions and financial aid issues. Neither the faculty or the advisors mentioned family members as resources for the students.

The advisors and faculty members described personal and institutional barriers that they believed impacted the corequisite students. Unlike the students, who described every barrier except their lack of academic preparedness, the advisors and faculty zeroed right in on the students' unpreparedness for college-level as the most significant personal barrier these students needed to overcome. The faculty indicated that these students are underprepared in three areas: reading, writing, and what Julie called "academic immaturity." Their lack of reading and writing skills were addressed in their coursework. The students were expected to read essays and literature in their English courses, and they wrote essays, which were graded, and they were expected to revise those essays if they made low grades on them. They were also low in skills associated with writing research papers, such as using MLA citations and attribution of sources, but again, these skills are taught in the English classes.

The students' lack of academic maturity manifested when they were asked to think critically. All four faculty members indicated that these students had a difficult time questioning the authority of the authors of the texts used in class. The corequisite students struggled with arriving at an opinion different from the opinion of the authors, and they could not assess the credibility of sources because they believed that if something was published, then it must be true and therefore not subject to doubt. They also had trouble separating their experience from objective fact and supporting their arguments with evidence. The faculty believed that exposure to the kinds of assignments that required the students to utilize critical thinking skills would help the students mature as thinkers.

The faculty discussed the motivation of the students, and although they agreed that student motivation is an important factor in student success, they did not agree on their corequisite students' level of motivation. Kenneth believed that students were afraid of academic writing and shut down when they were faced with a difficult assignment. Bennett agreed with this and said that his students also complain that they are bad writers and use that as an excuse for not performing well. Dylan disagreed and said that he found his students to be more motivated than his credit-level students, more attentive to their grades and more likely to seek help.

Both the advisors and the faculty members identified life issues as a barrier for these students although the faculty did not believe that these students were more likely to suffer from life issues than the students who entered college ready for college-level work. They listed child care, employment, and drug use as personal life issues that impacted their students' performance in class; however, they said that this is true for many of their students, not just the corequisite remediation students. A related barrier, the advisors and Dylan said, was that the colleges employed too few counselors to meet the needs of the students who struggle with life issues, a sentiment echoed by a student participant who felt that she needed mental health counseling and did not know where to get it at the college. Katz and Davison (2014) found that community college students have more mental health concerns or issues than university students but less access to mental health resources and that there is a particular need for these resources at community colleges.

Working too many hours was identified as a barrier to student success. The advisors were more likely to know about the students' employment situation because they helped the students build their class schedules around the students' work schedules, and in fact, they quizzed the

students about their responsibilities outside of school to help the student determine how many courses to take in one semester. The advisors preferred to advise the students to take fewer courses in one semester and increase the students' chances of success if the students had a heavy workload or cared for children rather than advising them to take more classes and graduate sooner.

Students also had to contend with institutional barriers. Institutional barriers identified by the advisors and faculty or made evident by their statements were dependent on the study institution. At Campus A, the largest campus in this study, students did not have enough time with advisors during their first-semester advising process, advisors knew little about the corequisite program, and there were not enough corequisite slots to meet the needs of the students who qualified for the course. The largest college in this study served the smallest number of students in its corequisite remediation English program, a problem of scale that must be rectified in the next three years when the state enrollment mandates for corequisite remediation classes are implemented. See Table 5 on page 64 for enrollment data on first-time-in-college students served by developmental English and corequisite remediation English courses at each of the study sites. There were gaps in advisor knowledge about the corequisite program at all three study institutions, which points to a need for more communication between the departments and the advisors.

The faculty could only speak about the students' implementation of strategies that they had taught the students, such as revising papers, meeting the faculty for conferences, contacting the faculty via text and email, asking questions in class, and visiting the tutoring center and the library, and they indicated that generally, the students did what they were supposed to do with

good results. Overall, the students were good students, who were motivated to succeed, and they did what they were supposed to do to achieve that success.

The faculty spoke about the students' attitude about learning within the context of the corequisite remediation English classes. The students were grateful for the corequisite opportunity. Julie believed that it was her job to set the tone of the class by emphasizing that the class is an opportunity rather than a burden, and she believed that the corequisite students were not laboring under the stigma of developmental education, which was something she saw in regular developmental courses. Because the students chose to be in the corequisite classes and because the corequisite classes were marketed as an accelerated opportunity and because the students knew that they were getting college credit, the faculty stated that the students were happy to be in the courses.

Although the students were thankful for the opportunity to enroll in credit-level English with support, they entered the corequisite remediation English courses fearful about writing. Faculty said that the students tended to describe themselves as bad at writing, as weak writers, but they also admitted that they also saw eager and earnest students as well. In all, their classes represented a mixed bag of student attitudes about writing. The faculty did say that the students' attitudes shifted over the course of the semester as the students practiced writing, and their confidence grew. This growth in confidence was echoed by the students who said that they were better writers at the end of the semester than they were at the beginning and that they felt prepared to take on the next course in the sequence.

The students who were most fearful of the corequisite English courses exhibited signs of fixed mindset. Rather than energized by challenge, faculty said, they wilted when faced with difficult writing assignments. They described themselves as "bad," "weak," and said that they

"suck" at writing. The faculty indicated that part of their job is help students navigate this lack of confidence and overcome it. They all taught their students how to approach writing assignments using step-by-step processes. Rather than viewing each essay assignment in its entirety, the faculty explained, students can just do one step at a time, which is less intimidating. Dylan explained that he tells the students that their skills as writers are separate from who they are as human beings and that writing skills can be learned, which is a strategy designed to foster growth mindset in these students.

The faculty claimed that the corequisite students finished the corequisite classes more proficient at writing college essays than they were when they entered and that the students were transformed from unsure, anxious, academically immature students to more experienced, more confident students who can handle the process of learning. Further, the faculty stated that by the end of the semester, the corequisite students in mainstreamed corequisite courses on Campus B and Campus C were not distinguishable from the students who tested directly into credit-level English.

Although the advisors did not indicate that they were familiar with mindset research, they used growth mindset markers to determine students' eligibility for corequisite remediation classes. They used students' attitudes about learning as a gauge of the student's fitness for acceleration into credit-level courses. Students who exhibited fearfulness, described themselves as afraid of college or afraid of writing or overwhelmed by the idea of acceleration were less likely to be recommended to enroll in the corequisite courses. Students who were excited by the challenge or who indicated that they were excited to enter college and excited to take a writing course were more likely to be recommended for the corequisite program, according to the advisors. Similarly, students who tested into the lower level of developmental English,

performed exceptionally well, and who were then recommended by their instructor to vault over the upper-level developmental English course into corequisite English were students who worked very hard and who may have expressed a desire for more challenge. It is also likely that students with a strong growth mindset may be more likely to volunteer to participate in an hour-long interview with a stranger. This may explain why the students interviewed for this research study demonstrated more growth mindset beliefs than fixed mindset beliefs. First, growth mindset students were more likely to be recommended for the corequisite courses by both instructors and advisors, and second, they may have been more likely to participate in this study.

Overview and Summary

The students in this study entered community college and their corequisite remediation classes and brought with them their individual situations as defined by Schlossberg, Lynch, and Chickering (1989) and their conceptions of self and learning to an unfamiliar arena, community college and the corequisite English classes. They needed support both at home and at school, and they had to employ strategies that would help them succeed. This is covered in the preceding pages. The common thread throughout the data is the importance of support for these students. Support emerged not as just one factor of four factors in Schlossberg's Transition Theory (1989) but as the overarching factor that helps the students deal with their situation, gain the confidence in themselves that they need to enter and persist in high education, and learn what strategies to employ and how to employ them. For these students, support connected the other factors and enabled the students to succeed. Support held it all together, or perhaps it is more accurate to say that support enabled the students to hold it together.

The students' personal support enabled them to make the decision to enroll in college in the first place. Then their personal and institutional support systems enabled them to navigate the

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admissions and testing processes and enroll in corequsite remediation courses. As the students moved through college, they relied more on institutional support for academic help, such as their professors and other institutional support structures such as tutoring and library services, but they still depended on their personal support people for help with childcare, finances, and time. Several of them also asked for academic assistance from their family members.

As the students utilized this support both at home and at the institutions, they learned how to implement strategies that helped them to be successful. This success grew their self-esteem and gave them confidence to continue, which impacted their strategies. The students continued to implement the strategies that helped them to be successful, which included seeking help when they needed it.

The strategy of seeking help as well as their attitudes about learning indicate that these students were more growth-mindset oriented than fixed-mindset oriented. This conclusion is supported by the assessment of the students by their professors, who said that although the students do not always do what they should to succeed, overall, they were motivated to learn, willing to work hard, and increasingly confident in their ability to write as the semester progressed. Their professors also said that most of the students improved over time and more often than not were ultimately successful in credit-level English.

The students, faculty, and the advisors indicated that when the students are adequately supported, the conditions for success are set. It is up to the students to take advantage of that support and do their part, but if they feel supported, practically, academically, and emotionally, they are more likely to implement strategies that will lead to success. For these students, support is the key.

Recommendations for Practice

In the next section, I list recommendations for practice that emerged from the research findings. To maximize the potential for the success of students enrolled in corequisite remediation classes, community colleges should:

1. Include students' personal support providers in campus orientations so that they can also understand what resources are available through the institution and provide better advice to the students to whom they are connected. Because students utilize their family members such as parents and spouses as tutors and providers of academic advice, those people should be familiar with the services the college provides so that they can also recommend that the students utilize institutional resources. Colleges can create "How You Can Support Your Student" sessions at each orientation focused on helping the students' support people help them succeed in college.

2. Structure admission processes so that advisors can spend time with incoming students and determine the best courses for each student. The advisors in this study who only had five minutes with each student were also the advisors with the least understanding of the corequisite program and what types of students were best suited for it. These advisors were also the most confused about how to interpret TSIA scores. Advisors need ongoing development both on state mandates and trends and on institutional programs as well as training on holistic advising processes so that they can place students in corequisite programs more accurately.

3. Strengthen the linkage between the advisors and the corequisite faculty so that the advisors have all the information they need about the corequisite program to advise students properly. If the advisors are familiar with the curriculum and structure of the

corequisite courses, they will be more equipped to advise students into the courses and give students accurate information about the corequisite program.

4. Scale the corequisite program to meet the state mandated enrollment percentages so that student needs are met at all community colleges. Students who are eligible to accelerate through developmental English should not be denied to opportunity to do so because of program enrollment limitations.

5. Provide professional development for faculty who teach corequisite remediation English courses. The recent THECB mandates mean that more trained faculty will be needed to meet the demand for corequisite remediation classes. Corequisite students are a vulnerable population and require well-designed and well-executed instruction and faculty who are invested in their success. The faculty interviewed for this study demonstrated care for their students in the form of thoughtful rigorous lessons, high-level teaching strategies, consistent support, which included connecting students to institutional resources, and encouragement. This should be the standard in all college classrooms.

6. Create programs that provide mentoring opportunities for students, both as mentees and mentors so that they get involved on their campuses and make connections with other students when they enter and provide connections for entering students after they have gained experience.

7. Incorporate mindset and grit theory into coursework, especially into the student success coursework that is specifically intended to help students learn how to navigate college. When students learn to recognize and analyze their beliefs, especially those that are counter-productive, they have the opportunity to change those beliefs.

8. Provide English-speaking mentors for who are English language learners to give these students opportunities to hone their English language skills with native English speakers. The students in this study for whom English was a second language expressed a need to learn English quickly and well, and they stated that they had few opportunities to engage with native English speakers on a personal level. They were deliberate about not spending time with other students who spoke their native language because they knew that they needed to be immersed in English; however, they were unsure about how to connect with English-speaking students at their colleges. A formal buddy system that pairs English-speakers with non-native English speakers would help them make valuable connections.

9. Provide mental health counselors at institutions to meet the mental health needs of students. Quinn (2014) analyzed survey results of 24 community colleges in California compared to a national sample of 153 colleges and found that community college students report higher diagnosed conditions such as insomnia, sleep disorders, bipolar disorder, substance abuse, schizophrenia as well as higher incidence of emotionally and physically abusive relationships, family problems, and suicide attempts. Community college students are also more likely to be homeless than university student, are more likely to be from a lower socioeconomic bracket, first-generation students, employed, and parents. Many have learning disabilities.

10. Finally, provide access to electrical outlets. The students cited access to electrical power as important to them. They needed technology to stay connected to their professors, their classmates, the library, and the online components, and they needed to do their work on their laptops, all of which would be impossible if they did not have access to power. As

institutions refresh their facilities and their furniture, they should consider purchasing

chairs and couches with build-in electrical outlets so that the students can remain

connected and able to work.

Implications for Future Research

This study was conducted before THECB lowered the TSIA writing score cut-off for

credit-level English and required that institutions place a certain percentage of developmental

English students in English 1301 with corequisite support. The TSIA writing score requirement

for English 1301 will drop 23 points for students seeking admission in Fall 2018, but the TSIA

reading cut score will remain unchanged. This means that students who test into English 0309 in

Fall 2018 will likely do so on the basis of their reading score, not their writing score. Practically

speaking, this does not mean that students will be better-prepared in writing; it simply means that

more incoming students will be deemed college-ready in writing but not reading. More students

who would have qualified for English 0309 in both reading and writing in Fall 2017 will qualify

for English 1301 in Fall 2018, but the students who test into English 0309 in Fall 2018 will be

very weak in reading. This difference in student population should be studied further to

determine if curriculum changes are warranted to meet their needs.

These mandates take effect Fall 2018, and by Fall 2020, 75 percent of all students who

test into the highest level of developmental English must be placed in corequisite courses. This

will be a massive scale-up of corequisite remediation courses that will service great numbers of

students who test into developmental English and math in Texas. At many institutions, students

who are on the "bubble" of college-level English and math, often within two points of testing

into college-level English and math, are advised into corequisite remediation classes. However,

the enrollment mandate will force institutions to widen their placement criteria, which will

change the population of students enrolled in corequisite English and math classes. It is imperative that institutions continue to monitor the impact of these courses on students by talking with the students and listening to them describe their experiences as they undergo the testing, advising, and enrollment processes and as they move through their corequisite courses so that they can provide appropriate support services for these students. Researchers should also talk with faculty who manage the curriculum and work with the students in the classroom and advisors who help these students choose their courses. One study that will inform our understanding of how these courses are being implemented at institutions in Texas and their impact on students is currently underway.

In August 2016, in partnership with THECB, the RAND Corporation implemented a study to examine the impact of mainstreaming on students who tested into the highest level of developmental English but who were placed into corequisite remediation English courses. The study design was mixed methods and included a randomized control trial (RCT), focus groups of students and faculty, and one-on-one interviews of key decision makers on thirty-three campuses at six institutions of higher education in Texas. The purpose of the study was three-pronged:

1. To understand corequisite remediation as an intervention designed to accelerate students' progress through developmental education.

2. To understand the experiences of student in accelerated pathways relative to traditional developmental education requirements.

3. To understand how institutions are responding to the mandate to provide more pathways through developmental education.

Because student participants were randomly placed into either English 0309 or English 1301 with corequisite support, the study will also allow researchers to examine success rates by TSIA

score. Researchers will be able to determine if the change in cut score recently implemented in Texas impacts success rates in the corequisite remediation classes.

Additional research on mindset of community college students, especially developmental students, is needed, and the connection between mindset and grit (Duckworth, 2016) is a promising avenue of inquiry. Although it was not specifically addressed in this study, grit offers a promising avenue of inquiry. Duckworth defines grit as "perseverance and passion for long term goals" (2016. Stoltz expanded that definition into four components: growth, resilience, instinct, and tenacity (2014), all of which combined can lead to the tendency to consider new perspectives, respond constructively to adversity and challenge, pursue the right goals in the best and smartest ways, and persist to achieve those goals. In Stoltz's framework, mindset is one component of four. Just as Dweck (2006) argues that a growth mindset can be purposefully cultivated, Stoltz (2014) argues that GRIT can be grown. GRIT research is underway at one community college in Texas. This research could impact corequisite remediation students, who would benefit from curriculum that helps them see the value of hard work and resilience in the face of adversity. Faculty at Lone Star College-Tomball are participating in a GRIT certification program and learning how to weave GRIT concepts and strategies into their courses as a way to help students increase their GRIT and therefore increase their success. An examination of the impact of GRIT strategies on corequisite remediation students would be interesting, especially if findings indicate that GRIT strategies increase success rates and arm students with the mindset and strategies to succeed in their college courses.

This study only examined the experiences of students who were in corequisite remediation programs that were structured similarly to the Accelerated Learning Program established by Community College of Baltimore County; however, other colleges have created

corequisite remediation programs that are structured differently. Colleges in California, Tennessee, and West Virginia are experimenting with different models of corequisite remediation. An examination of student experiences in those programs with a focus on best practices would enable institutions to choose practices from all program types to meet the needs of students.

This study did not examine the experiences of students in corequisite remediation math students, who are present in greater numbers at community colleges than corequisite English students. Developmental math students experience a great deal of anxiety. Several students in this study talked about their fear of math and their frustration about math. Mindset and grit research aimed at corequisite math students could help institutions assist students change their beliefs about learning so that they become more confident about their ability to tackle their math classes.

Conclusion

This study took a broad look at community college students enrolled in corequisite remediation English classes and their experiences in entering and moving through their corequisite remediation coursework. One of the central arguments of the developmental education reform proponents is that students near the cut-off for credit-level courses should accelerate as quickly as they can through developmental education courses because they are not significantly different from students who test directly into credit-level courses. Although I did not examine the test scores of the students who participated in this study, their attitude about their college work, the strategies that they implemented to succeed, and their personal struggles did not seem unique to them. The faculty who worked close with them agreed that these students are very similar to the students who test into credit courses with the exception of academic

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preparedness, a weakness that is corrected by the end of the semester in which they completed corequisite remediation English. If these students are not significantly different from students who test near but above the cut-off for enrollment in credit-level courses, then it can be argued that corequisite students simply benefit from increased attention to their needs. The students reported that support was key to their success. In fact, they defined their circumstances and their likelihood of success by the level of support that they enjoyed. Personal support was critical to their entry into college, and personal and institutional support were necessary to facilitate their movement through college with institutional support becoming more important over time as the students learned to take advantage of institutional resources and formed relationships with their instructors. In addition to providing support themselves, the instructors also connected the students to other institutional resources.

There is still work to be done, especially in light of state mandates to scale up the corequisite remediation programs in Texas. To better serve the needs of these students who will be entering corequisite remediation programs in greater numbers, best practices in corequisite remediation classes should be examined, and communication between academic and student services departments must be strengthened. Advisors and faculty must work together to provide strong corequisite programs and continue to provide institutional resources to students and communicate to students the importance of utilizing those resources. In short, we must not only holistically advise these students, we must holistically instruct them as well. We must give them the attention, the support they need to succeed in pursuit of their academic goals.

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APPENDIX A

PROTOCOL FOR INTERVIEWING STUDENTS

1. Name?
2. Age?
3. Basic facts about you: marital status, children, employment.
4. When did you start at CCS, Campus?
5. What is your major?
6. What do you hope to accomplish at CCS, Campus?
7. Tell me about your elementary and high school experiences. How did you do academically? Did you like school? Why or why not?
8. Why did you decide to attend CCS, Campus?
9. What do you think are your greatest strengths or advantages that will help you succeed in college?
10. What do you think are your greatest weaknesses or disadvantages that will act as barriers to success for you here at CCS, Campus?
11. How do your family and friends feel about your attending school? How do they feel about your attending at CCS, Campus?
12. What process did you follow for admissions with regard to testing?
13. Describe the experience of taking the TSIA.
14. How did you feel when you learn that you placed into developmental courses?
    a. What was your own level of confidence of yourself as a college student at that time?
    b. On what did you base your level of confidence?
15. Walk me through your process of scheduling courses.
    a. How did you decide what to take?
    b. How did you learn about NCBO-supported credit-level English 1301?
    c. What made you decide to take the NCBO-supported credit-level English 1301?
16. Describe your experience in your NCBO-supported credit-level course. (Name the course). How have you done in both the NCBO and the credit course?
    a. What has been the best thing about taking an NCBO and a credit-course?
    b. What has been the toughest thing about taking an NCBO and a credit course?
17. What strategies have you employed to succeed in both the NCBO and the credit course?
18. How have you done in your other courses?
    a. Do you feel prepared to enroll in more credit courses? Why or why not?
19. What do you think has contributed the most to your success in college?
20. What do you think has given you the most trouble in college?
21. Describe your time in college? What descriptive words fit the best?
    a. Finish this sentence: College is like _____. Explain that.
22. How has your perception of college changed since you began taking courses?
23. How has your perception of yourself as a college student changed from before you started college to now?
24. How have you changed since you started college?
25. Is there anything that you would like to add?

APPENDIX B

PROTOCOL FOR INTERVIEWING FACULTY

1. Name?
2. How long have you been a community college professor?
3. In what areas are you an experienced teacher/professor?
4. What classes are you teaching now?
5. How did you come to teach the linked NCBO and credit-level course?
6. Describe the linked courses.
7. How do the developmental students come to enroll in the linked courses?
8. What are the differences between the NCBO and the credit-level course to which the NCBO is linked?
9. How are the developmental students doing in the NCBO?
10. How are they doing in the credit-level course?
11. Compare the developmental students to the students who tested directly into the credit-level course. Are they different? If so, how?
12. What strategies do you ask the developmental students to employ both on their own and in class?
13. What sorts of strategies do the students employ on their own, strategies that they create themselves?
14. What kinds of support are the developmental students given? Does this differ from the support that the credit students are given? If so, how?
15. What kinds of help do they ask you for?
16. What do the developmental students express about being in the NCBO? What do they say about their feelings about taking it? Do you have an impression of how they feel? If so, how did you get that impression?
17. Rate the level of confidence that the developmental students have about their academic ability. How did you arrive at this rating?
18. How confident do you think they are about their ability to succeed in college in general?
19. Have they mentioned life issues that may get in their way? If so, what are those issues?
20. Overall, what do you think about the experience of teaching these developmental students who have opted to take a linked credit-course and NCBO? Do you think that this is a strategy that helps students? Do you think that these students will be prepared to move on?
21. In your opinion, what is the biggest factor in determining the success or failure of these students?
22. Is there anything that you would like to add that has not been covered here?

APPENDIX C

PROTOCOL FOR INTERVIEWING ADVISORS

1. Name?
2. How long have you been an advisor? How long have you been at LSCS?
3. What are the steps that students must take to enroll at LSCS?
4. If they test into the highest level of developmental education, what are their options?
5. Describe the advising process.
6. How would a student find out about the linked NCBO and credit-level courses?
7. What kinds of students would you advise to take those courses?
8. How do you determine whether or not a student is a good candidate for those courses?
9. Think about the students to whom you have explained the NCBO/linked credit-level courses. How do they react?
10. If they decide to take the course, what reason do they give for taking it?
11. If they decide not to take the course, what reason do they give for not taking it?
12. What is your opinion of the linked NCBO/credit-level courses? Explain.
13. How much information have the advisors been given about the linked NCBO/credit-level courses?
14. What kinds of support do you expect students to receive in the courses?
15. What resources are available to support students here at LSCS, Campus X?
16. In your opinion, what are the most important factors that influence a student's success or failure?

APPENDIX D

STUDENT CONSENT FORM

You are being asked to take part in a research study that examines how community college students enrolled in NCBO-supported credit level courses deal transition into college. I am asking you to take part because you are currently enrolled in an NCBO-supported English 1301 class. Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to take part in the study.

What the study is about: The purpose of this study is to learn how students who enroll in an NCBO-supported credit-level English course adjust to college life and college academics. You must be enrolled in an NCBO and English 1301 to participate in this study.

What we will ask you to do: If you agree to be in this study, I will conduct an interview with you. The interview will include questions about your past academic or school experiences, your decision to enter college and your choice to attend community college, your experience with the admissions process, and your experiences in college, your courses, and your resources both at home and at the college. The interview will take between 30 and 90 minutes to complete, depending on how much you want to share. With your permission, I would also like to tape-record the interview.

Risks and benefits: There is the risk that you may find some of the questions to be sensitive; however, I do not anticipate any risks to you participating in this study other than those encountered in day-to-day life. You are welcome to decline to answer any questions that you find to be too personal.

There are no tangible benefits to you; however, some interview participants find it gratifying and rewarding to discuss their experiences and their perspective. The transition into college can be difficult, and I hope to learn more about students who test into Developmental English but choose to take on the challenge of college-level English with NCBO support.

Compensation: Each student participant will be given a lunch coupon for the college campus. The value of each lunch coupon is between $5.00 and $7.00

Your answers will be confidential. The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report I make public, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you. Research records will be kept in a locked file; only the researcher will have access to the records. Any recording of the interview will be kept in a secured file.

Taking part is voluntary: Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. You may skip any questions that you do not want to answer. If you decide not to take part or to skip some of the questions, it will not affect your current or future relationship with Lone Star College or your professor. If you decide to take part, you are free to withdraw at any time.

If you have questions: The researchers conducting this study are Kim Carter and Dr. Yvonna Lincoln. You can ask questions now, but if you have questions later, you may contact Kim Carter at Kimberly.S.Carter@lonestar.edu or at 281-351-3352. You can reach Dr. Yvonna Lincoln at ysl@tamu.edu. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a subject in this study, you may contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at 979.458.1467or outreachrcb@tamu.edu or access their website at http://rcb.tamu.edu/humansubjects.

You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent: I have read the above information and have received answers to any questions I asked. I consent to take part in the study.

Your Signature _____ Date _____

Your Name (printed) _____

I consent to this interview being tape-recorded. _____Yes _____No. _____Initials

Signature of person obtaining consent _____ Date _____

Printed name of person obtaining consent _____ Date _____

This consent form will be kept by the researcher for at least three years beyond the end of the study.

APPENDIX E

FACULTY CONSENT FORM

You are being asked to take part in a research study that examines how community college students enrolled in NCBO-supported credit level courses deal transition into college. I am asking you to take part because you currently teach either an English NCBO or an NCBO-supported English course or both. Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to take part in the study.

What the study is about: The purpose of this study is to learn how students who enroll in an NCBO-supported credit-level English course adjust to college life and college academics.

What we will ask you to do: If you agree to be in this study, I will conduct an interview with you. The interview will include questions about the NCBO and/or the English course that you teach, the students enrolled in your course(s), and your perspective on their adjustment to college life and college courses. The interview will take between 30 and 90 minutes to complete, depending on how much you want to share. With your permission, I would also like to tape-record the interview.

Risks and benefits: There is the risk that you may find some of the questions to be sensitive; however, I do not anticipate any risks to you participating in this study other than those encountered in day-to-day life. You are welcome to decline to answer any questions that you find to be too personal.

There are no tangible benefits to you; however, some interview participants find it gratifying and rewarding to discuss their experiences and their perspective. I hope to learn more about students who test into Developmental English but choose to take on the challenge of college-level English with NCBO support so that we can learn more about these students and their needs so college can make adjustments that will benefit them.

Compensation: There is no compensation for participating in this study.

Your answers will be confidential. The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report I make public, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you. Research records will be kept in a locked file; only the researcher will have access to the records. Any recording of the interview will be kept in a secured file.

Taking part is voluntary: Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. You may skip any questions that you do not want to answer. If you decide not to take part or to skip some of the questions, it will not affect your current or future relationship with Lone Star College. If you decide to take part, you are free to withdraw at any time.

If you have questions: The researchers conducting this study are Kim Carter and Dr. Yvonna Lincoln. You can ask questions now, but if you have questions later, you may contact Kim

Carter at Kimberly.S.Carter@lonestar.edu or at 281-351-3352. You can reach Dr. Yvonna Lincoln at ysl@tamu.edu. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a subject in this study, you may contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at 979.458.1467or outreachrcb@tamu.edu or access their website at http://rcb.tamu.edu/humansubjects.

You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent: I have read the above information and have received answers to any questions I asked. I consent to take part in the study.

Your Signature _____ Date _____

Your Name (printed) _____

I consent to this interview being tape-recorded. _____Yes   _____No. _____Initials

Signature of person obtaining consent _____ Date _____

Printed name of person obtaining consent _____ Date _____

This consent form will be kept by the researcher for at least three years beyond the end of the study.

APPENDIX F

ADVISOR CONSENT FORM

You are being asked to take part in a research study that examines how community college students enrolled in NCBO-supported credit level courses cope with the transition into college. I am asking you to take part because you advise students who test into Developmental English but enroll in an NCBO-supported English 1301 course. Please read this form carefully, and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to take part in the study.

What the study is about: The purpose of this study is to learn how students who enroll in an NCBO-supported credit-level English course adjust to college life and college academics. You must advise students who test into Developmental English but opt to take an NCBO-supported English course to participate.

What we will ask you to do: If you agree to be in this study, I will conduct an interview with you. The interview will include questions about developmental students, the admissions and scheduling processes, and your perspective on the adjustment of developmental students to college life and NCBOs and NCBO-supported English sections. The interview will take between 30 and 90 minutes to complete, depending on how much you want to share. With your permission, I would also like to tape-record the interview.

Risks and benefits: There is the risk that you may find some of the questions to be sensitive; however, I do not anticipate any risks to you participating in this study other than those encountered in day-to-day life. You are welcome to decline to answer any questions that you find to be too personal.

There are no tangible benefits to you; however, some interview participants find it gratifying and rewarding to discuss their experiences and their perspective. I hope to learn more about students who test into Developmental English but enroll in college-level English with NCBO support so that we can can make adjustments that will benefit them.

Compensation: There is no compensation for participating in this study.

Your answers will be confidential. The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report I make public, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you. Research records will be kept in a locked file; only the researcher will have access to the records. Any recording of the interview will be kept in a secured file.

Taking part is voluntary: Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. You may skip any questions that you do not want to answer. If you decide not to take part or to skip some of the questions, it will not affect your current or future relationship with Lone Star College. If you decide to take part, you are free to withdraw at any time.

If you have questions: The researchers conducting this study are Kim Carter and Dr. Yvonna Lincoln. You can ask questions now, but if you have questions later, you may contact Kim Carter at Kimberly.S.Carter@lonestar.edu or at 281-351-3352. You can reach Dr. Yvonna Lincoln at ysl@tamu.edu. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a subject in this study, you may contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at 979.458.1467or outreachrcb@tamu.edu or access their website at http://rcb.tamu.edu/humansubjects.

You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent: I have read the above information and have received answers to any questions I asked. I consent to take part in the study.

Your Signature _____ Date _____

Your Name (printed) _____

I consent to this interview being tape-recorded. _____Yes   _____No. _____Initials

Signature of person obtaining consent _____ Date _____

Printed name of person obtaining consent _____ Date _____

This consent form will be kept by the researcher for at least three years