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English Remediation As a Predictor of Student Success in an Undergraduate Adult Program

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ENGLISH REMEDIATION
AS A PREDICTOR OF STUDENT SUCCESS
IN AN UNDERGRADUATE ADULT PROGRAM

by

Karen Mahovich Burke

A Research Project Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
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ENGLISH REMEDIATION
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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted at the adult college of a midsize private university in Colorado. The purpose of this research was to determine if underprepared students proved to be more successful after completing a remedial Basic English course. For this study, underprepared students were defined as those individuals who scored 49 points or less on their admission essay or did not complete the essay within three semesters. Success was defined as maintaining a 3.0 GPA on a 4.0 scale. This research was conducted with the intention of evaluating the success of undergraduate underprepared adult students.

The target population included all new students who began classes in one of the 5 or 8 week sessions in the fall 2005. Of the 518 new students who began classes in the fall 2005, 171 were defined as underprepared. The underprepared student records from fall 2005 through the summer 2006 were retrieved and analyzed. Student names and numbers were eliminated from the data collection process to ensure anonymity.

Surprisingly, the results of the study did not support the researcher’s hypothesis. Students who completed the Basic English course did not prove to be successful. However, those who did not complete the Basic English did prove to be successful. While the results did not support this researcher’s hypothesis, there were significant findings that came out of this study.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to dedicate my degree to the late James T. Malloy.

Jim was the most courageous selfless man I have ever met.

I wish to extend my love to my late mother, Kimberly Wilde, father, Robert Mahovich, stepmother Sandra Mahovich and sister, Hope Rugani. Thank you for always believing in me unconditionally throughout my life. I also would like to thank Jeffrey Klennert for his understanding and support during this endeavor. I would like to mention a special thank you to my dear friend, Dita Dau. You were my inspiration. I could not have completed this degree without you.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Recent societal changes are forcing more and more individuals to attend postsecondary institutions (Aslanian, 2002). For example, employers who formerly hired high school graduates or individuals with two year degrees have come to view a four year degree as essential to employment (Miller, 1996). However, McCabe (2000) suggested that nearly 58% of students leaving high school are not prepared to begin college level work. Furthermore, changes in welfare reforms and immigration laws are forcing these individuals “into the classroom as they prepare for jobs that pay a living wage” (Southard, 2004, p. 1). In addition, many students seeking higher education are re-entry adults who have been away from the formal learning environment for several years. Clearly stated, many U.S. residents are simply unprepared for college level academia. Fortunately, “the response from most postsecondary institutions has been to recognize the increasing diversity of the students entering their schools and to accept that some of these students will arrive in need of additional preparation for college study” (Miller, 1996, p. 12). Often, these students who are in need of additional academic preparation become labeled as underprepared.

McCabe (2003) proposed that, “each year one million students-one in four who enter higher education-are underprepared” (p. 14). According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2000; as cited in Perkhounkova, Noble, & Sawyer, 2005), almost 30% of all U.S. postsecondary students are underprepared. In fact, McCabe
(2000) stated that nearly 30% of four year college enrollees and 41% of community college enrollees are inadequately prepared in at least one of the following basic skills: reading, writing, and arithmetic. Roughly 40% of these individuals are adult students, often defined as 25 years and older (Oudenhoven, 2002; as cited in Schuetz, 2002).

As more and more underprepared students seek education, there becomes a need to evaluate their success. In doing so, educators and practitioners question whether these inadequately prepared students are succeeding in their college classes after completing remedial coursework. In response to this concern, this researcher examined the remediation and success of underprepared students in an adult undergraduate program. Success was defined as maintaining a grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 on a 4.0 grading scale over three semesters (fall 2005, spring 2006, and summer 2006). An underprepared student was defined as someone who scored below the writing proficiency level on their admission essay or did not complete the essay within three semesters.

Most often, students become labeled as underprepared through admission testing (McCabe, 2003). If the student scores below the pre-set proficiency level, he/she is usually advised to take remedial courses to ensure college success. Many of the universities across the nation have some form of admission testing (i.e., ACT, SAT or writing/math proficiency). Entrance criteria are often based upon the type of college the student is seeking attendance. For example, adult programs may not require a student to take the ACT or SAT. In fact, according to the Nontraditional Students Report (2001a, 2001b; as cited in Williams, 2002), “admission policies for adult programs tend to be less stringent since adults tend to be more goal oriented and more committed to learning”
(p. 8). Entrance criteria are used to assess a student’s level of basic skills. From these assessment results, students are placed in developmental or remedial type courses as a means to prepare them for college level work. Although the three “R’s” of education (reading, writing and arithmetic) are significant to basic skill educators, it was beyond the scope of this study to address all three. Therefore, this researcher was primarily concerned with writing remediation as a predictor of student success.

The institution in this study is a midsized university located in the Rocky Mountain region. There are six campuses located across the Front Range of Colorado and two campuses located in Las Vegas, Nevada. The university consists of three separate colleges (traditional, healthcare, and adult). The traditional college serves recent high school graduates seeking undergraduate degrees in liberal arts, sciences and pre-professional programs. The healthcare college serves students seeking either undergraduate or graduate degrees in healthcare professions of nursing, physical therapy, and administration. The adult college serves adult students seeking either undergraduate or graduate degrees in liberal arts, business, communication, computer science and teaching. The adult program is designed to meet the flexible needs of the working adult. Due to the limited scope of this study, this researcher focused only on the undergraduate adult learning program of the university.

Miller (1996) reported that 80% of American colleges have an open admission policy. According to Miller, these institutions accept students into their programs regardless of the academic preparedness; thereby, limiting entrance, access or opportunity barriers. However, if students are academically unprepared, these schools offer some
form of remediation to prepare these students for college level work. The institution in this study offers an open admission policy, minimizing any barriers the adult student may face when returning to school.

To apply to the undergraduate adult program at the institution in this study, the student must complete an application (See Appendix A), submit a $50 application fee, and document 3 years of post high school work experience on the employment section of the application. The final piece of the admission process is a 300-500 word admission essay. Students select one of the four available topics to write their essay (See Appendix B). At the time of this study, it was recommended that students complete their essay within 10 days of submitting their application. However, there was no policy in place to monitor whether or not the student followed this recommendation. The admission essay was a tool that the university staff used to place students in appropriate English courses.

Problem

This researcher was concerned with the success rate of underprepared undergraduate adult students at a four year university. Unfortunately, there was a limited amount of literature on adult students who were underprepared at the university level. Most of the literature represented the community college as the primary setting for research on underprepared students. This might possibly have correlated with the fact that more than 90% of community colleges across the nation provide remedial courses in mathematics, reading and writing to prepare students for college level courses (McCabe, 2003). With this literature available, one might suggest that similar findings of the success of underprepared students would exist, regardless of whether the student
attended a two year or four year institution. As a result, this researcher explored the adult student success rate of remediation at a four year university. The results of this study will contribute to an existing body of literature and offer educators and practitioners a more comprehensive view of remediation at all levels of higher education.

In this study, admission essay scores were used for the placement of students in the appropriate level English course. Students’ essays were graded with a rubric (See Appendix C). The rubric consisted of 10 criteria of effective writing with “1” being the lowest score and “10” being the highest. There were 100 points possible. Students scoring 49 pointes or lower were advised to take the Basic English course (EN200). The Basic English course was intended to prepare students for college level writing. Those students scoring 50 points or higher were exempt from EN200 and advised to take the appropriate college level English course based on their writing scores.

This study was a follow up to the Williams (2002) study and conducted at the same university. Since the Williams study, there has been virtually no research conducted at this university on the success rate of underprepared adult students who are in need of a Basic English course. This research became timely as policy makers at this institution were eager to learn more about the success of their undergraduate underprepared students. To that end, this researcher identified the underprepared student population as those students who did not complete the admission essay or completed the essay and scored 49 points or lower. Data from this student population was examined to determine their success. Success was defined as maintaining a GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 grading scale over three semesters (fall 2005, spring 2006, and summer 2006). Two
distinct groups were identified from the population of underprepared students.

- Group 1 - students who did not take the Basic English course (EN200) within three semesters (fall 2005, spring 2006, and summer 2006).
- Group 2 - students who took the Basic English course (EN200) within three semesters (fall 2005, spring 2006, and summer 2006).

Relevance

This study was an extension of a previous work done by Williams (2002) and was conducted at the same institution. Williams used admission essay results as the predictor of student success. At the time of her study, she found that undergraduate adult students who wrote competently were more successful than those who did not write competently. She defined success as maintaining a GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 grading scale and completing three courses over a 12 month period. Williams suggested that further research be conducted on the success of students in need of a Basic English course. As a result, this researcher identified a group of students in need of a Basic English course and explored their success. Success was defined as maintaining a GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 grading scale over three semesters (fall 2005, spring 2006, and summer 2006).

At this time, it is worth mentioning two significant changes in the admissions process since Williams (2002) conducted her research. First, the file completion process changed. At the time of the Williams study, the complete admission file consisted of: an application, a $50 application fee, official transcripts from every school attended to include military training documents, and a graded admission essay. The essay consisted of a 300-500 word paper describing what a Regis education meant to the student. At this
point, the advising department evaluated any transfer credits and prepared a degree plan. The degree plan represented a working document of completed courses and those courses the student needed to complete for their selected bachelor degree. Once the student’s credits were transferred into the degree plan, the student was contacted for an advising appointment. During this appointment, the student signed the degree plan and was advised on taking the appropriate writing course based on their admission essay score.

Under the new file completion process, the student’s file was complete with all of the above mentioned documents except the admission essay score. Some students submitted the essay with their other documents, while others postponed completing their essay until after their file was complete, if at all. As a result, the graded admission essay may not have been available during the scheduled advising appointment. When the graded essay was not available for the advising appointment, advisors were unclear as to which English course to recommend. This caused a cumbersome situation if a student needed the Basic English course, but the advisor did not have a graded writing sample at the advising appointment.

Another change existed in the grading of the admission essay. At the time of the Williams (2002) study, grading was conducted by a trained English instructor. The grades were denoted as green, yellow and red. The grade of green referred to competent writers where yellow and red referred to writers who were not competent. Students receiving a green on their admission essay were placed in a college level English course. Those receiving a yellow or red were advised to enroll in a Basic English course. Students also had the option of taking the Basic English course rather than submitting the
writing sample.

Under the new essay grading policy, the students writing was graded by a trained English instructor who utilized a rubric of 10 writing criteria. Each criterion was evaluated using a number between 1 and 10 with “1” being the lowest score and “10” being the highest score. There was a possible score of 100 points. If a student scored 49 points or lower he/she was advised to take the Basic English course (EN200) as one of his/her first 3 classes. Students scoring higher than 49 points were advised to take a college level English course (200, 300 or 400 level). Students scoring 50-74 points on the entrance essay were advised to take a 200 level course. Those students scoring between 75–89 pointes were advised to take a 300 level course. Finally, students scoring 90–100 points could register in a 400 level course. Although these courses were recommended based on the students admission essay scores, there was no process in place to monitor or enforce the advisors recommendation.

Strategy

The institution in this study is a midsized university in the Rocky Mountain Region. This researcher focused primarily on the undergraduate adult learning program of the university. For the purpose of this study, students scoring 49 points or lower on the admission essay were termed not competent in their writing skills and recommended to take a Basic English course. In addition, those students who did not complete the admission essay within three semesters were also termed not competent in their writing skills. Those scoring 50 points or higher on the admission essay were termed as competent writers and were recommended to take college level English courses.
In an attempt to examine the success of students in terms of their writing skills, statistical data were gathered from new student records who began taking courses in the fall semester 2005. At the institution in this study, there are 3 semesters (fall, spring, and summer). Each semester is further divided into accelerated 5 and 8 week classes. There are three - 5 week start dates and two – 8 week start dates for each semester (See Appendix D). This researcher was primarily concerned with exploring the success of new students who began taking courses in any of the 5 or 8 week start dates in the fall 2005 semester.

Data were reviewed and reported to determine the success of students defined as underprepared. Underprepared students were defined as those individuals who scored 49 points or less on their admission essay or did not complete the essay within three semesters. The primary focus of this study was to determine if underprepared students who took the Basic English course within three semesters (fall 2005, spring 2006, and summer 2006) would be more successful than those students who postponed enrollment in the course, if taking it at all. Success was defined as maintaining a GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 grading scale over three semesters.

Background

Many authors (Williams, 2002; Perkhounkova et al., 2005; Campbell & Blakey, 1996) have dedicated their efforts to conducting research and collecting statistical data to measure the success of underprepared students. For example, Williams (2002) explored the effects of writing competency on an admissions essay as a predictor of student success in an adult undergraduate program. Williams classified the students as
competent or not competent writers based on an admission essay grading criteria. Competency was defined as passing the admission essay (scoring a green). Students not passing the admission essay (scoring a yellow or red) or electing to enroll in the Basic English course were termed not competent in their writing skills. Williams found that competent writers were successful in an undergraduate adult program more often than those who were not competent. Success was defined as maintaining a minimum GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale and completing at least three courses over a 12 month period.

Similarly, Perkhounkova et al. (2005) explored the effectiveness of developmental courses as a predictor of student success. Success was defined as a “B” or higher, or a “C” or higher in subsequent college level courses after remediation. Unlike other studies that have examined student success after remediation, this study considered the grade the student received in their developmental course. Perkhounkova et al. proposed that “the grade earned by the student in a developmental course is a more important predictor of later success than merely taking the course” (p. 20). These authors suggested that there is a misconception that earning a “C” grade in a developmental course means a student is prepared for college level courses. In fact, the Perkhounkova et al. study demonstrated otherwise. Findings of the study suggested that “students who took developmental courses and earned higher grades (at least a B) in these courses were more likely to be successful than were other students with similar levels of academic preparation” (p. 20). Perkhounkova et al. proposed that policy makers should require students to earn a “B” or higher in developmental courses before enrolling in subsequent college level courses.
Furthermore, Campbell & Blakey (1996) conducted a longitudinal study to determine whether early remediation affected the success of underprepared students. Early remediation was defined as taking a remedial course in the first year of enrollment. Although somewhat vague, their definition of success was defined as persistence toward degree completion. Findings of the study suggested that early enrollment in remedial classes and degree seeking intent were predictors of success. In addition, Campbell and Blakey found that high GPAs, the number of remedial courses taken, age, ethnicity, and gender were all predictors of underprepared student persistence.

Obviously, there is a multitude of ways to define success of underprepared students. Some researchers define success in terms of writing competency, others define success in terms of receiving higher grades in remedial courses, while even others define success as persistence toward degree completion. Regardless of the ambiguity around the topic of student success, educators and practitioners are anxious to explore ways to measure the performance of the many underprepared students attending American colleges each year.

Hypothesis

The intention of the Basic English course (EN200) is to prepare students for college level writing. The course is designed to provide underprepared students with the basics of grammar, punctuation, and paragraph structure. This researcher hypothesized that undergraduate underprepared adult students who completed the Basic English course within three semesters (fall 2005, spring 2006, and summer 2006) would be more successful than those choosing to postpone enrollment in the class. Underprepared
students were defined as those individuals who scored 49 points or lower on their admission essay or did not complete the admission essay within three semesters. Success was defined as maintaining a GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale over three semesters.

Definitions of Terms

- Accelerated classes – Each semester is divided into three – 5 week start dates and two – 8 week start dates.
- Admission essay - A 300-500 word paper on a select topic that a new student submits for admission into the university. The results of the graded essay were used to place students into the appropriate English course.
- Adult learner - A student defined as: 25 years or older, working full-time, and having family responsibilities.
- Adult program - An academic program designed to meet the needs of adult learners. Class schedules are flexible (i.e., evening, weekend, online, intensive).
- Advisor - A staff member assigned to a student once his/her file is complete. This person assists students through the course selection and his/her entire academic program. They are responsible for recommending remedial classes to students who score 49 points or lower on the admission essay.
- Developmental course - A comprehensive course/program that addresses the needs of the whole person by integrating personal and academic development.
- EN200 – Essentials of Effective Writing. A Basic English course students are advised to take when their graded admission essay is 49 points or lower.
• File completion – Admission application, $50 application fee, and all transcripts including any military documents. For the purpose of this study, the admission essay was not part of the file completion process.

• Open admission policy - Institutions with this policy accept students into their programs regardless of their academic preparedness. Open admission policies limit entrance, access or opportunity barriers.

• Prospective student – A student interested in the university who has not yet applied.

• Remedial course - A course that focuses on compensating for deficiencies in prior learning.

• Student status – A prospective student who has applied to the university.

• Underprepared student - Students who are lacking basic skills and defined as not prepared for college level coursework.

Summary

This chapter included the problem, relevance, strategy, background, hypothesis and definitions of terms for this research. The issue of underprepared students in terms of assessment, placement and success was addressed. Chapter 2 focuses on an in-depth review of what the literature states about underprepared students, developmental/remedial education and student persistence. Chapter 3 contains the research methodology, data collection and statistical analysis for this research. Chapter 4 includes the results of the statistical data. Finally, chapter 5 summarizes this research and mentions limitations and recommendation for future studies.
Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher examined literature on topics that address undergraduate students who are labeled academically underprepared. Research suggests that underprepared students are those individuals who require remediation in basic skills (reading, writing, and arithmetic) to achieve success in college level academia. The literature proposes that underprepared students encompass a variety of ages; from recent high school graduates to those students who have been away from the formal learning environment for a few or more years. Although the literature on underprepared students is not often age specific, this research focused on the underprepared adult student and their success after completing a Basic English course. Most of the literature does suggest that underprepared students are more successful after completing remedial courses. This becomes important as societal changes are driving the need to educate all people, regardless of their academic preparedness. As our society becomes more diverse, and our economy becomes more global, the need for remedial education becomes more of a reality. Therefore, researchers and practitioners are eager to explore topics related to underprepared students, remediation, and student persistence.

It became apparent that there was an insufficient amount of research on the adult underprepared student in terms of writing skills at four year institutions. Fortunately, there was a significant amount of information on the role community college programs play in preparing students for college level academia. With this information available,
one might suggest that there is little difference between underprepared students regardless of the type of institution (two year or four year) the student attends. As a result, much of the literature presented in this chapter represents the underprepared student in the community college setting.

Since the institution in this study consists of an undergraduate adult program, the literature review begins with a general overview of the profile and characteristics of the adult learner. Then the researcher delves further into the theoretical and experiential literature of underprepared students, remediation, and persistence.

Adult Learner

Historically, institutions of higher learning have catered to the traditional aged student (Bendixen-Noe, 1998). In the literature, traditional aged students are often defined as those individuals 18-24 years old. However, within the last 50 years, colleges and universities have faced the challenge of servicing a nontraditional (25 years and older) population of students. Research suggests that this trend is expected to continue. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2002; as cited Kasworm, 2003), “75% of current undergraduate students are nontraditional because they are older; they have experienced a gap in their collegiate enrollment; they are part time learners, they are minorities; or they are financially independent” (p. 2). Of this percentage, over half are 25 years or older. As the number of older students attending colleges continues to increase, “institutions must look at the uniqueness of the adult learner and attempt to meet their needs” (Bendixen-Noe, p. 27). In an effort to academically meet their needs, researchers and practitioners continue to explore two questions: Who is the adult learner?
What are the characteristics that make them different from their younger counterparts?

Adult learners are defined as those individuals who are 25 years of age or older (Bendixen-Noe, 1998). They are often referred to as nontraditional, returning, or older students. Most adult learners work full time, have family commitments, and are first generation students. Bendixen-Noe reported that “the major reasons cited for college entry by the older students ranged from developing a new career, wanting to learn, and having the satisfaction of obtaining a degree” (p. 28).

Furthermore, adult students possess characteristics that are unique and differ from those of traditional students. As Merriam (2001) states, Malcolm Knowles described the adult learner “as someone who:

1. has an independent self concept and who can direct his or her own learning,
2. has accumulated a reservoir of life experiences that is a rich resource for learning,
3. has learning needs closely related to changing social roles,
4. is problem centered and interested in immediate application of knowledge,
5. is motivated to learn by internal rather than external factors” (p. 5).

Research suggests that adult students are valued for their maturity, motivation, and commitment (Kasworm, 2003). Although it would seem logical that adult learners are better prepared for higher education, leaving the formal learning environment early has implications for concern. Kasworm suggested that “because adult students are predominately re-entry, part-time students, there are still questions regarding the potential successful completion of adult learners in undergraduate studies” (p. 6). Similarly,
Brookfield (1986) argued that adults are not as quick to learn and are at different learning levels. Furthermore, several authors (Bishop-Clark & Lynch, 1992; Lynch & Bishop-Clark, 1994; MacDonald & Stratte, 1998; Ross-Gordon & Brown-Haywood, 2000) have suggested that adult students lack confidence in their ability to succeed academically. This lack of self confidence is directly linked to adult learners “perceptions that they may not be as well prepared as fellow students who have not left the formal learning environment” (Ross-Gordon, 2003, p. 48). In fact, Gardiner (1994; as cited in Grimes & David, 1999) suggested that adult students are among one of the populations most likely to be academically unprepared compared to their younger peers. Oudenhoven (2002; as cited in Schuetz, 2002) supported this statement by proposing that roughly 40% of all underprepared students attending college are adult learners.

Underprepared Students

Societal changes are drawing more and more students to postsecondary education. This is primarily due to the rapid advances in technology which are forcing our society to become a more skillful workforce (Aslanian, 2002). Unfortunately, most citizens lack a postsecondary education to meet the demands of the changing economy. Out of those who seek a college education, nearly 30% are not prepared for college level academia (McCabe, 2000). In addition, our country is experiencing a significant influx of immigrants bringing with it a wide range of academic achievement levels. Aslanian proposed that the community colleges are a solution to educating multiple cultures with varying academic preparedness.

In a recent address, Alan Greenspan stressed that in order to stay competitive in
our global economy we must strengthen our workforce (Aslanian, 2002). In doing so, he suggested the need to educate all people who have not previously participated in some form of higher education. Similarly, McCabe (2000) proposed that our future depends on education more than ever. The relevance of educating all people becomes a reality as the literature suggests that “80 percent of new jobs will require some postsecondary education” (p. 24). Even manual labor type jobs will demand knowledge of complex processes rather than a predetermined list of instructions. Unfortunately, less than half of Americans have participated in postsecondary education. As a result, the need to increase the educational status of our society becomes apparent.

The number of high school graduates (65 %) attending college is on the rise (Aslanian, 2000). However, many high school graduates who enroll in college are not prepared for the rigors of college level academia. Aslanian proposed that “more than one-half of these students are first generation students (often from working-class families and minority backgrounds)” (p. 24). Being of a minority status often correlates to higher poverty and lack of educational preparation. As a result, “government and institutions of higher learning have come to recognize the urgency of attracting and serving the postsecondary needs of underserved and underprepared populations.” (p. 25).

In an effort to ensure high academic standards, some four year public universities have chosen to ban remedial education as a means of serving the underprepared student (Aslanian, 2002). To that end, many community colleges become the only opportunity for these less fortunate individuals to receive a formal education. In fact, research suggests that the community colleges serve the widest student population. The
population can range from the underprepared student looking for remediation to the individual with an advanced degree seeking additional training. Most importantly, community colleges become a solution for the underprepared student by offering lower tuition rates, an open admission policy, technical and academic curricula, and support services. All of which become vital for the success of underprepared students.

In an effort to realize the differences between underprepared students and college ready students, Grimes and David (1999) surveyed freshmen at a community college in Florida. In 1992, approximately 500 freshmen were asked to complete the Student Information Form. This survey instrument was developed by the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP, 1966) and designed to gather data on student demographic, experiential, and attitudinal elements (i.e., age, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, academic preparation, college enrollment decision, and self-ratings).

The student sample was asked to complete the survey during their freshmen orientation (Grimes & David, 1999). The ethnicity of the sample included: 15.5% Black, 4% Asian and 80% White. The average age of the sample was 23 years old. Fifty one percent of the sample consisted of college ready students; whereas 48% were defined as academically underprepared. College ready students were identified as those who completed the statewide Computerized Placement Test (CPT) and termed proficient in reading, writing and mathematics. Academically underprepared students were identified as those who did not meet the proficiency cut off scores.
The results of the study demonstrated insignificant differences between underprepared and college ready students in relation to age, family issues, gender or enrollment status (Grimes & David, 1999). However, the groups differed significantly in terms of ethnicity, high school GPA and degree aspirations. Namely, African American students were represented more significantly (21%) in the underprepared group compared to (6%) for the college ready group. The GPAs differed for each group where underprepared students had an average GPA of B- and college ready students had an average GPA of B. Furthermore, most underprepared students aspired to achieve vocational or associate degree programs. Whereas, college ready students aimed for bachelor or graduate degrees.

Analysis on the college enrollment decision data demonstrated that underprepared students produced higher mean scores on: (1) improving reading and study skills, (2) satisfying parental desires, and (3) difficulty finding a job (Grimes & David, 1999). Furthermore, the analysis of self ratings of academic ability revealed significant differences between the two groups. Underprepared students demonstrated lower self ratings in mathematical ability, reading speed and comprehension, self-confidence, writing ability, public speaking, and public health.

Clearly, there are significant differences between underprepared and college ready students in terms of characteristics and perceptions of themselves on experiential and attitudinal measures. As a result, colleges are faced with more than academic challenges. They are also charged to support the many other limitations, such as self confidence, representative of the underprepared student population.
Expanding upon the effects of underprepared students, Pitts, White & Harrison (1999) proposed that faculty at open admission institutions experience frustration in the teaching environment despite remedial efforts. This is primarily due to the fact that academic deficits of underprepared students have accumulated over 12 or more years and do not lend themselves to an easy fix. Once students complete remediation, they enter college level classes. Pitts et al. argued that even after these students complete remedial courses, they may still experience academic deficits. This becomes a challenge for faculty teaching college level courses where underprepared students are enrolled.

Unfortunately, in many situations, faculty are expected to teach underprepared students without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum (Pitts et al., 1999). Mason (1978) proposed that many underprepared students expect the instructor to provide remediation in the regular college classroom. This scenario becomes difficult as many instructors do not feel secure in their ability to deal with students who are underprepared (Stark & Lattuca, 1997). In fact, in many cases faculty are driven to lower their instructional standards and grading practices to accommodate the general student population (London, 1982; Cohen, 1986 and Seidman, 1985). In a national study conducted by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (1989; as cited in Pitts et al.), three fourths of the faculty polled reported that students were seriously underprepared.

In an effort to explore faculty perceptions of their experiences with underprepared students, Pitts et al. (1999) conducted a qualitative study at two open admission universities. Seven participants from each institution with varying disciplines were
selected for the study. The participants were selected based on the “likelihood that they would have had some experience with student academic underpreparedness in the classroom setting and because they did not teach remedial or developmental courses” (p. 346). Eight of the selected faculty were male and six were female. The data were gathered through open ended interviews. In the interviews, participants were asked about their perceptions and experiences of teaching underprepared students. The interviews were recorded for later transcription. The data were analyzed to identify common themes: (1) basic problems associated with academic underpreparedness, (2) strategies to deal with problems, and (3) opinions, values, and feelings.

All participants expressed that poor academic preparation of students constitutes a major problem for them both academically and personally (Pitts et al., 1999). The analyzed data demonstrated several problems associated with teaching underprepared students and were identified as follows:

1. Students basic skills level deficiencies were serious and pervasive.
2. Students read and comprehend poorly and do not write at the college level.
3. Student’s attitudes and motivation were poor.
4. Students make excuses for their deficiencies.
5. Resources for teaching underprepared students in the regular college classroom were inadequate.
6. Faculty felt they were forced to significantly water down the curriculum.

Overall, the participants categorized the general population of student in their classrooms as poorly prepared for college level academic. Several common themes
emerged when asked about coping strategies they used to teach underprepared students in the regular college classroom (Pitts et al., 1999).

1. Teachers need to be flexible in their approach to teaching.
2. Teachers need to go beyond the traditional role of teaching by counseling, motivating, inspiring, negotiating, and controlling.
3. Teachers may need to reduce course content in both quantity and scope.
4. Teachers have lowered expectations by modifying evaluation and grading.

The third and final theme identified was the participant’s opinions, values and feelings. More specifically, participants expressed how they viewed the problem and what they thought could be done (Pitts et al., 1999).

1. Teachers appreciated the intent of the open admissions policy, but felt strongly about the declining standards.
2. Teachers have different priorities and agendas than students.
3. Teachers felt that the large number of underprepared students in their classes was a contributing factor in their deteriorating attitudes toward their jobs.
4. Teachers expressed the need for more resources and leadership to assist them when working with poorly prepared students.

The findings demonstrated that “underpreparedness significantly affected how participants in this study taught, the way they structured their courses, and the way they evaluated students” (Pitts et al., 1999, p. 363). Most expressed confusion about their role as teachers and appropriate requirements for their students. As a result, it becomes
apparent that faculty at open admission institutions personally struggle with the problem of underpreparedness.

Remediation

Research suggests that remedial education is an effective method for preparing underprepared students for college level academia. In the 1960s, the first signs of remedial education began as our nation fought for equality (McCabe, 2000). Opportunities of higher education were made available to all people who had previously been excluded (i.e., unprepared, underserved and minorities). According to McCabe, during this period “more college facilities were built than in the previous two centuries” (p. 2). In this new open admission format, students were allowed to enroll in any course regardless of their readiness. As more and more students failed courses they were not prepared for, policy makers began to conceptualize the need for change.

During the 1970s and 1980s, practitioners saw the need for identifying student’s skill levels prior to enrolling in any class (McCabe, 2000). As a result, college officials introduced entry testing as a means of identifying the readiness of students for appropriate placement. McCabe suggested that “mandatory entry testing is becoming more common, but nearly half of the states lack policies that require it” (p. 3). Entry testing is particularly vital to institutions that support an open admission policy, allowing students into their programs regardless of their academic preparedness. Open admission educational institutions likely serve four distinct groups: (1) the well prepared, motivated, (2) the unprepared, high expectations, (3) the reasonably prepared, unmotivated, low self esteem, and (4) the unprepared, low expectation, low self esteem (Nielson, 1991).
According to Nielson, adults tend to fall into the unprepared, high expectation group. Due to the diverse student population open admission institutions serve, the need for entry level testing becomes a crucial component to their academic success.

Entry level testing often includes basic skills assessment in reading, writing and mathematics. The most popular form of testing is administered via a paper and pencil format (McCabe, 2003). However, computer based assessment is gaining popularity. In fact, McCabe suggested that in some cases “educators have turned to computer programs that purport to score writing samples more efficiently and consistently” (p. 35). One example is the Write Placer Plus, developed by College Board (2001) as part of its ACCUPLACER program. The computer based testing program assesses students writing samples with immediate results.

In an attempt to measure the effectiveness of entry level assessment such as the ACCUPLACER program, Saunders (2000) conducted a study at an open admission community college in Saint Louis, Missouri. The purpose of the study was to evaluate the placement and success of students in entry level writing courses. As many community colleges have an open admission policy, college officials become obligated to assess the tools used for placement purposes to ensure the success of all students. In fact, Gillespie (1993) proposed that if an institution chooses to implement placement testing, than the reliability of these assessment tools must be examined to ensure that the results are effective in the appropriate level of course placement.

In the Saunders (2000) study, “a retrospective analysis of 482 students who had taken ACCUPLACER Sentence Skills test between January and August 1999 of their
enrollment year, was performed” (p. 2). The aim of the study was to determine the correlation between students test scores and their success in the recommended entry level writing courses. Success was defined as receiving a grade of ‘C’ or better in the recommended course. Entry level English placement was determined by preset ACCUPLACER scores. Students scoring from 36 to 82 were placed in either one of two (ENG 020, ENG 030) entry level writing courses. Those scoring 83 and above were placed in a college level English courses (ENG 101 or ENG102).

Analysis of the data demonstrated that “64% of those enrolled in the pre-college level writing courses, English 030 and 020, were successful” (Saunders, 2000, p. 3). Of those registered in college level writing course, 58% received a ‘C’ or better. The results are in alignment with Roueche and Roueche’s (1993) recommendation of 50% success rate for entry level writing success. Therefore, the ACCUPLACER testing proved to be a viable instrument in placing students appropriately.

Despite the research that supports remediation and student success, some practitioners still do not value remedial education (McCabe, 2000). In fact, remedial education has always been a controversial topic. Over the last two decades, debates over remedial education have begun to intensify. Opponents of remedial education argue that remedial curricula is a repeat of the basic skills taught in high school. They also believe that remedial programs compromise the integrity of college level academia. On the other hand, those who support remedial education argue that one cannot deny the importance of a well educated society. They also highlight the low cost and benefits of remedial programs. Regardless of the debates over remedial education, McCabe announced that
“America has no one to waste” (p. 25). We must provide open admission and the right to succeed for every student, regardless of their academic readiness.

In an attempt to realize the benefits of remedial education, McCabe (2000) conducted the first National Study of Community College Remedial Education. The study consisted of twenty five community colleges that were selected based on their region and type of institution (i.e., urban or rural). Data were collected from student records and follow up interviews with students who successfully completed remediation. The findings demonstrated that:

1. Forty three percent of community college remedial students complete their program successfully.
2. Remediated students pass 88% of college level English classes and 82% of mathematics classes.
3. Most remedial students sought occupational programs.
4. Ninety eight percent of students become employed after successful remediation.
5. Mandatory testing and placement are essential to remediation programs.

Despite the supporting evidence of student success after remediation, there continues to be controversy around mandatory testing and placement of underprepared students (Hadden, 2000). Many institutions across the country implement placement testing to identify basic skills students are lacking. The dilemma arises once these underprepared students are identified. The controversy is over access versus success. Is it ethical to deny a students freedom of choice by requiring them to take a remedial
course? Is it ethical to deny access to a class if students are not prepared for the curriculum? Is it ethical to allow students to fail knowingly they are not prepared? Is it ethical to require faculty members to maintain academic rigor when half of the students are underprepared? These are some of the questions surrounding the debate of mandatory placement.

Hadden (2000) proposed that “the overarching dilemma rests at the heart of what community colleges pride themselves on most - the egalitarian position of open access and the effort to provide all students with the highest quality of education” (p. 823). As with all ethical issues, no right answer exists. One thing is clear, these ethical issues lead to ironies that question mandatory placement of underprepared students.

The ethical dilemma becomes more pronounced in states like Colorado. In Colorado, state policy mandates placement testing but allows students the right to waive taking remedial courses (Hadden, 2000). Rouche and Rouche (1993) proposed that this dilemma puts community college officials “between a rock and a hard place” (p. 103). The concept of open access allows all students the right to enroll in college level course regardless of their level of proficiency and also opens the possibility of student failure. Similarly, Mitchell (1989) characterized the admittance of underprepared students into open access programs as “committing the fraud of promising and charging for educational services that we could not deliver because we gave students the right to fail and provided programs that all but insured that they exercised the right” (p. 4).

Moreover, Dr. Dorothy Horrell, president of Colorado Community College and Occupational Education Systems (CCCOES) summarized the community college
dilemma as a debate between two conflicting views. On the one side, research demonstrates that students become more successful after completing remediation courses. On the other side, postsecondary students have the right to make their own decisions on whether to complete remediation type courses. Horrell also mentioned the importance of creating higher standards for high school graduates as well as communicating the skills needed for college success.

According to a recent report from CCCOES, 18.2% of the college student body was enrolled in one or more basic skills class (Hadden, 2000). Although this percentage is significant, it would be considerably higher if students did not have the right to waive remedial course recommendations. The data for this report were gathered from 12 of the 16 Colorado Community Colleges for the academic year 1997 to 1998. In a CCCOES report profiling basic skills, “approximately 57% of those enrolled in developmental courses are not recent high school graduates, so the hope that improving high school standards will eliminate the need for developmental studies is, perhaps, wishful thinking” (p. 825). Furthermore, regardless of the efforts to improved high school standards, there always exists a need to provide remedial classes for adult students returning to college. With more and more adults returning to education, the need for developmental courses will continue to exist.

Ironically, colleges across the U.S. have no difficulty enforcing prerequisite requirements for upper level courses; however, mandating a certain level of proficiency before students enroll in college level courses triggers debate (Hadden, 2000). For instance, no one questions an institutions prerequisite policy requiring a student to take a
General Chemistry course before enrolling in an Organic Chemistry course. These students are simply not familiar with the foundational knowledge to be successful in an upper level chemistry course. Proponents of developmental education argue that the same concept holds true for basic skills. In order for a student to be successful in a college level course, they must be proficient in basic skills (i.e., reading, writing and arithmetic). Despite “research and reports that indicate the success rate of students who remediate is higher than those students who waive remedial placement” many college officials are not willing to take the step of mandating remedial placement (p. 828). Therefore, this ethical dilemma continues to challenge policy makers as they search for the best solution to providing student success and open course access.

Yet, another irony exits in terms of performance indicators. Curtin (1999) announced that one of the performance targets of the Colorado Commission on Higher Education is graduation rates. This pressure to produce more college graduates can have adverse effects in the classroom. Instructors may feel the pressure to remediate deficiencies in an attempt to help students comprehend what they are teaching. However, these remedial practices in the classroom can compromise the rigor of the course. Such results can reinforce the misconception that community colleges are operating below the required academic standards.

Young (2002) proposed that “given the projected increased need for remedial instruction in higher education, community colleges must be proactive in demonstrating the worth of remediation” (p. 16). Furthermore, college officials must also continue to justify the merit of remedial programs to a public that demands accountability.
Therefore, educators and practitioners continue to explore the success of remedial programs. In doing so, researchers are eager to examine the persistence and retention of remediated students.

Persistence

Student persistence and/or retention continue to be at the forefront of discussions among educators and practitioners. While these terms are used interchangeable, they are often used to explain a student’s perseverance toward a course and/or degree completion. A great deal of research has been dedicated to the persistence and retention of college students (Young, 2002). However, according to Kasworm (2003), research on persistence for adult students has always been highly problematic since adults represent interrupted enrollments and reentry activity. In fact, Kasworm proposed that adult students bring to the educational environment “between 1 to 15 collegiate transcripts of other prior institutional enrollments” (p. 7).

Although there is a great deal of literature on persistence and retention, most does not specifically focus on the underprepared student (Young, 2002). For example, Vince Tinto is known for his theoretical model of college retention. In his model, he proposed that “student persistence is directly influenced by institutional and goal commitment” (Young, p. 7). While Tinto’s model is widely accepted, it does not speak to the needs of underprepared students. If proponents of remedial education “are correct when they argue that remedial instruction is necessary, effective, and economical,” then it becomes important to “understand how to keep underprepared students persisting towards their academic goals” (p. 6).
In an effort to explore the concept of persistence after remediation, Young (2002) addressed several studies in her argument about the importance of understanding how to retain remedial students. For example, Batzer (1997) found that “academically underprepared students who completed remediation earned higher grades in college level English and college level math than those who did not complete remediation” (p. 4). Batzer also reported that students who took remedial classes persisted longer than students who completed no remediation. Similarly, Schoenecker, Bollman, and Evens (1996) demonstrated that remediated students “performed as well as or better than the students originally classified as college prepared” (p. 1). Furthermore, a study conducted at Sinclair Community College suggested that remedial students were more likely to persist in college than students who did not need remediation. These studies suggest that remediation aids in the persistence and retention of underprepared students. Therefore, it is in the interest of researchers to understand what keeps remedial students persisting after remediation.

In an effort to realize retention of remedial students, Young (2002) proposed three key concepts that contribute to persistence: (1) teaching and learning, (2) mandatory assessment and placement, and (3) institutional outreach. First, she suggested that using the correct approach of teaching and learning yielded high remedial student persistence. The various approaches to teaching and learning are often identified in learning theories (i.e., humanistic, behaviorist, and developmental). The humanistic approach is “where students are responsible for their own learning and the role of the teacher is a facilitator to that learning” (p. 9). Young proposed that remedial students are not ready for self
directed learning. The behaviorist approach to learning is characterized by self-paced learning, also not conducive to remedial courses. In the developmental approach to learning, “instructors are intimately involved with helping students move from one level of knowledge to another” (p. 9). Of the three possible learning theories, research suggests that the developmental approach is most effective in remedial classrooms.

According to Young (2002), the second key concept that leads to persistence in remediated students is mandatory assessment and placement. While there is controversy around the topic of mandatory assessment and placement, the research suggests that assessment and placement of underprepared students aids in the success of their college experience. In addition, Young argued that educators and practitioners cannot provide suitable developmental programs if they do not know which students need to be remediated. Furthermore, “while critics argue that mandatory assessment and placement lowers a student’s self-esteem and forces them into unwanted and expensive classes, proponents maintain that if the purpose of the developmental coursework is explained to students, students will recognize the importance of the remediation in reaching their education and career goals” (p. 12).

The third key concept that leads to persistence in remediated students is active institutional outreach programs (Young, 2002). An example of institutional outreach is creating partnerships with secondary, two year and four year schools. This can create an awareness of the academic standards and expectations that high school graduates will need to be successful at the college level. In conclusion, effective teaching and learning techniques, mandatory assessment and placement, and active institutional outreach with
local schools are three key concepts that yield high retention rates of remedial programs.

In a recent study, Moore (2002) proposed that “the nationwide retention rate of developmental education students in higher education is approximately 33%” (p.5). In an attempt to compare retention at community colleges and four year institutions (i.e., public, private), Moore analyzed data from a survey of more than 5,000 students. Student retention was defined differently for two year verses four year institutions. Retention at two year institutions was defined as graduation or continuous enrollment at the end of 3.5 years. At four year institutions, retention was defined as graduation or continuous enrollment at the end of 5.5 years.

Analysis of the data suggested significant differences between retention rates at the various colleges (i.e., two year, four year) and retention rates in terms of ethnicity (Moore, 2002). At the community college level, 26% of developmental students were retained. White students were found to be 3 times more likely than African Americans and 1.4 times more likely than Latinos to be retained. At public four year colleges, 29% of developmental students were retained. Whites were found to be 1.4 times more likely than African Americans and 1.1 times more likely than Latinos to be retained at public colleges. When compared to community colleges and public four year colleges, private four year colleges demonstrated the greatest percentage (42%) of developmental students retained. In addition, “African American students are 1.1 times more likely than White students to be retained at private colleges, and 1.4 times more likely than Latino students to be retained at private colleges” (p. 7). In conclusion, the average retention rate at four year colleges is significantly higher than the retention rate at community colleges. Also,
African American developmental students have the greatest chance of retention at four year private institutions.

In a similar study, Kolajo (2004) found that “there is a positive link between the number of developmental courses taken and time to graduation” (p. 365). In this study, data were collected from a community college for both developmental and non-developmental students over a three year period. Academic records of the college’s graduates were analyzed by age, number of semesters and overall GPA. Student data were separated into four groups based on placement testing: (1) those who took only one developmental course, (2) those who took two or more developmental courses, (3) those who required no developmental coursework, and (4) those who transferred from another school and were not required to take placement testing.

Results of the analysis demonstrated that students who took only one developmental course “had an average age at graduation of 30 years, took on average 10 semesters to graduate, and had an average overall GPA of 3.25” (Kolajo, 2004, p. 368). Those students who took two or more developmental courses, graduated at an average of 27 years old, took 11 semesters to graduate, and had a GPA of 2.86. Those students who were not required to take developmental coursework, graduated considerably younger at 25 years, graduated within 8 semesters and had a GPA of 3.25. Finally, students who transferred in and did not take developmental coursework graduated at an average age of 31 years, completed their program on an average of 6 semesters and had a GPA of 3.27. Results of this study demonstrated that students who took one developmental course performed equally well, with a GPA of 3.25, as regular students who were not required to
take developmental coursework. In addition, as the number of developmental courses taken increased, so did the time to graduation. This demonstrated that student’s time to graduation is dependent on the number of developmental courses taken.

In a recent ACT study, Perkhounkova et al. (2005) reported on the benefits of developmental courses as a predictor of student persistence. The study was conducted at two large Midwestern universities (referred to as Institution I and Institution II). ACT test scores and developmental course grades from 1997 through 2002 entering classes were gathered from Institution I. Data for Institution II consisted of ACT test scores and developmental course grades from 1996 through 2000. Both institutions determined placement into developmental courses (i.e., mathematics and English) based on in house placement test scores and ACT scores.

Data were analyzed in two stages (Perkhounkova et al., 2005). First, success was determined separately for students who took developmental courses and those who did not. Success was defined as a “B” or higher, or a “C” or higher in subsequent college level courses after remediation. Second, students’ grades in developmental courses were included with ACT scores for predicting success in standard college level courses. Perkhounkova et al. proposed that if developmental instruction is effective, the probability of success for students who took developmental courses should be higher than the probability of success of those who directly enrolled in college level courses. For institution I, “this expected outcome occurred for about 50% of the English course analyses and about 60% of the mathematics course analyses” (p. 11). For institution II, “this outcome occurred for only about 40% of the English course analyses and about 50%
of the mathematics course analyses” (p. 11).

Evaluation of students grades in developmental courses were added to ACT scores, the results almost always indicated that earning a high grade (A or B) in a developmental course increased students success in college level courses (Perkhounkova et al., 2005). Whereas, students who scored lower grades (C or D) in developmental courses typically had lower success rates in college level courses. Unlike other studies that have examined student success after remediation, this study considered the grade the student received in their developmental course. Perkhounkova et al. proposed that “the grade earned by the student in a developmental course is a more important predictor of later success than merely taking the course” (p. 20). These authors suggested that there is a misconception that earning a “C” grade in a developmental course means a student is prepared for college level courses. In fact, the Perkhounkova et al. study demonstrated otherwise. Findings of the study suggested that “students who took developmental courses and earned higher grades (at least a B) in these courses were more likely to be successful than were other students with similar levels of academic preparation” (p. 20). Perkhounkova et al. proposed that policy makers should require students to earn a “B” or higher in developmental courses before enrolling in subsequent college level courses.

Although the research suggests that remediation yields student success in college level courses, it does not specifically address the issue of early remediation. As a result, Campbell & Blakey (1996) conducted a longitudinal study to determine whether early remediation affected the persistence of underprepared students. Early remediation was defined as taking a remedial course in the first year of enrollment. Persistence was
defined as the number of semesters a student attended from the Fall 1991 or Fall 1992 through Fall 1995.

Data were collected from new student records at a Midwestern community college for the Fall 1991 and Fall 1992 semesters (Campbell & Blakey, 1996). As part of the admissions process, all new students were required to take the ASSET basic skills inventory which included three tests that measures student’s skill levels in reading, writing and mathematics. Students scoring at or above the proficiency level for all three tests were defined as prepared for college level work. Those scoring below the proficiency level in one or more tests were defined as underprepared. The level of preparedness was further defined by the number of tests the student scored below the proficiency level (i.e., students scoring below on all three tests were the least prepared for college level work). In addition, all new students were required to fill out an application which included their academic intent (i.e., degree seeking or nondegree seeking) and demographic information (i.e., age, ethnicity, and gender). Finally, students cumulative GPA was tabulated from their first semester (either Fall 1991 or Fall 1992) through Fall 1995.

The student population consisted of 3,282 students who completed the ASSET basic skills testing for the Fall 1991 or Fall 1992 semester (Campbell & Blakey, 1996). Of the 3,282 students tested, 1,275 were defined as underprepared. The underprepared group consisted of: 639 students scoring below the proficiency level on one of the three tests, 443 students scoring below the proficiency level on two of the three tests, and 193 students scoring below the proficiency level on all three tests. Analysis of the data
demonstrated that cumulative GPA and number of remedial courses taken were the best predictors of student persistence for students who scored below the proficiency level on one or two of the three tests. Where as cumulative GPA and taking remedial courses early (i.e., in the first year) were the best predictors of persistence for students scoring below the proficiency level on all three tests. Analysis of additional variables demonstrated that the underprepared students at the “institution had a larger percentage of minority students, attempted fewer credits, had a lower GPA, were less likely to indicate a degree seeking intent, and were slightly older than their counterparts who were academically prepared” (Campbell & Blakey, p. 10). In conclusion, findings of the study suggested that early remediation was mostly a significant predictor of persistence for students who were the least prepared (scored below the proficiency level on all three tests) for college level classes.

Summary

In this chapter, the author presented theoretical and experiential literature on underprepared students, remediation, and persistence. It became apparent that more and more underprepared students are seeking a college education. Although much of the literature suggests that remedial education is effective in preparing the underprepared student for college level academic, opponents argue otherwise. This controversy in the educational community challenges policy makers, educators, and practitioners to justify the effectiveness of their remedial programs to ensure the success of their students.
Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The need for English remediation continues to be a topic of discussion among the educational community. In fact, the literature suggests that remedial programs are a crucial component to the success of underprepared college level students. Much of the research presented in Chapter 2 addressed theoretical and experiential evidence that supports the effectiveness of remedial programs. While there is a significant amount of literature (Aslanian, 2002; Campbell, & Blakey, 1996; Hadden, 2000; Kolajo, 2004; McCabe, 2000; Perkhounkova, Noble, & Sawyer, 2005; Saunders 2000; Roueche, Roueche, 1993; Young, 2002) on remedial programs for underprepared students at the community college level, there is a limited amount of research dealing with the remediation at four year institutions. As a result, this researcher examined the effects of English remediation as a predictor of student success in an adult undergraduate program at a four year university. Success was defined as maintaining a GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 grading scale over three semesters (fall 2005, spring 2006, and summer 2006).

As previously discussed, the institution in this study operates on a three semester accelerated format. Each semester consists of two 8 week start dates and three 5 week start dates (See Appendix D). This researcher was primarily concerned with the success of English remediation for students from fall (August 29, 2005) through summer (August 27, 2006). Student records for the three semesters were evaluated to determine if remediation was a predictor of student success in an adult undergraduate program.
Since there is virtually no research documenting the success of remediation in adult undergraduate four year programs, this research will contribute to a limited body of literature by offering educators and practitioners a more comprehensive view of remediation at various levels of higher education, to include adult learning programs.

Many adults have been away from the formal learning environment for 5 or more years (Williams, 2002). Therefore, the potential for remediation exists in adult learning programs as many adults may need to improve on their academic skills (i.e. reading, writing and arithmetic). As many adults return to education, it becomes invaluable to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of the assessment and placement processes to ensure the academic success of the underprepared student population. As a result, this research became timely as policy makers at this institution were eager to learn more about the success of their undergraduate underprepared students.

Research Design

As discussed in Chapter 1, to apply to the undergraduate adult program at this institution, the student must: complete an application (See Appendix A), submit a $50 application fee, and document 3 years of post high school work experience on the employment section of the application. The final piece of the admissions process is a 300-500 word admission essay. Students select one of the four available topics to write their essay (See Appendix B). It was recommended that students complete their admission essay within 10 days of submitting their application. The graded essay is a tool the university uses to place students in the appropriate English course.
The students’ essays are graded by a trained English instructor who utilized a rubric (See Appendix C). The rubric consists of 10 criteria of effective writing with “1” being the lowest score and “10” being the highest. There are 100 points possible. Students scoring 49 points or lower are advised to take the Basic English course (EN200). The Basic English course is intended to prepare students for college level writing. Those students scoring 50 points or higher are exempt from taking EN200 and are placed in the appropriate English course based on their writing score. As discussed in Chapter 1, students scoring 50–74 points on the entrance essay are placed in a 200 level college English course. Those students scoring between 75–89 points are placed in a 300 level college English course. Finally, students scoring 90–100 points can register in a 400 level college English course.

In this study, the researcher’s goal was to quantitatively determine if a relationship exists between English remediation and student success in an adult undergraduate program. Since there was a significant volume of student data that could be analyzed, a quantitative research project was appropriate. A quantitative study allowed this researcher to utilize numerical data from student records and make objective evaluations. From these evaluations, conclusions were drawn based on statistical correlations and recommendations were made as to the success of the underprepared student population at this four year adult institution.

Microsoft Excel 2003 was used in this study to carry out the statistical analysis. The analysis was evaluated on two distinct groups of the sample population:
- Group 1 - students who did not take the Basic English course (EN200) within three semesters (fall 2005, spring 2006, and summer 2006).

- Group 2 - students who took the Basic English course (EN200) within three semesters (fall 2005, spring 2006, and summer 2006).

The mean cumulative GPA and standard deviations were calculated for each group. This researcher hypothesized that remedial English aids in the success of underprepared students. Therefore, students in Group 2 would prove to be more successful than students in Group 1. The flowchart illustrated in figure 1 demonstrates the research design used in this study.
All SPS undergraduate new students (online or classroom based) who took at least one class starting in Fall 2005 (excluding TE, Graduate programs & Las Vegas campus) (Target Population)

Student completes admission essay by summer 2006

YES

Student Scores 49 points or less on admission essay

YES

Student Scores 50 points or higher
Not part of study

NO

NO

Student took Basic English course (EN200) by summer 2006

YES

Group 1
Student who did not take the Basic English course (EN200)

NO

Group 2
Student who took the Basic English course (EN200)

Figure 1. Flowchart of Research Design
Target and Sample Population

As discussed in Chapter 1, the institution in this study is a midsized university located in the Rocky Mountain region. There are six campuses located across the Front Range of Colorado (Fort Collins, Boulder, Broomfield, Lowell, Denver Tech Center, and Colorado Springs) and two campuses located in Las Vegas, Nevada. The university consists of three separate colleges (traditional, healthcare, and adult). The traditional college serves recent high school graduates seeking undergraduate degrees in liberal arts, sciences and pre-professional programs. The healthcare college serves students seeking either undergraduate or graduate degrees in healthcare professions of nursing, physical therapy, and administration. The adult college serves adult students seeking either undergraduate or graduate degrees in liberal arts, business, communication, computer science and teaching. The adult program is designed to meet the flexible needs of the working adult. Due to the limited scope of this study, this researcher focused only on the undergraduate adult learning program of the university.

In this study, the target population consisted of all new degree seeking undergraduate adult students who began taking classes in one of the 5 or 8 week start dates for the fall of 2005. Student data were collected from the Fort Collins, Boulder, Broomfield, Lowell, Denver Tech Center, and Colorado Springs campuses along with online programs. The following data were excluded from this study: campuses outside of Colorado (Las Vegas), teacher education programs, and graduate programs. The total target population included 518 new students who began taking classes in one of the fall 2005 semester start dates.
As presented in Chapter 1, there are 3 semesters (fall, spring, and summer) at the institution is this study. Each semester is further divided into accelerated 5 and 8 week classes. There are three - 5 week start dates and two – 8 week start dates for each semester (See Appendix D). This researcher was primarily concerned with exploring the success of new students who began taking courses in any of the 5 or 8 week start dates in the fall 2005 semester (August 29, 2005 through December 18, 2005).

The target population was further divided into a sample population of 171 students who were identified as underprepared. For the purpose of this study, underprepared students were defined as those individuals who scored 49 points or less on their admission essay or did not complete the essay within three semesters. The sample population of underprepared students was divided into two distinct groups (Group 1 and Group 2). Group 1 consisted of underprepared students who did not take the Basic English course (EN200) within three semesters (fall 2005, spring 2006, and summer 2006). Group 2 consisted of underprepared students who took the Basic English course (EN200) within three semesters (fall 2005, spring 2006, and summer 2006). The sample population consisted of 33% of the target population. This sample was adequate in size to allow the researcher to make generalizations about the data.

Although the effects of completing the admission essay (scoring 49 points or lower) and taking a Basic English course (EN200) within three semesters likely pose significant success rates, this study only included three semesters (fall 2005, spring 2006, and summer 2006). Therefore, the long term impact of English remediation is not visible in this project.
Data Collection Procedure

The institution in this study operates on an accelerated semester (fall, spring, and summer) schedule. Each semester is further divided into two – 8 week and three – 5 week start dates (See Appendix D). The subjects for this research project included all new incoming students who began taking classes in the fall of 2005. Data collection were gathered for undergraduate adult students who began their coursework in one of the 5 or 8 week start dates in the fall 2005 (August 29, 2005 – December 18, 2005). Students beginning classes prior to or after the fall 2005 semester were excluded from this study.

This research became timely as policy makers at this institution were eager to examine the effectiveness of their English assessment and placement policies. In some cases, when human subjects are involved in a research project, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at this university requests approval. However, since the focus of this study was to evaluate existing university policies (English assessment and placement) and will only be used to make internal policy suggestions and decisions, it was determined that the IRB was not needed for this project. As a result, data collection was relatively straightforward as this researcher is employed in the Marketing and New Student Enrollment (M&NSE) department at the university. Student data were requested through the M&NSE Request Form process. This process is used by the various departments throughout the university to request data stored in the universities database. The Request Form was filled out with the necessary data criteria (See below) and sent to the Data Coordinator of the M&NSE department. The Data Coordinator pulled the student data from the university database and displayed the information in an excel spreadsheet. To
ensure the confidentiality of information, student names and student identification
tables were excluded from the spreadsheet. The following data were requested by this
researcher:

- Number of courses taken from fall (August 29, 2005) through summer (August
  27, 2006)
- Students’ cumulative GPA from fall (August 29, 2005) through summer (August
  27, 2006)
- Admission essay date and score
- Date EN200 taken and grade
- Date of birth
- Gender
- Campus location
- Employment status
- Major

The student’s number of courses taken, cumulative GPA, admission essay
date/score, date EN200 taken/grade, date of birth and gender were used for the analysis.
It was decided by the researcher that the remaining data, (campus location, employment
status, and major) were not conclusive enough to make generalizations about the sample
population. The results of the analysis are displayed in Chapter 4.
Data Analysis

The researcher hypothesized that undergraduate underprepared adult students who completed a Basic English course (EN200) within three semesters (fall 2005, spring 2006, and summer 2006) would be more successful than those choosing to postpone enrollment in the class, if at all. As previously discussed, underprepared students were defined as those individuals who scored 49 points or less on their admission essay or did not complete the essay within three semesters. Success was defined as maintaining a GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale over three semesters. The Mean GPA, Mean Number of Courses and Standard Deviations for two groups (Group 1 and Group 2) were evaluated in the overall analysis. The following table illustrates a sample of the data analyzed.

Table 1

Sample Table of Statistics Calculated

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Statistic</th>
<th>Group 1</th>
<th>Group 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sample Size</td>
<td>n₁</td>
<td>n₂</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean GPA</td>
<td>X₁</td>
<td>X₂</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation (GPA)</td>
<td>S₁</td>
<td>S₂</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Number of Courses</td>
<td>Y₁</td>
<td>Y₂</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation (mean # of courses)</td>
<td>D₁</td>
<td>D₂</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note:

n = size of Group
s = standard deviation (GPA)
y = mean # of courses
x = mean GPA
D = standard deviation (mean # of courses)
Summary

This chapter consisted of the research design, sample population, data collection, and data analysis carried out in this project. To determine whether a relationship exists between English remediation and student success, this research was quantitative in nature. The Microsoft Excel 2003 package was used for the statistical analysis. The results of the analysis were evaluated between two groups: Group 1- students who did not take a Basic English course and Group 2 – students who did take a Basic English course. The statistical data provided information as to whether remedial English aids in the success of undergraduate underprepared adult students. The results of this analysis are presented in Chapter 4.
Chapter 4

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Introduction

To be successful in postsecondary education, students must possess effective reading, writing, and arithmetic skills. In some instances, students lack the necessary basic skills and are, therefore, dependent on the school for assistance. In an effort to determine a student’s basic skill level, many college admission policies require entering students to participate in testing. Through these testing procedures, some students are identified as lacking the necessary skills needed for college success and are often recommended remedial courses. These courses are designed to prepare the student for college level academia through identifying, learning, and practicing the skills needed for success.

Much of the research suggests that remedial courses aid in the success of students labeled as underprepared. Although the three “R’s” of education (reading, writing and arithmetic) are significant to basic skill educators, it was beyond the scope of this study to address all three. Therefore, this researcher was primarily concerned with writing remediation as a predictor of student success in an adult undergraduate program.

To ensure an adequate population for statistical analysis, this researcher chose to evaluate data for all new undergraduate adult students who began coursework in any of the 5 or 8 week start dates for the fall of 2005 semester (August 29, 2005 through December 18, 2005). This group of students were defined as the target population of the study and consisted of 518 new students.
The target population was further divided into the sample population of 171 students (33% of the target population). The sample population included students identified as underprepared or not competent in their writing skills. For the purpose of this study, underprepared students were defined as those individuals who scored 49 points or lower on their admission essay or did not complete the essay within three semesters (fall 2005, spring 2006, and summer 2006). Competent writers were defined as those students who completed the essay and scored 50 points or higher. This population of students was not included in the statistical analysis.

Students essay scores were entered in the university database by the Administrative Assistant of the Academic Resource Department. To ensure the confidentiality of information, student names and identification numbers were excluded from the requested data. This researcher requested only non identifiable data such as: (1) students’ cumulative GPA from fall (August 29, 2005) through summer (August 27, 2006), (2) number of classes taken, (3) admission essay date and score, (4) date Basic English course (EN200) taken and grade, (5) date of birth, (6) gender, (7) campus location, (8) employment status, and (9) major.

Statistical analysis was conducted on the population of underprepared students to determine if English remediation was a predictor of student success in an undergraduate adult program. Success was defined as maintaining a GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale over three semesters. The analysis was carried out on the underprepared student population who began taking courses in the fall 2005 semester. The underprepared student population was divided into two distinct groups: Group 1 – those individuals who did not
take the Basic English course (EN200) within three semesters. Group 2 - those
dividuals who took the Basic English course. As previously stated, EN200 is a Basic
English course students are advised to take when their graded admission essay is 49
points or lower.

Presentation of Data

This researcher hypothesized that undergraduate underprepared adult students
who completed a Basic English (EN200) course within three semesters (fall 2005, spring
2006, and summer 2006) would prove to be more successful than those choosing to
postpone enrollment in the class. Success was defined as maintaining a GPA of 3.0 on a
4.0 scale over three semesters.

The intention of the Basic English course is to prepare students for college level
writing. The course is designed to provide underprepared students with the basics of
grammar, punctuation, and paragraph structure. For the purpose of this study,
underprepared students were defined as those individuals who scored 49 points or lower
on their admission essay or did not complete the admission essay within three semesters.
The null hypothesis suggests that there will be no difference in success rates between
Group 1 and Group 2. As discussed earlier, Group 1 consisted of students who did not
take the Basic English course within three semesters. Group 2 consisted of students who
did take the Basic English course. In statistical terms the null hypothesis is represented
as, $H_0: \mu_1 = \mu_2$
Presentation of Tables and Figures

In an attempt to further explore the overall population (target population) this researcher examined demographic variables, specifically, age and gender. The target population consisted of all new undergraduate adult students who began coursework in any of the 5 or 8 week start dates for the fall of 2005 semester (August 29, 2005 through December 18, 2005). This group included both competent writers (scored 50 points or higher on the essay) and those students labeled as underprepared (scored 49 pointes or lower on the essay or did not complete the essay within three semesters). Evaluation of the data demonstrated that the average age of competent writers resulted in 36.1 years. Whereas, the average age of underprepared students resulted in 36.4 years. Statistically, there was no significant age difference between the two groups. Therefore, the results of this study demonstrate that age does not appear to be a factor in whether a student is competent or not competent in their writing skills.

Furthermore, evaluation of the gender data produced similar results. Comparison of male and female percentages demonstrated that there were comparable numbers of each gender in both the competent and underprepared groups. Statistically, there was no significant gender difference between the two groups. Therefore, the results of this study demonstrate that gender does not appear to be a factor in whether a student is competent or not competent in their writing skills. Figure 2 is a graphical representation of the percent gender results.
To statistically explore the sample population of students, this researcher utilized the Microsoft Excel 2003 package. As previously stated, the sample population (underprepared) consisted of those students who scored 49 points or lower on the admission essay or did not complete the essay within three semesters. This population was further divided into two groups: Group 1 – those students who did not take the Basic English course, Group 2 – those students who did take the Basic English course. The analysis was carried out utilizing the following student data: GPA, number of courses taken, admission essay date and score, date Basic English course (EN200) taken and grade. Table 2 displays the results of the statistical analysis.
Table 2

Statistical Analysis (Sample Population)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Statistic</th>
<th>Group 1 Did not take (EN200)</th>
<th>Group 2 Did take (EN200)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sample Size</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean GPA</td>
<td>3.101</td>
<td>2.641</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation (GPA)</td>
<td>1.073</td>
<td>1.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Number of Courses</td>
<td>5.007</td>
<td>5.652</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation (mean # of courses)</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>2.516</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The mean GPA (3.101) for Group 1 was significantly higher than the mean GPA (2.641) for Group 2. This is contrary to this researcher’s hypothesis. This researcher hypothesized that those students who completed a Basic English course would prove more success than those who did not complete the course. Surprisingly, the results of the data do not support the researcher’s hypothesis. Furthermore, the results do not support the literature which suggests that remediation aids in the success of underprepared students.

In addition, Group 1’s mean GPA (3.101) met the criteria of success as defined by this researcher (3.0 on a 4.0 scale over three semesters). Group 2’s mean GPA (2.641) did not meet the criteria and was significantly lower than the 3.0 GPA success rate. It is worth mentioning that the standard deviations of both groups were statistically equivalent. This means the dispersion of data throughout each group was similar.

While the average number of courses were different between Group 1 (5.007) and
Group 2 (5.652), this difference was less than one course. Interestingly, it was Group 2 that took more classes than Group 1. Furthermore, the standard deviation for Group 2 was significantly smaller than for Group 1. This indicates that the dispersion of data within Group 2 was comparatively small. Figure 3 displays the graphical representation of GPA and number of courses for Group 1 and Group 2.

GPA and Number of Courses (Sample Population)

![Figure 3](image)

In an attempt to further understand the student demographics of Group 1 and 2 of the sample population, this researcher investigated gender and age. In matching with the target population gender results, there was no significant difference in male and female percentages between the two groups. Figures 4 and 5 display the results. Furthermore, age comparisons (Group 1 – 36.1 years) and (Group 2 – 36.4 years) also did not demonstrate significance.
% Gender Evaluation

**Figure 4 - Group 1**

- Male: 57.43%
- Female: 42.57%

% Gender Evaluation

**Figure 5 - Group 2**

- Male: 56.52%
- Female: 43.48%
Because this hypothesis was rejected, this researcher chose to re-examine the data to determine whether the students who did not complete the essay skewed the underprepared statistical results. To that end, the mean GPA and number of courses taken for those students who chose not to complete the essay within three semesters were calculated. The result of the analysis demonstrated that the average GPA was 3.09 and the number of courses was 5.22. Contrary to this researcher’s definition of underprepared students, these results support the idea that students who did not complete the essay within three semesters were not necessarily underprepared writers.

Summary

In this chapter, this researcher presented the data and statistical analysis as described in previous chapters. Evaluation of the data demonstrated no significant relationship between English remediation and student success as defined by the researcher. Therefore, this study did not support the researcher’s hypothesis. Furthermore, the results of this study do not support the literature which suggests that remedial programs are essential to the success of underprepared students. The final chapter of this study includes limitations and recommendations for future research.
Chapter 5

DISCUSSION

Summary and Conclusions

Societal changes are driving the need to educate all people beyond a high school diploma. However, many individuals entering postsecondary institutions are not prepared for college level academia. In fact, McCabe (2000) suggested that nearly 30% of people seeking a college education are unprepared. To meet the demand of preparing students for postsecondary education, policy makers at institutions are charged with identifying, designing and implementing curriculum that aids in the success of all students, regardless of their academic preparedness. In an effort to learn what makes unprepared students successful, researchers and practitioners continue to explore how these students become identified and placed in remedial programs.

Most often students become labeled as underprepared through entry level testing. Entry testing often includes basic skills assessment in reading, writing and mathematics. Students scoring below the proficiency level in one or more of the assessments are often recommended to enroll in remedial courses. While most of the research (Hadden, 2000; McCabe, 2000; Saunders, 2000; Rouche & Rouche, 1993) supports the concept of remedial programs, controversy in the educational community does exist.

Debates over remedial education have begun to intensify. Opponents of remedial programs argue that remedial curriculum is a repeat of the basic skills taught in high school. They also believe that remedial course curriculum compromises the integrity of
college level academia. While the debate on the effectiveness of remedial education continues, those who support remedial programs argue that no one can deny the importance of a well educated society.

Summary of Statistical Analysis

In attempt to examine the effects of remediation, this researcher explored the success of the underprepared student population in an undergraduate adult program. Although the three “R’s” of education (reading, writing and arithmetic) are significant to remedial educators, it was beyond the scope of this study to address all three. Therefore, this researcher was primarily concerned with writing remediation as a predictor of student success.

The analysis of the underprepared student population at this university produced surprising results. This population (sample population) consisted of 171 students. For the purpose of this study, underprepared students were defined as those who scored 49 points or lower on the admissions essay or did not complete the essay with three semesters. It is interesting to note that students in Group 1, those who did not take the Basic English course (EN200), were considered successful (mean GPA – 3.101). Those in Group 2 who took the Basic English course proved to be unsuccessful (mean GPA – 2.641). Success was defined as maintaining a grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 on a 4.0 grading scale over three semesters (fall 2005, spring 2006, and summer 2006).

This researchers hypothesized that English remediation was a predictor of student success. The results of this study do not support this hypothesis. Furthermore, English
remediation did not aid in the success, based on the definitions (underprepared student and success) set up by this researcher. Underprepared students were defined as those students who scored 49 points or lower on the admission essay or did not complete the essay within three semesters. Success was defined as maintaining a GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 grading scale over three semesters. While this researcher defined the population of students who did not complete the essay within three semesters as underprepared, this was not the case. In fact, further analysis of the data demonstrated that those students who did not complete the essay proved to be successful (GPA – 3.09) and thereby prepared for college level coursework.

Summary of Additional Findings

It becomes interesting to note that out of 171 students defined as underprepared, 128 did not complete the essay. The other 43 completed the essay and scored 49 points or less. This is a significant number of students (128) who chose not to abide by the 10 day essay submission requirement. Therefore, if students writing proficiency level is to be evaluated and used as a tool to determine English placement, essay submission requirements might need to be redefined. Undoubtedly, policy makers at the university where this study was conducted were aware of the situation and decided to change the essay submission policy at the conclusion of this study. The new policy was implemented on August 22, 2006 and now requires students to complete and submit the essay along with the application. Prospective students are not moved to student status until they have completed the essay requirement. Therefore, they are unable to register
for a course until the essay is submitted. To that end, a large number of uncompleted essays should no longer be an issue at this university.

Most notable in this research was the fact that of 518 students (target population) who began courses in one of the 5 or 8 week start dates of the fall 2005 semester, 241 students scored 50 points or higher on the admission essay. This is a significant number of students scoring within the proficiency level defined by the university. Therefore, the misconception that students are not prepared for college level writing may be a misnomer. It appears that most adult students entering the university where this study was conducted have adequate writing skills to become successful.

Recommendations for Future Study

Aside from this study, there is virtually no research on writing remediation in adult undergraduate programs. To better assist in the success of adult underprepared students, it would benefit practitioners to learn more about English remediation and student success in varying realms of higher education. To that end, this researcher offers several topics for future study.

- Conduct a replication of this study and extend the timeframe to two or more years.
- Conduct a similar study at this university and evaluate the curriculum of the Basic English course (EN200) to ensure that the topics covered truly impact student success.
- Conduct a statistical analysis on the competent student population, as defined by this researcher (50 pts. or higher on admission essay), to determine if writing competency translates into student success.
• Consider a replication of this study at a public institution that serves an adult student population.

• Compare the level of retention of adult underprepared students with adult students who are defined as competent writers.

• Consider a replication of this study at other private adult learning institutions.

• Consider a replication of this study at a community college to determine if there is a relationship between type of institution and writing remediation.

• Conduct a study with competent adult writers to identify characteristics of what makes a student successful.

Study Limitations

To further explore writing remediation and student success in undergraduate adult programs, this researcher presented several recommendations for further research. While the results of this study will undoubtedly contribute to decisions set forth by policy makers at this university, this study includes limitations. It is beyond the scope of most research to include all dimensions of the topic at hand. As a result, this researcher addresses sample size and length of study as possible limitations.

When conducting research, limitations in sample size are an important consideration for the creditability of the results. In this study, the underprepared sample population consisted of 171 students. This sample was further divided into two groups: Group 1 students – did not take a Basic English course - EN200 (148 students), Group 2 students – took a Basic English course (23 students). Although a sample of 23 is adequate to carry our statistical analysis, a larger sample would have increased the
validity of this study. Therefore, a limitation of this study might include sample size.

One way to increase Group 2’s sample size would be to conduct the same study over a
longer time frame.

This study covered a three semester (fall 2005, spring 2006 and summer 2006) timeframe. Data collection began for students who started courses in any of the 5 or 8 week start dates in the fall 2005. Data were gathered from student records for fall 2005, spring 2006 and summer 2006. Although one might suggest that a full year of data collection is significant to make generalizations about a study, extending the study two or more years would likely present greater validity and possible trends. Unfortunately, this study did not allow for more than one year of data collection due to admission essay grading and policy changes.

Prior to July 13, 2005 the admission essay grading score was 40 points or less. Therefore, students who scored 40 points or less on their essay were required to take a Basic English course (EN200). On July 13, 2005 the grading policy changed from 40 points or less to 49 points or less, thereby increasing the standard of competency based writing. In an attempt to keep the data consistent, all essays entered into the database under the previous grading system were excluded from this study. Furthermore, on August 22, 2006 the essay submission policy changed. Prior to August 22, 2006 students were required to turn in their essay within 10 days of turning in their application. However, there was no process in place to monitor this policy. As this study demonstrated, a significant number of students (128) chose not to complete their essay. Under the new policy, students are required to complete the admission essay as part of
their application. The new policy will eliminate any concern for incomplete essays. As a result, extending this study to include data before July 13, 2005 or after August 22, 2006 would likely have skewed the analysis and lead to inaccurate statistical results. Therefore, this researcher chose to limit the study to a one year timeframe (August 29, 2005 – August 27, 2006) in which no changes were taking place.

Final Remarks

A greater number of individuals are entering postsecondary education. This trend is expected to continue as our technical and global economy is driving the need for a more educated society. Many students who seek higher education become labeled as unprepared for college level academia. In an attempt to serve this population, remedial programs are designed to ensure that underprepared students possess the necessary skills for college success.

In conclusion, it became evident that there is virtually no research on English remediation for adult learners. As a result, this researcher is hopeful that this study will encourage other researchers to explore the effects of remediation in adult programs. While the results of this study did not support this researcher’s hypothesis, significant findings were revealed. As a result, this research will contribute to the limited literature on unprepared adult students by offering policy makers and practitioners an understanding of remediation at all facets of education, to include adult learning programs.
REFERENCES


Hine, W. C. (2001). *Proceedings of the annual midwest research to practice conference in adult, continuing and community education.* Conference hosted by the School of Adult and Continuing Education, Eastern Illinois University, Charleston, IL.


APPENDIX A
Application for Admission
(Please type or print clearly)

Full legal name ___________________________________________ Last __________ First __________ Middle initial __________

Previous/Other Name ____________________________ Preferred Name ____________________________

Soc. Sec. _______________ Date of Birth ____________________________________________

Current mailing address ____________________________________________

City/Town __________________ State __________ Zip __________ Country __________

Home Phone: __________________ Work phone: __________________ Cell phone: __________________

Fax number ____________________________________________ E-mail Address (required)

Regis uses e-mail as the primary means to communicate with you about your application and admissions status.

Current Employer __________________ Occupation/Title __________________

Employment start date __________________ Full time __________ Part Time __________

Month __________ Day __________ Year __________

Employer address ____________________________________________

Street __________________ City/Town __________________

State __________ Zip __________ Country __________

Preferred Start Term: Year: ______ Term (select one):

Fall Semester 2006 _______ Aug 28 _______ Oct 2 ______ Oct 23 _______ Nov 6

Spring Semester 2007 _______ Jan 8 _______ Feb 12 _______ March 5 _______ March 19

Summer Semester 2007 _______ May 7 _______ June 11 _______ July 2 _______ July 16

Preferred Location: (Select one primary location. Not all programs are offered at all locations.)

Denver (Lowell) _______ Denver Tech Center _______ Boulder _______ Colorado Springs

Interlocken _______ Las Vegas, NV _______ at Broomfield _______ at Henderson

Fort Collins _______ Las Vegas, NV _______ Online _______ at Summerlin

Study Intent:

☐ Bachelor’s Degree
☐ Second Bachelor’s Degree (Regis graduates only)
☐ Non-Degree Seeking
☐ Certificate

10/2006 - Regis University SPS Undergraduate Programs
Major/Degree Programs

- Check degree program and specialization if applicable

(OL indicates available online)

(IV indicates available in Las Vegas)

☐ Accounting (IV)
☐ Applied Psychology (IV)
☐ Applied Science (IV)

(Applicants must have a non-technical associate degree in Applied Science)

☐ Computer Information Systems
   SPECIALIZATIONS:
   ☐ Enterprise & Web Application Engineering (OL)
   ☐ Information Systems Security (OL)
   ☐ Object-Oriented Programming (OL)
   ☐ Software Engineering (OL)

☐ Computer Networking
   SPECIALIZATIONS:
   ☐ Advanced Networking (OL)
   ☐ E-security

☐ Computer Science (OL)

☐ Finance (OL)

☐ Human Resource Management

☐ Liberal Arts (IV)
   SPECIALIZATIONS:
   ☐ English (IV)
   ☐ Philosophy (IV)
   ☐ Irish Studies
   ☐ Religious Studies (IV)
   ☐ Catholic Studies
   ☐ Flexible Specialization (IV)

☐ Marketing (OL)

☐ Organization Development (IV)

☐ Public Administration (OL)/(IV)

☐ Religious Studies (IV)
   SPECIALIZATIONS:
   ☐ Academic Religious Studies (IV)
   ☐ Spirituality (IV)
   ☐ Peace and Social Justice (IV)
   ☐ Catholic Studies (IV)

☐ Social Science (IV)
   SPECIALIZATIONS:
   ☐ Economics (IV)
   ☐ History (IV)
   ☐ Sociology (IV)
   ☐ Flexible Specialization

Business Administration (IV)
   SPECIALIZATIONS:
   ☐ Electronic Commerce (OL)
   ☐ Finance (OL)/(IV)
   ☐ Human Resource Management (IV)
   ☐ Insurance
   ☐ Management (OL) (IV)
   ☐ Marketing (OL) (IV)
   ☐ Public Administration (OL)
   ☐ Flexible Specialization (OL)

Communication (IV)/(OL)
   SPECIALIZATIONS:
   ☐ Conflict Management
   ☐ Leadership (IV)/(OL)
   ☐ Public Relations (IV)

Certificates

☐ Adult Spirituality
☐ Catholic Studies (IV)
☐ Computer Networking (OL)
☐ Conflict Management
☐ Criminal Justice
☐ E-Business Information Management
☐ E-Business Marketing Management
☐ E-Security
☐ Federal Accounting (OL)

☐ High Performance Management (IV)
☐ Homeland Security (OL)
☐ Homeland Security & Disaster Response
☐ Human Resources
☐ Information Systems Security (OL)
☐ Irish Studies (OL Only)
☐ Java™ Programming (OL)
☐ Leadership (OL) (IV)
☐ Management Information Systems (OL)

☐ Masters Certificate in Project Management
☐ Peace and Social Justice
☐ Practical Psychology
☐ Project Management (OL)
☐ Psychology of Violence
☐ Public Administration (OL)
☐ Public Relations
☐ Technical Writing
☐ Unix (Solaris™) Operating Systems (OL)

10/2006 - Regis University SPS Undergraduate Programs
Please attach a non-refundable $50 application fee.

Check   Credit Card   MasterCard   Visa   American Express   Discover

Name on Credit Card

Account Number ___________________________ Expiration Date ____________

Signature ___________________________ Date ____________

☐ Fee waived: Previous Regis University student

Previous Education:

Name of high school ___________________________ State ______ Year of graduation ______ or GED exam ______

Have you ever applied to Regis University? Yes ___ No ___ Last year attended __________________________

Please list ALL schools etc. from which you would like to transfer credit(s) to Regis University. If your intent is to not transfer credit, the school, etc., need not be listed. (Please do not attach any transcripts or additional pages.)

- Community colleges, junior colleges, colleges or universities. An official transcript will be required from every college or university listed. If you do not have college experience, you are required to submit your high school transcripts.
- If applicable, list branch of military service. A notarized copy of your DD214 form and other appropriate military records will be necessary for the complete evaluation of military credit.
- College credit tests taken (CLEP, DANTES, USAF, etc.). An official transcript will be required for test scores.
- Educational credit for training programs evaluated by the American Council on Education (ACE).

NOTE: Resume may not be substituted for filling out this section. Please print in full (no abbreviations) school name, military service, tests or corporate training.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Dates attended</th>
<th>Approximate # of transfer credits</th>
<th>Degree earned &amp; month/year</th>
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10/2005 - Regis University SPS Undergraduate Programs
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<tr>
<th>Employer</th>
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<th>Start Date</th>
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Students who do not meet the three-year work requirement are considered on an individual basis. An admissions representative will be happy to speak with you about your specific circumstances.

- **Are you a U.S. Veteran?** Yes____ No____ Do you plan to use VA educational benefits? Yes ____ No____
  Type of benefits ____________________________________________________________

- **Financial Aid:** Do you intend to apply for financial aid (student loans) through Regis University? Yes ____ No____
  (If applying for financial aid, please allow six to eight weeks for processing before the start of your courses, or ask about tuition deferment.)

- **Have you ever been convicted** of a felony or misdemeanor? Misdemeanor traffic violations are exempt.
  No ____
  Yes ____ (additional documentation required)

- **Citizenship:** U.S. ____ Other (please specify) ______________________________________

  Country of Birth ____________________________  Visa Type __________  Visa No. __________
  Issue Date _______________  Expiration Date ________________

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**Applicants with an International Background**

Additional admission requirements may apply to applicants who possess a visa and/or have completed education outside of the United States (including U.S. citizens and permanent residents). All applicants must verify the U.S. equivalency of their coursework through a Regis-approved Credential Evaluation Service. All applicants must submit TOEFL and essay (TWE) Examinations and a “Supplemental Application for Students with an International Background”. Transfer students must also complete a SEVIS form. To review these requirements, please visit our Admissions page at www.regis.edu/intl or contact your campus representative at 303-458-4300 or 1-800-967-5327.
Voluntary Information: The following information is optional. Regis University uses this information to assist it in promoting diversity in the student population and for reporting purposes. It will not be used in admission or other educational processes. You will not be treated adversely if you choose not to provide any or all of this information.

Sex: Male__Female__ Marital Status: ____________________________

Religion: Catholic__Protestant__Jewish__Other ____________________________ None__

Ethnic Origin: African American__American Indian__Asian or Pacific Islander__Caucasian__Hispanic__Other __________

All Applicants Please Read and Sign

Formal admission to Regis University as a degree candidate is granted after all admission materials have been received and all minimum standards met.

Acknowledgments and Signature

I hereby certify that to the best of my knowledge, the information furnished on this application is true and complete without evasion or misrepresentation. I understand that if found otherwise, it is sufficient cause for rejection or dismissal.

I further authorize Regis University to make inquiries when necessary to certify the accuracy of my records.

I acknowledge that admission decisions are made by Regis University personnel in the exercise of discretion and professional judgment and are not subject to review or appeal.

If accepted into Regis University, I understand that my program of study as declared on this application is determined by the University Bulletin degree completion requirements in effect at the date of my acceptance.

Applicant’s Signature ____________________________ Date ____________________________

Regis University is accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA) and operates in accordance with applicable laws on equal opportunity and non-discrimination in the consideration of eligible students for admission, scholarships, awards, and financial aid.

Materials in support of an application for admission become the property of Regis University and will not be provided or returned to an applicant. The University reserves the right to deny admission, services, continued enrollment and re-enrollment to any applicants, students or other persons whose personal history, medical history, background or behaviors indicates that their presence in University facilities, programs, or activities, or use of University services would endanger themselves, the health, safety, welfare, well-being or property of the University, its employees, students, guests, or others, or would interfere with the orderly performance and conduct or the University’s or affiliated agencies’ functions.
Writing Skills Placement

Effective writing skills are essential for success in the School for Professional Studies, as in any quality college degree program. To ensure your academic success, the School for Professional Studies requires that all degree-seeking students submit a writing sample to be evaluated by the SPS undergraduate English faculty.

A writing sample is required as part of this application for all degree-seeking students, even if you are transferring English credits. It is very important to write the essay according to your best writing ability because results determine the level of classes you will be placed in to achieve your academic success.

Writing Sample Instructions

Please complete an essay on one of the following four topics:

1. Effective interpersonal communication depends on many factors. In your experience, what are a few of the most important factors?

2. Some business professionals say that two of the purposes of business are marketing and innovation. From your experience, what does this statement mean to you?

3. Computer technology has become an integral part of our lives. Discuss what you envision will be some of its important impacts on your life over the next ten years.

4. Members of the Regis University community are asked to become aware of the world in which we live and to seek to improve it through service to others. What does “service to others” mean to you?

Your essay must be structured as follows:
- 300-500 words
- five paragraphs, including introduction, body and conclusion
- careful paragraph development
- typed and double-spaced
- formal (academic) punctuation and mechanics
- correct spelling
- appropriate title

Your essay will be evaluated for:
- clarity – clearness and focus in addressing the theme
- content – development and evidence which supports the thesis
- organization – recognizable introduction, thesis sentence, paragraphs of support, and strong conclusion
- correctness – accuracy of spelling, punctuation, grammar, and sentence structure
- style – quality of diction, structure and tone

Based on the evaluation, the committee will require or recommend an English course appropriate to your skill level:
- EN200 - Essentials of Effective Writing, or EN203 - Intermediate Composition (required - must be completed during your first three terms of enrollment at Regis University)
- 300-level English Composition (recommended)
- 400-level English Composition (recommended)

Be sure to keep a copy of your sample. A copy of the evaluated writing sample will be mailed back to you.

Include a cover page with the following information:
- name
- address
- phone number
- e-mail address
- Social Security - last 4 digits
- your signature
- date

10/2006 - Regis University SPS Undergraduate Programs/Classroom-Based
This evaluation is an extremely useful resource for your advisor so they can assist you achieving your goals and academic success. This evaluation is not formally graded, and the score will not influence your acceptance to Regis nor your grade point average.

Regis University School for Professional Studies Undergraduate Writing Evaluation

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<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
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<th>10</th>
<th>Line total</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Document viewed as a whole: The writing process, planning, drafting, revising, and editing. Essay is limited with Thesis/Purpose Statement. Essay clearly addresses topic. Title is consistent with essay content.</td>
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<td>2. The Writing Goals: Paper is written with stated audience and audience response in mind. Writing is clear and fluent.</td>
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<td>3. Logic is sound and well-reasoned: Rhetoric is helpful to the reader; support is clearly addressed and free of logic fallacies. Document fulfills all requirements; it is organized, unified, coherent, focused.</td>
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<td>4. Stylistic elements: Tone is consistent and appropriate. Writing is concise, precise, compact, succinct. Degree of formality is appropriate.</td>
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<td>5. Effective paragraphs: Topic sentences are clearly present. Support and development are convincing. Transitions help the reader. Introduction, body, and conclusion fulfill their unique roles.</td>
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<td>6. Effective sentences: Verbs are consistent in tense and number. Parallel construction adds emphasis and balance. Pronouns and antecedents agree in number, subjects and verbs agree in number. Placement of modifiers prevents misreading (dangling, squinting, misplaced modifiers; faulty predication are absent)</td>
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<td>7. Sentence fragments, comma splices, run-on sentences (fused sentences) are not present in essay.</td>
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<td>8. Noun/pronoun case is grammatically correct. Pronoun antecedents are easily identified.</td>
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<td>9. Effective Words: Words are used correctly in context. Precise denotative and connotative meanings are observed. Necessary words are not omitted. Mechanical Precision: Spelling and capitalization are correct. Spelled-out and numeric numbers, italics, apostrophes, hyphens, etc. are used correctly.</td>
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<td>10. Effective punctuation: Interior punctuation within the sentence as well as end punctuation are used correctly and enhance clarity.</td>
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Writing Sample Total

Writing samples are evaluated according to the student’s present writing ability as indicated by this writing sample. Student’s writing ability in the attached writing sample is assigned a score based on criteria presented above with “1” being the lowest score for a criteria and “10” being the highest. There are 100 points possible. Points assigned in each line of criteria will be added together to achieve the student’s final writing placement. The resulting score determines at what level the student’s present writing ability has been placed as follows and in what level writing course the student should enroll. In the case that a student’s writing is placed at the 200 or 300 level, and that student has not fulfilled the EN203 Core Requirement, the 300 or 400 level writing course in which she or he enrolls will fulfill the EN203 Core Requirement.

90 – 100 points .........................400 level ability
75 – 89 points..........................300 level ability
50 - 74 points or lower............... 200 level ability
49 points or lower.................... EN200 required
REGIS SCHOOL FOR PROFESSIONAL STUDIES

COURSE PLANNING GUIDE

Traditional Semester

Spring 2006

8W1 Dates: 1/9 - 3/5
8W2 Dates: 3/6 - 4/30

5W1 Dates: 1/9 - 2/12
5W2 Dates: 2/13 - 3/19
5W3 Dates: 3/20 - 4/23

Summer 2006

8W1 Dates: 5/8-7/2
8W2 Dates: 7/3-8/27

5W1 Dates: 5/8-6/11
5W2 Dates: 6/12-7/16
5W3 Dates: 7/17-8/20

Fall 2005

8W1 Dates: 8/29 - 10/23
8W2 Dates: 10/24 - 12/18

5W1 Dates: 8/29 - 10/2
5W2 Dates: 10/3 - 11/6
5W3 Dates: 11/7 - 12/11