Developmental Reading Learning Communities in the First-Year Experience

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Abstract

The University of Texas at El Paso offers over seventy learning communities to first-year students from extremely diverse socioeconomic and educational backgrounds. Ninety percent are Hispanic, 54 percent are first-generation college students, and 59 percent must participate in developmental classes before moving forward with college-level courses. The following article offers a descriptive snapshot of the successes and foibles of developmental reading learning communities at an urban commuter university with a nontraditional student body.

Nestled in the curve of the Rio Grande River, a stone's throw from the U.S.-Mexico border, The University of Texas El Paso (UTEP) serves a nontraditional (low income, first-generation) population of over 20,000 students. Classified as a Doctoral/Research-Intensive university, UTEP has a strong commitment not only to academic excellence but also to educational access for the local population. Although UTEP has always served a regional population, as recently as 1978 less than 40 percent of the students were Hispanic. Due to institutional recruitment efforts, the student population currently more closely mirrors the demographics of the community at large with 76.1 percent of the undergraduate population of Hispanic ethnicity (CIERP; Natalicio 2006).[1]

Because of its pledge to increase the education level of the community, UTEP serves a diverse population of students, the majority of whom can be considered "at-risk." For example, a recent report by the Community College Survey of Student Engagement (Community College Survey of Student Engagement 2002) identified several factors that put college students at risk of not graduating. These included working more than thirty hours per week; considering the cost of college as a significant factor to continuing; being responsible for their own college expenses; being a part-time student; having academic deficiencies in math, writing, or reading; and being a first-generation college student. At UTEP, over 80% of the student body are employed, 60% receive financial aid, 54% are first-generation college students, 98% are commuters, 90% are racial or ethnic minority (predominately Hispanic or Mexican nationals), and almost 60% need remediation in at least one area of basic skills (CIERP; THECB 2005b).

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[1] As of 2005, the combined population of the El Paso Juarez borderplex was over two million. El Paso's per capita income is about two-thirds of the national average.

UTEP is not alone in the problems of underprepared students. Since the 1960s, institutions of higher education have, however reluctantly, embraced the open-door philosophy by providing equal educational opportunities for larger numbers of people. At the same time, in response to demands for open admissions, remedial or developmental education classes have become widespread since many of the newly admitted students are academically deficient in one or more basic areas of math, writing, or reading (Smith et al. 2004). A decade ago, Vincent Tinto estimated that four out of every ten college students needed remediation and that 90 percent of U.S. colleges and universities offered remedial course work (Tinto 1998). More recent surveys found that one-fourth of entering freshmen at public four-year postsecondary institutions enrolled in at least one remedial course during the 2000 fall semester (Adelman 1999; National Center for Educational Statistics 2004). The numbers for Texas institutions are similar and in 2005, 22% of all new students and 36% of Hispanic new students enrolled in four-year institutions were "underprepared" for college. Figures for UTEP reflect the composition of the student population with 59% of entering students and 59% of Hispanic students needing developmental classes in preparation for college-level courses (THECB 2005b). Some institutions including UTEP have shown that math placement is a greater deterrent to eventual graduation than reading placement. However, the National Center for Educational Statistics argues that the "need for remedial reading appears to be the most serious barrier to degree completion" with only 17% of students taking remedial reading classes eventually receiving a bachelor's degree. Although only 6% of entering freshmen at public four-year postsecondary institutions enrolled in remedial reading courses nationally, reading placement is a serious issue for UTEP where approximately 40% of entering students are required to take the university's developmental reading course, ENGL 0310 (Adelman 1999; CIERP 2007; National Center for Educational Statistics 2004).

To allow institutions "more flexibility in determining college readiness" and to change the focus of developmental education to make it less of a barrier to success, the state of Texas adopted the Texas Success Initiative (TSI) in 2003 (THECB 2005a).[2] There are two components of the program: assessment to diagnose students' basic skills in reading, mathematics, and writing, and developmental instruction to improve academic skills. Students complete their TSI requirements when they pass the math, writing, and reading sections of the ACCUPLACER test or when they receive a C or better in a college-level math, writing, or reading-intensive course.[3]

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) also made recommendations for improved institutional strategies based on Hunter Boylan's research on "What Works" (Boylan 2002; Boylan and Saxon 1999). These included institutional priority, assessment, advising and placement, progress monitoring,

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[2] Texas uses the term "developmental" rather than "remedial" to refer to any courses required for academic deficiency. Developmental courses receive no college credit.
[3] Certain students are exempt from TSI based on SAT or ACT scores or military service.

interventions, and linkages with college-level classes. While the THECB found that an increasing number of institutions were making developmental education a priority, they also concluded that the state's institutions of higher education were slow to make changes and even slower to adopt "innovative teaching techniques" like learning communities or paired courses designed for developmental education students (Boylan 1999; THECB 2005a).

UTEP realizes that it is not enough for the university to achieve its goal of open access for the community; UTEP must ensure that once students are accepted, they are able to succeed. There is ample evidence that students who complete developmental classes successfully compete with their peers; however, only a small percentage of underprepared students complete their developmental courses. Furthermore, the THECB found a relationship between student attrition and the time required to complete developmental courses (Boylan 1999; THECB 2005a). In an attempt to improve the high institutional attrition that occurred for its first-time, full-time freshmen (FTFTF) after their first year, UTEP has developed a variety of programs to help its largely underprepared, mostly first-generation student body adapt to college successfully. The majority of these programs came under the umbrella of University College in 2004. While University College is the administrative home to various departments and programs that focus on students' successful academic and social transitions to the university environment such as admissions, advising, financial aid, and testing, the college also houses several academic departments including the Entering Student Program (ESP), developmental English and Math, and a Bachelor of Multidisciplinary Studies. Components of the ESP include the University Studies program (including UNIV 1301—a 3-credit-hour critical thinking seminar with a variety of academic themes to be described in full below), the CircLES program (which provides major-specific learning communities to pre-science and pre-engineering students), and a large learning community program for general and special student populations including pre-major as well as developmental LCs. The extensive fall 2007 lineup of learning communities offered seats to 1,155 students in fifty-five learning communities of two or more classes, approximately half of the entering first-time undergraduate fall class. In addition, University College offers a variety of programs to decrease the time non-exempt TSI students spend in developmental classes.

College Readiness Initiative

Recognized by the THECB as a best practice for first-generation/ low income student initiatives, the College Readiness Initiative is a collaborative effort of UTEP, El Paso Community College (EPCC), and the twelve Region 19 independent school districts. Established in 2005, the CRI seeks to increase incoming students' college readiness and to decrease the number of students needing remediation through testing and intervention prior to college enrollment. This initiative specifically addresses the problem of "misaligned expectations" when the skills and knowledge of high school graduates are inadequate for college-level courses (Malnarich and Dusenberry 2003).

ENSO – Enhanced New Student Orientation

ENSO math workshops have been added to the five-day new student summer orientation for students who placed into developmental math classes. Upon completion of a three-day, six-hour math workshop, 31 percent of the students moved to college-level math classes upon retesting with the math portion of the ACCUPLACER.

CircLES

The CircLES program was developed as part of the Model Institution for Excellence (MIE) of the National Science Foundation (NSF) in 1997 and became part of the ESP in 2004. CircLES learning communities are designed for pre-science and pre-engineering majors and link various levels of math (UNIV 1301) and a variety of science and engineering classes. Serving both college ready and underprepared students, 30 percent of the CircLES clusters contain remedial math and 50 percent are pre-calculus learning communities. Since implementation, first-year retention rates for students in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics students have increased from less than 70 percent to 80 percent.

Developmental English (DE) Courses at UTEP

UTEP's developmental English program includes writing and reading components. Beginning in 2001, students whose ACCUPLACER scores were in the upper portion of developmental writing were admitted to college-level English composition with a supplemental workshop. Over a four-year period from 2001-2005, 80 percent of the students who placed into the college-level/developmental workshop combo successfully completed college-level basic English composition. Significant resources are available for these and the other developmental reading and writing students. These aids include individual tutoring by the Developmental English faculty and a computer lab reserved only for developmental students. Students can also utilize the University Writing Center on a voluntary first-come, first-served basis. Tutors help with any stages of the writing process and with homework assignments. To help facilitate tutoring sessions, some tutors are bilingual in English and in Spanish. The Writing Center offers tutoring six days and four nights per week. The staff is composed of highly trained undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral students as well as professional faculty with master's degrees and doctorates. Throughout each semester, the center also sponsors various writing workshops.

Approximately 90 percent of students statewide are required to complete DE courses in reading prior to enrollment in credit classes (THECB 2005a). UTEP's developmental reading classes primarily follow this "prerequisite acquisition model" (Higbee 2005). Texas Success Initiative (TSI) students at UTEP have an advising hold placed on their records. However, once they have been advised to complete their reading course before registering in reading-intensive college-level courses such as the U.S. History Survey (HIST 1301 and 1302) or Introductory Sociology (SOCI 1301), no formal mechanism keeps students from enrolling in these courses before completing ENGL 0310.

The developmental reading curriculum, ENGL 0310, introduces students to effective reading habits, emphasizes the development of vocabulary, comprehension techniques, critical analysis, and written responses. Required readings for the course include *Newsweek* magazine, an assigned novel, and *The Reader's Handbook*. The latter is a text and resource for reading skills, techniques and strategies. The early chapters of the text include explanations, instructions, and exercises on reading skill development and reading strategies such as vocabulary development, main idea, details and organizational patterns, inference, point of view, and critical thinking. The next section illustrates how to apply those skills with other study techniques for reading across the academic disciplines in the core curriculum. Reading in the disciplines first introduces techniques for remembering textbook information and includes instruction on annotating, summarizing, paraphrasing, note taking, outlining, and mapping. The subsequent chapters include readings in the humanities, in literature, poetry, drama, in the social sciences, in life and natural sciences, and in mathematics, while the final section covers study techniques for reading in business and in everyday life. Departmental requirements for ENGL 0310 include two summary paragraphs, two reading analysis paragraphs, an assignment based on the novel, a reading response essay, daily work including journal entries, various exercises and quizzes, and a final examination.

Despite the scope of texts used for ENGL 0310 including *The Reader's Handbook*, national research has indicated that many students find reading and writing exercises that take place out of the context of college credit classes "boring" and they need the stimulation and challenge of an embedded learning activity (Higbee 2005; Malnarich and Dusenberry 2003; Smith et al. 2004). Additionally, students' comments from institutional surveys show a correlation between attrition and time spent in non-credit developmental courses (Tinto 1998), indicating that both students and institutions would be better served by initiatives that successfully moved students out of the developmental sequence and into credit classes quickly.

Developmental Reading Learning Communities at UTEP

Approximately 11 percent of entering freshmen at all postsecondary institutions and 6 percent at four-year public institutions needed remedial coursework in reading (National Center for Educational Statistics 2004). However, community colleges and universities have been slow to move past the use of individual stand-alone developmental classes that use a recitation and drill format. In fact, despite evidence that developmental students profited from participation in learning communities that linked a skills course with a content course, only 11 percent of four-year institutions in Texas used linked or paired courses for developmental reading classes in 2004 (Commander and Stratton 1996; THECB 2005c).

Although the pairing of college-level courses with developmental education classes is rare in Texas, UTEP has been using this model for a limited number of students for the past few years. This "concurrent acquisition model" approach, where students enroll in credit bearing classes while receiving developmental support, has the theoretical

advantages of what has been called "contextualized learning" or a "cognitive apprenticeship" where students use authentic activities to build "authentic strategies" (Brown, Collins, and Duguid 1989; Higbee 2005; Malnarich and Dusenberry 2003). This approach also builds on the research of Ruth Keimig who classified developmental programs on a four-level scale. The lowest level consisted of individual remedial skills courses taught without the context of standard college-level courses while the next level described institutionalized but voluntary learning assistance for individual students. In her opinion, programs that were comprehensive in scope and included participation in "learning systems in academic courses" were the most successful in their impact on students' GPA and retention (Keimig 1983).

Learning communities (LCs), for the purpose of this paper, are the intentional linking of two or more courses with a common cohort of students during a semester. LCs nationally and at UTEP vary in the degree of curricular integration and faculty collaboration, as well as the composition of the linked courses (Barefoot et al. 1999; Wilcox et al. 1997). At UTEP, like many other colleges and universities that have adopted the linked course model, we target "high-risk" or "gateway courses" by combining the ENGL 0310 reading course with an embedded section in large lecture classes of reading-intensive courses where all students, especially underprepared students, have difficulties (Malnarich 2005). Students self-register using Banner and a co-requisite system which requires concurrent registration through census day.

In fall 2006, fifteen developmental reading LCs were offered for a total of 305 students while in fall 2007, twelve developmental reading learning communities were offered to a total of 260 students. The roster of classes included two class combinations of ENGL 0310 with various freshmen courses such as sections of the history survey classes as well as one or two triad LCs consisting of ENGL 0310, UNIV 1301 (the freshmen seminar), and an additional reading- intensive course. Unfortunately, enrollment in these learning communities has been slow and only ten LCs in fall 2006 and seven in fall 2007 actually filled. On retrospection, it appears that this was due to misconceptions and apprehensions on the part of students and advisors alike. In an informal survey, students expressed various insecurities about university-level work and the problems inherent in enrollment in the large sections of 200-500 students that comprise many of the introductory level high-risk courses in the university core such as the history survey. On the other hand, anecdotally it appears that some of the academic advisors, despite in-service training, believe that developmental students should follow a prerequisite acquisition model rather than a co-acquisition model. Due to these difficulties, there are simply not enough students involved in the developmental reading learning communities to make a rigorous statistical study but certainly enough to provide descriptive data and consider possible trends in GPA, retention, and student satisfaction. Two of the fall 2007 learning communities that linked ENGL 0310 and the history survey section are indicative of the developmental reading learning community program and will be discussed in detail below.

The United States History Survey courses (HIST 1301 and HIST 1302) are core requirements for all graduates of state-funded colleges and universities in the state of

Texas. History is one of the high-risk courses at UTEP with some sections having only 25 percent of freshmen (fewer than thirty hours) pass each semester. The history survey tends to be taught in large sections of between 150-275 students by either tenure or tenure-track professors with doctorates or adjuncts with master's degrees in history. As many researchers have shown, students enrolled in large introductory courses that are part of a learning community tend to have higher GPAs, retention rates, and student satisfaction (Boylan and Saxon 1999; Dietz 2002; Pastors 2006; Wilcox et al. 1997).

For the two DE/history survey learning communities in fall 2007 under discussion, the reading instructor was an experienced full-time master's lecturer in DE and University Studies. Faculty development for the Developmental English instructors includes weekly meetings to discuss articles or texts relating to developmental reading and writing as well as those of the first-year experience. Since all Developmental English faculty members are instructors in the Entering Student Program, they also attend the University Studies and learning community biannual workshops. The history faculty members were tenure-track associate professors or tenured professors with several years of teaching experience. All three instructors had prior experience in learning communities, but had not been previously paired with each other. Prior to beginning the fall semester, all learning community instructors attend an Entering Student Program Instructor workshop in May. The workshop in May 2007 had sessions on creating a cross-disciplinary assignment, handling classroom management issues, and best practices in learning communities. Learning community faculty also attended a university-wide half-day seminar in late August led by the Language Arts Work Group of the Teachers for a New Era (TNE) Initiative on how to create effective assignments to help students master discipline-specific content. In preparation for the semester, all three instructors exchanged syllabi, study guides, and required texts and communicated frequently via telephone and e-mail.

All learning communities share two things in common: "shared knowledge" and "shared knowing" (Tinto 1998). Linked courses enable students to see the connections between course content and also increase the ability of students to transfer knowledge and strategies from one situation to another (Stallworth-Clark et al. 1998). Additionally, learning communities not only introduce students to "academic culture" (Boylan and Saxon 1999) but allow students, particularly first-generation and commuter students, to "encounter learning as a shared rather than isolated experience" (Tinto 1997).

Shared Knowing

This is especially important for a large urban university such as UTEP in that almost all of our students are commuters (98 percent). In fact, it is this aspect of what Malnarich and others have called "friendship through scholarship" that is at the center of the learning community experience (Malnarich and Dusenberry 2003).

An informal survey of students in the two developmental reading learning communities under discussion reveals that while only 60 percent of the students in the

ENGL 0310 sections knew one to five other students by name on the first day of class, all of the students answering the survey knew almost all of the students in the class by name at the end of the semester. Of more importance, all had formed study groups and met at least three times during the semester to study for the history section. As one of the students wrote, "This was a small class [and] a place where I met many people and we became more of a family. We used to hold study groups together for tests and help each other during class." Several of the students in the learning community expressed concerns about taking a large lecture class, citing issues ranging from indifferent professors in an impersonal atmosphere to not being able to hear the professor and not enough seats near the front of the auditorium. Nevertheless, many noted that having a large class in conjunction with the small English class "really helped" and that "it was not so scary walking into a class of 250 people and not knowing anyone" because they knew students from the English class. As Vincent Tinto has argued, for students such as these, learning communities facilitate the development of peer networks and a "shared learning" experience that bridges "the academic-social divide" and fosters personal investment in their education (Tinto 1997, 613).

Limited access to higher education affects low income, first-generation, minority, and other nontraditional students most of all, and although a recent statistical study conducted by the Center for Institutional Evaluation, Research and Planning at UTEP found that the educational level of parents and low income per se were not significant predictors of college attrition at UTEP while proper educational attitudes were (CIERP 2007). While regularly admitted students "continually plan, organize, monitor, and evaluate their learning experience," developmental students often lack a readily available "toolbox" of self-regulatory skills, nor are they able to apply what strategies they do know effectively or appropriately (Brown, Campione, and Day 1981; Stallworth-Clark et al. 1998; Young and Ley 2003).

Through classroom activities, students in the two ENGL 0310 sections under discussion were familiarized with various aspects of self-regulated learning such as self-evaluation, organization, goal-setting and planning, environmental structuring, soliciting help from faculty and peers, and reviewing tests, notes, and texts (Young and Ley 2003). Surveys and self-reflective essays were given to the students after exams in the history class at mid-term and after the final examination to determine how students were applying this information (Appendix 1). When asked, students' responses included "seeking assistance from peers," asking "authorities for help and making more time to study," and "studying with my group." One student's self-reflection included the comment that "I really don't know if I did better on Exam #2. I think it was a bit hard. I did change my study habits according to what we have discussed in reading class, so hopefully it did help me on the exam." Another mentioned having changed his study habits: "I also found a way to break up the time to study and find a place that causes less distraction." While most listed positive changes, a few admitted the need for improvement, such as "I feel I did about the same as Exam One because I really haven't changed much of my study habits other than to keep myself organized with my readings" or "I think I should read more and write more notes on my own, that way it can help me get more information."

Developmental students are not only unprepared academically, they are usually unprepared emotionally for the rigors of college life and tend to exhibit behaviors such as skipping class or turning in papers late that are contradictory to success (Moore 2000). Recent studies show that while aptitude and success go hand in hand for high achievers, motivational beliefs and the ability to apply self-regulated learning strategies correctly are more important for the success of developmental students than initial aptitude (Ray, Garavalia, and Murdock 2003). Interestingly enough, our findings bore out their results. In these two developmental learning communities, the students' ACCUPLACER scores did not appear predicative of their history grades and the students with the higher ACCUPLACER scores did not always fare better than those in the lower ranges. On the other hand, there was a correlation between attendance and academic performance. Students with a zero to three absences in English 0310 scored higher in their history classes than those with more than three absences.

At the end of the semester, when asked the degree to which they had become self-regulated learners, students replied

> "I am a lot more of a self-regulated learner now because it helps a lot with all my classes. I self-evaluate my work when I get it back from the instructors. I am very organized—it helps me not confuse myself. I have set goals such as to learn certain things and do well on my work. I keep records on my test scores in class, and many other things."

> "I feel that becoming a self-regulated learner is important but I am still learning….Self-evaluation, goal-setting, and seeking help from peers and teachers are the most important. It is essential for me to be a self-regulated learner in order to be a successful student."

Learning communities also increase involvement with academe, making it more likely for students "to learn and persist" (Tinto 1998). Of all new underprepared students at UTEP, 66 percent persisted from 2005 to 2006 while the one-year retention rate for students taking ENGL 0310 is about 55 percent (THECB 2005b, 2005c). Although it is too early to determine the one-year retention rate, almost 85 percent of the developmental students in these two LCs returned for classes at UTEP in spring 2008.

Shared Knowledge

According to John Seely Brown, Allan Collins, and Paul Duguid (1989), authentic activities allow students to build scaffolding for their further academic endeavors. Following the paradigm of situated modeling, instructors promote learning by demonstrating a task, support the students as they perform the task themselves, and then empower the students to act independently. For instance, while the ENGL 0310 class utilizes a general text to demonstrate writing a reading response paragraph, the ENGL 0310 class with the embedded history section used the history text for that same assignment. After a discussion of reading analysis paragraphs including what is expected in an effective analysis paragraph as well as the faults of an average or

unsuccessful analysis, students are given various prompts depending on their section of the history survey (Appendix 2). All students are to provide specific, relevant examples from the selection to support their analysis. Since this format was very similar to essay exams given in the history sections, the students were able to use the assignments as a scaffold for "authentic" learning. These assignments involved almost all of the self-regulatory strategies since the students were required to participate in peer reviews, faculty conferencing, and tutoring at a faculty-run writing lab. Students commented that these essays "helped me with writing my long essay and I was able to get straight to the point;" allowed me to "remember key points while taking the test;" and demonstrated how to "give specific points from the text and lecture notes to illustrate what was happening."

Researchers have also found that developmental students often need explicit instructions on how to acquire "domain-specific knowledge" through the use of a simple heuristic (Alexander and Judy 1988; Stallworth-Clark et al. 1998). One of the simplest self-teaching strategies available is the journalistic heuristic of who, what when, where, why and how. By asking and answering questions on a set of readings from the history survey classes, students in the ENGL 0310 sections gained the skills to write summaries, analyses, and essays as well as learning to differentiate between main ideas and supporting details (Appendix 3). When asked about preparation for the exam, students responded that they reviewed notes, as well as asked and answered questions "in order for it to stay in my head."

Because of the small number of students involved in these learning communities, statistical analysis is impossible. While the overall pass rate for all classifications of students in the large history sections that contained these two embedded cohorts was 72 percent, the pass rate for non-developmental reading freshmen was 64 percent. Grades in the history sections also indicate that the content-specific tasks in these two developmental reading learning community enabled students to succeed more often than unsupported developmental students taking the same course with a pass rate of 54 percent and 40 percent respectively.

Use of First-Year Seminar in Developmental LCs

Studies have indicated that students react in a positive fashion to learning communities that contain a first-year seminar and report gains in various areas including academic performance, institutional involvement, and personal development (Barefoot et al. 1999; Boylan and Saxon 1999). This has also been our experience, and we have had success with learning communities for the general student population that combine the history survey sections with regular English composition or the freshmen seminar (UNIV 1301) or both.

UTEP's freshmen seminar is UNIV 1301. It is a 3-credit-hour course designed to strengthen academic performance and essential academic skills; ease transition into the college environment by increasing involvement with university activities, resources, faculty, and fellow students; and encourage self-assessment and goal clarification. Part

of the university's core curriculum, the course is taught by an instructional team that consists of an instructor, a student peer leader, a university librarian, and an advisor. Approximately 80 percent of entering freshman take the course their first semester at UTEP and typically half of the UNIV courses offered are linked in learning communities. On the whole, first-year students enrolled in the learning communities that linked history to UNIV 1301 have a higher pass rate for the history survey sections than freshmen students taking the history section without the benefit of a learning community, even if those students are concurrently taking a stand-alone UNIV 1301 section.

In fall 2006, we had two developmental reading LCs linked to the same history survey lecture: one a two-course model with ENGL 0310 and the history survey, and the other a triad consisting of the freshmen critical thinking seminar, ENGL 0310, and the history survey. Although the overall passing rate for this survey lecture course was at 67 percent, only 54 percent of the freshmen in the class passed. While only 23 percent of the developmental students who took the class without the support of the ENGL 0310 course passed, a total of 61 percent of the freshmen developmental students taking the course in learning communities passed. To our surprise, 79 percent of the students in the developmental reading triad passed as opposed to 40 percent of the students in the two-course developmental reading learning community. We therefore decided to try more of the triad classes in the fall of 2007 as well as continuing the two-class model of ENGL 0310 and history. However, although research (Boylan 1999; Ray, Garavalia, and Murdock 2003) has suggested that developmental educators can improve student learning through the addition of a freshman seminar which teaches organization and critical thinking skills, it was our discovery that creating a developmental learning community that included our critical thinking seminar, UNIV 1301, had potentially as many problems as solutions.

During fall 2007, students in the Developmental English learning communities that did not include UNIV 1301 passed at 54 percent while students in the HIST/ENGL 0310/UNIV 1301 triads passed at 46 percent and developmental students taking the history sections without support passed at 40 percent. It appears that the two-course developmental learning communities mainstreamed underprepared students into college courses while giving them the support they needed for success by utilizing the content of one class as the basis of study skill strategies in the other. As Tinto observes, the "linkage of skill as applied to a particular credit-bearing content course tends to drive student engagement" (Tinto 1998). However, the triad of 3-hour courses may have unintentionally marginalized and isolated the students. Although all UNIV 1301 courses emphasize the critical thinking skills necessary for college, by placing students in "developmental only" UNIV 1301 sections, they missed vital exposure to peer role models. This resulted in a situation where instructors voiced the concern that the triad cohort "hyperbonded," which consequently encouraged the continuation of high school behavior rather than fostering more mature conduct.

Because of this experience, the fall 2008 lineup includes several history/ENGL 0310 combinations, but we have chosen to mainstream the developmental reading students

into regular UNIV 1301 classes. We will also be piloting three learning communities that have an embedded history section combined with a mini-semester formatted ENGL 0310 based on the premise that by the time some students learn effective study strategies, it is too late in the semester to pass the linked history course. With the compacted format, it is anticipated that students will have access to the reading skills necessary for success prior to mid-terms in the linked history sections.

Despite the cost and time involved in remediation, institutions such as UTEP that strive for open admissions to allow the greatest number of students access to higher education simply must continue to try various formats for developmental education. As Boylan notes, the alternative to remedial or developmental education for underprepared students is "never completing college at all" (Boylan 1999).

Appendix 1. Self-regulatory Learning Reflection

History Exam #1 Survey
1. Predict the numerical grade you earned on Exam I. Be specific. On which sections did you do well? With which sections did you have trouble?

2. How did you begin to prepare for this exam?

3. How many total hours did you spend studying? How did you break up your study time?

4. Did you prepare all the questions on the study guide?

5. How did you prepare for the objective section? Did you use note cards? Other methods? Did you study the words within the context of the course?

6. If your professor offered review sessions, did you attend? How was the session helpful?

7. If you could take this exam again, what would you do differently?

History Exam #2 Survey
1. Predict the numerical grade you earned on Exam #2. Be specific. On which sections did you do well? The long essay? The short essays? The objective section? With which sections did you have problems?

2. If you feel you did better on Exam #2, why do you think you did so? Did you change any of your study habits?

3. How many total hours did you spend studying? How did you break up your study time?

4. Did you prepare all the questions on the study guide?

5. How did you prepare for the objective section?

6. Did you attend the review session offered by your professor? How was the session helpful?

7. Did the co-curricular assignment you wrote for ENGL 0310/History assist you with this exam?

8. Which of the ENGL 0310 reading chapters assisted you in better preparing for this exam?

9. In what ways have you become a stronger self-regulated learner? Please list specific points and support your statements with examples, details or illustrations.

Mid-term Reflection
In-Class On-the-Spot Writing
Time: 10 minutes

In the next few minutes, I would like you to reflect on your progress thus far this semester. Please answer the following questions on this sheet of paper.

1. What grade do you predict you earned on your history mid-term? Explain why you think you received the grade you did.

2. What can you do in order to improve your grade in the next weeks? Please be specific.

3. What grade do you predict you earned in English 0310? Explain why you think you received the grade you did.

4. What can you do in order to improve your grade in the next weeks? Again, please be specific.

Appendix 2. Reading Analysis Paragraph

Sample Integrated Learning Community Assignments
Reading 0310 and History 1301 and 1302
Using the textbooks assigned for the history classes, write a reading analysis paragraph following the directions given. Make sure that supporting details are relevant, clear, and effective.

1. In response to "Global Conflict: World War II, 1937-1945" by Jacqueline Jones and others, write an analysis paragraph that explains how women's lives were affected by World War II, both during the war and after.

2. In response to "Families and Religion," by David Goldfield and others, write a paragraph that explains how families and religion were rooted in the institution of slavery.

3. In response to "The Great Depression," by James A. Henretta and others, write a paragraph that thoroughly analyzes the specific underlying causes of the Great Depression.

Scoring Guide for Reading Analysis Paragraph
In an effective analysis paragraph:
- The writing clearly analyzes information stated in the article.
- The writing discusses the specific points requested in the prompt.
- The topic sentence states the title and author and main point of the article.
- Details are relevant, effective, and clear.
- The writer uses his/her own vocabulary to restate ideas; quotes are few and punctuated correctly with quotation marks.
- Transitions show relationships between details.
- The paragraph ends appropriately with a sense of closure and emphasis on the main idea.
- Surface errors are few and do not distract the reader.

Appendix 3. The Journalistic Heuristic

Who? What? Where? When? Why? How?
The Journalistic heuristic is one technique journalists use to elicit specific concrete answers and thereby to avoid 'yes" or "no" responses. This technique can be used as a pre-writing technique or as an active reading strategy.

Sample Journalistic Heuristic Assignments for History 1302/English 0310
Use the journalistic heuristic to ask and answer twenty-five questions on each of the assignments below which were taken from your History 1302 Study Guide. This will help you to prepare for the essay portion of your upcoming history exam. Your sources for this assignment are America, A Concise History by James Henretta and others, Romo's Ringside Seat to a Revolution, "Border Culture" (film), "Women in WWII" (film), "Civil Rights" (film), and your class notes. You will share these questions and answers with your learning teams in this class.

A. Describe the women mentioned in Romo's *Ringside Seat to a Revolution*, both as individuals and types (such as flappers) and the roles they played.

B. Which three photographs in Romo's, *The Ringside Revolution* do you consider most interesting, and why? What do they tell us?

C. Regarding inclusion/exclusion, describe the struggles of African Americans, Mexican Americans, students, and women for equality since WWII, including the

most important organizations, leaders, and goals. How did ordinary people get involved in these events (think of the film)? What opposition did they face?

Figure 1. Pass rates in history sections linked with Developmental English learning communities.
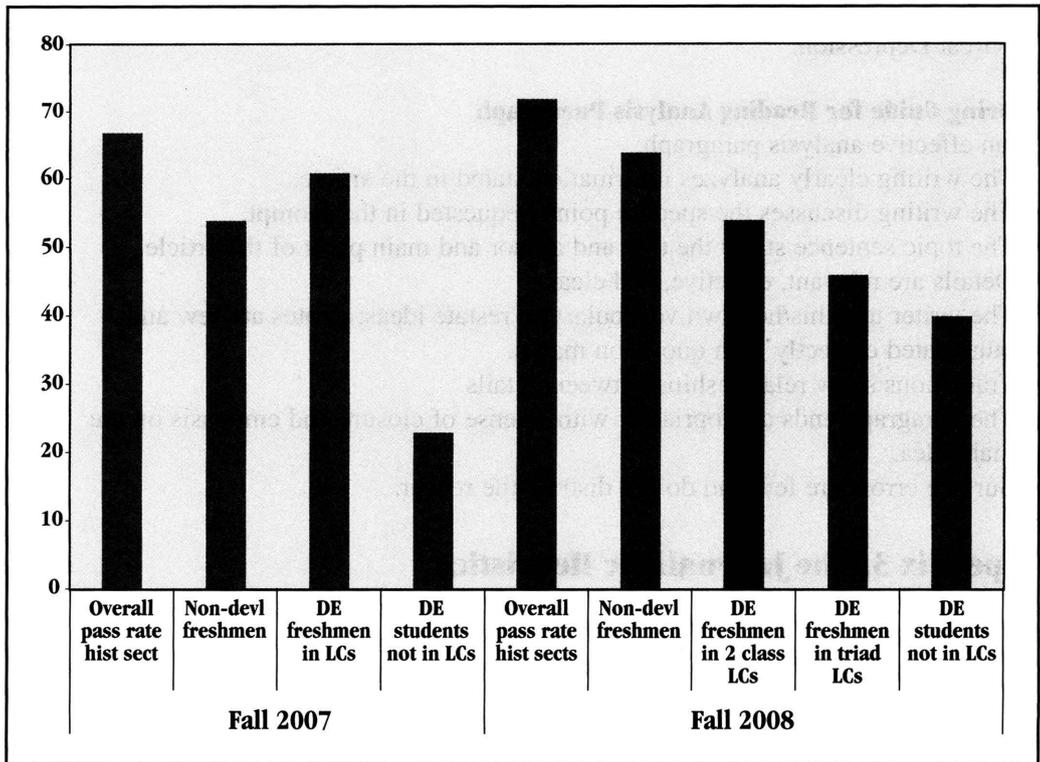
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