

The Scope of Developmental Education: Some Basic Information on the Field



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Each year the National Center for Developmental Education receives hundreds of telephone calls, letters, FAXes. and E-Mail messages soliciting information on developmental education. Researchers, reporters, state- and institutional-level decision makers, and legislators are continually raising questions about the nature and scope of developmental education in American higher education. Some questions are raised by those who wish to strengthen it or study it, and others are raised by those who would rather do away with it. Whatever their motivation, however, information is needed to inform their discussions.

This issue of RiDE attempts to assemble information from a variety of sources to respond to questions about the size and scope of developmental education. These sources include the National Center for Developmental Education, professional associations in the field, The National Center for Education Statistics, the Southern Regional Education Board, the National Study of Developmental Education, and the Chronicle of Higher Education. Through a combination of hard data and some >educated guesstimates= it is hoped that a fairly accurate snapshot of that endeavor known as developmental education can be presented here.

How Large an Endeavor is Developmental Education?

Students

According to the Chronicle of Higher Education (1994, p. 5), 2,185,959 first-time freshmen entered college in the fall of 1993. The National Center for Education Statistics (1991) reported that 30% of all entering freshman took at least one remedial course. A report from the Southern Regional Education Board in the same year indicated that the average remediation for first-term freshman in the southern United States was 27% in reading and writing and 38% in mathematics (Abraham,

1991). Given this data, an estimate that 30% of entering students in the U.S. require remediation would appear to be accurate. This would mean that approximately 656,000 entering freshmen are involved in remedial and developmental courses.

This is, however, far from being a total estimate of the number of students participating in developmental education. Experience and observation indicate that many students who need remedial or developmental assistance are unable or unwilling to take advantage of this assistance during the first semester. For example, some students may, simply be unable to fit the developmental courses they need into their first-semester schedule; other students might deliberately delay taking developmental courses or fail to realize that they need them until later in their college careers.

Furthermore, a large number of students may not take remedial or developmental courses but still require tutoring, individualized instruction, or other learning assistance services offered through developmental programs or learning assistance centers. A reasonable, and probably conservative, >guesstimate= would be that these groups of students represent about 15% of the continuing college and university and population. This estimate would include both those who enroll in remedial and developmental courses after their first term or those who later participate in learning assistance or other academic support activities.

The Chronicle of Higher Education (AThe Nation: Students, @ 1994, p. 5) reports that about 10,354,000 continuing students composed of second-term freshmen through seniors were enrolled in higher education institutions in the fall of 1993. Fifteen percent of that figure is 1,553,079. That number plus the original 656,000 entering freshmen enrolled in developmental courses would make a total estimate of 2,209,079 students who participate in developmental education courses or services each year.

An additional 700,000 students also participate in educational opportunity programs funded by the federal government (National Council of Educational Opportunity Associations, 1995). At the undergraduate level, these programs include Educational Opportunity Centers, Upward Bound, Veteran's Upward Bound, Talent Search, and Student Support Services. The number of students in these programs, added to the previous total, would bring the total of those participating in some type of development service to 2,909,079. This figure does not include those taking freshman seminar or college survival skills courses or those receiving assistance from departmental, as opposed to developmental program, learning laboratories (writing labs, mathematics labs, etc.). Although there may be some overlap between programs, this is still likely to be a conservative rather than a liberal estimate of those participating in developmental education on an annual basis.

Personnel

The National Center for Education Statistics (1991) reported that "Aa total of 30,650 persons taught remedial college courses" in the fall of 1989. If anything, that number has probably increased somewhat in the past 6 years. The National Study of Developmental Education (Boylan, Bonham,

& Bliss, 1994a) also found that between 1986 and 1990 there was at least one counselor or advisor working, primarily, with developmental students for every three faculty members teaching developmental courses. This would mean that approximately 10,000 counselors or advisors work with developmental students each year.

In addition to instructors and counselors, the National Study of Developmental Education (Boylan, Bonham, & Bliss, 1994b) reports that approximately 55,000 tutors work in developmental and learning assistance programs across the country on an annual basis. A further 11,400 professionals are estimated to work in educational opportunity programs. (M. Hoyler, Associate Director, personal communication, September 15, 1995). This would mean, therefore, that about 107,050 higher education personnel work with developmental students in any given year. This, too, is probably a conservative estimate as it does not include developmental education program administrators or departmental laboratory personnel.

Programs

In 1991, the National Center for Education Statistics reported that 74% of the nation's colleges and universities provided remedial or developmental courses. This figure is consistent with the National Study of Developmental Education (Boylan, Bonham, & Bliss, 1992) which reported that 75% of colleges and universities provided remedial or developmental courses. According to The Chronicle of Higher Education (September 1, p. 15), there are 3,638 colleges and universities in the United States. If 75% of these provided remedial or developmental courses, that would mean that 2,729 of the nation's postsecondary institutions feature some type of developmental program.

Table 1: Summary of Information on Developmental Education Students, Personnel, and Programs

Students participating in developmental education	2,209,079
Personnel involved in developmental education	
Faculty.....	30,650
Tutors.....	55,000
Counselors/advisors.....	10,000
EOP (TRIO) personnel.....	11,400
Total.....	107,050
Developmental programs in U.S. colleges & universities	
Remedial/developmental courses and learning assistance programs.....	2,729
EOP (TRIO) programs.....	1,750
Total.....	4,479

In addition, the National Council of Educational Opportunity Associations (1995) reports that there are approximately 1,750 Upward Bound, Talent Search, and Student Support Services programs on college campuses. This would bring the total number of programs providing developmental

services to 4,479. Again, however, this is probably a conservative estimate that does not include departmental laboratories or freshman seminar programs.

Professional Associations

In addition to students and programs, the field of developmental education also includes professional associations. These associations provide professional development activities, promote communication among members, encourage research in the field, and disseminate information.

The first major professional association for those working with underprepared college students was the Western College Reading Association. This association was founded in 1967 and later became the College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA). The association's original membership included those who worked with learning assistance centers or taught reading and study-skills courses on college campuses in the western United States. In recent years, its membership has become national rather than regional and also includes those teaching other remedial or developmental courses.

The College Reading and Learning Association has 28 regional affiliates representing the continental United States and Canada. Its current international membership is approximately 1,200 (T. Gier, Past President, personal communication. September 15, 1995).

Another major professional association for those working with underprepared college students is the National Association for Developmental Education originally known as the National Association for Remedial Developmental Studies in Postsecondary Education. At first, the association served those who taught remedial and developmental courses in colleges and universities. Today, its nationwide membership also includes a substantial number of administrators, tutors, advisors, and other learning specialists associated with learning assistance centers. As of the fall of 1995, the association had 31 state and regional chapters representing 42 states, and the District of Columbia. Its current membership is estimated at 2,700 (E. Bingham, Vice President, personal communication. September 11, 1995).

Table 2: Professional Associations and Membership

College Reading and Learning Association.....	1,200
National Association for Developmental Education.....	2,700
National Council of Education Opportunity Associations.....	7,500
Total professional membership.....	11,600

The largest professional group for those working with underprepared students is the National Council of Educational Opportunity Associations (NCEOA). This organization is a coordinating body for 11 regional educational opportunity associations representing every state in the union plus Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. Unlike the other professional groups described

here. NCEOA was founded in 1981 after its regional affiliates were established. In fact, NCEOA is more of a coordinating body for regional associations than an actual professional association. The membership of those regional associations represented by NCEOA is approximately 7,500 (M. Hoyler, Associate Director, personal communication. September 15, 1995).

Professional Publications

The most well known publication in the field is the Journal of Developmental Education (originally the Journal of Remedial/Developmental Education). It is published by the National Center for Developmental Education and the official journal of the National Association for Developmental Education. Its circulation is approximately 4,500 (B. Calderwood, Managing Editor, personal communication, September 15, 1995). Another well known publication in the field is the Journal of College Reading & Learning. This is the official journal of the College Reading and Learning Association and is published by that association. Its estimated circulation is approximately 2,000 (T. Gier, Past President, personal communication. September 15, 1995). The official journal of the National Council of Educational Opportunity Associations is called Opportunity Outlook. It is published by NCEOA and has a circulation of approximately 1,000. The New York College Learning Skills Association (NYCLSA) also publishes its own journal. Its title is Research & Teaching in Developmental Education. It has a circulation of approximately 800. The Journal of Teaching & Learning is the newest journal in the field. It was established in 1995 and is the official journal of the Ohio Association of Developmental Education. Its current circulation is unknown. Another publication relevant to the field is Research in Development Education. This is published in newsletter format for those interested in current research in the field. It is published by the National Center for Development Education and has estimated circulation of 600 (B. Calderwood, Managing Editor, personal communication. September 15, 1995). Editors of the Learning Assistance Review, plan the release of its inaugural issue for the spring of 1996. This journal is the official publication of the Midwest College Learning Center Association. Its purpose is to disseminate information on learning assistance programs and to foster communication among learning center professionals.

Table 3: Publications in Developmental Education

Journal of College of Reading and Learning Published by the College Reading & Learning Association Circulation.....	2,000
Journal of Developmental Education Published by the National Center for Developmental Education (provided as the official journal of the National Association for Developmental Education) Circulation.....	4,500

Journal of Teaching & Learning

Published by the Ohio Association for Developmental Education Circulation..... Unknown

Opportunity Outlook

Published by the National Council of Educational Opportunity Associations

Circulation..... 1,000

Research & Teaching in Developmental Education

Published by the New York College Learning Skills Association

Circulation..... 800

Research in Developmental Education

Published by the National Center for Developmental Education

Circulation..... 600

Discussion

Of the nation's 12,539,820 undergraduate students (September 1, 1994, p.5) almost one quarter (23%) are exposed to developmental education in any given academic year. They are served, however, by a relatively small percentage of the faculty and staff in higher education. According to the Chronicle of Higher Education (September 1, 1994, p. 33), there are 520,551 fulltime faculty in American colleges and universities. Only 30,650 or 5.9% of these teach remedial or developmental courses on a full-time basis. Those staff working with developmental students also represent a small segment of nonfaculty professionals in American higher education. Although there are 55,000 tutors serving developmental students, only 11.6% or 6,380 of these work full-time (Boylan, Bonham, & Bliss, 1994b). Assuming that 90% of the 10,000 counselors and advisors and an estimated 7,500 educational opportunity program personnel work full-time, the total number of professional staff working full-time with developmental students would be 16,500. According to the Chronicle of Higher Education (September 1, 1994, p. 33), there are 496,230 professional staff working full-time in colleges and universities. This would mean that only 3.3% of the full-time professional staff in American higher education work with developmental students. This is a strikingly small commitment of personnel to work with the large percentage of students participating in developmental courses and services. Essentially, only 5.9% of full-time faculty and 3.3% of the full-time staff are available to serve 23% of American college students! Of course there is also a substantial number of part-time faculty and staff working with developmental students. According to the National Study of Developmental Education (Boylan, Bonham, & Bliss, 1994a). 72% of all faculty working with developmental students do so on a part-time basis. As noted earlier, 88.4% of the tutors working with developmental students are part time. But there are a vast number of part-time faculty and staff employed throughout American higher education. Cohen and Brawer (1989), for instance, suggest that nearly 60% of the faculty in American community colleges are part-time employees. Given the size of this part-time population, those working part-time with developmental students still comprise a relatively small percentage of the total. It, therefore, seems reasonable to assert that the field of developmental education provides a

substantial amount of service to American higher education given the relatively small percentage of personnel invested in it.

Another trend that can be observed from the data presented here is that a rather small percentage of those working with developmental students belong to professional associations in developmental education. The high number of part-time personnel working with developmental students probably contributes to this low membership rate. Table 1 indicates that there are 107,050 professional personnel involved in developmental education. Of these, only 11,600 (11%) are involved in professional associations. Furthermore, this membership figure probably includes a considerable amount of overlap because many developmental educators belong to more than one professional association. For instance, an increasing number of NADE members are also members of CRLA (T.Gier, Past President, personal communication, September 15, 1995). It is unfortunate that the overwhelming majority of those personnel who provide developmental education services do not participate in professional associations. The field would benefit from more aggressive recruitment by the existing professional associations, particularly among part-time faculty and staff. It would also profit from greater institutional support of professional association members in developmental education.

Conclusion

Developmental education is obviously a substantial enterprise in American higher education. It involves almost three million students and over 100,000 faculty and staff. Nevertheless, even including part-time faculty and staff in developmental programs in the total count, a very small percentage of the nation's higher education personnel resources are devoted to developmental education. Among other things, this would suggest that those who hope to reduce personnel costs in higher education are not likely to accomplish much by eliminating developmental education. When one considers the high percentage of students served by such a low percentage of the personnel involved in American higher education, developmental education is already quite cost effective.

Developmental education might become even more cost effective, however, if greater numbers of its practitioners were involved in professional associations in the field. It is probably true that many of the faculty who teach developmental courses already belong to professional associations in their own particular disciplines such as reading, English, or mathematics. Nevertheless, in a field with at least 107,000 personnel, a professional membership base of 11,600 leaves much to be desired. Expanded training and professional development, for its practitioners would appear to be a necessity in an endeavor where 5.9% of the faculty serve 23% of the students.

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