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Developmental Education Repeaters: Stories About Repetition

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of Dr. Marietta Del Favero. Dr. Del Favero was my major professor and advisor since the beginning of my journey through the Ph.D. program. She was an inspiration and taught me that research is a process, and we must always follow the process. Dr. D. was a scholar, a mentor and a friend. Never did she steer me in the wrong direction; her guidance and expertise has made me the researcher I am today. She was a fighter, and she stood up for me and my research when it was necessary. Dr. D. is and will continue to be terribly missed. Dr. D., this dissertation and research is for you. I hope I have made you proud.

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Abstract

Developmental education students make up almost half of the community college population in the United States (Bettinger & Long, 2005). Approximately 42% of first-time freshmen at community colleges must enroll in at least one developmental education course in English, reading and/or math (NCES, 2010). Many developmental education students are unsuccessful in passing a developmental education course in their first and second attempts and retake the course sometimes five times before passing. There is substantial research on persistence among college students, but the research fails to link persistence to developmental education repeaters. My study sought to explore community college developmental education repeaters' experiences with and stories about repetition in a reading course. My study was framed around developmental education and its students, course repeaters, and persistence.

I used qualitative research methods with a narrative research design. Two methods of data collection included multiple one-on-one interviews and document collection. Four participants were selected from one community college in the New Orleans area, two who repeated and completed developmental reading upon their third attempt and two who were in the process of completing developmental reading a third time. Data analysis revealed six themes. The information gleaned from the inquiry may inform community college faculty practice with regard to not only reducing and preventing course repetition but also increasing persistence and retention of developmental education students.

Key Terms: college readiness, community colleges, persistence, social integration, academic integration, validation, motivation

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Developmental education students represent a large percentage of the student population in community colleges. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics, (2010), 42% of entering freshmen at community colleges have enrolled in at least one developmental education course in English, reading or math. Parsad, Lewis and Greene (2003) postulated that 75% of community colleges require students to enroll in developmental education courses in which they are referred based on placements tests or ACT scores before they are allowed to enroll in college level courses. Students enrolled in such courses are not always successful, which prevents their enrollment in college level courses among other things. Students are often repeating developmental education courses, and these students are referred to as developmental repeaters for the purpose of the study, which not only extends their stay in college and creates additional expenses for the student, but also leads some students to drop out.

Kuh, Cruce, Shoup, Kinzie, and Gonyea (2008) reiterated the problem of repetition by claiming that students who excessively repeat courses increase their time to degree, which cuts their chances of earning a degree in half and reduces the odds of persistence. As evaluators of developmental education, Levin and Calcagno (2007) asked a question they believed community college educators should consider in order to improve remedial student preparation for college-level coursework; specifically they asked, "What proportion of students who are required to take remediation courses actually enroll and pass the courses and with how many attempts?" (p. 9). This question suggests that community college and developmental education professionals are beginning to question repetition as a problem.

The problem of repetition in developmental education courses is not a new one for Local Community College (LCC), the site selection for the study. Approximately 35% of the student population at LCC must enroll in at least one developmental education course. Not every student in the 35% of enrollees in developmental education is successful, however. For instance, in the fall 2011 semester at LCC, several students were unsuccessful in developmental education courses in English, reading and math (LCC, fall 2011 Data). Table 1 summarizes the percentages of students who failed a developmental education course in the fall 2011 semester. The course prefixes and numbers represent the following: DEVE 0880, Developmental English II, DEVE 0900, Basic Math, DEVE 0940, Introductory Algebra, DEVR 0740, Developmental Reading I, and DEVGR0780, Developmental Reading II.

Table 1: Summary of Developmental Education Completion, fall 2011, LCC

Successful Completion = A, B, C   Other = D, F

Course		Successful	Other (Unsuccessful)	Total
DEVE 088	Count	66	73	139
	% in course	47.5%	52.5 %	100.0%
DEVM 0900	Count	108	75	183
	% in course	59.0%	41.0 %	100.0 %
DEVM 0940	Count	171	125	296
	% in course	57.8 %	42.2 %	100.0 %
DEVR 0740	Count	8	14	22
	% in course	36.4%	63.6%	100.0%
DEVR 0780	Count	92	79	171
	% in course	53.8%	46.2%	100.0%

As seen in the table above, 46% of the students who were enrolled in developmental reading II (DEVR 0780) in the fall 2011 semester at LCC were unsuccessful during their first attempt (LCC, fall 2010 Data). This shows that LCC faces many challenges in developmental reading, English and math as it relates to repetition.

While repetition is indeed a problem for individual students, there are also implications for higher education and society as a whole. Students in developmental reading face even greater barriers. If students are not persisting, their chances of staying in college are reduced, which could affect the retention data at higher education institutions. If students leave college because of repetition of courses, like reading, which provides foundational skills that are necessary to succeed in college, there is a chance that they leave lacking skills needed to function in academia and society (Boylan, 1999; Payne & Lyman, 1996). As a result, there will be a higher population of adults lacking basic education necessary to survive and compete in society, especially one that is currently faced with employment shortages or employers who require some kind of education background (Friedman & Mandel, 2010; Guevera, 2005). What is it that students believe prevents them from successfully completing a developmental reading course? And how, based on students' experiences, is motivation to persist through and successfully complete such courses impacted when faced with repetition?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of my study was to examine community college developmental repeaters' stories about and experiences with repetition of coursework and what they believed led to persistence to successfully complete a developmental reading course when they repeated it three or more times. In addition, the study sought to explore repeaters' stories and beliefs about how their motivation was impacted when faced with repeating a reading course three or more times.

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Role of the Researcher

Although my assumptions and biases will be revisited in Chapter Three, I found it necessary to declare my biases and assumptions about developmental education, beforehand, in order to ensure that they were validated through the results of my study. As a qualitative researcher, in order to draw accurate conclusions from my study, I felt it was necessary to remain aware of my biases and assumptions so that my study would not be overly influenced by them. It was only natural that because I am a developmental education practitioner, my passion and biases may have sometimes been obvious throughout my study. Therefore, I kept a reflective journal so that my biases and assumptions did not wholly impact my study. Reflective journaling allowed me to write my feelings, questions and thoughts about participants' stories so that I could develop a certain level of awareness of my feelings, behaviors and their consequences on my research and participants (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Glesne, 2006; Moen, 2006).

Importance of the Study

Although there were a limited number of studies based on developmental students' perceptions of success (Duranczyk, 2007; Miller, 2000; Stein, 2006), none had explored developmental repeaters' stories about and experiences with repetition and what they believed led to motivation and persistence to successfully complete a developmental reading course when repeating it three or more times. The results of my study have contributed to what we know about developmental education repeaters' retention. Community colleges sometimes lose many developmental education students within the first and second years of enrollment for various reasons, and often times when students fail or withdraw from a developmental reading course they lose the motivation and desire to reenroll in the course. The results of my study may lead to

higher graduation rates of developmental reading students because coming to understand and appreciate developmental students' stories and beliefs could encourage community college faculty and leaders to improve certain areas of their developmental education programs to better serve the developmental education student population.

Overview of Theoretical Framework

My study assumed that instructor validation of a student, which includes factors such as assistance in learning, high standards and understanding, appreciation and respect, and motivation leads to repeaters' ability to academically and socially integrate themselves into a classroom setting. Social and academic integration in a classroom setting then lead to students' persistence through and successful completion of developmental reading courses upon repetition. Therefore, Rendon's (1994) validation theory, Ford's (1992) motivational systems theory (MST), and Tinto's (1993) theory of departure and persistence were used to frame developmental repeaters' perceptions of and experiences with what leads to persistence to successfully complete a developmental reading course when repeating it three or more times. Combined, the three theories formed a framework that linked a repeater's successful completion of a course upon repetition to persistence and motivation. A visual depiction of the theoretical framework can be seen below.
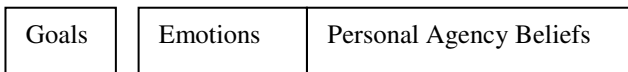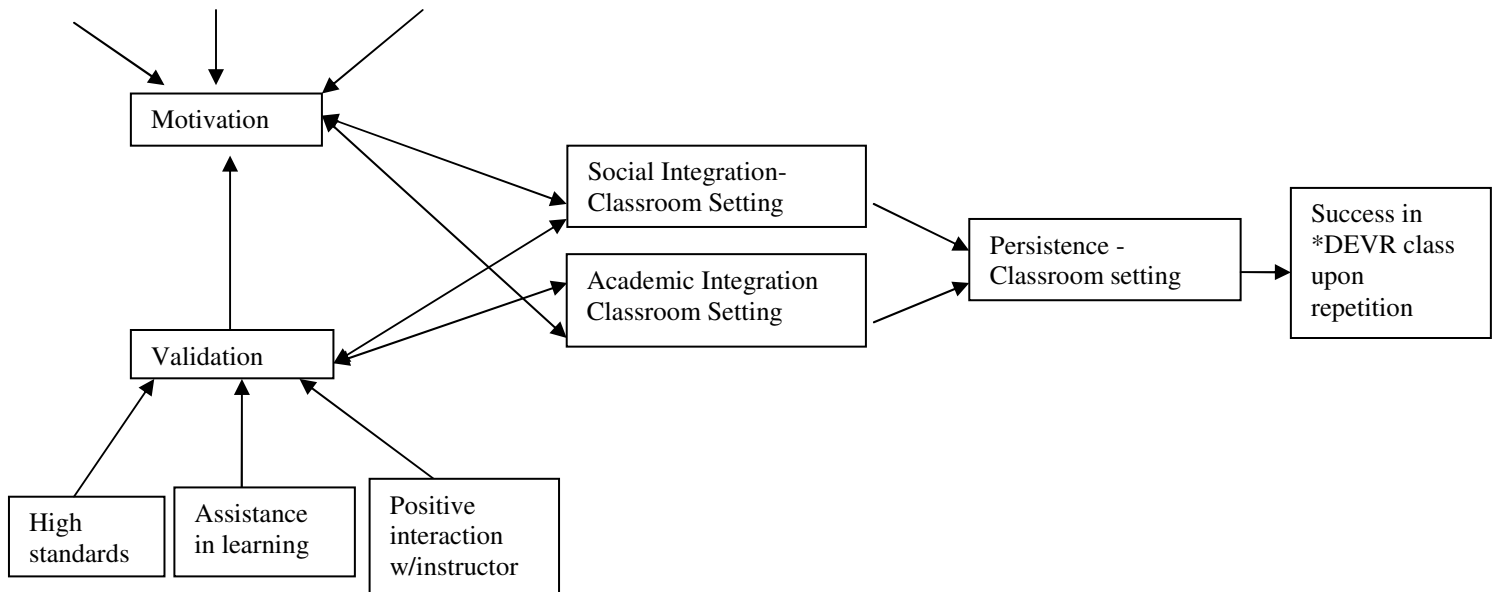
Goals	Emotions	Personal Agency Beliefs

Figure A: A Conceptual Framework of Repeaters' Successful Completion of a Course

*DEVR=Developmental Reading

Research (Allen, 1999; Ford, 1992; Rendon, 1994; Tinto, 1993) suggested that there were a variety of factors that influence a student's persistence in college.

Theorists and researchers (Allen, 1999; Ford, 1992; Rendon, 1994; Tinto, 1993) often cited academic and personal support, self beliefs, and goals as leading factors in persistence. Rendon (1994) and Ford (1992) stressed the importance of a responsive environment, where faculty were understanding and respectful, assisted in learning and set high standards, all factors that contributed to a student feeling validated in their learning, which led to students' motivation to persist and succeed. In addition, Ford's MST emphasized that motivation is driven by goals, emotions and personal agency beliefs. He used a formula to demonstrate the cohesiveness of the above concepts in his theory, which is represented as: personal goals x emotion x personal agency beliefs = motivation (Ford, 1992, p. 14). Tinto (1993) also stressed the importance of

goals in a student's persistence, but he also suggested other key factors that lead a student to persist in college

Tinto (1993) reinforced the relevance of faculty support, goals, and academic and social integration for persistence and success in college. Tinto's persistence and departure theory was discussed in the context of a higher education institution rather than in the context of a classroom setting. Tinto (1997) later claimed that the classroom was where the academic and social join, but he did not consider how a student's goals, academic and social integration could impact persistence and departure in a single classroom setting, nor did he revise his persistence and departure theory to address the classroom setting and its impact on success and persistence.

Demaris and Kritsonis (2008) discussed the need for more research to be conducted on Tinto's (1993) persistence and departure theory as it related to the effects of the classroom on student persistence and satisfaction. In their article, Demaris and Kritsonis claimed that the classroom setting is extremely important because it shapes a student's academic and social integration, and there is a lack of research examining how class experiences impact a student's persistence in college. Therefore, for the purpose of my study, Tinto's persistence and departure theory was re-contextualized and applied to a college classroom setting.

My study described academic integration as the ability of a repeater to meet the rigors of a developmental reading class by actively participating in class, asking questions, doing assignments, asking for help or tutoring, and going beyond the class expectations. Tinto (1993) suggested that students would not depart and would persist in college if they were socially and academically integrated in the institution; I suggested, for the purpose of this study, that if repeaters were socially and academically integrated in the class which they were repeating, they too would persist through and successfully complete the course. This understanding of

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integration paired with MST and validation created my understanding of persistence of repeaters, as well as a solid conceptual framework for this study.

The stories of participants in the study were examined to determine what encouraged them to persist in and successfully complete their developmental reading course when they were faced with repeating it a third time. Additionally, the participants' stories were analyzed to provide more insight into repetition and into the theories that framed the inquiry. I used the three theories, Tinto's (1993) persistence and departure theory, Ford's (1992) MST, and Rendon's (1994) validation theory, to suggest that social and academic development and integration of the student into the higher education institution are relevant to understanding student persistence in college as well as in a college classroom setting. None of the theories had ever discussed motivation, validation, academic and social integration with regard to developmental repeaters in a class context.

Research Questions

The goal of my study was to discover developmental education repeaters stories about and experiences with repetition in developmental reading. In order to examine theses stories, I wanted to answer the following questions: What are developmental education repeaters' stories about developmental reading courses and repetition of such? What are repeaters' stories about what leads to persistence to successfully complete a developmental reading course when repeating it three or more times? What are developmental education repeaters' stories about how motivation to complete a course is impacted by their need to repeat it?

Overview of the Literature

Developmental Education: The Basics

The development of open admission colleges greatly affected the state of higher education; there was an influx of students who were at risk of failing because of academic weaknesses and in need of remedial or developmental education (Kulik, Kulik & Shwalb, 1983; Lesley, 2001). The National Center for Education Statistics (2002) defined developmental education as any program, course or activity (in the areas of reading, writing or math) for students lacking skills needed to perform college level work at the level required by an institution. As Maxwell (1979) pointed out, the term *developmental education* began to be used in order to circumvent the stigma of the term *remedial education*. For the purpose of my study, developmental education also included the remedial courses and programs and services, such as tutoring, mentoring, early intervention, proper advisement and structured courses associated with it. Recent research (Adelman, 1999; Alexson & Kemnitz, 2007; Conley, 2008) was more concerned not with what developmental education meant, but *why* so many students are placed in it.

Educators and researchers (Adelman, 1999; Alexson & Kemnitz, 2007; Conley, 2008) began to discuss the academic gap between secondary and postsecondary education which has created a population of students entering college academically unprepared. They stressed the importance of a smooth academic transition from high school to college as a means of making students prepared for and able to successfully complete college level general education courses, an idea that has been termed as "college readiness" (Alexson & Kemintz, 2004; Conley, 2008). Conley (2008) stressed the challenges many high school graduates face when they enter college lacking academic preparedness and college knowledge. They lack mastery of content knowledge in writing skills and math logic; they lack intellectual maturity and are unable to apply critical thinking and analytical skills to solve problems; and they lack basic study skills, time

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management skills or the ability to work successfully in study groups (Conley, 2008). Moreover, they lack a clear understanding of the opportunities of college and a college degree, where they can get involved in internships and assistantships in their future career interests (Conley, 2008). This level of underpreparedness, both socially and academically, has only created a larger population of and a greater need for developmental education.

A lack of preparedness could be forcing more and more students into developmental education courses upon entering college. Often times they are not prepared sufficiently enough to pass the courses upon their first attempts. In cases in which students must take a developmental course and is not successful, he or she is then faced with repetition, which sometimes becomes even more discouraging for the student to complete (Bailey, Jeong, & Cho, 2008; Fenton, 2002; Stein, 2006; Windham, 1997).

Developmental education students are defined as students who are placed in developmental education courses and often referred to as academically and socially "underprepared" or "at-risk" of failing academically or dropping out (Conley, 2008; Kirst & Usdan, 2009). The reason why developmental education students are considered "at-risk" of failing is because they enter the college environment lacking necessary academic skills, such as analytic and critical thinking skills, to perform college-level coursework (Kirst & Usdan, 2009). They were not taught or did not attain skills in high school that would have prepared them to successfully perform at the level required by a higher education institution (Conley, 2008; Kirst & Usdan, 2009; U.S. Department of Education, 1996). Despite the evidence based on developmental education and its students' lack of preparedness, there are still ongoing debates (Boylan, 1999; Oudenhoven, 2002; Young, 2002) pertaining to the need for developmental education in higher education.

Debates About and Usefulness of Developmental Education

Opponents of developmental education have argued that the courses take too long, cost too much and prevent students from progressing toward their degrees by holding them in different levels of noncredit remedial courses (Boylan, 1999; Young, 2002). Others insist that some students are just not college level material (Young, 2002). They argue that offering remediation in college removes incentives to do well in high school, detracts from the education of prepared college students by "dumbing down" courses, and leads to low graduation rates (Oudenhoven, 2002; Young, 2002).

Developmental education proponents insist, however, that developmental students are just as successful in degree completion as better prepared students, and the benefits of remedial courses outweigh its cost (Boylan, 1999; Payne & Lyman). Naturally, there are some students, depending on their level of competency and life circumstances, who are able to complete remediation within a year, but the chances of completion within one year are slim (Boylan, 1999; Payne & Lyman, 1996; Young, 2002). Some students may require "multi-tier" remediation, where they must take more than one level of remediation in a single subject area, which could extend their completion time to a year and a half or more, as well as lower their chances of degree completion (Conley, 2007).

An example of "multi-tier" remediation can be seen at Local Community College. For example, at Local Community College (LCC), the site selected for this study, there are two levels of developmental reading, developmental reading I and II, labeled as DEVR 0740 and DEVR 0780. There are three levels of developmental math, introductory math (DEVM 0900), introductory algebra (DEVM 0940), and college algebra (MATH 1180). There are two levels of developmental English, developmental English I and II, labeled as DEVE 0840 and DEVE 0880.

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Some students at LCC, as I have often seen, start their college careers enrolled in the first level of each developmental education subject area, and this could take students at this academic level up to three semesters to complete the entire developmental education sequence in each subject area if they are to pass each level upon their first attempt. If they do not pass, this can turn three semesters of developmental education coursework into four or five semesters. In a situation such as this, the odds of students persisting through the four or five semesters are sometimes slim (Conley, 2007; Paulsen, 2006). This is the reason for the aforementioned concerns based on time to complete developmental education courses.

Despite the time it takes students to complete remediation, developmental education is important and necessary considering the proportion of first-time students who enter college lacking basic academic skills. Nationally, 42% of first-time community college students must take at least one developmental education course (NCES, 2010). The population targeted for my study was made up of students who not only lack basic academic knowledge and ability, but are usually placed in two or more developmental education courses.

Past Studies on Developmental Education Student Perceptions

There was a dearth of literature on developmental education repeaters' stories about and experiences with developmental reading and repetition, as well as a lack of sufficient literature examining repetition's impact on repeaters' motivation and persistence. There were studies (Duranczyk, 2007; Miller, 2000; Stein, 2006) based on student perceptions of what leads to success in developmental education courses, but the studies were generally specific to developmental math and English. Most of the participants of past studies were four-year, university students, but some were community college students; however, the studies made no

mention of repetition or repeaters. This created a gap in the literature on developmental education students.

Stein (2006) did a qualitative study on six developmental education students enrolled in exit level developmental education courses at two Latino-majority, four-year institutions, University of Texas – Pan American (UTPA) and University of Texas at Brownsville (UTB). She questioned students' perceptions of institutional attributes that lead to success. Some of the attributes that led to success included confidence, the necessity of developmental education as a stepping stone, and validating factors, such as class size, instructor characteristics, and course difficulty (Stein, 2006). Stein's study made no mention as to why students believe they repeat developmental courses and was limited to the four-year institution. My study, therefore, was necessary to add to the literature on repeaters and to better understand developmental repeaters and what they feel they need to be successful.

Duranczyk (2007) and Miller (2000) both reflected on participants' perceptions of motivation with developmental math coursework. Duranczyk's eighteen participants were interviewed two to four years after they had taken remedial math courses, which gave the author the advantage of discovering the long term effects of developmental education. Miller's participants consisted of three community college developmental math students in addition to five developmental math faculty members. The participants in both studies concluded that their motivation to succeed came from family background and conceptual and former knowledge of mathematical concepts, but neither study addressed perceptions or feelings regarding course repetition considering that the participants had not repeated a course. Although the studies discussed factors that encourage motivation to succeed, they did not mention motivation as it relates to those faced with repetition. Miller and Duranczyk concluded, however, that motivation

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(Astin, 1999; Dembo & Seli, 2004; Ford, 1992) was an important factor in goal achievement and ultimately, success.

Motivation

My study assumed that it was the motivation gained from validation from various sources, higher standards and assistance in learning that led to a student's academic and social integration in a classroom setting and persistence through and eventual success in a developmental reading course upon repetition (Ford, 1992; Rendon, 1994; Tinto, 1993). For the purpose of my study, success was defined as a student persisting through and passing a developmental reading course after repetition three or more times. Successfully passing a course, especially when retaking it was a major challenge for a developmental student, but it was motivation, validation, social and academic integration that led to a student's ultimate persistence and success in a developmental reading class upon repetition.

The major theoretical perspective of motivation that guided the present study was Ford's (1992) motivational systems theory (MST). In short, the MST viewed motivation as a construct that represented the direction a person was going, the emotional energy and experience that was bolstering or preventing movement in that direction and expectations of the person about achieving goals (Ford, 1992). My study focused on academic motivation, which is strongly influenced by goals, personal belief systems and task value because I believed motivation was necessary for a student to successfully complete a developmental reading course upon repetition (Campbell, 2007; Ford, 1992; Hidi & Harackiewicz, 2000; Svinicki, 1999; Tobias, 1994; Wigfield & Eccles, 1992).

Repeaters

For the purpose of my study, repeaters were defined as students who were unsuccessful in a developmental reading course, failed it more than once and had to repeat it three or more times. Several studies (Bailey, Jeong & Cho, 2008; Fenton, 2002; New York Technical College, 1995; Windham, 1997) have discussed the growing rate of developmental education student course repetition. Bailey et al. (2008) used data collected from the Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count initiative, which included over 250,000 students from 57 community colleges in seven states. They found that 16 % of students who were referred to developmental reading failed to pass the course during their first attempt. After acquiring this information on the percentage of students who fail to pass developmental education courses upon initial enrollment, the researchers posed a question to be considered for future research on developmental education repetition: What happens to students who either never enroll in their first developmental course or enroll in but fail to pass the course the first and second times? (Bailey, Jeong & Cho, 2008). Bailey and colleagues questioned repetition, and my study set out to answer the question by learning why students believe they were not successful during several attempts and what led to motivation to persist when faced with repetition.

The aforementioned studies on developmental education repeaters showed that developmental education course repetition is a pressing issue in higher education. New York Technical College's (1995) study, for example, revealed reasons 154 students believed they were unsuccessful in a developmental course upon initial enrollment. While this was important, developmental educators need to gain knowledge about what can be done to increase motivation once a student is faced with repetition, and eventually, with this knowledge educators can prevent repetition altogether.

The previously discussed research produced more questions, such as what can colleges do to intervene once a student is faced with failure? Repeaters' stories about and experiences with repetition and developmental reading allowed me to address these questions. A clear understanding of college developmental reading courses is necessary to understand prior to understanding challenges that students of developmental reading claimed they face.

Developmental Reading

Developmental reading courses at the college level are defined as courses designed to help students improve their reading, comprehension and vocabulary skills to a level necessary to be successful in college level coursework (Sivek, n.d.).   Placement in developmental reading is determined by ACT or standardized test scores, such as the *Nelson- Denny* or *Degrees of Reading Power* tests, tools used to measure a student's comprehension and vocabulary grade equivalencies. Developmental reading is one of the most important of remedial courses because it is where students learn foundational comprehension and vocabulary skills necessary to be successful in a reading intensive college-level course (McKusker, 1999; Paulsen, 2006). Nationally, a mere 17% of students who must enroll in a developmental reading course actually receive a bachelor's degree or beyond (Conley, 2007; NCES, 2004). And, if a student does enroll in a developmental reading course and fails multiple times, the chances of degree completion are even more dismal in proportion (Conley, 2007; Paulsen, 2006).

Some of the most important ways to ensure higher levels of motivation, persistence and success in coursework in developmental reading students, according to researchers (Caverly, Nicholson & Radcliffe, 2004; Johnson, 1997; McKusker; 1999; Paulsen, 2006; Rendon, 1994; Tinto, 1993) was by using certain instructional methods, such as student-centered teaching, group work and collaboration, and one-on-one instruction and tutoring, in addition to faculty

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support and the validation of a student's ability to learn. The research on developmental reading did not recommend what educators of developmental reading could do to better assist developmental reading course repeaters, hence the relevance of the study.

Overview of Methodology

My study was conducted using qualitative research methods. Creswell (2005) defined qualitative research as "a type of educational research in which the researcher relies on the views of participants, asks broad, general questions, collects data consisting largely of words from participants, describes and analyzes these words for themes, and conducts the inquiry in a subjective, biased manner" (p. 39). I used a narrative inquiry as a research design (Creswell, 2003, 2005; Glesne, 2006; Miles & Huberman, 1994) in order to explore the stories about and experiences with repetition three or more times in a developmental reading course and how those experiences impacted motivation and persistence. Creswell (2005) defined narrative inquiry as "a design that allows a researcher to describe the lives of individuals, collect and tell stories about people's lives and write narratives of individual experiences" (p. 473). Past studies (Duranczyk, 2007; Miller, 2000; Stein, 2006) on developmental education student perceptions used qualitative research methods; therefore qualitative research was valuable for my study because it extended past research that was already done.

Participant selection was based on several criteria: the student had successfully completed developmental reading by the third attempt or was in progress of completing developmental reading a third time. Creswell (2005) and Patton (1990) point out that participant selection in qualitative research involves the researcher intentionally selecting individuals and sites to learn and understand experiences of chosen participants are rich in information. Four participants from one community college, referred to as Local Community College (LCC), were

selected based on their repetition of a developmental reading course three or more times and were recruited by me based on statistical information focusing on student repetition of developmental reading I gained from LCC upon being approved to do my study by the LCC IRB. Fortunately, I had already built a good rapport with participants because I had taught them in a developmental course other than reading. This allowed participants to be comfortable with not only participating in the study, but also sharing personal information with me that impacted their repetition and ultimate success in reading. Participant selection and recruitment will be discussed in depth in Chapter three of the study.

The study used two methods of data collection, three one-on-one, in-depth interviews, asking specific as well as open-ended questions and autobiographical essays from participants. My study was based on the examination of developmental reading repeaters' stories about and experiences with repetition and developmental reading and how those experiences hindered or lent to the repeater's persistence to succeed upon repetition three or more times.

Delimitations of Study

This study had several delimitations. First, it did not address developmental education students at four-year institutions. Second, it was qualitative and used a narrative research design and, as such, was not based on a large population. And finally, the study did not consider sex, race, age or socioeconomic status as predictors of persistence and success or lack thereof in repeaters.

Additionally, the study cannot be generalized to the larger population of developmental education students due to the small sample size. And there were only four participants, three who were enrolled in or had completed developmental reading and one who was a recent graduate from LCC.

Organization of Chapters

The remaining chapters are organized as follows. Chapter two is a review of the literature, which includes: a definition of developmental education, a brief historical background of developmental education, developmental education and community colleges, debates and usefulness of developmental education, and developmental reading instructional methods. In addition, characteristics of developmental education students and their perceptions of developmental education are discussed in depth, as well as a discussion of reports on repeaters. A description of the theoretical framework is addressed with an emphasis on the three theories used to frame the study: persistence theory, including academic and social integration, motivational systems theory and validation theory. Chapter three provides the methodology that was used for the study, including the rationale for qualitative research, design type, the role of the researcher, data collection procedures, data analysis procedures, trustworthiness and the outcomes of the study and how it related to theory and current literature. Chapter four discusses the findings of the study, which includes the participants' stories as well as the thematic discovery based on the stories. Finally, Chapter five provides a discussion of the findings, the theoretical framework revisited, implications for theory, practice and future research and recommendations for policy.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

There has been an ongoing discussion among researchers about developmental education since its induction into higher education in the mid 1800s (Abraham & Creech, 2000). In the 1800s, approximately 40% of first year students took some form of developmental education courses (Manning, 2006). Today, not much has changed. Nationally, approximately 42 % of first-time students entering community college institutions enroll in developmental education courses (NCES, 2010). The reasons why they must enroll in a developmental education course vary; it could be because they have been out of school for an extended amount of time and need to be refreshed in a subject, had inadequate high school preparation, were not enrolled in a college preparatory program, or earned low grades in high school (Abraham & Creech, 2000). Regardless of why a student must enroll in developmental education courses, the need for such by some students exists across all higher education institutions.

The pressing issue, however, is not necessarily why students enroll in developmental education courses but why they so often repeat the same developmental education courses. Is it a personal issue? A lack of course understanding? A lack of being academically and socially integrated into the course? A lack of encouragement from faculty? A lack of motivation? Not taking the course seriously? Lack of attendance? Could it be an issue on the part of the student or lack of policy that allows students to repeat a course until they finally pass? Or could it be a lack of developmental education program resources available to students? In order to gain insight into these questions, it is important to understand the various definitions and background of developmental education and its place in higher education, and the characteristics and needs of the students served.

The following literature review is based on several important facets of developmental education and students who enroll in developmental education courses. The literature review first presents a background of developmental education, including qualities that define it. Along with a brief history of developmental education, this chapter will explore developmental education's place in community colleges, and criticisms and debates, as well as benefits of developmental education. Furthermore, the chapter discusses developmental reading, in addition to the instructional methods proven beneficial to students' successful completion of developmental reading courses and tutoring. Finally, the chapter delves into the theories and concepts that frame the study, which include Tinto's (1993) theory of persistence and departure, including academic and social integration, Ford's (1992) motivational systems theory and Rendon's (1994) validation theory. First, developmental education must be defined.

Defining Developmental Education

Developmental education programs were developed to improve and increase the skills underprepared students lacked, as well as promote smooth transitions of underprepared students into college level coursework (Boylan, 1983; Boylan, 1990). There are various definitions of developmental education (Boylan, 1990; Cohen & Brawer, 2003; NADE, 2001). However, all of the definitions conclude that developmental education is more or less preparatory courses. Preparatory courses are designed to help develop students' foundational academic skills in math, English and reading to better prepare them for college-level coursework, and programs used to increase academic skills lacking for underprepared college students (Boylan, 1990; Cohen & Brawer, 2003; NADE, 2001).

The National Association of Developmental Education (NADE) (2001) claimed that developmental education includes any program, course or activity in the areas of reading, writing

or math for underprepared students who are not yet ready to perform college level course work. The National Association of Developmental Education further suggested that developmental education is a field of practice and research that addresses preparedness, diagnostic assessment and placement. Also included in the field of developmental education are improvement of discipline-specific strategies, as well as tutoring, mentoring, and supplemental instruction, personal, academic and career counseling, academic advisement and coursework in the areas of English, math, reading and college success (National Center of Developmental Education, 2001).

Cohen and Brawer (2003) suggested that developmental education, also referred to as remedial, compensatory and basic education consists of courses designed to teach literacy, the essentials of reading, writing, and math in addition to broader skills for living, such as time management, study skills, and coping mechanisms. Developmental education takes teaching academic basics further by including in it general college and life skills. Personal management and academic skills are also developed in the underprepared student through developmental education.

The range of services developmental education provides to students is also available to college prepared students; however it is developmental education's goal to ensure that its students are encouraged more than others to utilize these resources. The goals of developmental education include maintaining academic standards by allowing learners to develop competencies necessary for success in conventional college courses and enhancing retention of students (National Center for Developmental Education, 2001). Ultimately, developmental education is responsible for assuring that learners needing academic skills reinforcement entering higher education institutions have the resources necessary to succeed, which will allow them to eventually persist through college level coursework and college in general. But, what happens

when they attempt to persist through a course but are unsuccessful? Further exploring the

literature on developmental education will attempt to clarify this question, but it is also important

to understand the changes that developmental education has endured. Developmental education

has gone through a variety of definitional changes as seen in the aforementioned definitions

provided by researchers (Boylan, 1990; Cohen & Brawer, 2003; NADE, 2001). To better

understand the shifts in developmental education and the various titles it has been given, a brief

historical overview must be considered.

Historical Overview of Developmental Education

There have been many historical phases that developmental education has undergone in

higher education (Arendale, 2002). From the mid 1600s to the present, developmental education

has been referred to in different terms, and different populations of students were served given

the historical period. Developmental education's roots started early in American history. The

courses of the early 1600s through the mid 1800s were in some form of a developmental

education program. For instance, during these times, academe referred to developmental

education as "precollegiate preparatory academies and tutoring" and served only white males

(Arendale, 2002). The mid 1860s to the 1940s marked the use of college preparatory programs,

which included remedial education courses, and again, served mostly white males (Arendale,

2002; Boylan, 1990).

Most students in early American colleges and universities entered with the intention to

study the ministry and were literate in Greek and Latin, a preliminary requirement for ministry

study (Boylan, 1990). However, those who lacked proficiency in Greek and Latin came to be

known as America's first group of underprepared students (Boylan, 1990). Manning (2006)

reported that in 1865, about 40% of first-year students took some type of developmental

education course. Students who did not excel in the societal, academic norms of the era were placed in other courses of training (Boylan, 1990; Maxwell, 1979). The postsecondary institutions of the mid to late 1800s offered programs in agriculture and mechanics because it was these disciplines that the sons of the thriving middle class demanded, especially after land grant colleges were established (Boylan, 1990; Maxwell, 1979).

Students who lacked proficiency in Greek and Latin and enrolled in agricultural programs and such also lacked proficiency in basic academic skills, such as reading, writing and mathematics. In order to accommodate students lacking in these basic skills, the aforementioned programs and departments offering general courses in each area were implemented (Boylan, 1990; Maxwell, 1979; Tomlinson, 1989; Wyatt, 1992). According to Wyatt (1992), at the peak of the college preparatory movement in 1889, a mere 65 of the 400 colleges that had been established lacked such preparatory programs. The preparatory programs marked the first forms of developmental education programs of skills reinforcement education, and it was these programs that flourished in the latter half of the 1800s (Tomlinson, 1989; Wyatt, 1992).

As colleges began to compete for students, more underprepared students were being accepted. For instance, in 1907, Harvard, Yale, Princeton and Columbia had entrance requirements that many students enrolling could not meet; to accommodate and accept underprepared students, as well as meet enrollment quotas, the colleges created developmental programs (Wyatt, 1992). Payne and Lyman (1996) claim that by 1941, college reading and how-to-study courses were increasingly offered among different higher education institutions.

With the explosion of veterans returning from WWII in need of skills and employment and their need to take advantage of the G.I. Bill, the explosion of vocational and technical colleges emerged (Boylan, 1990; Manning, 2006; Maxwell, 1979; Payne & Lyman, 1996;

Tomlinson, 1989; Wyatt, 1992). Students entering community and technical colleges post WWII lacked necessary skills to achieve academic success that was a part of the technical and vocational programs (Arendale, 2002). Between the 1940s and into the 1970s, developmental education courses were well integrated into higher education institutions and were beginning to serve traditional male students, nontraditional males and females, members of low socioeconomic backgrounds and students of color (Arendale, 2002). Higher education was beginning to become assessable to almost everyone during these historical times. And with this newly found accessibility came a new group of students yearning to enter higher education institutions.

Between the 1960s and the 1980s a second group of students who lacked basic educational skills entered the higher education realm. The development of open admission colleges greatly affected the state of higher education following the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; with open admission, available government funds, especially for low income students, came an increase of at-risk, academically underprepared students who were in need of remedial or developmental education (Boylan, 1990; Kulik, Kulik & Shwalb, 1983; Lesley, 2001; Manning, 2006; Maxwell, 1979; Payne & Lyman, 1996; Tomlinson, 1989; Wyatt, 1992). For students who matched such criteria, community and junior colleges surfaced.

Community and junior colleges were developed as open access institutions. Open access institutions carried open admissions policies so anyone could enroll, especially those who could not meet high admissions standards of four year institutions and earn an education at an affordable price (Arendale, 2002; Cohen & Brawer, 2003; Manning, 2006). A diverse population from various socioeconomic and educational backgrounds began entering college.

However, many of them were underprepared for the rigors of college level coursework (Arendale, 2002; Boylan, 1990).

Furthermore, the importance of earning a college education increased between the 60s and late 70s (Arendale, 2002; Boylan, 1990). Without a college or technical degree, a person could not earn quality employment. From the 1940s through the 70s and 80s, people were enrolling in some form of higher education in order to earn technical skills or a basic education (Arendale, 2002). Four year institutions of the past that once had lax admission policies were raising their admissions standards, as well as tuition costs and offering bachelors and masters degrees and PhDs (Arendale, 2002; Manning, 2006; Payne & Lyman, 1996).

The increase of underprepared students led to an increase of developmental education, as well as a variety of labels for such, including preparatory studies, academic support programs, compensatory education, learning assistance and basic skills (Boylan, 1990). Students, especially today, enter higher education with developmental education needs for a variety of reasons. These reasons are: being academically less successful from kindergarten to high school and as a result not college ready; having a large time lapse between high school and college; and experiencing differences in maturity and motivation (Boylan, 1990; Conley, 2008; Payne & Lyman, 1995). Despite the reasons why students enter college academically underprepared, their enrollment of such students in college has increased with each year, especially in the community college.

Developmental Education and Community Colleges

There are a total of 1,053 community colleges in the United States and of that, Louisiana houses a total of 11 of them (Provasnik & Planty, 2008). As previously discussed, community colleges' growth and popularity evolved during a historical period when people were attempting

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to gain technical and academic skills to earn a trade, education and ultimately, a better quality of life. The advantages of community colleges include lower tuition, open admission policies, certificate and degree programs, vocational training, transferability of courses and the offering of developmental education in which many entering students must enroll (Cohen & Brawer, 2003).

Community colleges are better equipped for developmental students considering they serve smaller populations and can invest the necessary time that developmental students require. Ninety-five percent of community colleges offer developmental education instruction, and approximately 42 % of first-time community college students must enroll in one or more developmental education course (Lewis & Faris, 1996; McCabe, 2000; NCES, 2010; Shults, 2000). Many states, including New York, California, Arizona and Florida, encourage students to take developmental courses if necessary at the community college prior to entering a four year institution (Bettinger & Long, 2005). Perhaps the reason for this is due to many four year institutions, especially in Florida and California, not offering developmental education courses. In addition, community colleges offer many services to support students' success and retention.

Community colleges offer the following to developmental education students, which has been shown to facilitate persistence and retention: strong administrative support, mandatory counseling and placement, structured courses, award of credit, flexible completion strategies, multiple learning systems and teaching methods, volunteer instructors, use of peer tutors, monitoring of student behaviors, interfacing with subsequent courses, and program evaluation (Perin, 2004; Roueche & Roueche, 1993; Weissman, Silk & Bulakowski, 1997). With these available resources in an institution, it would seem that success for developmental students is within reach, even in the face of failure and repetition. Unfortunately, though, not all developmental students reach a level of success in their courses and must repeat them sometimes

three and four times before successfully passing them. Regardless, developmental education

should be a major offering at community colleges considering what they can provide to students.

Research (Bettinger & Long, 2005; Cohen & Brawer, 2003; McCabe, 2000; Perin, 2004)

suggests that developmental education's place is in the community college considering its cost,

students' needs and the large percentage of students enrolling in college with such needs. The

traditional view of two year institutions is their commitment to developmental education. Two

year colleges are better equipped to teach and advise underprepared students (Bettinger & Long,

2005; McCabe, 2000; Perin, 2004).

Community colleges have practically assumed the role of solely providing developmental

education. As Guevara (2005) points out, community college developmental education was and

still is essential to the U.S. economy because it provides underprepared students with continued

education and constructive employment. Currently, most employers require employees to have

some college, and community colleges are responsible for not only providing the future

workforce with academic training but also vocational training and skills. McCabe (2000)

reiterates the importance of education to employment by suggesting that 80% of new jobs require

some college; the scale is tilted when we learn that less than half of the students in the U.S. are

unprepared to even enter college (Conley, 2008).

It is the underprepared students who enter community college for technical, vocational or

academic training who are in desperate need of developmental education. In addition to needing

developmental education, a large percentage of students require developmental reading, and

without successful completion of reading, they may not be successful in college-level courses

and in their chosen work field. Developmental education's place is in the community college

setting. Based on its history and need in the past and still today, there are some (Boylan, 1999; Oudenhoven, 2002; Young, 2002) who question developmental education's effectiveness.

Debates About and Usefulness of Developmental Education

There have been ongoing debates about developmental education and its usefulness. Many argue that developmental courses take too long, cost too much and keep students from making progress toward their degrees because students are held in several different levels of noncredit, developmental courses (Boylan, 1999). Others insist that some students are just not college level material (Young, 2002). Still others argue that offering developmental education courses removes incentives to do well in high school, detracts from the education of prepared college students by 'dumbing down' courses and leads to low graduation rates (Oudenhoven, 2002). However, the benefits of developmental education are greater than the aforementioned drawback.

Developmental education is valuable for underprepared students and does not 'dumb down' course material. It would cost more for a student to repeat the same college level course, due to underpreparedness or failure when he or she could simply gain skills in a pre-college course and smoothly transition into the college level work. Opponents of developmental education more often than not thrive on the negative issues that can be raised regarding developmental education rather than accept its usefulness.

Many developmental education proponents (Boylan, 1999; Payne & Lyman, 1996; Young, 2002) insist that developmental students are just as successful in degree completion as a better prepared student; the benefits of remedial courses outweigh its cost; and most students complete remediation within a year. Developmental education is important and necessary considering the number of first-time students entering college lacking basic academic skills.

Approximately 25% of first-time students entering the community college reported having to enroll in one or more developmental education course (Provasnik & Planty, 2008). Researchers (Astin, 1999; McCabe, 2000; Oudenhoven, 2002) agree that developmental education is one of the most important and critical educational, social and economic issues in the United States because a large majority of students who are in need of remediation are the future workers in society.

Developmental education serves as the stepping stone for some students in technical programs, and as such they result in graduating with technical skills and a degree. As a result, they move into the work field, make money and eventually put it back into the economy. Much of the research (Oudenhoven, 2002; Weissman, Silk & Bulakowski, 1997) on developmental education programs shows their usefulness in higher education institutions; this same research discusses the idea that what has been missing in such program development is assessment and review of their policies in order to develop proper guidelines.

Weissman, Silk and Bulakowski's (1997), as well as Perin's (2004) research on assessing effective developmental programs in community colleges concluded that with the proper developmental education program, one that includes identification of skill deficient students, proper advisement, placement, courses, effective instructional methods, tutoring, mentoring and academic support for remediation and retention, students who remediate are more successful and persist longer than skill-deficient students who do not remediate. As McCabe and Day (1998) claim, "developmental education can be extraordinarily cost-effective in providing lifelong learning for underprepared students and meeting changing workforce needs for the next century" (p. 4).

Considering what opponents and proponents say about developmental education, it is clear that the advantages outweigh the disadvantages of developmental education. The consequences of not offering developmental education in higher education institutions would be damaging to the futures of students who are not yet academically prepared for college level coursework. Students who are underprepared would possibly not have a chance to earn a college degree because they will not be academically able to succeed in college level coursework, and they would fail and drop out (McCabe & Day, 1998; Perin, 2004; Weissman, Silk and Bulakowski, 1997).

Developmental education is responsible for preparing the underprepared for the academic rigidity and sometimes difficulty of college level course work. Students in need of developmental education must have a place toward which to turn to gain basic academic skills. It is in developmental education programs where they have the opportunity to do just this. Developmental reading, furthermore, creates a bridge from rudimentary comprehension, vocabulary, thinking and reading skills to college level reading, thinking and comprehension skills, which are skills necessary to be successful in *any* college level course.

Developmental Reading

College developmental reading courses are designed to help students improve their reading skills to a level necessary to be successful in college-level coursework (Sivek, n.d.). Many community colleges offer two levels of developmental reading: the first level is designed for students who score below a 17 on the ACT exam or who score low on standardized tests such as the *Nelson-Denny* or *Degrees of Reading Power* test, used to measure a student's comprehension and vocabulary grade equivalencies.

Developmental reading curriculum generally places a heavy emphasis on vocabulary and comprehension. Course content specifically includes understanding vocabulary through context,

finding main ideas and supporting details, answering comprehension questions, making inferences based on readings and interpreting and analyzing tone. Most developmental reading courses require students to read a variety of texts, such as novels, short stories and essays (McKusker, 1999; Sivek, n.d.). Although these skills may seem elementary, approximately 17% (Conley, 2007) of reading students pass developmental reading, but when they do pass, developmental reading helps them academically throughout the longevity of their college careers.

Research (Caverly, Nicholson & Radcliffe, 2004; Cox, Friesner and Khayum (2003; Johnson, 1997; Paulsen, 2006) suggests that the success of developmental reading students in college is related to taking and successfully passing a reading skills course. For instance, Cox, Friesner and Khayum (2003) claim that developmental students who enroll in and pass developmental reading courses are more successful in the long run during their college careers compared to students who do not have to take or do not pass a developmental reading course. Developmental reading students who are taught strategic reading, the use of thinking processes including predicting, visualizing, interpreting, monitoring of comprehension and summarizing, were shown to not only out-perform students who were not taught the same strategies, but they successfully transferred these skills into more reading intensive courses (Caverly, Nicholson & Radcliffe, 2004; Johnson, 1997; Paulsen, 2006). Developmental reading courses are beneficial to the overall success of college students, but again, not all of them are successful upon initial enrollment.

Many students fail a developmental reading course the first and second time they enroll and are faced with repetition a second, third and sometimes fourth time. Perhaps a lack of successful instructional methods has led some students to a pattern of repetition in

developmental reading courses. Despite the success that enrolling in and passing a developmental reading course has shown, one of the most important ways to ensure a developmental reading student's success is by using certain instructional methods. McKusker (1999) emphasizes this idea by claiming that basic skills programs, which include developmental reading courses, must incorporate successful teaching practices in order to better meet the needs of students to support their success. More often than not, these methods are either lacking in the developmental education program or varied methods of instruction are not being used to meet the different learning styles of students. According to Rendon (1994), part of instruction includes instructor validation of the student, which has been shown to lead to motivation, persistence and success in a course. Therefore, my study assumed that instructional methods are a major aspect of developmental reading courses that have been shown to lead to a developmental reading student's academic and social integration, persistence and success, and the same methods could lead to a repeater's eventual persistence and success upon repetition of a developmental reading course three or more times (Beaver , 1977; Boehnlein, 1995; Caverly, Nicholson & Radcliffe, 2004; Dressel & Marcus, 1982; Kaiden, 1998; McFarland, Dowdey & Davis, 1999; Morris & Price, 2008; Paulsen, 2006; Putman & Walker, 2010; Severiens & Schmidt, 2008; Simms, 1985; Zinn, 1999).

Instruction in the Developmental Reading Classroom Setting

Developmental students have specific needs with regard to their learning and ultimate success in college. Simms (1985) reinforces the idea that good teaching fosters student success. Because developmental students lack the foundational academic skills to be successful in college-level course work, their success in the developmental course relies heavily on the way in which teachers disseminate information and facilitate learning and discussions of such

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information. Boehnlein (1995) reiterated the importance of instruction in the classroom and suggests that the most effort for the instructor should be concentrated on classroom methodologies because it is in the classroom where successful learning can begin.

Therefore, the most important component of the successful developmental reading classroom setting is instructional methods, which include student-centered teaching, community building through group work, tutoring and collaboration (Beaver, 1977; Boehnlein, 1995; Caverly, Nicholson & Radcliffe, 2004; Dressel & Marcus, 1982; Kaiden, 1998; McFarland, Dowdey & Davis, 1999; Morris & Price, 2008; Paulsen, 2006; Putman & Walker, 2010; Severiens & Schmidt, 2008; Simms, 1985; Zinn, 1999). All of these methods have proven effective in leading developmental education students' success, and prevent repetition and withdraws (Beaver, 1977; Boehnlein, 1995; Caverly, Nicholson & Radcliffe, 2004; Dressel & Marcus, 1982; Kaiden, 1998; McFarland, Dowdey & Davis, 1999; Morris & Price, 2008; Paulsen, 2006; Putman & Walker, 2010; Severiens & Schmidt, 2008; Simms, 1985; Zinn, 1999). Following is a detailed discussion of each method of instruction labeled in subsections in the order listed above.

Student-Centered Teaching and Collaboration

The most discussed area of research with regard to the instruction of the developmental student is teaching that is learner or student centered. Dressel and Marcus (1982) define student-centered cognitive teaching as assuring that "the intellectual maturation of the student is regarded as the goal of the teaching-learning process" (p. 6). Student-centered cognitive teaching centers on the intellectual growth of the student and encourages the students to think critically. Student-centered teaching stimulates feelings of belongingness; more importantly, it caters to diverse learning preferences and student populations (Severiens & Schmidt, 2008). This key feature in

student-centered teaching can easily be applied to developmental repeaters and this study, because student-centered teaching creates a class environment that promotes involvement in the classroom, and involvement for the purpose of this study is said to help students more easily academically and socially integrate into a classroom setting (Tinto, 1997). These are strategies I attempt to employ in my practice daily.

For example, as a developmental reading instructor, I use student-centered teaching in my classroom. In order to encourage students to "think critically," I use problem based learning (PBL) in the classroom, which focuses on real world problem-based scenarios that the students solve by use of the problem solving process. I write the scenarios I use in class, which are based on situations that I have experienced with my students. Most of my students care about the problems, because many of them have had similar experiences. This stimulates them to think about what they would do in a similar situation and the direction they would take in resolving the problem in the scenario. Not only does the material become meaningful to the students, it creates a class environment that makes students want to think beyond their normal barriers of thought, encourages them to seek out all options when attempting to solve a problem, and creates student involvement and discussion, all factors that I assume lead to academic and social integration and persistence in a classroom setting upon repetition. Some researchers (Severiens and Schmidt, 2008) make the same claim the same about problem based learning in the classroom setting.

Severiens and Schmidt (2008) did a quantitative study on 305 first year students in a four year institution from three different psychology curricula, which included a problem-based curriculum learning environment. They found that there were positive effects of the learning environment on student progress. They also found that students in the PBL curriculum showed

higher levels of social and academic integration than students in conventional curricula environments. Students in a PBL environment were more inclined and comfortable to collaborate and ask questions, which helped them more easily socially and academically integrate themselves; in turn, they were more likely to have positive learning outcomes (Severiens & Schmidt, 2008). Overall, this research claims that collaboration, as seen in problem based learning, in the classroom promotes social and academic integration. Not only are students sharing and discussing ideas with peers, their interest and participation encourages them to academically and socially integrate themselves into the classroom.

Collaboration is a key component in student-centered teaching, and PBL is a prime example of a way to help a learner in a developmental reading classroom become more involved, especially if the learner is a repeater. Collaboration has also shown to help students build communities and groups in the classroom, hence fostering their ability to academically and socially integrate themselves into the classroom setting and persist through the class (McFarland, Dowdey & Davis, 1999; Morris & Price, 2008; Rendon, 1994; Tinto, 1997).

Building Communities through Group Work

The idea of student-centered teaching is to build trust from the students and develop a community of learners, as opposed to a class filled with single pupils. Group work in the class fosters the growth of a community oriented classroom structure, which further eases students' ability to volunteer to speak in classroom and discuss their opinions. Being part of a classroom "community" is also a way for students to become academically and socially integrated in the class, which is something that leads to persistence in a class (Tinto, 1997). Persistence will ultimately lead to successful completion of a developmental reading class upon repetition.

Most developmental students shy away from reading out loud, as well as asking questions in class, but when they are in a responsive, validating environment (Ford, 1992; McFarland, Dowdey & Davis, 1999; Morris & Price, 2008; Rendon, 1994; Tinto, 1997) and feel as though they are part of an academic community, they will not feel threatened which will encourage them to participate and allow their voices to be heard in the classroom. Although theorists, like Brookfield (1995) insisted that the circle for the use of groups and circular discussions are oppressive to some students who are shy, the circle and group work often provoke discussion in students. Once they become comfortable with the idea of open discussion, they become eager to speak, share ideas and opinions, and academically and socially integrate themselves into the classroom (Tinto, 1997).

Another purpose of group work in the developmental classroom is that it enables students to share work and solve problems together, similar to Severiens and Schmidt's (2008) study on PBL environments (McFarland, Dowdey & Davis, 1999). This is a collaborative, interactive method to stimulate thought and help students think together. Eventually, group work leads to students feeling comfortable with thinking on their own, and they become academically integrated into the classroom (Tinto, 1997). The value of group settings in a classroom extends further than simply talking to peers and sharing ideas; groups also give students the opportunity to openly practice articulating words and opinions academically.

Beaver (1977) addressed the importance of group settings in the developmental classroom and maintains that "students enjoy working with their peers in a collaborative effort, but they also learn how to handle language better as a result of well-structured, meaningful group assessment and interaction" (p. 136). The instructor in this type of classroom structure would merely serve as the facilitator, assuring that the students stay on the topic of discussion and

collaborate on ideas from an educated perspective. This will boost students' motivation and validate that they are in fact capable of thinking on their own and beyond their own means, in addition to helping them become fully integrated in the classroom setting (Ford, 1992; Rendon, 1994). Other research (Kaiden, 1998; Morris & Price, 2008) suggests that working in groups and building communities in a developmental reading class also allow for new understandings because of differing perspectives being introduced by students.

Morris and Price (2008) provided their own philosophy of group work in the developmental reading classroom which explains how students exhibit self-sustaining groups while actively listening and developing new outlooks on readings. This creates more discussion and participation in the classroom, as well as helps students improve comprehension because they are able to talk out their interpretation of what they read, which could increase motivation, academic and social integration and promote persistence to succeed in a classroom upon repetition (Ford, 1992; Tinto, 1993). Kaiden (1998) traced her experience with a group of students in a college reading classroom. She explained that through letting her students work in groups and having them discuss significant events from what they were reading, the students became engaged readers. Working with peers in group settings encourages students to not only collaborate, but also help each other in the form of peer tutoring while evaluating one another, and this too could lead to social and academic integration (Astin, 1999; Terenzini, Rendon, Upcraft, Millar, Allison, Gregg, & Jolomo, 1994; Tinto, 1993, 1997)

Tutoring

In order to further increase student understanding and collaboration, teachers should set up tutoring sessions with groups of developmental repeaters and non repeaters in the reading class in order to reinforce course materials and make students more comfortable with each other.

Because students often learn better from each other, it is important for developmental instructors to incorporate tutoring and peer assessment into the classroom setting. One way to do this is to place students in pairs; a strong student with a weaker one will make for a balance of skills and knowledge. Students view each other's work as something that is reachable, unlike examples in a textbook that may be intimidating (Zinn, 1999). Students often help each other understand material better than the instructor, and peer work is less intimidating for the developmental student. Group tutoring is also an excellent means to content reinforcement, as well as further development of academic, social and classroom skills (Putman & Walker, 2010; Tinto, 1997).

Tutoring can also be used in a group setting, where students collaborate on assessments of each other's work. Levin and Calcagno (2007) stressed the importance of collaboration and teamwork in developmental education as central to student success. Zinn (1999) pointed out that "in collaborative group work…assessment is encouraged from beginning to end" (p. 31). Peer assessment encourages students to provide to one another constructive criticism, and seeing other student's class work will lessen student anxiety and promote social integration. Zinn suggested that self-assessment and peer assessment can be used as informal appraisal measures to evaluate student writing and reflections on a regular basis. Peers can more or less inform the instructor of what they think is a weakness or strength; if the student can accurately point out problems in another's work, the instructor will know whether or not the student is learning. The instructor can also give one-on-one tutoring to students and can then validate their learning, leading them to persist and successfully complete a course (Rendon, 1994).

For example, my students must complete several peer assessments during a semester. They must do reflection paragraphs based on chapters of novels they read for the class. I collect the paragraphs then randomly pass them back to different students; they then have to read each

other's paragraphs and express their opinions of them in class discussion. They must be able to explain how they feel about the paragraph and give reasons based on their own understanding. This exercise is uncomfortable for some students in the beginning of a semester, but they get used to it and actually look forward to it because they become eager to express their opinions and let their peers hear them. In this setting, students get involved with the material and want to discuss it in a classroom setting. When they are seeing benefits of discussion through praise and constructive criticism, they are more inclined to become integrated into the classroom setting, which will lead them to persistence and successful completion of the class.

The student can also collaborate with the instructor in order to discuss his or her own strengths and weaknesses in the course. Collaboration has been shown through research to have a positive impact on students' self-efficacy and motivation, which have also positively influenced their success in developmental reading courses (Anderson & Carta-Falsa, 2002; Durskey, 1993; Morris & Price, 2008). Discussing weaknesses and strengths in a classroom with an instructor not only integrates the student into the culture of the class, but also leads students to increased positive self-beliefs, providing them with validating experiences in the class and motivating them to persist and succeed in the class especially when faced with repetition (Anderson & Carta-Falsa, 2002; Ford, 1992; Rendon, 1994; Tinto, 1993).

My study assumed that based on the use of certain instructional methods, students will become integrated into the classroom, persist and succeed. There are components of instruction that can be better tailored for students who are faced with repetition, such as those previously discussed. When students can connect material to former knowledge, their self-beliefs are increased, as is their motivation to learn. In addition to increasing motivation based on positive self-beliefs, students feel validated in their learning experiences. With motivation and

validation, students are more willing and able to academically and socially integrate themselves into the classroom setting. The combination of motivation, validation and academic and social integration lead to persistence, which eventually, leads to successful completion of a developmental reading course upon repetition.

Based on the literature on developmental reading instruction, it is clear that these methods would aid students in persisting through and successfully completing a developmental reading course upon repetition (Beaver, 1977; Boehnlein, 1995; Caverly et al., 2004; Dressel & Marcus, 1982; Kaiden, 1998; McFarland et al., 1999; Morris & Price, 2008; Paulsen, 2006; Putman & Walker, 2010; Severiens & Schmidt, 2008; Simms, 1985; Zinn, 1999). My study expanded this literature by examining whether repeaters believe that these methods do indeed lead to validation, motivation, integration, and ultimately, persistence in a class upon repetition. The aforementioned literature has scarcely considered repeaters' perceptions of these methods and how the methods could impact their learning and success, but my study will begin the discussion on repeaters' perceptions of instructional methods in the class and explore whether they believe the methods increase their ability to integrate in and persist through a class when repeating a developmental reading course and three or more times. To better understand why developmental students, including repeaters require certain types of instruction and content to succeed upon repetition, a discussion of their characteristics is necessary.

Characteristics of Developmental Education Students

Previously, there was a discussion regarding developmental education (Boylan, 1990; Cohen & Brawer, 2003; NADE, 2001) and how it is made up of courses and services to support students who lack academic preparedness; these students are considered developmental students. Developmental students, often referred to as 'underprepared' or 'at-risk' (U.S. Department of

Education, 1996) are college students who enter the college environment without academic skills, such as analytic and critical literacy skills, to perform college-level work at the level required by an institution (U.S. Department of Education, 1996). Kulik, Kulik and Shwalb (1983) claim that at-risk status is determined based on students' low test scores, low achievement in high school or college courses, or membership in a socioeconomically disadvantaged group.

The aforementioned are the students who make up approximately 66% of community college student populations in Louisiana (LA Board of Regents, 2008) and approximately 30% of community college student populations nationally (Gerlaugh et al., 2007; NCES, 2008). About 42% of developmental education students in community colleges are first-time college students; many are non-traditional, often over 24 years of age; approximately one third are minority students, and half hold jobs and raise families (Batzer, 1997; Conley, 2008; NCES, 2010). Most developmental students are enrolled in more than one remedial course in a semester, generally in writing, reading and/or math, and the need for developmental education continues to grow as more and more students enter higher education academically underprepared for college level coursework (Conley, 2008; NCES, 2008).

In a special supplemental analysis of community college statistical data collected by the National Center of Education Statistics, Provasnik and Planty (2008) prepared a descriptive profile of community colleges in the United States. They found that in America, there has been an increase in community college enrollment over the years, as well as an increase of a more diverse student body entering underprepared for college level coursework (Provasnik and Planty, 2008). Perhaps this could be due to a lack of a smooth transition from high school to college level coursework: many are just not ready for college (Conley, 2008). According to a 2008 study, approximately 29% of community college students enrolled in developmental education

courses during their first year in college; 15% of the students took remedial math (the most common remedial course reported), 10% took reading, 10% took writing and 8% took English (Provasnik & Planty, 2008).

The characteristics of developmental education students include: being weak in basic academic skills, being a first time college student, being nontraditional and over 24 years of age, being a minority, being from a low socioeconomic background, holding a job while attending school or being a full time parent (Batzer, 1997). Based on these characteristics, it is evident that programs and classroom settings as previously discussed are necessary to increase the skills they lack to perform college level coursework. The developmental education classroom setting at community colleges should offer the necessary components, such as student-centered teaching, group work, tutoring and collaboration, all of which have been shown to increase developmental education students' skills, prepare them for college level coursework and encourage them to persist through degree completion (Boehnlein, 1995; Caverly, Nicholson & Radcliffe, 2004; Dressel & Marcus, 1982; Harlow & Cummings, 2003; McFarland, Dowdey & Davis, 1999; Morris & Price, 2008; Paulsen, 2006; Severiens & Schmidt, 2008).

In addition to solid developmental education classroom settings, research has shown that according to students, other factors contribute to success in developmental education courses. To follow is a discussion of past studies on developmental students' perceptions of what leads to success; however, these studies do not place an emphasis on students who are faced with repetition, which shows where my study will add to the literature and past research.

Past Studies on Developmental Education Student Perceptions

There are limited amounts of literature on developmental student perceptions of repetition. There are studies, however, based on student perceptions of what leads to success in

developmental education courses (Duranczyk, 2007; Miller, 2000; Stein, 2006) and are specific

to developmental math, English and reading. These studies indicate developmental student's

perceptions of institutional characteristics that lead to success in college (Stein, 2006),

developmental student perceptions of developmental math years after taking the course

(Duranczyk, 2007), and student and faculty perceptions of motivation in developmental math

(Miller, 2000). My study was specific to the context of a single developmental reading course in

a community college setting and explored a concept that has yet to be qualitatively explored,

repetition. To follow is a discussion of the aforementioned studies, their findings and

conclusions and how my study is relevant to and will add to these studies on developmental

education students.

Stein (2006) did a qualitative study on developmental education students' perspectives of

institutional attributes that lead to success. The study was conducted at two predominately

Latino universities, University of Texas – Pan American (UTPA) and the University of Texas at

Brownsville (UTB) and included six participants who had been or were currently enrolled in

developmental education courses. Stein's use of in-depth interviewing allowed her to do pre and

post interviews in the beginning, middle and end of the semester. There were three major themes

discovered in Stein's study as to students' perceptions of what leads to success in developmental

courses: confidence, the necessity of developmental education as a stepping stone, and

validating factors, like class size, instructor characteristics, and course difficulty.

Students, according to Stein (2006) were confident in their abilities and overcame the

perceived stigma of testing into developmental education courses; this did not prevent them from

succeeding and moving on to college level coursework. Stein also pointed out that the students

viewed developmental education as a "stepping stone" to the more difficult college level course

in the same area. Finally, Stein's participants believed factors such as smaller classes, gentle, caring instructors and the level of difficulty of a course led to their overall success in the course. The level of difficulty, although hindered them at times during the semester was alleviated by the continuous concern and validation of the instructor, which allowed Stein to confirm Rendon's (1994) validation theory which claims that students succeed when validated by the instructor (Stein, 2006).

Stein (2006) concluded her study by proposing that developmental education programs need to enforce mandatory attendance, which allows structure. The idea of structure is congruent with Rendon's validation theory, where she claims that structure is necessary for success for nontraditional, developmental students, and for the purpose of my study, repeaters. She suggested that there should be mandatory placement of students when they test in developmental education, which leads students to persistence and success. Faculty should be trained in validation theory, Stein claimed, so that they can better understand how their validating behaviors empower students and lead them to success.

Stein's (2006) findings and conclusions go hand in hand with what I attempted to accomplish in my study. I extended Stein's research by focusing on an area that she did not include in her study. I focused on repeaters and examined what they believed is a "classroom attribute" as opposed to an institutional one that leads to success in a classroom upon repetition. This will start the discussion on repeaters and link validation, motivation, integration to persistence in repeaters in a classroom setting. While Stein's study focused on perceptions of success in developmental education, Duranczyk's (2007) study was based on interviews with eighteen participants, who were former developmental math students at the university level and their perceptions of developmental math years after completion.

Duranczyk (2007) discovered that one of her participants was traditional age, low income, first generation and started at a community college. Her experience in developmental math gave her the motivation and drive to "break the cycle" of the environment from which she came (Duranczyk, 2007). Duranczyk discussed another participant, also low income, traditional aged and transferred from a community college, who she claimed stated that she was never exposed to half of the math she was being taught in the developmental math course in which she placed. Duranczyk claimed that the student expressed that she was discouraged, but overcame it and spent time in a math lab to ensure that she passed the course; she also explained how the participant felt comfortable in the course because she was not alone; she realized that there needed to be more emphasis on the courses in elementary and secondary education to prevent having to take them at the college level.

Another one of Duranczyk's (2007) participants was nontraditional, financially stable and employed full time. He accepted his placement in math because he did not put forth effort in high school, which limited his options after graduation (Duranczyk, 2007). Finally, another participant in the study, also nontraditional, tested in developmental math where she discovered she was ADD; this led to her understanding as to why she had such a hard time academically in high school (Duranczyk, 2007). Developmental math, as the author claimed, based on the last participant, served as the "gateway" to her future courses and career path. Although the aforementioned study was informative and rich in students' perceptions post developmental course work, it did not address anything concerning course repetition or what actually led them to success. The study focused more on how the students felt after they had taken the developmental course, as opposed to their feelings during the course or upon course repetition.

Duranczyk's (2007) findings indicated that there are benefits to knowing how developmental education courses, in this case, developmental math, impact students years after they have enrolled and passed the courses. It is important to understand how students perceive developmental education, regardless of the course, but just as important is to understand how students perceive developmental courses when they have to repeat them. My research broadened the aforementioned literature on developmental student perceptions by exploring another facet of developmental students that have yet to be examined, repeaters. Repeaters' perceptions of and experiences with developmental reading and how persistence is impacted upon repetition has created an understanding of repetition from the perspective of the repeater so that practitioners can better serve the needs of repeaters in their classrooms and help them increase persistence. The focus of my study deviated from what researchers typically study in developmental education, which is developmental math, as seen above and as discussed in Miller's (2000) study to follow.

Miller (2000) used case studies to investigate the perceptions of motivation of low achieving, developmental math students at a community college who were successfully completing the course. Her participants consisted of three developmental math students and five developmental math instructors. She used achievement goal theories of motivation, such as task focused goals, extrinsic goals and ability goals (Middleton & Midgley, 1997; Ryan & Pintrich; Stipek, 1996) to frame her study. Miller also took into consideration, during her initial data collection, developmental math faculty opinions and perceptions of developmental math students' motivation. Miller's study found that there were barriers to success according to the students, such as math anxiety, overloaded by job and family, and lacking perceptions of math

relevancy. In addition, emotions about and attitudes toward math hindered their motivation to learn math with ease (Miller, 2000).

Like Stein's (2006) and Duranczyk's (2007) study findings, Miller's (2000) findings did not represent the developmental repeater population, but she does imply that motivation is in fact a precursor to learning and being successful in developmental math; the same can be said of developmental reading repeaters' success. The author concluded that motivation was not necessarily a precursor to understanding math (Miller, 2000). She also asserted that more research should be conducted to better understand the motivation of developmental math students who have low achieving self-beliefs, suffer from math anxiety and are overloaded with work and family responsibilities, all things that created barriers to their motivation in math (Miller, 2000). My study elaborated on the research based on motivation of developmental math students, but instead, I linked motivation issues to developmental repeaters' persistence, as well as explained through their stories how repetition impacts their motivation to persist in a reading class upon repetition.

Perceptions of developmental students provided by the aforementioned studies (Duranczyk, 2007; Miller, 2000; Stein, 2006) revealed how developmental students feel about developmental education. Other research (Fenton, 2002; Gerda, 1995; New York City Technical College, 1995; Windham, 1997) gave statistical information on developmental education students and repeaters alike. There are reports (Fenton, 2002; Gerda, 1995; New York City Technical College, 1995; Windham, 1997) on course repetition that provide a collection of percentages of failures in specific courses, as opposed to how students perceive repetition and what they believe can be done in order to help them be successful upon repetition. To follow is a

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discussion of such reports on repeaters. Following each report discussion, I will show how my study added to the reported information.

Reports on Developmental Repeaters

Many developmental students often repeat remedial courses sometimes three or more times, but why? What do developmental education repeaters believe to be the reasons behind developmental course repetition other than failing the course? Also, what do developmental reading repeaters believe would lead to successful completion of a reading course when faced with repetition? A *multiple repeater* can be defined as a student who repeats the same developmental course in reading, writing or math two or more times (New York City Technical College, 1995). The policies enforced by community colleges for general education course repetition are not the same for developmental education courses. Some colleges like Texas A & M do not allow students to take a developmental course more than three times (http://slc.tamu.edu/texas-success-initiative). Perin (2004) claimed that community colleges across the country show low completion rates (or repetition) of developmental education. Many studies were conducted on repeaters (Fenton, 2002; Gerda, 1995; New York City Technical College, 1995), but they did not explore what students felt they need in order to be successful upon repetition.

The study by New York City Technical College (1995) entitled, "Multiple Repeaters Project" researched 154 multiple repeaters from the spring and fall 1994 and spring 1995 semesters in order to identify and place students who repeated developmental courses in special course sections where they were provided "only one opportunity to succeed" and had to "sign an agreement indicating their commitment to and pledging attendance in their remaining developmental courses" (p. 9). The findings indicated that the pass rate in these "special smaller

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sections" was generally higher, i.e. 54% higher than usual (New York City Technical College, 1995).   If the student did not pass the special sections course, he or she was not allowed additional opportunities to repeat the course (New York Technical College, 1995).

The study by New York Technical College (1995) suggests that there are many students who enroll in developmental education courses and fail to take the course seriously and may not be set on succeeding from the start of the class. As a developmental education professor, I have witnessed such cases and this may be a barrier that often hinders a student's success in developmental reading. Students who test into a developmental reading course more often than not believe the class to be a "blow off" class, one that is not necessary and not to be taken seriously, and one in which they do not have to do much work to receive an easy A. As a result, these same students fail to integrate themselves into the class at any level, whether socially or academically; some of the students do in fact fail. But still, there are students who work hard and still fail to successfully complete the class and must repeat it. New York Technical College continued their quantitative search for information regarding repeaters in an extension of the previous study.

In another quantitative research study by New York Technical College (1995), 301 multiple repeaters were surveyed as to why they felt they repeated developmental courses one or more times. The most important reason for course repetition, according to the students surveyed, was not studying enough, followed by personal or family problems, not attending regularly and inadequate academic preparedness (New York Technical College, 1995). The survey also asked multiple repeaters what they needed to succeed and the number one necessity was taking the class seriously, followed by utilizing resources, like tutors, working on study habits and understanding the teacher (New York Technical College, 1995).

Of the 301 repeaters, 8 had repeated a course once, 198 repeated a course three times, 55 had repeated a course 4 times, 15 repeated 5 times and 25 repeated 6-8 times (New York Technical College, 1995). These numbers indicate the need for further study on multiple repeaters at community and technical colleges. The study did not discuss college policies on how many times a student is allowed to take a developmental course, but considering that 25 students had enrolled in a developmental course 6-8 times it is safe to assume that if there is a policy, it is clearly not enforced. Also, the study did not discuss what students believed they require for optimal performance in a repeated course, nor did it discuss resources to alternate teaching methods that could have led to successful completion. Are there other reasons why students repeat? Is it as simple as not taking a course seriously? If a student is "forced" to do well in a class the first time, will repetition be prevented?

My study sheds light on the aforementioned questions. I furthered the research on repeaters by adding the variables of motivation, validation, academic and social integration and link them to persistence, while including recommendations for policies on repeating, performance issues and student support in the classroom setting as tools for successful completion upon repetition. I used qualitative research methods, as opposed to survey based, quantitative research methods as seen in the research above in order to make meaning of students' experiences with and stories in developmental reading courses. In order to validate or disprove whether a student's seriousness affects his or her motivation and persistence upon repetition of a developmental reading course, as the quantitative analysis above suggested, I expanded on the aforementioned reports and developed an interview protocol for my study that questioned the participant's level of seriousness when enrolled the first, second and current times. Students' perceptions of seriousness in a classroom enhanced the knowledge on not only

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repetition but also on what students view as hindrances to success prior to repetition, which could be their level of seriousness. This helped me better understand repetition. Another report (Windham, 1997) on repetition compared developmental repeaters to college level repeaters.

Windham (1997) studied repeated course enrollments in developmental courses for three years. The quantitative study found that overall the percent of repeaters in college prep courses was greater than repeaters of college credit courses (Windham, 1997). The average percent of first time enrollment in developmental education courses was 80%; repetition or second time course enrollment in developmental education courses was 15.2 % (Windham, 1997). The study concluded that one in five developmental education enrollments were repeaters and most are in English and math courses (Windham, 1997). The study did not suggest why students repeated the courses, nor did it discuss policy regarding the number of times a student is allowed to enroll in and take a developmental course (Windham, 1997). The study also did not elaborate on student beliefs and perceptions of repetition. My study, however, provided more detail on repetition by adding student perceptions of and experiences with it. Reports on course repetition sometimes focused on repeating college courses in general, as opposed to developmental education courses.

Gerda's (1995) quantitative matriculation research report on course repetition focused mainly on the course repetition policy at College of the Canyons in Santa Clarita, CA. The study did not single out developmental education, but it did mention one developmental math course being problematic for students to pass the first time they enrolled. Gerda found that 54% of students in the sample had to repeat the course only once, while only 6% repeated a course multiple times. Policy should allow students only two chances to take a course, according to Gerda's study and findings so that students do not feel as though they have unlimited

opportunities to pass a class and so that their time to degree does not get extended because of repetitions. This type of enforced policy could improve time to degree and retention rates, as well as increase persistence upon the first attempt of taking a course (Gerda, 1995).

Gerda's (1995) study was prepared in order for the college to renew its policy on course repetition. The study did reveal that students were repeating math courses up to five times, and this was against the college policy that was in place, which is often the case for many policies at the community college (Gerda, 1995). The study demonstrated that many colleges have college-wide course repetition policies, but do not follow them for one reason or another. My study added to literature on policy development and repetition by exploring students' perceptions of and stories about repetition, and based on their beliefs, recommend avenues of policy development for repetition of developmental reading courses.

Another study on course repetition showed that repeaters of any course did not change their behaviors in order to succeed the second or third time in the same course (Fenton, 2002). Fenton (2002) stated that 70% of the student body at Rhodes State College initially received developmental placement in one or more subject areas, and of the 70%, 23% repeated the course. The developmental students studied came from two categories: those who did not complete a high school college prep program and those who were over 21 years old and had been out of school for years, two characteristics of the typical developmental student according to the National Center of Developmental Education (Fenton, 2002). Other factors that affected their success included their economic backgrounds, cultural and social barriers and inability to focus (Fenton, 20002).

Fenton (2002) suggested that due to the students' characteristics and barriers, "course repetition may be one way these students have to sequester enough time to adequately digest the

course material" (p. 6). Fenton, like Gerda (1995) found that it was a developmental math course that students most often repeated. Fenton implied that the reason for repetition in developmental courses was due to economic and social barriers, as well as being nontraditional college students as opposed to lack of preparation, understanding or teaching methods.

The aforementioned studies on developmental education multiple repeaters showed that developmental education course repetition is a pressing issue among community college students. New York Technical College's (1995) study revealed reasons students believed prevented them from successfully completing a developmental course upon initial enrollment. However, the reasons merely raised more questions. For instance, why didn't a student take the course seriously? What type of family or job issues prevented success? Was there something the college could have done to intervene prior to failure? It is through student perceptions and my study that these questions can be better answered.

It is clear what types of studies and discussions have been presented about developmental education, its students and its repeaters. Perceptions of success in developmental education (Stein, 2006), perceptions of motivation in developmental math (Miller, 2000) and experiences in developmental math post enrollment (Duranczyk, 2007) are all studies that have explored developmental education students. Reports on repetition as to the research and literature on developmental education by providing statistics that clearly show the growing repetition crisis among college courses, especially developmental education courses (Fenton, 2002; Gerda, 1995; New York Technical College, 1995; Windham, 1997).

My study expanded the knowledge that has already been presented on developmental education students by exploring repetition from the perspective of the repeaters. My study explored repetition in a class, but it also linked repetition to validation, motivation, social and

academic integration in an attempt to discover how these things impact persistence and success in repeaters', things that have yet to be accomplished in developmental education research. In order to further exemplify how I linked the aforementioned concepts to repetition in a classroom, to follow is a detailed discussion of the theories and their concepts (Ford, 1992; Rendon, 1994; Tinto, 1993) that were used to frame and guide my study and better helped to understand and answer the study's research questions.

Theoretical Framework

My study was framed by three major theoretical concepts. The study assumed that validation (Rendon, 1994) leads to motivation (Ford, 1992), and together, validation and motivation lead to social and academic integration in a classroom setting. Academic and social integration then lead to persistence (Tinto, 1993) in a developmental reading course when faced with repetition; when a student persists, he or she is more likely to succeed in a class upon repetition. Figure A below shows how the three theories were connected and used to frame the study.
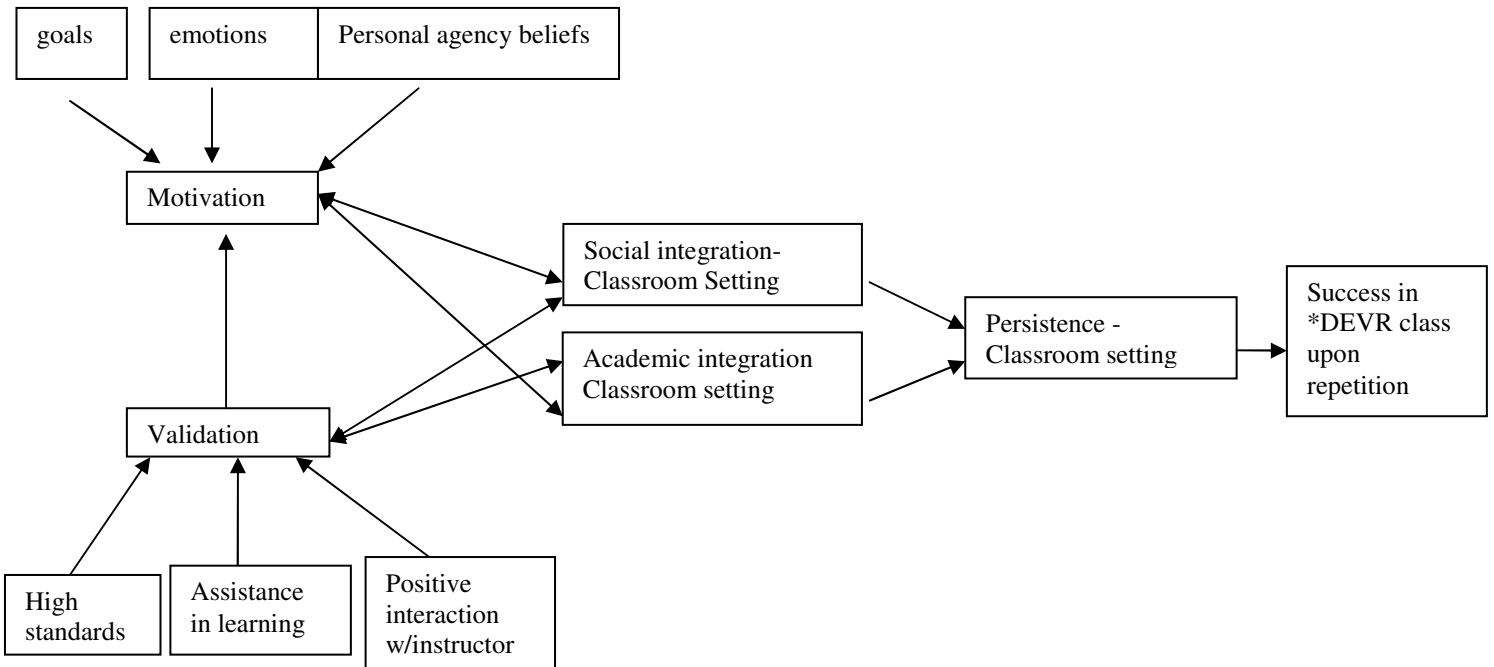
Figure A: A Conceptual Framework of Repeaters' Successful Completion of a Course

*DEVR=Developmental Reading

My study utilized the three theories on a much smaller scale by applying components of each theory that my study assumes guide a developmental repeater through successful completion of developmental reading in a college classroom setting upon repetition. My study assumed that it is motivation and validation that lead to what Tinto (1993) termed as social and academic integration, two factors that contribute to persistence. Upon being socially and academically integrated into a classroom setting where a student is repeating a course, a repeater will persist in that course and accomplish successful completion. None of the aforementioned theories have ever been applied to developmental repeaters, hence the rationale for the use of such theories.

Tinto's (1993) persistence theory, Rendon's (1994) validation theory and Ford's (1992) motivational systems theory were used to frame the study. Tinto and Rendon have emphasized persistence and validation in a college setting; Ford focused on motivation of an individual in several different settings. There were limited studies or theoretical discussions, however that link validation, motivation, academic and social integration and persistence to developmental repeaters; therefore, this study will begin the discussion of how validation, motivation and persistence can be linked to developmental repeaters. Ford discussed goals, emotions and personal agency beliefs as factors leading to an individual's motivation, while Rendon suggested validation obtained through validating experiences in the classroom that lead to motivation, persistence and success.

Persistence Theory

Persistence theory has been the focus of much educational research (Allen, 1999; Braxton, Sullivan & Johnson, 1997; Braxton & Lien, 2000; Cabrera, Nora & Castaneda, 1993; Pascarella, 1980; Pascarella & Chapman, 1983; Terenzini, et al. 1993). Research studies on persistence mainly pertain to student departure and why students choose to stay in or leave college. Tinto (1993) is the most widely referenced researcher on student departure and persistence. Several researchers (Douglas & Guiffrida, 2006; Hurtado, 1997; Kuh & Love, 2000; Rendon, Jalomo, & Nora, 2000; Moore & Upcraft; Tiereny, 1999) have argued that Tinto's theory is limited because of its exclusion of cultural variables as indicators of student persistence in a college setting. The theory, they argue, needs to be more culturally aware because of the amount of culturally diverse student populations in higher education.

Two aspects of Tinto's persistence theory were used to frame the study: academic integration and social integration. The study claimed that validation and motivation lead to academic and social integration which then lead to persistence and success in a classroom setting upon student repetition. In his student departure and persistence theory, Tinto (1993) postulated that the more a student academically and socially integrates himself or herself into campus life by engaging in campus activities, forming relationships with staff, peers and faculty, utilizing student resources, and participating in extracurricular clubs and activities, the higher the chances are that he or she will persist in college, graduate and remain loyal to that institution. If students do not successfully integrate themselves into college life, they are unable to separate themselves from past relationships and cannot successfully transition into a new community (Tinto, 1993). Tinto (1997) also discussed student persistence in learning communities where students become members of the linked classroom community as opposed to the college community, but he did not make reference to students who are repeating a developmental reading class. He did,

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however, suggest that the classroom is the place where the academic and social join, and for many students, the classroom is the only place to achieve academic and social integration (Tinto, 1997). Therefore, for the purpose of this study, Tinto's persistence and departure theory was re-contextualized by using academic and social integration to frame a repeater's persistence in a classroom setting, as opposed to an institutional setting, when faced with repetition. Following is a discussion of academic and social integration.

Academic and Social Integration

Academic and social integration have been widely discussed in research (Braxton & Lien, 2000; Cabrera, Nora & Castaneda, 1993; Pascarella, 1980; Pascarella & Chapman, 1983; Terenzini, et al. 1993) based on student persistence. Students become members of the community of an institution, and as such, interact with academic and social systems of that community. Some researchers (Barbatis, 2010; Bers & Smith, 1991; Pascarella & Chapman, 1983; Pascarella, Smart & Ethington, 1986) discussed the significance of academic and social integration to a student's institutional commitment and persistence. The above researchers indicated a significant relationship between academic and social integration and institutional commitment and persistence; the higher the level of institutional commitment and academic and social integration, the greater the chance the student will persist to graduation (Braxton & Lien, 2000; Pascarella, 1980; Pascarella & Chapman, 1983; Pascarella, Smart, & Ethington, 1986). The same idea was applied to developmental repeaters in a developmental reading class in the community college setting; this study assumed that instead of the campus as a whole as the context within which academic and social integration occurs, the developmental education classroom is the context. As such, the higher the level of social and academic integration in a classroom, the higher the chances the student will persist and be successful in the class upon

repetition. A discussion of the operational definitions of academic and social integration in the context of the study is to follow.

For the purpose of this study, academic integration in a developmental reading class setting was defined as students meeting the standards and criteria of a class in which they are enrolled and repeating. Included in a student's being academically integrated in a classroom setting is meeting the expectations of the class. Some of the expectations could be doing all assignments and successfully passing tests, and participating and collaborating in class discussions and group work exercises. Further, students could ask for extra credit work in order to reinforce understanding and learning in the class, as well as increase grades, and reinforcing course materials and understanding by spending extra time spent on course materials. Grades, for instance, can be a measure of the level of a student's academic integration and ability to meet the expectations of a class and achievement therein (Astin, 1999; Bean & Metzner, 1985; Bers & Smith, 1991; Braxton, Sullivan, & Johnson, 1997). The greater the student's level of academic integration in a classroom setting, the greater the chances of commitment to successfully complete the class upon repetition three or more times (Astin, 1999; Barbatis, 2010; Bers & Smith, 1991; Braxton, Sullivan, & Johnson, 1997; Braxton & Lien, 2000; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). The same credence applies to social integration.

It is through social integration that a student is connected to his or her intellectual growth and environment in an institution (Astin, 1999; Tinto, 1993, 1997). Like academic integration, the more a student is socially integrated in the college, i.e. joins clubs, develops relationships with staff, faculty, peers and other members of the college community, and gets involved in campus life and extracurricular activities, the more likely the student will be to persist through college and graduate (Astin, 1999; Pascarella, 1980; Tinto, 1993). By socially integrating

themselves, students receive a socially rewarding experience and develop support from peers and faculty, which ultimately will lead to persistence and commitment to the institution and persist (Bers & Smith, 1991; Allen, Robbins, Casillas, & Oh, 2008; Bean & Metzner, 1985; Braxton, Sullivan, & Johnson, 1997; Pascarella, 1980; Terenzini, et al., 1993; Tinto, 1993, 1997). The same can be said of a student's persistence in the classroom setting.

For the purpose of my study, social integration was used in a classroom context. Social integration, for the purpose of my study, referred to a developmental reading repeater socially integrating him or herself into a community college classroom setting. In order to socially integrate, the student must have formal and informal interaction with the instructor, stay in contact with instructor, especially in times of difficulty, form peer relationships in the class and exchanging phone numbers and email addresses, collaborate with peers, and develop study groups with peers in order to persist and reach success upon repetition of a course. Social integration was viewed, in my study on a much smaller scale than it has been in past research. The major distinction between social integration in the classroom setting and social integration in the institution is that relationships are being built within the boundaries of the classroom as opposed to the institution a whole. This assumption can be justified in that the classroom is often for developmental education students one of their only points of contact with the institution since they are not yet in a major course of study which generally serves as a student's touchstone to institutional life. Research (Allen, Robbins, Casillas, & Oh, 2008; Astin, 1999; Bers & Smith, 199; Karp & Hughs, 2008; Pascarella, 1980) has explored academic and social integration and claims its value to a student's overall success.

Astin's (1999) theoretical discussion of social and academic involvement was seen in his student development theory based on student involvement and claims that students who are

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heavily academically involved or integrated in a college setting are generally satisfied with all

aspects of a college. In addition, students who became academically integrated in college also

experience the rewards from an institution of good academic performance (Astin, 1999). Astin

limited his discussion of involvement and integration of a student by focusing on the college

experience as a whole as opposed to an individual class experience, more specifically a class that

is being repeated by a student. This repetition may, in fact, build a community among repeaters;

repeaters becoming and feeling part of a community in the classroom is likely to lead them to

success, hence further justification for the use of academic and social integration as part of the

theoretical framework. Astin's beliefs are congruent with other researchers' (Allen, et al., 2008;

Barbatis, 2010; Bers & Smith, 1991; Bean & Metzner, 1985; Braxton, Sullivan, & Johnson,

1997; Karp & Hughs, 2008; Pascarella, 1980; Tinto, 1993, 1997) discussions and studies on

academic and social integration can be applied to developmental repeaters in a classroom setting

to better understand whether integration is indeed a factor in the persistence of developmental

repeaters in a single course. Additional persistence investigators have used academic and social

integration theory to examine its relationship to and influence on student persistence.

Bers and Smith (1991) conducted a quantitative study on the influence of student intent

and academic and social integration on 1142 community college students. Their findings suggest

that other factors, such as educational goals (a key factor in motivation achievement), precollege

characteristics and employment status affect persistence in college more so than academic and

social integration; however, they do conclude that social and academic integration significantly

impact their persistence to stay in college (Bers & Smith, 1991). They did not discuss how

social and academic integration impacts community college developmental repeaters' persistence

in a classroom and how it is related to their motivation to persist in a classroom setting upon

repetition. My qualitative study will give a voice to repeaters and allow them to express whether they believe that integration is a key to persistence and success when faced with repetition in a developmental reading class.

Terenzini et al. (1993) findings based on focus group interviews with 132 community college students revealed that "involvement" on campus is an indicator of persistence in college. They found that "validating experiences," which aid in students becoming involved and integrated in the college, as Rendon (1994) also discussed, often ease students' transition in college, making it easier for them to persist in college (Terenzini et al., 1993). Again, however, they did not speak about the developmental repeater and how involvement or integration does or does not impact persistence. Their conclusions suggested that college faculty, staff and leaders need to ensure students on campus have validating experiences so that students can have an easier time adjusting to college life and they will more likely persist.

Karp and Hughes (2008) examined the influence of informational networks (social connections that assist in the conveyance of an institution's procedures) and integration on persistence of first time community college, full and part-time freshmen. Karp and Hughes randomly selected and interviewed 44 students based on their initial experiences at college. The results indicated that 90% of the students who academically and socially integrated themselves into the college persisted to their second year in the college, and 61% were part of an information network (Karp & Hughes, 2008). The study's scope, like many others, emphasized integration in college as a whole experience, rather than a college classroom setting. It did not examine classroom settings or repeaters, and my study will expand on this idea. Another study, Taylor (2009) did not take into account how integration impacts a repeater's persistence

Taylor (2009) examined the effects of academic and social integration on community college students' persistence in developmental education courses. Taylor quantitatively investigated two major topics: the level of academic and social integration of students in developmental education courses and the relationships between academic and social integration and persistence. Taylor used a survey research design and collected data based on demographics, measures of persistence and a 34 item survey which measured academic and social integration. Unlike other researchers, Taylor found that there was no statistically significant relationship between academic integration and persistence, in addition to there being a low degree of correlation between social integration and persistence based on faculty interaction.

Taylor (2009) disproved what other researchers have claimed about academic and social integration significantly affecting college students' persistence. I will use Taylor's study to show that academic and social integration may not always impact persistence in college, but I will add to it by suggesting it does in fact impact repeaters' persistence in a classroom setting. Barbatis' (2010) supports the notion that academic and social integration do indeed impact persistence in college.

Barbatis (2010) highlighted underprepared community college students and factors that contribute to or hinder their persistence. The study sought to explore perceptions of 22 underprepared community college students and their persistence. The participants either: persisted and graduated, persisted and earned 30 credit hours or more, or dropped out of college all together (Barbatis, 2010). Four factors were discovered through interviews and focus groups based on what leads to persistence and retention: precollege characteristics, external college support/community influence, social involvement, and academic integration (Barbatis, 2010).

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These findings further validate Tinto's (1993) theory that academic and social integration lead to persistence. Again, however, the study discussed social involvement as involvement on campus, like Astin (1993), and did not consider social involvement and integration into the classroom. In regards to academic integration, the researcher does mention the importance of faculty-student interactions and developed cognitive skills in students who were academically involved, similar to Pascarella (1980), Rendon (1994), and Tinto, which generally takes place in the classroom setting. This confirms my assumption that academic and social integration can indeed lead to persistence in repeaters in a classroom.

Finally, Allen et al. (2008) proposed that college commitment and social connectedness impact retention and persistence. The study sampled 6,872 students from 23 different four year institutions to examine the effects of academic performance, motivation, and social connectedness on third year retention (Allen et al., 2008). The researchers' findings suggested that social connectedness had a direct effect on s student's decision to stay in college and did not consider these factors in community college students or developmental repeaters (Allen et al., 2008). The findings, however, are consistent with what others (Allen et al., 2008; Barbatis, 2010; Bean & Metzner, 1985; Bers & Smith, 1991; Braxton et al., 1997; Karp & Hughs, 2008; Pascarella, 1980; Tinto, 1993; Tinto, 1997) have claimed about social integration or connectedness and staying in college and how social integration leads to persistence. The same is being assumed of developmental repeaters in community colleges in my study; social integration will in fact lead repeaters to motivation and persistence in a classroom to successfully complete the course upon repetition.

Overall, most researchers on social and academic integration (Allen et al., 2008; Astin, 1999; Barbatis, 2010; Bers & Smith, 1991; Braxton, Sullivan, & Johnson, 1997; Karp & Hughes,

2008; Pascarella, 1980; Rendon, 1994; Terenzini et al., 1993; Tinto, 1993) agreed that increased

social and academic integration leads to increased commitment to an institution and retention. In

the classroom setting, developmental repeaters more often than not have a hard time developing

relationships with other students and faculty (Young, 2002). My study claimed that it is a lack of

academic and social integration and the formation of interpersonal relationships that hinder a

developmental student's success upon enrolling in a class the first and second time. Through

academic and social integration, a student can develop relationships that will positively impact

their motivation, level of commitment, integration and lead them to persist in the class upon

repetition, and ultimately the student will be successful. Motivation was understood, for the

purpose of this study, through what Ford (1992) entitles motivational systems theory. An

explanation of motivational systems theory as well as its three major components will now be

discussed in the following section.

Motivational Systems Theory

Motivation is a difficult term to define. There is scarce literature on motivation and

student's perceptions of it as it relates to developmental reading repeaters. Some researchers

(Anderman & Young, 1994; Donald, 1994; Hynd, Holschuh & Nist, 2000) have pointed out the

lack of research for at-risk readers and their perceptions of motivation when it is linked to

difficult reading content. My study examined students' perceptions of motivation by questioning

what drives them to persist and successfully complete a developmental reading course when

faced with repetition. Motivation was one concept that was used to frame the study, and it was

through Ford's (1992) motivational systems theory (MST) that it was explained and linked to

validation, persistence and success. Motivation has been defined as a stimulus within a person

that incites him or her to action and is based on the probability of success or failure (Raynor & Entin, 1982). A deeper understanding of motivation can be found in Ford's MST.

In his MST, Ford (1992) discussed motivation in terms of goals, emotions and personal agency beliefs. He claimed that motivation is a concept that represents the direction in which a person is going (goal), the emotional energy and experience affecting movement in that direction (emotions), and the expectancy the person has about whether or not he or she can attain the goal (personal agency beliefs). In terms of developmental repeaters, their goal would be to pass the reading course upon repetition three or more times, but the emotions, i.e. past failure and inability to successfully complete the reading course the first and second time, may be what has constricted the goal and hence the repeater from successfully completing the developmental course. As a result, the repeater may believe (personal agency beliefs) that he or she is incapable of fulfilling this goal because of negative past experiences and failure.

According to Ford's (1992) MST, motivation was defined as "the organizing patterning of three psychological functions that serve to direct, energize, and regulate goals-directed activity: personal goals, emotional arousal processes and personal agency beliefs" (p. 3). Without these three components, motivation in an individual cannot occur. MST takes into consideration the "person-in-context" and one's behavior and effective functioning within a context which ultimately affects motivation (Ford, 1992; Ford, 1995). Effective functioning in this case would be a student successfully persisting through and passing a developmental reading course upon repeating the course three or more times. Effective functioning is represented by two concepts: achievement and competence. Achievement (Ford, 1992), at the situational level of analysis, was defined as "the attainment of a personally or socially valued goal in a particular context," while competence, at the behavioral level of analysis, is defined as the attainment of

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relevant goals in specified environments, using appropriate means and resulting in positive developmental outcomes" (p. 66). A visual depiction of how achievement, competence and motivation are related can be represented in the following formula:

Achievement/Competence = Motivation x Skill x Responsive Environment (Ford, 1992, p. 14). In order for a person to reach a profound level of motivation, he or she must have the desire to achieve or attain a specified goal, and once achieved, a certain level of competence is naturally acquired. Goal attainment or achievement and competence lead to motivation.

In terms of developmental repeaters, goals were represented by the desire to persist through and successfully complete a developmental reading course upon repetition. The term "goals" however has deeper meaning and value when linked to motivation. The following subsections define and further explain MST and the three major concepts MST claims that lead to one's motivation, starting with a discussion of goals, then personal agency beliefs and finally emotions; the same three factors I claimed lead a student to academic and social integration and persistence in a classroom setting upon repetition.

Goals

Ford (1992) defined a personal goal as something that directs an individual's activities and represents desired future states and outcomes. In order for an individual to be motivated, he or she must have something in which to strive and it is this "goal" that will lead to an individual being motivated to complete a task. Imbedded in the concept of goals is goal content, which was described as desired or undesired consequence represented by a goal (Ford, 1992). Goal content can be further understood through questions such as "What are you trying to accomplish," or "Why did you do that?" The answers to these questions lead to the content of a goal. There are several different types of goals; however it is the mastery goal that will be used for the purpose

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of the study to better understand developmental reading repeaters. This study suggested that it is

the "mastery goal" of attempting to successfully complete a developmental reading course upon

repetition that leads a repeater to motivation.

Mastery or "task-focused" goals were defined as the desire to "improve one's

performance on a task or to reach or maintain a challenging standard of achievement and

competence" (Ford, 1992, p. 95). Other researchers (Ames, 1992; Kitsantas, Winsler, & Huie,

2008; Middleton & Midgley, 1997; Middleton & Spanias, 1999; Miller, 2000; Pajares, 2001;

Ryan & Pintrich, 1997; Stipek, 1996) of task-related goals reiterated that task-related goals are

based on developing understanding and competence, and many students with such goals are

more likely to connect their efforts with successful learning outcomes. For the purpose of my

study, the "task" in which a student is attempting to improve or reach a challenging standard of

achievement is successful completion of developmental reading upon repetition. Students who

lack the desire to fulfill a goal will inhibit their motivation levels to achieve; when students are

progressing toward a goal, they will be more likely to be motivated to persist (Svinicki, 1999).

Other researchers (Hidi & Harackiewiez, 2000; Pajares, 2001) have examined task-focused goals

and motivation of a student to better understand how goals impact motivation and ultimately

persistence.

Hidi and Harackiewiez (2000) and Pajares (2001) pointed out that it is in the face of the

difficulty of a task that students are academically motivated to become more competent in

acquiring new skills. Researchers (Bandura & Schunk, 1981; Ford, 1992) maintained that when

accomplishing a goal requires a substantial amount of time and effort, motivation is enhanced.

Other factors that can lead to goal attainment and hence motivation is individuals' belief in

causes of successes and failures; they will be motivated by viewing successes and failures in

terms of effort they invest in tasks rather than ability, which is especially helpful to

developmental repeaters because they already have poor views of their ability (Allen, 1999;

Mealey, 1990).

In addition to task difficulty, effort and ability, the context in which the goal is being

attempted also affects one's desire to fulfill a goal and ultimately, his or her motivation. Ford

(1992) posited that goal attainment will be long lasting if: there is feedback information

presented that allows someone to assess their progress and locate inconsistencies in current and

desired outcomes; capability beliefs and skills for obtaining the goal; and a responsive

environment that fosters goal attainment, all factors that contribute to motivation (Bandura &

Cervone, 1983; Ford, 1992; Locke & Latham, 1990a; Rendon, 1994; Schunk, 1990; Wood &

Bandura, 1989). Environment is also a consequence of validation as discussed by Rendon

(1994), and she suggested that an environment where students feel validated for their progress

leads to motivation and ultimately persistence and success. This validation increases students'

personal self-beliefs, or the way they feel about themselves (Ford, 1992) as will be discussed,

leads to motivation.

Personal Agency Beliefs

Personal agency beliefs (PAB) are used to explain the patterning of capability beliefs and

context beliefs, two types of personal agency beliefs that determine whether or not a person will

stimulate or reduce behavior to obtain motivation to fulfill a goal (Ford, 1992). Capability

beliefs are congruent with self-efficacy beliefs, which both can be defined as evaluations and

beliefs about one's capabilities and has the skill required to function effectively and attain a

desired performance or goal (Bandura, 1986; Ford, 1994; Pajares, 2008; Schunk, 1989; Svinicki,

1999). Bandura (1982) suggested that self-efficacy affects one's motivation, effort and

persistence; with each successful endeavor, motivation increases as does self-efficacy. For individuals to reach a high level of motivation, they must believe in themselves and their abilities, or have a positive self-efficacy, to achieve a goal (Bandura, 1982; Ford, 1992; Schunk, 1989). As previously stated, developmental education repeaters have a low self-efficacy, and it is their lack of belief in themselves and their capabilities that often hinder their success. Schunk (1989) and Campbell (2007) supported this idea by saying that when faced with obstacles or difficulty, "students who feel they can perform well ought to work harder and persist longer than those who doubt their capabilities" (p. 5). Much of the literature agreed that self-efficacy greatly impacts motivation.

Kitsantas, Winsler, and Huie (2008) quantitatively investigated the role of prior ability measures, self- regulation, and motivation in predicting academic performance among first year college students. There was a sample of 243 undergraduate students, 99% of which were full time, attending a four year institution. In terms of motivation, there was a discussion of self-efficacy and how it is a motivational belief that greatly influences student's academic performance above other factors such as task value (Kitsantas et al., 2008; Robbins et al., 2004). To further support self-efficacy as a predictor of academic performance, the results of Kitsantas et al. study findings showed a strong correlation among first year academic achievement and self-efficacy. Self-efficacy, then, can be said to not only affect one's motivation to obtain a goal, but also one's academic performance and success.

My study suggested that one of the reasons why students are unsuccessful in a developmental reading course upon the first and second attempts is their lack of goal development and belief in their own abilities to be academically successful. It is through solid goal development and positive self-efficacy or capability beliefs that a repeater will be successful

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upon repeating a developmental reading course upon his or her third or more attempts, and validation will help students develop these positive capability beliefs.

Researchers and theorists (Ferrara, 2005; Hynd, Holschuh, & Nist, 2000; Martin & Dowson, 2010; Mealey; Pajares, 2001; Schunk, 1989; Svinicki, 1999) also discussed the importance of positive self-efficacy or capability beliefs on motivation. Hynd et al. (2000) supported the notion that positive self-efficacy plays a major role in determining a student's will and motivation to learn and do well in a class. In addition, self-efficacy is also affected by poor or good grades. While some students are motivated to do better because of poor grades, others are discouraged and doubt their abilities; in either case, motivation is driven by the desire to do better academically when discussed in terms of learning (Hynd et al., 2000; Svinicki, 1999).

Repeaters may begin a developmental reading course with negative capability or self-efficacy beliefs because they have made several attempts to pass the course, but the context in which the task goal is being attempted could greatly impact a repeater's capability beliefs and lead him or her to motivation and persistence and successful completion of the course. Ford (1992) asserted that if one has strong capability beliefs and positive context beliefs then his or her goals will be achieved even if faced with obstacles, difficulties and/or failure. This can be paralleled by Rendon's (1994) discussion of validation and how key environment, or in this case context is in validating a student's abilities, something that leads to persistence and success. These ideas are applicable to the study because I uncovered the stories about how repeaters perceive their abilities and how these perceptions have impacted their motivation and persistence in completing a course in the face of repetition. Strongly influencing capability or self-efficacy beliefs are context beliefs, which are also beliefs that assist in an individual's ability to obtain motivation.

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Context beliefs are evaluations of whether one has the responsive environment needed to support effective functioning (Ford, 1992). Without positive context beliefs, or the belief that the environment is conducive for effectively obtaining a goal, motivation is not possible. There are several different aspects of the environment that must be present in order for goals to be obtained and hence motivation to occur. The following are key aspects of a responsive environment: the environment must be congruent with one's goals; the environment must be congruent with one's capabilities; the environment must have the resources needed to facilitate goal attainment; and the environment must provide an emotional climate where effective functioning is supported (Crane et al., 1998; Ford, 1992; Hidi & Harackiewicz, 2000; Rendon, 1994; Svinicki, 1999). All of these components of environment must be present in order for a person to obtain a goal and reach a high level of motivation and eventually persist in and successfully complete a developmental reading course upon repetition. I expanded the discussion of environment to explore how repeaters view the environment's role in a classroom setting upon repetition, as well as reflect on how they feel it impacts motivation, integration and persistence upon repetition. The way one "feels" about the pursuance of a goal, which could promote or hinder goal attainment and motivation is also necessary to consider; Ford calls these feelings 'emotions' in the MST.

Emotions

Emotions influence motivation because they serve an arousal function, making them sources of energy in motivational patterns (Ford, 1992). Emotions also provide an individual with information about obstacles and opportunities of personal relevance and help prepare a person to deal with those obstacles and opportunities (Ford, 1992; Frijida, 1988). Ford (1992) notes that emotions are useful when, "effective functioning requires immediate action in context

of a concrete problem or opportunity such as…removal of an obstacle or goal attainment" (p.

144). Developmental repeaters are attempting to obtain the goal of successfully completing a

reading course they are repeating for three or more times; therefore, their emotions will impact

the way in which they feel about obtaining that goal and is going to promote or detract them

from goal attainment and motivation. Some studies have shown the validity of Ford's (1992)

MST and his discussion of goals, beliefs and emotions and their relationship to motivation by

testing it in different educational settings.

Validity of Motivational Systems Theory

The validity of Ford's (1992) MST has been explored by researchers (Campbell, 2007;

Crane et al., 1998; Putman & Walker, 2010) in order to better understand the impact of

motivation on the performance of different groups of individuals in various settings; however,

the theory has never been utilized to understand the perceptions of motivation of developmental

reading repeaters, hence the gap in literature as it relates to motivation and the MST. The

following overview is based on the few studies that have investigated MST.

Crane, Poziemski, and Gustafson (1998) applied aspects of MST to 348 developmental

reading students in a community college in an academic semester. The study focused on self-

concept, or self-perceived competence in reading and task value, both factors used to determine

motivation in MST (Crane et al., 1998; Ford, 1992). The researchers of the study, as well as

other researchers, postulated that in regards to self-concept and task value, if students believe

they can succeed, they are more likely to be motivated to persist in the task than when they

anticipate failure; however, believing that they will fail hinders their ability to read (Crane et al.,

1998; Hidi & Harackiewicz, 2000).

The results of Crane, et al.'s (1998) study also revealed that in order for students to be motivated to read, they must have a meaningful context in which to read. In order for students to be motivated to read, the reading must have a purpose and intrinsic rewards, and it must also be something relevant based on students' prior knowledge. This idea validated what other researchers have suggested about motivation and reading (Ford, 1992; Morris & Price; Paulsen, 2006). The purpose must be more than the students' need to enroll in and successfully pass the developmental reading course in which they placed.

While Crane et al.'s (1998) study used two criteria similar to the study, motivation and developmental reading students, there was no discussion of developmental repeaters and the impact of motivation on their persistence to successfully complete a course upon repetition. The study proved that task value and context are necessary for developmental reading students to be successful. The authors' conclusions suggested that it is important for development reading practitioners to ensure meaningful material that will stimulate the reader – only then will they be motivated to read. Repeaters were examined to extend this discussion on meaningful material and motivation in this study. Although the study did not directly mention reading repeaters, it is useful for the study. Campbell (2007), however, explicitly applied MST to business degree-seeking students at a four year institution, but again did not discuss how it relates to developmental reading repeaters.

Campbell (2007) investigated the validity of MST by using it as a measurement of the performance of 259 college students pursuing degrees in business. The study was conducted by use of quantitative methods to test the relationship between motivational strategies, biological factors, responsive environment factors, skill and prior ability, and academic performance, as well as the impact of the level of academic performance by the students' gender and race

(Campbell, 2007). Campbell also emphasized two important factors used in the study, which are also two overarching components of MST: value, intrinsic and extrinsic goal orientation and task value; and expectancy, control beliefs and self-efficacy, two of the same factors utilized in Crane et al.'s (1998) study.

Campbell's (2007) study concluded that the MST is a valid predictor of performance and that academic performance is heavily impacted by gender and race in college students seeking business degrees. While the study did provide an examination of the MST and its relation to an academic setting, it did not focus on motivation and performance as it relates to an academic, classroom setting. Instead, it emphasized performance, race and gender and their relation to motivation in business degree-seeking students. Like Campbell's study, my study focused on a specific group of students, repeaters in a classroom setting. Finally, MST was applied to children with reading difficulties to test their self-concepts, learning environments and how they affected their motivation.

A final study (Putman & Walker, 2010) used MST to examine 22 children, ages 7-12 with reading difficulties and their motivation to read in nontraditional learning environments as contexts for reading instruction. Quantitative and qualitative approaches were used to explore whether one's self-concept of reading increased when informal learning environments were used as a context of instruction. Ford's (1992) MST also posited that it is a "responsive environment" that leads to motivation, and Putman and Walker (2010) confirmed this idea.

The children were enrolled in a tutoring program offered through a university in the Midwestern region in the United States, which held tutoring sessions in two locations: a university building where the university art museum and geology department were located and a regional nature and cultural center in the community, which represented informal learning

environments (Putman & Walker, 2010). The tutors and children met for an hour twice a week for 10 weeks and focused on reading and writing lessons related to student's needs (Putman & Walker, 2010).

Putman and Walker's (2010) quantitative results based on a paired sample *t* test on student's motivation scores from the pre and post motivation test indicated that there was a statistically significant increase in motivation scores, pre and post tutoring sessions. The results also revealed that there was a statistically significant difference in self-concept regarding reading from the pre and post-tests (Putman & Walker, 2010). Qualitative results based on tutor's reflections showed that children's motivation for reading increased in informal, responsive environments (also environments that influence motivation) because the environment encouraged increased engagement with materials and children's ability to better identify with material (Ford, 1992; Putman & Walker, 2010; Rendon, 1994). Overall, the results show that a responsive and informal learning environment and self-selected material increase one's motivation to read, in addition to increasing social and academic integration, which is congruent with what other theorists and researchers have suggested (Ford, 1992; Paulsen, 2006; Putman & Walker, 2010; Rendon, 1994; Tinto, 1993).

All of the aforementioned studies that used MST as a modeling theoretical framework attempted to link motivation and its various facets, such as goals, task value, personal self-beliefs and a responsive learning environment, to different groups of students. Holistically, they confirmed Ford's claim in the MST that goals, task value, and personal agency beliefs impact a student's ability to reach a high level of motivation. While these studies are important and relevant to the research and literature on motivation as well as the study because they link

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motivation to students including reading students, they do not consider the developmental

reading repeater and motivation.

My study added to the literature and research on motivation and MST by linking it to

developmental repeaters, validation, social and academic integration and persistence to

successfully complete a developmental reading course. The study expanded the current

knowledge on motivation while allowing repeaters to explain how they believe these concepts

are related to successful completion of a reading course when repeating it. Furthermore, the

study dissected validation and investigated if it too is a factor that impacts motivation according

to repeaters. To follow is a detailed discussion of validation theory and how it is relevant to the

study.

Validation Theory

Originally applied to nontraditional and culturally diverse students and faculty behavior

toward them, Rendon's (1994) validation theory posited that "validating experiences" lead to

student's persistence and success in a college classroom. Rendon claimed that when a student

feels accepted and their worth in the classroom is validated, the student will be motivated to

persist and ultimately be successful. According the Rendon, validation occurs when faculty and

staff remind students that they are: capable learners, appreciated by the institution and play a

major role in their own learning. Other validating experiences can also come from interpersonal

relationships shared with peers and faculty and informal out of class faculty interaction and

progress feedback, also things that can lead to social integration in a classroom which is

necessary for persistence and success in a classroom (Anderson & Carta-Falsa, 2002; Astin,

1984; Martin & Dowson, 2010; Pascarella, 1980; Rendon, 1994; Schunk & Rice, 1990;

Terenzini, et al., 1993; Tinto, 1993, 1997). Validation theory has never been applied to

developmental reading repeaters; therefore, for the purpose of the study, validation theory will be applied to developmental reading repeaters in a classroom setting.

Rendon (1994) suggested that nontraditional students find it more difficult to connect to an institution because they lead nontraditional lives, meaning most attend school, hold full time jobs and take care of their families and households, as opposed to the traditional college student who may still live with his or her parents, may work a part time job and does not have family or household responsibilities like the nontraditional student. Therefore, nontraditional students require validation at some level so that they feel more secure in their academic endeavors (Rendon, 1994). The same can be said of developmental reading repeaters. Because of past failure, repeaters' ability is challenged, and they may require more validation than the typical developmental education student. Rendon pointed out that validation is, "an enabling, confirming, and supportive process initiated by in and out of class agents that foster academic and interpersonal development" (p. 44). Through academic and personal development, validation will occur and developmental repeaters will have a higher chance of becoming motivated, persisting and being successful.

Validation theory is relevant to my study because the idea of "validating experiences" can be easily applied to developmental repeaters. Similar to culturally diverse students who sometimes feel "out of place" in college because of their backgrounds or past negative academic experiences (Rendon, 1994), developmental repeaters could feel the same discomfort when faced with repetition. Not only do they feel the stigma of being a developmental student as previously discussed, but they also suffer the feeling of helplessness in the face of failure in a course they must eventually pass in order to move into college level coursework.

Validation theory has been used to frame studies on developmental education students, but never developmental reading repeaters (Stein, 2006; Young, 2002), hence more rationale for use of the theory. Stein (2006) used validation theory to frame her study on developmental education students' perspectives of individual and institutional attributes that lead to success. The participants for Stein's study, however, were Latino and attended a predominately Latino four year institution. The participants suggested that validation is an important attribute for an institution to have for students to be successful (Stein, 2006). Young (2002), on the other hand, did a study on the retention of underprepared students in community colleges. She proposed that retention of underprepared students in community colleges occurs through validation because so many students in community college settings are nontraditional and require validation in a learner-centered classroom in order to persist and be successful (Young, 2002).

To further exhibit the importance of "validation" and the need for students to feel capable and confident in their learning in order to be successful, Anderson and Carta-Falsa (2002) did a phenomenological study based on students and faculty perceptions of what makes faculty and student relationships effective. Although the researchers did not use Rendon's (1994) validation theory to frame their analysis, their findings agree with Rendon's proposition; both students and instructors seek: an open, supportive non-threatening, interpersonal classroom climate; collaboration and a desire to work together; and developed relationships with peers, all things that can lead to both motivation and social and academic integration (Anderson & Carta-Falsa, 2002; Ford, 1992; Rendon, 1994; Tinto, 1993).

My study exemplified the applicability of validation theory in studying developmental repeaters. Having validating experiences ultimately enhances a repeater's motivation, academic and social integration, persistence and successful completion of a developmental reading course.

These factors are important to better understand a repeater's perceptions of and experiences with developmental reading and repetition.

Summary

Based on the discussion of developmental education, repeaters, validation, motivation and persistence, there is a need for a deeper understanding of validation, motivation and persistence and the linkage of such to developmental repeaters. The study began the discussion and discovered, through repeaters' perceptions, what leads to motivation and persistence when faced with repetition in a developmental reading course and how motivation and persistence are impacted by repetition. In order to explain the direction in which I will take to gain knowledge on repetition, Chapter three follows and explains the methodology that was used to conduct the study.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of my study was to examine community college developmental repeaters'

stories about and experiences with repetition and what they believed led to persistence to

successfully complete a developmental reading course when they repeated it three or more times.

In addition, the study sought to explore repeaters' stories and beliefs about how their motivation

was impacted when they were faced with repeating a reading course three or more times.

Research Questions

The goal of my study was to elicit and examine developmental education repeaters'

stories about and experiences with repetition in developmental reading. In order to examine

these stories, I attempted to answer the following questions: What are developmental education

repeaters' stories about developmental reading courses and repetition of such? What are

repeaters' stories about what leads to persistence to successfully complete a developmental

reading course when repeating it three or more times? What are developmental education

repeaters' stories about how motivation to complete a course is impacted by their need to repeat

it?

Research Methods

I used qualitative research methods in order to elicit and study developmental reading

repeaters' stories about persistence and success when faced with repetition. Creswell (2005)

defines qualitative research as "a type of educational research in which the researcher relies on

the views of participants, asks broad, general questions, collects data consisting largely of words

from participants, and describes and analyzes these words for themes" (p. 39). Creswell (2005)

suggested that qualitative research methods are used when there is little information about an area of research and the nature of inquiry is based on participants' experiences with the unexplored area of research. My study focused on developmental reading repetition, and therefore sought to understand repetition through participants who had experienced such. Qualitative research methods were appropriate for the study as there is very little known about developmental reading repetition. The focus of the study was based on repeaters' stories about repeating a developmental reading course and what they believed led to their persistence to successfully complete it after repetition.

Research Design

The study was based on the examination of developmental reading repeaters' experiences with and stories about repeating developmental reading courses. I used a narrative research design in order to explore not only stories related to developmental reading repeaters, but also re-occurring themes regarding developmental education repeaters' experiences with and perceptions of how motivation and persistence are impacted when faced with repetition. Narrative research designs (Creswell, 2005) are used when the researcher wants to "describe the lives of individuals, collect and tell stories about people's lives, and write narratives of individual experiences" (p. 473). Narrative research also enables participants to tell stories that they believe are important to be heard (Creswell, 2005).

Narrative research designs have several characteristics. First, narrative research must occur in a specific setting (Creswell, 2005). The setting for my study was the developmental reading classroom at Local Community College. Another feature of narrative research design is that the stories told by the participants or "field texts" represent the raw data and "provide a lens for greater understanding" for the study; it is the stories that are eventually analyzed by the

researcher as she retells them (Bedford and Landry, 2010, p. 154; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Creswell, 2005). Finally, narrative research designs use literary elements such as setting, characters, actions, problem and resolution in order to tell a chronological accounting of the participants' experiences (Creswell, 2005).

Through narrative research design, I was able to give my participants a voice through retelling their experiences in literary form, while attempting to discover the meaning which they attached to those experiences (Creswell, 2005). I was eager to hear the stories of my participants based on their experiences in developmental reading courses, and likewise they were excited to tell their stories. In hearing their stories, I was curious to explore participants' experiences with repetition and whether validation and motivation played a substantial role in their academic and social integration in a course when repeating a developmental reading course when it was being taken again. Additionally, I wanted to investigate if integration led to persistence and successful completion of a course being repeated. Along with integration as a possible reason for persistence, I wanted to know if repeating a course was brought on by students' life circumstances as opposed to one's academic ability or a lack of effort put forth in the class or possibly something else. The possibilities were endless as to *why* students would repeat a course.

Narrative research was suitable for the study because the purpose of the study was to discover participants' stories about what leads to motivation and persistence when they were faced with repeating in a course and their perceptions of how motivation and persistence are impacted by class repetition. The rationale for a narrative research design was based on past studies. Past research on developmental education students (Duranczyk, 2007; Miller, 2000; Stein, 2006) used phenomenological research designs as well as narrative inquiry. Using similar

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research methods for the study was appropriate because it was an extension of developmental education research, making it more valid. It also provided the discovery of new knowledge on an unexplored area of developmental education, course repetition.

Site Selection and Gaining Access

Local Community College (LCC) is a two year, comprehensive community and technical college located in Southern Louisiana and has been in operation since the early 1990's. The college offers general education and occupational curricula that blend humanities, social sciences and natural sciences. Most students will graduate with an Associate Degree, yet those involved in workforce development training programs will gain practical knowledge Certificates of Completion (LCC,2010-2014 Strategic Plan). The college also serves a large population of dual-enrollment students. These are high school students who enroll in college level courses to receive college credit.

Despite LCC suffering devastating damages due to Hurricane Katrina and the subsequent flooding that occurred, the current enrollment has surpassed pre-Katrina enrollment numbers. The current student enrollment at LCC is 2,413 (LCC, 2010-2014 Strategic Plan); whereby 800 of these students are dual-enrollment as indicated above. The college serves a diverse population; 48% are traditionally identified minority students (African American, Asian, Latino-American), while 52% of the students are Caucasian. The age range of the students is between 18 to 65 years old. Currently, 67% of the population is female, and 33% is male. Approximately 35% of the student population at LCC must enroll in one or more developmental education courses; roughly 40 % of students who enroll in developmental education courses are faced with repetition. One of LCC's educational goals includes providing a program of developmental education for students who need to strengthen their academic skills (LCC, 2010-2011 Catalog).

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I am currently employed at LCC, and gaining access was not a problem. One of my Doctoral committee members suggested that rather than attempt to locate and recruit participants from among students I had never met, I might recruit participants from a site where there were students with whom I had developed a rapport. Thus my previous interaction with participants became a criteria aspect of my sampling procedures.

Creswell (2005) and Patton (1990) point out that purposeful sampling involves the researcher intentionally selecting individuals and sites in order to learn about and understand participants, their stories and how they are related to the research study in which they are involved. Participants in narrative research designs are critical to the study because they have had some type of experience with the issue being examined (Creswell, 2005).

There were two other major criteria for participant selection – (1) the participant must have been enrolled in a developmental reading course, and (2) the participant must have taken the reading course at least twice and either be in the process of attempting the course for a third time or have completed the course after three or more attempts. The criteria were used to select participants as the study sought to explore repeaters' stories about motivation and persistence in developmental reading upon repeating a course three or more times. The assumption was these were the students who were in most danger of dropping out due to lack of success in the course.

Four students from Local Community College were selected based on their repetition and completion of a developmental reading course. Specifically, two participants had successfully completed the course after three attempts and two were (at the time of data collection) attempting to complete the course for the third time; one in the beginning level and one at the exit level.

The justification for choosing the four participants is as follows. I believed that the completers would be able to provide me with data that would be more reflective and

retrospectively; upon reliving the past experiences in developmental reading due to repeating it, the participants had the ability to embrace the experience more so than the participants who were enrolled in the course during data collection. The completers had to think back on their experience and really dig deep into their psyches in order to remember how they felt during the developmental reading process. The participants in progress with repeating the course provided me with currently lived experiences, as they were enrolled in the class during the data collection process. This provided me with current data.

After IRB approval, I began my search for participants. Because I chose a site with which I was familiar, it was not difficult to locate participants. Additionally I received IRB approval at Local Community College. I was given information on students who repeated developmental reading. From the list, I was able to identify eight students who were repeaters. After contacting each of the eight students, I met with each of them to determine their willingness to participate in the study. Four of the six students met the criteria for the study, and were willing to participate. As a practitioner in the developmental education and community college population, I have developed relationships and a friendly rapport with students and other practitioners in the field. Therefore, the participants I selected were students who knew me, which made them more comfortable with the basis of the study and what I was attempting to research.

As mentioned earlier, Local Community College was also where I teach developmental education courses although I taught the participants in courses other than reading. Because of my prior experiences with these students, I developed strong student-teacher relationships with each one previously. Once the students agreed to participate, I obtained written permission from them by way of the Informed Consent Form (Appendix A). The form outlined what was expected of

participants, any risks associated with the research, and participants' rights regarding the study. We also discussed steps to be taken to ensure confidentiality and I shared my contact information and my committee chair's contact information in case they had questions as the study progressed (Creswell, 2005; Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2006).

Ensuring Confidentiality

Relationships are naturally developed between participants and researchers in qualitative research. The researcher generally "holds the power" in the relationship because it is the researcher who is ultimately reporting information obtained from participants (Glesne, 2006). In order to ensure confidentiality, I kept real names of participants, as well as settings anonymous. Pseudonyms were used in place of real names and places (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Creswell, 2005). I respected participants and their privacy and maintained that all information obtained through interviews and document collection remained confidential. All study related materials were locked in a file cabinet of which I am the only person with access (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Creswell, 2003, 2005; Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2006; Glesne, 2006). Data collected will be kept for approximately three years after the research study has been conducted the event I publish the research study findings. After three years, I will shred the data collected to further ensure confidentiality.

Role of the Researcher and Researcher Biases

The role of the researcher is extremely important in qualitative research due to the possibility of subjectivity. Furthermore, subjectivity should be constantly examined during the entirety of the research process to ensure the researcher's feelings will not influence participants' responses, and findings will remain valid and trustworthy (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Creswell, 2003; Glesne, 2006). Also, because of the interpretive nature of qualitative research and

narrative designs, as well as the continuous, intense relationships that will be built with participants, it was important for me to acknowledge biases and personal interests in the topic and participants of the study (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Creswell, 2003; Glesne, 2006). Additionally, it is also important in narrative research designs to not only acknowledge biases but also share common experiences we may have with the participants; this allows the researcher to use her experience to raise other possibilities of meanings (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Lyle, 2009). Because I am a former developmental math student, a developmental education professor in a community college setting, and a former teacher of the participants, I brought to my research personal experiences and biases pertaining to the students whom I am studying.

Researcher Experiences

Like many of the students, including the participants in this study and others enrolled at community colleges, I am from a low socioeconomic background. I was raised in a small town in Louisiana, and my family was extremely poor. Growing up poor inspired me to want to do whatever was necessary to make a better life for myself. My high school math teachers told me that I was not "college material," and I was not going to make it beyond the 12th grade. As a result, math became my least favorite subject. I had to enroll in the first level of developmental math during my freshman year in college. I passed the first level, but after enrolling in the second level of developmental math, I was unsuccessful and failed; I was embarrassed, ashamed and felt academically inadequate. These feelings are the same emotions that many students I work with share with me related to their developmental reading courses. Even today as I complete my dissertation to earn a doctoral degree, I doubt my own academic abilities and have a hard time accepting and admitting that I am smart and academically capable.

I enrolled in the second level of developmental math again and passed the second time. I believe I did so because of the support and help I received from my instructor, my tutor and my class peers. The research suggests these three groups of support systems play a large role in student validation, motivation, social and academic integration and eventually, persistence to succeed (Rendon, 1994; Stein, 2006; Tinto, 1993).

Due to my experience working closely with developmental reading students, I brought certain biases to my study. I am an advocate of developmental education, and I believe that developmental reading is one of the most important courses students can complete. Developmental reading is the foundation for students to develop skills that are lacking in their comprehension of material and in their ability to process what they learn. I also believe that there is more than academic effort that plays a role in a developmental reading repeater passing a course. The students I work with who are in enrolled in developmental reading are more often than not also enrolled in developmental math and English. They not only lack "skills" such as adding/subtracting, solving equations and/or writing sentences, they also lack the ability to think critically beyond what they see in the textbook or hear from an instructor. More often than not, they are afraid to think beyond what the instructor tells them. Effort, then, can only take them so far academically. As a developmental reading instructor, I've witnessed student repetition each semester. I have seen some students re-enroll in my class on multiple occasions. Some persist and others do not.

So that my biases would not influence my research, I used methods, such as reflexivity, to monitor my subjectivity (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Glesne, 2006; Hunt, 1987). Reflexivity suggests the researcher understand the research process and ability to manage opinions, assumptions and honesty during the study (Glesne, 2006; Hunt, 1987). Keeping a self-reflective

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journal was one way I developed a certain level of awareness of my own feelings, behaviors and their consequences on my research and participants (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Glesne, 2006; Moen, 2006). For example, through my journal I was able to write out my feelings towards developmental education from my perspective at the completion of participant interviews. I was able to identify with their situation and thereby see myself in their shoes. My journal represented a way to see those feelings in writing in order to help determine if they would cloud my interpretation of their stories.

Corbin and Strauss (2008) suggest that the qualitative researcher use her background and past experience to "provide the mental capacity to respond to and receive messages contained in data – all the while keeping in mind that our feelings are a product of data *plus* what the researcher brings to the analysis" (p. 33). Journaling allowed me to write down feelings, ideas, interpretations or connections to my own experiences that I expected to develop before, during and after data was collected.

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Data Collection

</div>

Using Analysis During Data Collection

Merriam (1998) states that good case study research requires the researcher to not wait till the end of data collection to analyze data but to use the information collected as a framework for guiding remaining data collection. During the course of this study, my plan was to simultaneously review data and use any responses from participants, reflections from my notes and general observations to shape the upcoming interviews and any future data collection activities. The data collected were intended to shape the final product through the analysis that took place during the interview process and beyond to ultimately arrive at the findings and outcomes in Chapters Four and Five (Merriam, 1998).

Triangulation as a Data Collection Method

Triangulation, or the use of multiple data collection and data analysis methods, was used to not only ensure trustworthiness, accuracy and increase confidence in study findings but also to provide deeper insight into participants and the meaning which they attached to their experiences of course repetition (Creswell, 2005; Glesne, 2006; Mathison, 1988). Meaningful data collection through many sources ensures that the identification of common themes can be triangulated against each data collection tool to assist in gaining more trustworthy data.

The interviews were held in one location that provided minimal distractions and possibility of by passers hearing the conversation or interfering with the data collection process. Each participant was interviewed three times during the process of the study. Between interviews, I conversed with each participant so that I could ensure my understanding of their stories was parallel to their own understanding (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Creswell, 2005; Glesne, 2006).

Participants were also asked to write one personal, reflective essay on the topics we discussed in our interviews. I will discuss, in a separate subsection, document collection and how I addressed problems I encountered, including valid data collection, during the document collection process. A brief discussion of each method of data collection, interviews and document collection is to follow.

Interviews

I conducted and recorded three face-to-face, in-depth interviews that lasted approximately 45 minutes with four participants selected for the study. The interview questions came directly from the Interview Protocol (Appendix B), and follow-up questions were generated in the process of individual interviews. Interviews were also used as a method of data

collection in past studies on developmental education students, and the studies gained insight into developmental education students' perceptions; therefore, I used the same method in hopes of gaining new insight and discovery based on repeaters' experiences with and stories about repetition in developmental reading (Duranczyk, 2007; Miller, 2000; Stein, 2002).

In-depth interviews allowed me to ask questions to begin discussion and gain information based on participants' understanding of, stories about and experience with course repetition. These interviews allowed me to *listen* to participants' stories as opposed to controlling what they said through structured question/answer discussions (Creswell, 2003; Glesne, 2006). Follow-up interviews were conducted later in the research timeline to validate findings and further clarify information obtained from participants in the initial interview process (Creswell, 2005; Patton, 1990).

Using several types of interview questions in qualitative research leads the researcher to rich, descriptive information from participants regarding a certain phenomenon (Creswell, 2003; Glesne, 2006; Patton, 1990). I used open-ended, unstructured questions (Appendix B) in an attempt to gain opinions and experiences of participants based on course repetition and developmental reading. I was careful to protect participants from feeling uncomfortable or obligated to discuss information they may have not be willing to discuss. It was very important to make the entire process comfortable to them as they were discussing subjects that may have been difficult for them to talk about. This level of comfort also was considered for the setting of the interview. The location of the interview also plays an important role in data collection.

Interview Setting

Miles and Huberman (1994) point out the importance of specifying where research, or in this case, interviews will take place and the events and processes that will occur during such

interviews. Because I used a narrative inquiry research design, it was important for me to ensure

the interviews and any other meetings or discussions with participants were informal and in a

relaxed setting (Creswell, 2003; Glesne, 2006). Narrative research is based on "collecting

stories" from participants; if participants are not comfortable, they may not be as inclined to

share their stories. Therefore, the interviews took place at a place that was determined to be

comfortable to the participant and met the criteria of ensuring proper data collection. Ironically,

all of the participants agreed to meet me in my office at the college. Since they were still on

campus, it was convenient for them to just stop by my office to talk between their classes or

outside their work schedules. The interviews were tape recorded, and I took notes during each

interview in a journal in order to keep my biases from heavily influencing my data. I also

highlighted relevant information that I wanted to refer to later during data analysis.

The interview protocol (Appendix B) included the instructions for the interview process,

possible interview questions and space for note taking (Creswell, 2005). Also included in the

protocol was a reminder to participants to sign a consent form authorizing permission to be

interviewed, as well as a statement ensuring confidentiality of the participants and the

information they provided during the interview (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Creswell, 2005).

Interview Protocol Development

The interview protocol development is important in the qualitative research and interview

process. Creswell (2003) suggests that interview protocols have the following components: a

heading, instructions to the researcher, research questions, probes to follow key questions,

transitional cues for the interviewer, and space to write researcher comments and reflections.

After reviewing the literature on developmental education students' perceptions (Duranczyk,

2007; Miller, 2000; Stein, 2006) and the reports on repeaters (Fenton, 2002; Windham, 1997;

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Gerda, 1995; New York City Technical College, 1995), I developed an interview protocol based on themes that were discovered in past research studies on developmental education students. The themes included: academic and social integration, confidence, developmental education as a stepping stone, validating factors, motivation, persistence, and outside responsibilities.

An interview protocol was developed with questions that could be casually asked to initiate the telling of a story by participants. Because research questions were comprised of what I wanted to understand, I wanted to make sure my interview questions were set up so that they would help me gain a better understanding of repetition (Glesne, 2006). I did not, however, want to constrict a participant's storytelling based on experiences in developmental reading by asking rigid questions, so I asked a question to begin discussion, and if something specific needed to be discussed, I asked the participant directly.

Preparing interview questions, according to Glesne (2006), is a process, and the questions must "fit the topic; the answers they elicit must illuminate the phenomenon of inquiry, and the questions must be drawn from the respondents' lives" (p. 82). Questions that must be asked include those that elicit experience/behavior, feelings, knowledge, sensory, and background/demographic questions (Patton, 2002). I wanted to ensure the participants discussed and shared experiences, behaviors and background information based on different concepts and themes discovered by other research of developmental education, (e.g. validating factors, motivation, social and academic integration and persistence) in addition to drawing on participants' lives during developmental reading course repetition. Therefore, I prepared interview questions as follows.

I created two interview questions based on validation theory, which included instructor standards and interaction. These questions allowed me to understand, through participants'

experiences, the importance and relevance of validation and whether it was, in fact, a key factor in a repeater's persistence and success as evidenced in Rendon's (1994) and Stein's (2006) studies on culturally-diverse students and developmental education students. Two questions were developed based on motivation, as seen in Miller's (2000) study of developmental math students' motivation, with sub-questions pertaining to goals, feelings, and personal self beliefs, which helped me gain insight into how participants believe motivation is impacted by course repetition. Social integration in a classroom setting was the focus of two questions, as was academic integration in a class setting. The integration questions focused on levels of interaction with peers and instructor, as well as class involvement, like study groups, in addition to questioning the level of academic involvement, such as studying, class preparedness, and successful test taking, as discussed as by Rendon (1994), Stein (2006), and Tinto (1993, 1997). These questions illuminated how participants' social and academic involvement in a class setting impacted their motivation and persistence when faced with course repetition.

Finally, two questions were centered on the overarching concept for the study, persistence. These questions allowed me to further investigate the participants' experiences with and stories about repetition of developmental reading courses to gain insight as to whether the aforementioned factors, validation, motivation, social and academic integration in a classroom setting, led to persistence (Tinto, 1994). Although, as a general guideline, I went into the study with a prepared set of interview questions, as noted earlier, the data collected during the ongoing analysis and discovery helped frame additional question development.

Using the Data to Shape Future Data Collection

In order to better prepare for subsequent interviews and challenge key themes that became apparent during the interview process, the process of analyzing the data during data

collection was used (Merriam, 1998). Even though this will be discussed in depth later in Chapter Four, one participant's experiences, for example, were to frame the next set of interviews. One participant discussed how her mother and family members were influences on her academic success or lack thereof. Her realization of this made me question whether or not I was raising a strong enough line of questioning regarding family when meeting with the next participants. Therefore, based on her discussion, I made sure to dive deep into family influence in subsequent interviews. Participant three discussed the impact of staff and faculty at her institution as relevant to her eventual success; therefore, it was important for me to incorporate questions based on staff and faculty influence on success. However, participant four did not address staff or faculty influence as motivating her to succeed, but she did mention the relevance of her kids and fiancé as motivators for success. In each of these examples, participants' responses to the set interview protocol allowed for deeper levels of inquiry and framed future discussions with the same participants and future discussions with remaining participants. These types of questions were also framed in the general language of the reflective essays that participants were asked to write.

To further confirm data, I asked all four participants to write reflective passages in the form of a personal essay based on different topics related to the study, such as motivation, goals, repetition, reading and teaching methods and classroom structure, which further enlightened my interpretation of participants' experiences with developmental reading and repetition.

Essay Writing

According to Creswell (2005), free writing and narratives can achieve the goals of collecting stories in narrative research. Bedford and Landry (2010) also suggest that in narrative inquiry, researchers can glean and use various types of field texts during a research study. One

type of field text is autobiographical writing in which participants "tell their stories though writing rather than orally (Bedford & Landry, 2010; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Therefore, each of the participants was asked to write a personal, reflective essay related to the research study.

As a way to further understand participants, their stories and lived experiences, I asked all participants to write a personal essay allowing their stories and experiences to come through in their own writing. The participants were provided a set of writing prompts (Appendix C) to assist them in developing their essays. All four of the participants had taken my English class at Louisiana Community College, and they knew how much I enjoyed "hearing" their voices in the form of an essay. All four participants agreed to provide an essay.

In order to ensure participants would produce valid data, I provided an incentive to them in the form of a $25.00 Visa gift card. I also asked the four participants to write autobiographical narratives addressing topics we had discussed in the interviews (Creswell, 2005). The participants who were in progress of completing developmental reading were asked at the end of the semester to outline their journey battling with several attempts trying to pass and finally passing a developmental reading course after repetition. The participants who had already successfully completed the course upon repetition three or more times were asked to write an autobiographical narrative outlining the same experiences; however, their narratives focused on their past experiences in the course. Also, I asked all participants to express what they believed led to success in a reading class when faced with repetition, as well as why they thought they were unsuccessful in the past.

Originally, I anticipated problems with asking for personal essays from participants given that they viewed "writing" about themselves a chore, but these problems did not occur. Given

my experience with developmental English and reading students, I knew that although they would be resistant to write, the resulting writing would be an honest depiction of the participants' experiences as told by the participants so that they would be heard and validated, things that developmental students need in order to persist and be successful (Rendon, 1994). Allowing the participants to express personal information freely and without judgment, criticism or a "grade" truly proved to unlock the barriers that create academic inadequacy in developmental education students (Hidi & Harackiewicz, 2000; Morris & Price, 2008; Stein, 2006).

I did not set time limits or any other boundaries, including checking for grammar or proper writing mechanics in the participants' writing, and I asked them to write in *their* voices. This was an attempt to allow them to have freedom of expression and a feeling of openness to unleash feelings, experiences and stories of developmental reading repetition. Some participants had poor mechanics in their writing, resulting in a lack of clarity, but I was able to address those ideas with them in person to clarify what each was trying to express. One of the participants, for instance, has dyslexia, and her dyslexia often inhibits her ability to write coherently (Appendix D). I had taught the participant in developmental writing, so I was well-aware of her writing problems. I did have to meet with her so that we could go through her essay together to make sure that my understanding of her essay correlated with her meaning. There were words whose meaning I was unsure of because of the spelling, so I asked her if the word was in fact what I assumed it to be. Words like "llsutors" puzzled me, and I assumed the word was actually supposed to be "tutors" because of its context; she verified that she was, in fact, trying to spell "tutors." Once I was able to ask her about some of the language issues, I was able to clarify any confusion I previously had with her essay.

Personal essays provided me with rich, thick descriptive data from participants which helped me better make sense of their feelings and perceptions of developmental reading repetition (Creswell, 2005; Glesne, 2006; Wolcott, 2001). These narratives also allowed me to give the participants a "voice," a key feature of narrative research, while reporting information in the language of the participants, something I was also able to do with the data collected from interview responses (Creswell, 2005). Analysis of interviews and essays allowed me to identify common themes based on participant reactions to and opinions of developmental reading repetition. Once my data were collected, I moved into the data analysis stage of qualitative research.

Data Analysis Methods

Data were analyzed using both scientific and humanistic approaches because I was the "human instrument" of data collection (Patton, 1990; Wolcott, 2001). Data were analyzed based not only on field notes and autobiographical notes, but also on stories derived from one-on-one, in depth interviews with participants and an evaluation of personal narratives collected from participants. Data analysis is an ongoing process and, therefore, was conducted during and after collection of data (Creswell, 2005). Creswell (2003) suggests several steps in the process of data analysis in qualitative research, which include organizing and preparing data for analysis, reading data, coding data, developing themes, discussing themes, and interpreting data and findings. I viewed each participant's story as an individual case and there was a possibility that similarities and differences could exist when looking at the cases together. Therefore, I used cross-case analysis to analyze the data.

Cross-Case Analysis Process

Miles and Huberman (1994) explained cross-case analysis as "a theory that does not forcibly smooth the diversity in front of us, but rather uses it fully to develop and test well-grounded sets of explanations" (p. 207). There was a need to understand the dynamics of each participant's case as opposed to just assuming that each participant would allude to the same circumstances, challenges and knowledge. My understanding of the dynamics emerged from synthesizing key factors mentioned by the participants that eventually became relevant to the theoretical framework for the study. Since each participant's circumstances, successes, failures and history would be relevant to his or her perceptions of and experience with repeating developmental education reading, it was necessary to allow each participants' story to be used as the measure of analysis in the study. Merriam (1998) suggests that the usage of individual participants as cases and the examination of their stories across other participants will assist in establishing external validity and possibly generalizability.

The cross-case analysis methodology literature points to a matrix approach of identifying the general themes, commonalities and differences that could exist if not examined together (Miles and Huberman, 1994). For example, using the table below as a framework, I was able to compare each participant's story as it related to the general themes that started to develop during data analysis. There were certain influences, such as parents, spouses, children and peers, on participants' academic pursuance the participants discussed during interviews and in personal narratives. These influences heavily impacted the participants' academic experiences. For instance, the table below is an example of how using a theme such as "Family Influence" was analyzed across participants. The "Descriptive Factors" along the left-side were identified as general theme definers to better coordinate the data collected and aid in analysis.

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Figure B: Family Influence on College Enrollment – Developmental Education Repeaters

Descriptive Factors	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3	Participant 4
Overall Positive				
Overall Negative				
Parental Influence				
Spousal/Significant Others				
Children Influence				
Siblings, Extended Family Influence				

It was necessary during data analysis to perform a broad analysis of cases' (participants) stories where all four data streams related to possible themes and were analyzed at once. There were also cases where only two of the participants were compared and contrasted through this method. In order to draw any conclusions or create particular findings as located in Chapter Four later in this document, it was necessary to stay "as close to the data" as possible starting with the transcription of the interviews.

Interview Transcription

I transcribed each interview within 36 hours of the interview. It was important for me as a narrative researcher to re-transcribe the data, searching for literary elements, including setting, characters, actions, problem and resolution, of the participant's story (Creswell, 2005). During transcription, I left space in the margins to write cursory remarks based on interview information (Creswell, 2005; Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Data Analysis Timeline

During the course of data analysis, it was important for me to follow a set procedure for data analysis considering that items from one participant may influence the questions asked to the next participant. After transcribing, I went through each interview and read it for initial flow and clarity making cursory markings in the margins to indicate references to concerns or experiences that seemed similar but somewhat out of sequence. As noted earlier, each interview was used in two distinct processes – one to help influence future interviews and then a second time for coding and ultimate data analysis.

I read the transcript a second time – this time noticing the repetition of certain words, such as "I knew I could do it", "I was disappointed, feeling stupid," and circling them as an initial code identifier for future discovery (Appendix E). After a third reading, I went back through the transcription and began to insert distinct codes near sections that shared commonality of meaning (Appendix E). In subsequent interviews, the process was repeated.

Finally, when all interviews were completely transcribed and coded, I began looking for terms circled in the previous interviews as well as the cursory notes from previous interviews to determine categories for the data. These categories did not begin to take on real meaning for me until after I had read each of the participants' stories and worked through the restorying process.

Because stories are often told out of sequence, it is important for the narrative researcher to "restory" the first-person accounts told by participants in order to highlight areas that may stand out. In doing so, the researcher may begin to make connections among the multiple sources of data obtained during the research study (Creswell, 2005). "Restorying" is the gathering of stories, analyzing them for key elements and rewriting the story in a chronological order of events (Creswell, 2005; Sandelowski, 1991). I "retold" each participant's story as I

understood it and as it was shared with me. As the researcher, I attempted to add structure and depth in meaning without inserting my own bias or beliefs.

In the process of restorying, I used multiple data streams, such as prior knowledge of participants from past experiences, information gathered from interviews and details from the reflective essays to show a complete enough picture of each participant. I also shared with each participant their interview transcriptions and personal essays to better confirm that data were being presented correctly as shown later in this chapter. Additionally, storyboarding and story maps were used (Appendix F-I) to better "see" the story from the participants. Law (2009) points out that "storyboards and story maps frame a process for reflecting on experience" (p. 2). Through storyboards and story maps, I was able to create a sequential, visual depiction of the story participants shared with me. It was during this stage that I began the coding process and thematic discovery (Creswell, 2005; Glesne, 2006; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 1990).

Coding

Coding is considered analysis or making sense of the data; it involves the researcher's dissections of transcriptions, notes, and documents and discoveries of relationships among them (Creswell, 2005; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Coding in qualitative research is less concerned with words but more concerned with the meaning behind those words (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Codes are tags and labels used to "chunk" information into categories of meaning and are used to compress data into themes, and in the case of narrative inquiry, into individual parts of a story (Creswell, 2005; Glesne, 2006; Miles & Huberman; Patton, 1990).

I read several pages of text then divided it into different segments of raw data, and in the case of narrative research, segments of individual stories (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Creswell, 2005). As I read through the texts, I asked questions, such as "Why does this person feel this

way?" or "what is this person really saying?" I "bracketed" particular sections of text that were of interest or directly related to repetition and my research questions (Bedford & Landry, (2010); Creswell, 2005; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Because I am a visual learner, I used different colored highlighters to show "color connections" among the four participants' stories, which also helped me keep data organized. For instance, I used a yellow highlighter representing the first read of the transcription. I used a purple highlighter to code a word or statement that represented emotions, and I used an orange highlighter to represent an example of a support system or motivation for the participant. From reading, bracketing and highlighting, I was able to develop codes as seen in coding scheme in appendices to better categorize and search for patterns in the data (Glesne, 2006) (Appendix J).

Codes were based on setting, emotions, activities, relationships and participants' ways of thinking or knowing about themselves or about their experiences with others in academic contexts (Creswell, 2005; Miles & Huberman, 1994). According to Creswell (2005), researchers may start with 30-40 codes in the beginning stages of the coding process, but the end result of coding is to condense them to 5-7 themes, which will be made up of similar codes that form one idea. These themes are discovered through categorizing data from participants that are most often discussed; maybe many of the participants suggest the same idea, and this could become a theme (Creswell, 2005). Through thematic coding, I discovered six themes, which allowed me to come to a new understanding of repetition in developmental reading based on experiences and stories shared by participants (Creswell, 2005).

I used description and thematic discovery to further analyze the stories of the participants. Once the initial draft of each story was written, I coded the actual stories as a way to further uncover themes. I used the words and language of the participants to explain the six themes I

discovered in the stories, which allowed the participants' stories to come alive (Creswell, 2003, 2005; Glesne, 2006; Miles & Huberman, 1994). I used concept and story mapping and storyboards, as previously discussed, in order to create a visual depiction of the concepts and stories that both influenced and affected the study (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2006; Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Trustworthiness

There are many strategies used in qualitative research in order to ensure trustworthiness of data before and during data collection. The strategies helped to ensure accuracy, as two methods of data collection - interviews and personal essays, were being utilized (Creswell, 2003, 2005; Glesne, 2006; Mathison, 1988; Miles & Huberman, 1994). This is important because it showed that the researcher was not relying on one method alone for information from participants.

Member Checking

I used member checking and collaborated with participant-storytellers as a method of assuring trustworthiness of findings. In this process, I asked all four participants to review the precision of my accounting and understanding of their experiences based on the stories they told me (Creswell, 2005; Glesne, 2006; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Once I analyzed the data and "restoryed" participants' experiences, I emailed participants a draft of their stories and asked them to read them and give me feedback so that they could make sure I accurately documented what we recorded during our interview.

It was more convenient to email the participants their stories than to meet with them because it was during the Christmas holiday season when I began to write my findings, and the participants were not available to meet. They emailed me with their feedback, which was made

up of comments, such as Jason saying, "Ms. O., you mentioned that I was mad with my teacher when I failed reading, but I wasn't. I was mad with myself." And Jessie corrected me by saying, "I hated English in high school; you said that I loved it. I said I was good in it, but I did not like it! I'm a math person." These comments changed the participants' stories a little. For instance, thinking that Jason was angry with his teacher made me believe that he blamed the teacher for his past failure in reading. This would have led me to believe that he was not taking responsibility for his failing and his decision to stop attending his classes. This idea changed once I learned that he was, in fact, angry with himself, which led me to understand that he did indeed take responsibility for his failing reading. Additionally, Jessie's comment about hating English also changed a piece of her original story. If she would have loved English, as I originally thought, it would have made me question why she had so many problems in reading. It made more sense to me when she clarified that she did not enjoy English, and pointed out that she was a "math person."

Based on the participants' comments, I made the necessary changes in order to be true to what they originally shared with me. As I made changes, I sent the changes back to the participants to make sure the newer versions were accurate based on what they told me and based on their experiences. Once I was certain that their words and beliefs were accurate, I wrote up a final draft of each story, sent each participant a copy to be read one last time. Upon their final read, they approved what I wrote and gave me the "okay" that the story was true, accurate and to their liking.

Member checking encouraged me to present and share my findings, and to ask the participants if my descriptions of story elements, such as settings, characters, actions, problem and resolution, participant experiences and language were accurate and realistic, as well as to ask

them to clarify anything they may have stated during the interview (Creswell, 2005). Member checking further solidified and validated the trustworthiness and accuracy of the narrative description (Creswell, 2005; Glesne, 2006; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Peer Debriefing

Peer debriefing, which involves locating a peer to review and reflect on the study findings and emerging themes, was also used as a method of validity (Creswell, 2003; Glesne, 2006). As Crewell (2003) suggests, peer debriefing allows for the research to be remembered by people and accepted among a larger population other than the researcher. I asked two of my peers who share similar research interests to review my research study and findings in order to ensure that everything I claimed and the reasoning behind those claims were clear and accurate. One of my peers is a colleague who teaches developmental English and reading at my institution. The other is a colleague and doctoral candidate, and she also teaches developmental reading courses. They reviewed my research and findings, gave me feedback related to better articulating some of the participants' stories' findings, and this again reinforced trustworthiness and accuracy of my narrative inquiry and my research study.

Outcomes of Study

The outcomes of the study were based on information obtained from the participants through their stories, interviews and any informal meetings with them. The outcomes of the study will have the potential to help developmental education faculty better understand the needs of developmental students and sensitivity of repetition. The outcomes may also serve as a catalyst for discussion on repetition and developmental education, an area of research that is lacking in developmental education literature. The findings of the study helped me, a developmental education faculty member in higher education, understand some of the reasons

students are unsuccessful upon their first and second attempts at passing a developmental reading course.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

The purpose of my study was to examine community college developmental reading repeaters' stories about and experiences with what leads to persistence to successfully complete a developmental reading course when repeating it three or more times. Additionally, the study sought to explore repeaters' beliefs of how their motivation was impacted when faced with repeating a reading course three or more times. Participants' responses unveiled the answers to the research questions that were the driving force for the study. The questions were: What are developmental education repeaters' stories about developmental reading courses and repetition of such? What are repeaters' stories about persisting in and attempting to successfully complete a developmental reading course when repeating it three or more times? What are developmental education repeaters' stories about how motivation to complete a course is impacted by their need to repeat it? The participants' responses validated the framework for this study. An in depth discussion of participants' beliefs will follow in the next section of the chapter.

Chapter four focuses on an analysis of the participants' responses through retelling their stories about their experiences with repeating developmental reading. It will also discuss participants' stories, tell of how their motivation and persistence were impacted by their repetition, as well as uncover themes that emerged from their stories. The chapter is divided into several sections. The first section of the chapter will introduce the four participants in the study. The second section of the chapter will tell the participants' stories about developmental reading

and repetition and the many challenges they faced during their journeys through developmental reading. The third section will report on the themes that were discovered during analysis of participants' stories. The themes are: "I was disappointed in myself;" "It was time for me to prove that I could do it, for me, my family, and my kids;" **"I was focused on other things, and school was not one of them;"** "It's not about being smart; it's about believing in yourself;" "When it comes to motivation, I look to my family, friends and teachers;" "I need to move around, talk to other students, hear others' ideas in groups and talk to my teacher sometimes if needed."

Participants

Four participants were selected for the study. As per the criteria initially set forth for participant selection, two participants were in the process of completing developmental reading a third time during data collection, and two participants had already completed developmental reading a third time. One participant attended Local Community College and graduated May 2011; the other three participants were currently enrolled in Local Community College, a small college in Southern Louisiana which will be referred to as Local Community College (LCC). Neither race nor sex was considered when selecting participants. All of the participants were between the ages of 19-26, and aside from the graduate, the other three participants were full time students at the same community college. Participants' majors ranged from Nursing to culinary arts, to general studies, and each participant had to enroll in reading three times prior to successfully passing. Table 2 below includes a visual picture of participants and the following information: age, race, gender (GDR), whether a first generation college student, major, full or part time student, year in college, number of attempts in reading before successfully passing, and whether they were completers or in progress of taking developmental reading.

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Table 2: Profile of Participants

	Age	Race	GDR	First generation college student?	Major	Full-time or part-time	Year in college	# of attempts in DEVR prior to passing	Completed or in progress
Participant 1: Sierra	26	Black	F	Yes	Culinary Arts	Full time	2nd	3	In progress (passed and completed)
Participant 2: Jason	19	Black	M	No	General Studies	Full time	2nd	3	In progress (passed and completed)
Participant 3: Jessie	24	White	F	Yes	Medical Billing & Coding	Full time	Graduate	3	Completed
Participant 4: Terry	23	White	F	Yes	Nursing	Full time	3rd	3	Completed

*DEVR = Developmental Reading

Uncovering the Stories

Upon starting this research journey, I was not sure which direction I would take to properly present my participants' stories. I developed quite a relationship with my participants, and it was because of the bond we shared during the research process that I was able to get *real* and *rich* stories from participants about their experiences with what seemed, at first according to their abilities, not so much of a big deal – reading and repetition. What was uncovered was what I was hoping for, such as discussions of past academic experiences, but experiences I did not intend to hear about, such as family influence on academic experiences, were illuminated through each participant's story.

Bedford and Landry (2010) point out that it is important in narrative inquiry for the researcher to be "knowledgeable about the cultural contexts that shape their participants and their stories" (p. 154). It was important for me to know about my participants' cultural and family backgrounds and childhood experiences because their experiences and academic preparedness were heavily impacted by their parents and background. Not only was I able to "collect data" for my study, but my participants also had self-discoveries and learned about themselves through our conversations based on developmental reading, repetition, and motivation.

The following stories represent a retelling of what I learned during my interviews with each participant. Names were changed to protect the privacy of each participant. In order to truly understand each participant and his or her experience, I also include in the stories a description of our conversations and some background information. Prior to each story, I include a short biography of each participant.

The Meeting Place

Each participant and I met for interviews in my office because that seemed to be the place where all of them, by admission, were most comfortable. My office is large and has a window that overlooks the front of the college and its main parking lot. Also, if one looks out of the window, she can see students arriving and leaving the campus. Decorating the walls of my office are posters of movie stars, some of my favorite framed poems, and copies of cartoons about teachers. Never do I use the main lights in my office; it is lit by a tall floor lamp that provides dim lighting and sits in the corner of my office behind an old wooden rocking chair. Next to the chair is a small, antique end table where my office phone and a few books sit. And finally, always playing on my computer is low music from Pandora Radio, which plays songs that range from rap music to old rock.

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I constantly have students in my office; they come to meet with me for tutoring and mentoring sessions, as well as to discuss personal issues they may be having or when they just need someone with whom to talk. Students are always welcomed in my office, even if they want to sit in there and do their work to avoid the distractions of their peers. On several occasions, each of the participants had been to my office to talk about personal issues when they were in one of my classes (other than reading) in the past. I suppose our one-on-one conversations in my office in the past gave them a sense of comfort and safety, which is why I believe they were all agreeable to meet in my office for interviews.

Participant 1: Sierra

I taught Sierra a year and a half ago in the fall of 2010, in a developmental English II course; this was the same semester Sierra was enrolled in developmental reading for the first time. It was then when we first met and began to develop a teacher-student relationship. Sierra and I used to have extensive one-on-one tutoring sessions between her classes where I would help her with her essays, as well as help her with reading her novels for her reading class. We also met to discuss personal problems Sierra was having. I learned that when Sierra discusses something personal or something that makes her uncomfortable, she often laughs, which I find interesting. It is almost as though laughing is a defense mechanism for her. It was during our first semester together that Sierra and I developed a bond.

Sierra is about 5'3', wears braids in her hair, and wears glasses. She always has a smile on her face. When she was in my English class, she would often look at the board and me with a puzzled look on her face. I knew she was often confused because she told me of her difficulties with English early in the semester, so I did try to give her extra help to alleviate her confusion. Despite the tutoring and extra help, Sierra failed developmental English II the first time and had

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to repeat it. Sierra did not give up. The following semester, she re-enrolled in developmental

English II, as well as in the developmental reading class she had also failed, she started fresh. It

was during this semester I noticed Sierra's resilience. She refused to quit, and when she did not

understand something, she asked.

After every class, Sierra was always the student waiting to speak with me concerning

something for which she may have needed further clarification. I helped her with all of her

essays, and she even sought tutoring outside of class. She passed developmental English II the

second time; however, she did not have the same experience in reading. She failed reading a

second time in the spring 2011 semester, but still, she never gave up. From our first semester to

the present, Sierra and I have continued to meet regularly for tutoring and mentoring sessions.

We are still very close, and when I asked her to be a part of my study, she happily agreed.

Sierra is a 26-year-old, black female from Louisiana and a single mother of three

children, 8, 5 and 2 years old. She is a devoted parent and is living with her parents until she is

finished with school. She wants nothing more than to one day be able to support her children

without the help of her parents and to be a strong role model for them. Sierra originally wanted

to become a nurse one day, but through her discovery about her learning difficulties over the past

couple of semesters, she realized she was not academically comfortable with the nursing

coursework, so she decided to major in culinary arts. She is currently in her second year of

college.

Sierra and I shared three in depth interviews and a few 15-minute chats during the fall

2011 semester when I was collecting data. Each time Sierra and I met, we met in my office on

the campus of Local Community College where I teach and where she is a full time student. It

was Sierra's idea to meet in my office because it was convenient and comfortable for her. I have

taught Sierra in writing classes in the past, and over the last few semesters, we have developed an excellent rapport. She did not hesitate to discuss her experiences with me. Sierra has never cared for reading because, according to her, she was never a strong reader. It did not surprise her when she tested into developmental reading. To follow is a retelling of Sierra's story and her experiences with developmental reading and repetition.

Sierra's Story: A 'Hard Learner,' but Learning

She stared at the board wondering why she didn't understand what the teacher was explaining. She had been working so hard in the class all semester, but still, she just couldn't "get it." She never missed a homework assignment, nor did she miss a day of class. She failed all of her tests, though. One of the requirements to pass the class was to not only have a 70 average at the end of the semester but also to increase in grade equivalencies on a standardized test, the Nelson-Denney. Sierra remained at a 5th grade vocabulary and comprehension level, the same level where she started in the beginning of the semester.

It was the end of the semester, and she was almost positive she was not going to pass the class. Puzzled and concerned, she approached the teacher after class to ask if there was any chance she could pass the class. The teacher opened her roll book and slid her index finger across Sierra's column to observe all of her grades earned throughout the semester. "It doesn't look good, Sierra," the teacher said sadly. "Yeah, I figured that!" Sierra replied with a nervous laugh. She dropped her head, walked back to the table to put her books in her school bag, placed the bag on her shoulder and proceeded to the classroom door to leave. The teacher stopped her just as she was putting her hand on the doorknob and said, "Next semester, Sierra, you will pass this reading class! I am personally going to make sure of it." "Okay. I'll be here because I am

not giving up," Sierra said smiling. But to herself, she said, "I was so disappointed in myself because I really tried and thought I would at least get a C."

Sierra would be going through an identical experience the following semester, failing reading a second time. Sierra's journey in developmental reading started in the fall 2010 semester. She was never a strong student in school; she struggled academically in elementary school, middle school and high school. Sierra was well aware of her learning issues at an early age. Sierra reflected on her learning when I asked her about her past academic experiences, and she said, "It's rough being a hard learner. My learning skills is way off 'cause of the type of learning I had up in high school and middle school. The teachers just didn't care." When she entered college, she knew she was going to have a hard time, and she was not quite prepared for the rigors of college course work.

In high school and middle school, Sierra always needed someone to read to her – she always, since she could remember - had IEPs (individual education plans) in school, but she never thought anything of it, nor did her parents. "You gonna get over this hump and succeed; this is just a phase, Sierra," her mother would tell her. But in retrospect, Sierra feels that if her mother had done something about her learning problems when she was a kid, perhaps she would not have had so many problems with learning as an adult. In her personal essay, Sierra wrote: "It's not my fault. If my parents would have took the time out and got us help, it wouldn't be hard to understand and some professors would not look down on us."

Reality set in when Sierra entered college, and she began to discover that her learning issues were much more than a phase; they were her academic reality and weaknesses as a student. Upon entering college, Sierra took a placement test to identify what level of English, reading and math she would have to take to begin her college coursework. Sierra tested into the

first level of developmental English, the first level of developmental math and the second level of developmental reading. She was a classic "multi-tier" developmental student. But that did not discourage her, nor did it interfere with her goals or her level of motivation to earn a college degree. Sierra was motivated by her kids and her desire to prove to herself that she could become academically capable despite her past educational experiences.

Sierra took developmental reading three times, and on her third attempt, she was finally successful. She reflected on her first attempt in developmental reading and claimed that it was "rough" to say the least. Although she did all of her assignments, she hesitated to get involved in the class by working with her peers and asking questions. She also hesitated to ask for help. In retrospect, Sierra knows she should have gotten tutoring in reading during her first attempt, but at the same time she could not because of her life's circumstances, as she stated.

> I didn't seek [tutoring]. I have kids; I just have another life. I have to work
> around my mamma's schedule with work and she give me rides to school. It was
> just too hard to even try to get tutoring after classes; my schedule just would not
> allow it.

Because she could not seek tutoring at school, she sought it at home with her cousin. Sierra's cousin would "break it down" more on Sierra's level of understanding. One-on-one worked well for Sierra, and she knew it would be even better if it were one-on-one with her teacher, but she could not do it because of her schedule and kids. As a result of her academic struggling, she failed developmental reading during her first attempt, but she refused to give up.

The very next semester, spring 2011, Sierra enrolled in developmental reading for the second time. As she walked in the classroom, she did not see any familiar faces. She felt "stupid," as she proclaimed during our interviews. She sat in the class with the same teacher,

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which did not bother her because she was already familiar with her teaching methods, which in her eyes, would give her a head start in the class. Listening to the teacher review the syllabus, her expectations and the concepts she would be covering during the semester, Sierra thought to herself, "This shit again!" She had heard all of this before - context clues, main ideas, supporting details – she heard it all. But, she did not quite grasp it.

Sierra's second attempt in developmental reading went much like her first attempt. Sierra was still hesitant to get involved in class, but "I knew I had to do something because what I had did last semester obviously didn't help me," she reflected. One day, Sierra was sitting in class and the teacher decided to put the students in groups. Sierra, uncertain since she was "not much of a sociable person when it comes to strangers," moved into a group but did not say much. She gazed at the other students trying to absorb the discussion based on their understanding of the concepts they were reviewing that day in class, but still, she did not say anything. "I just sat there, like I did when I was in middle school. I was scared I was going to say something stupid and wrong," she said. Sierra was beginning to lose her motivation and desire to even stay in school, but she knew she had to be in school. Her goals were to set an example for her kids and prove to them, herself and her family that she was a capable learner. Sierra reflected on her desire to be better for her kids.

> I needed to show my kids that I was getting mines and eventually one day they needed to do the same if they wanted more out of life. It was bad enough that my nine year old son understood the stuff I was learning in reading better than I did.

Proving to herself that she was academically capable was going to take more than just sitting in the class and listening. She failed reading a second time, and again, Sierra was overcome by a wave of disappointment. She recalled:

I was just thinking, 'Man, I really need to get out of this class.' I was so

disappointed and upset that I failed, *again.* I was disappointed in myself; I was

disappointed that I could not learn like everyone else for some reason. And

nobody made it a big deal. My teacher just tried to tell me it's gonna be okay and

said she would help me next semester. I felt kind of helpless.

The very next semester, fall 2011 quickly approached, and Sierra walked into her reading

class for the third time with the same teacher she had the two previous times in reading. But

what was different this time in reading class was Sierra's attitude. Rather than feeling "stupid"

as she said she did the first two times, she felt more motivated than ever. Sierra said:

I was just like, 'shoot I better get it this time! I done did this twice!' I knew the

things she [the teacher] was going to be talking about; I knew what she wanted us

to know. I *have* to get it this time. I am not about to sit through this class a fourth

time.

She sat in her desk, took her books out and was ready for reading, even though it was for a third

time. This time, though, she remembered what she had been learning the past two semesters in

reading class. This time, she raised her hand, asked questions, and worked in groups where she

shared her questions and ideas with her classmates. She also stayed after class and talked to her

teacher; she asked her questions if she was still confused and arranged regular tutoring sessions

with her teacher between classes so that her rides would not be affected. Additionally, Sierra

was working hard on her reading assignments at home. This time, Sierra was clearly aware of

her learning difficulties and what she needed to do in order to be successful in reading during her

third attempt. Through all of this, Sierra began to deeply explore her learning issues; she wanted

to know "what was wrong with [her]," as she stated in a somber tone.

Sierra was sitting at her kitchen table with her son who is in third grade. He handed her his homework directions and asked her to help him. As she read the directions, she realized she did not quite understand them. She gave them back to her son and asked him to read the directions to her as she had done in the past during her previous educational experiences. He did, and still, she did not quite understand them. Sierra explained what she was feeling in that moment.

> I understood it, but I really did not. I felt really stupid because my son is in third grade! Here I am in developmental reading a third time and my third grader needs help, and I can't help him. I just knew something had to be wrong with me.

Shortly after that experience with her son, Sierra's English teacher at the time, with whom she shared a bond, approached her and asked if she had ever been tested professionally for a learning disability. Despite the fact that she had IEPs in middle and high school and was in special education classes, Sierra did not remember if her mother had ever had her tested outside of school. Sierra said:

> Having IEPs made me think less of my abilities…if my mamma would've got me help when I was younger, I could've done better, but she always told me I would get over that [learning] hump, but I never did get over it.

Sierra also said in her personal essay that her self-esteem was low, which she felt held her back, because of the poor academic experiences she had due to her learning disability. She wrote:

> I feel like my self-esteem is a setback. My self-esteem hurt me because I think it's the end of the world. It's difficult to understand my work or my assignments. The feeling of never going to get things done can be frustrating.

The moment her teacher discussed testing with her was the moment that Sierra was prompted to take action for herself. She decided to get tested for a learning disability. The tests revealed that Sierra did indeed have a learning disability; she was diagnosed with dyslexia and ADHD.

Sierra learned of her disability midway through the fall 2011 semester, and we met soon after. Compared to our initial meeting, Sierra's feelings about her abilities and the way in which she described her learning changed. Learning about her learning disability created a fire in Sierra. Instead of feeling discouraged because of her learning problems as she had all of her life, she felt relieved because she now knew that she was far from "stupid" or "slow," words she often used initially to describe her feelings about herself and her abilities. "I don't ever want that [learning disability] to affect me. I just want to complete college and go on with my career," Sierra said.

According to Sierra, she "feels different" this semester. She proclaimed,

> Right now, I feel a whole lot better and a whole lot more motivated and comfortable. Even though it's the same teacher, I'm still on the right track. I just know that I can do it, and I'm gonna do it.

And she is right. Upon learning of her issues, Sierra went to the educational bookstore to purchase study aids and workbooks she thought would help her with reading concepts. She would do a page in the workbook and give it to her third grader son to check. One day, he checked a page and looked at her when he was done and said, "Oh mamma! You really getting it," then high fived her and put a smiley face on her paper, a perfect example of how and why her kids motivate her so much.

Sierra is more focused and motivated now more than ever. When she is in class, she said she does nothing but works. She even formed a study group with her classmates outside of class.

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Even though she thinks having a learning disability "…sucks, [she] is glad [she] found out about it because [she] is here doing something, and education won't hurt."

Sierra's teacher praised her more than ever this semester for her efforts because she did not give up. Her teacher told her things like, "Oh, you're getting it now, huh?" and would smile at her. Sierra said, "That made me feel better and more motivated because before [last semester] it was like, 'boy it's rough!' But now I can see that I have really come a long way." The teacher also, as Sierra wrote in her personal essay, helped her motivation in class. She wrote, "The teachers are there for motivation and kept me focused on achieving my goals." The teacher's acknowledging Sierra's effort increased her motivation and encouraged her to not only immerse herself into the class and its content, but also to persist and get through the class successfully.

One day, the teacher decided to put the students in groups to review their vocabulary words and use them in sentences. Sierra sat in the group and excitedly talked about and shared her sentences. She became the leader in the group, which motivated her. The ultimate motivation came, however, when one of her classmates in the group looked at her and said, "Dang, Sierra! You know this!" Sierra replied, with a big smile on her face, "Yeah girl, I do. Finally!" Unlike in the past when interaction in class made Sierra feel shy and embarrassed, she became proud and outspoken. She discovered that embracing the interaction with her classmates actually helped her learn and understand concepts in reading better.

Finally, Sierra felt as though she "got it" during her last semester in reading. She believed in herself and is currently focused on her goal to complete college and be a role model to and set an example for her kids. At the same time, she has proven to herself that although she has learning difficulties, she can still succeed academically. These things have led to Sierra's high level of motivation and determination. In addition, her teacher also felt and acknowledged

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that Sierra "got it." She continuously praised her for her hard work during the semester, gave her one-on-one tutoring and encouraged her to not give up. Sierra claimed in her essay that she feels as though some teachers "look down" on her or students who have trouble learning. She wrote,

> Professors look down on us. They need to find a way to seek help for the challenged students before they judge the students. They need to take time with those students to understand where they are coming from and what their background is.

For Sierra, if a teacher acknowledges a student is having learning difficulties and takes time with him or her, as her reading teacher did during her reading class experiences, then students like her can reach success. This validation from the teacher led to Sierra's being comfortable in her reading class. Motivation and encouragement from her teacher led Sierra to persist through and successfully pass her reading class upon her third attempt. She successfully completed developmental reading the fall 2011 semester with a passing grade of C.

Participant 2: Jason

Jason and I met the fall 2010 semester at LCC; it was his first semester in college. During that semester, he was a student of mine in development English II. This was also the same semester when he was first enrolled in developmental reading II. I was immediately impressed by Jason because of the essay he wrote on the first day of class. I asked the class to write an essay based on what they believe the word *success* means. Jason's essay was amazing. He discussed some of his idols, like Bill Gates and claimed that they were examples of success in his eyes because they started from nothing. He too wanted to be one of those people who started from nothing but made something out of their lives despite their circumstances.

Jason is about 6'1', has long dreadlocks and wears small, silver framed glasses. When he would sit in class to write his essays, his dreads would fall right across the frame of his glasses; I always noticed this because he would sit in the front of the class, and as he wrote, he would constantly push his hair away from his face. Jason was always the student in class who had something profound to say when we would discuss topics; he was the student in class who everyone looked to for help on their essays, and he never turned students down when they went to him for help. He was also somewhat of a class clown. He used to crack silly jokes in class and make attempts to have me to let the class out early. It was a regular occurrence for me to walk into class and hear Jason say, "Good morning Ms. O'Dell. You look lovely today. Can we leave early?" The class would always expect him to do that, and they would always laugh at him, as would I.

About three weeks before the end of the fall 2010 semester, Jason stopped coming to class. I did not understand why, because he had been such a wonderful student. Students are required to turn in essay portfolios (which are considered the final exam for the class) at the end of the semester, and if they do not, they automatically fail the class. Considering Jason had a B average in my class, I did not want to see him fail at the end of the semester because he did not turn in his folder. I saw too much potential in him as a student. I also taught one of Jason's friends, and I approached him and asked him if he knew why Jason was not coming to school. He said he didn't know, and I asked him for Jason's cell phone number. I called Jason and told him that he needed to talk to me immediately at school, and he did. He came into my office, and he told me he stopped coming because he was looking for a job. I told him he needed to turn in his folder of essays, and I was not going to leave him alone until he did.

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He turned in his folder on the last day of class, and he ended the semester with a B. Unfortunately, he never did go back to his reading class, and he failed the class. Since then, I have kept my eye on Jason and his progress because as I said, I see potential in him. Our bond has strengthened over time, and I believe the rapport I have developed with him is largely due to the interest I showed in him and my refusal to watch him fail. When he was asked to participate in my study, his reply was, "It would be a pleasure, Ms. O."

Jason is a 19-year-old male from a small town in Louisiana. He has no kids and lives with his parents. He is in his second year at Local Community College and is majoring in general studies. He has high hopes to one day transfer to a four year institution to major in Herpetology, the study of amphibians and reptiles. Jason also envisions himself one day inspiring and being a role model for the youth in his neighborhood and those who believe education is not for them. Unlike the other participants in the study, Jason has always excelled academically and has always loved to read, and he was never a "light" reader. Jason enjoys reading books that could help him change his life and motivate him to want more. Some of his favorite books include *The Forty Eight Laws of Power* and *A Million and One Pieces*.

Despite his youth, Jason is extremely mature and feels grounded and focused on "doing the right thing" and staying in school. He has a bubbly personality, is always smiling and is liked by everyone, including his teachers. This is evident on campus. When Jason walks down the halls, he is often walking with a group of males and females, and generally shakes the hands of other students in passing if he knows them. His peers form the local community, many who are either drug dealers or in jail, according to Jason, have told Jason that their life is "not for him," and he needs to stay in school because he has a "good mind" and can "be the one [out of him and all of his friends] to make it in school and life." He has always been praised by his

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family, peers and teachers for being highly intelligent, although he is modest and hesitates to admit his high level of intelligence to himself.

Our three in-depth interviews and short chats in between took place in my office, because like the other participants, Jason was most comfortable with meeting in my office between his classes. I knew Jason from teaching him in one English class, and I was well aware of his capabilities. Again, like Sierra, Jason was comfortable with me because he had been in class with me, so it seemed easy for him to open up and share his experiences. I was excited to have one-on-one conversations with Jason, because I was curious why such a smart young man was failing and repeating a reading class he originally did not have to take. I learned a lot about Jason and the reasoning behind his failure and repetition of reading. To follow is Jason's story and his experiences with developmental reading and repetition.

Jason's Story: The Visionary

The son of two parents who attended college but never earned a degree, Jason was the kid who was going to make a difference. Although college was stressed in his household, no one outside of his home really ever told Jason that he *should* attend college. Jason reflected on his high school experience and how it impacted his view of college.

> In high school, I just didn't really hear about college. Nobody told me in high school that you have to go to college or not. Nobody said that it would better yourself to go to college. Nobody told me that.

Jason's parents did stress college, and they prompted his interest and enrollment in college. There is a bit of irony in Jason's story. He originally tested out of developmental reading, but he chose to stay in the class in order to improve his reading speed. Unfortunately, he failed the class twice before taking it a third time in the fall 2011, the semester I was

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collecting data, and finally passing. Jason, however, did not regret staying in the class, nor did

he necessarily regret failing it twice. Jason was well aware of the mistakes he made in school,

and he was disappointed in himself for making "foolish" decisions, as he called them, as will be

seen in the retelling of his story.

His long dreadlocks caressed the edges of his silver framed eye glasses. He looked down

at the standardized test he had to take on the first day of his reading class, smiled and thought to

himself, "Hmm…this is going to be easy." The next class meeting, he walked into the

classroom, and the teacher gave back the results of the test. "You tested out of the class, Jason,"

the teacher said to Jason as she handed him his test.

"Really? So what I gotta do now?" Jason asked. The teacher, walking and talking at the

same time said over the other students' chatting, "You have to go to the admissions office and

add another class in place of this one."

"Nah," Jason said. "I'm just gonna stay in this class. I need to make my reading speed

faster." Proud to have tested out of the class, Jason still chose to stay in the developmental

reading class in order to improve his reading rate. What he was unaware of was that

developmental reading required a lot more than just trying to improve one's reading rate. Jason

would have to learn this the hard way. Jason's experiences in developmental reading were

slightly different than those of the other participants. He tested out of reading originally but

chose to stay in the class because he "was not comfortable with his reading speed."

Jason's first semester of developmental reading took place in the fall 2010 semester.

During the semester, the students were required to read two novels, take vocabulary tests and

review concepts such as main ideas and supporting details. Jason did not have a problem with

the work the course required; his academic abilities were beyond where they needed to be for a

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college freshman. It was his circumstances that led to his ultimate failure in developmental

reading in the fall 2010 semester and the semester that followed.

Jason grew up in a small town in Louisiana and was always a good student. He was and

still is constantly encouraged by his parents to do well in school, and he always did. Jason was

also encouraged to read, and he read often about things of his interest. When Jason graduated

from high school, he had hopes of going to college, and his parents wanted him to attend college.

Jason's parents support him in everything he does, especially furthering his education.

> [My parents] support me a thousand percent. They support the school, they
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> support me going to school; my whole family supports me. They don't even want
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> me even getting a job. They want me to stay in school, and they say if you stay in
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> school it will come out better, and I believe them. But you know how the
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> economy and times is right now, and it wouldn't be bad to have some extra
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> income coming in to help them out.

Jason also said how much his family and others motivated him to be in school when he wrote his

reflective essay and said, "When it comes to motivation, I look to friends, family and

teachers...They drive me to be better than my predecessors and make a good name for myself."

But, most, if not all, of Jason's friends did not intend to go to college. Instead, they

wanted to work and earn money. Jason was always bothered by his friends' lack of desire to

better themselves. It hurt and still hurts Jason to know that his friends do not want more.

> All of my friends are either convicted felons or drug dealers. But they are people
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> I grew up with. And you know, just 'cause you do what you do, I'm not gonna
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> down you, but just have some respect and self-esteem about yourself. My drug
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> dealer friends, I be like 'man why you don't go to school. You got all that

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money; just go to school, you know. It's gonna pay off.' None of my friends

wanna hear that. It hurts me personally inside; it really does hurt me every day.

Every day I go home, and I tell them something that happened at school and most

of the time, they don't wanna hear it. It just makes me mad, well, not mad. It just

pisses me off to the fullest, and it disappoints me because I'm looking at them

like, 'Man I've been going to school with ya'll since forever, and ya'll all dropped

out.'

His friends' poor choices have motivated Jason to make better choices. Jason enrolled in

college, but in the back of his head, he wanted to work and earn money, which is what his friends

were doing. Despite their choices, Jason's friends knew that *their* life was not for Jason.

They push me to be in school. If I say, 'Man I'm not going to school,' they gonna

be like, 'You, nah man, this life is not for you.' They be like, "man you got

something that we don't have.' And I be like, 'What?' They tell me, 'We don't

know, but you got that. You got that factor in you man.'

Jason listened to his friends and went to school, but his desire to have money continued to haunt

him during his first semester in college and often distracted him from his school responsibilities.

Despite the distraction, Jason tried, somewhat.

The content in his reading class during Jason's first semester was not too difficult for

him, but he admitted to having problems with understanding some of the concepts. He was

having a hard time focusing because his thoughts of financial grandeur far outweighed his desire

for a passing grade in developmental reading. Jason stopped attending his classes and began

searching for a job or something that would allow him to "get paid." He failed almost all of his

classes that semester. A cloud of disappointment hovered over Jason at the end of his first

semester. His teacher was disappointed in him because she saw the potential in him just like his family and friends. He was disappointed in himself because he felt as though he wasted a semester – on nothing. He never did find a job that semester either.

> I wasn't angry that I failed the first time; I was just more disappointed in myself knowing that I could've done it [taken and passed reading] the first time. I was disappointed because I know I can do it, but I just, I don't know. I just know I can do it.

Additionally, Jason's friends and family were disappointed in him. Feeling as though he let everyone down, including himself, Jason enrolled the next semester, spring 2011, and registered for the same classes he failed the previous semester. This time, though, he was ready to do the work required to be successful in the classes. He wanted nothing more than to pass his classes, especially developmental reading, and he knew he was capable of being successful.

That semester, Jason was in developmental reading a second time with a new teacher. He was determined to get his head out of the clouds and focus on school. He entered his classes with velocity, but Jason's second semester in reading went much like the first. He sat through the class the whole semester and did not speak much. He would answer questions when the teacher asked, but he did not really talk much with his peers or with his teacher. He never really went to the teacher for help because he never felt he needed help. He did admit, however, that some things could have been different in his reading class the second time he enrolled.

> Some of the things could change. Some of the ways the reading teachers teach. The second time I took [developmental reading], the teacher sometimes just got up there on a board and gave us general information and made us interpret things without really explaining the information. I want a hands-on teacher that

communicates with everybody. I feel a student should have the right to get some

one-on-one sometimes. Or even if it's just the teacher walking around, you know.

That makes me feel good when a teacher walks around while I'm working and

looks to see if I'm doing things right and tells me, 'Oh, you gotta watch that' or

'That's got to be fixed.' I would like to see more teachers telling students what

their weakness is.

Even though his teacher the second time in developmental reading did not teach the way

Jason would have hoped, he still tried. He had problems on some of his tests, but he excelled on

his written assignments. He understood the material even though he was sometimes puzzled by

some of the concepts, but his mind continuously drifted elsewhere, which ultimately affected his

ability to focus on his goal at the time – to pass developmental reading. Once again, Jason's

desire for a job outweighed his desire to pass developmental reading. He was passing the class,

but again, he did not show up to take the final exam.

The final exam, I didn't show up for 'cause I got a job, and I was thinking at the

time that I needed a job. I was real focused on getting a job; my main concern

most of the time the last two semesters was a job. At the end of the last two

semesters that I failed reading, I was passing all of my classes, then I got a job,

didn't show up for the finals and failed the classes.

The fall 2011 semester, Jason finally decided to get serious. Another job came and went,

and although Jason still wanted to be in school, he also wanted a job. For a third time, he had to

take developmental reading as well as a few other courses he had failed in the previous semester.

Right before the fall 2011 semester started, Jason was in the barber shop and he started chatting

with one of his friends. The conversation with his friend enlightened Jason and made him realize

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what he needed to be doing with is life. Jason remembers the conversation in the barber shop that day clearly.

> One of my friends and me, we were at a barber shop. He's like 34 or 35 years old. It was right before the semester started. He's like 'Man, Jason, man why you not in school brah?' I was like, 'I'm trying to get a job.' He said, 'A job!? Man, you smarter than like eight niggas, man. What you want a job for? You got a mind man!' I laughed and brushed it off, but I really thought about what he said.

For Jason, the obvious thing for him to do was re-enroll in school. And that is what he did.

It seemed as though the fall 2011 brought to Jason experiences that were constant reminders of his intelligence and how people viewed him. His friends' and other people's perceptions of him actually motivated Jason to be in school, take it seriously, and focus on his future. He had another experience with someone from his past that reinforced that he was making the right decision to be in school. It happened one day in the beginning of the fall 2011 semester.

> I was at school one day, and I bumped into a guy I grew up with who didn't even remember me or anything. We started talking and he asked me, 'Man, how you know me?' I said, "Man, I grew up right across the street from you for about 15 years!' He asked me to help him with something in the library. We get in the library and we went to talking and while I was helping him with something on the computer, a guy next to us needed help. So, while I was doing my thing and my boy's, I was helping this other guy too. My friend tells me, 'Brah! You real smart, brah.' I was like, 'What you mean?' He said, 'Brah, you know what you be talking about!'

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Jason just smiled at his friend and nodded his head. He never really saw himself that way before, *smart.* But he was beginning to get comfortable in the role of being smart.

Additionally, Jason tried something different the third time in developmental reading. He talked more in class, talked more to his peers, went to the teacher for help, and worked in groups with his peers. He was even willing to help other students in class if he understood something that they did not understand.   When I asked Jason about forming study groups with his peers, he said that he did not see a lot of that happening on campus, but he would like to see it. Jason said:

> I don't. I personally don't see a lot of people that sit together in study groups. Maybe a few, but I don't see a lot of people that do. Uum, that's good you said that 'cause that's something we could do around here. And it would be better 'cause when, like I told someone today, matter of fact, when you talk about information to someone else, I'll remember it and you'll probably remember it too.

The teacher was doing things differently as well, and this was a good thing for Jason. Jason recalled in his reflective essay the type of teaching that he felt worked best for him and his learning when he wrote:

> If a teacher loves their job, and I think my reading teacher loves her job, then the learning experience will be much smoother, because they will watch their students' attention and that is one thing I look for in a teacher. A teacher also has to be consistent with their teaching, meaning if they change their teaching method in the middle of the semester that would confuse the students. I would prefer a teacher that I can communicate with one-on-one if I need help.

Jason was with the teacher he had the first time he took reading, and she seemed to be doing things differently than his former teacher. She walked around class while students were working, put students in groups, and sat with them one-on-one if they felt they needed it. Jason asked the teacher to sit with him often to make sure he was doing his work properly; this was the type of teacher he claimed he needed to be successful. Jason said he never thought to try the things he tried during his third experience in reading because in high school, Jason never needed tutoring or extra help. Other students in high school used to cheat off of Jason's tests and assignments. Feeling like he needed extra attention and verbal encouragement from his teacher was a new academic experience for Jason, but it worked. Jason passed developmental reading his third time with a C.

Jason's experiences with repetition and developmental reading did not negatively influence his academic career. Instead, his choices to work instead of finish his first two semesters of college allowed him to open himself up to bigger endeavors. His decision to get a job and stop attending school led him to having experiences with unsuspecting individuals who further enforced the importance of Jason's being in school. Those experiences gave Jason the urge and desire to prove to himself, his friends, his family and community that he could be the one to *do it* – complete college. This led to Jason's becoming a young visionary with hope of inspiring and motivating others to better themselves and seek knowledge, as evidenced in the following excerpt from Jason and my interview.

> I want to set an example for people in my area and for my family members. I want them to see that even though we came from nothing, which we did, I want to prove to them that if I can do it, they can. It's not about being smart; it's about believing in yourself. So, I'm just trying to better myself, and I want to better my

community too 'cause I just don't like the way it is. I just want the knowledge,

and I want other people to have the same knowledge that I have.

Jason will one day make a difference, or at least he will try!

Participant 3: Jessie

I met Jessie the spring 2008 semester at LCC where I taught her in a developmental

English II. Jessie is about 5'4 and has dark hair. I remember Jessie being very talkative in class,

not only with her classmates but also where class discussions were concerned. She was the

student in class who enjoyed sharing her ideas and hearing other peoples' ideas. She used to

complain about writing essays, since writing was not one of her favorite subjects. Nevertheless,

she did what she had to do in my class and passed. It was during this semester that we developed

a teacher-student relationship. She came to me for help on essay assignments, as well as for

advising during registration. Jessie also came to my office often just to talk about issues she was

having with her other teachers and personal problems she was experiencing at the time. Once

she passed my class, we still maintained a relationship and continued to meet once a week. Now,

she is an employee at LCC, which has made it easier to keep contact with her, in addition to

having access to her to ask if she would be willing to participate in my study. Without

hesitation, she agreed to participate.

Jessie is a 24-year-old female from a small town in Louisiana. She has no children and

lives with her parents. She recently graduated from Local Community College with an

associate's degree in Medical Billing and Coding. Prior to graduating from college, Jessie hit a

few road blocks academically. Jessie was a strong student academically, but began to get lazy in

school and lose her academic drive when she was in middle school and felt responsible to help

her brother (who had ADD and learning difficulties) with school rather than focus on her own

school work. As a result of pushing her own school work to the side in middle and high school, she entered college as a developmental student having to enroll in developmental English and reading. She repeated developmental reading three times before successfully completing the course.

Jessie was very open to participating in my research study. Jessie and I also met in my office because she is currently employed at Local Community College, so it was easy for her to come to my office to chat during her breaks at work. We met for three in-depth interviews and had a few random chats here and there as necessary to clarify some responses from our interviews. At some points during our interviews, Jessie became emotional when discussing her academic experiences and how they were so heavily negatively impacted by her family and responsibilities that were often put on her shoulders. Ultimately, Jessie's raw honesty to me and to herself about her experiences with developmental reading and repetition truly provided insight into why, when faced with repetition, students may become even more motivated to succeed in a course. Jessie's story is to follow.

Jessie's Story: The Security Blanket

"By the time I was in fifth grade, I was a mom," Jessie said with a nervous laugh. Always academically capable, Jessie was a straight A student through elementary and most of middle school and never had any type of behavior problems. Her brother was born when she was in kindergarten, and by the time she entered fifth grade, he was entering elementary school and it was then that Jessie's academic endeavors were abruptly put on hold.

Jessie's brother was diagnosed at a very early age with ADHD, as well as a learning disability. Jessie's mother graduated from high school, and her father dropped out in the tenth grade. They were not academically strong, but Jessie was. Since Jessie had been proving her

academic capabilities since she started school, her mother relied solely on Jessie to help her brother with his schoolwork, and if she did not or if she refused, she would get punished. Jessie told me about her time spent with her little brother.

> My mom would tell me, 'Well, the reason I make you help your brother is because you know the material; we did it totally different when I was in school.' She would watch television or do whatever, and he would come home with homework and I would be the one helping him with it. If he had a school project, I would end up doing it. You know, my brother has had the easy road his whole life. It has always been, 'Oh he's got a learning disability; he's got this; he's got that.' My brother is three years behind in high school. When he failed the LEAP test, my mom put him through summer school. My mom refused to put me through summer school when I failed two classes in ninth grade. He would give me a project like two days before it was due, and I would be up until midnight and I was in like 6th or 7th grade doing a project 'cause it's due the next day for my brother. My mom would say, 'Jessie can do it. She's smart enough to do it. She's in honors. She can do it.' And from that moment on, my mom let him dump his school work on me, and he wouldn't care because he knew I would do it.

Jessie's being responsible for her brother's schoolwork strongly influenced the work she was able to produce in school. She was in honors classes throughout most of her K-12 education, but her record of academic achievement quickly faded. Jessie felt as though she was always in a position to choose whether to do her brother's projects or her own. She always did her brother's

work to avoid the wrath of her mother. Also, she felt sorry for her little brother, and she became his security blanket. But Jessie lacked a security blanket of her own.

She knew she could do the work in high school, but she put forth little effort because she was so stressed about the obligation to do someone else's work. She started to not care because she noticed her mom did not care about her academic progress or lack thereof. Jessie said in her essay reflection, "I was a lazy, lazy person in high school, and I did not feel like doing my work. Maybe that was because of my brother; I don't know."

She also began thinking that maybe if she messed up in school, her mom would notice and maybe want to help her. "I think in the back of my head, I thought maybe if I start failing, she would start caring," Jessie said. Jessie strongly believed that if her mother would not have more or less forced her to take on her brother's school work and disregard her own, she would have been at LSU with her friends, and her life would have been totally different. Jessie's setbacks in middle and high school paved the way for the academic setbacks she would face in college.

She didn't care that she tested into the second level of developmental reading in the fall 2005 semester because she knew she needed it, but she also knew she was going on vacation the first week of classes, so she would be able to further avoid the class. She was not a fan of reading; actually, she hated reading. She did, however, enjoy math. She enrolled in her courses. She had already planned to miss the first week of classes because she was going on vacation with her family. She called each of her professors to let them know of her absence the first week of school. She did not even meet her reading professor.

The following week, classes were cancelled because there was a huge hurricane headed straight for Louisiana. Born and raised in Southern Louisiana, she and her family were very well

aware of the damage a hurricane of this caliber could do to the city, especially to the area in which they lived. She evacuated with her family along with thousands and thousands of other families.

Hurricane Katrina devastated Louisiana and practically destroyed the parish where Jessie and her family had lived prior to the storm, including its homes, businesses and schools. Local Community College was just one of Katrina's many victims. The college withdrew students from all of their classes in the fall 2005 semester as a result of Katrina and the damage it did to the college. Despite the devastation the city endured, Jessie was secretly glad she did not have to sit through a semester of reading. She admitted that even if the storm had not destroyed her neighborhood, she had decided that she was not attending that reading class.

Upon returning to her home town after the storm, there was nowhere to turn. Jessie and her family moved into a house located about 30 minutes from her previous home. As soon as LCC was reopened, which was the very next semester in the spring 2006, and had classes to offer students, Jessie re-enrolled. She enrolled in the same classes in which she was enrolled prior to the storm. The storm did not stop Local Community College from offering courses to students to help them find some type of normalcy in the midst of all of the rubbish Katrina had left behind. It did not stop Jessie either. In developmental reading again, Jessie walked into class, looked around and thought, "Oh I'm *so* not going to be in this class!" This attitude set the tone for the remainder of Jessie's semester.

She sat in her reading class with a look of aggravation on her face. She did not want to be in reading class – not at all. She was young, 18 years old. She was fresh out of high school and was unsure of the rules and procedures of college life. She "religiously attended class." But something changed her way of thinking about college.

I thought [college] was like high school. You had to come, you had to do this, you had to do that, then I guess people would get comfortable and eventually start walking out of class. I'm sitting in class one day, and it was the first time I saw someone do it. I was in class, and this girl got up, got her books and walked out. I'm like, 'Oh my God! She's about to get it!' The teacher just kept teaching. And I'm like, 'Wait, you can do that?' I went and asked my cousin if you can just leave out of class, and she said you don't even have to go to class as long as you're doing the work. So, of course in my head, I'm thinking, 'Uh, I don't *have* to go to class. Maybe I can miss like one or two classes.' Well, that turned into three or four.

Jessie failed her reading class that semester.

Jessie remembered clearly why she was unsuccessful the second time in reading. Similar to her attitude the previous semester, Jessie just did not care, and she was more concerned with spending time with her friends than being in reading class. She had a gap in between her morning classes and her afternoon class, which was reading. So, she looked for things to do in between classes, which did not include going to the library to read or study. Jessie recalled when she was in the reading class in the spring 2006 semester.

It was boring. The teacher's class was very boring. To be honest, I really never went. I would go to lunch with everybody and by the time it was time to go back to school, it was either go home in [a distant part of town] 'cause that's where we would go eat 'cause nothing was opened in St. Bernard because of the storm or go back to school for an hour and fifteen-minute boring reading class. Most of the time, I chose to go home (she laughs).

Jessie's was not very serious about schoolwork during her second attempt in reading, and she blamed that on two things – her age and the way in which the class was taught. Her age was evident in her actions; she chose lunch with friends over class; she skipped classes often, and she rarely did her schoolwork. She was not a fan of the teacher's methods, either, which strongly impacted her motivation to even attend the class.

> Her class was just boring. It didn't interest me at all. There was no group work, no real interaction, you know. We just sat there and listened to her talk. I would rather work in groups and have discussions and just more interaction from the students.

She was also not a fan of the reading material because it bored her. The class had to read three novels, *The Great Gatsby*, *The Diary of Miss Jane Pittman* and *Flowers for Algernon*, none of which were based on vampires or the supernatural, things Jessie enjoys reading about. She would have liked reading the novels more if they would have been "more up to date not something set in the 50s," Jessie insisted. She only did her assignments "when [she] felt like it," and the teacher started to notice Jessie's trend during the semester.

> My reading teacher started yelling at me and asking, 'Why aren't you coming to class? Blah, blah.' She said, 'I see you around campus up until lunch time, then you're not here after. What happened?' I told her that I go to lunch in Metairie and then go home because I lived in Metairie. She said, 'Well, you're going to fail my class.' My response to her was, 'Oh well, if I fail, I fail!' (She laughed).

Jessie really just didn't care during the spring 2006 semester. She ended her semester in reading with a D, which basically meant she failed. In order to successfully fulfill a reading requirement

at LCC, the student must earn a C or higher. Jessie was going to have to enroll in developmental reading a third time.

Three years later, it was the spring 2009 semester at LCC, and it was the week of registration. Jessie was on campus and waiting to meet with her advisor in order to register for classes. This was a special semester for Jessie; she was graduating in May. Jessie recalled her meeting with her advisor that day.

> I remember Mary (her advisor) calling me in her office during registration. She said, "Jessie, you want to graduate this semester?" I was kind of confused as to why she would even ask me that way because she knew I was graduating in May. I said, "Well, yeah I'm graduating. Why would you ask such a silly question?" She said, "No, you're not graduating. You never passed developmental reading. How can you graduate?" I was like, "What the hell!?" Mary said, "Jessie, you know you have to have a C or higher in developmental reading in order to pass." I said, "Oh crap! Sign me up then!"

Jessie truly thought that the school would possibly overlook the D and let her slide through and graduate without taking it again, but unfortunately, that did not happen. Jessie re-enrolled in developmental reading for the third time, three years after she had taken it the second time. She ended up in class with the same teacher she had the second time in developmental reading.

On the first day of class, Jessie walked into class and was greeted by her teacher. "Hey, Jessie! You're finally back. I knew you'd be back!" The teacher said to her. Jessie sarcastically replied, "Yep. I'm back! Yay!" She was far from thrilled or excited to be in the class again with the same teacher. The teacher seemed to have a way of putting fear in the students. "I was scared of her. She just seemed so intimidating," Jessie said of her teacher.

Regardless of how Jessie felt about her teacher or reading, she was practically being forced to be successful in the class this time, especially since she was being motivated to do so by her desire to finally graduate.

Determined and ready, Jessie entered developmental reading with a fierce level of seriousness and motivation. She was ready to prove to herself that she could get out of her reading class and graduate. Jessie was also in her last year at LCC and was very comfortable on campus. She was friendly with faculty and staff, and she felt as though the faculty and staff at the college were her school family. For Jessie, LCC became *her* security blanket – something she lacked academically. Jessie said in her reflective essay:

> I needed them [staff, faculty] to push me and that push is what helped me get
> through my last semester in reading. I knew I had to do it because I was not
> going to be at LCC for another semester for one stupid reading class. I knew I
> could do it, and I was gonna do what I had to do.

She was sure of herself and her abilities; she knew it was going to be easy this time because she had sat through it once with the same teacher already. Jessie remembers how she felt being in the class the third time.

> It was easier the third time, a lot easier. I guess I just had that drive in me that I
> need to do this. I was also older, two years older. So, I think that had a lot to do
> with it. I needed to prove to myself that I could do it this time. I knew if I didn't
> do this, I'd be sitting in the class the next semester and everybody else would
> have done graduated and I would still be studying for this one stupid class.

Jessie was also more motivated because she had a very different experience in the reading class compared to the previous attempts.

The reading material was the same, but the textbook changed as did the teacher's teaching methods. Jessie recalled:

> The class structure changed and the way she did it was completely different. She would test us every day, and she did not test us every day the last time I was in her class. So, if we were reading a novel, I knew if I did not read, I was going to fail. I knew that if she gave me a chapter to read on Monday, I was walking into class that Wednesday and being tested on it. That was like a huge, 'I gotta get off of my butt and do it' moment.

Another big difference in the class during Jessie's third attempt was that the class size was much smaller, and the teacher provided opportunities for group work. A small class and group work made for an ideal class environment for Jessie because she was eager to hear what other students had to say about the reading material and other class work. Jessie said:

> It was a smaller class. She did a lot of putting us in circles, and that's how we would work. It wasn't you were sitting in class looking at the board all day; you were sitting in class talking to other students, and I liked that because someone else in class may have caught something that I didn't catch. She gave us group projects that we could work on in class, and we all worked together, and I liked that interaction; I'm a very, very talkative person. In group work, other people have to tell you what they're thinking, and I like to know what the person next to me is thinking. I feel like I learn better that way.

She also said in her personal essay, in regard to teaching and class structure that:

> I like to be in a class where there's stuff happening. It makes the time go by faster. I am not a student who likes to listen to someone talk for an hour and then

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lets us leave. I need to move around, talk to other students, hear others' ideas in

groups and talk to my teacher sometimes if needed.

For Jessie, this was the ideal classroom setting and worked best for her learning needs.

Finally, Jessie talked to her teacher this time. Although she felt like she did not need

tutoring, she did meet with her teacher to check on her progress. The teacher would often have

words with Jessie when she felt as though Jessie was not doing her best work. However, the

teacher would encourage her and praise her for her efforts, and this motivated Jessie to do well in

the class in addition to motivating her to immerse herself in the class in order to be successful.

The teacher really pushed Jessie, and she said she was glad that she did.

The end of the semester approached, and Jessie discovered that she was going to pass the

class. The teacher pulled her on the side to give her a pep talk. Jessie reiterated what she

remembered the teacher telling her. According to Jessie in one of our interviews, the

conversation went this way. Jessie's teacher said:

You should have an A in my class, Jessie. You've already done this once. I'm

glad you shaped up, because if you would not have, you would have been in my

class again. You should have gotten out of here the last time, but you did it this

time. You have a B.

Jessie was so thrilled that she was finally getting out of reading and getting out of college. "I

know I'm smart, and I knew I could do it from the beginning; I was just lazy," Jessie said, and

she did it.

Jessie had been motivated in the past by her desire to one day become a nurse. That

changed when she discovered the number of hours she was going to be required to put in after

graduating before she could even get a job in the nursing field. She changed her major to

Medical Billing and Coding because one of her school mates convinced her that once she graduated, she would be able to easily find a job and earn a decent salary. Her school mate was wrong. Although she is a graduate and has an associate's degree in Medical Billing and Coding, none of her hours are transferrable, nor has she been able to find a job in the field. She is currently employed at LCC as an administrative assistant in the Chancellor's office. Despite her not working in the field of her degree, her *security blanket,* LCC, is also her safe haven. Jessie hopes to one day soon go to a four year college and get a bachelor's degree. She has not yet stopped her academic career. With Jessie's motivation and level of commitment once she sets her mind on something, I have no doubt that she will successfully earn another college degree.

Participant 4: Terry

I met Terry in the fall 2010 semester at LCC. She is about 5'5, has bleached blonde hair and light eyes. She was very shy and rarely said much of anything in the developmental English II class in which I taught her. She was also enrolled in developmental reading II that same semester. Terry did, however, talk to me and approach me in the beginning of the semester after class ended to ask me if she could get extra help from me in writing because it was her weakest subject. Of course, I agreed. We would meet after class for tutoring sessions where we would discuss topics and assignments. She told me she was having trouble in reading, so I began to also help her with her reading assignments as well. She would also talk to me about personal issues that were occurring in her life, and we became close during the beginning of that semester.

Terry stopped coming to school that semester because of non-academic obstacles. She failed all of her classes; however, she returned the very next semester, to retake the classes she had previously failed. She re-enrolled in my developmental English II class, and again, I helped her with her writing. She, like Jessie, also asked me to help her with her reading assignments,

and I did. We worked hard on her reading skills and comprehension, things she claimed had

always been problematic for her. She was successful in both developmental English II and

developmental reading II the spring 2011 semester.

Terry is a 23-year-old female and a mother of two young sons, ages 3 and 7. Terry is

from a small town in Louisiana but currently lives with her fiancé and two children. Like Jessie,

Terry completed developmental reading, but it took her three attempts in the course before being

successful and passing. Terry blamed herself and noted her lack of seriousness and her

circumstances as some of the reasons why she was unsuccessful in reading the first two times.

But like Sierra, she became motivated by her kids and her desire for a better life, which made her

persist through and pass reading. She was also motivated by her teacher.

Unlike the other three participants, Terry is extremely shy, and it was a bit of a challenge

to meet with her for interviews initially. When it was finally time for the interviews, we met in

my office on campus after her classes. As I asked her questions, she hesitated to answer because

she was not so comfortable with her voice being recorded. We managed, however, to meet three

times for interviews and had several phone and email conversations. Terry was a tough

participant, but she managed to share with me stories that provided rich description based on her

experiences with developmental reading and repetition. Following is Terry's story.

Terry's Story: Miss Independent

He sat next to her at the kitchen table as he did every weekday afternoon. She took out

her books and her homework assignments. She was in second grade, and she was a daddy's girl.

Terry's dad sat with her every afternoon to help her with her homework when she was a child.

He would help her in all of her subjects, especially reading. He would read to her all of the time,

and she enjoyed reading; she rarely struggled with it in school. If she did not understand

something, he would try his hardest to help her better understand. When Terry was seven years old, her father passed away. Terry was devastated; not only did she lose her father, but she lost the one man she could depend on, guidance and her favorite teacher. From that day forward, Terry decided at a fragile age that she would never depend on anyone, especially not a man, because no man could fill the shoes of her father.

Terry was a good student up until her father passed away. Once he passed, she began having difficulties in school in reading. Her mother did not help her with her homework like her father had done. Terry was more or less left to teach herself, which eventually made her shut down academically. We talked about her memories of reading and learning as a child, and she remembered a few moments that made her realize why she could have had problem with reading as an adult.

> The only memory I have is when my dad passed away when I was in second grade. Before he passed away, he used to help me read. He used to teach me and then I didn't have him anymore. I didn't have my mom to teach me; she was there, but she never helped me. From second grade until now, I've taught myself. My mom has never helped me with nothing, no homework, nothing. Studying, nothing! I did it all by myself. My first C was in third grade in reading, and I think if I would've had a parent to help me that would not have happened, especially if my dad would've been alive.

Terry's issues with reading would follow her into her adult life.

Additionally, the loss of Terry's father brought on other behaviors in Terry and her older sister. Terry's older sister became pregnant at the age of fifteen and dropped out of high school and received her GED, and her mom ended up raising her daughter. This heavily impacted

Terry, and she began rebelling because she knew she was not going to suffer any consequences. Dad had always been the authoritative figure in her life, and with him being gone, Terry felt as though she was on her own because her mom was more concerned with raising her grandchild than she was with Terry's actions. Terry recalled:

> I wasn't a bad kid, so my mom really wasn't worried about where I was at and what I was doing. I never got in much trouble before. She was raising my sister's daughter that my sister had in high school and was so preoccupied with the baby instead of worrying about where her daughter [Terry] was at and what her [daughter] was doing.

Terry became pregnant in high school, and again, she was left to do things on her own.

> I was in a little kiddy relationship that grew from middle school to high school, and then things happened. You don't really plan on things like getting pregnant happening at that age; nothing is a big deal. Now, looking back, I wish my mom would've been more worried about me and let my sister raise her own kid; I wasn't ready [to be a mom]. I wish my mom would've been more of a parent and not a friend when I was that age. Even though I had a child young, I didn't expect my mom to raise my kid [like my sister]. I physically and emotionally did everything; even on school nights I got up every couple of hours with my son, while my sister did nothing for her own kid. My mom did everything for her kid.

Terry believed that if her mom would've been there more after her dad passed away in every way when she was younger, she would not have had a hard time in school, and she would not have been as compelled to have unprotected sex at a young age. She does not blame her mom for her choices, but she does resent her for not parenting her the way she now parents her own

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children and guides her niece. Being a mom at a young age did not prevent Terry from pursuing

her dreams to one day earn a college degree and become a nurse.

Terry was still with the father of her child, but it was not the most stable of relationships.

She enrolled in Local Community College in 2007 at 18 years old, right after she graduated from

high school. When she entered LCC, she tested into developmental reading. She was

disappointed that she tested into developmental reading because she felt like she did not need it.

She enrolled in developmental reading that semester. She was a young mom, and she believed

that because of her age and her child, she was just not focused on going to school every day. She

said in one of our interviews, "I was just focused on other things, and school was not one of

them." The father of her child was trying to take her son and move to Baton Rouge; he did not

want Terry in school, so she left LCC and moved to Baton Rouge with her son and his father.

She just stopped going to classes and ended up failing them, including her developmental

reading class. Unlike the other participants, it took Terry a while to come back to school, and

that had to do with her baby's father. She explained:

> I didn't want to take care of my child by myself, and I was not going to let him
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> [the baby's father] take my baby without me. I moved to Baton Rouge with him
>
> and never went back to school. He wouldn't let me go back to school. He was
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> very controlling and didn't want me to do good for myself. He wanted me to
>
> have to depend on him, and that made me feel bad about myself and my
>
> circumstances. I needed to know that I could get through life on my own.

Three years later, Terry left the father of her first child and moved back to a Southern town in

Louisiana. She re-enrolled in school and made the decision to pursue nursing so that she could

one day take care of herself and her child on her own.

Terry was in developmental reading a second time, and she was ready to get started on her general education courses so she could eventually move into the nursing program. She did not really adjust well to the teacher in her reading class. She felt as though she did not "break things down" enough, and she just had trouble with some of the concepts. She did not initiate a conversation with her teacher, because she was a little intimidated by her. She did not seek out tutoring, nor did she talk to her peers in an attempt to get some clarity on the class work. Despite her problems with the structure of the class and the teacher in reading, she was passing until life's circumstances once again got in her way midway through the semester. Terry reveals her circumstances at that time in her life when she reflected and said:

> The father of my child tried keeping my son, again. He wouldn't give him back, and school was important, but my kids come first. So, I had to stop coming for a second time, and I was very upset that I ended up failing the class again.

Terry managed to get through the traumatic moments with the father of her first child and re-enroll in school the following semester. Once again, she had to enroll in reading and this would be her third attempt trying to successfully complete the course, but this time it was different. She was ready to show her kids and herself that she could get through her past academic failures and move forward. Determined to pass all of her classes, especially reading, she started the semester strong and ended it even stronger. She had a different teacher, and she seemed to feel more comfortable with her and her teaching methods.

> My teacher the third time in reading felt better. I liked the way she handled the class compared to my previous teacher. My new teacher seemed to be more involved with us. She had a better way of teaching and explaining. We had a small class, so she would sit with us one-on-one and work with us if we were

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having problems. She also put us in groups, and even though I did not *need* to

work with other people to get through the class, I did it, and I liked it. She also

praised me when I did good, and that made me feel good and made me want to do

good in her class.

Terry had a much better experience during her third time in reading, not only because she

was determined and more motivated and focused than ever, but also because she felt comfortable

with her teacher at the time. Because she was comfortable, she met with her teacher as often as

necessary when she felt herself getting confused over certain concepts. And even though she felt

like she did not need it when she originally tested into reading, she realized the benefits of it and

claimed "it helped [her]." Terry also wrote in her personal essay,

I was ready to prove to my kids that their mommy could pass her classes, just like

I expect them to do. It was time for me to move ahead, away from the drama with

my ex and think about my future. I was going to show my mom, sister, kids,

fiancé, and me that I could get out of these basic classes and be a nurse one day.

Terry persisted through and successfully completed developmental reading that semester and

she had no doubts that she would pass because, as she stated, "I am an achiever!" Terry ended

the semester in reading after her third attempt with a B.

Terry just finished all of her general education and pre nursing courses in the fall 2011

semester, and she is preparing to enter a nursing program at Northshore Technical College. Her

biggest motivation is her two sons and her fiancé, who is also in carpentry school through his

employer. Terry is often tired and stressed, and sometimes she does not want to get up in the

morning or do anything. But her desire to have a stable career to better provide for her kids and

be a role model for them motivates her to get out of bed on those difficult mornings.

When Terry talks about her kids, her fiancé and their future, her face lights up. Finally, Terry has found a real partner with whom to share her life. They both have similar goals and views on life. Both know that "in order for a family to work and survive, both parents need to provide something," as Terry stated. Terry also commented on how much her fiancé supports her. She said, "He encourages me to go to school because if I finish school, then I will have my career, and then we can get married (laughs)."

Despite the loss of her father at a young age and her mother's negative attitude toward her and her ambitions (something Terry said several times in our interviews), Terry remains a strong-willed, independent woman who will stop at nothing until she gets what she desires. She has hopes to become an LPN to "get her foot in the door" of the medical field and get her life and career moving; then she wants to become a nurse practitioner, which is one position away from a doctor. "When it's all said and done, I'll probably be forty when I am done with school!" Terry joked. I suppose struggle, independence, hard work and determination pay off, at least we can see it did through Terry's story.

Analysis of Stories

Discovering Themes

Upon analyzing the aforementioned stories, six common themes surfaced among the four participants and their experiences. In order to give the themes a richer meaning, they were labeled with the words of the participants. This allowed for the themes to come alive and represent the lived experiences and feelings of the participants. The themes are: "I was disappointed in myself;" "It was time for me to prove that I could do it, for me, my family, and my kids;" "I was focused on other things, and school was not one of them;" "It's not about being smart; it's about believing in yourself;" "When it comes to motivation, I look to my family,

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friends and teachers;" "I need to move around, talk to other students, hear others' ideas in groups and talk to my teacher sometimes if needed." To follow is a discussion of each theme as it relates to the participants' beliefs.

Theme One:
"I was disappointed in myself."

Each participant in some way commented on the idea of being able to go the extra mile in reading the first and second times, but none did, which led each to feel disappointment; this disappointment led to their motivation to succeed. All of the participants in the study claimed that they were disappointed in themselves for needing to repeat developmental reading three times before passing it. They stated that they were disappointed because they knew they could have passed the first time; however, they were either lazy or had other things in their lives which distracted them. They could not stay in the class to complete it, nor did they make attempts to immerse themselves in the class which ultimately could have led to their success.

One participant, Sierra, claimed that she was disappointed that she failed the class because she had really tried in the class. She was also disappointed because although she tried, she still felt as though she could not "get" the material the first time in reading. Sierra said, "I was so disappointed in myself because I thought I tried hard enough." When she failed the second time, she was even more disappointed as seen when she said:

> I was disappointed and upset that I failed, *again*. I was disappointed in myself; I
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> was disappointed that I could not learn like everyone else for some reason…I
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> really felt stupid. I was real disappointed that I had to depend on my mamma for
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> rides and could not meet with my teacher for extra help the first two times I took

reading. That's why this semester I made sure she pick me up later in the day so I

could have time to stay at school and work with my teacher or a tutor.

Despite Sierra's disappointment on multiple levels, she became more motivated to persist and

succeed the third time she was in reading.

Similarly, Jason was also disappointed in himself and the lack of work he knew he was

capable of doing the first two times in reading but did not. Jason recalled:

I wasn't angry that I failed the first time; I was just more disappointed in myself

knowing that I could've done it [taken and passed reading] the first time. I was

disappointed because I know I can do. Even though the teacher was different

from this last teacher, I can't blame the teacher. I made a bad decision, so it was

my fault I failed.

Jason was well aware of his abilities, but ultimately, he let himself down and suffered from

disappointment.   Still, however, this disappointment further pushed him to want to succeed, and

he eventually did.

Jessie reflected on similar feelings of disappointment in her interviews, but she claimed

that her disappointment was based on her belief that she could have passed reading the first two

times because she was capable of doing the work. She was disappointed in herself because she

knew she had the ability, but she was too lazy at the time to even care, much less do the work.

Jessie said, "I knew I could do it from the beginning the first two times; I was just lazy."

Finally, Terry was disappointed because she tested into reading initially and she didn't

think she needed it. More importantly, she was disappointed in outside circumstances as well.

She reflected:

> I didn't think I needed reading and I was upset I tested into it the first time. Once I was in it through and able to take it seriously the last time, I learned a lot…I was mad at myself because I let someone control my life for so long and that I let that stop me from sticking to my plan with school.

Terry's emotions toward what was happening in her life during her initial experiences in reading prevented her from being successful in reading twice and school in general. She overcame the unfortunate circumstances she was experiencing at the time and finally passed reading. Although disappointment was a negative emotion to the participants, it was disappointment that actually led to the participants' motivation and desire to pass the course upon their third attempts.

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Theme Two:
"It was time for me to prove that I could do it, for me, my family, and my kids."

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The participants each suggested that their eventual success in reading was due largely to their desires to prove to themselves and others that they could do it, regardless of what was happening in their lives. All of the participants reflected heavily on showing themselves and others that they could achieve their goals. Their goals impacted their motivation to persist in the reading class upon repetition. All four participants were naturally driven by the task focused goal to successfully complete reading, but their bigger, overarching goal was what inspired them to want to actually complete reading. The participants' motivation came from their desire to prove that they could earn a degree to one day have a future career, be independent, graduate, and be role models to their kids, family and friends.

Three of the four participants were focused on the goal to be role models for others. Sierra, for instance claimed that one of her major reasons for wanting to be successful in college was because of her goal to be better for her kids. She said:

I need to show my kids that I was getting mine; I need to set an example for my

kids. If I don't, who's gonna do it? I see my cousin who has a degree and I look

at my friends accomplishing their goals while I'm trying and that hurts. I need to

show them, me, my teachers, my family and my friends that I can do it too.

Jason had similar goals, but his goals were based on being better for himself and his

community. One of Jason's big goals was to not only better himself in college but to also be a

role model to kids in his neighborhood, as well as to his friends. Jason stated that he,

…want[s] to set an example for people in my area and for my family members. I

want them to see that even though we came from nothing, which we did, I want to

prove to them that if I can do it, they can…So, I'm just trying to better myself and

I want to better my community too 'cause I just don't like the way it is. I just

want the knowledge, and I want other people to have the same knowledge that I

have.

Jason was well aware that in order to achieve the goal of wanting to be a role model by being

successful in college, he first had to be successful in all of his classes, especially reading, a class

he had attempted three times before passing. This goal increased his motivation and allowed

everything else to fall in place and make room for his future success.

In addition, Terry was motivated by her kids and her desires to be their role model and

one day have the financial means to take care of them, on her own if necessary. She was also

motivated by her desire to be independent so that regardless of her circumstances, she would

always be able to provide for her children on her own. She stated:

[My father's son] wanted me to have to depend on him, and that made me feel

bad about myself and my circumstances. I needed to know that I could get

through life on my own. I do not like to depend on nobody, especially not a man!

Terry's goal to prove that she could take care of her child and herself on her own fueled her

motivation and willingness to eventually persist through and pass reading.

Unlike two of the three participants, Jessie does not have children, and she did not have

anyone for whom she felt she needed to be a role model, but she did want to show herself that

she could be successful and graduate. Jessie's biggest goal at the time of her experiences in

reading was to graduate from college, something she could not do until she passed

developmental reading. Jessie's advisor told her, "No, you're not graduating. You never passed

developmental reading," to which Jessie responded, "Oh crap! Sign me up then!" Jessie had

one goal at the time of her repetition and that was to get her degree and be done with college.

Her repetition and need to successfully complete reading regardless of her past failure because of

her goal to graduate opened doors for Jessie and encouraged her to view her situation through a

different lens. Her motivation allowed her to integrate herself in the class and in the college,

which led to her persistence and completion of reading. Her goal was fulfilled; she passed

reading and graduated the same semester.

The participants' focus on their goals increased their motivation, and they persisted and

passed their class. Prior to their successful completion of the course, their goal was present, but

they could barely see it because it was fogged by their desires for other things and their

circumstances, which created an inability to focus on the goal to pass their class.

Theme Three:
"I was focused on other things, and school was not one of them."

Participants reflected on some sort of upheaval, crisis or personal issue that disrupted their focus on their college performance and success. This led their failing reading. Participants all mentioned how their circumstances prevented them from being successful in reading during their first two attempts. It was their circumstances that participants seemed to be confusing with their goals at the time. The four participants in the study were all faced with non-academic obstacles that prevented them from focusing on successfully completing developmental reading during the first and second attempts.

Sierra, for instance, was unable to successfully pass reading on the first and second attempts because she could not make time to meet with her instructor for tutoring, something she later discovered was beneficial to her. This occurred because she did not have a vehicle. She had to work around her mother's schedule because she was relying on her for transportation to and from school. The times she could have met with her instructor conflicted with the times she was to be picked up by her mother. Sierra recalled:

> I didn't seek [tutoring]. I have kids; I just have another life. I have to work
> around my mamma's schedule with work and she give me rides to school. It was
> just too hard to even try to get tutoring after classes; my schedule just would not
> allow it.

Because she could not seek tutoring, it was even harder for Sierra to grasp the material in reading

Similarly, Terry had conflicts with her reading class because of her child and his father. The circumstances the first two times she was enrolled in developmental reading put a hold on Terry's ability to be successful. She remembered:

I didn't want to take care of my child by myself, and I was not going to let him [the baby's father] take my baby without me. I moved to Baton Rouge with him and never went back to school. He wouldn't let me go back to school.

As a result, Terry had to leave school, and this ultimately impacted her academic endeavors and prompted her failing of her classes. However, the aforementioned circumstances also eventually encouraged her to not let something like this happen again, and she made sure it did not. When she finally resolved the issues she had with her child's father, she was able to get back on her feet and re-focus on her schooling, which led to her success.

Jason's desire for something other than school at the time of his past developmental reading experiences led him to failure in reading, but luckily for Jason, he learned a lesson from his decision making. Jason had one thing on his mind when he was in developmental reading the first two times – getting a job. The first semester he was in developmental reading, Jason made it close to the end of the semester when his desire for a job outweighed his desire to complete his classes; "I just stopped going to class because of a job," Jason remembered. His second attempt was very similar. Jason recalled:

The final exam, I didn't show up for 'cause I got a job and I was thinking at the time that I needed a job. I was real focused on getting a job; my main concern most of the time the last two semesters was a job. At the end of the last two semesters that I failed reading, I was passing all of my classes. Then I got a job, didn't show up for the finals and failed the classes.

As seen in the participants' experiences, one's circumstances can lead to both failure and success. Some circumstances, however, are beyond one's control. Jessie's circumstances at the time of her experiences in developmental reading were very different from the other participants.

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Jessie's first time enrolling in reading was the fall 2005 semester, and although she had not intended to attend classes the first week of the semester because her family was going on vacation, she did not intend to miss an entire semester. After her vacation, Jessie returned to St. Bernard with hopes of beginning her semester, but Hurricane Katrina had other plans. As a result of Hurricane Katrina, LCC and all of the schools and colleges in the New Orleans area had to shut down. Jessie and all other students ended up being administratively withdrawn from all of her classes that first semester.

Her second attempt in developmental reading was also heavily impacted by her circumstances. At the time, she was not serious about academics. Like Jason, she was more serious about things unrelated to reading, and she just didn't care about developmental reading. Jessie recalled:

> I really never went. I would go to lunch with everybody and by the time it was time to go back to school, it was either go home in Metairie 'cause that's where we would go eat 'cause nothing was opened in St. Bernard because of the storm or go back to school for an hour and fifteen minute boring reading class. Most of the time, I chose to go home (she laughs).

Wanting to be with friends outweighed Jessie wanting to be in her "boring" reading class in the afternoons. Also, she was unconcerned with the consequences of her choices as seen in her statement, "Oh well, if I fail, I fail." This could have very well been one of many effects of having just experienced the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. She claimed she was "not focused like [she] should have been," and I replied, "Who was?"

After hurricane Katrina, she was forced out of her home, the parish in which she was raised and relocated. These circumstances greatly affected Jessie's ability to persist in reading.

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It took Jessie three years to retake reading after that semester. Finally, however, when she was threatened by the possibility of not being able to graduate if she did not pass developmental reading, her attitude changed as did her behavior.

Although the participants' circumstances hindered their ability to persist through and successfully pass reading upon their first two attempts, they never lost sight of knowing they could pass the class. The idea of believing in one's capabilities is also something that serves as a driving force in one's motivation. This idea is evident in the participants' experiences.

<p style="text-align:center">Theme Four:
"It's not about being smart; it's about believing in yourself."</p>

The participants suggested that believing in themselves and their abilities motivated them to persist and be successful in class. Participants in my study often mentioned their beliefs about their abilities in both their academic and personal lives, and these beliefs heavily impacted their motivation and academic and social integration in their reading class the semester they were successful. Although one participant, Sierra said she felt "stupid" initially in reading when she was unsuccessful, her repetition and the discovery of her learning disability encouraged her to think otherwise. All four participants believed in themselves and their abilities by the time they were faced with repeating a developmental reading course a third time. The belief in their abilities led to their motivation to socially and academically integrate themselves in their reading class on their third attempt.

For example, after failing reading the first time, Sierra was disappointed because she always had difficulties with learning. Sierra's learning difficulties "made [her] think less of [her] abilities. Sierra called herself a "hard learner" and said it was rough, to say the least, trying to learn as everyone else did. However, she was still motivated to successfully complete the reading class even though she had to repeat it. She told her teacher, "I'll be here [next semester]

because I am not giving up!" She claimed during her second attempt in reading, she was

thinking, "I better get it this time. I *have* to get it this time," but she did not get it. She failed a

second time. But still, Sierra kept her head high and took the reading class a third time. She

claimed in an interview, "Right now, I feel a whole lot better and a whole lot more motivated and

comfortable…I just know that I can do it, and I'm gonna do it." She also stated in her essay,

"Because of my learning disability, it is real difficult. But it is a challenge that I must fight."

Despite her obstacles with learning, Sierra successfully completed reading on her third attempt,

and it was partly because she believed in herself, which increased her motivation and

performance in the class.

At the same time, Jason never gave up despite his failure in reading and his need to repeat

it a third time prior to being successful. Jason recalled how he felt after failing reading the first

time by saying, "I was disappointed in myself, knowing I could've done it [passed reading] the

first time…I know I can do it. I just know I can do it." Even though Jason was disappointed, he

never stopped believing in his abilities. Distracted by a job, his goals overpowered his positive

beliefs in his abilities. He also knew there was something special in him academically because

other people saw it in him. His teacher always told him how smart and capable he was. His

family and friends had all told Jason how smart he was, and he was, "always the kid in school

other students wanted to cheat off of," Jason told me. Jason's experiences led to his positive

capability beliefs and increased his motivation to be in and stay in school, eventually succeeding

in reading.

Jessie had similar experiences to Jason regarding her academic capability beliefs. In high

school, she was in honors classes and knew she was capable of doing her school work.

However, she put forth little effort and earned mediocre grades. In college, she had the same

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attitude – she knew she could do the work; she just didn't always feel like doing it. When she reached her third experience in reading, she showed not only that she knew she could do it, but she put those beliefs into action. Her "aha" moment came during her last "stay" in reading when she discovered that the teacher changed a few things. That semester, she knew she did not have a choice as to whether or not she was going to pass. She said,

> "If I did not read, I was going to fail…that was like a huge 'I gotta get off my butt and do it' moment. I mean I was in honors English classes in high school; I had to know something, right? "

Jessie, like Jason and Sierra believed in herself and her abilities and proved it her last semester in college. Her positive capability beliefs further drove her motivation and led to her ultimate persistence and success in reading.

Finally, Terry reflected on how she was upset she tested into reading originally, because she did not think she needed the class. However, she later discovered that she did need it because she had trouble with reading in the past.

> I started having problems in reading in the second grade. My son has problems with it too, so I read to him and help him with it all the time. I know that in order to help him, I needed to learn what I didn't know, and it took me being in that reading class to get the things I never had before. I made great grades in that class, and it really helped me believe that I was going to be able to take my education all the way.

Despite her past experiences and trouble in reading, Terry still believed in herself. Terry discovered during her third time in reading that she is "an achiever," and she was determined to do what it took to get pass the reading class.

Theme Five:
"When it comes to motivation, I look to my family, friends and teachers."

The four participants stated that they are encouraged by their family, kids, friends and teachers to be successful. This validation and encouragement impacted their motivation and persistence in class. My study stressed the importance of validation in a class setting in order for a repeater to be successful. Participants in the study agreed that validating experiences are necessary for their motivation, integration and persistence to successfully complete a class when faced with repetition. They experienced validation through their teacher, peers, family and friends.

Sierra had validating experiences in all of her semesters in reading. Her first attempt left her with the teacher assuring her that she was going to "make sure" she passed the reading class the following semester. She also felt validated the following semester when she was praised by her teacher for her increased effort in the course even though she was unsuccessful. Sierra's third attempt in reading brought her many validating experiences. Her son high fived her and said, "Oh mama, you really getting it," when he helped her with her school work one day and she had everything correct. One of her peers even told her in class one day, "Dang, Sierra! You know this!" Finally, her teacher smiled and told her one day, "Oh, you're getting it now, huh?" All of these experiences made Sierra, "feel better and more motivated because before, boy it was rough! But now, I can see that I have really come a long way." Validation for Sierra took place right at a time when she needed it most. It increased her motivation, gave her the courage she needed to integrate herself into the class and encouraged her to persist and successfully complete the class.

Terry was also validated by her teacher and her kids, which increased her motivation. Terry explained how the teacher she had during her third attempt in reading, "praised [her] when

[she] did good, and that made [her] feel good and made [her] want to do good in class." Terry's teacher's praise was a validating experience for her and motivated her to *want to* be successful in class. She also said that another big source of her motivation came from the support and validation she received from her fiancé. She said that her fiancé "encourages [her] to go to school" as often as he can and Terry is sure to encourage him as well. Through these in class and out of class "validating experiences," Terry was able to have a successful semester. She integrated herself, persisted and was successful.

Similar to Sierra and Terry, Jason's validating experiences came from his teacher, in addition to coming from his family, friends and peers. Jason's reading teacher, during his second and third attempts, praised him and his efforts, even though he was unsuccessful the second time for reasons previously discussed. Jason's family always verbalized their support and encouraged Jason. With regard to his family, Jason said,

> "They support me a thousand percent. They support the school, they support me going to school; my whole family supports me. They don't even want me even getting a job. They want me to stay in school, and they say if you stay in school it will come out better, and I believe them."

His friends support him in a similar way. Jason said his friends "push [him] to be in school." They tell him that he has something they don't have; he has a good mind. One of his peers in school made a comment to him one day, saying, "You real smart. You know what you talking about." Jason's family, friends and peers' constant reminders to him about his ability were validating experiences that continue to be reasons for his motivation. Jason's teacher also validated him by providing him with positive feedback, verbal encouragement and words of praise. Jason's experiences reinforced his motivation and beliefs of himself. They also

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encouraged him to integrate himself in class and successfully complete it. Jessie's experiences did the same for her motivation.

Jessie was mostly validated by her teacher and the methods the teacher used to conduct the class the third time she was enrolled. Jessie said that her teacher would approach her when she felt Jessie needed a pep talk. She would also encourage Jessie and praise her when she performed well in class. The teacher also told her one day during her final attempt in reading, "I'm glad you shaped up; you did it this time!" These things made Jessie feel good, which motivated her to say the least to achieve in the reading class.

The teacher also used methods in class such as group work and peer collaboration, which Jessie claimed allowed the class to have more interaction, which was the type of environment she felt she needed to be successful in a class setting. According to Jessie, the students in class would praise one another when they knew answers or led discussions. The praise, encouragement and class structure served as validating experiences for Jessie and positively impacted her motivation, integration in the class, persistence and successful completion of the class. The idea of class structure and teaching methods became the overarching final theme found in the participants' stories.

Theme Six:
"I need to move around, talk to other students, hear others' ideas in groups and talk to my teacher sometimes if needed."

The participants in the study suggested that success in a class depends on what is happening in the class. Classroom attributes, including teaching methods aided participants' in becoming part of the class community and this helped them persist and be successful in a classroom setting. It was in the classroom where everything seemed to come together for the participants and led to their motivation, immersion, persistence and success in developmental

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reading during their third and last attempt. The classroom was the context in which the

participants' experiences occurred. The classroom structure was congruent with the participants'

capabilities and learning preferences and provided an emotional climate for them to function

effectively, all things that led to the participants' motivation and desire to become part of the

class community and eventually successfully complete it upon repetition. Once they became

comfortable in the class and with the teacher's methods, they developed positive context beliefs,

which motivated them to truly become part of the class, persist and successfully complete

reading.

The classroom was set up so that the student, rather than the teacher, was at the center of

the class, which made the students feel comfortable. The participants agreed that a student-

centered classroom was most effective for them in their quest to be comfortable and successful in

developmental reading. They specifically discussed collaboration and group work, one-on-one

tutoring and communicating with the instructor as key ingredients to their success in reading.

The first two times in their reading class, the participants claimed that the teacher did not

use group work as a method of instruction in the class. Although a few of the participants had

the same teacher more than once, she did not always use the same methods in all of her classes.

Jessie remembered the teacher changing her methods between the second and third time she took

the class and said it made a difference in her learning. During Jessie's second attempt, her

teacher used a lecture-based teaching method and did not put students in groups, but the third

time when she took the same teacher she began using groups. Working in groups for Jessie was

an ideal learning environment for several reasons. Jessie recalled her third attempt in reading

and how the teacher used group work:

She did a lot of putting us in circles, and that's how we would work. It wasn't you were sitting in class looking at the board all day; you were sitting in class talking to other students, and I liked that because someone else in class may have caught something that I didn't catch. She gave us group projects that we could work on in class, and we all worked together, and I liked that interaction; I'm a very, very talkative person. In group work, other people have to tell you what they're thinking, and I like to know what the person next to me is thinking. I feel like I learn better that way.

Jessie's ability to interact is a prime example of her academic and social integration in the class, and it was group work that allowed the talkative quality in Jessie to shine, as she integrated herself in class, persisted and became successful.

Sierra had a similar experience with the use of group work in her reading class. She was ready to try something different. Always hesitant to participate in interactions and groups in class during her first attempt in reading, Sierra said, "I knew I had to do something different because what I did last semester obviously didn't help me." She participated in a group work session in class but resisted speaking in the group. She recalled, "I just sat there like I did when I was in middle school. I was scared I was going to say something stupid or wrong."

Despite her negative beliefs in her abilities at the time, during Sierra's third attempt, those beliefs slowly dissipated. Sierra's teacher put students in groups during her third attempt, and she happily spoke and shared her ideas. Sierra recalled:

I was not about to be up in that class four times. I been in that class two times already; I knew what she (the teacher) was going to go over, so I knew answers that other students didn't know. And that felt real good. They didn't need to

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know I been in there before. I turned into the person in class people wanted to be

with in groups, and that never happen before.

The collaboration and interaction in the group motivated Sierra and made her feel as though she

was part of the class, which aided in her ability to successfully complete it.

Jason and Terry also enjoyed and were successful in a collaborative environment. Both

discussed their desire for group work, but they claimed that they did not necessarily *need* it to

learn best, as Terry insisted. They enjoyed sharing ideas with peers, but they did not enjoy the

debates over trivial aspects of whatever assignments they would be doing together in groups.

Terry said that the teacher she took for her third time in reading put students in groups, and it

was effective for her. Terry said, "She put us in groups and even though I did not *need* to work

with other people to get through the class, I did it and I liked it."

Jason recalled being in class and being put in a group, and although he enjoyed it, he did

point out one interesting aspect of group work that can become a challenge in class. He said:

> Group work is cool, but when two people's opinions collide with each other it can
>
> get tricky. If that happens, I try to find a solution, you know, like use some of my
>
> ideas and some of your ideas and maybe we can combine them and make them
>
> one great idea. I remember just a few weeks ago, we had a group exercise where
>
> we had to take a vocabulary word and write the definition and use it in our own
>
> sentence. We had to write the parts of speech of each word in the sentence too. I
>
> wrote a sentence down and a girl in my group was like, 'no, no, this isn't how you
>
> do it.' And then I was like, 'well let me see what you got.' I look at her sentence
>
> and then I see that, well, you know, we needed to figure out a way to combine our

sentences together and see how it works out. We combined out sentences, wrote

it on the board, and it turned out good.

Although group work can be "tricky," as Jason implied, it can ultimately lead to excellent

learning and problem solving experiences. It also teaches students about working together and

respecting each other's work and opinions, as seen in Jason's above experience. But group work

and collaboration were not the only two components of the classroom setting that encouraged

students to integrate.

Another important component of the class structure and teaching methods the participants

discussed in depth was their desire for one-on-one tutoring with their instructors. Working one-

on-one with the teacher gave the participants the motivation and confidence they needed to give

their all in their reading class, persist and succeed. One-on-one teaching and tutoring helped all

four participants in their reading class when they finally decided to seek it during their third

attempt. The four participants each alluded to their teachers being there to help, but despite their

failure to take advantage of it the first two times they were re-enrolled in developmental reading.

They agreed that it did help them ultimately to get tutoring in order to be successful in the class.

Sierra, for instance, originally wanted to seek tutoring during her first and second

semesters in reading, but she could not because of her circumstances, as previously discussed.

She did, however, make sure to seek tutoring from her teacher during her third attempt. Sierra

and her teacher had regularly scheduled tutoring sessions each week in which they would go

over the concepts discussed that week in class or review concepts with which she was having

problems understanding. Sierra would also get supplemental exercises from her teacher so that

she could practice on her own. The teacher would discuss Sierra's strengths and weaknesses and

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things she needed to work on and would also compliment Sierra in tutoring sessions for a job

well done. Sierra recalled in her personal essay:

> I need my teacher or tutor to help me. I didn't gain any skills or knowledge from
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> high school. Now it's hard for me to comprehend. I have to read a paragraph
>
> about four or five times to understand it. My reading level is on a fifth or sixth
>
> grade level; in college it should be higher.

She also said in her interview that:

> I need someone to read to me sometimes, no matter if it is a novel or a test. She
>
> [reading teacher] help me last time. She would sit with me after class, read to me
>
> and give me extra work. When we met, she told me what I needed to work on
>
> most and sit with me and watch me do the work in case it was hard. It helped me.

The validation and encouragement from her teacher gave Sierra confidence in class and

motivated her to talk more and become more integrated. Sierra's experiences with tutoring

helped her to socially become part of the class and helped her gain the confidence to form study

groups with her classmates to further clarify what she and her teacher would discuss in their

tutoring sessions. These things combined further enabled Sierra to persist through and

successfully complete her course in her third attempt.

Jason agreed that one-on-one and hands-on teaching was a perfect way to help a student

excel in a class. In Jason's first attempt in developmental reading, the teacher walked around a

little and offered tutoring, but he never went to tutoring. His second attempt left him with a

teacher who, as Jason said, "Got up on the board and gave us general information and made us

interpret things without really explaining the information." That method of teaching did not

work for Jason. He preferred:

…a hands-on teacher that communicates with the students. I feel a student should have the right to get some one-on-one sometimes so that they can know their strengths and work on their weakness. That would make me feel good and work harder.

Jason did seek tutoring his third semester in reading, and he had a teacher who walked around when students were doing their in-class assignments and stopped them if she saw they were doing something wrong. She sat with them when they called on her, and she would tell them what they needed to practice to be stronger students in reading. Jason excelled in that type of environment, and it allowed him to further integrate himself in the class and successfully pass.

Jessie and Terry had similar experiences with one-on-one tutoring and communicating with their reading teachers. Jessie did not even consider tutoring or communicating with her teacher the first two times she was enrolled in reading. The third time was different, though. Jessie did not feel as though she needed tutoring, but when her teacher suggested it, she did it anyway. She met with her teacher for tutoring once a week to check on her progress or have her clarify a concept or issue she may have been having at the time in class. Jessie believed that the regular contact and communication with her teacher led to her motivation to get more academically involved in the class, which led to her persistence and successful completion.

Terry felt the same way about tutoring and communicating with her teacher the first two times she was enrolled in the class. She did not feel she needed it, so she did not seek it. She was also very shy, and the teachers in her first two reading classes did not approach her about her progress, and she did not approach the teacher. The third time in reading, Terry had a teacher who approached her students when she noticed they were having problems in the class, and she

approached Terry one day. Terry was comfortable, and it became easier for her to go to the

teacher if necessary. Terry remembered her third experience in reading and said:

> My teacher the third time in reading felt better. I liked the way she handled the
>
> class compared to my previous teacher. My new teacher seemed to be more
>
> involved with us. We had a small class, so she would sit with us on-on-one and
>
> work with us if we were having problems.

This helped Terry improve her reading and comprehension skills, but it also encouraged her to be

a little more outspoken in class and to share her thoughts with her peers. When she finally

reached that level of comfort in the class, Terry's outspokenness, improvement and seeking extra

help were clear examples of her successful integration both academically and socially in the

class. This integration led to Terry's persisting in the class and being success in developmental

reading upon her third attempt.

All of the things that were taking place in their classroom during their third attempt in

reading may have been in place, at least to some extent before; participants were perhaps blinded

again by life and all of the stressors it offers. Repetition may actually have given participants the

ability to see clearly and discover that the teacher was there all along; their peers were there all

along; they were the missing link in their ultimate inability to successfully complete reading in

their first attempt. With their thinking cleared, the blinders gone and their circumstances under

control, the participants became open to working in groups, leading discussions, and asking the

teacher for help and one-on-one tutoring when necessary.

Summary

The data collected for the study revealed rich, thick description from participants based

on their stories about and experiences with developmental reading and repetition. The findings

claimed that developmental education repeaters and developmental students in general do, in fact, require some level of integration in the developmental reading classroom in order to be successful. This integration happens through student-centered teaching, which includes group work and collaboration, one-on-one tutoring and teaching, and communication with instructor. The participants also suggested that validation and motivation are key components in the integration process as well. Additionally, participants stated that motivation is heavily impacted by one's goals, capability beliefs, emotions and circumstances, one thing that was not fully considered in the original framework.

My research has created a curiosity in me that I never anticipated. Following in Chapter Five, I will revisit the original theoretical framework that guided the research, as well the themes discovered in the study and how they not only relate to the framework but also how they relate to past literature on developmental education students, their needs and their perceptions of what leads to success. I will also discuss the delimitations of the study, as well as implications for theory, practice, policy and future research possibilities that were discovered through my research process.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

As the research and findings suggest developmental students require things that a traditional college student may not need to be successful in a class. To follow is a discussion of the conceptual framework for this inquiry as I revisit it and revise it with consideration for participants' stories, experiences and beliefs. Following the framework, I will discuss other findings that were revealed by a few of the participants. I will then discuss limitations of the study, as well as implications of the research and future research possibilities that were discovered during the research process.

Framework Revisited and Revised

I began this research study in order to examine developmental reading repeaters' stories about and experiences with developmental reading and repetition. According to the participants' stories and experiences with developmental reading and repetition, in order to persist and be successful in a developmental reading class when faced with repetition, a student must have validation from in and out of class validating agents (Rendon, 1994). This validation leads to the students' motivation, which is also heavily influenced by their goals, emotions and personal agency beliefs (Ford, 1992). Also influencing motivation is one's circumstances, something that had not been considered in the original framework. Therefore, "circumstances" was added to the framework as influencing one's motivation. Additionally, although teaching and classroom structure were considered as promoting validating experiences and impacting motivation, it was not originally considered in the framework. Therefore, teaching methods and classroom structure were also added to the framework to show how they impact social and academic integration (Tinto, 1993, 1997), validation and motivation to persist.

With validation motivation, specific classroom structure and teaching methods, students can more easily socially and academically integrate themselves in a classroom setting, which leads them to persist in and successfully complete a class when faced with repetition. Below is a visual depiction of the revised framework that guided this research and was validated by participants.

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┌────────┬──────────┬─────────────────────────┬───────────────┐
│ Goals  │ Emotions │ Personal Agency Beliefs │ Circumstances │
└────────┴──────────┴─────────────────────────┴───────────────┘
```
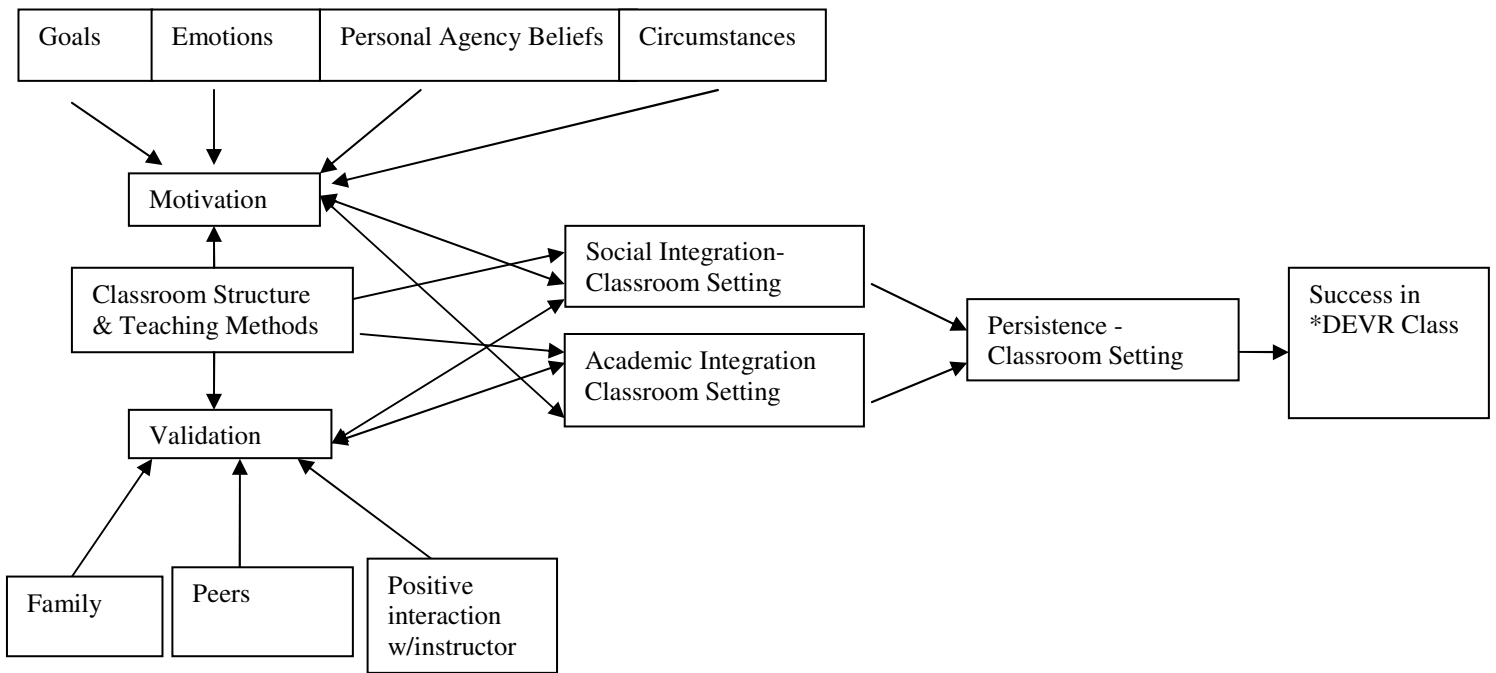
Figure C: Revised Conceptual Framework of Repeaters' Successful Completion of a Course

*DEVR=Developmental Reading

It should be noted that if students were aware of the positive impact of socially and academically integrating themselves in a class, they could perhaps avoid repetition. Therefore, one other aspect of the original framework changed; success in DEVR class upon repetition has been revised to say Success in DEVR class. Success in reading could happen for any developmental student, even non-repeaters, if they are validated, motivated and academically and socially integrated in the class setting.

Revisiting the Themes

In order to thoroughly explain the themes and their connection to past literature and the theoretical framework used to guide the study, a detailed discussion of each theme will be presented.

Theme One: "I was disappointed in myself."

The idea of participants' discussion of disappointment and how it was a driving force in their eventual success can be linked to what Ford (1992) claimed in his MST. Ford theorized that more often than not, one's motivation is heavily influenced by one's emotions toward goal attainment. Past failure may actually impacts one's motivation in a positive way, and result in failure becoming the driving force behind his or her motivation to not give up (Ford, 1992). Research on developmental education students discussed how developmental education students often lack confidence and because of past academic failure may easily become disappointed when they are faced with material they cannot understand (Boylan, 1990; Fenton, 2002; Rendon, 1994; Tinto, 1993). This may result in their wanting to give up or quit, and if they do not give up or quit, they may be generally unsuccessful in academic pursuits.

The stories of the four participants in my study suggest this may be accurate. Only one of the participants, Sierra, actually remained enrolled in the reading class the first two attempts; the other three just quit attending class when it became difficult and, therefore, failed the first two times they enrolled in the reading class. However, none of the participants gave up all together; their motivation to successfully complete the reading course despite being enrolled in it a third time increased their motivation and eventually, their academic and social integration in the class, which resulted in their successful completion.

For the participants in my study, failure and repetition led to disappointment; disappointment led to increased motivation in participants. Because of this disappointment,

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participants were strategically placed in a position to want to integrate themselves in the class they repeated. Ford (1992) suggested that often times it is failure and disappointment that drive one's motivation. Although failure and disappointment equate to negative performance of a task, in the present study, it was the disappointment that led to the participants' motivation and attainment of their goal to succeed. The goal to successfully complete the course was driven by the participants' disappointment of knowing they could have achieved success the first time. As a result, they persisted through and successfully passed their reading course. This disappointment also led to their eventually taking their class seriously and taking steps to do things differently in class the third time they enrolled. Disappointment also led to the participants' desire to reestablishing their goals so that they could be successful in life, not just their reading class.

Theme Two: "It was time for me to prove that I could do it, for me, my family, and my kids."

Theme two illuminated the idea of goals for the participant. All of the participants discussed how they wanted to prove something to someone, whether it was themselves, their family, their kids, their friends or their teachers. This desire to "prove something" became the participants' goal when they were enrolled in reading the third time. According to Ford (1992) and the MST, goals are the main driving force in one's motivation. Ford suggested that it is an individual's goals that direct his or her actions and represent desired future states and outcomes. Ford stressed task focused goals in his MST and claimed that these goals represent the desire to "improve one's performance on a task or to reach or maintain a challenging standard of achievement and competence" (p. 95). Miller (2000) and Stein (2006) also stressed how goals influenced the motivation of their participants to be successful in a developmental education course.

The participants in my study emphasized the relevance and importance of goals as related to their motivation. However, during their reading experiences the first and second times, the participants suggested that it was the shifting of their desired goals that negatively impacted their ability to focus on the goal to successfully complete developmental reading.

The participants' goals were skewed by either their desires for other things or their circumstances in life during their time in reading. Two of the participants, Jason and Jessie, were focused on their desire to get a job and spend time with friends, and they viewed these desires as hindrances to their ability to be successful in developmental reading during the first two attempts. Jason and Jessie viewed their goals to get a job and "hang out" as things that eventually outweighed their goal to be successful in developmental reading. Eventually, their motivation to pass reading faded.

The attention of the other two participants, Terry and Sierra, was consumed by their children and learning problems. Their goals to take care of their kids and overcome a learning problem, respectively, were valid at the time; they did not view these goals as affecting their motivation. These were things they needed to go through in order to eventually be successful in reading, even if it meant taking the class three times. Eventually, all of the participants overcame the obstacles in their lives and were able to focus on the goal to prove to themselves and others that they could successfully complete reading, which heavily influenced their motivation. Unfortunately, non-academic circumstances still threatened the participants' motivation and success during their first two attempts.

Theme Three: "I was focused on other things, and school was not one of them."

Past literature (Boylan, 1990; Fenton, 2002; Rendon, 1994; Roueche & Rouche, 2000; Stein, 2006; Tinto, 1993) has suggested that community college students often have a difficult

time balancing the rigors of college with their outside obligations and circumstances, which often include taking care of families and children and having full time employment. Also, many times, circumstances "get in the way of" future successes of developmental education students. Boylan (1999), Payne and Lyman (1996) and Young (2002) have all suggested that there are developmental students, depending on their level of competency and life circumstances, who have a hard time completing developmental education courses. Miller (2000) found, in her study on developmental math students' perceptions of motivation, that life circumstances for her participants inhibited their motivation to do well and succeed in developmental math.

The participants in my study claimed that circumstances and obligations in their lives often prevented them from being successful their first two times in developmental reading. The participants discussed circumstances such as personal issues, taking care of kids, lack of seriousness and needing a job as reasons why they felt they were unsuccessful in developmental reading the first two attempts. These circumstances for the participants reduced their ability to fulfill their goal to be successful in the class, which reduced their motivation to integrate themselves in the class and successfully complete it the first two attempts.

Ford (1992) pointed out that circumstances that affect goal attainment naturally impact motivation, whether negatively or positively. For the participants in my study, life's circumstances negatively impacted their motivation and desire to successfully complete reading. Jason was focused on getting a job; Sierra had to work around her mother's schedule for rides to and from school; Terry was having problems with the father of her child; and Jessie was more concerned with her social life and less concerned with school. The circumstances also deflated any beliefs the participants had in themselves to reach success. The participants were

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disappointed that they did not pass the first two attempts, but the obligations in their lives during those times did not allow them to focus on developmental reading.

Many researchers have found that faculty who are sensitive to students' circumstances in life and who are willing to work with them during challenging times alleviate some of the pressure for the student to do well in class and increase motivation (Miller, 2000; Rendon, 1994; Stein, 2006). This motivation then leads to success. The participants in my study also claimed the same. They suggested that the faculty member who took interest in their lives and progress was the faculty member with whom they were successful. This finding indicates that there is a need for developmental faculty to be sensitive to a student's outside obligations in order to more effectively work with him or her toward excelling in class. This sensitivity may also promote students' positive capability beliefs and eventual motivation to succeed in a class upon their earlier attempts.

Theme Four: "It's not about being smart; it's about believing in yourself."

Ford (1992) discussed personal agency beliefs, which are used to explain the patterning of capability beliefs that determines whether or not a person will stimulate or reduce behavior to be motivated to fulfill a goal. Additionally, Bandura (1982) pointed out that personal agency beliefs or self-efficacy beliefs affect one's motivation, effort and persistence. Ford described capability beliefs as evaluations and about one's capabilities and skills required to function effectively and attain a desired goal. These beliefs also have substantial influence over the level of one's motivation. If one has positive capability beliefs, his or her motivation will increase. Miller's (2000) and Stein's (2006) studies and the findings of my study suggest this is accurate.

Researchers (Crane, et al, 1998; Ferrara, 2005; Hynd, Holschuh, & Nist, 2000; Martin & Dowson, 2010; Miller, 2000; Stein, 2006) agree that the way a student feels about his or her

capabilities determines his or her motivation to learn and succeed in a class. They claim that confidence in oneself or positive capability beliefs can positively influence a student's motivation to succeed. Bandura (1982) and Ford (1992) suggested that with each successful endeavor, motivation increases, as does one's self-efficacy or capability beliefs. In the case of the four participants in my study, the opposite occurred; even in the face of failure they believed in themselves. Initially failing developmental reading disappointed the participants, but it did not prevent them from believing that they were capable of passing the course. The four participants' positive capability beliefs and confidence in their abilities greatly influenced their motivation, and Ford (1992) suggested in his MST that capability beliefs impact motivation. The belief in themselves eventually led to participants' willingness to socially and academically integrate themselves in the class upon their third attempt, persist and successfully pass developmental reading.

The self-confidence and motivation gave participants the force necessary to work hard and perform different practices they had not used in past reading attempts. This confirms what other studies (Crane, et al, 1998; Hidi & Harackiewicz, 2000; Putman & Walker, 2010) have found regarding the impact of capability beliefs on motivation. For instance, Crane et al (1998) claimed in their study of developmental students and motivation that when students believe they can succeed, they are more likely to be motivated to persist in a task. The participants in the study stated that they were constantly encouraged and praised for their efforts by their teacher, family and peers. The encouragement led to their belief in their abilities and the belief that they could succeed, which gave them the motivation they needed to persist and successfully complete developmental reading during their third attempt. The participants' motivation was also

strengthened by encouragement and praise, or validation as it is referred to for the purpose of the study, which was is consistent with a fifth theme found in participants' stories.

Theme Five: "When it comes to motivation, I look to my family, friends and teachers."

Rendon (1994) stressed the importance of validation to success in college, especially for nontraditional, developmental and culturally diverse students. Rendon claimed that validating experiences lead to students' persistence and success in the college classroom. Validating experiences, according to Rendon, make students feel accepted as their worth in the classroom is validated, and they persist and succeed. She also pointed out that validation is, "an enabling, confirming, and supportive process initiated by in and out of class agents that foster academic and interpersonal development" (p. 44).

Validation allows for relationships to develop both in and out of the classroom; however, in the classroom, validating experiences not only increase a student's motivation, but they also makes it easier for a student to socially and academically integrate into the class (Anderson & Carta-Falsa, 2002; Ford, 1992; Rendon, 1994; Stein, 2006; Tinto, 1993; Young, 2002). The four participants in this study all agreed that their instructor, during the third attempt in reading, provided a validating environment in which they were most successful. They referred to experiences such as the teacher's complimenting their efforts, working with them in class one-on-one to help them with troubling concepts and meeting with them to discuss their progress in the class. They also mentioned that their instructor, during their third attempt in reading, approached them often when she saw they were having problems; this is a prime example of validation. This sort of validation from the instructor not only motivated them to do well in the class, but it also led to their social and academic integration in the class, which led to their eventual persistence and success.

The participants also discussed the validating experiences they received from their family and peers and how it positively impacted their motivation and ultimately their performance in the classroom. Participants mentioned their kids, parents, friends and classmates as being people other than their instructor who validated them and their efforts. The acknowledgement from peers and family further increased motivation and eventual persistence and success in reading.

With validation comes sensitivity, something that participants in this study and previous studies (Miller, 2000; Stein, 2006; Young, 2000) have claimed is necessary for them to be successful. These findings on validation further stress the importance of faculty professional development for classroom environment that leads to success. Classroom structure and teaching methods was a final theme that was prevalent among the four participants in the present study.

Theme Six: "I need to move around, talk to other students, hear others' ideas in groups and talk to my teacher sometimes if needed."

Ford (1992), in his discussion of personal agency beliefs, discussed an individual's context beliefs and how they influence one's motivation. According to Ford, context beliefs are evaluations of whether one has a responsive environment, which is needed to support effective functioning. Also claimed is that without positive context beliefs or the belief that the environment is conducive for effectively obtaining a goal, motivation is not possible. A responsive environment is one that is congruent with one's goals; it must also be congruent with one's capabilities; it must have resources needed to facilitate goal attainment, and the environment must provide an emotional climate where effective functioning is supported (Crane et al., 1998; Ford, 1992; Hidi & Harackiewicz, 2000; Rendon, 1994; Stein, 2006; Svinicki, 1999).

The four participants in the study agreed that the classroom environment during their third attempt in developmental reading made it possible and less intimidating for them to socially and academically integrate themselves into the class and successfully complete it. They discussed the environment as non-threatening, which made them comfortable. It made them want to volunteer to lead groups, ask questions and share ideas with their classmates, all examples of academic and social integration. Such behavior in a class can often be a challenge for developmental education students.

Developmental students often have a difficult time openly expressing their thoughts, opinions and ideas in the classroom, especially when some instructors too often refuse to deviate from a standard lecture format. Teaching in the developmental classroom must be student-centered, where non-traditional methods of teaching are used, such as community building, group work, and one-on-one tutoring (Beaver, 1997; Boehnlein, 1995; Caverly, Nicholson & Radcliffe, 2004; Dressel & Marcus, 1982; Morris & Price, 2008; Putman & Walker, 2010). Boehnlein (1995) stressed that developmental students "need to enter a comfort zone" before being expected to be productive in the classroom (p. 6), and the classroom environment must be a responsive one in order for the student to be motivated to speak and discuss topics in class, as discussed by Ford (1992). Harlow and Cummings (2003) proposed that the most successful form of instruction is one that "move[s] away from adherence to an ordered and sequential structure to creation of a more relaxed atmosphere that encourages discussion, questions, and sharing points of view" (p. 298).

The developmental reading instructor should attempt to create a friendly and welcoming atmosphere in the student-centered classroom. This is difficult to achieve with the use of the typical lecture-based method of instruction, another rationale for use of nontraditional teaching

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methods. A welcoming environment and teacher friendliness are also viewed as validating

elements for developmental students as seen in Rendon's (1994) validation theory. It is this type

of atmosphere that also creates a responsive environment needed for repeaters to be motivated

and academically and socially integrated and to persist and successfully complete a course being

repeated three or more times (Ford, 1992; Tinto, 1993). Also, Demaris and Kritsonis (2008)

claimed that students should feel as though they belong to a community in the classroom, and

"classroom experience must be designed to provide positive experiences through the adoption of

various learning strategies" (p. 3).

This sense of belongingness can also foster validating experiences for students, which

ultimately positively influences motivation, integration and persistence. Student-centered

teaching also promotes involvement in the class, a key factor in social and academic integration

(Tinto, 1997). Comfort in a classroom setting may further encourage students in developmental

courses to speak in class while sharing work and problem solving, to ask questions and to read

out loud (McFarland, Dowdey & Davis, 1999; Morris & Price, 2008; Rendon, 1994; Severiens &

Schmidt, 2008; Tinto, 1997). These are activities that challenge and intimidate developmental

students but are also excellent processes for becoming academically and socially integrated in

the classroom setting. All of the participants expressed that they had these types of experiences

in developmental reading during their third attempts.

According to the participants in my study, traditional lecture-based instruction was not

the method used in their reading class during their third attempts, but it was the primary teaching

method used when they were unsuccessful the first two attempts. The instructor during their

successful attempt in developmental reading often put students in groups or in a learning circle in

order to serve as a facilitator in the learning environment rather than the typical teacher,

something typical of the student-centered classroom (Dressel & Marcus, 1982). Additionally, the participants discussed how the instructor would ask students to discuss in small groups their understanding of different readings then share them with the class as a whole. This encouraged participants to talk more and share their ideas without feeling as though the teacher was grading them, and it allowed them to hear other students' understanding of the course material, which naturally helped their own understanding (Harlow & Cummings, 2003).

Also, through group work in a classroom, the participants were able to build trusting relationships, such as the one developed by Sierra and her study partners in class, which made them comfortable and as though they are part of a community, in addition to serving as a way to academically and socially integrate in the classroom setting (Tinto, 1997). Student learning is enhanced when students are actively involved in learning and when they are placed in situations in which they have to share learning in some connected manner (Astin, 1993). This environment allowed the participants to integrate and successfully complete the class.

Other Discoveries

There were other interesting aspects of participants' stories that were quite compelling. Three of the four participants were heavily influenced by their family and childhood experiences, and these experiences set the tone for their future academic lives. The passing of Terry's father when Terry was very young left her feeling alone in her academic life. Jessie felt forced by her mother to take on the responsibility of doing her little brother's schoolwork and put her own schoolwork on hold because he was diagnosed at an early age with ADHD and a learning disability. And finally, Sierra had had a learning disability since she was a child, as documented in her IEPs throughout middle and high school, but her mother had never had her formally tested because she assumed it was "just a phase" and it "would pass."

Family circumstances for the three participants when they were children paved the way for the difficulties they had academically as adults. A person's upbringing may greatly impact his or her academic success, an idea that was addressed in Bourdieu's (1973) cultural capital theory. Bourdieu claimed that beyond economic reasons, "cultural habits and…dispositions inherited from" an individual's family are important to and likely to influence an individual's academic success or lack thereof (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1979). Three of the participants grew up in environments where school was either not taken seriously or came second. This could have impacted their attitudes toward schooling, their academic abilities and their academic successes and failures. Also, although the aforementioned cultural influence appears to be parallel to what critics believe is the "missing link" in Tinto's (1993) persistence and departure theory, my study was limited to persistence in the classroom setting, not in college as a whole. Therefore, claiming that culture heavily influences participants' persistence in a classroom can be assumed to be true but cannot be fully validated by my findings.

Furthermore, two of the four participants were from low socioeconomic backgrounds, which could have influenced their desire and determination to obtain a college education. Their socioeconomic status could have also impacted their parents' views of higher education and its importance. For instance, Jason's parents pushed him to go to college; both his mother and father had some college. They were poor, with seven people living under the roof of one small house. They stressed the importance of college to Jason and explained how it could lead him to a better life eventually. Although they were poor, Jason's parents were still able to provide him with the cultural capital Jason needed to develop a desire for college and a better life. Sierra's parents, however, did not stress college or its value. Sierra is the first in her immediate family to attend college, and her lack of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1973) greatly impacted her desire to

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attend college. These two examples suggest that one's economic background may not always have to negatively determine where an individual can end up.

Finally, one of the participants could not stress enough how important the college staff, administration and faculty truly were to her success at LCC in general. Tinto (1993) claimed in his persistence theory that integration occurs through relationships formed in and out of the class on the college campus and the integration leads to persistence in college. Jessie validated Tinto's belief. Additionally, Rendon (1994) suggested that validating agents, like faculty, staff and administration must take initiative with students in order to make them comfortable to be successful in college, and Jessie's experiences also validated this notion.

Autobiographical Disclosure

Based on my participants' stories and the discoveries I made from analyzing their stories, I came to a better understanding of not only who they are but also where they came from and the people and experiences that shaped their lives. I had built rapport with the participants during previous semesters, which gave me prior knowledge of the participants, so it was easy for me to listen to and learn about their experiences with developmental reading and repetition. I used this prior knowledge to better understand my participants and to make meaning of their stories. For instance, I knew Sierra had failed one of my English classes, and I knew she had academic challenges, but I was not sure how *she felt* about those things. I knew Jason's attention was focused elsewhere because I had to more or less hunt him down when I taught him in an English class to get him to turn in his essay folder. However, I did not know the *real* story behind why he had slacked off that particular semester. Terry had shared with me, a year or so ago, how she had problems with the father of her child, but she never told me about how he was trying to take

the child away from her. And Jessie and I had never discussed her family issues and how heavily they impacted her academic experiences.

Learning about my participants' lives growing up and hearing about how poor a couple of them were made me think of my own childhood and family background and how much it impacted my life as an adult. I too was raised in an extremely small home in a small town in Louisiana. My mother reared my two sisters and me alone, and she had to work two and three jobs to support us; we were poor. She was not college-educated when I was younger, but she was driven and determined to take care of her kids, and if that meant working three jobs, then that is what she did. My participants and I have many things in common, including coming from a low socioeconomic background and having weak academic foundation. When I heard Jason talking about living in a small house that was shared with seven people, it brought me back to my own childhood. Sierra also discussed being financially unstable, which is why she and her three children still live with her parents. These experiences allowed me to better understand and connect to their stories so that I could better interpret, report and appreciate them. I also learned that socioeconomic background could, in fact, influence one's academic pursuance.

Finally, it troubled me to read in Sierra's short essay how she felt as though some professors "look down" on students who are academically challenged. Although I do not "look down" on any students, certainly not ones who have difficulties learning, I have had teachers in my past academic experiences who I felt "looked down" on me because of my inadequacies in math. My geometry teacher in high school, for instance, told me that I was never going to go any further than high school because I was what she called, "math illiterate." It hurt my feelings as a teenager, and it could have hurt my academic future if I would have trusted her predictions. I fought my math challenges and furthered my education, just as Sierra says she is fighting her

learning challenges. Too often, teachers, whether in high school or college, so heavily impact students' views of their abilities that the students develop an "I can't do it" attitude. This could ultimately hinder their academic successes, if they have the courage to attempt to even further themselves academically. Sierra believed in herself, as did I, despite her learning difficulties and has been courageous in pursuing her degree.

As a practitioner in the field of developmental education, I assumed that developmental education students lack motivation, which is why they often repeat developmental education courses. I assumed, based on my experience, that a large majority of developmental education students had the ability to perform the work necessary to successfully pass a developmental course but lacked the ability to or did not attempt to socially and academically integrate themselves into a classroom setting, concepts that will be later discussed in the study, hence leading them to repetition. I believed that student success in the community college classroom requires special types of instruction and personal skills on the part of the instructor, including the ability to validate and connect with students. In order to persist and successfully complete a developmental reading course upon repetition, developmental repeaters needed to have positive self-efficacy and capability beliefs.

Although Jessie admitted to being lazy at one point during her academic career, she also had many other things with which she was concerned and this was not by choice. She may have been suffering from the trauma associated with Hurricane Katrina, which could have been a reason why she had a hard time focusing on the task of passing her classes. Sierra did, in fact, have very weak academic ability, but this was not the only reason why she was unsuccessful. Her circumstances and outside obligations prevented her from seeking extra needed help, and this hindered her progress in class. Jason was trying to get a job not only to make money for

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himself but also to help his family financially. Terry had problems with her child and his father. Who was I to assume all students are plain lazy when they fail a class? I was pleased that my participants proved me wrong.

I also assumed going into the study that most, if not all, college faculty members conducted developmental education classes in the same fashion as I do. I found it interesting to hear my participants discuss teachers being insensitive to their circumstances. I am an educator who is a firm believer in getting to know students. I want to know who they are, where they come from and whether or not there is anything occurring in their lives that could hinder their success in my class. For me, doing that comes with the territory of being a teacher. I have heard on numerous occasions from students at my institution how some of their teachers are rude, talk down to them, and do not consider a their outside circumstances when a student may miss class or not have an assignment.

For example, last semester, I had a student whose child had asthma, and the father of the child was for the most part, absent. She was, academically, an excellent student. Not only did this student have to miss many classes because her child was sick, but she also had to miss classes because on the days she had class, the father was supposed to pick up the child, and he would not show up most of the time. She spoke with her teachers, including me, and I told her I would work with her. Her other two teachers dropped her from their courses. This semester she had to come back to school and retake the classes she was dropped from last semester.

Perhaps if the teachers would have been more sensitive to the student's life circumstances at the time, they could have worked with the student and she would not have had to repeat the same courses the following semester. This is why I believe that faculty professional

development on sensitivity issues in the classroom, whether it is based on non-academic

obstacles or learning obstacles is a necessity.

Delimitations

This study had a few delimitations. The study did not address developmental education

students at four year institutions. Second, it was qualitative and used a narrative research design

and as such was not based on a large population; there were only four participants used in the

study. And finally, the study did not consider sex, race, or age as predictors of persistence and

success or lack thereof among repeaters in a classroom setting. The study also did not consider

other coursework in which the participants were enrolled. Although the study made mention of

whether students were enrolled in other developmental courses, it was not something that fell

within the scope of the study.

The study could not be generalized to the larger population of developmental education

students due to the small sample size of four participants. And was limited to four students who

met very specific criteria, two were enrolled in developmental reading a third time during the

semester data were collected, two had already completed developmental reading upon a third

attempt at one community college in the New Orleans area, and all four had a previous student-

teacher relationship with the researcher. The study was also limited to the developmental

reading classroom and could not be generalized to a larger population of college students, nor

could it be generalized to other classroom settings.

Implications for Theory

Based on the findings of the study, there are theoretical considerations that should be

addressed. Tinto's (1993) theory of departure and persistence should be revisited to possibly

include a cultural component based on family culture and how family culture and its cultural

capital greatly impact one's academic success or lack thereof. This can be seen in the participants' stories based on their upbringing and how it influenced, in some way, their academic experiences. They did not *blame* their families for their academic inadequacies; however, they did acknowledge that the demands put on them by their parents when they were young impacted them academically. Additionally, a couple of the participants suggested that their parents' lack of school knowledge and a college education affected their ability to take education seriously in middle and high school, which eventually made it difficult to adjust to the rigors of a higher education setting. As a result of their difficulty acclimating to a college setting, they struggled in their courses and had to repeat at least one course during their college careers. Adding a culture component to Tinto's theory of departure and persistence could add what critics of the theory have claimed to be missing.

Another aspect of Tinto's (1993) departure and persistence theory that appears to missing is the consideration of persistence and departure in a classroom setting which could lead to a student's ultimate persistence in college. Tinto (1997) claimed that the classroom was where the academic and social join, but he did not consider how a student's goals, academic and social integration could impact persistence and departure in a single classroom setting, nor did he revise his persistence and departure theory to address the classroom setting and its impact on success and persistence. Examining and applying Tinto's theory on a smaller scale, the classroom setting, could help researchers discover what students need in a class in order to persist. This would suggest that the greater the persistence of a student in a classroom setting, the greater their persistence in college. If educators know what students need both inside and outside of the classroom to be successful, retention could be positively impacted. Moreover, what happens in

the classroom seems to greatly impact a student's success in that class, as seen in the study findings.

Implications for Practice

Faculty

The results of the study showed that students care most about what is happening in the classroom and the way in which information is disseminated by an instructor. As evident in the findings of the study, several themes illuminated the idea that the instructor and his or her methods can enhance or inhibit a student's ability to successfully perform academically in the classroom. Two of the themes, "When it comes to motivation, I look to my family, friends, and teachers," and "I need to move around, talk to other students, hear others' ideas in groups and talk to my teacher sometimes if needed," suggested a need for higher education leaders to examine the quality of teaching in the developmental education classroom.

First, all of the participants stated that they experienced greater levels of academic engagement and success when the instructor in their class walked around the class and gave them support while they were working on an assignment. They also claimed that instructor praise inspired and encouraged them to want to do better in their class. These findings can be used to influence faculty professional development for developmental education faculty, where faculty are trained in validation theory and guided as to how to create a "validating environment" in their classroom that is sensitive to the needs of their students.

Participants also alluded to the importance of faculty being sensitive to their life circumstances. There could be faculty professional development on sensitivity training in the classroom, especially the developmental education classroom. Some students in developmental education courses enter the classroom feeling the stigma of being in a developmental course and

feeling academically inadequate. Also, it is important for faculty in the community college developmental education classroom setting to truly understand their population. As previously stated, the characteristics of developmental education students include: being weak in basic academic skills, being a first time college student, being nontraditional and over 24 years of age, being a minority, being from a low socioeconomic background, holding a job while attending school or being a full-time parent (Batzer, 1997). Through sensitivity training, faculty could learn more about their students and how to better serve them without the students feeling as though they are being "looked down" upon or misunderstood.

Moreover, the participants suggested that they were not aware of the college process, nor were they aware of the benefits and value of college. Some students are not college ready because they lack college knowledge; students from low socioeconomic backgrounds suffer disadvantages because schools that low income students attend often do not offer programs geared toward college preparation (Adelman, 1999; Bedsworth, Colby, & Doctor, 2006; Conley, 2007). As a result, students who enter college from these schools often lack not only knowledge about the opportunities of college but also lack academic skills needed to be successful in college. It is important for faculty and college leaders to make an attempt to "teach" students about these things when they enter college. College knowledge and readiness are things that many community college freshmen lack (Conley, 2007), and if leaders and faculty developed workshops for high school seniors and entering freshmen presenting what students should know about college it could greatly impact students' success and retention.

Additionally, the participants in the study indicated that they excel in a classroom and with a teacher that uses fewer lectures and more group work, collaboration and one-on-one tutoring. Research suggests that the most important component of the successful developmental

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reading classroom setting is instructional methods, which include student-centered teaching, community building through group work, tutoring and collaboration, and the participants validated this type of classroom setting (Beaver, 1977; Boehnlein, 1995; Caverly, Nicholson & Radcliffe, 2004; Dressel & Marcus, 1982; Kaiden, 1998; McFarland, Dowdey & Davis, 1999; Morris & Price, 2008; Paulsen, 2006; Putman & Walker, 2010; Severiens & Schmidt, 2008; Simms, 1985; Zinn, 1999). Therefore, faculty could also benefit from professional development based on how to foster a collaborative learning environment.

Developmental Education Programs

Another important finding that can be seen as an implication for practice is the participants' discussion of their goals and desires to make something out of their lives. Community college faculty and leaders could develop programs for developmental education students that are goal-oriented rather than grade oriented. Students could be asked to create a task list or a short term goal list of three goals that does not necessarily have to be related to academics but could be focused on life goals. The teacher could ask them to complete the tasks or goals by the end of the semester, and the end of the semester assessment could be based on whether or not they completed the tasks or goals. This could serve as a way to not only help the students focus on one goal at a time and fulfilling it, but it could also help them learn how to balance their tasks and circumstances in life with their tasks in school.

Participants also reflected on the value of group work in their classes. One of the participants stated that he thought it would be a good idea if there were more study group sessions happening around campus. Faculty and leaders could encourage the development of study groups for developmental education students. Developmental education faculty could place students in groups with a mixture of stronger and weaker students and require students to

meet in their study groups regularly. Study groups can be required to meet in a student success lab on campus and asked to sign a sign-in sheet to document that they actually met in their groups. This could be something used as a way to assess students' progress in class, as well as a percentage of their grade. A study group component in developmental education courses could enhance a student's experience in class both academically and socially. They could also get tutoring from their peers through the groups, which could help them improve their knowledge and academic capabilities in class.

Support Services

Based on the participants' discussion of circumstances disrupting their goal attainment and success, as well as their desires to be more for themselves, their families and their friends, mentoring programs could be developed through community college support services. A mentoring program such as this could bring developmental education students together to discuss obstacles in their lives that they feel are affecting their movement and achievement of their goals. Discussions could shed light on possible coping mechanisms and teach students how to manage these obstacles so that they do not feel compelled to just give up in school and quit.

A couple of the participants discussed either needing or wanting a job or being unable to find a job in their major once they graduated. A program could be developed through student support services that offers career-oriented education for students and provides them with insight in their chosen field. Such a program could recruit professionals from certain careers and have them speak to the students about "a day in the life" in their field. Also, there could be a discussion on internships in different fields and job opportunities for new graduates. A program such as this could also provide full time students with part-time job opportunities, perhaps in their field of study so that they may begin working in their career before they even graduate.

Finally, more services for students with learning disabilities needs to be considered. Since one of the participants discussed her struggles with her disabilities, I believe that a better program for students with learning disabilities must be developed. Learning specialists need to be available at all times, so that they can direct students to additional resources, motivate them by giving them strategies for doing class and home work and read to them if necessary.

Faculty professional development and developmental education program additions, such as goal-oriented courses, study group programs, and more support services, such as mentoring programs, career-centered programs and services for students with learning disabilities could truly enhance developmental education programs. Because many developmental education students lack a career focus, goal setting skills and skills to manage school, family, work and other obligations, I believe that developing such programs could help them find structure. This structure will only help them in their academic, career and life endeavors.

Implications for Future Research

The study began the conversation of academic and social integration in the classroom as a way to not only examine Tinto's (1993) persistence theory in a new light but to also show how academic and social integration is as important in a classroom setting to a student's success as it is to a student's success on a college campus. The study also showed through repeaters' stories that motivation (Ford, 1992) and validation (Rendon, 1994) influence a student's ability to academically and socially integrate his or herself in a classroom setting and leads to a student's persistence and successful completion of a course.

The study opened several different doorways for future research. Future research could examine social and academic integration in a college classroom, not a developmental classroom, in order to discover if integration is indeed something that leads to success in any college

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classroom. Another interesting research endeavor this research has prompted is the possibility of faculty perceptions of integration in a developmental classroom and whether or not they too believe it helps students' academic persistence and success.

Because one of the participants discovered during the semester data were collected that she had a learning disability, conducting a quantitative research study on the relationship between learning disabilities and developmental education would be a feasible addition to higher education literature. Alternatively, a qualitative research study could be conducted with developmental education faculty and learning specialists to examine their perceptions of learning disabilities and whether or not they believe disabilities influence a student's placement in developmental education or a student's repetition in a college classroom setting.

Bourdieu's (1973) cultural capital theory and its relationship to developmental students' success could also be examined. Three of the four participants reflected on their upbringing and family influence and how it impacted their K-12 academic experiences. Because of their negative childhood academic experiences, their college academic experiences were also troublesome at times. A qualitative research study examining developmental students' beliefs about childhood academic experiences and cultural capital and its impact on their academic success would be a possible research endeavor.

Additionally, Tinto's (1993) theory lacked a cultural consideration, and three of the four participants did discuss how their families' and friends' validation encouraged them to be, stay and persist in college. This supports what critics have claimed to be missing in Tinto's persistence and departure theory. However, they did not discuss how this encouragement led to their persistence in the classroom setting. Therefore, revisiting Tinto's (1993) departure theory to include how one's culture impacts his or her persistence in a classroom setting can also be a

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future research consideration. In addition to one's culture, future research could be conducted to how one's socioeconomic background impacts a person's life, both academically and personally. The participants in the study discussed their parents not attending college because they did not have the means, and they also mentioned how their parents' and families' views of education and what was important also impacted their academic lives. These findings could serve as a starting point in a study based on socioeconomic background and its influence on developmental education students and their success in college.

This research could be extended and applied to developmental education students and repetition at four-year institutions. A qualitative research study could also be conducted to learn about developmental students' or college students' perceptions of cultural capital how it "paves the way" for a student's academic life and success. For example, do students believe their upbringing and parents influence their future academic careers? Finally, one participant was enrolled in reading the semester Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans. The impact of a natural disaster and event related stress on a developmental student's academic success could be a future research possibility.

Recommendations for Policy Makers

The findings of the study showed that students are indeed repeating developmental education courses. As previously stated, LCC has a high rate of repetition.   More specifically, approximately 40% of students at LCC repeat developmental math, 45% repeat developmental reading and 50% repeat developmental English. Additionally, LCC does not have a policy on the number of times a student can repeat a course, and it would be beneficial to the college if it developed a repetition policy. Other colleges have discovered the necessity of having a repetition policy in past reports on repetition.

In a study on repetition by New York Technical College (1995), the author found that out of 301 repeaters, 8 students had repeated a course once, 198 repeated a course three times, 55 had repeated a course four times, 15 repeated 5 times and 25 repeated a course 6-8 times. The author concluded that based on his findings that there was a need for the college to develop repetition policies to prevent students from being allowed to repeat a course more than two or three times.

Gerda (1995) suggested in his study prepared for his college to revise and renew their repetition policy that his college never followed their repetition policy which claimed that student could only repeat a course two times. Students at the college, however, were repeating courses up to five times (Gerda, 1995). Gerda recommended that students should only be allowed two chances to take a course so that they do not feel as though they have unlimited opportunities to pass a class and so that they do not extend their time to degree. The same conclusion can be drawn based on the findings of my study. Community College faculty and policy makers must develop solid policies on repetition, and they must adhere to their policies.

The study by New York City Technical College (1995) revealed that when students were placed in special sections of a developmental class where they *had* to be successful in the class otherwise they would not be allowed to repeat it there was a higher rate of successfully passing the course upon the first attempt. Community college leaders could develop a repetition policy in order to limit the number of times a student is allowed to repeat a course. Perhaps leaders could specify how many times a student is allowed to enroll in a class before being successful in it.

Based on past literature and the findings of this study, I believe that three times could be the maximum number of times a student should be allowed to enroll in a class and attempt to

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successfully complete it. Otherwise, if a college allows students to repeat courses up to 4 times

or more, what are the chances of retaining those students throughout their college degree may be

negatively impacted. I believe that a student should be allowed only three times to enroll and

attempt to be successful. Such a policy on repetition should be strongly considered by

community college leaders so that students will be aware of the consequences of failing a course

multiple times. Those consequences include: extended time to degree, being held back from

enrolling in reading intensive courses, negative academic record, which may negatively impact

their future baccalaureate and/or graduate study and possibly dropping out. Consequences

should be stated as part of a repetition policy.

Conclusion

Chapter five further discussed the findings of the study while connecting them to past

literature on developmental education students. The original theoretical framework was revisited

and revised based on the findings of the study. In order to connect the findings to past literature

and studies, each theme was discussed as it related to the literature. Because there was a limited

amount of literature on developmental education repeaters, the findings of my study can be used

to begin the discussion on repetition, as well as the need for repetition policy in community

colleges and the need for faculty professional developmental on teaching and classroom structure

in the developmental education classroom. Community college leaders and faculty must make

developmental education students and their needs a priority in order to better help them reach

success during their initial experiences in a developmental classroom. This could not only

improve retention of developmental education students, but it could also improve the quality of

academic support for developmental education students. With success in a developmental

education course, developmental education students will more than likely be successful through the entirety of their college careers.

Additionally, other discoveries that were found in the research study were discussed. Delimitations of the study were addressed, as well as implications of the study. There were implications for theory, practice and research based on the study findings. Based on the implications, recommendations for community college leaders and policy makers were suggested and brought the chapter to an end.

As a qualitative researcher, I started this research study with the intent of learning more about developmental education repeaters' experiences with and stories about repetition. I learned that everyone has unique experiences and stories, all of which make up who they are and what they are able to do socially, academically and personally. I heard stories not only about repetition but also about what actually shaped each participant academically and could have been said to lead to their academic inadequacies as adults. My findings both enlightened and inspired the researcher in me. I hope that my findings will do two things: help developmental faculty understand the sensitive nature of being a developmental education student, especially if he or she is a repeater, and help leaders and policy makers at the community college level understand how important it is for repetition policy to be developed in order to possibly prevent repetition in developmental education courses all together.

My research began with my passion for developmental education and its students. My experiences so far in the field of developmental education have enlightened and saddened me all at the same time. Hearing my participants' stories and experiences helped me understand what it is I can do in my role as a teacher to help them avoid repetition and reach success. My research

and participants inspired me to be a better educator, a better listener and a stronger advocate for

developmental education students.

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Appendix A: Informed Consent Form

The University of New Orleans
Education Administration Doctoral Program
Department of Educational Leadership, Counseling, and Foundations
Title of the Study: Developmental Education Repeaters: Experiences with and Perceptions of Repetition
Researcher & Contact Information: Jade J. O'Dell, College of Education and Human Development, 348D Bicentennial Education Center, 2000 Lakeshore Drive New Orleans, LA 70148, jodell@uno.edu or jadejudith80@gmail.com

Purpose of the Study: The study involves research based on developmental reading students' experiences with and feelings about developmental reading courses. The purpose of the study is to discover and explore developmental repeaters' perceptions of and experiences with developmental reading upon repetition a 3^{rd} or more times. The study also seeks to examine developmental reading repeaters' perceptions of and experiences with how their motivation and persistence have been impacted by repetition.

Expectations of the Participant: Upon consent, the participant will be asked to do one of the following as decided by the researcher: conduct up to two one-on-one, recorded interviews that will last between 30-45 minutes, and provide narrative based writings of experiences in a developmental reading course.

Benefits of Research: Upon analysis of interviews and documents, the research findings could help future developmental reading students understand what is necessary to be successful in a developmental reading course to prevent repetition, and findings could help instructors understand how to better serve developmental reading students.

Risks to the Participant: There are no foreseeable risks or discomfort to the participant during the research process.

Confidentiality: The researcher will ensure confidentiality of information collected by keeping names of participants anonymous in the study. Data collected will also be kept in a safe, locked place to further ensure confidentiality.

Contact Information: Please contact Dr. Ann O'Hanlon (504-280-3990) at the University of New Orleans for answers to questions about this research, your rights as a human subject, and your concerns regarding a research-related injury.

Participation: Participation in the study is voluntary and refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which the participant is otherwise entitled. Participant may discontinue participation at any time without penalty.

Participant Name _____**Participant Signature:**_____
Researcher (Jade J. O'Dell): _____ **Date:** _____

Appendix B: Interview Protocol

The following questions are based on the concepts being used to frame the study, including motivation/success, academic and social integration, persistence and repetition. These questions will most probably change, as the interviewee may raise issues I had not considered during the development of the protocol. Some questions could lead to other questions that may or may not be listed in the protocol.

Background Information:
1. Do you remember when you tested into developmental reading? How did you feel about testing into developmental reading?
2. Tell me about your first time taking reading. What do you remember to be your experiences in the class? The material? Content? The teacher? The other students?

Repetition
3.   How did you feel when you discovered you were unsuccessful in the reading class the first time?
4. What were your experiences in reading upon the second attempt? Third attempt?

Motivation/Success
5.   What do you think has motivated you to stay in the class considering you have taken it twice already and were unsuccessful?
6. What do you think hindered your success the first and second attempts? Were you motivated to do well? If so, what motivated you?
7. Now you are in the class for the _____ time. How are you feeling this semester? Do you feel different from when you took the class the first time? Second time?
8. What is your progress in the class right now? (This question will be for the student who is currently in progress of repeating the course)
9. What do you believe "kept" you in the class considering you had to repeat it three or more times?

Validation
10. What are your experiences with your instructor (s)? How did your instructor make you feel in the developmental reading during your experience?
11. How do you feel your instructor evaluated you and your progress (or lack thereof) in the course?

Academic Integration
12. Are you heavily involved in the content and expectations of the course?
13. Have you used or do you currently utilize support services, such as tutoring?

Social Integration
14. What are your experiences with peer interaction in classroom? Group work/study groups? Collaboration with peers?
15. What are your experiences with peer interaction outside of the classroom? Group work/study groups? Collaboration with peers?

16. What are your experiences with faculty interaction in the classroom? Faculty tutoring/extra credit?
17. What are your experiences with faculty interaction outside of the classroom? Faculty tutoring/extra credit?

Appendix C: Essay Free Writing Instructions

Dear Participant:

To further show how your background, goals, feelings about yourself academically and your interaction in class and how all of this has impacted not only your motivation, but your ability to continue through developmental reading three or more times, please free-write on the following topics. Do not worry about grammar, language or structure….speak in your own language and **TELL ME YOUR STORIES** as they relate to each topic listed below. You should have a separate story for each topic. If you want more freedom, you can free write on whatever topic you would like…

1. Goals…what are they? Have they affected your motivation to be in school? Stay in reading and pass it?
2. Feelings about yourself in school and your academic abilities
3. Motivation…has your motivation been affected because of failing reading twice?
4. Teacher instruction…how do you learn best and has your reading teacher done things to match how you learn; course content….does it interest you? Would you rather "pick" your own material
5. Teacher contact…do you keep in touch with your instructor now and in the past? Do you ask for help when you need it? Do you believe your teacher praising you for effort helps you stay motivated to do well in class? Why or why not?
6. In-class peers…do you form study groups? Work in groups in class?

Sixea

"My life experience with learnig"
discusses how diffucult is it to learn
with a (learning disabilty). I also (LD)
discusses how the learning
disabilty can impact our (self-eem (SE)
and our career. Another how I
was in (remedial class.) I can
relate to this story because I
once was and I'm this, still is
today. My education experiences (PED)
have (affected every aspect of)
my life, and it makes wonder why

That has causes to lash out **ANG** angry

FAM

on _____ of the time

I _____ sleep or

I say mean things to my

mother. I feel like my self esteem low - self esteem! **SG**

BIS

is a setback. My 'self-esteem hurt _____ referring to her learning disability

me because i think its the end

BIS

of the world. It's difficult to
LD

understand my work or my
LD

assignments. The feeling of never frustrated

be frustrating. Even seeing my **ANG** ANG? FEEL HELD BACK
ANG

friends accomplish their goals while I'm still

> When discussing self-esteem, Sierra became frustrated in her writing. This quote was incorporated in the portion of the story developed from transcriptions when she discusses her beliefs in herself and self-esteem.

My education has affected me
now. I'm attending college, but
I'm taking remedial classes,
which I should have learned
in high school. Even in my
childhood I always had an IEP
and my tutors had to read
paragraphs or the direction, and
sometimes the questions to me.
Although I have many issues, it
doesn't a challeged for me. I realized I
have a learn disalbity after completed
high school. I have to solve the solution

Handwritten margin annotations: Anger? confusion? at risk Academic. LD - someone ready CHAL - But doesn't quit LD tutors

~pat
path on their back. That they here for teacker. That llsturors aren't here for fashion or check. The llsturors want to help us and they take prr... do for a livin... alot of knowe...

I written this story about my life experience. Because of my learn disabity it düffult but a challenges that I must fight. Most of the proffess need to

"Because of my learning disability, it difficult but a challenge that I must fight." I interwove this quote from Sierra's essay into the part of the story based on her motivation and self-beliefs I developed from interview transcriptions.

[Handwritten margin notes top-left: "went ... comprehension pass class"]

[Handwritten top: "September 2011 14.4 - ND"]

Transcriptions	Observations
J.O. Okay so this is interview number one with Jeffery Hughes and let's gets started. Today's what September 8th? Right? Is that right? I think that's the date. Check your phone Jeffery.	*[Handwritten: "19 yrs. old"]* *Common ideas* *$ / Job]* *motivators* *Set example* *peers* *Family* *disappointment] emotions* *positive —] capability* *believes in self* *needs support / validation* *of teachers / Family / peers* *photologist / photographer* *] Goals* *but really — to prove* *to self & others he* *can do it —* *Set example*
J.H. Laughs.	
J.O. Coughs	
J.H. mumbles	
J.O. is that right	
J.H. mumbles	
J.H. Yeah September 8th	
J.O. Thursday September 8th	
J.O. Do you originally remember the date when you tested in to developmental reading?	
J.H. Yes	
J.O. When was that? Tell me about it.	
J.H. It was my first semester I came to Nunez Community College.	
J.O. Okay	
J.H. Umm. I tested out actually.	
J.O. Okay and what happened?	*tested out originally — but felt he needed it b/c wanted to work on reading faster*
J.H. Umm. Well I tested out and my level was college level already but my reading rate I couldn't read as fast.	
J.O. Uh hmm	
J.H. That was the only problem I had. I just wanted to work on it. So I stayed in the class.	
J.O. So you chose to stay in the class?	*[circled: "DR"]*

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J.H. Yeah I chose to stay.

J.O. Okay. How did you feel when you tested into it first then took the test and tested out?

J.H. Pause

J.O. Didn't bother you?

J.H. No. Cause it a

J.O. Were you like...

J.H. No. It's a test. I mean. I tried my hardest.

J.O. And when you were in umm high school what was your. What were your experiences in high school when it came to reading and English or any subject like that?

J.H. Umm I read a lot. In high school I readed a lot. Like off. Off blunt the books they gave us to read in school.

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. But I also read personal books I read.

J.O. Okay such as. Give me some examples

J.H. Umm. Like The Forty-Eight Laws of Power,

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. Thirty-Three Strategy of War

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. Those are some of my favorite books. Umm. Behold the Peril Horse.

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. A Million and one Pieces

J.O. Wow

J.H. Books like that.

Handwritten margin notes:
conscious of problem areas

did not care about being in ready

hard working

READER! in h.s.

FAVES novels

J.O. Okay

J.H. I like to read books like that. Umm but so far this reading with the test and it was you know it wasn't anything really.

J.O. Not a big deal to you

J.H. Nah.

J.O. Umm let's see. What about the content here at Nunez? What to you think about the content the books? The things you have to do in your textbooks? The readings?

J.H. Umm well (pause)

J.O. And be brutally honest

J.H. Uh it's not too bad. But like it's just you know more stuff I have to learn about it that's why I really can't complain about it.

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. I can't complain about it at all

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. But some of the things could change like. Like that some of the ways the reading teachers teach. But most of the reading teachers I had were great.

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. So you know. It was just me basically with the reading. It was like some. There is some structures like the way the teachers set it up for us to do some of the assignment. I couldn't grasp every aspect of the assignment.

J.O. Okay explain more about the structure and set up of the assignment in the way the teacher did it.

J.H. Like if like I have to underline like pos and underline like the context clues or whatever.

takes responsibility
doesn't complain
SELF STARTER

TEACHing -
set up, assignments -
needed to change teacher

hard time grasping/understanding

Understanding

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. Like I can get the answer to the problem but to go back and do all that work underline the action verb and all that

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. It just. It confuses me sometimes.

J.O. Okay

J.H. And like I can't get a handle on that

J.O. Okay

J.H. But as far as getting the answer. I can get the answer.

J.O. Okay

J.H. So

J.O. And what about umm so you've taken this is your 3rd sesmester taking the class

J.H. Yes

J.O. And you took it fall of 2010

J.H. 2010

J.O. Spring 2011

J.H. (Pause)

J.O. Right?

J.H. Yes

J.O. And then this semester?

J.H. And this semester

J.O. So you're consecutively taking it?

J.H. Right

J.O. Okay tell me about the story of fall 2010. The

frustrated b/c he "knows" he can do it

confused

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first semester you took reading. When you took. When you went into class. You tested out and decided to stay. What happened?

J.H. Umm

J.O. And and what were you doing in that class that semester? How were your grades? What was going on? That's the kind of stuff I want to know.

J.H. On the test I wasn't umm the test that the teacher was giving wasn't doing really fairly well. But with the written assignments or whatever I would get that. It was just the test that killed me.

J.O. Okay

J.H. Then the final exam I didn't show up for cause I just got a job and it was it was the way I was thinking that at that time that I needed a job

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. But I was going to school but but I was real focus on getting a job. (moves recorder around)

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. You know un that's my main concern at most time is a job

J.O. Okay. Okay

J.H. You know. That like takes up like like a lot of energy to try you know make it

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. So that's mainly I was like the first 2 semesters. Like last semester at the end of the semester I think I was passing every class. and I got a job

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. And I didn't go to the final exam.

Handwritten margin notes:

testing problems/ comfortable w/ assignments, but not tests

1st sem
no show for final = failed class
wanted to work - goal = $

More focused on getting a job - motivation impacted not by goal of completing course, but by goal of working $

Same thing 2nd time
taking reading - wanted to make $ - he was passing, but got a job + didn't go to final !!

Various circled words marked "circ"

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J.O. So it was all behind a job?

J.H. A job

J.O. Okay so do you think umm (pause) when you had to retake it last semester. Did. What were your feelings? Did they change from the attitude you had from the first semester when you took it? Were you angry?

J.H. No. No.

J.O. Like what were your emotions?

J.H. No no I wasn't angry. But I was just more disappointed in myself knowing that I could have did it the first time.

J.O. Okay

J.H. But now I waaa couldn't can't say I was angry.

J.O. Okay

J.H. There was no anger there. Umm. Uh yeah mostly disappointment.

J.O. Okay

J.H. In myself. I was mostly disappointed in myself. Knowing that I can. Cause I can do it just I don't know, it's just.

J.O. So you do believe you can do it?

J.H. I know I can do it.

J.O. Okay

J.H. I don't believe it. I know I can do it.

J.O. You know it. Okay and umm do you think it's this attitude of umm like your attitude of I know I can do it? There's no doubt, I have the ability, there's no doubt.

J.H. Yeah

Handwritten annotations:
✱ A JOB!

✱ emotions → disappointed in self! that motivation

DIS

DIS

"I can do it"

BIS

DIS

BIS

sure of self/abilities
strong/high/positive
self efficacy/capability beliefs

pos. capability beliefs
BIS = belief in self

✱

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J.O. Is that what has lead you to continue to reenroll, reenroll, and just try again?

J.H. Right

J.O. Okay and umm what do you think has motivated you? Aside from the fact that you believe in yourself? What do you think? Cause that's right? Right? You believe in yourself?

J.H. Right.

J.O. What do you think has continuously motivated you even though you've taken it twice? What has motivated to stay? To do it again a third time?

J.H. Because I…. I don't usually tell people this but

J.O. Tell me

J.H. Ah

J.O. Give it to me. Nobodies know any of this except us.

J.H. Ah ah ah…. I want people to hear this. I want to set an example for like people in my area, like where I live at and my family members. I really want to set an example, that even though we came from nothing, which we did. Five people living sleeping in the room and stuff. And I just want to prove to them that if I can do it. The youngest one out of everybody, they can also do it. And a lot of my peers I tell them man go to school and they tell me nah I'm not smart enough man. It's not about being smart. It's about believing in yourself. So my friends, my family and is I'm just trying to better myself and I wanna better my community too cause I just don't like the way it is.

J.O. Tell me about your community. The way you grew up. All of that.

J.H. Uh

Handwritten margin annotations:

reenroll b/c so sure of abilities

GOALS

EX/RM

JH motivated by idea that he c. ned be positive role model to kids in his hood — set example PROVE to self / others

motivator —
set example
grew up poor
"prove" he can do it — ultimate GOAL

believing in yourself
BIS

does not like way community is — disappointed in that too

DISAPPT. AGAIN!

GOAL

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J.O. What's your background?

J.H. Well I grew up on Highland. Uh that's what we call it Highland.

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. We moved from Highland to Walkers Lane. I was livings with my father on Walkers Lane

J.O. Highland is in St. Bernard?

J.H. Yeah all this is in St. Bernard.

J.O. Okay

J.H. And my father and my mother they split up for the time being. So it was moved it was back and forth, you know back and forth.

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. But I was gone to, at first I was gone to umm Chalmette Christian Academy which was right here

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. Then I asked my dad can you enroll me in public school. But when I got to public school everything it just seem. It was so easy to do like you know. I like just flew passed it.

J.O. The school work?

J.H. Yeah the schoolwork.

J.O. Okay

J.H. And well after Chalmette Christian Academy I went to Joe Davies, then I went to Trist but between then I grew out I was quite, liked animals, like you know trying to learn new things. Most people use to tell me I could dissect a frog and put it back together.

Handwritten annotations:
Violet

From St. Bernard

mom/dad split up — back & forth

Christian Academy

wanted to go to public school —

— breezed through work — came easy to him

BIS

loved to learn!

J.O. Laughs

J.H. You see a nerd or whatever.

J.O. Laughs

J.H. Like what like what my dad all told me it doesn't matter what somebody calls you. It's always what you think of yourself

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. I always think of myself of as not intelligent, but you know I just. How can I say this? I don't want t to call myself intelligent.

J.O. Why?

J.H. Cause its. I don't know. It's something about like like putting a label on myself. I don't want to label myself as that.

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. As that.

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. But I just want to know. You know the knowledge and I want other people to know the knowledge that I know.

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. Cause you know it's not right for if I know something and you don't know something. The way I feel that's not right.

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. At all.

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. So that's basically how it happened. In high school I had problems. I had you know what every teenager go through try drugs a little bit

Handwritten margin notes:
nerd!

dad - motivator - pro smart!

so sure of self yet unsure of intelligence

BIS

"label" to call self intelligent

wants to learn!!

so eager to learn - know everything

thinks everyone should know everything!

makes him uncomfortable to think that not everyone knows things — makes him uncomfortable to think he doesn't know something!

H.S. → wrong crowd

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J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. You know stuff like that partying. You know but when it came to 12th grade it to my head that man you bout to you gone to college. You got to up the ball game. You got to get your mind. I had to elevate my mind.

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. So I think it was it was the summer after 12th grade. I went to reading books hard and studying hard and trying to live by the the books that I read it like it teaches you know how to use your mind in different ways and I was just trying to use that in real life situations.

J.O. Uh hmm uh hmm

J.H. So that's basically it. I mean.

J.O. So you come you said your parents divorced

J.H. They divorced when I was five but they got back together when I was around like eight or ten cause they to me that they told me that from them they said if they would have been apart until you made 18 you would have you know you probably would have went astray so we got back together for the benefit of you.

J.O. Awe how nice.

J.H. You know to make sure that you grow up straight. And which they have

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. You know umm

J.O. So it sound like like from what you've said that's kinda driven you?

J.H. Yeah

J.O. Uh hmm

→ Straightened up senior year —
ready to "ELEVATE His mind"

→ reading books About how to use your mind —

Parents back together — didn't want JH to mess up by having one parent

Parents big reason why JH so Driven!

J.H. Cause they both went to college, but like my dad he had to support his mom cause she was sick and he had to support his grandmother she was sick my grandfather he couldn't do much and my dad he went 2 years of college and he said I just I just have to start working.

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. You know and my mom she really didn't grow up with anything at all. She had my sister when she was 18. She you know getting catching the bus to St. Claude medical that use to be up there. She use to work there for a couple of years. Umm there's just a lot of stuff but.

J.O. And how many siblings do you have?

J.H. It was just me and my sister.

J.O. Okay

J.H. And b.. it's just me and my sister.

J.O. And what about your goals? How do you think like how have your goals changed and sifted from this high school time of your life when you were cutting up and being a teenager

J.H. Right.

J.O. To now. How old are you know?

J.H. Nineteen

J.O. Nineteen. So how have you kinda evolved from that period of your life to now? How have your goals changed? What are they?

J.H. Umm

J.O. Are they are those goals motivating you to stay here?

J.H. The goal

Handwritten margin notes:
- Both parents have some college —
- dad supported his mom – sick
- mom – had sis @ 18 – didn't have anything
- GOALS

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J.O. To stay here and do what you have to do?

J.H. Really my family is motivating me to stay here

J.O. Okay

J.H. Cause anywhere around my neighborhood like the elderly people are always telling education is the key

J.O Uh hmm

J.H. You have to have education

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. So basically I drive off what they say case they more experience then me at life.

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. And why not take advice from someone whose more experience than you

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. You know even if you don't use it you can take heave to it.

J.O. Right

J.H. But that's what I try to do. But my goals umm they really haven't changed really you know (pause)

J.O. What are they?

J.H. Umm I wanna be reptileogist a reptileogist I think that's what it's called

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. The study of reptiles and umm that's like a veterinarian or something , something to do with animals or photography uh videography or something like that I was interested in that in high school that what I was really interested in

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. That's what everybody knew me for. For being

Handwritten margin notes:

Family – motivation
neighborhood
"Education is key"

MOT

FAM

he learns a lot + is motivated a lot through others experience + wisdom

GOAL/career
Reptiles/study of reptiles
photography

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the camera man or whatever

J.O. Oh wow

J.H. I was always the camera man in high school

J.O. You could actually combine those 2 things and, and be a vet and

J.H. Yeah

J.O. Or do pictures of animals

J.H. Yeah that what

J.O. Like got into zoology or something

J.H. Right

J.O. That's probably where you would want to go into

J.H. But I'm trying to get my GPA up first.

J.O. Uhmm

J.H. I'm trying to get everything situated first so when I do make that move I'll I'll be you know calm about it.

J.O. Uhmm. Tell me about your umm your experiences here at Nunez with uh your instructors and when I say instructors I mean umm there's this big theory out there in high education especially about 2 year intuitions students

J.H. Uhmm

J.O. And umm the theory claims that a lot of times students have a hard time being successful in college because A they have to acclimate themselves to this environment

J.H. Right

J.O. When you get out of high school and come here

RAise GPA

Situated

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J.H. Right

J.O. And B because a lot of times umm there's not enough people around them at a college level to encourage them, to push them, to make them feel worthy, to make them feel valued.

J.H. That's what I'm trying to do to people

J.O. Okay. So give me tell me about some experiences where you may have had that here in partially in your reading classes. Where where as like maybe you had it in your other classes but that wasn't enough to get you to the level of getting academically intergraded in your classrooms to make you stay or maybe you didn't have that. Maybe your teachers didn't do that for you.

J.H. Umm my teachers they did everything that they was suppose to do it it kinda came down on me

J.O. Okay

J.H. I never blame the teachers for that it all came on me and I made bad choice

J.O. Uh umm

J.H. You know I gotta live with it. I can't look back on it and keep thinking about it.

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. I gotta keep moving forward trying to make things better. That's why I'm contently enrolling, contently enrolling

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. I'm not gonna give up on something like this. This is something that involves my life.

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. And my and the future.

Handwritten margin notes:

EX1 RM

JH wants to be person to push others, make them feel valued

TCH — teachers – good – did what they were supposed to do

TAKES RESPONSIBILITY!!

"His Fault" for failing first couple of times

Now just trying to stay focused – constantly enrolling to make things better

– not Giving up!
This is "His Life" + "future"

POSITIVE

BIS — constantly

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. You know I feel really serious about that.

J.O. Do you umm use any types of support service here tutoring? Do you ever go talk to your teachers outside of class? Do you take advantage of extra work?

J.H. Umm

J.O. Do you get involved in group activities in classes?

J.H. Yeah the group like like

J.O. The reading classes in particular.

J.H. Yeah in the reading. Yeah she umm. The reading instructor nah she's been doing some group activities group activities and uh hmmm it's all right. It's all right but when two peoples opinions collide with each other

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. It gets kinda like

J.O. Heated?

J.H. Yeah heated

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. But I always try to find a solution you know something that for some from my idea and some from your idea and maybe we can combined it and make it a great idea.

J.O. Uh hmm uh hmm

J.H. But you know some people just want to go by what their word is

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. And you know you can't get mad at them

[Handwritten marginal notes:]

Serious About making life better — finishing school

Group work — OK - but doesn't nec. help him learn better — opinions clash!

But when that happens — he becomes prob. solver — respects other's opinions — finds a way to meet halfway! —

[Boxed handwritten notations: TCH, GRP]

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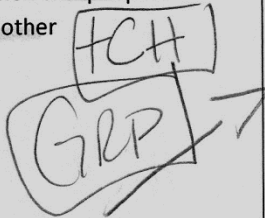
though cause that's them though but

J.O. Did that happen recently in reading class?

J.H. Laughs. Laugh

J.O. Laughs. I'm feeling another story coming on about reading class.

J.H. Yeah it was umm last week we had a group we had to write sentences umm let me see we had to write our definition sentences with we had to with the parts of speech in each sentence. Right?

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. We had to write the definition sentence out use the word correctly in the sentence and we had to check each umm part of speech out

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. And there was me and a student that sit next to me and she I think I put I wrote a sentence down and she was like no no no this isn't how you do it and then I was like well let me see what you got and I look at her sentences and then I see that well you know well we give it wrong and combine both sentences together and you know see how that works out. We combined both sentences together and went wrote it on the board and it turned out good.

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. You know so

J.O. Uh hmm. So you had a little conflict at first

J.H. Yeah little but right

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. It's better to talk it out

J.O. Uh hmm. Umm do you think that I hate to ask the do you think questions cause they're always

[Handwritten margin notes: "Story About group experience"; "tCH/GRP"; " tCH/GRP"; "very diplomatic — talks things out when there's conflict"]*

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like yes or no but when it comes to a classroom setting

J.H. Uh hmm

J.O. There's umm all this talk about you know in order for a student to be successful in a classroom there has to be this certain level of integration in the class.

J.H. What you mean?

J.O. So like for example umm students have to be involved both academically meaning participating in group settings umm doing their assignments successfully passing test

J.H. Yeah

J.O. But in addition to that they also have to be involved socially

J.H. Right

J.O. Making friends with people in class, making friends with the teacher

J.H. Right

J.O. Communicating with everybody

J.H. Right

J.O. Studying together. Umm

J.H. There's not a lot of that

J.O. Are you doing any of that?

J.H. No there's not a lot of that going around here though.

J.O. Tell me about that

J.H. Like I don't I don't I personally don't see a lot of people that sit together in study groups certain few maybe but I don't see a lot of people that do that umm that's good that you said that cause

Study groups

Students don't study together here —

GRP

that something we could do around here

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. And it would be better cause when like I I told someone today matter fact if you talk when you talk information so someone else I'll remember it and you'll probably remember it.

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. I mean communicate with each other. Cause ittts just better communication I don't knows why is just

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. Cause if you talking to me and I'm talking to you we gonna remember what each other says so you know it better on the mind I think

J.O. Yeah and its gonna make a difference of course

J.H. Yeah

J.O. Umm so then you're what your what I'm getting out of what you're saying is that if people were more academically involved and socially involved

J.H. Right

J.O. It would probably help students be more successful

J.H. It would help students be more successful

J.O. Do you think it would help students be more motivated to want to be successful

J.H. Yeah because if you surround yourself with people who motivate themselves your gonna wanna be motivated too. Its its its just like science with energy

Academic/social meet in class study grops
But — JH feels like study groups would be good — help each other remember things better when talking about it.

helps others

JH agrees that AI & SI would help students be more succ. in class setting & be more motivated to be succ.
motivated people help others become motivated!

Ex

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J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. Energy can't be destroyed it can only be transferred

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. That positive energy is gonna rub off on you if you have negative energy on you

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. So it it really is true, but yeah dit yeah

J.O. What about umm what's going on with your family right now with you going through this process of college? How are they reacting?

J.H. Umm

J.O. What's going on the outside of school?

J.H. They they support me to to the a thousand percent they support the school they support me going to school my whole family that their they don't want me even getting a job.

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. They want me to stay in school and they say if you stay in school it will come out better. And Iiii believe them but you know you know how the economy and times is right now and it wouldn't be bad to have some extra income coming in to help them out.

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. Cause I I just don't want to sit back and y'all you know pay for college for me or whatever, I go to college or whatever such and such years and you know probally not get a job or something. I wanna be here right now helping y'all out

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. Not staining y'all selves y'all y'all almost to the

[Handwritten margin notes:]

positive energy / motivation is contagious! rubs off on you

FAM / MV

Family extremely supportive —
do not want him working while in school —

But he can't help but want extra $ to help family.

he wants to help his family $ as much as he can — feels BAD that he's in school + they take care of him

FAM MV

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time to retirement

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. You know I'm gonna be I'm gonna have to support y'all you know

J.O. Eventually yeah

J.H. Yeah I'm gonna have to support them but you know they everybody everybody I'm talking from people form bums on the street that know me they be like stay in school man

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. They say you got a good mind stay in school. I always get told that by a lot of I have a good mind. I'm but.

J.O. Well I know we tell you that here at Nunez.

J.H. Yeah y'all tell me that a lot

J.O. Your one of our favorites

J.H. Laughs

J.O. Cause we see right through you. We have so many students coming in and out of Nunez that come in then leave and never come back. And umm you know that last fall semester I remember like it was yesterday. I was hunting you down form every student I ever saw you with

J.H. Laughs

J.O. Just walk with you down the hall

J.H. Laughs

J.O. Saying where is he. Where is he? I need his folder

J.H. Laughs

J.O. And I mean was because I I see it and you know for a teacher we don't see that often. It's

[Handwritten margin notes:]

support Parents

He's → sure he will have to support parents one day — + he doesn't have prob doing that

FAM day

FAM/Mot → SUPPORT — bums, neighborhood — all support him to stay in school

→ tell him he's got a "GOOD MIND!"

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very sad its depressing actually. Umm you know when some when you see a light in a student and you see them you know hanging with then wrong people or just getting wrapped up in the wrong show

J.H. Right

J.O. Or doing whatever. Doing whatever except what you see in them and what you see that they are capable of doing

J.H. And and that's what a lot of people tell me too

J.O. Uh hmm uh hmm

J.H. But that I try but but Ms. O'Dell like on my social level I try not to be around those people anymore.

J.O. Tell me how? While you're on that subject I wanna know how you showing this this uncanny I my opinion level of persistence and motivation to get what you have to do here done? How impacting your community? And when I say your community I don't mean like your neighborhood, I mean your circle of friends. How many of them are going down the same road with you?

J.H. Like school?

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. None of them Ms. O'Dell.

J.O. Hmm

J.H. Ms. O'Dell I'm gonna be all of my friends are I don't wanna say I don't like to say this but

J.O. You can say whatever you wanna say

J.H. All of my friend are either convicted felon drug dealers and just but it's just people I grown up with and its people that you know just cause you do what you do I'm not gonna I'm not gonna

[Handwritten margin notes:]
He tries to stay away from wrong crowd but just can't seem to —

Friends

→ none of friends in school

friends he grew up w/ either convicted felons or or drug dealers.

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down you for what you do. But just have some respect and self-esteem about yourself

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. And you know just I just try to tell them just lay off it a little bit you know just make it a weekend thing

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. Or like to my drug dealing friends I be like man why you don't go to school you got all that money just go to school. You know its gonna pay off

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. But you know they none of my friends wanna here that. Like it it it hurts me personally Iiii inside it really does hurt me every Ms. O'Dell this is every day I go home and I tell them something that happened at school uh something about school or whatever and they don't want to hear it and it just it it makes me it it doesn't make me mad but it does piss me off

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. It pisses me off to the fullest

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. But it disappoints me cause I'm looking I'm like I've been going to school with you guys since you know

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. And y'all turned out y'all all all my friends dropped out except Julian. Julian the only one that followed me this far. (pause) But

J.O. And yeah what's going on with him now?

J.H. Julian he has he has a lot of responsibility I give him. He has to take care of his household.

Handwritten margin notes:

he doesn't judge them, but believes they have no self respect

tries to push friends who are on wrong path to do better — that it'll pay off, but...

JH IS A MOTIVATOR
↳ they do not listen

HURTS Jeffery —
Pisses him off b/c he can't tuck to his friends about school — they "don't wanna hear it" — they're in a whole nother world.

DISAPPOINTED (again)

b/c he's only one out of all friends he went to school w/ who came to college

Handwritten circled annotations in text: ANG; DIS

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J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. That's why he says he can't come back. He said he gotta get... You know he has to pay all the bills for his mom

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. He tries to get things done for his mom and his grandmaw she's sick but

J.O. And that's another one I saw he's got a light in him

J.H. Yeah

J.O. And he's highly intelligent, but you know you can just I also see the unfortunate side of the situation, where it's he's letting that shit take a hold of him

J.H. Right

J.O. And you know it's one thing to smoke weed, you know what I'm saying

J.H. Right, it's one thing

J.O. It's one thing to smoke pot and and it's one thing to do it socially and and hang out with your friends and whatever

J.H. And that gets old.

J.O. Fast

J.H. It gets old fast

J.O. Fast

J.H. It gets very old

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. And like that's what I was telling my friends the other day I said man I'm gonna start hang with new people man I'm just gonna start trying some

living life g smoking weed, hanging out — gets old — FAST

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you hang around with a certain crowd your gonna constantly for ever gonna be associated with that crowd

J.O. Right. You know what I mean.

J.H. Forever

J.O. Forever it does not leave you. Umm okay so back to the class. I love talking to you your just so highly intelligent Jeffery

J.H. Laughs don't say that.

J.O. I want you to see that. You need to see that in yourself.

J.H. Don't say that.

J.O. And I want you every time I see you from now on I'm gonna say there's my little intelligent Jeffery , cause you need to call yourself intelligent. You need to see yourself that way, two things have stuck out during this conversation you said over and over again you've said it intelligent and disappointment those two words you have said about a hundred times

J.H. Laughs

J.O. If I played this back right now you'd hear it you didn't you don't want to disappoint your family, you've disappointed yourself, your friends have disappointed you, you sometimes feel like you've disappointed your friends cause you've gone in the opposite direction.

J.H. Right

J.O. All this disappointment yet you still rise above all that and truly truly believe in yourself.

J.H. I

J.O. But you're so scared to admit that you're above all that cause you so scared that if your

Handwritten margin notes:

> You hang w/ certain crowd — that's how people view you — bad crowd — you're bad too . . .

modest
> Chuckles when told he's smart — Believes in self — but Don't fully accept it yet prob b/c he feels bad about being only one who doing something

> ☆ ☆

(Right margin vertical note:) smart b/c your friends are doing complete opposite B/you?

friends heard you say that. Oh god what would they think?

J.H. It's not what they think cause they know me and they know like like some people like this this is the way I'm just gonna tell you something you're gonna laugh bout it. One my friends we at a barber shop he a he a like 34 or 35 he's old

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. And he's like man Jeff it was right before school started man why you not in school bra. I was like I'm trying to get a job he said a job he said man you smarted than like eight niggers man

J.O. Laugh and claps hands

J.H. How you gonna what you want a job for man you you gotta mind man and I was like man you know I brushed it of or whatever but then like so many people tell me that like. I don't know it's crazy.

J.O. Why is it crazy?

J.H. It just it just is like I just I don't know cause mainly in my eyes I see more intelligent people like I see people that are way more intelligent than me.

J.O. At nineteen? You see people at nineteen way more intelligent than you?

J.H. Yeah

J.O. Okay

J.H. And like people don't like like people don't acknowledge them like like some like today in in class earlier today a guy I knew from ???? He didn't even know I was sitting next to him he didn't remember me or anything.

J.O. Uh hmm

friends know how
smart he his —

* Story -
Friend

People out there
are smarter than
me

high
school

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J.H. I said Brunel how you doing? He was like how you know me? I was like man I grew up right across the street from you for about fifteen years

J.O. Laughs

J.H. He was like you related to Jordan, Jermaine, and Jeffery and I said I am Jeffery

J.O. Laughs

J.H. He said awe man what's up man? And you know we went to talking and he helped me out I didn't have a jump drive

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. So you know I hurried up and finished my uh little thing for the computer class or whatever and I downloaded to his jump drive and we went to talking or whatever and they had a guy next to him and he need help and while I was doing mine I was helping him and so on our way out of class or whatever he tells me he like man bra you real smart bra. I was like man what you mean? He was like bra you know what you be talking about? So then downstairs right before my algebra right before the class before I came here we was I was telling them about all type of stuff like stuff about the world stuff that people don't want you to know.

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. Like stuff that a average person just is is cra I don't get why average person don't know this stuff like

J.O. What stuff? Give me some examples

J.H. Alright like earlier we was talking about umm alight I read I was watching an interview of Bill Gates

J.O. Uh hmm

Story
Friend

even friend from childhood told him how smart he was & how much he "knows what he's talking about"

J.H. Who I admire on certain levels

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. And Bill Gates he has a theory he wants the world to be he need he said the world is over populated and then he gave he gave an equation. Now the equation was that not only is motor machines like motor machines like gas run machines fossil fuels not only upsetting our you know atmosphere whatever but form us having so many people in the world breathing out carbon dioxide it also effects that to and makes the green house effect.

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. So the more people we have in the world the worst it's gonna get.

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. And I was telling them Bill Gates he got this thing going where he's trying to get rid of .9 billion people

J.O. Wow

J.H. Yeah he he he trying to get rid of .9 billion people in the world

J.O. What do we do with him?

J.H. You give him like a lot of people I I I have a different way of thinking of thing but my theory is that he said that they gonna use vaccines umm new uh what would you call a condom lik like a protection of sex or something like that.

J.O. Umm let's see a condom, contraceptive, birth control

J.H. Birth control pills new types of food and I was just listening to him but the crowd was listening to him like it was a good thing

admires
Bill Gates

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J.O. Right

J.H. And I'm looking like

J.O. Wait a second

J.H. Wait wait this dude talking about getting rid of like a billion people right now man.

J.O. Laughs

J.H. Y'all agree to this?

J.O. Right

J.H. And that why I feel like my nephew he can say cause my nephew he lives with us too and he's a strong motivated cause I don't want him to be you know young dumb and wreak less or whatever

reckless

J.O. Right. How old is he?

J.H. Uh how old is my new nephew four.

J.O. Four? Okay.

J.H. Four he's learning everything

J. O. This is the time too

J.H. Yeah

J.O. When you can influence him the most

J.H. He's a good listener I give him that, he's a great listener, he knows right from wrong he knows not to curse none of that

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. We don't curse around him. I don't smoke cigarettes around him

J.O. Good

J.H. None of that I don't do not introduce him to any of that. Nothing.

[handwritten margin notes]

emot

4 yrs. old
Nephew - also motivate -
wants to set example
for him, so he doesn't
become reckless

Qs his nephew - wants
to encourage him -
knows right from
wrong!
Respects nephew

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J.O. Good

J.H. But the Bill Gates thing I was just listening like these people like they clapping (clapping his hands) and cheering for him but what they not understanding is whose that billion people

J.O. Right

J.H. You see what I'm saying?

J.O. They didn't even connect it.

J.H. They didn't connect it. Who is involved with that billion people? So you know. (Pause) This is

J.O. You know you obviously. You know a lot more. See this goes back to me saying that oh my god you're so intelligent

J.H. Laughs

J.O. You listened. I would have never had the patients to sit and listen to Bill Gates

J.H. Laughs

J.O. Nah ah don't want to hear what he has to say.

J.H. Well you never listen to Steven Hawkins be for have you?

J.O. But you like

J.H. Huh?

J.O. No

J.H. The dude in the wheelchair

J.O. No I haven't

J.H. Laughs

J.O. I haven't

J.H. Laughs

Steve Hawkins

J.O. Do I need to?

J.H. Laughs, you you not the first couple of words you not gonna

J.O. Laugh

J.H. You not gonna you gonna be like stop

J.O. Laughs, Why do you admire Bill Gates so much?

J.H. Umm I admire will I kinda dis-admire now

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. Since I seen that but, I admired him because he made the way he made Microsoft it just intrigues me. The way he made that company the way it is today

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. It just I I I it's crazy

J.O. From nothing

J.H. Yeah from nothing and in in this world its I thought about this the other day it's not about getting a job or getting a career it's about making a job. You have to make a job in order to you know its its you have to make a job

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. Its its I I I don't know it's just at the back of my mind like.

J.O. Well I think I think (pause) Where you're going with that idea is you could have a hundred jobs

J.H. Yeah you could have a thousand jobs

J.O. Thousands of jobs you could make hundreds of thousands of dollars

J.H. Dollars

Handwritten margin notes:

* admired B. Gates b/c he built a company from nothing!

doesn't believe in "getting a job or career" but believes people need to "make a job!"

quote - rethinking "not about a job!"

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J.O. And still it might not be

J.H. Enough

J.O. The job for you.

J.H. Or the job for you. You might not like that job.

J.O. And that's when saying you have to make a job meaning you have to make it comfortable, you have to make it work for you, and and that's gonna be doing something when you wake up in the morning your happy to go do it.

J.H. Right.

J.O. You know and that's making a job.

J.H. Right

J.O. That's what I do here for example

J.H. Right

J.O .If I wasn't for you and every other student that I've gotten attached to here. This I wouldn't have made this job

J.H. Laughs

J.O. You know what I'm saying. cause its surly not anything else but my students that I'm here. Umm okay. So back to the reading class umm do you plan on since we've kinda thrown it out there collaborating with other students?

J.H. Yeah, yeah, yeah,

J.O. Getting in to groups?

J.H. Yeah this semester I'm talking with the other students

J.O. Okay. And you think that that umm that whole idea of getting involved in your classroom setting is gonna help you progress more through the class

[Handwritten margin notes:]

have tons of jobs/$ but still might not be enough —

—talking more w/ other students —getting more involved

J.H. Yes

J.O. Okay. Umm let's see what else? Anything else you wanna add about what's going on in your class right now with reading? You feeling more confident? You gonna stick it out?

J.H. Yeah. Ah yeah

J.O. And this gonna be it?

J.H. Yeah I'm gonna stick it out. I have to stick it out. It's like a due or die type of thing. I have to stick it out.

J.O. Okay. I want to see you stick it out. I mean worse case sinreo I'll tell you this much umm here at Nunez I can only speak for myself and Ms. Lott were your cheerleaders. Mr. Austin got attached to you last semester too. And he was like awe Jeffery; awe Jeffery every time we said your name.

J.H. And I didn't even talk, I didn't even say anything in his class but when I did say something, like he just looked like like outside like I was talking and everybody was looking at me and I just noticed like I'm talking but who am I talking to. I was just talking but everybody looking at me like they feeling the conversation like.

J.O. How'd that make you feel?

J.H. Like like they should know the stuff I know too.

J.O. Did it inspire you?

J.H. No, I talk I do this all the time I try to get people information and knowledge like so much like it

J.O. But listen what you're not noticing cause this is so beautiful and I'm gonna ask you to write some stuff for me when you leave this interview.

J.H. Laughs

Handwritten margin notes:

stick it out in school

Not

*PAst reading classes
in PAst - never talked
felt awkward b/c
only one talking
felt like everyone
was looking at him
Felt stupid b/c
he was smart
but people listen to
him - he has that
ability*

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J.O .You have this ability to inspire people. When you speak Jeffery you don't notice it but you just said notice that moment when you were just standing in a hall talking and everybody who was around just stopped and listened. That is a gift, that's a ability to inspire other people whether you're talking about oh it's a beautiful day outside did y'all see how bright the sun is. People are probably gonna stop and listen

J.H. Right

J.O. Because it's just who you are and not everybody can do that. I know when I walk into a room and I'm gonna gloat about Jade for a minute when I walk into a room and I start talking

J.H. They listen

J.O. People stop

J.H. People gonna stop and listen

J.O. Even if I'm talking about look at these new shoes I have on.

J.H. Laughs

J.O. Okay. Because some people have the ability to stop a room.

J.H. Right

J.O. You know and that's a gift. Cause I know a lot of people. I know a lot of very smart people, I know a lot of very ignorant people, I know a lot of very average in between people.

J.H. Right

J.O. And not everybody can do that. When you use to say stuff in English class students would stop (slaps hands) and listen (hits desk)

J.H. But I just too never say much.

J.O. And you use to never even know that happened. Right you said so little, but when you

listening

People listen to Jeffery —

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did say something. The room cleared and everybody listened that's a beautiful gift. So if you walk into your reading class next time y'all meet you do Monday/ Wednesday or Tuesday/ Thursday reading?

J.H. Monday/ Wednesday

J.O. The next time you go in reading class and Ms. Lott says get into group or do something

J.H. Right

J.O. I want you to try something

J.H. What?

J.O. I want you to go Ms. Lott; I'll be a group leader or say something about leading a group.

J.H. Alright

J.O. And you take charge of the group and see what happens. I grantee the students in your group are gonna stop and all the energy is gonna be put on Jeffery. All your friends in your neighborhood that thinks it bull shit that you're in school. I'm sure you've heard you're a sellout you're in school. Why you doing this?

J.H. No

J.O. Has anybody ever told you that?

J.H. No they.. The way it is to tell you the truth they push me to be in school though like. Like they might say it's not for me but if I say like man I'm not gone to school they gonna be like you you you no man this not for you
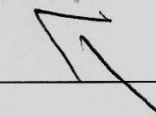
J.O. uh hmm

J.H. they be like man you got something that we don't have. I be like what? And they be like we don't know. But you got that, you have that factor in you man. He said there was just everybody tells me stay in school, I don't know why, but

[handwritten margin notes] Friends // friends- people who are not in school push him to stay in school- tell him "this life is not for you"

everybody tells me stay in school. Something

J.O. I'm say until until you done at Nunez. I'm gonna be on you. I just I just it's very obvious to somebody like me to somebody like Ms. Lott to any teacher that has had you that I've talked to. You are a force to be reckoned with, you don't see it yet but I promise you Jeffery you stick out school and you do what you have to do you're gonna do big things and you might want to be a zoologist or something like that bit when I talk to you and the things that you've told me and shared with me today I see this little revolutionary in you like you can really be a spokes person for your community. You could be a person that changes young kids form doing bad to doing good.

J.H. Not to cut you off Ms

J.O. Cut me off

J.H. I've asked the pastor to do that a couple of times but he he he was he looked at me and was like nah nah not you. He was like not you, but this Sunday I have to go speak at a church just at a different church someone invited me to be their guest at a church

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. And I was I was just shocked personally.

J.O. Why were you shocked?

J.H. I don't cause I don't see myself man cause I don't know I don't see myself with this smart kid like you know if somebody talks about something I just know about like I know about like like adult conversations is just like it will go in one ear and out the other.

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. I won't even pay attention if someone talking about something dull like it can be about football

pastor - asked him to be Guest at church! Speaker

★ doesn't see self as "smart

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basketball, and sometimes it's nice to talk about that but I like to talk about more enlightening yourself

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. You know getting your mind together.

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. I always tell people your mind is the control center and your body is the fortress

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. That's the only reason you have a body to protect the information inside of your mind that's basically what god or whoever made us for.

J.O. Uh hmm uh hmm

J.H. You know I just I just I don't know it's crazy. But I do I read public speaking books too, I read a lot of public speaking books when they had a sale in the library they were 25 cents a book

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. I said 25 cents a book. I'm about to buy six of these

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. Eight of them and it was all public speaking books and so far I've read a couple of chapters in a few of them

J.O. So you love books?

J.H. I wouldn't say I love them but it's different. I could read a book and see a movie in the book. It's it's the craziest thing ever like like when I was young the Harry Potter books

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. The books. When I read those books

[handwritten marginalia:]

mind —

→ likes to - use it - alout big public speaking books to work his mind

→ protect info in his mind!

✱ loves books public speaking books!

✱ - "sus" what he reads? Harry Potter

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J.O Did you read the whole series?

J.H. Oh the whole series.

J.O. Awe I love that.

J.H. The whole series

J.O. I love it

J.H. I read the whole series my mom would preorder the every book. Every book I preordered. And when I was reading it I was like these visions like like Harry and the way that they describe them so good.

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. To where I just I was just seeing like you know I could see them doing this and its crazy when I saw the movie I was like I saw this already.

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. I was like I saw this already.

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. This movie is retarded.

J.O. Laughs

J.H. Laughs, I'm like man the books the books fine but this movie makes it brings it down grades it like

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. A lot

J.O. That's what a lot of people said about the Harry Potter stuff.

J.H. The movies downgraded the books.

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. I just I just don't know Ms. Lott

Harry Potter

read whole harry
Potter series —

thinks movies down
grade books!

J.O. What do you

J.H. Not Ms. Lott. Ms. O'Dell

J.O. That's okay. We look exactly the same. I know

J.H. Laughs

J.O. Laughs, what do you think umm if you were umm in a classroom uh with other students who had repeated reading a third or fourth time? Umm do you think that most

J.H. I would try to help them out.

J.O. You would try to help them

J.H To the fullest

J.O. Do you think that most students who repeat developmental reading cause its tough class for a lot of students to pass? Despite what a lot of students think you know some students go into reading thinking umm this is easy

J.H. Yeah

J.O. This is gonna be a blow off and it's not

J.H. It's not

J.O. So you mentioned earlier that umm your big thing was not the reading part it was the test taking part.

J.H. Right

J.O. It was that time when you had to be assessed on your knowledge

J.H. Right

J.O. Connecting the concepts together making everything make sense. You said that's where your problem came in.

J.H. Right. But I didn't I don't understand I didn't I don't understand why I can't do that but it

peer tutoring
help students
tut

Reading not blow off class!

someone was to ask me to write an essay about something right now I could do it like that (snaps fingers)

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. Actually somebody betted me twenty dollars you can't write an essay in ten minutes. I said how many paragraphs you want it to be

J.O. Laughs

J.H. He said I don't know. I don't think he knew what a paragraph was

J.O. Laughs

J.H. I was like you want me to write an essay alright. And I just picked out the topic it it was power source

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. Alternative energy

J.O. Oh my god

J.H. Just out the blue I picked alternative energy (snaps fingers) a paragraph two a couple paragraphs about alternative energy and then they went a showed a college student and the college student sh sh she was going to LSU

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. She said Jeffery why you not in LSU with me? You write better than some of the people that and I was like in high school I just didn't I didn't it didn't nobody told me in high school in school that you have to go to college or not that you have to go to college but that it would better yourself to go to college. Nobody told me that.

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. You know I just went through school. Like you

Handwritten margin notes:

→ prefers writing over reading — can't seem to connect concepts in reading but can write

no one told him in h.S. that college betters self!!

no one told him so to college to better self!

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know it just after high school then I got the big picture.

J.O. How were the teachers in high school with you?

J.H. The same way you guys are with me.

J.O. Laughs

J.H. Laughs

J.O. So they pushed you. They motivated you. So the theory is true that if if a teacher umm tells a student your capable you can do this. Your smart

J.H. Right

J.O. Let me help you. Let me get you there. That's gonna motivate you.

J.H. Right, but I really haven't gotten a lot of help over the years in school. Like a tutor and I've never had a tutor, I've never had that they people wanted to cheat off me and stuff in class like in high school people wanted to cheat off my papers and stuff

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. I use to be like man. It's aggravating.

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. And they use to try

J.O. It's so aggravating being smart. Isn't it?

J.H. No Laughs

J.O. Laugh

J.H. No I'm not. It's not that.

J.O. I know it's not I'm just messing with you.

J.H. But it's... I don't know. It's crazy just just

Handwritten margin notes:
Jch
PGD
teachers in h.s. pushed him just like we do @ NCC
People wanted to cheat off of Jeffery → he uued get annoyed by it.

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something I can't explain.

J.O. I know being intelligent is unexplainable Jeffery. I know trust me. And you know hearing you talk about umm the way you view yourself I think it hilarious

J.H. How?

J.O. I'm gonna tell you how. Because forever still till this day I'm about four months away from a PHD

J.H. Right

J.O. I'm gonna have the highest level of a degree that anyone could possibly get.

J.H. Right

J.O. You can go any further unless you go get another PHD

J.H. True

J.O. Never ever, ever, ever still right now today I don't see myself that way. I do not see myself like I should have a PHD. I don't see myself that way

J.H. But you're getting it

J.O. But I'm getting it. Umm never have I felt that I was academically capable, but I am like I'm very smart academically

J. O. I'm a teacher umm so hearing I feel like, you know it's almost like we you think the same way, while I'm sitting here telling you, Jeffery you're so intelligent.

J.H. Right

J.O. I've had teachers tell me Jade you're so intelligent you know

J.H. Right

J.O. you gonna go far and I would say I'm not smart I'm really not smart

J.H. Right

But you know I know, know; know, deep, deep, deep down somewhere in there how smart I am. You know deep down how smart you are. Yeah

J.O. You just haven't found it quite yet. You haven't you haven't had something to really show you just how smart you are. Because of the setbacks that you talked about. Right?

J.H. Right

J.O. Okay

J.H. But, but I've, I've managed stuff. That's what I don't know what my daddy well, well he was a good he's, and he's a great father. He more than a great father he's a real a true role model

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. And he my he I'm not gonna say he not intelligent but he always told me when you talking about something or when you're doing something son always make sure you know the facts about it. Don't go by opinions. Go by the facts and go about how its suppose to be done don't try to, to turn it

J.H. unless you do find turning it around that's better suited for that situation

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. but he always told me that you, you gotta keep going. It doesn't matter what life throws at you, you gotta keep going and this man beens working since he was fourteen.

J.O. Wow

J.H. Fourteen and he just told me, he just says man I just want you to finish college and I just want you

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to you right he told me after you finish college you gonna see it. That's all he tell me you gonna see it. And I be like what the hell

J.O. You'll see it. I promise. I swear to god if you don't you can have my pinky finger

J.H. Laughs

J.O. I love this little finger to its so small

J.H. laughs

J.O. You can have it. Umm okay two more things and then we'll cut this because I'm gonna have to interview you one or two more times,

J.H. Right

J.O. One thing is you mentioned teaching methods in the classroom. You mentioned earlier about the content and ah I'm not so crazy about the content what if you know umm what would you change about your class content in your reading class if you had to? If you would you want more control over it? Would you want

J.H. No, No I wants somebody how, I wants a teacher whose capable of teaching like I want some I want a teacher that could communicate different

J.H. like everybody in the class

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. Like a hands on teacher that communicates with everybody.

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. Some teachers they just get up there on a board and talk to the class in general and give the stuff on the board and give everybody in general and make them interpreted it in their own way

[Handwritten margin notes: "teaching – Hands on Communicates w/ Students", "no lecture – board!"]

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J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. I fell as though that student should have the right to you know get a one on one sometimes

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. In the classroom. Even if it's just in the classroom walk around you know that, that makes me feel good when a teacher walks around while I'm working and looks to see looks like oh you know you gotta watch that or that's got a messed up Fix it.

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. They don't tell you the answer but then you know they helping you out

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. As a teacher supposed to be doing

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. And that's all I would like to see more , more, more hands more teachers actually seeing what each students weakness is.

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. Even though it take time but, you got all the time in the world

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. So umm

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. But I would like to see.

J.O. Umm what about the material in the class? What about the students? Do they ever umm hinder you from learning? Or do the students in the class ever distract you from focusing on

one on one

walk around - makes students feel good

{ VALIDAtion }

tell you if you messed up or if you are getting somethi-

"SUPPOSED TO Do that"

teacher needs to be hands on - walk around - tell Students where weakness is

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J.H. I try that type of stuff I block it out.

J.O. okay

J.H. I don't pay attention to ignorance like if people trying to crack jokes in class

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. Like if we out of class we can joke all we want but, but in this environment I want to be focus on learning I don't want to laugh or anything if if it has something to do with the work we doing then you know we I communicate but mostly that's why I don't like really talk in class though unless it's about the work

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. I don't want to get distracted and you know go off hand and mess up on my assignment or something.

J.O. Uh hmm

J.H. You know that's basically it

J.O. Okay well I think we got a good start here umm I'm like already putting 3 stories different stories together in my head

J.H. Laughs

J.O. This is so wonderful

J.H. Laughs

J.O. What I'm gonna ask you to do.

[Handwritten margin notes:]
→ blocks out other students

— wants to focus on learning !! no talking in class —

→ doesn't like distractions

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Appendix F: Story Map of Sierra's Narrative

Main Idea	Sierra has failed developmental reading twice and is currently in progress of attempting to complete the course for a third time. Despite her repetition, she has continued to persist through the course and plans to regardless of how long it takes. This semester is going to be the one she finally passes, according to Sierra.
Moral	No matter how many times a student repeats a course, he or she can do it with the right goals to encourage motivation, self-belief, constant validation from teachers, peers and family and friends and integrating his or herself as much as possible in the academic and social setting of a college classroom. Also, wanting to be a positive role model for your kids and show them they need to do the same often prompts motivation. **Key terms: disappointment, learning difficulty, feels stupid, needs teacher validation & help, prove something to herself, kids, circumstances, teaching**
Characters	Sierra, classmates, reading teacher, friends, family
Setting	The setting of Sierra's repetition is Local Community College in Southeast Louisiana.
Plot	Sierra has attempted developmental reading going on a third time. She just doesn't seem to "get it," regardless of how much she studies. She can be totally prepared for a vocabulary test and the minute she gets the test, she forgets everything she studied. Although she tried hard in the past to pass reading, she found herself, this semester during her third attempt, trying things she had not tried in the past. She went to an educational bookstore to practice her reading outside of class, she volunteered to be a group leader in her reading class when her teacher put her in groups, she attended regular tutoring sessions, she formed study groups with peers outside of class, and maintained positive self-belief which led her to be motivated to become absorbed in the class and pass this time. Her teacher noticed her extra effort this semester, and continued to validate her, praise her efforts and constantly stayed on her to make sure she was successful in this attempt. The teacher reminding Sierra that she can do it, praising her and providing her with outside help further motivated Sierra to become immersed in the class.
Problem/Climax/Conclusion	Sierra discovered this semester that she has a learning disability, which, according to Sierra is probably the reason why she had IEPs through elementary, middle and high school, and was put in special education courses as well. Her mother never acknowledged Sierra's difficulties; therefore, she has struggled academically her entire life. Despite her learning difficulties, she has embraced her academic challenges and continues to persist through college to get her Culinary Arts degree. Upon talking to her right after the semester ended, I learned that Sierra passed developmental reading with a C this semester upon her 3rd attempt.

Appendix G: Story Map of Jason's Narrative

Main Idea	Jason has failed developmental reading twice and is currently in progress of attempting to complete the course for a third time. But his vision to be and do something big one day has inspired him to stay in school and complete his courses. Despite his repetition, he has continued to persist through the course and plans to pass this semester. Jason's disappointment at his own laziness and poor choices in the past has convinced him that this semester is going to be the one he finally passes.
Theme/Moral	No matter how many times a student repeats a course, he or she can do it with the right goals to encourage motivation, self-belief, constant validation from teachers, peers and family and friends. Motivation comes ultimately from wanting to please and prove something to the self, as well as be a role model for others who think they can't go to college and get a degree. **Key terms: disappointment, outside validating agents (family, neighborhood folk, friends, younger kids in his life), prove something to himself, circumstances, teaching, belief in oneself and abilities**
Characters	Jason, classmates, reading teacher, friends, family
Setting	The setting of Jason's repetition is Local Community College in Southeast Louisiana.
Plot	Jason has attempted developmental reading going on a third time. It's not that he doesn't understand the material; he is just lazy and has had other things on his mind that have distracted him from focusing on school. The irony of Jason's story is that upon his first time enrolling in the class, he actually tested out of reading. He chose to stay in the class because he wanted to increase his test scores as well as his reading speed. He did well during the semester, scoring mediocre, but passing grades, even though he was capable of being a straight A student, according to his teacher. Unfortunately, during Jason's first attempt of developmental reading, his plans for school were clouded by his unrelenting desire to get a job and make money. As a result, he stopped going to class, missed the exit exam and the final and failed the class. During his second attempt, he started the semester with the goal to pass the classes he had failed the previous semester. With a fierce motivation and goal to prove that he could do it, once again he made it all the way to two weeks before the end of the semester and didn't show up for the final; again, he failed the class. He was again pulled into a place where he had the opportunity to get a job and make money, and again, it deterred him from his focus on school.
Problem/Climax/Conclusion	For the third semester in a row, Jason is in developmental reading with one of his former teachers. He made the decision to not look away from school from this point on because his family, friends and teachers have convinced him he can do it and he can make something big of himself. Additionally, Jason now sees that with a degree, he WILL get a job he

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desires and make the money he deserves. His teacher has praised him for his extremely high levels of motivation and drive and has stayed "on him" in class to make sure he finishes this time. He has focused on his class work, has become involved in class both academically and socially, and has managed to stick it out. Recently, I contacted Jason to see if he actually passed developmental reading this semester, and he did with a B. He had the highest average in the class this semester.

Appendix H: Story Map of Jessie's Narrative

Main Idea	Jessie failed developmental reading twice before successfully completing it a third time. It was her feelings toward herself and her need to graduate that practically forced her to take developmental reading a third time and pass it. The third time around, Jessie's level of commitment in the class motivated her to persist through and pass.
Moral	As a developmental reading repeater who completed developmental reading a third time a couple of years ago, Jessie's experiences with repetition were not much different from the students who were in progress of completing a third time. Laziness must be replaced by one's motivation, self-belief, constant validation from teachers, peers and family and friends. Motivation comes ultimately from wanting to please and prove something to the self. **Key terms: laziness, disappointment, circumstances, teaching**
Characters	Jessie, her advisor, classmates, reading teacher, friends, family
Setting	The setting of Jessica's repetition is Local Community College in Southeast Louisiana.
Plot	As a kid, Jessie was an honors student in school. Her brother, however, who was five years younger than her had a learning disability and as a result, Jessie was practically forced to take on the responsibility of being her brother's tutor which put her in a position to put her own school work in middle and high school aside. Jessie ended up in developmental reading. Jessie attempted developmental reading three times before finally passing it. Her story was a little different from the other participants in that Jessie's first time in reading was the same semester that hurricane Katrina hit the city. She, as well as all other student enrolled in school at the time, was automatically withdrawn from her classes the Fall 2005 semester. Upon reenrolling, things were still in shambles in St. Bernard where she was living and attending school before the storm. After the storm, her family moved to Metairie. When the Spring 2006 semester started, Jessica was enrolled in developmental reading for the second time. But, she just did not want to be there. She had other things that were more entertaining than developmental reading; she had lunch dates with her friends to tend to. She did not like the reading class, hated the material, and hated the way in which it was being taught. As a result, she rarely attended. She would leave school in between her classes, go to lunch in Metairie since nothing was open in Chalmette, and she would not go back to LCC for her afternoon class, developmental reading. Instead, she would finish lunch and simply go home. She did not feel like doing the assignments or reading the books for the class…it was all boring and repetitious to her. She had been in honors English classes in high school, so she did not understand how she ended up in the class in the first place. She ended up failing the class upon her 2nd attempt, but she could not escape developmental reading all together. She thought she'd

Problem/Climax/Conclusion	just ignore developmental reading and hoped that her advisor would look past it and not make her take it again. She did, after all, get a D in the class. However, successful completion of developmental reading is a C or higher. If a student gets a D or F, he or she must retake it. A few semesters pass Jessica by and it is her last semester at LCC. Her advisor called her and informed her that if she did not take the developmental reading class and earn a C or higher, she could not graduate. Upon hearing that news, Jessie enrolled in developmental reading for the third time with the determination and motivation she needed to persist though and pass successfully. The third time in the class was different though. Although she had the same teacher, the teacher's methods had changed. Instead of a lecture based class, the teacher incorporated group work, peer reviewing and class circular class discussions, all things that were more suitable for Jessica's style of learning. She excelled in the class because she was working with her peers. She was also working with study groups outside of class, as well as seeking extra work and help from the teacher. The teacher praised her for her newly discovered persistence, which further encouraged her to want to not only please herself but her teacher as well. Jessie passed developmental reading upon her third attempt with a B. She was also determined to pass and graduate because of her personal desire to move out of her mother's home and start a family of her own. Jessie graduated with an Associate's Degree in Medical Billing and Coding.

Appendix I: Story Map of Terry's Narrative

Main Idea	Terry failed developmental reading twice before successfully completing it a third time. It was her desire to "get started" on her classes for the Nursing program so that she could provide for her children, be independent and not feel the need to depend on anyone that encouraged her to take developmental reading a third time and pass it. Terry's desire to provide for her children, to become a nurse and her level of commitment in the class motivated her to persist through and pass developmental reading upon her third attempt.
Moral	As a developmental reading repeater who completed developmental reading a third time a year ago, Terry's experiences with repetition were based more on her circumstances at the time she enrolled than on her actual performance in the class. Regardless of the circumstances, though, persistence and motivation came from her desire (goals) to please and prove something to herself, as well as set the foundation to be successful in other reading intensive classes so she could get her nursing degree. The class structure helped assist in Terry's success in the class the third time. **Key terms: low level of focus, disappointment and anger, circumstances, teaching, proving to self & others, independence**
Characters	Terry, reading teacher, kids, friends, family
Setting	The setting of Terry's repetition is Local Community College in Southeast Louisiana.
Plot	Terry attempted developmental reading three times before finally passing it. Her story was a little different from the other participants in that Terry's first time in reading occurred when she was 18 years old and had a child. The father of her child, her child and she moved to Baton Rouge her first semester, so she stopped going to school. A few years later, after splitting with her very controlling baby's father and moving back to Chalmette, she re-enrolled in school. She was determined to pass the class the 2nd time and to start fresh after being out a few years, but she did not. Again, life's circumstances put another road block in front of Terry; her baby's father kept trying to keep him from Jessica, and according to her, "school is important, but my kids come first!" Again, she stopped attending and failed the class.
Problem/Climax/Conclusion	The third time she enrolled in the class, Terry was frustrated and knew she had to pass and get out of reading. Terry was more comfortable her third time in reading; the teacher's methods were more conducive to her style of learning, and she felt like the teacher was "more involved" than the previous teacher she had. She was able to get one on one teaching the third time in reading, and this helped her move more smoothly through the class. Although the teacher put the students in groups, she did not feel the need to work in groups. She preferred to work on her own or with the teacher. Terry remembered how much the

	teacher would praise her in class for her effort and motivation; it made her feel good as a student and motivated her to want to pass to not only please herself but also please her teacher. She also took advantage of talking to the teacher outside of class, as well as meeting with her for additional tutoring. With her kids on her side to push her, a teacher who cared and a strong desire to start her nursing program, Terry passed the class with a B. Terry has completed her pre recs and will be transferring from LCC to another technical college to go into their LPN program.

Appendix J: Coding Scheme

The following letters represent the coding scheme that was used during the data analysis stage in the research process. Following each code is its description.

LOS = lack of seriousness
LZ = lazy
TCH = teaching
FOC = focus
CIRC = circumstances
ANG = Anger
BIS = belief in self
RM = role model
BEX = be an example
P2S = prove to self
LD = learning disability
FAM = family
MOT = motivator/motivation
GW/GRP = group work
ENC = encouragement
PRA = praise
CAR = career
REG = regret
CS = class structure
DIS = disappointment
TUT = tutoring
1-1 = one-on-one

Stars = possible quotes
Purple highlighter = feelings/emotions
Orange highlighter = support systems/motivators
yellow highlighter = first read

Appendix K: Informed Consent Letter

Dear Participant:

I am conducting a study of developmental education repeaters attending community colleges in the New Orleans area. This study will explore developmental education repeaters' perceptions of and experiences with developmental reading repetition, motivation and persistence.

The information obtained from the study could help future developmental education students understand what they may need in order to be successful in a developmental reading course in order to prevent them from possibly repeating the course in the future. It will also help developmental education educators understand what they may be able to do to promote successful completion of a course when a student is repeating the course, in addition to helping first time developmental education course takers be successful upon their first attempt in the course.

Thank you for your willingness to participate in the study. I am hoping that my study will help students and educational leaders and developmental educators prepare for and respond to the needs of developmental education students.

If you have any questions or concerns pertaining to the study and your participation, please feel free to contact me at (504) 259-1547 or by email at jodell@uno.edu or jadejudith80@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

Jade J. O'Dell
Doctoral Candidate
Educational Administration in Higher Education
University of New Orleans

Vita

Jade J. O'Dell was born and reared in St. Bernard, Louisiana. She moved to Metairie, Louisiana at the age of eleven years old, and since the age of 24, she has resided in various parts of the New Orleans area. She received her Bachelor of Arts in English Writing and Master of Arts in Communications from Loyola University New Orleans. She has taught all levels of education, including elementary at Westbank Cathedral Academy in Marrero, Louisiana; high school through Loyola University New Orleans's Upward Bound Program and college at Delgado Community College and Local Community College. Currently, she is an assistant professor of developmental education at Local Community College, where she has been teaching for nine years.

Jade hopes to one day work in an administrative capacity in the area of student support services or teaching and curriculum. Her passions are teaching and developmental education and working with students who may be labeled "at-risk" academically; therefore, an ideal position at the community college would be to serve as a director of a learning center for developmental education students or students who have been identified as being academically weak.

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This dissertation proposal was typed by the author.