

# **An Evaluation of Developmental Education in Texas Public Colleges and Universities**

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## **Table of Contents**

---

### [Developmental Education Outcomes](#)

[Executive Summary](#)

[Introduction](#)

[Methodology](#)

[Findings for Community Colleges](#)

[Findings for Universities](#)

[Discussion of Findings](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[References](#)

### ["Best Practices" in Developmental Education](#)

[Executive Summary](#)

[Introduction](#)

[Methodology](#)

[Findings for Community Colleges](#)

[Findings for Universities](#)

[Discussion](#)

[Summary of Best Practices](#)

[References](#)

### [Evaluating for Improvement](#)

Self-Study Guidelines for Developmental Education Program in Texas Public Colleges and Universities

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[Return to the TASP Page](#)

## **Executive Summary**

### **Background**

This report was prepared by the National Center for Developmental Education (NCDE) under contract to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB). The report was designed to explore several aspects of developmental education: assessment, placement, courses, and services. It was also designed to provide a general evaluation of developmental education outcomes in Texas public colleges and universities.

### **Methodology**

The study on which this report was based used survey methodology to gather data on developmental education processes and outcomes. The items explored in the study included the use of local assessment instruments, the number of students scoring below 180 on various sections of the Texas Academic Skills Program (TASP) Test, the number of students placing into developmental courses, the number of students passing these courses, the number of students passing developmental courses who also passed the appropriate section of the TASP Test, and the number of students retained over one year who had passed or not passed developmental courses.

This information was gathered through a survey of Texas public community colleges and universities. Survey respondents included 69.3% of the public community colleges and 71.4% of the public universities in Texas. This was considered to be a very strong response rate. Such a high response rate indicates that the findings of this report are likely to represent an accurate reflection of developmental education in Texas public higher education institutions.

### **Findings**

This study found that a variety of instruments are used by Texas public colleges and universities to assess and place incoming students. A large percentage of students obtain low scores on these instruments and are therefore placed in developmental courses. On the average and depending upon the subject area, about 10-15% of those who failed one or more sections of the TASP Test obtained scores below 180. A score of 180 indicates serious student underpreparedness.

Depending upon the subject, between 37.7% and 61.8% of entering community college students and between 27% to 63.6% of entering university students were placed in developmental courses or services. Students were most commonly placed in developmental courses in mathematics on the basis of local assessment or TASP Test scores. A very small percentage of these students later passed the TASP Test before completing developmental

education.

Survey results indicated that about 75% of those students who take developmental courses pass them within one year. These rates were found to be consistent with national averages.

The survey also identified post-developmental education TASP Test pass rates in reading, writing, and mathematics at both community colleges and universities. University students were more likely to pass the TASP Test following developmental education than community college students. Post-developmental education TASP Test pass rates ranged from a low of 33.4% in mathematics at community colleges to a high of 85.4% in writing at universities.

An analysis of post-developmental education TASP Test pass rates by institution revealed a wide range of passing percentages. At some institutions less than 20% of the students passed the appropriate section of the TASP Test following participation in developmental courses. At other institutions more than 80% of the students passed the appropriate section of the TASP Test following participation in developmental courses.

The survey also explored the retention of those students who had passed developmental courses and those students who had failed them. Those who passed these courses were much more likely to be retained for at least one year than those who failed them. This was true at both community colleges and universities.

## **Discussion and Conclusions**

The use of local assessment instruments in addition to the TASP Test for placement purposes is widespread among Texas public colleges and universities. The evidence suggests that the use of both types of instruments is appropriate and is working satisfactorily to identify students who need developmental education.

Of those who take a combination of local instruments and the TASP Test for placement purposes at Texas public colleges and universities, about half score at levels that would place them in one or more developmental courses. A very large number of students entering Texas public colleges and universities, therefore, are inadequately prepared at some level in one or more subject areas. Ten to fifteen percent of these score below 180 on one or more sections of the TASP Test.

Although the majority of students passed their developmental courses, passing the developmental course did not guarantee passing the TASP Test. The disappointingly low post-developmental education TASP Test pass rates, however, appeared to be related to the institution providing developmental education rather than to the TASP process in general. Participation in developmental education at some institutions resulted in high post-developmental education TASP Test pass rates while participation at others resulted in low

TASP Test pass rates.

In addition to what appears to be an uneven quality among institutional developmental programs, the lower than expected TASP Test pass rates following developmental education may also be attributable to other factors. As noted earlier, 10-15% of those placed into developmental courses have such a low level of academic skill in some areas that they are not likely to pass the TASP Test until they have experienced a substantial amount of developmental education. Institutions enrolling a high percentage of extremely weak students might be expected to have low post-developmental education TASP Pass rates. This study measured TASP Test pass rates for the 1996-97 academic year only. It is reasonable to assume that resolution of academic skill deficiencies may have taken longer than a year for some of these students.

Nevertheless, passing a developmental course apparently makes some contribution to passing the TASP Test in the same subject area for most students. Furthermore, passing a developmental course does appear to contribute to student retention.

The major conclusions of this study are that:

- a) as measured by post-developmental education TASP Test pass rates, developmental education is working well at some institutions and poorly at others;
- b) as measured by pass rates in developmental courses, Texas students are generally successful in these courses, even though passing a developmental course does not guarantee passing the TASP Test; and
- c) as measured by year-to-year retention, passing a developmental course is related to student persistence.

This is consistent with the findings of a previous report on the TASP completed by the National Center for Developmental Education. Essentially, the TASP is basically a sound system supported by a sound assessment instrument. Unfortunately, implementation of this system by institutions is very uneven.

## **Introduction**

In the spring of 1996, the National Center for Developmental Education (NCDE) was contracted by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to conduct an extensive evaluative study of the Texas Academic Skills Program (TASP). The study was completed in October of 1996 and findings were then shared with the Coordinating Board, the Texas Legislature, and Texas public colleges and universities.

Following submission of the report, the TASP was debated during the 1997 legislative session. Following this debate, a variety of TASP reform measures were passed by the Texas Legislature. A rider to the Appropriations Act passed during the 1997 legislative session directed the Coordinating Board to undertake a follow-up evaluation of developmental education in Texas colleges and universities. This follow-up evaluation was to assess the effectiveness of developmental education and to identify "best practices" in developmental education among Texas colleges and universities.

In keeping with this directive, the THECB contracted with the NCDE during the spring of 1998 to conduct a small scale follow-up study to the original TASP evaluation. The following reports are provided in partial fulfillment of that contract. Part 1 of the report provides an assessment of outcomes related to developmental education. Part 2 of the report identifies "best practices" in developmental education among Texas public colleges and universities and analyzes them on the basis of the literature and research in the field.

### **Methodology**

Because of the limited amount of funding available for this project, it was determined that institutional surveys represented the most cost effective method of obtaining data. Consequently, a survey form was developed by staff of the National Center for Developmental Education. This survey form requested specific numerical data on a variety of issues of interest to the THECB and the Texas Legislature.

The survey form was submitted to the THECB for review by staff. As a result of this review several revisions were made in the form. Some revisions were made because it was determined that institutions were unlikely to have certain data. Other revisions were made to promote clarity or to address specific questions raised by the THECB staff.

A final version of the form was presented to the THECB in the spring of 1998 (see APPENDIX 1). This version of the survey asked nine questions addressing seven general issues:

- 1) the use of local testing in addition to the TASP Test for placement in developmental courses,
- 2) the number of students failing one or more sections of the TASP Test,
- 3) the number of students with scores below 180 on specific sections of the test,
- 4) the number of students taking various developmental courses,
- 5) the number of students passing these courses,

6) the number of students passing the TASP Test following remediation, and

7) the number of students passing or not passing developmental courses who were retained after one year.

The form was then printed and distributed to all Texas public colleges and universities along with a cover letter providing instructions and describing the purpose of the survey (see APPENDIX 2).

Those responding to the survey form were advised that Dr. Ronald Swanson of the THECB would be available via telephone, FAX, email, or letter to answer questions regarding the survey. Several questions were raised about the survey and Dr. Swanson and Dr. Hunter Boylan of the NCDE collaborated in responding to these.

Survey responses were collected by the THECB in the spring of 1998 and forwarded to the NCDE for review and analysis. Of 75 Texas community colleges, responses were received from 44 colleges and four community college districts representing 52 individual institutions. Responses were received from 25 of 35 universities. This represented a 69.3% response rate for community colleges and a 71.4% response rate for universities. Because the overall response rate was well above 50%, it was considered to be adequate for purposes of this study.

It should be noted that not all of the respondents were able to answer all questions. Some institutions did not have the data necessary to answer the questions. Others did not have populations addressed by the study. Some universities, for instance, were upper-level institutions and, as a consequence, did not use the TASP Test or did not have developmental courses. Although this further reduced the number of usable responses, the number of institutions providing usable data still represented a response percentage well above the norm for survey research.

Each institutional response was reviewed by THECB staff and, later, by NCDE staff. This review caused several surveys to be deleted from the sample because of obvious inconsistencies in the data reported. Following receipt and analysis of survey forms, information from each form received and judged to be accurate was then entered into a data base. Data base analysis was then used to generate totals and percentages for each category of question under consideration.

It should be noted that, although the survey response rate for this study was high, the data collected was based neither on a random sample nor on the total population of Texas public institutions. This limits the extent to which the findings may be generalized to all Texas institutions. Other limitations characteristic of survey research using self-reported data are also applicable to this study.

## Findings for Community Colleges

### Local Assessment at Community Colleges

Of the 44 community colleges responding to the survey, 37 (84.1%) reported that 27,094 students took a local assessment test prior to taking the TASP Test. However, only 33 of these institutions provided data on the number of students placed in particular developmental courses. The total number of students assessed through local instruments for these 33 institutions is 22,549 and their placement results are described in Table 1.

A total of 8,499 of these students or 37.7% were placed in developmental reading as a result of local assessment tests. A total of 9,114 of these students or 40.4% were placed in developmental English/writing as a result of local assessment tests. A total of 13,927 or 61.8% were placed in developmental mathematics as a result of local assessment tests. An unknown number of these students were placed in more than one developmental course as a result of local assessment.

On the basis of this information, it is apparent that developmental education on the majority of Texas campuses is based, at least partly, on local assessment instruments. The TASP Test, however, remains an important part of the assessment and placement process at community colleges.

**Table 1**

**Number and Percent of Students Placing into Developmental Courses  
on the Basis of Local Assessment Tests, Fall of 1996**

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Reading	8,499	37.7
English/Writing	9,114	40.4
Mathematics	13,927	61.8

Institutional n = 33

Of those students originally placed in developmental courses, some later passed the appropriate section of the TASP Test on their first attempt (see Table 2). Data for this question was

provided for a total of 21,684 students from 31 individual community colleges. Of these students, a total of 1,750 or 8.1% of those placed in developmental reading later passed the TASP Reading Test on their first attempt. A total of 2,271 or 10.5% later passed the TASP Writing Test on their first attempt. A total of 2,626 or 12.1% later passed the TASP Mathematics Test on their first attempt.

These findings tend to validate the accuracy of TASP Test based placement in developmental courses. On the average, only about one of ten students who are placed in developmental education courses based on the TASP Test later place out of these courses by passing the TASP.

**Table 2**

**Number and Percent of Students Placing into Developmental Courses  
on the Basis of Local Assessment Who Later Passed the  
Appropriate Section of the TASP Test on Their First Attempt, Fall of 1996**

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Reading	1,750	8.1
English/Writing	2,271	10.5
Mathematics	2,626	12.1

Institutional n = 31

Students Scoring Below 180 on TASP Test at Community Colleges

Staff of the THECB considered it important to identify the number of students who scored what was considered to be at the lowest levels of TASP Test. Having this information would enable the Coordinating Board to generate an estimate of the percentage of incoming students who were seriously unprepared for college level work. After consulting with THECB staff members, university, and community college personnel, it was determined that this level was a score below 180. It was assumed that students scoring below this point would need a substantial amount of developmental education if they were to have any hope of being successful in college.

Forty-four community colleges reported that a total of 13,334 students entering for the first



time in the fall of 1996 failed one or more sections of the TASP Test. Of these, 1,276 or 9.6% scored below 180 on the reading section of the TASP Test, 1,313 or 9.8% scored below 180 on the writing section of the TASP Test, and 1,862 or 14.0% scored below 180 on the mathematics section of the TASP Test (see Table 3).

The data indicates that about one of every ten students entering Texas community colleges does so with extremely weak basic skills in English and reading. For mathematics, this figure is about half again as high.

**Table 3**  
**Number and Percent of Students Scoring Below 180**  
**on Various Segments of the TASP Test**  
**at Community Colleges, Fall of 1996**

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Reading</b>	1,276	9.6
<b>Writing</b>	1,313	9.8
<b>Mathematics</b>	1,862	14.0

Institutional n = 44

#### Students Taking Developmental Courses at Community Colleges

A total of 44 community colleges reported that 9,437 of the 13,334 (70.7%) first-time students who had failed one of more sections of the TASP Test took one or more developmental courses. This is a smaller percentage than reported in our earlier study of the TASP. There are several possible explanations for this. As noted above, some of the students who originally failed the TASP Test later retook it and passed, thereby eliminating them from the pool of students for whom developmental education was required. Others may have been excused from developmental courses under a variety of exemptions possible under new guidelines established by the Texas Legislature in 1995 and, again, in 1997. Although some of these exemption options were not available in the fall of 1996, many students and advisors recognized that they would be soon and might, therefore, have waited for this option to become available. It is also possible that many of these students participated in non-course based developmental education instead of developmental courses. Furthermore, some of the students

in this sample may have taken the TASP Test earlier as high school students participating in dual credit courses offered by community colleges.

Data for students taking developmental courses, passing them, and later passing the appropriate section of the TASP Test was provided by individual community colleges and by districts.

Districts aggregated their data and, as a consequence, figures for individual institutions within each district were not available.

Furthermore, neither all colleges nor all districts reporting had complete data for each of the questions on this topic. Data is, therefore, reported only for those institutions or districts that provided complete data sets. This included 37 individual colleges and two community college districts. The results are reported in Table 4 for individual colleges and Table 5 for community college districts.

Results from individual colleges are reported as follows. Of those students who had failed the TASP Reading Test, 2,238 took developmental reading, 1,647 (73.6%) passed the course, and of those who passed, 747 (45.4%) later passed the TASP Reading Test. Of those students who failed the TASP Writing Test, 2,733 took developmental English/writing, 1,988 (72.4%) passed the course, and of those who passed, 1,094 or 55.0% later passed the TASP Writing Test. Of those students who failed the TASP Mathematics Test, 5,510 took developmental mathematics, 3,595 (65.2%) passed, and of those who passed, 1,200 (33.4%) later passed the TASP Mathematics Test.

**Table 4**

**Students Taking Developmental Courses,**

**Passing Them, and Passing TASP Test**

**Individual Community Colleges, Fall of 1996**

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Took Course</b>	<b>Passed Course</b>	<b>Passed TASP Test</b>
<b>Reading</b>	2,238	1,647 (73.6%)	747 (45.4%)
<b>English/Writing</b>	2,733	1,988 (72.4%)	1,094 (55.0%)
<b>Mathematics</b>	5,510	3,595 (65.2%)	1,200 (33.4%)

Institutional n = 37

Results from Community College Districts are reported as follows. Of those students who failed the TASP Reading Test, 400 took developmental reading, 385 (96.3%) passed the course, and of those who passed, 126 (32.7%) later passed the TASP Reading Test. Of those students who failed the TASP Writing Test, 1,062 took developmental English/writing, 991 (93.3%) passed the course, and of those who passed, 651 (65.7%) later passed the TASP Writing Test. Of those students who failed the TASP Mathematics Test, 1069 took developmental mathematics, 965 (90.3%) passed the course, and of those who passed, 286 (29.6%) later passed the TASP Mathematics Test.

These tables reflect substantial differences in TASP Test pass rates in reading and writing for community college districts and individual community colleges. However, these differences are unlikely to be meaningful. The limited sample size of community college districts makes any statistically valid comparison impossible.

**Table 5**  
**Students Taking Developmental Courses,**  
**Passing Them, and Passing the TASP Test**  
**Community College Districts, Fall of 1996**

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Took Course</b>	<b>Passed Course</b>	<b>Passed TASP Test</b>
<b>Reading</b>	400	385 (96.3%)	126 (32.7%)
<b>English/Writing</b>	1062	991 (93.3%)	651 (65.7%)
<b>Mathematics</b>	1069	965 (90.3%)	286 (29.6%)

District n = 2

Retention of Students Passing and Not Passing Developmental Courses

A total of 37 individual community colleges and three community college districts reported data on the retention of students who had passed developmental courses and those who did not pass these courses. The data resulting from these questions are reflected in Table 6.

Of those who *had passed any* developmental course at individual community colleges, 7,159 or 53.7% were still enrolled at the institution for the fall semester of 1997. Of those who had *not passed any* developmental course, only 2,544 or 19.1% were still enrolled at the institution for

the fall semester of 1997.

Of those who had *passed any* developmental course at community college districts, 2,515 or 60.9% were still enrolled at the institution for the fall semester of 1997. Of those who had *not passed any* developmental course, only 262 or 6.3% were still enrolled at the institution for the fall semester of 1997.

The data from these tables suggest that those who passed any developmental courses were much more likely to be retained than those who had not passed any developmental courses. This was true for both individual community colleges and community college districts. Although there were some differences in results for individual community colleges and community college districts, these are also unlikely to be meaningful because of the disparity in the size of the two samples.

**Table 6**

**Retention of Students Who had Passed or Not Passed**

**Developmental Courses for Community College Districts**

**and Individual Community Colleges, Fall, 1996 to Fall, 1997**

<b>Reporting Unit</b>	<b>Total Students</b>	<b>Passing and Retained</b>	<b>Not Passing and Retained</b>
<b>C. C. Districts</b>	4,133	2,515 (60.9%)	262 (6.3%)
<b>Individual C.C.s</b>	13,334	7,159 (53.7%)	2,544 (19.1%)

Individual Institutional n = 37

District n = 3

**Findings for Universities**

Local Assessment at Universities

Among Texas public universities, 16 of the 25 institutions reporting (64.0%) indicated that 9,897 students took a local placement test prior to taking the TASP Test (see Table 7). Of these, a total of 2,676 or 27% placed into developmental reading as a result of local assessment.

A total of 4,709 or 47.6% placed into developmental English/writing as a result of local assessment. A total of 6,290 or 63.6% placed into developmental mathematics as a result of local assessment. An unknown number of these students were placed into more than one developmental course as a result of local assessment.

**Table 7**  
**Number and Percent of Students Placing into**  
**Developmental Courses**  
**on the Basis of Local Assessment - Universities**

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Reading</b>	2,676	27.0
<b>Writing</b>	4709	47.6
<b>Mathematics</b>	6,290	63.6

Institutional n = 16

Of those students placing into developmental courses on the basis of local assessment testing, a number of them later passed the appropriate section of the TASP Test on their first attempt. These figures were reported for 15 institutions and a total of 9,674 students and are displayed in Table 8.

A total of 1,083 or 11.2% of those placed in developmental reading later passed the TASP Reading Test on their first attempt. A total of 2,022 or 20.9% later passed the TASP Writing Test on their first attempt. A total of 1,988 or 20.5% later passed the TASP Mathematics Test on their first attempt. As in community colleges, these figures tend to validate the use of the TASP Test for placement in developmental education at universities.

**Table 8**  
**Number and Percent of Students Placed into Developmental Courses**  
**on the Basis of Local Assessment Who Later Passed the TASP Test - Universities**

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Reading</b>	1,083	11.2
<b>Writing</b>	2,022	20.9
<b>Mathematics</b>	1,988	20.5

Institutional n = 15

Students Scoring Below 180 on the TASP Test at Universities

Twenty five universities responded that 7,790 of their students entering for the first time in the fall of 1996 failed one or more sections of the TASP Test (see Table 9). Of these, 1,064 or 13.7% scored below 180 on the TASP Reading Test. A total of 1,146 or 14.7% scored below 180 on the TASP Writing Test. A total of 1,235 or 15.9% scored below 180 on the TASP Mathematics Test.

**Table 9**

**Students Scoring Below 180**

**on Various Sections of the TASP Test at Universities**

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Reading</b>	1,064	13.7
<b>Writing</b>	1,146	14.7
<b>Mathematics</b>	1,235	15.9

Institutional n = 25

One somewhat surprising piece of information revealed in Table 9 is that universities appear to have a higher percentage of entering students obtaining extremely low scores on various sections of the TASP Test than community colleges. This may or may not be of significance. It does, however, indicate that universities also have their share of seriously unprepared entering students.

Students Taking Developmental Courses at Universities

A total of 25 universities provided complete data on 7,790 students who initially failed one or more sections of the TASP Test. Of these, 5,972 took various developmental courses, passed them, and later took the appropriate section of the TASP Test (see Table 10).

A total of 1,994 students failed the reading section of the TASP Test and took developmental reading. Of these, 1,574 (78.9%) passed developmental reading. Of those who passed, 1,195 (75.9%) later passed the TASP Test. A total of 2,614 students failed the writing section of the TASP Test and took developmental English/writing. Of these, 1,878 (71.8%) passed developmental English/writing. Of those who passed, 1,603 (85.4%) later passed the TASP Writing Test. A total of 4,683 students failed the mathematics section of the TASP Test and took developmental mathematics. Of these, 3,130 (66.8%) passed developmental mathematics. Of those who passed, 2,048 (65.4%) later passed the TASP Mathematics Test.

As might be expected, Table 10 reveals that universities have a considerably higher post

**Table 10**  
**Students Taking Developmental Courses,**  
**Passing Them, and Passing the TASP Test**  
**Universities, Fall of 1996**

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Took Course</b>	<b>Passed Course</b>	<b>Passed TASP Test</b>
<b>Reading</b>	1,994	1,574 (78.9%)	1,195 (75.9%)
<b>English/Writing</b>	2,614	1,878 (71.8%)	1,603 (85.4%)
<b>Mathematics</b>	4,683	3,130 (66.8%)	2,048 (65.4%)

Institutional n = 25

developmental education TASP Test pass rate than community colleges. Similar findings were reported in a previous evaluation of the TASP (Boylan, et al., 1996).

Retention of Students Passing and Not Passing Developmental Courses

A total of 20 institutions reported data on the retention of students who had passed developmental courses versus those who did not pass these courses. The results are presented

in Table 11.

Of those who *had passed any developmental course*, 3,964 or 66.4% were still enrolled at the institution for the fall semester of 1997. Of those who *had not passed any developmental course*, only 575 or 9.6% were still enrolled at the institution for the fall semester 1997. As was the case for community colleges, those passing developmental courses were much more likely to be retained than those who do not pass them. At universities, those passing developmental courses are six times more likely to be retained for one year than those who fail them.

**Table 11**

**Retention of Students Who Had Passed or Not Passed**

**Developmental Courses**

**Universities, Fall of 1996 to Fall of 1997**

<b>Total Students</b>	<b>Passed and Retained</b>	<b>Not Passed and Retained</b>
5,972	3,964 (66.4%)	575 (9.6%)

Institutional n = 20

**Discussion of Findings**

Use of Local Assessment for Placement Purposes

In a previous study of the Texas Academic Skills Program (Boylan, et al., 1996), it appeared that the majority of Texas public colleges and universities used some local assessment instruments in addition to the TASP Test for placement purposes. When questioned about this practice, the reasons typically given were that local faculty were interested in skills not measured by the TASP Test, that TASP Test results occasionally were not reported quickly enough to be useful in the placement process, or that the TASP Test measured skills at too low or too high a level to be completely useful to the institution.

The available data suggests that the use of local assessment instruments in addition to the TASP Test has continued and, perhaps, even increased in the past two years. Of the 44 community colleges responding to this survey 37 or 84.1% used local tests in addition to the TASP Test. All of the community college districts responding to the survey reported the use of local tests in addition to the TASP Test. Of the 25 universities responding, 16 or 64% reported using local assessment instruments for placement purposes.



In the fall of 1996, 37 community colleges and four community college districts reported testing a total of 38,811 students using instruments other than the TASP Test. A total of 16 universities reported testing a total of 9,897 students using instruments other than the TASP Test.

Local placement results at community colleges appear to be fairly consistent with TASP Test results. Of those placed into developmental reading as a result of local testing at community colleges, 91.9% also failed the TASP Reading Test. Of those placed into developmental English/writing, 89.5% also failed the TASP Writing Test. Of those placed into developmental mathematics, 87.9% also failed the TASP Mathematics Test. In essence, those who obtained low scores on the local assessment instrument obtained similarly low scores on the TASP Test.

Local placement results at universities were not quite as consistent with TASP Test results as was the case in community colleges. Of those placed into developmental reading as a result of local testing at universities, 89.8% later failed the TASP Reading Test. Of those placed into developmental English/writing, 79.1% later failed the TASP Writing Test. Of those placed into developmental mathematics, 79.5% later failed the TASP Mathematics Test.

These findings suggest that those who fail a particular section of the local placement test are very likely to fail the same section of the TASP Test. Nevertheless, these findings cannot be used to support the claim that local tests are more or less accurate than the TASP Test. The findings only suggest that there is some degree of consistency in the results of local assessment instruments and the TASP Test and that this consistency appears to be somewhat higher at community colleges than at universities.

The findings also lend some credence to the claim that the TASP Test does not measure skills at a high enough level for some institutions, particularly universities. About 20% of those who placed into developmental education as a result of local assessment at universities still managed to pass the TASP Test. It may be assumed therefore, that up to 20% of those in university developmental courses would not have been placed there had the TASP Test been used as the only assessment and placement instrument. This further supports the use of local instruments in addition to the TASP Test for assessment and placement purposes at universities.

### Students Placing into Developmental Courses

A fairly high percentage of the 1996 incoming Texas college and university students taking local assessment instruments were placed in developmental courses as a result, particularly in the area of mathematics. In community colleges, 61.8% of those taking a local assessment test were placed into developmental mathematics. In universities, 63.6% of those taking a local assessment test were placed into developmental mathematics.

As might be expected, the percentage of students placed into developmental reading as a result of local assessment was higher in community colleges than in universities. In community colleges, 37.7% of those tested using local assessment instruments were placed into developmental reading but only 27% of those entering universities were placed in developmental reading. There was also some difference between universities and community colleges in the percentage of students placing into developmental English/writing as a result of local testing. At universities, 47.6% of those tested using a local assessment instrument placed into developmental English/writing. At community colleges, this figure was only 40.4%.

Although there were some differences between community colleges and universities in the percentage of entering students being placed in developmental courses, both types of institutions admitted students who, in varying degrees, were less than fully prepared for college-level work. This suggests a continued need for developmental education, not only in community colleges, but also in universities.

### Students Scoring Below 180 on the TASP Test

As noted earlier in this report, THECB and college and university officials believed that many students taking the TASP Test and subsequently placing into developmental courses were extremely weak academically. A score below 180 in any sub-test of the TASP Test was considered to represent a severe academic skill deficiency. For students scoring at this level, it was unlikely that they would be able to pass the TASP Test without at least two or three semesters of developmental education. Consequently, for these students the use of post developmental education TASP Test pass rates within a single academic year would not be a fair measure of program or institutional performance.

It was also believed that the number of students dropping out of college prior to completion of the TASP Test might be accounted for by this group of students. It is reasonable to assume that a very high level of motivation would be required for such students to continue in non-credit developmental courses over a long period of time. Lack of motivation among students enrolled in developmental courses was consistently cited as a problem by faculty interviewed in the earlier TASP study (Boylan, et al., 1996).

The current study found that, depending upon the TASP Test subject area and the type of institution, 10-15% of those taking the TASP Test score below 180 (see Tables 3 and 9). This suggests that at least one of ten students entering Texas public colleges and universities does so with such severe academic skills deficiencies as to make passing the TASP Test difficult even with substantial amounts of developmental education.

This finding further suggests that a small but, nevertheless, notable minority of Texas high school graduates are thoroughly unprepared for college-level academic work. This finding is consistent with data provided to the THECB by major testing companies. Also, according to

the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), just under half of those applying to colleges and universities nationally have not taken a full battery of college preparatory courses in high school (NCES, 1996). It is reasonable to assume that, to the extent this is true of Texas, it would lead to a serious lack of preparation for college level work among many entering college students.

Such deficiencies on the part of entering students have a negative impact on any evaluation of the TASP in general or of developmental education in particular. The fact that the pool of those retaking the TASP Test following developmental education includes 10-15% of students with serious academic shortcomings may, to some degree, artificially deflate the impact of developmental education in Texas public colleges and universities. It is unlikely that the effects of developmental education can be demonstrated for such students during a time frame of only one year. Consequently, any measure of post developmental education TASP Test pass rates would show little gain for these students.

### Pass Rates in Developmental Courses

The findings of this study indicate that a substantial majority of students who take developmental courses in Texas public colleges and universities pass them within one year. When results from individual community colleges and community college districts are aggregated, 77.3% passed developmental reading, 78.5% passed developmental English/writing, and 69.2% passed developmental mathematics within one year. Of those enrolled in developmental courses at universities, 78.9% passed developmental reading, 71.8% pass developmental English/writing, and 66.8% passed developmental mathematics. These pass rates are about the same as those reported by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). In a study of developmental courses in the fall of 1995, the NCES found that approximately 75% of those who took developmental courses passed them within one year (NCES, 1996).

These findings suggest that having to pass developmental courses does not serve as a barrier to continuation in college. A substantial percentage of those enrolled in developmental courses do, indeed, pass them within one year. Most are likely to pass them within one semester. Furthermore, the pass rates in developmental courses among Texas public institutions are consistent with developmental education, generally, in the United States. Students in developmental courses at Texas institutions are about as likely to pass them as students enrolled at institutions in other states.

### Post Developmental Education TASP Test Pass Rates

This study attempted to identify the percentage of students who failed their initial attempt at the TASP Test, participated in developmental courses, and later passed the appropriate section or sections of the TASP Test. It should be noted at the outset, however, that limitations in the data

collection procedures produced artificially low results on this measure.

This study was able to identify the percentage of those who failed one or more sections of the TASP Test, took developmental education, and later *took and passed* the appropriate section of the TASP Test. These findings are difficult to interpret, however, because an *unknown* number of the students passing developmental courses *never attempted* to retake the TASP Test. In other words, the post developmental education pass rates reflected here might be higher but could not be any lower. This is because those who did not take the TASP Test following developmental education are counted in this study as having failed it.

There are several reasons why those who passed developmental courses might not have taken the TASP Test. Many students passing developmental courses might later have been advised to take advantage of the recent option to be exempted from passing the TASP Test by taking a designated course and earning a grade of B or better. Other students may have delayed retaking the TASP Test for more than two semesters following participation in developmental education and their results would, therefore, be unavailable for inclusion in this study. Still others may have dropped out or "stopped out" (Tinto, 1987) of college after participating in developmental courses but before retaking the TASP Test.

The results discussed here only represent those students who failed one or more sections of the TASP Test, passed developmental courses, and actually took the TASP Test at some point within the next two semesters. Given this, it is difficult to interpret the meaning of post developmental education TASP Test results. It can be said that among community college students, *at least* 45.4% of those passing developmental reading courses later passed the TASP Reading Test, that *at least* 55% of those passing developmental English/writing later passed the TASP Writing Test, and *at least* 33.4% of those passing developmental mathematics later passed the TASP Mathematics Test. At universities, *at least* 75.9% of those passing developmental reading later passed the TASP Reading Test, *at least* 85.4% of those passing developmental English/writing later passed the TASP Writing Test, and *at least* 65.4% of those passing developmental mathematics later passed the TASP Mathematics Test.

Because this study deals with a group of students, *all of which had previously failed* one or more sections of the TASP Test, it can reasonably be implied that TASP-based developmental education is at least somewhat successful. This implication is further supported by the fact that 10-15% of the students in this sample had original TASP Test scores below 180 and, therefore, were unlikely to pass a TASP Test even following developmental education.

Developmental education appeared to be more successful at universities than at community colleges. This should not be surprising given the fact that all the community colleges in the study were "open admission" institutions and most of the universities in the study were at least moderately selective in their admission practices.

The data also indicates that developmental education was consistently more successful in English/writing than in mathematics and somewhat more successful in English/writing than in reading. This was true of both community colleges and universities.

In spite of the qualifications noted above, the average post developmental education TASP Test pass rates for all institutions reported may be described as disappointingly low even given the limitations of the data. This general statement, however, does not truly reflect the state of developmental education in Texas. Some institutions have high post developmental education TASP Test pass rates in some subjects. Other institutions do not. This data is reflected in the frequency distributions shown in Tables 12, 13, and 14.

As noted in these tables, there are 16 universities and three community colleges with post developmental education TASP Test pass rates of over 80% in Writing. There are ten universities and one community college with post developmental education TASP Test pass rates of over 80% in reading. There are five universities and two community colleges with post developmental education TASP Test pass rates of over 80% in mathematics. Obviously, there are several institutions in Texas doing an extremely good job of developmental education.

Unfortunately, there are others doing what appears to be poor job of developmental education. Five community colleges had post developmental education pass rates in writing of 30% or below. On the other hand, no universities reported post developmental education TASP Test pass rates at 30% or below in writing. Nine community colleges and two universities reported post developmental education pass rates at 30% or below in reading. Five universities and four community colleges reported post developmental education pass rates at 30% or below in mathematics. When calculated as an *average* for all Texas public institutions, post developmental education TASP Test pass rates are not impressive. When looked at on an institution by institution basis, some are exceptionally high and some are disappointingly low.

### Developmental Education Pass Rates and Student Retention

The findings of this study suggest that passing *any* of the developmental courses in which a student is placed is associated with retention. At individual community colleges, community college districts, and universities the findings were consistent. Depending upon institutional type, students who passed developmental courses were three to six times more likely to be retained for one year than students who did not pass developmental courses.

This finding is consistent with national data on the relationship between success in developmental courses and retention. According to the National Study of Developmental Education, student success in developmental courses taken during the first year was strongly correlated with retention and graduation (Boylan, Bonham, Bliss, & Claxton, 1992). The same appears to be true in Texas.

## Conclusions

Most of the findings of this report were consistent with what is commonly known about the Texas Academic Skills Program and developmental education in Texas. In general, these findings suggest that:

- a) there are large numbers of students entering Texas public colleges and universities who are, to some degree, underprepared for college work;**
- b) a small but, nevertheless, significant minority of these students enter college almost totally unprepared for college work;**
- c) a combination of local instruments and the TASP Test are generally used for placing students in developmental courses;**
- d) the majority of those students taking developmental courses pass them within one year;**
- e) passing a developmental course, however, does not guarantee passing the TASP Test in the same subject area;**
- f) the overall quality of developmental education as measured by TASP Test pass rates is very uneven, with some institutions being much more successful than others; and**
- g) passing a developmental course at any institution is related to first year retention.**

For a variety of reasons which go beyond the scope of this report, a large number of Texas high school graduates are either *relatively unprepared* or *absolutely unprepared* for college-level academic work. Relatively unprepared students are those who may lack skills in only one area measured by the TASP Test. Most typically, this area is mathematics. The relatively unprepared group might also include those who fail the TASP Test in more than one area but whose scores, although low, are at least close to passing. These students have a very good chance of being successful in college with only a modest amount of developmental education.

Absolutely unprepared students are those who fail more than one section of the TASP Test or who have scores below 180 on one or more sections of the test. These students are likely to need a substantial amount of developmental education in order to be successful.

The fact that large numbers of students enter Texas colleges and universities relatively underprepared is not exceptional. This is the case in most state public higher education systems

(Knopp, 1996; National Center for Education Statistics, 1996). The problem in Texas is that, in addition to these students, a large number of absolutely unprepared students are also entering the system. The result is that, although the national average for incoming students placing into developmental courses is about 30% (National Center for Education Statistics), the average in Texas is considerably higher.

This is not surprising in light of information recently made public by the national testing companies serving Texas high school students. Reports by both ACT (1998) and The College Board (1998) suggest that Texas high school graduates are scoring well below the national average on verbal and mathematics skills. Yet, an astonishing 47% of those taking the ACT test in Texas report that they are A students (College Board, 1998). Texas high school students can apparently obtain good grades and still fall below the national norm on tests of basic academic skills. This suggests the possibility that grade inflation may be a factor here.

Furthermore, although more than half of Texas high school graduates have taken college preparatory courses, many of those planning to go on to college have not taken these courses (ACT, 1998). It should come as no surprise, therefore, that Texas high school graduates enter college unprepared for college-level academic work.

The underpreparedness of these students is reflected in their scores on the TASP and on local assessment instruments. Although there is some consistency in scores on TASP and local assessment instruments, it appears that both kinds of assessment serve a useful purpose at Texas institutions and may be necessary to improve the accuracy of placement at some institutions.

The results of this study indicate that the large number of underprepared students entering Texas institutions require that developmental education courses and services be provided by both colleges and universities. This requirement is, however, higher at community colleges than at universities.

Students who enroll in these developmental courses are likely to pass them at rates consistent with national averages. However, passing a developmental course in a particular subject area does not generally guarantee passing the TASP Test in the same area.

Given the unevenness of developmental education at different institutions noted in this report and a previous TASP evaluation (Boylan, et al., 1996), this is to be expected. Even *if* efforts had been undertaken to improve the general quality of developmental education in Texas public institutions during the fall of 1996, the effect of such efforts would be unlikely to show up by the fall of 1997.

Furthermore, it should be noted that even the most effective developmental courses or programs cannot insure that everyone will pass the TASP Test. Bringing students up to an

adequate level of academic skill through developmental education is, at best, a difficult and challenging task requiring skill and preparation on the part of instructors, advisors, counselors, and tutors. The normal problems inherent in accomplishing this task are exacerbated by the fact that 10-15% of the students entering Texas public colleges and universities possess extremely weak academic skills. In spite of this, the findings of this report suggest that passing a developmental course in a given subject does increase the likelihood of passing the TASP Test in that subject.

The findings of this report also suggest that participation in developmental courses is associated with student retention. Those who pass these courses are much more likely to be retained than those who do not pass.

Perhaps the most important finding of this study is that, although the quality of developmental education in Texas higher education is uneven, the developmental programs at many institutions are quite successful. The challenge for Texas public colleges and universities is to learn from successful institutions and apply the resulting knowledge to strengthening developmental education at less successful institutions. Part 2 of this study is designed to identify the best developmental education practices in Texas institutions so that developmental education throughout Texas might be improved.

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## Executive Summary

### Background

This study was undertaken by the National Center for Developmental Education (NCDE) at the request of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB). The study represents the second part of a general evaluation of developmental education in Texas public colleges and universities. Results from Part 1 of the study and information from other sources were used to identify institutions with successful developmental education programs. This study then explored the practices used by these institutions in delivering developmental education courses and services.

### Methodology

Two groups of institutions were identified for participation in this study. The first group was selected because they had high post-developmental education Texas Academic Skills Program (TASP) Test pass rates. A second group was identified through THECB institutional effectiveness studies and consultant observations. As might be expected, several institutions appeared in both groups. Sixteen community colleges and 17 universities were eventually selected for participation in the study.

A survey questionnaire was then developed by the NCDE in consultation with THECB staff. This questionnaire was sent to the TASP Liaison at each of the 33 participating institutions. The questionnaire asked respondents to identify which of several components, services, or program characteristics best described developmental education at their institution. The response rate for the survey was 87.8%. This was considered to be more than adequate for the purposes of the study.

Survey responses were analyzed and the results tabulated to identify common characteristics of successful programs. Open-ended response information was also solicited to obtain additional information on the common characteristics of successful programs.

### Findings

Successful developmental programs in Texas public colleges and universities shared a remarkably consistent number of common characteristics. Furthermore, most of these characteristics were consistent with what the research and literature of developmental education regards as key components of effective programs.

As a guide to program improvement efforts, the findings of this study were divided into three groups. The characteristics described as *level one* best practices included those which were not

only characteristics of successful developmental education programs in Texas but were also strongly supported by the literature and research in the field. These were recommended as a basis for initiating developmental education program improvement efforts. *Level one* best practices, in order of priority, included:

1. an institutional commitment to developmental education,
2. a strong commitment to professional development for all those who work with developmental students,
3. a high level of coordination of developmental education courses and services,
4. a regular and systematic evaluation of program outcomes for the purpose of program improvement,
5. an ongoing effort to insure consistency of developmental course content and the content of the TASP Test as well as the entry standards for collegiate-level courses,
6. a use of frequent testing in developmental courses,
7. an integration of classroom and laboratory activities in developmental courses,
8. a clearly stated set of goals and objectives for the developmental program,
9. a use of full-time faculty to teach developmental courses, and
10. a utilization of supplemental instruction for developmental and other courses.

*Level two* best practices reflected common characteristics of successful developmental programs identified by this study which also had some support from the research and literature.

The *level two* best practices, not necessarily in order of priority, included:

11. a comprehensive learning assistance center providing academic support services to developmental courses,
12. a comprehensive set of academic and other support services,
13. a reporting structure placing developmental courses and services under an academic administrator,

14. a tutoring program providing both group and individual tutoring services,
15. an effort to articulate college level academic requirements to local and feeder high schools, and
16. a use of the same faculty to teach both collegiate-level and developmental courses.

*Level three* best practices included those which characterized successful developmental programs in Texas but had little or no support from the research and literature. *Level three* best practices, not necessarily in order of priority, included:

17. a data collection and monitoring system to track student performance on the TASP Test and other local assessment instruments,
18. a variety of efforts to inform incoming students of the TASP and other assessment requirements,
19. a variety of options for students who passed developmental courses but continued to fail the TASP Test, and
20. a use of letter grades (A,B,C,D, and F) in developmental courses.

## **Conclusion**

The best practices of institutions identified as having successful developmental education programs were remarkably consistent with the best practices recommended in almost 25 years of research and literature in developmental education. Although some of the best practices identified in this study appeared to be unique to Texas public colleges and universities, most of them were essentially the same practices shared with other successful programs across the United States.

If the quality of developmental education practiced by Texas colleges and universities is uneven, it is not because of a lack of information on how to deliver it successfully. Instead, it is because not all Texas institutions implement the techniques and methods known to result in successful developmental education.

## **Introduction**

This study represents a continuation of the evaluation of developmental education in Texas public colleges and universities. Part 1 of this study provides a summative evaluation of various developmental education outcomes. Part 2 of this study identifies what "best practices"

are currently used among successful developmental education programs in Texas public colleges and universities.

The successful developmental programs in this study were identified through a combination of outcomes criteria and observation. The outcomes used for this purpose were those identified in Part 1 of the study. Observations included those of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) staff as well as those of consultants who worked with the National Center for Developmental Education (NCDE) in a previous study of the Texas Academic Skills Program (TASP).

Best practices were revealed in this study through an analysis of data from survey forms completed by personnel of institutions identified as having successful developmental programs. Characteristic best practices of successful programs were also revealed through a review of the developmental education research literature.

The information provided from this study identifies what practices are most consistently used by successful programs in the treatment of developmental students. It also provides a reference for other institutions wishing to improve the quality of their developmental education activities.

## **Methodology**

The first stage of this study identified Texas public institutions that were successful in the delivery of developmental education based on the TASP. The institutions were identified in two ways. First, based on data provided by the THECB and reviewed in Part 1 of this study, six community colleges and ten universities were identified as having the highest post developmental education TASP Test pass rates. Each of these institutions had post developmental education TASP Test pass rates of more than 60% in at least two subject areas (reading, writing, and mathematics). An additional ten community colleges and seven universities were identified on the basis of observation. The community colleges were selected by the THECB based on staff field observations from the most recent Texas "Institutional Effectiveness Study." The universities were identified on the basis of consultant ratings from the original TASP Evaluation Report (Boylan, et al., 1996).

A questionnaire was then developed to address several areas of concern regarding TASP requirements and developmental education program components. These areas of concern included:

- a) methods used to inform students of TASP requirements,
- b) collection of data on TASP Test performance,

- c) support provided for students who repeatedly fail the TASP Test,
- d) utilization of local instruments for assessment and placement,
- e) developmental program structure and organization,
- f) structure of tutoring programs,
- g) utilization of Supplemental Instruction,
- h) structure and organization of learning assistance programs,
- i) faculty and staff development activities,
- j) characteristics of developmental courses,
- k) characteristics of developmental faculty,
- l) utilization of program evaluation,
- m) efforts to articulate college requirements to local schools, and
- o) other local best practices.

The final survey questionnaire included a combination of a standard checklist of items as well as open-ended responses. The open-ended responses were designed to illuminate information provided through the checklist. A copy of the resulting questionnaire is included in APPENDIX 1.

The survey questionnaires were then mailed to TASP Liaisons at the institutions selected to participate in this study. A total of 33 surveys were distributed by mail and 31 were completed and returned. The effort yielded a total 15 universities and 14 community colleges responses with complete and usable data. This represented a usable return rate of 87.8%. This was considered to be a very high rate of return for survey responses and was more than adequate for the purposes of this study.

The answers to standardized response questions were recorded into a spreadsheet and analyzed by tabulating response frequencies. The frequencies were then calculated as percentages of the total response. A cut-off percentage of 65% was used to determine whether or not a given practice was widely used. Because of the small sample of respondents and the format of the questions, more sophisticated statistical procedures were not considered to be appropriate.

Open-ended responses were recorded and grouped by institution type. They were also grouped by general category of response (i.e., multiple responses saying essentially the same thing). The analysis consisted of identifying and describing common trends noted in the respondents' replies. The results were reviewed and analyzed by D. Patrick Saxon, Research Associate, and Hunter R. Boylan, Principal Investigator for the project and Director of the NCDE.

Although the survey questionnaire was reviewed by both NCDE and THECB staff, time limitations prohibited field testing of the questionnaire. The respondents' instructions made it clear, however, that THECB staff were available to clarify any of the questions on the survey form. These instructions were provided to compensate for the fact that field testing of the questionnaire was not performed prior to distribution.

The lack of a field test may serve as a limitation to the study findings. The findings of this study are further subject to those limitations typical of survey research based on self-reports.

## **Findings for Community Colleges**

### **Methods Used to Inform Students of TASP Requirements**

Part I of the survey instructed respondents at institutions identified as successful in providing developmental education to identify any methods used to inform students about TASP requirements. Six responses (and their frequency tabulation) were identified as practices commonly used at the institutions surveyed:

- (a) college/university catalogs (93%),
- (b) TASP information printed in course bulletins (80%),
- (c) group meetings held with advisors/counselors at summer orientation (73%),
- (d) announcements in developmental courses (73%).
- (e) ongoing individual meetings with advisors/counselors (67%), and
- (f) reminders from faculty during regular classes (67%).

In the open-ended response section for this question, three institutions reported that they offered TASP workshops for area high school counselors. Two institutions reported that they placed TASP posters in every classroom and on public bulletin boards. One institution reported sending a mailing to all graduating high school seniors in the district.

## **Collection and Availability of Data on Student Performance**

Part II of the survey inquired about data collection and availability of information on student performance on the TASP Test and in developmental courses for institutions identified as successful providers of developmental education. About 90% of the community colleges reported that their institution kept its own data base containing this information and made it available to advisors/counselors. Eighty percent of the institutions made student performance data from the TASP Test and from developmental courses available to faculty. It should be noted that none of the institutions reported that the information regarding student performance was withheld from faculty and advisors/counselors. Faculty and advisors or counselors were typically not required to maintain this information. In open-ended responses, two institutions reported that the Office of Institutional Research kept this information.

## **Support for Students Who Continue to Fail the TASP Test**

Part III asked respondents to identify methods used to provide support to students who had gone through all available developmental courses and still failed the TASP test. Only one method was cited with significant frequency. Assigning students to computer-based individualized instruction was practiced at 67% of the responding institutions. Open-ended responses revealed that two institutions allowed their students to take "regular" courses, but placed them in learning laboratories as well. Another program specially designed individualized self-paced instruction for students who continued to fail the TASP Test following participation in developmental courses.

## **Additional Local Placement Procedures**

Part IV of the survey provided an open-ended response format and asked respondents at successful institutions to list any instruments or measures used in addition to the TASP Test to place students in developmental courses. Six institutions reported that they used the Pre-TASP Test for placement. Five institutions had developed their own placement tests, and most of these were for mathematics. Four used the SAT and ACT, and three reported using the ASSET Test. Most of the institutions used more than one type of placement test, therefore some double counting within the sample occurred.

## **Program Structure and Organization**

Part V of the survey addressed the developmental program organizational model. About half of the programs were described as decentralized or mixed (some courses and services under a single unit and some offered through academic departments). Only 13% of the institutions reported having a fully centralized program (all courses and services provided under a single administrative unit). Almost all of the institutions surveyed indicated that developmental courses and services were well-coordinated.



Seventy-three percent of the programs had a written statement of goals and objectives and all of them shared this information with faculty. Ninety-three percent of the programs reported to an academic administrator rather than to a student affairs administrator.

## **Tutoring Programs**

Part VI of the survey offered a choice of several statements that respondents used to describe their tutoring programs. Only one institution reported that it did not provide tutoring. Individual tutoring was offered by all others. Eighty percent of the programs offered "drop-in" tutoring and 67% offered tutoring by appointment. Eighty-seven percent of the programs employed peer tutors and 67% employed professional tutors.

Most of the institutions required their tutors to be trained before they worked with students. The main training areas (and their response rates) included program procedures (67%) and tutoring techniques (67%). Other characteristics reported in the open response area included "advanced" students used exclusively as tutors, tutoring services offered within academic departments, and accommodations made for various learning styles and disabilities.

## **Supplemental Instruction**

Part VII of the survey inquired about the provision of Supplemental Instruction (SI) to developmental students. It appeared that this technique is not commonly used among the community colleges surveyed. Only 13% reported providing SI to developmental students in "high risk" courses. Other types of SI were provided only minimally.

## **Learning Assistance Program**

Part VIII of the survey examined the services provided to students by the learning assistance program (LAP). None of the services listed on the survey were mentioned with any significant frequency. All of the learning assistance centers, however, provided a variety of services. Services most commonly mentioned in the open-ended response section included study skills and test-taking skills workshops, practice testing for the TASP Test, and mentoring for ESL students.

## **Faculty and Staff Development**

Part IX of the survey addressed the extent of institutional support for faculty and staff development among those institutions identified as having successful developmental programs. The most common professional development activity cited was that at least one person in the developmental or learning assistance program attended an off-campus training institute designed specifically for developmental educators. Eighty-seven percent of the programs

engaged in this practice.

Sixty-seven percent of the programs allowed the majority of full-time faculty and staff to attend at least one regional developmental education conference a year. Sixty-seven percent also reported that all full-time faculty and staff drew up a personal professional development plan each year.

One institution commented that they had a comprehensive staff development program committee headed by a faculty member who had extensive release time to coordinate development activities. Another mentioned that workshops were regularly held on instructional technology, the use of the Internet for instruction, and other technology-based instructional techniques.

### **Characteristics of Developmental Courses**

Part X of the survey examined the structure, requirements, and grading policy of developmental courses. Most of the institutions reported that students were tested or given graded assignments at least five times each term in each of the developmental subject areas. Eighty-seven percent did this for English/writing and reading, while 80% did so for mathematics. Between 73 and 87% percent integrated laboratory activities with course activities in each subject area. Eighty-seven percent graded their developmental courses in all subjects on an A,B,C,D,F basis.

### **Characteristics of Developmental Education Faculty**

Part XI of the survey asked about the program staffing patterns and credentials of developmental faculty. The 14 institutions that provided data for this question accounted for 118 developmental English/writing faculty. Sixty percent of these held full-time positions. The institutions reported that there were also 63 developmental reading faculty, of which 60% were full-time. In developmental mathematics, there were 186 faculty, of which 50% were full-time. The most common credential among developmental education instructors was the master's degree. Many of those with master's degrees, however, also had additional post-master's graduate credit.

A look at the credentials of the full-time faculty teaching developmental courses revealed that 69% of those teaching developmental English/writing had master's degrees as their highest academic credential. Sixteen percent had bachelor's degrees, and 15% held doctoral degrees. In developmental mathematics, 62% had master's degrees, 22% had bachelor's degrees, and 16% held doctoral degrees. For developmental reading, nearly 69% had master's degrees, 24% had doctoral degrees, and 7% held bachelor's degrees.

### **Program Evaluation**

Part XII of the survey examined the methods used to evaluate developmental education programs. Sixty-seven percent of the institutions reported that the program and/or courses had been reviewed by an external evaluator within the past five years. Well over 80% collected data on student completion rates in developmental English/writing, reading, and mathematics. Sixty-seven percent collected data on post-developmental education TASP Test pass rates, but only for students who had at least completed developmental English/writing. Data were also collected by 67% of the programs on the number of students who passed developmental English/writing and mathematics courses and later passed a college-level course in the same subject. Sixty-seven percent of the institutions evaluated all developmental education activities annually and used the results to plan and revise the program. Eighty-seven percent of the institutions had students complete faculty evaluations in all developmental courses.

Participants were also asked to describe any efforts made to insure that developmental course exit standards were consistent with entry standards for the regular curriculum. Six institutions reported that this was accomplished by having faculty members teach both developmental and college courses. Other methods mentioned included post-testing, and holding regular meetings among faculty for the purpose of setting and revising developmental course exit standards.

Part XII, question 16 asked for a description of any efforts made to ensure that the exit standards for developmental courses were consistent with the objectives of the TASP Test. Thirteen of the institutions stated that TASP objectives were taken into account in course planning. Two of these institutions actually used the Pre-TASP Test as part of the exit exam.

### **Efforts to Articulate College Requirements to Local Schools**

Part XIII of the survey asked about methods used to articulate college requirements to local schools and efforts to reduce the gap between high school exit and college entry standards. Some of the methods mentioned included meeting regularly with high school staff and parents, offering dual credit courses with local feeder schools, and mailing newsletters periodically.

### **Local Best Practices**

Part XIV of the survey asked respondents for a description of program characteristics or practices that they believe contributed to their being identified as having a successful developmental education program. This question provoked a quite diverse list of responses.

The most frequent response was that the Developmental Education Program was a multi-function operation that provided numerous services to students. In other words, the program's comprehensiveness enabled it to serve a diverse population of students. Several institutions reported this to be a major program strength.

Each of the following were also mentioned by at least two respondents.

"The program has dedicated faculty."

"Courses and labs incorporate computer-aided instruction"

"Students are placed carefully into appropriate courses."

"Diligent tracking procedures monitor student progress."

"Program faculty and staff are continually involved in planning, evaluating, and upgrading the program's activities."

"Everyone pays attention to student needs."

## **Findings for Universities**

### **Methods Used to Inform Students of TASP Requirements**

The universities identified eight methods that were commonly used to inform students about TASP requirements. These responses and their frequency tabulations were:

- (a) written information sent to students' homes as soon as they apply (80%),
- (b) written information given to students when they first arrive (87%),
- (c) group meetings held with advisors/counselors at summer orientation (73%),
- (d) ongoing individual meetings held with advisors/counselors (67%),
- (e) information included in college/university catalogs (100%),
- (f) TASP information printed in course bulletins (100%)
- (g) announcements made in developmental courses (80%), and
- (h) letters sent to students during the first term (80%).

In open response, three institutions reported that they sent a personal letter to students regarding their personal TASP deficiencies. Other methods of informing students of TASP requirements that were mentioned included Email announcements and radio advertisement.

### **Collection and Availability of Data on Student Performance**

In Part II of the survey, between 87 and 93% of the 4-year institutions reported that they kept a data base of information on student performance (for the TASP Test and developmental courses) and made it available to advisors/counselors. Eighty percent made data regarding TASP Test performance available to faculty and 67% made data for developmental course performance available to faculty. None of the institutions reported that the information regarding student performance was withheld from faculty and advisors/counselors. Only a small percentage of institutions (less than 27%) required faculty to maintain their own information on student performance.

In open-ended responses, three institutions reported that student performance data is maintained and made accessible through the student records system. At two institutions, the mathematics department maintained its own database. Another method of disseminating this information was to record TASP scores on advising transcripts used in the registration process. One learning assistance program reported that it analyzed student performance in developmental education and on the TASP Test and included this in the annual institutional effectiveness report.

### **Support for Students Who Continue to Fail the TASP Test**

Part III of this survey dealt with methods of providing support for those students who had passed developmental courses but continued to fail the TASP Test. Among universities identified as having successful developmental programs, the four most common methods (and their response rates) of providing such support included:

- (a) students assigned to computer-based individualized instruction (87%),
- (b) students assigned to non-computerized individualized instruction programs (80%),
- (c) students assigned to retake the same remedial/developmental courses (73%), and
- (d) students assigned to programs of individualized tutoring (67%).

The least used method of supporting students who fail the TASP Test was that of placing them in special short-term TASP preparation courses or workshops. Although this was recommended in an earlier report on the TASP (Boylan, et al., 1996), at the time of this study, it was still not being done very often even among universities with successful developmental

programs. Only 27% of the university respondents indicated that they provided this form of support.

Two institutions offered TASP workshops and non-course based developmental education but participation was voluntary. Other types of support reported included assigning students to small group tutoring, assessing learning styles, offering academic counseling, and conducting workshops on skill development.

### **Additional Local Placement Procedures**

The instruments (and their response rates) used in addition to the TASP to place students in developmental courses were identified in Part IV of the survey as:

- a) ACT (6),
- b) SAT (5),
- c) locally developed placement tests (5),
- d) Pre-TASP Test (3),
- e) Quick TASP Test (2),
- f) ASSET (2),
- g) ACCUPLACER CPT (2), and
- h) computerized TASP test (1).

Some universities used more than one assessment measure for placement purposes, usually the SAT or ACT combined with another instrument. Almost all of the universities responding indicated that they used local measures in addition to the TASP Test for placement.

### **Program Structure and Organization**

Part V of the survey considered the structure and organization of university developmental programs. The only consensus reached in the area of program organization was that 87% of the programs reported to an academic administrator. None of the universities reported having a centralized program although many reported that their developmental education courses and services were mixed. There was an almost even split between programs described as decentralized and "mixed" (some courses offered by academic departments and some provided

through a developmental program). The response rates here were 53% and 47% respectively.

Only 40% of the universities reported having a written statement of goals and objectives for developmental education. Furthermore, less than 27% shared these statements with staff and 20% shared them with students. This rate was substantially lower for universities than for community colleges.

## **Tutoring Program**

In Part VI of the survey, all universities reported having a tutoring program that offered individual tutoring, "drop-in" tutoring, and tutoring by appointment. Nearly all (93%) offered group tutoring. All of the programs used peer tutors and 67% used faculty tutors.

It appears that the majority of institutions required their tutors to be trained in several program and performance areas *before* they worked with students. These training areas (and their response rates) included program procedures (67%), tutoring techniques (80%), content issues (73%), and interpersonal communication (73%). As tutors worked with students, 73% of the institutions required continued training on tutoring techniques while 67% reported continued training on interpersonal communication. University tutoring programs were much more likely to emphasize interpersonal communications in tutor training sessions than were community colleges.

Other reported characteristics of university tutoring programs included staffing the program with graduate assistants. Several respondents indicated that tutors were encouraged to evaluate students' mastery of specific learning objectives as part of the tutoring process. This apparently represented an attempt to integrate the principles of mastery learning into the tutorial process.

## **Supplemental Instruction**

The responses to Part VII of the survey suggested that Supplemental Instruction was not as commonly used at the participating institutions as other interventions. The cut point for inclusion as a common characteristic of successful programs was that 65% of the programs surveyed used a particular technique. Only 60% reported providing SI to developmental students in "high risk" courses while other types of SI were provided only minimally. Nevertheless, 60% was still a high rate of usage. Furthermore, universities demonstrated much higher rates of SI use than community colleges.

## **Learning Assistance Program**

Part VIII of the survey revealed three services that were commonly provided to students by the learning assistance programs at universities. These services (and their response rates) included tutoring (73%), computer-based individualized instruction (60%), and non computer-based

individualized instruction (60%). Other services (and response rates) were as follows:

- a) study skills workshops (5),
- b) non-course based TASP developmental education (2),
- c) learning styles assessment (2),
- d) library of resource materials (2),
- e) testing services (1),
- f) speed reading instruction (1), and
- g) computers and software instruction (1).

### **Faculty and Staff Development**

The results from Part IX of the survey indicated that the most common professional development activity was to have at least one person in the developmental or learning assistance program attend an off-campus training institute specifically for developmental educators (80%). Also, 70% of the developmental programs subscribed to one or more professional journals in the field. Other notable faculty development activities included:

- a) faculty serving as officers in professional organizations (2),
- b) faculty presenting at conferences (2),
- c) faculty participating in doctoral programs (1),
- d) faculty subscribing to listservs (1),
- e) developmental reading/writing coordinators meeting regularly with faculty (1), and
- f) faculty and advisors attending TASP policy workshops (1).

The only major difference between universities and community colleges in the area of faculty and staff development activities was that university faculty were much more likely to subscribe to professional journals related to developmental education.

### **Characteristics of Developmental Courses**



In Part X of the survey, more than 90% of the institutions identified as successful reported that students were tested or given graded assignments at least five times each term in English/writing, reading, and mathematics. Seventy-three percent integrated laboratory activities with course activities in the subject of developmental mathematics. Seventy-three percent also graded their developmental mathematics courses on an A,B,C,D,F basis.

### **Characteristics of Developmental Faculty**

In Part XI of the survey, the 14 institutions that provided data for this question accounted for 114 developmental English/writing faculty. Fifty-four percent of these were full-time. Only 13 institutions provided data for developmental reading faculty and they accounted for 42 faculty members. All but one of these were full-time. Finally, 15 institutions provided faculty data for developmental mathematics. Here, there were 217 faculty and 30% of these were full-time.

Forty-six percent of the full-time faculty in developmental English/writing had a master's degree as their highest degree. Nearly 21% had a doctoral degree and 33% had a bachelor's degree. For developmental mathematics, 70% of the faculty had a master's degree, 16% had a doctoral degree, and 14% had a bachelor's degree as their highest degree. Fifty percent of developmental reading faculty had a master's degree as their highest degree, 40% had doctoral degrees, and 10% had bachelor's degrees.

At both universities and community colleges, the most common credential among developmental faculty was the master's degree. Again, most of the master's degree level faculty had post-master's graduate credits. As in community colleges, the majority of university developmental faculty were full-time. The only exception to this was in mathematics.

### **Program Evaluation**

The most common practice identified in Part XII of the survey was the collection of data on student completion rates in developmental English/writing, reading, and mathematics. About 80% of the responding universities engaged in this practice for the given subjects. Approximately 70% collected data on post developmental education TASP Test pass rates for students who had completed English/writing, reading, and mathematics. Ninety-three percent reported that students completed faculty evaluations in all developmental courses.

Four of the responding institutions implemented departmental exit exams in an effort to insure that the exit standards for developmental courses were consistent with entry standards for the regular curriculum. Other methods mentioned included:

- a) informal evaluation by coordinator and instructors,

- b) curriculum review by faculty,
- c) evaluation using the NADE self-study guidelines,
- d) regular meetings between developmental faculty to coordinate curriculum,
- e) student evaluations of courses and instructors,
- f) monitoring student pass rates,
- g) compliance with academic standards, and
- h) research conducted to evaluate consistency of exit and entry standards.

Part XII, question 16 asked about any efforts to insure that the exit standards for developmental courses were consistent with the objectives of the TASP test. Eight institutions responded that their curriculum and/or instructional materials were designed using the TASP objectives. Two programs mentioned that their goal was to promote solid writing skills, and not necessarily to focus on the TASP. Two other institutions mentioned that research was regularly conducted on TASP success following developmental education.

### **Efforts to Articulate College Requirements to Local Schools**

Part XIII of the survey revealed that 8 universities held periodic workshops with high school teachers and counselors in an effort to articulate college requirements to local schools and to reduce the gap between high school exit and college entry standards. Other efforts mentioned included the following.

"TASP requirements are regularly sent to high school counselors."

"Admission requirements are published in all material sent to high school students."

"Classroom presentations are held at area schools."

"Upward Bound disseminates information via radio advertisement."

"Admissions encourages students to take college preparatory math in high school."

"Pre-TASP testing is done at local high schools."

"Admissions counselors meet with high school seniors."

## **Local Best Practices**

In Part XIV of the survey, the respondents were asked to describe program characteristics or practices that they believe contributed to their being identified as having successful developmental programs. Again, there were quite a number of differing responses for this question. At least two institutions reported each of the following.

"Dedicated faculty are the key to our success."

"There is consistency across developmental courses."

"Faculty are all full-time."

"We have a decentralized program."

"Self-directed learning encourages an emphasis on student self-responsibility."

"We have a comprehensive set of services."

It is notable that both universities and community colleges cited the dedication of developmental education faculty as a key component in a successful program. Respondents from both types of institutions also mentioned comprehensiveness of services as a factor in program success.

## **Discussion**

### **Informing Students of TASP Requirements**

Both the community colleges and the universities identified as having successful developmental programs do a commendable job of informing students about TASP requirements, particularly after students had arrived on campus. This represents good practice consistent with the recommendations of an earlier report on the effectiveness of the TASP (Boylan, et al., 1996).

Universities appear to make somewhat greater efforts to communicate TASP requirements to students upon application through letters sent to students' home addresses, through summer orientation sessions, and through correspondence with high school guidance counselors. Community colleges appear to put greater efforts into communicating with students once they arrive on campus. This should not be surprising given the fact that community college students tend to apply, register for classes, and arrive on campus much later than university students. As

a consequence, universities have more and better information at an earlier date regarding who is likely to be subject to TASP requirements, thus enabling them to communicate with students at an earlier point.

## **Collection and Availability of Data on the TASP**

Institutions participating in this study consistently make efforts to monitor student performance in developmental courses and on the TASP Test. Four out of five successful programs maintain a data base specifically designed to accomplish this purpose.

Most of the institutions in this study collect and maintain TASP-related data through a centralized process. In most cases either the Institutional Research Office, the Counseling/Advising Center, or the Registrar's Office is used for this purpose. In only a few cases do individual departments or programs maintain their own TASP data base.

At institutions identified as successful in providing developmental education, TASP Test scores, local assessment results, and other student performance data are integrated into the advising process. Furthermore, these institutions make a concerted effort to communicate this information to all faculty and staff who work with developmental students.

## **Support for Students Who Continue to Fail the TASP Test**

Both the community colleges and universities in this study often assign students to retake a particular developmental course if they continue to fail the TASP Test. However, these institutions recognize that having students repeat the same course they have already failed is not always effective. Consequently, they also offer a variety of other options to such students.

Assigning students to participate in individualized computer laboratory support is the most common option provided by both community colleges and universities. At community colleges, some students who fail the TASP Test are permitted to take regular college courses but required to receive tutoring or participate in other learning assistance activities. Learning laboratories providing individual tutoring and non-computerized individual instruction are also used frequently by the institutions in this study.

These represent sound approaches. The use of laboratory experiences *as a supplement* to developmental courses, in particular, is supported by the literature as a useful technique for providing remediation (Maxwell, 1985; Kulik & Kulik, 1991; Boylan, Bonham, Bliss, & Claxton, 1992).

## **Local Placement Procedures**

In addition to TASP Test results, most of those institutions identified as having successful

developmental programs use local assessment instruments for placement purposes. Universities tend to use SAT or ACT scores frequently for this purpose. Community colleges, on the other hand, are more likely to use instruments such as the ACCUPLACER, the COMPASS, or the ASSET. Both community colleges and universities frequently use the pre-TASP Test and locally developed instruments, particularly for mathematics placement, in their assessment and placement procedures.

Although the use of locally developed assessment instruments for placement purposes tends to characterize the successful developmental programs in Texas, it also characterizes the majority of Texas institutions. It is not possible to say, therefore, that there is any relationship between the use of local assessment and placement and the success of developmental education. On the other hand, most institutions report that they are satisfied with the use of locally determined or developed assessment instruments and the practice appears to be beneficial. Furthermore, data from Part 1 of this study suggests that universities may need to use additional instruments to improve the accuracy of their placement.

### **Program Structure and Organization**

Contrary to the findings of research and literature in the field (Roueche & Snow, 1977, Roueche & Baker, 1987, Boylan, Bliss, & Bonham, 1997), some of the most successful developmental programs in community colleges are not completely centralized. Many, however, are "mixed," with some courses and services being offered by a developmental program and others being offered by academic departments. At universities, about half the programs are decentralized and the remainder are mixed.

In either case, open-ended comments indicate that the majority of those institutions identified as successful in developmental education appear to have well-coordinated developmental efforts. At successful universities and community colleges, there is at least one administrator on campus designated the responsibility of coordinating developmental education efforts. This, too, is consistent with the literature of the field (Keimig, 1983; Cassaza & Silverman, 1996; Boylan, Bliss, & Bonham, 1997).

Community colleges participating in this study are much more likely to have written statements of goals and objectives for developmental education than universities. Seventy-three percent of the community colleges report having written statements of goals and objectives for developmental education while only 40% of the universities have them. Those institutions which have such statements, however, consistently make efforts to share these with appropriate faculty, staff, and students. This is also consistent with best practices as identified in the research and literature (Donovan, 1973; Roueche & Snow, 1977; Roueche & Baker, 1987; Boylan, Bonham, Bliss, & Claxton, 1992).

The vast majority of programs identified as successful report to an academic rather than a

student affairs administrator. This, too, is consistent with the literature on successful developmental programs (Spann & Thompson, 1986).

## **Tutoring Programs**

The presence of a tutoring program offering both individualized and group tutoring is definitely a characteristic of successful developmental programs in Texas. All of these programs use peer tutors and two-thirds of them also use faculty as tutors. Universities also report the frequent use of graduate assistants as tutors.

A large majority of the institutions in this study emphasize tutor training as a part of their tutoring program. Training is most consistently offered in program procedures, tutoring techniques, and interpersonal communication. This emphasis on tutor training is regularly cited in the research and literature on successful developmental education programs (Maxwell, 1985; MacDonald, 1995; Cassaza & Silverman, 1996; Boylan, Bliss, & Bonham, 1997).

## **Supplemental Instruction**

Supplemental Instruction (SI) is a technique which identifies difficult courses and provides small group assistance designed to help students learn how to be successful in the course. Instead of providing subject-centered tutoring or general study skills instruction, SI literally provides a mini-course on how to take the course (Blanc, DeBuhr, & Martin, 1993).

The use of Supplemental Instruction tends to characterize successful university programs in Texas, although not to the same degree as some other methods. However, Supplemental Instruction is used much more often in universities than in community colleges. Although 60% of those universities provide Supplemental Instruction, only 13% of the community colleges do so. This difference may be explained by the difficulty of securing qualified student SI leaders at a community college. Nevertheless, the research and literature of the field identifies the use of SI as one of the most widely successful techniques available in developmental education (Martin & Arendale, 1994; Martin & Arendale, 1998; Boylan, Bonham, Bliss, & Claxton, 1992; Ramirez, 1997).

## **Learning Assistance Programs**

The use of learning assistance programs to provide academic support for underprepared students is consistently supported by research and literature (Maxwell, 1985; Maxwell, 1992; Cassaza & Silverman, 1996). As might therefore be expected, a substantial majority of those institutions identified as having successful developmental education programs make learning assistance centers available to developmental students as well as the campus community at large. Universities are more likely than community colleges to have centralized tutoring provided by learning assistance centers. Both community colleges and universities use learning

assistance centers to provide a variety of computerized and non-computerized individualized instruction. Learning assistance centers at institutions in this study also provide study skills workshops, testing services, and various types of diagnostic assessment. Open-ended responses as well as the research and literature of the field suggest that the more integrated learning assistance services were with developmental courses, the more likely they were to be successful (Maxwell, 1985; Cassaza & Silverman, 1996; Commander, Stratton, Callahan, & Smith, 1996).

## **Faculty and Staff Development**

Among the institutions in this study, 80% of the universities and 87% of the community colleges emphasize professional development for those who work with developmental students. Institutions identified as successful in developmental education strongly encourage and support the training of those who work with developmental students. This is not surprising because the literature reports that specific training in developmental education is one of the major characteristics of successful programs (Donavan, 1973; Roueche & Snow, 1977; Roueche & Roueche, 1993; Boylan, Bliss, & Bonham, 1997).

A high percentage of programs in this study encourage faculty and staff to develop individual professional development plans and then provide financial support to pursue these plans. The most common professional development activity is attendance at developmental education conferences. Other activities include participation in off-campus workshops and institutes devoted to developmental education, on-campus workshops and training seminars, and enrollment in graduate courses. Although the practice is reported more frequently at universities than in community colleges, many programs encourage presentation at local, regional, and national conferences as a means of professional development.

## **Characteristics of Developmental Courses**

There are three things which tend to characterize successful developmental courses among the institutions participating in this study. The first is that developmental students are given frequent tests or graded assignments. Both community colleges and universities report that the typical developmental course requires *a minimum* of five tests or graded assignments each term. Many report giving students twice as many tests or graded assignments. As has been argued by educators for years, frequent testing appears to be related to improved learning (McKeachie, 1994; Roueche & Baker, 1994).

Participating institutions also report that laboratory activities are incorporated into their developmental courses on a regular basis. There appears, also, to be a high level of cooperation and communication between developmental faculty and laboratory personnel at successful institutions. Participation in laboratory activities in such cases is not voluntary. Instead, students are assigned specific course activities to be completed in learning laboratories. This,

too, is considered to represent sound practice according to the literature of the field (Boylan, Bonham, Bliss, & Claxton, 1992; Boylan, Bliss, & Bonham, 1997).

Finally, the institutions in this study consistently grade using an A,B,C,D, and F scale. Although there is little literature supporting or not supporting this practice, the use of letter grades is a definite characteristic of successful developmental courses in Texas public institutions.

### **Characteristics of Developmental Faculty**

The community colleges participating in this study are much more likely to use regular full-time faculty to teach developmental courses than is typically the case in Texas. For both developmental English/writing and developmental reading, 60% of those teaching the courses are regular full-time faculty. An earlier study of TASP-based developmental education in Texas suggests that the overwhelming majority of those teaching developmental courses are part-time and/or adjunct faculty (Boylan, et al., 1996). Those community colleges identified as having successful programs, however, do not follow this trend. They consistently use either faculty who teach developmental courses on a full-time basis or use their regular full-time faculty to teach developmental courses.

Although developmental courses at universities are taught somewhat less frequently by full-time faculty, developmental courses are still taught more frequently by full-time faculty than is typically the case among Texas universities. Fifty-four percent of those who teach developmental English/writing at the university level are full-time, 98% of those who teach developmental reading at the university level are full-time, and 30% of those who teach developmental mathematics at the university level are full-time.

This data suggests that the institutions which are most successful in developmental education use regular, full-time faculty to teach developmental courses. These faculty are full-time either in a department or in a developmental education program. This is one respect in which there is a marked difference between those institutions identified as most successful in developmental education and the rest of Texas public colleges and universities. Interestingly enough, the use of full-time faculty to teach developmental courses has not been explored very thoroughly in the literature as a factor in successful developmental programs. What has been well-established in the literature is that it is not wise to rely primarily or exclusively on adjunct faculty to teach developmental courses (Boylan, Bonham, Bliss, & Claxton, 1992; Boylan, 1996; National Association for Developmental Education, 1998). This study supports the concept that exclusive reliance on adjunct faculty to teach developmental courses is not consistent with successful developmental education.

The majority of developmental education faculty at institutions in this study have the M.A. as their highest degree. This is true at both community colleges and universities. There is a



slightly higher percentage of developmental education faculty with doctorates teaching developmental courses at universities, particularly in the area of reading. Nevertheless, the academic credentials of those teaching developmental courses at the institutions in this study do not differ substantially from those at other Texas institutions or from national averages (Boylan, Bonham, Bliss, & Claxton, 1992).

## **Program Evaluation**

The presence of a systematic and ongoing evaluation component has been identified in the literature as a primary characteristic of successful developmental programs and courses (Maxwell, 1985; Casazza & Silverman, 1996; Boylan, Bliss, & Bonham, 1997; Congos & Schoeps, 1997). Those Texas institutions identified as having successful developmental education programs are no exception to this finding. Well over 80% of both the community colleges and universities in this study regularly collect evaluation data on student course completion rates and the relationship between student performance in developmental courses and TASP Test performance. Courses are also evaluated not only by students but also by ongoing research on course effectiveness at these institutions.

Most of the institutions in this study collect and report data on post developmental education TASP Test pass rates and the performance of developmental students in later courses. The programs at most of these institutions have also been reviewed by an external evaluator within the past five years.

Many of the successful programs in this study use the *NADE* (National Association for Developmental Education) *Self-Study Guides* or the *CAS* (Council for the Advancement of Standards) *Self-Study Guides for Learning Assistance Programs* to conduct formative evaluation of program services. Furthermore, the majority of institutions report that data collected for evaluation purposes is shared with program staff and used to monitor, revise, and improve program performance.

Both the community colleges and the universities in this study go to considerable effort to insure that developmental course material is consistent with both the TASP Test and the entry standards for regular curriculum courses. A variety of methods are used to accomplish this. The most common method of insuring consistency between exit standards for developmental courses and entry standards for the regular curriculum is to have the same faculty teach both developmental and regular courses. Other methods include the use of faculty reviews of the curriculum, surveys of students, TASP Test study guides as a basis for setting course objectives, TASP Test performance evaluation following developmental education, and interface on a consistent basis between those who teach developmental courses and those who teach courses of similar content in the regular curriculum.

It is clear from these findings that successful developmental programs in Texas consider

program evaluation to be a high priority. It is also clear that they consider establishing consistency between developmental course objectives and TASP Test and regular curriculum objectives to be an equally high priority.

### **Efforts to Articulate College Requirements to Local Schools**

Only about half of the institutions in this study go to any lengths to articulate college-level requirements to local schools. The failure to do so has already been cited as a weakness of the TASP in an earlier report on the TASP (Boylan, et al., 1996). Nevertheless, those institutions regarded as having successful programs are still more likely to do so than most Texas institutions.

In an effort to communicate information on college requirements to local schools, meetings are held between college admissions counselors and high school seniors, information is sent to college guidance counselors, and TASP Test preparation workshops are occasionally held in local high schools. Some community college admissions counselors hold meetings with parents of college-bound students and some send newsletters out to local high school seniors advising them of college requirements. A few community colleges use radio advertisements to communicate various requirements. Others also offer dual credit courses at local high schools and this, too, helps to articulate college requirements to high school students.

Unfortunately, practically all of these activities are targeted for high school seniors. Almost no activity is cited that helps to familiarize high school underclassmen of college requirements. For most students, the senior year is a poor time to attempt to make up for whatever lack of preparation may have taken place during the previous three years. Articulation with public schools, therefore, is an area in which even the efforts of those institutions most successful with developmental education leave something to be desired.

It should be noted that a previous report on the TASP indicates that Texas high schools have done an inadequate job of informing students of TASP requirements (Boylan, et al., 1996). However, because very little time has passed since this report was issued, it is not surprising that this is still a problem.

### **Local best practices**

The responses of participating institutions to questions regarding what they considered to be the cause of their success with developmental students are informative and quite consistent with the literature. The comprehensiveness of services and the "dedication of faculty" are cited consistently by institutions as cause for their success. Also, consistency of standards across the curriculum, regular evaluation, individualized computer learning laboratories, and the use of full-time faculty to teach developmental courses are all cited with some frequency. Essentially, responses to this question indicate that the most successful institutions took developmental

education very seriously and make it an institutional priority. They assign dedicated instructors to the task, make efforts to insure that standards for developmental and curriculum courses are consistent, evaluate the outcomes of what they do on a regular basis, and provide high levels of support to developmental education. In summary, those institutions identified as having the most successful developmental programs **value** developmental education and support it accordingly. This, by the way, is a common characteristic of successful developmental programs that is probably the most widely supported by research, literature, and expert opinion.

### **Summary of Best Practices**

On the basis of this study, it can be concluded that those institutions identified as being most successful in using developmental education to prepare students, not only for the TASP-Test, but also for regular college courses have several common characteristics. These may be described as "Best Practices."

Those wishing to improve their developmental programs are unlikely to be able to implement all of these practices at once. Consequently, the best practices are presented below at three levels. *Level one* best practices are strongly supported by this study, by the research and literature in the field of developmental education, and also by many experts in the field. *Level two* practices are supported by this study and have some support from the literature and expert opinion. *Level three practices* have little or no support from the literature but still characterize successful developmental programs in Texas public colleges and universities.

The best way to improve developmental education programs is to begin implementing change at *level one*. The ten best practices listed under *level one* are the ones most likely to contribute to improved program performance in the shortest amount of time. After changes at *level one* have been implemented, the institution may move on to implement changes at *level two* and *level three*.

It should also be noted that not all of the activities described at *level one* are costly. For instance, there is no cost to establish goals and objectives for developmental courses and activities and to share them with all those involved in developmental education. It is either relatively inexpensive or cost free to engage in ongoing and systematic evaluation of developmental programs and to share the results with all those involved in developmental education. Frequent testing in developmental courses and the integration of courses and laboratories are cost free. Similarly, efforts to insure that there is consistency between the exit standards of developmental courses and the content of the TASP Test as well as the content of regular curriculum courses is also cost free. In essence, cost should not be an excuse for failure to improve developmental education. Half of the *level one* activities are either cost free or relatively inexpensive.

#### **Level One**

- 1. Best practice involves an institutional commitment to developmental education.*
- 2. Best practice involves a strong commitment to the professional development of all those faculty, advisors, and tutors who work with developmental students and systematic efforts to promote and encourage professional development.*
- 3. Best practice involves strong coordination of developmental education efforts.*
- 4. Best practice involves the regular and systematic evaluation of developmental education courses and services and the use of evaluation information for program improvement purposes.*
- 5. Best practice involves avoiding reliance on adjunct faculty to teach developmental courses.*
- 6. Best practice involves frequent testing in developmental courses.*
- 7. Best practice involves the integration of laboratory activities into developmental courses.*
- 8. Best practice involves the establishment of clearly stated goals and objectives for developmental education and regular sharing of these with faculty, staff, and students.*
- 9. Best practice involves ongoing efforts to insure that the content of developmental courses is consistent with the content of the TASP Test and the content of regular curriculum courses.*
- 10. Best practice involves efforts to articulate college academic requirements to local high schools.*
- 11. Best practice involves the use of Supplemental Instruction to support developmental students.*

## **Level Two**

- 12. Best practice involves the use of a comprehensive learning assistance center to provide academic support services to developmental students.*
- 13. Best practice involves a reporting structure that places developmental programs under an academic administrator (unless there is evidence that the program is already succeeding under a student affairs administrator).*

***14. Best practice involves the provision of a tutoring program providing both group and individual tutoring.***

***15. Best practice involves the provision of a comprehensive series of courses and academic support services to developmental students.***

***16. Best practice involves having faculty teach a combination of both regular curriculum and developmental courses.***

### **Level Three**

***17. Best practice involves a variety of consistent efforts to inform incoming students of TASP requirements.***

***18. Best practice involves the collection and monitoring of data on TASP performance on a regular basis by local campuses.***

***19. Best practice involves a variety of options for students who have completed developmental courses but still fail the TASP Test.***

***20. Best practice involves the use of letter grades (A,B,C,D, and F) in developmental courses.***

It is not surprising that the list of best practices cited here includes many of the practices recommended in an earlier report on the TASP (Boylan, et al., 1996). The best practices of institutions identified as being successful in providing developmental education are quite consistent with 25 years of research findings on characteristics of effective programs. If there are shortcomings in the quality of developmental education provided by Texas colleges and universities, it is not because we do not know what to do. It is because we do not always do what we know how to do.

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## *Evaluating for Improvement Self-Study Guidelines for Developmental Education Programs in Texas Public Colleges and Universities*

### **Introduction**

### **Background**

This self-evaluation guide was designed at the request of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB). It was designed as a follow-up to an evaluation of developmental education in Texas public colleges and universities.

A part of that evaluation explored the "best practices" of Texas institutions judged as having successful developmental education programs. These programs were judged to be successful on the basis of:

- a) high post-developmental education TASP Test pass rates,
- b) observation by Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board staff, and
- c) observation by consultants participating in 1996 site visits of Texas developmental education programs.

Successful programs were then surveyed to identify their common characteristics. The common characteristics identified through the survey were described as "best practices." In essence, best practices represent services, organizational patterns, or activities engaged in by successful programs. These best practices form the basis for the guidelines included in this document.

In addition to the survey of successful developmental programs in Texas, a review of the research in developmental education was also conducted to identify best practices. To a large extent, this review of the research validated the best practices of Texas public colleges and universities. Some additional best practices and characteristics of successful programs were also found in the research literature and these have been incorporated into this document.

### **Formative and Summative Evaluation**

Formative evaluation of a program takes place as the program is being designed, refined, or delivered. It is designed to identify strengths and weaknesses of a program so its strengths can be maintained and its weaknesses can be corrected.

Formative evaluation asks the questions "what are we doing well," "what are we doing poorly," and "how can we improve what we do?" It is designed, therefore, to enhance the quality of a program.

Summative evaluation, on the other hand, takes place after courses or services have been delivered. It is designed to determine whether or not these courses or services actually did what they were designed to do and to identify how well this was accomplished.

Summative evaluation asks the questions, "did we do what we were supposed to do" and "how successful were we in doing it?" It is designed, therefore, to judge the ultimate value or success of program activity. Formative evaluation, on the other hand, does not make a value judgment regarding the worth of program services. It simply provides information that can be used to improve them.

One of the assumptions on which this document is based is that, at the present time, developmental education in Texas public colleges and universities can profit more from formative evaluation than summative evaluation. A variety of mechanisms for summative evaluation are already in place at the state and local level. What is missing is not summative information. A great deal of that is already available. What is missing is formative information that can be used for the purpose of program . One of the major purposes of these guidelines is to help developmental education professionals gather this formative information and use it to improve their programs.

### **Purposes**

This set of self-study guidelines was designed to help developmental programs evaluate their courses and services against a standard of "best practices" for successful developmental education in Texas. Using these self-study guidelines will enable developmental programs to conduct a formative evaluation allowing them to:

- a) compare their own programs and services to those of the most successful developmental education programs in Texas,
- b) compare their own programs and services to the "state-of-the-art" in developmental education as identified in the research and literature,
- c) identify program strengths and weaknesses, and
- d) use the resulting information to refine and improve their programs.

The ultimate purpose of these guidelines is to improve the quality of developmental education practice in Texas public colleges and universities.

### **A Note of Caution**

Many people assume that if they copy the services, characteristics, and activities of successful developmental programs then they, too, will have successful programs. This is a flawed assumption.

The best programs are successful, not only because of **what** they do but also, because of **how** and **why** they do it. For instance, simply having a developmental English course will not guarantee that students who pass it will be successful in either the TASP Test or in later curriculum courses.

To be successful, the developmental English course should be designed, organized, and delivered using thoughtful planning and methodology. To be successful, the developmental English course should be taught by someone who believes in the value of developmental education and the worth of developmental students.



These guidelines will help practitioners of developmental education determine whether or not their efforts are consistent with the best practices of successful programs. There is more to success in developmental education, however, than simply emulating the successful practices of some other program.

The best example of this was found in the open-ended response section of the survey on which these guidelines were based. When asked to explain in their own words why their programs were successful, the most common response was "*dedicated faculty and staff.*" Those who had successful programs recognized that it was not just the presence of certain courses, services, or activities that made them successful. It was the dedication of the personnel who taught the courses, offered the services, or delivered the activities that caused success. Needless to say, dedication cannot be copied from another program.

### **General Principles to Guide Self-Evaluation**

No evaluation activity takes place in a vacuum. The success or failure of the activity is determined, to a large degree, by the environment in which the activity takes place, the values and attitudes of those who participate in the activity, and the goals and objectives of those participating. In essence, in order for an evaluation activity to be successful, it must take place in an environment supporting it and be undertaken by people who believe in it.

At the beginning of this decade, the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE) established a panel of higher education experts, and asked them to develop a set of principles to guide outcomes assessment activities. The results were published in 1992 in a document entitled *Principles of Good Practice for Assessing Student Learning*. These principles are described below as a set of general guidelines for use of this or any other self-evaluation guide.

#### *Principles of Good Practice for Assessing Student Learning*

- 1. The assessment of student learning begins with educational values.*
- 2. Assessment is most effective when it reflects an understanding of student learning as multidimensional, integrated, and revealed in performance over time.*
- 3. Assessment works best when the programs it seeks to improve have clear, explicitly stated purposes.*
- 4. Assessment requires not only attention to outcomes but also and equally to the experiences that lead to these outcomes.*
- 5. Assessment works best when it is ongoing, not episodic.*
- 6. Assessment fosters wider improvement when representatives from across the educational community are involved.*
- 7. Assessment makes a difference when it begins with issues of use and illuminates questions that people really care about.*
- 8. Assessment is most likely to lead to improvement when it is part of a larger set of conditions that promote change.*
- 9. Through assessment, educators meet their responsibility to students and to the public.*

### **How to Use These Guidelines**

#### **Completing the Rating Sheets**

These guidelines use a five-point rating scale to identify the extent to which a particular service, course, or characteristic is present in campus developmental education activities. Rating any item is, in many respects, an objective decision. Different people may have different views of the extent to which a particular item is present.

For this reason it is recommended that these guidelines be completed by a group of *at least three* professionals familiar with the campus developmental education courses and learning assistance services. It is also possible that a representative of the campus Admissions Office may need to be consulted for information on those items regarding school/college articulation.

These guidelines are the property of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and may be reproduced and distributed for program improvement purposes by any public Texas college or university. The guidelines are already pre-punched to fit into a three ring binder. There is a separate page for each section being evaluated. It is recommended that these pages be stored in a three ring binder and copies of the instructions, ratings sheets for each section, scoring information, and planning sheets be made as needed.

When these guideline sheets have been completed, the average of all responses for the group should be calculated for each item. For instance, if two members of the group rated a particular item as a "4" and two members rated it as a "2," the average rating would be a "3."

The process of using these guidelines will be enhanced if group members discuss their responses as they read and consider each item. Some items are very straightforward. The item is clearly either present or not present. Others are more complex and may require some thought and discussion. This discussion is likely to lead to a deeper understanding of the program in question and the extent to which a particular item is present in the program.

This is a self-evaluation and is designed for your own program improvement. It is important, therefore, that completing the guidelines be an objective process. Overly optimistic or inflated ratings will only provide misleading information and compromise program improvement.

#### **What the Ratings Mean**

Following each set of items there is a space to add the total of all items in that particular section. On page 23 of this document is a summary sheet indicating the "high," "medium," and "low," total scores for each section. A *high* score indicates that the program has the characteristics of roughly the top third of developmental education programs in the State of Texas for that particular section. A *medium* score indicates that the program has the characteristics of the middle third of developmental education programs in the state of Texas for that particular section. A *low* score indicates that the program has the characteristics of the bottom third of developmental education programs in the State of Texas for that particular section. Ratings should only be interpreted by section.

Total scores should be interpreted with caution because some sections are more important to success than others. Having an institutional commitment to developmental education, for instance, is likely to have greater impact on the success of developmental education than whether or not Supplemental Instruction is used to support developmental courses. Attempting to weight the value of individual sections, however, is not possible at this time. Total scores, therefore, should be used simply as rough guidelines for understanding where a particular institution may fall along a theoretical continuum of Texas institutions.

These score ranges are not scientifically developed categories. They represent estimates of where a particular program might be placed along a theoretical continuum of successful Texas developmental education programs.

### **Planning for Improvement**

On the last page of this document is a planning sheet. It is designed to record program areas that need improvement and to outline plans for making improvements. This should also be completed as an activity in using these guidelines.

It is also recommended that, once the improvement planning sheets have been completed, they be shared with faculty and staff who work with the campus developmental program. They should also be shared with those administrators whose assistance may be required in implementing program improvements.

Recognizing that there is always competition for resources in higher education institutions, program improvement plans should be realistic in terms of available resources. An unrealistic program improvement plan is not likely to be implemented.

If a campus has no learning assistance center, for instance, it is unlikely that resources can be found to develop one immediately. The program improvement plan might, therefore, recommend a series of steps that might be taken over a period of years that would lead to the eventual establishment of a learning assistance center.

### **Time Required to Complete the Guidelines**

It makes no difference if these guidelines are completed at a single meeting or at a series of meetings. The total time required for a group to complete the guidelines section is estimated to be about one and a half to two hours.

The total time required for the group to complete the improvement planning section is difficult to estimate. Obviously, the time required for planning depends upon how much improvement is necessary. For a program with scores falling in the middle of the continuum (medium rating) this is estimated to be about two to three hours.

**Instructions** Each of the items in this self-study guide is based on the best practices of Texas public colleges and universities judged to be effective in delivering developmental education. Each item is to be ranked on the following 1 to 5 scale.

### **Ratings for Program Improvement**

**1 = This item is not present at our institution and we have no plans for including it.**

*This means that the item does not exist at all on your campus. Furthermore, no one has considered implementing it.*

**2 = This item is not present at our institution but we are working toward including it.**

*This means that the item is not currently present. However, plans are either being made or are in place to implement it.*

**3 = This item is present at our institution only to some degree.**

*This means that the item is currently present but has been only partially or incompletely implemented.*

**4 = This item is present at our institution but needs improvement in its implementation.**

*This means that the item is present but is not working as well as expected.*

**5 = This item is present at our institution and we are satisfied with its implementation.**

*This means that the item is present and is working to the satisfaction of those involved in the program.*

*Successful programs in Texas went to great lengths to inform incoming students of TASP Requirements (Boylan & Saxon, 1998).*

### **Section 1 - Informing Incoming Students of TASP Requirements**

\_\_\_ 1. Information on TASP requirements is mailed to students as soon as they apply to the institution.

\_\_\_ 2. All incoming students are informed about TASP requirements during orientation sessions.

\_\_\_ 3. Advisors/counselors meet with incoming students to inform them of TASP requirements.

\_\_\_ 4. Information about TASP requirements is printed in the college/university catalog.

\_\_\_ 5. Information about TASP requirements is announced on local radio and television.

- \_\_\_ 6. Faculty in developmental classes make announcements about TASP requirements.
- \_\_\_ 7. Announcements regarding TASP requirements are posted on campus bulletin boards.
- \_\_\_ 8. College staff hold meetings with high school students at local feeder schools and discuss TASP requirements.

\_\_\_ **Total of responses 1 through 8**

*Availability and use of TASP Test performance data characterized most successful programs in Texas (Boylan & Saxon, 1998).*

**Section 2 - Collection and Availability of Assessment Data**

- \_\_\_ 9. The institution maintains records on the performance of all students being assessed for TASP purposes.
- \_\_\_ 10. The institution maintains records of all student scores on any other local assessment instruments.
- \_\_\_ 11. Data on student assessment for TASP purposes and local assessment test performance is regularly made available to advisors/counselors.
- \_\_\_ 12. This information is integrated into the academic advising process.
- \_\_\_ 13. Data on student assessment for TASP purposes and local assessment test performance is regularly made available to developmental education faculty.
- \_\_\_ 14. Data on post-developmental education TASP Test performance is regularly made available to developmental education faculty.
- \_\_\_ 15. A specific office on campus has been designated as the centralized collection and maintenance agency for assessment data undertaken for TASP purposes.

\_\_\_ **Total of responses 9 through 15**

*Repeating a failed treatment is not a particularly effective way to improve student performance (Boylan & Saxon, 1998).*

**Section 3 - Support for Students Who Continue to Fail the TASP Test**

- \_\_\_ 16. Students who fail the TASP Test following developmental education are provided with individual tutoring.
- \_\_\_ 17. Students who fail the TASP Test following developmental education are placed into computer-based learning laboratories.
- \_\_\_ 18. Students who fail the TASP Test following developmental education are placed into short-term TASP preparation workshops.
- \_\_\_ 19. Students who fail the TASP Test following developmental education are still allowed to take certain collegiate-level courses.
- \_\_\_ 20. Students who fail the TASP Test following developmental education are assigned to the Learning Assistance Center.
- \_\_\_ 21. Students who fail the TASP Test following developmental education are encouraged to repeat the developmental course only after considering the individual student's needs.
- \_\_\_ 22. Students who fail the TASP Test following developmental education are provided with further diagnostic testing (cognitive and affective assessment).
- \_\_\_ 23. Results from this diagnostic testing are used to develop an individual learning plan for each student.

\_\_\_ **Total of items 15 through 23**

*Effective coordination of communication, services, and activities is essential to a successful developmental program (Casazza & Silverman, 1996).*

**Section 4 - Program Structure and Organization**

- \_\_\_ 24. There is a single individual administrator responsible for coordinating campus-wide developmental education.
- \_\_\_ 25. The developmental education program reports to an academic affairs administrator.
- \_\_\_ 26. Those who teach developmental courses or provide developmental education services meet as a group on some regular basis.
- \_\_\_ 27. A written statement of goals and objectives exists for developmental education courses and services.

- \_\_\_ 28. This statement is shared with all faculty and staff who work with developmental students.
- \_\_\_ 29. This statement is reviewed and revised periodically by those involved in developmental education.
- \_\_\_ 30. Developmental education courses and services are highly coordinated efforts.
- \_\_\_ 31. An annual report of the effectiveness of developmental education is provided each year to the chief academic officer.

\_\_\_ **Total of items 24 through 31**

*Training is the most critical factor in the success of tutoring programs (Boylan, Bliss, & Bonham, 1997).*

#### **Section 5 - Tutoring Programs**

- \_\_\_ 32. A centralized tutoring program is available to developmental students.
- \_\_\_ 33. The program provides individual tutoring.
- \_\_\_ 34. The program provides group tutoring.
- \_\_\_ 35. The program provides tutoring by appointment.
- \_\_\_ 36. There is an on-going tutor training program.
- \_\_\_ 37. The training program includes tutoring techniques.
- \_\_\_ 38. The training program includes interpersonal communication.
- \_\_\_ 39. The tutoring program works closely with academic departments to select and train tutors.

\_\_\_ **Total of items 32 through 39**

#### **RATING SCALE REMINDER**

**1 = This item is not present at our institution and we have no plans for including it.**

**2 = This item is not present at our institution but we are working toward including it.**

**3 = This item is present at our institution only to some degree. .**

**4 = This item is present at our institution but needs improvement in its implementation.**

**5 = This item is present at our institution and we are satisfied with its implementation.**

*Supplemental Instruction has consistently proven to improve student performance in difficult courses (Martin & Arendale), 1994.*

#### **Section 6 - Supplemental Instruction (SI)**

- \_\_\_ 40. Supplemental Instruction is used to support developmental courses.
- \_\_\_ 41. Supplemental Instruction is available to students who have completed developmental education and are taking other courses.
- \_\_\_ 42. Supplemental Instruction leaders are carefully trained prior to working with students.
- \_\_\_ 43. The performance of students participating in Supplemental Instruction is evaluated on a regular basis.
- \_\_\_ 44. Those coordinating the Supplemental Instruction program work closely with faculty to identify potential SI leaders.
- \_\_\_ 45. There are a variety of courses taught on campus using Supplemental Instruction.

\_\_\_ **Total of items 40 through 45**

*The learning assistance program is a major source of support for underprepared and, indeed, for all students (Maxwell, 1985).*

#### **Section 7 - Learning Assistance Program (LAP)**

\_\_\_ 46. A centralized LAP is available to developmental students.

\_\_\_ 47. The LAP provides make-up testing services.

\_\_\_ 48. The LAP provides tutoring services.

\_\_\_ 49. The LAP provides diagnostic testing.

\_\_\_ 50. The LAP provides individualized instruction.

\_\_\_ 51. The LAP provides short-term study skills and strategies workshops.

\_\_\_ 52. The LAP provides computers and software instruction.

\_\_\_ 53. The LAP provides a library of resource materials for students and faculty.

\_\_\_ **Total of items 46 through 53**

*A vital component of any developmental or learning assistance program is a well-planned professional development program (Casazza & Silverman, 1996).*

#### **Section 8 - Faculty and Staff Development**

\_\_\_ 54. All faculty and staff of the developmental education program design and implement a personal professional development plan.

\_\_\_ 55. There is a professional development library available to developmental educators.

\_\_\_ 56. Full-time developmental education faculty and staff attend at least one professional conference in the field each year.

\_\_\_ 57. Developmental educators are able to participate in at least two on-campus, in-service professional development workshops each year.

\_\_\_ 58. Special efforts are made to provide training and development activities for adjunct faculty teaching developmental courses.

\_\_\_ 59. Developmental educators are encouraged to join professional associations relevant to developmental education.

\_\_\_ 60. All developmental education faculty and staff are encouraged to take graduate courses relevant to their professional roles.

\_\_\_ 61. Developmental education faculty and staff are encouraged to present at professional conferences.

\_\_\_ **Total of items 54 through 61**

*Effective developmental courses employ research-validated learning strategies (Stahl, Simpson, & Hayes, 1992).*

#### **Section 9 - Characteristics of Developmental Courses**

\_\_\_ 62. In every developmental course, students are given at least five graded tests or assignments each term.

\_\_\_ 63. There is an emphasis on mastery learning in all developmental courses.

\_\_\_ 64. There is an emphasis on individualized instruction in all developmental courses.

\_\_\_ 65. Laboratory activities are well integrated into the structure of each developmental course.

\_\_\_ 66. Computer-based instruction is available as a *supplement* to classroom instruction.

\_\_\_ 67. A variety of instructional activities are used to accommodate individual student learning styles in developmental courses.

\_\_\_ 68. All developmental courses are graded on a scale of A,B,C,D, or F.

\_\_\_ 69. Developmental courses are offered in a variety of time slots to accommodate individual student schedules.

\_\_\_ **Total of items 62 through 69**

*Using full-time faculty to teach developmental courses character- ized successful programs in Texas (Boylan & Saxon, 1998).*

#### **Section 10 - Characteristics of Developmental Education Faculty**

\_\_\_ 70. At least 60% of the faculty who teach developmental courses are regular, full-time employees.

\_\_\_ 71. Faculty are assigned to teach developmental courses because they have expressed a desire to do so.

\_\_\_ 72. All faculty who teach developmental courses have at least 18 graduate hours in the subject they are teaching.

\_\_\_ 73. At least 75% of those who teach developmental courses have a minimum of an M.A. or equivalent degree.

\_\_\_ 74. All faculty who teach developmental courses subscribe to at least one professional journal in a field related to their teaching.

\_\_\_ 75. Those who teach developmental courses are also active on campus committees and institutional governing bodies.

\_\_\_ 76. Some of the best instructors on campus teach the developmental courses.

\_\_\_ **Total for items 70 through 76**

#### **RATING SCALE REMINDER**

**1 = This item is not present at our institution and we have no plans for including it.**

**2 = This item is not present at our institution but we are working toward including it.**

**3 = This item is present at our institution only to some degree. .**

**4 = This item is present at our institution but needs improvement in its implementation.**

**5 = This item is present at our institution and we are satisfied with its implementation.**

*The presence of a systematic program evaluation component is related to student success (Boylan, Bliss, & Bonham, 1997).*

#### **Section 11 - Program Evaluation**

\_\_\_ 77. A program evaluation plan is in effect for *all* developmental education courses and services.

\_\_\_ 78. Evaluation of developmental education courses and services is an ongoing activity.

\_\_\_ 79. Evaluation data is shared with all developmental education faculty and staff.

\_\_\_ 80. Evaluation data is used as a basis for program refinement and improvement.

\_\_\_ 81. The program has been reviewed by an external consultant at least once in the past five years.

\_\_\_ 82. Systematic efforts are made to insure that the exit standards of developmental courses are consistent with the entry standards of regular curriculum courses.

\_\_\_ 83. The developmental education evaluation plan includes both formative and summative evaluation measures.

\_\_\_ 84. All developmental courses are evaluated by students every term.

\_\_\_ **Total of items 77 through 84**

*There is evidence that many of those entering Texas public colleges and universities do not understand the difference between high school and college (Boylan, et. al, 1996).*

#### **Section 12 - School/College Articulation Efforts**

- \_\_\_ 85. College admission counselors meet regularly with school guidance counselors.
- \_\_\_ 86. College faculty meet with teachers and students at local or feeder schools to discuss the requirements of college-level work.
- \_\_\_ 87. A variety of publications are sent to local or feeder schools encouraging students to take college preparatory courses.
- \_\_\_ 88. Public radio and television are used to inform students of the requirements of college-level academic work.
- \_\_\_ 89. All students applying for admission are advised of TASP and other academic requirements as part of the admissions process.
- \_\_\_ 90. The institution has a systematic plan for promoting school/college articulation.

\_\_\_ **Total of items 85 through 90**

*There is no substitute for an institution-wide commitment to quality learning improvement activities (Keimig, 1983).*

**Section 13 - Institutional Commitment**

- \_\_\_ 91. The administrator responsible for developmental education on campus has regular access to the chief academic officer.
- \_\_\_ 92. Resources and actions necessary to improve developmental education are built into the institutional master plan.
- \_\_\_ 93. Developmental education is specified in the college/university mission.
- \_\_\_ 94. Developmental education courses and services are described in the institutional catalog.
- \_\_\_ 95. The developmental education program has a campus-wide advisory committee.
- \_\_\_ 96. Developmental education faculty sit on college/university committees, advisory councils, and faculty governing bodies.
- \_\_\_ 97. At least 75% of the institution's developmental education activities are funded with "hard" money.
- \_\_\_ 98. The activities of the developmental program, its faculty, and staff are highlighted in institutional publications and news media.

\_\_\_ **Total of items 91 through 98**

*Doing a bad job of developmental education costs about the same as doing a good job (Claxton, 1994).*

**Section 14 - Miscellaneous Best Practices**

- \_\_\_ 99. Regular efforts are made to see that developmental course exit standards are consistent with TASP Test passing standards.
- \_\_\_ 100. Developmental education courses and activities are grounded in theories of adult development and learning.
- \_\_\_ 101. There is a high level of coordination between the learning assistance program and developmental courses.
- \_\_\_ 102. The administrator who serves as the campus TASP Liaison devotes at least 50% of his/her time to this task.
- \_\_\_ 103. Coordinators of developmental courses or learning assistance programs have at least 50% release time for this purpose.
- \_\_\_ 104. Coordinators of developmental courses or learning assistance programs have training at the MA level or its equivalent experience in developmental education or a related field.
- \_\_\_ 105. The space and facilities of the learning assistance and/or the developmental education program are at least the equivalent of other comparable programs on campus.
- \_\_\_ 106. Institutional assessment and placement practices are based on a combination of cognitive and affective assessment.

\_\_\_ **Total of items 99 through 106**

The score ranges reported here are based on the number of items for each section and an estimate of how prevalent items under each section were among Texas public institutions identified as having successful developmental programs. For instance, although **Section 1** had a total of eight (8) items for a total maximum score of 40, **Section 2** had only seven (7) items for a total maximum score of 35. Furthermore, most Texas public institutions had several different ways of informing students about TASP requirements in **Section 1** but tended to have fewer different ways of collecting and making TASP data available. Therefore, it was possible to have a lower score but still be in the high range in **Section 2**.

As noted earlier in this document, score ranges represent only rough estimates. Those institutions in the **High** range are estimated to be among the top one third of Texas public colleges and universities in terms of their application of best practices in developmental education. Those in the **Medium** range are estimated to be in the middle third of the distribution in terms of their application of best practices in developmental education. Those in the **Low** range are estimated to be in the lowest third of the distribution in terms of their application of best practices in developmental education. This is true for both the section ranges and the total institutional ranges.

**Section 1 - Informing Incoming Students of TASP Requirements**

**High** = 31 to 40 **Medium** = 20 to 30 **Low** = 19 or below

**Section 2 - Collection and Availability of TASP Performance Data**

**High** = 28 to 35 **Medium** = 17 to 27 **Low** = 16 or below

**Section 3 - Support for Students Who Continue to Fail the TASP Test**

**High** = 28 to 40 **Medium** = 18 to 27 **Low** = 17 or below

**Section 4 - Program Structure and Organization**

**High** = 31 to 40 **Medium** = 20 to 30 **Low** = 19 or below

**Section 5 - Tutoring Programs**

**High** = 31 to 40 **Medium** = 20 to 30 **Low** = 19 or below

**Section 6 - Supplemental Instruction**

**High** = 20 to 30 **Medium** = 10 to 19 **Low** = 9 or below

**Section 7 - Learning Assistance Program (LAP)**

**High** = 31 to 40 **Medium** = 20 to 30 **Low** = 19 or below

**Section 8 - Faculty and Staff Development**

**High** = 31 to 40 **Medium** = 20 to 30 **Low** = 19 or below

**Section 9 - Characteristics of Developmental Courses**

**High** = 31 to 40 **Medium** = 20 to 30 **Low** = 19 or below

**Section 10 - Characteristics of Developmental Education Faculty**

**High** = 31 to 40 **Medium** = 20 to 30 **Low** = 19 or below

**Section 11 - Program Evaluation**

**High** = 31 to 40 **Medium** = 20 to 30 **Low** = 19 or below

**Section 12 - School/College Articulation Efforts**

**High** = 20 to 30 **Medium** = 10 to 19 **Low** = 9 or below

**Section 13 - Institutional Commitment**

**High** = 31 to 40 **Medium** = 20 to 30 **Low** = 19 or below

**Section 14 - Miscellaneous Best Practices**

**High** = 31 to 40 **Medium** = 20 to 30 **Low** = 19 or below



## Interpreting Total Institutional Scores

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High Range = 400 to 535

Medium Range = 249 to 399

Low Range = 248 or below

### Planning for Improvement

#### Section 1 - Informing Incoming Students of TASP Requirements

A. List the steps you might take to improve the institution's activities in this area.

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B. Describe the costs (if any) associated with this improvement.

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C. List those individuals or offices whose support or cooperation will be needed to implement this improvement.

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D. Describe the time frame in which these improvements might be implemented.

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#### Section 2 - Collection and Availability of TASP Performance Data

A. List the steps you might take to improve the institution's activities in this area.

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B. Describe the costs (if any) associated with this improvement.

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C. List those individuals or offices whose support or cooperation will be needed to implement this improvement.

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D. Describe the time frame in which these improvements might be implemented.

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#### Section 3 - Support for Students Who Continue to Fail the TASP Test

A. List the steps you might take to improve the institution's activities in this area.

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B. Describe the costs (if any) associated with this improvement.

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C. List those individuals or offices whose support or cooperation will be needed to implement this improvement.

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D. Describe the time frame in which these improvements might be implemented.

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**Section 4 - Program Structure and Organization**

A. List the steps you might take to improve the institution's activities in this area.

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B. Describe the costs (if any) associated with this improvement.

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C. List those individuals or offices whose support or cooperation will be needed to implement this improvement.

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D. Describe the time frame in which these improvements might be implemented.

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**Section 5 - Tutoring Programs**

A. List the steps you might take to improve the institution's activities in this area.

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B. Describe the costs (if any) associated with this improvement.

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C. List those individuals or offices whose support or cooperation will be needed to implement this improvement.

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D. Describe the time frame in which these improvements might be implemented.

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**Section 6 - Supplemental Instruction**

A. List the steps you might take to improve the institution's activities in this area.

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B. Describe the costs (if any) associated with this improvement.

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C. List those individuals or offices whose support or cooperation will be needed to implement this improvement.

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D. Describe the time frame in which these improvements might be implemented.

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**Section 7 - Learning Assistance Program**

A. List the steps you might take to improve the institution's activities in this area.

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B. Describe the costs (if any) associated with this improvement.

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C. List those individuals or offices whose support or cooperation will be needed to implement this improvement.

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D. Describe the time frame in which these improvements might be implemented.

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**Section 8 - Faculty and Staff Development**

A. List the steps you might take to improve the institution's activities in this area.

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B. Describe the costs (if any) associated with this improvement.

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C. List those individuals or offices whose support or cooperation will be needed to implement this improvement.

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D. Describe the time frame in which these improvements might be implemented.

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**Section 9 - Characteristics of Developmental Courses**

A. List the steps you might take to improve the institution's activities in this area.

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B. Describe the costs (if any) associated with this improvement.

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C. List those individuals or offices whose support or cooperation will be needed to implement this improvement.

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D. Describe the time frame in which these improvements might be implemented.

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**Section 10 - Characteristics of Developmental Education Faculty**

A. List the steps you might take to improve the institution's activities in this area.

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B. Describe the costs (if any) associated with this improvement.

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C. List those individuals or offices whose support or cooperation will be needed to implement this improvement.

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D. Describe the time frame in which these improvements might be implemented.

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**Section 11 - Program Evaluation**

A. List the steps you might take to improve the institution's activities in this area.

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B. Describe the costs (if any) associated with this improvement.

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C. List those individuals or offices whose support or cooperation will be needed to implement this improvement.

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D. Describe the time frame in which these improvements might be implemented.

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**Section 12 - School/College Articulation Efforts**

A. List the steps you might take to improve the institution's activities in this area.

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B. Describe the costs (if any) associated with this improvement.

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C. List those individuals or offices whose support or cooperation will be needed to implement this improvement.

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D. Describe the time frame in which these improvements might be implemented.

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**Section 13 - Institutional Commitment**

A. List the steps you might take to improve the institution's activities in this area.

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B. Describe the costs (if any) associated with this improvement.

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C. List those individuals or offices whose support or cooperation will be needed to implement this improvement.

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D. Describe the time frame in which these improvements might be implemented.

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#### Section 14 - Miscellaneous Best Practices

A. List the steps you might take to improve the institution's activities in this area.

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B. Describe the costs (if any) associated with this improvement.

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C. List those individuals or offices whose support or cooperation will be needed to implement this improvement.

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D. Describe the time frame in which these improvements might be implemented.

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#### Future Steps in Program Improvement

Completing these self-study guides and the accompanying planning sheets are only initial steps in the program improvement process. The process should be ongoing.

The process of implementing change based on evaluation should be specific, realistic, affordable, and collaborative. Above all, it should be ongoing. If changes are made to improve developmental education, the effect should be noticeable in two ways.

**First** - future evaluation of student and program performance should show improvement over what is currently happening. More students should pass developmental courses, more students who have passed them should also pass the TASP Test, more students who have passed them should be successful in later courses, and more students should be retained. This, of course, requires that the evaluation of these outcomes should be measured on a regular basis, usually every year.

**Second** - future reviews of developmental programs using these self-study guidelines should show a qualitative improvement on items measured by the guidelines. In short, the scores on each section of the guidelines should improve from one review to another. To this end, it is recommended that developmental program reviews using these guidelines should be conducted every two years.

These guidelines are only a tool. And, like any tool, they may be used wisely and well or thoughtlessly and poorly. Users should feel free to modify them based on experience or to make any other revisions that would contribute to their more effective use.

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