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Redesign and (Re)Marginalization in a Terrain of Struggle: Measuring the Success of Computer-Assisted Personalized System of Instruction (CAPSI) in Developmental Writing Courses

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REDESIGN AND (RE)MARGINALIZATION IN A TERRAIN OF STRUGGLE: MEASURING THE SUCCESS OF COMPUTER-ASSISTED PERSONALIZED SYSTEM OF INSTRUCTION (CAPSI) IN DEVELOPMENTAL WRITING COURSES

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Title: Redesign and (Re)Marginalization in a Terrain of Struggle: Measuring the Success of Computer-Assisted Personalized System of Instruction (CAPSI) in Developmental Writing Courses

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Developmental writers have long been viewed as marginalized, and one course delivery method which might disrupt this marginalization is computer-assisted personalized system of instruction (CAPSI), which has proven successful in many disciplines. However, research on CAPSI writing courses is minimal, and there have been no published articles about the success of CAPSI in developmental writing courses. Despite this gap, administrations across the U.S. have mandated the redesign of their developmental writing programs based upon the tenets of CAPSI course delivery. Situated within a critical theoretical framework, this dissertation seeks to determine the extent to which CAPSI developmental writing courses are successful by presenting case studies of CAPSI developmental writing programs at two Tennessee community colleges. Multiple data sources included interviews with program directors and instructors, artifacts documenting the programs' creation and outcomes, site visits, and personal narratives. Data was analyzed twice. A first analysis determined what four criteria are used to measure program success; a second analysis compared each program's results against these four criteria. The study concludes that CAPSI developmental writing courses are not successful and work to increase marginalization rather than lessening it. Calls for future research include studies on the effect of quality of teaching on program success, student access to and knowledge of computer technology, the effect of procrastination among developmental writers, the effect of reading and writing abilities, and others.

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CHAPTER ONE

CONTEXTUALIZING THE MARGIN:

STUDY BACKGROUND AND RELEVANCE TO THE FIELD

Imagine the first day of college as a new student. After struggling to find a parking spot and racing across campus to your morning classes—and getting there late anyway—you finally find the Developmental Lab where you are required to report. When you walk inside, though, expecting to find twenty-four other students waiting for class to begin, what you see is just a computer lab with a handful of students sitting at the terminals. The lab assistant pulls up your information on her iPad and tells you that you need to take a diagnostic test which will last about 2 hours, with one hour of essay writing and one hour of grammar multiple choice. Immediately, you become nervous. A test? On the first day? For what? You don't like tests anyway, and with all the hustle and bustle of starting college, the last thing you feel like doing is taking a test, especially for English. But the lab assistant says that you can't start your writing class until you take it.

"Where is *my writing class?" you ask warily, glancing around the lab. You don't recognize anything that looks like a class or an instructor.*

Your writing class is personalized, the lab assistant explains. Instead of meeting as a group for lectures and presentations, you'll do all your class work on the computer, at your own pace, and repeat the lessons as necessary until you successfully complete each one. Eventually, when you pass all the modules, she explains, you'll pass the course and move up into College Composition. You only study and pay for those skills units in which you are deficient, rather than having to study everything on the syllabus and in the book. "And it's possible that you can finish

both your Developmental course and Comp One in the same semester, if you complete all your modules by mid-term," she informs you.

For a moment, you're confused. You didn't sign up for an internet class, but she explains that the entire Developmental Writing program at the college is like this—there are no more individual writing classes; now, every student's experience is personalized to meet his or her specific needs. The tests students take on the first day determine their individual study plans for the semester, and they don't have to study those writing skills in which they demonstrate proficiency. The idea is to save students time and money by not having to study those skills they already know.

Also, she adds, you can do the course work whenever and wherever you'd like, on any device with internet access, including your home computer or smart phone. It fits your writing needs, she explains with a shrug, and it fits your life.

"But what if I need help?" you ask.

"Any of our tutors can help you here in the lab, and you will have a course facilitator assigned to your class section who can answer your emails or meet with you in person if you need additional help."

"So there's no professor?"

"There's a professor who designed the course and materials, and who oversees your final grade for the course. But you'll go to the tutor first for basic questions about the work, then you'll contact your course facilitator if you have any questions that the tutors can't help you with or if you have any questions about your assignment grades. It's all right there in the information I'll give to you before you leave today."

"So the facilitator is my teacher?"

"Well, you don't really have a teacher exactly. The class is based on active learning, not lecture, so you learn the material by doing activities on the internet program. The facilitator is assigned to sections of two hundred students and is responsible for overseeing your work, checking that you're logging on regularly and meeting deadlines, and making materials available to you. But the tutors here in the lab will be the ones who help you the most with doing the actual course assignments."

You're confused…tutors, facilitators, professors…and all you want to know is how to pass the class so that you can get on with your college-level courses and get your degree as soon as possible. So, you wonder, who is the most important person to contact if you have problems? "The facilitator grades me, then?"

"The computer grades you. It's all done by computer, including the grammar drills and essays. But it's better this way. You don't have to wait days to get your papers back or find out how you did. The exams are graded immediately, and the essay results are usually back in less than twenty-four hours. That way, you can move on right away to your next assignment or repeat that one, if you have to."

You like the idea of being able to do work whenever you'd like (and you really like the idea of not having to fight for a parking spot and being able to sleep in later instead of going to class meetings), but you've never had a class like this before. You didn't even realize that such classes exist. But how can you have a class without a teacher? Isn't it just the bad students who have to work with tutors? And you're not so certain that a computer-based class is right for you. After all, you only have an old computer at home with dial-up, not high-speed internet, and you don't even know if that will work for this class. Your home connection can't keep up with World of Warcraft…will it would be able to keep up with college?

But you don't have a choice. All the developmental writing courses offered at this college are like this, she said.

So you follow the lab assistant to one of the computer terminals and wait while she brings up the two diagnostic tests.

The first one is a 140-question, multiple-choice test over grammar. You've never been good at grammar, and you're afraid that you're doing badly on this test. Misplaced modifiers—what's a modifier? Is that the same as an adjective? Apostrophes, parentheses, dashes and hyphens…is there even a difference at all between dashes and hyphens? By question 65, when you're asked to choose the parallel sentence, you're certain that parallelism was something you studied in math class, not in English. You're tired of taking the test, and since you're certain you didn't pass it anyway, you just start clicking answers so that you can finish quickly and go home for lunch before you have to head off to your afternoon job.

The second test is a little better. This one asks you to write an essay, and you feel pretty confident about that since you had to write so many 5-paragraph essays in high school to practice for the state test. The topic is pretty boring—"Describe your favorite store or restaurant"—but at least you can write about it pretty quickly and can come up with 3 points to make about it. You're done in half an hour, with two typed pages; the clock on the computer says that you still have half an hour to work, if you'd like to take it, but you don't know why you need to spend any more time on the essay. Five paragraphs, the thesis statement as the last sentence in the first paragraph, the thesis repeated in the conclusion, your three points everywhere they need to go…and you even remembered to throw in a "hook" in the introduction to get the reader's attention. You're convinced that your prof is going to think it's just fine, just like your high school teacher did. But your prof doesn't read it, you remember—nobody reads it. No body

reads it. Instead, the computer analyzes it. With a sigh, just glad to finally be finished, you hit the SUBMIT button.

After a few minutes, the computer prints out your test results, and the lab assistant asks you to wait while she creates your individualized study plan. Ten minutes later, she hands you a sheet of paper listing the Skills Modules which you have to complete this semester in your writing class. You scan the list, and it doesn't make sense. According to the list, you have to study introductions, but you know how to write a good introduction. (You wrote that great hook line about Wal-Mart being the All-American Store, after all.) The sheet says that you are proficient in thesis statements, but you don't even know what a "three-point thesis" is. And then, there are all those grammar units you have to complete. If you had known you'd have to do all that work, you wouldn't have sped through the multiple-choice test so quickly, clicking on every B answer just to be done.

When you ask the lab assistant what it all means, she responds, "Those are your results. Those are the modules you have to take, and the registrar will send you a tuition bill only for those modules."

She politely but firmly denies your request to take the tests again. Now that you know how important they really are, you assure her, you'll try harder and do better if she lets you take them again. But she only shakes her head, hands you a packet of information, and welcomes you into your developmental writing class. Then she turns to the next person in line.

The handouts include a course syllabus, information on how to log onto the internet program where you'll complete all your work, a sheet explaining how tuition is calculated for the modules, the name and contact info for your course facilitator, and information about the

tutors and lab hours. Lastly, there is a sheet of suggested deadlines for when the modules should be completed.

So you walk slowly out of the lab, confused, and already feeling the first tinglings of stress. Are you going to be able to do this, knowing how you like to procrastinate until the last minute but left to do it on your own whenever you'd like? What if you can't figure out how to use the internet site? The lab isn't open during the free hours you have to study when you're not stuck at work or in class—how are you supposed to get help from the tutors? What if you have a serious problem and really need to meet with the facilitator in person—will he be willing to do that?

But according to the individual study plan the lab assistant gave you, the first module isn't due until the end of next week, and it's only about writing simple sentences anyway, which you feel confident about being able to do well and quickly. So you slip the information into your backpack and decide to look at it over the weekend. Besides, you've got lots of time until it's due, and you can always repeat the quizzes until you get them right. Maybe, you decide as you get into your car and toss the information packet into the back seat with the discarded DQ cups and McDonald's burger wrappers, you just might like this class after all.

The Marginalization of Developmental Writers

Developmental writing has consistently been viewed as situated on the fringe, both in academic institutions and in society (Boylan, 1999; Mutnick, 2001). Also known as basic, intermediate, remedial, learning support, or transitional writing, the goal of these programs is to increase students' writing proficiency to that of their college-level peers. Paradoxically, however, developmental writers have also been marginalized—they have been isolated from the greater

academic community in separate programs located outside the English Department; they have been forced to attend tutoring sessions in separate writing labs for developmental students only; they are restricted from enrolling in most college-level courses until the developmental courses have been successfully completed; they have been given inferior resources and inexperienced instructors; and they have not been offered the same course delivery methods in the same numbers as their college-level counterparts. Their positionality has been referred to as existing on the "frontier," the "boundary," the "academic margins," and even in an "alien world" (see in order Shaughnessy, 1977; Rose, 1989; Mutnick, 2001; and Mutnick, 1996). The advent of open admissions policies in the 1970s and 1980s, as documented by Lavin and Hyllegard (1996) in *Changing the Odds*, gave more students with limited academic skills and preparation the ability to matriculate in post-secondary institutions. Despite rising numbers of student enrollments, however, this view of developmental students as marginalized members of the academic community continues, and it continues to affect debate surrounding what types of courses to offer (Mutnick, 2001). In fact, with a lack of cohesive theory regarding developmental education (Mutnick, 2001) coupled with so much of the literature regarding these students as matriculating on the fringe, it can be argued that marginalization has become the de facto identity of developmental education.

As members of groups which have been traditionally marginalized or "othered" by society—according to the last nationwide demographic survey conducted by the National Center for Developmental Education, 57% are women, 33% are minority, 10% possess physical disabilities, and 54% earn less than $20,000 per year (Saxon & Boylan, 1999)—developmental writing students are already aware of the social and economic forces working against them and the hegemonic power structures which dominate society. What they might not be aware of,

however, is that the same forces and power structures in the larger society—i.e., the perpetuation of white, male, middle-class values and expectations—are at play in educational institutions (Dewey, 1915 and 2011/1916), the same institutions to which they look as a way to escape the oppression and marginalization.

Academic institutions themselves have worked to marginalize developmental students. Developmental students are often separated from their college-level peers by being placed into developmental programs which are staffed and overseen separately from the discipline department, creating a disconnect between what skills are taught in the classes and what skills are actually needed for the college-level courses. Many colleges also offer separate, developmental-only assistance centers and require these students to take college orientation or learning strategies classes that their college-level peers are not required to take. In addition to being treated as separate, they are also treated as unequal. The least experienced teachers are often assigned to teach developmental courses. Nationwide, less than 25% of all developmental courses are taught by full-time faculty (Gerlaugh, Thompson, Boylan & Davis, 2007), and the minimum requirement in many states and under the requirements of many accreditation associations for an instructor to teach developmental writing is often just a Bachelor's degree. (For examples of such policies, see Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, 2006, and Tennessee Board of Regents, 2010a.) All this results in developmental writing courses plagued by insufficient resources, inaccurate placement and assessment procedures, and low student success, as indicated by high drop-failure-withdrawal rates and low graduation rates (Gerlaugh, Thompson, Boylan, & Davis, 2007).

The community colleges which enroll most of the developmental student population nationwide can also be viewed as being complicit in perpetuating these inequalities. Although

community colleges are often seen as providing an opportunity for students who would otherwise not be able to enter higher education (Lavin & Hyllegard, 1996), they can also be seen as factories for surplus workers (Shor, 1980), created simultaneously to "feed off the American Dream and shortcircuit it by building a large pool of unskilled workers for a shrinking number of increasingly deskilled jobs" (George, 2001, p. 95).

That developmental students are viewed as marginalized by those within academia is evident in the inability of the field to agree upon a common terminology to describe these students despite the fact that developmental courses have now been offered for decades. The National Association of Developmental Educators and its flagship journals, *The Journal of Developmental Education* and *Research in Developmental Education*, conflict with the *Journal of Basic Writing* and NCTE's Conference on Basic Writing in the terminology used to describe the same group of students. In addition, many programs across the country refer to themselves as neither developmental nor basic but as intermediate or transitional. More troubling, some programs and researchers still use the term "remedial," which draws its origin from medical terminology, implying that students with limited academic skills and preparation are somehow diseased or handicapped and can be remedied (Rose, 2008).

However, simply reassigning more qualified instructors and more resources to developmental courses is not the answer when separation from the greater academic community persists. How developmental writers are positioned within the academic community is as important as the quality of the instruction they receive. As Vandenberg, Hum and Clary-Lemon (2006) noted, "Effective participation [within the university], however, is a limited goal if, as theories of relations propose, writers' identities, values, and possibilities for agency are bound up in such relations; *students must also develop a self-conscious, critical awareness of how they are*

suspended in systems of relations so that they might engage in the ongoing process of transforming them" (p. 26, italics are mine). However, as Tajfel (1978) warned, those who see themselves as powerless, subordinate members of the institution are unlikely to challenge the power of the status quo, thus remaining where they are. Mutnick (1996) believes that even the most renowned developmental programs lack a critical perspective on education when it comes to issues of race, class, ethnicity, and gender and instead try to present to their students the idea that academic writing is neutral. However, it can be argued that even these programs that Mutnick claims are neutral are actually far from being so. Developmental writers are aware that they have been marginalized from the moment they are accepted into college and given a schedule with developmental classes which they must pass before they are allowed to take college-level courses; simply being placed into a developmental writing course, whether through mandatory placement or self-selection, results in a certain degree of isolation and stigmatism from their college-level peers. This outside positioning further adds to the perpetuation of hegemonic forces acting against them because they have no choice but to accept their marginalization, feeling the powerlessness and subordination to the institution that Tajfel (1978) warned about.

Ironically, despite their marginalized status, developmental students occupy a large portion of post-secondary education enrollments. 99% of community colleges and approximately 70% of universities offer developmental courses (Boylan & Bonham, 2007); approximately 40% of incoming students test into developmental levels, with some institutions reporting as high as 70% for particular subjects (Saxon & Boylan, 1999). There is also evidence to suggest that this number has risen since the National Center for Developmental Education last conducted this national survey in 1999. Current population trends show ethnic minority groups as occupying the

largest growth areas, and because African-American and Latino students are already overrepresented at the developmental levels when compared to their college-level counterparts, "it is expected that these numbers will continue to grow along with their increased participation in higher education" (Saxon & Boylan, 1999, par. 2). The result of this growing enrollment means more students will be forced onto the academic margins.

Despite their promise to give access to students who would otherwise not be able to matriculate in higher education, developmental writing programs have not lessened the achievement and power gaps in higher education that Kozol (1985) noticed in his extremely influential work, *Illiterate America*. If anything, they have worked to perpetuate them in the nearly 30 years since Kozol declared that the modern education system "assures perpetuation of disparities in power and inequities in every form of day-to-day existence" (p. 93) by separating developmental writing students from other college students, treating them as inferior, and limiting the types of courses made available to them.

(Re)Productive Spaces of Student Learning

Traditionally, then, developmental programs have not worked to create equal educational opportunities for students; instead, they have produced and perpetuated a hegemonic space oppressing the poor, minorities, and academically disadvantaged which comprise the majority of developmental students. However, it does not have to be this way. John Dewey (2011/1916) and Antonio Gramsci (2000) both saw the potential for such marginalized spaces to become educational democracies, sentiments which were synthesized by Henry Giroux (1987, 1988) in his assertion that educational institutions can become terrains of struggle, both for and against the status quo.

The idea that educational institutions can become spaces for struggle begins with educational philosopher John Dewey. In *The School and Society* (1915), "The Child and the Curriculum" (2008a/1902), and *Democracy and Education* (2011/1916), Dewey detailed the symbiotic connection between society and schools. Schools and the activities which take place there are a reflection of, and inseparable from, the wider community in which they exist (Dewey, 2008b/1909). For Dewey, schools were "embryo communities" (1915, p. 174), "institution[s] in which the child is, for the time…to be a member of a community life in which he feels that he participates, and to which he contributes" (2011/1916, p. 88). Although Dewey's interest in education occurred only as part of his wider concern about progressive social change (Festenstein, 2009), he recognized the essential role that education plays in creating a democratic society. Education, he concluded, is the means for the "social continuity of life" (2011/1916, p. 3) and the "primary ineluctable facts of the birth and death of each one of the constituent members in a social group" (2011/1916, p. 3) make education necessary, for "the life of the group goes on" (2011/1916, p. 3). To Dewey, society and educational institutions were intrinsically linked. Attempting to separate the influence of educational institutions from society was as impossible as trying to separate individual men from society: "men are not isolated non-social atoms, but are men only when in intrinsic relations" to one another, and the state represents them only in "so far as they have become organically related to one another, or are possessed of unity of purpose and interest" (Dewey, 2008b/1909, p. 231-2). By extension, then, the educational institution is a mirror of its society: an organization which contains the same power structures and social constructs as its greater community. Because it contains these same power structures, it also contains the same forces of inequality and exclusion and the same means of perpetuating them. However, while forces in both oppress by denying equal access to

resources and opportunities, oppression is not inevitable. Dewey saw democracy as the answer to disrupting oppressive forces and creating social change, and to Dewey, there was no better place for society to learn democracy than in its schools (Dewey, 2008b/1909).

In this belief—that forces which perpetuate inequality and oppression are not inevitable and that society and educational institutions share a relationship which can work to lessen these forces—Dewey shares a similar philosophy to that of Antonio Gramsci. A contemporary of Dewey, Gramsci is known best for his work about cultural hegemony and the idea of a cultural superstructure, but he was also interested in education and how it can disrupt hegemonic forces of inequity and oppression and bring about a radical democracy that gives voice to all members of society (Ives, 2004). With this philosophy, which he mentions in the writings that would be later become known as *The Prison Notebooks* (Gramsci, 2011), he ties together Dewey's idea of educational insitutions as reflections of the larger society with the struggle for societal change and purports his view that education was essential for both maintaining the hegemonic superstructures and for attempting to destroy them (Mayo, 2010b). However, social change and cultural emancipation can only be enacted with education and literacy as preconditions. For Gramsci, literacy becomes "the central pedagogical and political mechanism through which to establish the ideological conditions and social practices necessary to develop social movements that recognize and fight for the imperatives of a radical democracy" (Giroux, 1987, p. 6).

One of critical pedagogy's leading voices, Henry Giroux was highly influenced by the philosophies of both Dewey and Gramsci. Like Gramsci, he views literacy as a primary factor for change: "As both the mastery of specific skills and particular forms of knowledge," Giroux wrote of Gramsci's necessity of literacy and education, literacy has to "become a precondition for social and cultural emancipation" (1987, p. 2). Like Dewey, Giroux also views schools as

social institutions which mirror greater society in their power structures and in their production and reproduction of oppression and inequality. However, Giroux's synthesis of Dewey's and Gramsci's ideas goes beyond the recognition of schools as politically charged spaces of oppression. Integrating Dewey's idea of schools as extensions of society with Gramsci's notion of literacy as a means for disrupting hegemonic forces, Giroux was able to view schools as spaces of both resistance and agency, where struggles take place between competing discourses, ideologies, and behaviors (George, 2001). As a result of these struggles, schools are not merely reproductive but also productive, producing various amounts of both acquiescence and resistance simultaneously (Giroux, 1988). In this, an educational institution becomes a "terrain of struggle" (Giroux, 1987) within which change can first occur and then be transferred to larger society, and literacy functions as its chief weapon. However, the outcome of struggle is not inevitable; it is uncertain for which side literacy will triumph. As such, literacy becomes a "double-edged sword; it could be wielded for the purpose of self and social empowerment or for the perpetuation of relations of repression and domination" (Giroux, 1987, p. 2).

Developmental Writing Courses as Terrains of Struggle

If we accept Giroux's premise that educational institutions are terrains of struggle and that literacy is "not approached as merely a technical skill to be acquired, but as a necessary foundation for cultural action for freedom, a central aspect of what it means to be a self and socially constituted agent" (1987, p. 7), then it is easy to see the developmental writing class as one of those terrains of struggle for the emancipation of a marginalized and oppressed segment of the educational community. Developmental writing programs hold the potential both to disrupt hegemonic forces by developing literacy skills in a marginalized population and to

perpetuate the status quo by keeping these students on the academic fringe through inequality of resources and opportunity.

The very existence of developmental writing courses can be seen as a disrupting force against traditional power structures. They allow open entrance for students who would not otherwise be able to prepare for and enter college, ultimately resulting in degrees which lead to increased career and financial opportunities. Once on campus, for most developmental writing students—who are not male, white, or economically privileged—their presence in the academic community alone becomes a disruptive force. This follows Gramsci's (2000) implications of working for change from within the system rather than fighting it from without. Educators can also work toward this disruption. Cushman (2006) uses writing itself as a metaphor to explain the important role that teachers play in creating this disruptive force: "Writing teachers are in a position to, at the very least, explain to students how they are being written through this displacement, and at the very best, they are in a position to facilitate students' revisions of themselves in this place" (p. 361).

However, developmental writers do not necessarily see themselves as agents of disruption. While there are undoubtedly developmental writers who are in college simply for the learning experience matriculation provides, it is reasonable to assume that the majority are in college for practical reasons related to jobs and finances (Saxon & Boylan, 1999). In this, basic writers do not want to disrupt the hegemonic educational monolith of higher education; they want to become a part of it. College provides a route to a degree, which in turn becomes the route to a career and better socio-economic conditions for themselves and their families. To them, the current education system is both an oppressor, excluding certain socio-economic groups, and a liberator, providing the most salient means for improvement in socio-economic

conditions. Once they have gotten through the school door, the trick then becomes moving from a position of exclusion to one of inclusion and all the benefits it brings. As Smith (1997) argues, educators should work to facilitate our students' goals, even if they run counter to disrupting the educational status quo: "We *are* ethically bound by students' own aims, even if those aims seem uncomfortably close to elite values. Our distrust of values does not permit us to tell students what they 'really' want, or should want" (p. 317).

Technology as a Terrain of Struggle

One way in which educators can work to speed the repositioning of developmental writers into the greater academic community and lessen their marginalization is through the use of computer-assisted course delivery. However, such course delivery can also be seen as another terrain of struggle with the potential to both disrupt hegemonic forces and to perpetuate the status quo. On one hand, it provides to developmental students the same resources and short-and long-term economic benefits as those available to their college-level counterparts; on the other, it restricts opportunity for those who do not have access to the necessary technology or the ability to use it while simultaneously learning course content.

Cynthia Selfe was one of the first researchers to recognize the important link between technology and literacy. In 1982, she co-founded and edited *Computers and Composition: An International Journal for Teachers of English*, and in that same decade, she provided leadership to the National Council of Teachers of English's Assembly on Computers and English and to the Modern Language Association's Committee on Computers and Emerging Technology (Burns, 1999). As part of her keynote address to the Conference on College Composition an Communication in 1998, she called for composition instructors to "pay attention to matters of literacy and matters of technology in our teaching and in our students' lives" (Burns, 1999, p. x);

this call for awareness became the basis for her important 1999 work, *Technology and Literacy in the Twenty-First Century*. In it, she discusses the new responsibility for language arts teachers to teach digital literacies as a way to disrupt the digital divisions which fall along economic, racial, and gender lines and to ensure the necessary literacies for all groups. "Literacy alone is no longer our business," Selfe writes. "Literacy and technology are. Or so they must become" (1999, *Technology and Literacy in the Twenty-First Century,* p. 3).

In the three decades since Selfe noted the link between technology and literacy, institutions of higher education have embraced her call, and a large percentage of college courses are now offered which utilize computers to facilitate course delivery. At the college level, 19.8% of all college students took at least one online course in 2006 (Allen & Seaman, 2007), with estimates placing hybrid courses ranging from 5% (Allen, Seaman & Garrett, 2007) to 21% of all college courses offered (Sener, 2003). According to the Sloan Foundation, two-year colleges are leading the growth in online classes by accounting for nearly half of the online enrollments, and 87.8% of those two-year colleges who participated in the study anticipated their online growth rates to continue (Allen & Seaman, 2007). These numbers are all the more significant when compared to the overall enrollment growth rate of only 1.3% (Allen & Seaman, 2007).

These computer-assisted courses have the potential to disrupt hegemonic forces. This is particularly true with the economic status quo. For developmental students, especially, computer-assisted course delivery has the potential to affect both immediate finances and long-term economic inequities. These students tend to be older and poorer than their college-level counterparts, with more dependents and longer work hours (Boylan, 1999; Boylan & Bonham, 2007; Saxon & Boylan, 1999). A course delivery which allows students to complete assignments at home, create a flexible study schedule around work and family obligations, and reduce trips to

campus for class meetings “has the potential to knock down many of the hurdles developmental students often face such as problems with child care, transportation, and parking” (Carpenter, Brown & Hickman, 2004, p. 35). Welker and Berardino’s study (2005-2006) of hybrid courses confirms the benefits of the flexible scheduling that computer-assisted courses provide: one way flexibility was expressed by students was as “accommodation of things that intrude into busy lives such as sickness, family demands, work schedule, weather, personal activities, and distance from campus. These attributes contribute to student savings in terms of time and resource expenditures” (p. 45). In addition, the self-paced study of some computer-assisted courses would allow students to speed through course content, perhaps finishing the course early enough to take an accelerated freshman course at mid-term during the same semester. Computer-assisted delivery might also work to solve the long-term socio-economic differences which Selfe (1999) directly correlates to a lack of technology literacy and access. Computer-aided courses could work to ease students into computer literacy and more independent learning (Maffett, 2007), as well as provide “an opportunity to leverage the new technologies of the Internet to achieve the skills they need to stay competitive in an increasingly digital job market” (Martyn, 2003, p. 1).

Colleges also seek financial benefits through computer-aided courses courses. Administrators see computer-aided courses as a way to cut costs through increased space utilization and reduced instructor expenses (El Mansour & Mupinga, 2007; Irvine, 2006; National Center for Academic Transformation [NCAT], 2010c; Young, 2002). Once the course is established and all the content materials created, full-time instructors and graduate teaching assistants could be replaced by undergraduate learning assistants and tutors, who would answer questions and explain basic course material (Twigg, 2008a and 2008b). Mastery exams—and possibly even essays—could be graded by computer rather than by instructors. Therefore, fewer

instructional contact hours and fewer instructors would be needed, even for a much larger student enrollment and drastically reduced number of sections. As Carol Twigg, Director of the National Center for Academic Transformation, explains, "By replacing expensive labor (faculty and graduate students) with relatively inexpensive labor (undergraduate peer mentors and course assistants) where appropriate, the projects decrease the person-hours devoted to the course and free faculty to concentrate on academic rather than logistical tasks" (2003, p. 30). This reduction in instructors was accomplished at Tallahassee Community College, which redesigned its freshman composition course by using computer-assisted delivery:

> TCC reduced the number of full-time faculty involved in teaching its English composition course from 32 to 8 and substituted less expensive adjunct faculty without sacrificing quality and consistency. In the traditional course, full-time faculty taught 70% of the course, and adjuncts taught 30%. In the redesigned course, full-time faculty teach 33% of the course, and adjuncts teach 67%. Full-time faculty were freed to teach second-level courses where finding adjuncts is much more difficult. By making these changes, TCC reduced the cost-per-student by 43% and produced an annual dollar savings of $321,000. (Twigg, 2008b, sec. How can we afford all these great ideas)

Even a cursory look at the website for the National Center for Academic Transformation (hereafter referred to as NCAT)—a non-profit consulting agency which is employed by colleges to redesign courses using technology and personalized learning which increase student success and decrease expenses—demonstrates its concern with instructional cost savings. This is seen in hundreds of references to cost savings on its website, in its supporting articles which often refer to student outcomes and learning with the business term "productivity," and in its Course Planning Tool's detailed focus on costs (For a copy of the Planning Tool, see NCAT, 2010b).

NCAT proudly claims on the first page of its website that the 30 institutions it assisted from 1999 - 2004 under a grant from the Pew Charitable Trusts "reduced their costs by 37% on average, ranging from 20% to 77%, and produced a collective annual savings of about $3 million" (NCAT, 2010e). Indeed, with many of the programs NCAT has consulted, reduced instructional costs alone have determined program success. (For examples, see Harrington, 2013.)

While computer-assisted courses have the potential to disrupt hegemonic forces, they also have the potential to perpetuate the status quo. As Dennis Baron (1999) reminds us, "Researchers tend to look at the cutting edge when they examine how technology affects literacy. But technology has a trailing edge" (p. 32), and in higher education, that trailing edge is manifested in developmental students who are less likely to have access to the technology than their college-level counterparts due to economic conditions, ethnicity, and age (Boylan, 1999; Caverly & MacDonald, 2002; Maffett, 2007; Rainie, 2010; Saxon & Boylan, 1999; Stine, 2004). For example, in a survey conducted as part of the developmental writing program review at Delta State Community College (Please note: the names of the colleges and certain scholars have been changed throughout this dissertation; for a complete list, contact the author.), 14% of the college's developmental students did not have home access to a computer; 49% did not have home access to the high-speed internet service required to complete online activities; and 19% did not have home internet service at all (Madonowitz & Harrington, 2008). These figures align with the national statistics (Rainie, 2010). Although proponents of technology-based courses cite campus computer labs as providing necessary access (Caverly & McDonald, 2002), such labs simply do not provide enough access; for many students, family and work obligations limit the amount of time they can spend on campus (Tinto, 2008), and computer labs might not be open

during the hours when students with family and work obligations are available to use them (Nash, 2005).

Likewise, the economic savings that colleges realize might also work against developmental students. Any money gained by increased enrollment or higher student-to-instructor ratios must be weighed against additional tech support, additional computer labs, and increased academic assistance programs—all of which are fundamentally essential for success for a course with computer-based activities and reduced personal interaction with the instructor. The importance of support in computer-assisted courses is easily seen in research about online courses. Liu, Gomez, Khan, and Yen (2007) determined that technical support is one of the most important factors in online student success: "Technical problems that learners cannot easily fix or have to wait for a long time can put learners behind schedule, frustrated, and unmotivated" (p. 537). Young and Norgard's research (2006) found that students themselves realize that technical support is one of the main factors for success in online classes, and as Nash (2005) demonstrates, even giving students the opportunity of increased support, whether they use it or not, works to eliminate feelings of frustration and isolation. Providing proper support is vital for developmental students, who often lack the academic, critical thinking, and self-regulated learning behaviors necessary to survive in college without intensive assessment, counseling, and other learning assistance services (Saxon & Boylan, 1999). The Director of NCAT at first disagreed that additional funding needed to be spent on technology if existing technologies are used and their use smartly designed (Twigg, 2003); however, she later admitted that institutions who are capable of creating successful technology-assisted courses must make a commitment to support services:

> Learner readiness involves more than access to computers and to the network. It also involves access to technical support for using navigation tools and course-management systems. Students also need to be aware of what is required to be successful in technology-intensive courses. Making the change from face-to-face instruction to online learning involves far more than learning to use a computer. Many students are set in their ways after a lifetime (albeit brief) of passive instruction. They need preparation in making the transition to more active learning environments. (Twigg, 2004, sec. Institutional Readiness Criteria #7)

Yet many colleges lack the services to provide proper support to instructors and students, both with technology and academics (Tinto, 2008), and as researchers noted at Coastline Community College, those support services which are provided are often not available during weekend and late evening hours when most community college students' lifestyles allow them to complete their online activities (Nash, 2005).

Unfortunately, barriers to the benefits of computer-assisted courses are also being raised by developmental educators, who have been reluctant to offer computer-assisted courses. At the same time that 25% - 41% of all college-level courses were either online or hybrid delivery, only 3.8% of developmental classes were offered online, with an additional 3.6% as a type of hybrid class (Gerlaugh, Thompson, Boylan & Davis, 2007, p. 3). This low number for developmental students is striking considering that "99% of community colleges and about 70% of universities offer developmental courses" (Boylan & Bonham, 2007, p. 2); approximately 40% of incoming students test into developmental levels, with some institutions reporting as high as 70% for particular subjects (Saxon & Boylan, 1999). These numbers reflect the general resistance among developmental writing educators to expand computer-assisted course offerings (Gerlaugh,

Thompson, Boylan & Davis, 2007; Maffett, 2007). This hesitation occurs primarily over the unresolved issue of whether developmental students, with the unique problems and personal situations they bring to the classroom, can be successful in courses requiring heavy independent study and more lenient attendance. (For a detailed explanation of problems associated with online course delivery at the developmental level, see Stine, 2004).

The importance for students in this terrain of struggle created by computer-assisted delivery of developmental writing courses is exemplified in Carpenter, Brown and Hickman's 2004 article, "Influences of Online Delivery on Developmental Writing Outcomes." Although this article is about online delivery, not CAPSI, it succinctly demonstrates both the division among developmental educators regarding computer-assisted delivery and the high-stakes effect that this division might have on those students caught up in the struggle:

> Paradoxically, though, online developmental writing may loom as an obstacle in the perspective of many developmental educators, even though it has the potential to knock down many of the hurdles developmental students often face such as problems with child care, transportation, and parking; scheduling class times around family and work responsibilities; feeling part of the academic community; and becoming more proficient with current technology. Furthermore, if online education continues its rapid growth pattern, it is possible that developmental students may be disadvantaged by limiting online access as an option at the beginning of their academic work and thus limiting their full preparation for access and success in subsequent community college and university work. (p. 35)

CAPSI as a Terrain of Struggle

Despite the conflict regarding computer-assisted course delivery for developmental students, the use of this delivery method has increased in recent years. This is especially true for a computer-assisted course delivery method known as CAPSI—Computer-Aided or Computer-Assisted Personalized System of Instruction—which has flourished at the developmental level since 2007. However, it is still uncertain whether CAPSI works toward decreasing the marginalization of developmental writers by successfully speeding their inclusion into the greater academic community and providing better financial opportunities or if it is simply a new form of marginalization.

CAPSI courses were first named and described by researchers Pear and Kinsner (1987-1988) as a hybrid of computer-aided instruction and Fred Keller's (1968) Personalized System of Instruction (PSI). Keller had developed the concept of PSI to help students who were geographically isolated to learn course content on their own without depending upon the constant presence of an instructor. This approach was explained in his seminal article, "Goodbye, Teacher" (1968). Keller detailed five basic elements that he considered to be essential to personalized learning: self-pacing, repeated attempts to demonstrate mastery of course material through unit tests, use of lectures and demonstrations primarily for motivational purposes, dominant reliance upon written communication, and use of student proctors for feedback and tutoring.

This concept of learning through a self-paced, modularized program was embraced by a large community of teachers and researchers in the 1970s as an alternative to traditional, lecture-based teaching methods (Eyre, 2007). After this brief spurt of popularity, however, PSI fell out of favor with instructors, and by the 1980s, interest in PSI waned considerably (Eyre, 2007). Perhaps the most practical reason that PSI failed to take hold was the large amount of time

required to administer a PSI course. The time and work related to developing the materials, training and supervising proctors, and grading multiple test attempts drove many in the PSI camp back to more traditional delivery methods (Eyre, 2007; Grant & Spencer, 2003). By 1986, in a survey of 43 instructors who had used PSI in the past, only 23 were still using the method (Grant & Spencer, 2003). However, the recent proliferation of computers and internet-based grading tools has made PSI a viable alternative to traditional course delivery, and CAPSI courses have been described as the perfect delivery method for PSI instruction (Grant & Spencer, 2003). Pear and Crone-Todd (1999) called CAPSI an important link between educational technology and computer technology, and the acceptance of online learning at all levels has helped facilitate a resurgent interest in personalized instruction in recent years (Eyre, 2007). This growth in CAPSI course design has been so rapid, in fact, that NCAT has labeled it a "movement" (NCAT, 2008a, Sec. "Course Redesign in Western PA").

This growth has been especially large on the developmental level. As noted previously, computer-assisted developmental courses were not offered in the same amount as on the college level. The year 2007, however, marked a dramatic change in computer-assisted delivery for developmental students. In 2007, the Tennessee Board of Regents mandated the use of course elements which mirrored CAPSI delivery when it required the developmental programs at all nineteen of its schools to redesign their courses. That same year the SUNY system also submitted proposals to NCAT which resulted in a redesign pilot of developmental writing at Erie Community College. Texas also participated in an initiative in 20007 which led to pilot projects in developmental writing at Richland College, Austin Community College, University of Texas at El Paso, and Brookhaven College. (In fact, the State of Texas went so far in its pursuit of redesigned courses that its state government in 2006 passed House Bill #1, Section 61.076 of the

Texas Education Code, requiring the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to "implement a project under which institutions of higher education selected by the Board will review and revise entry-level lower division academic courses…to improve student learning and reduce the cost of course delivery through the use of information technology" (Texas Education Code, 2006).) Several colleges in Florida competed for grants to redesign developmental programs with NCAT's guidance (E. Bunting, personal communication, August 2010), and according to John R. Donnelly, Vice President for Instruction and Student Services at Piedmont Virginia Community College, legislators in Virginia have asked their state colleges to redesign their developmental courses using computer-aided delivery methods to increase student success and reduce costs (personal communication, April, 2011)—the same goals that NCAT markets. Higher education systems in West Virginia, Ohio, and Kentucky are also currently working on redesigning their developmental courses toward CAPSI delivery, with individual schools in California and Montana designing modularized developmental writing courses on their own initiative.

This growth in CAPSI courses has been spurred on by many different entities, working with courses in various disciplines. The majority of published, peer-reviewed research on personalized instruction continues to come from scholars in Canada, particularly at Athabasca University, which as home to the Canadian Institute of Distance Education Research and the *International Review of Research in Open and Distance Education* gives them ample opportunity to observe PSI in action. At Manitoba University, where PSI and CAPSI were created, the website *CAPSI* (n. d.) reports that the system is "an empirically supported teaching method" which is "currently being used at a number of educational institutions" (sec. Welcome, para. 1), and the researchers connected to the site offer consultation on implementing CAPSI courses. In

the United States, the largest group championing CAPSI delivery appears to be NCAT, an educational consulting group who describes itself as "an independent, not-for-profit organization that provides leadership in using information technology to redesign learning environments to produce better learning outcomes for students at a reduced cost to the institution" (NCAT, 2010e, para. 1). Since its formation in 1999, this group has consulted with colleges nationwide on almost 150 redesigned courses in various disciplines that used CAPSI elements, including courses in mathematics, behavioral sciences, composition, and many others (NCAT, 2010c). In 2008, Carnegie Mellon University received national attention when researchers there created a specialized software for personalized instruction called ALICE, and it has worked with several colleges in Western Pennsylvania to redesign courses in several disciplines to personalize instruction (Schackner, 2008). In October, 2010, Blackboard, a for-profit educational resources company, announced that it had teamed up with education provider, K12 Inc., to design modularized, self-paced developmental courses and sell them to colleges who want to outsource their remedial offerings; with courses designed and taught long-distance by K12 employees, students progress individually through the course rather than meeting as a class (Young, 2010).

On their websites and in promotional and public relations materials, Blackboard and NCAT do not acknowledge either PSI or CAPSI. Instead, they refer to such course delivery methods as modularized or unit-based, and NCAT goes so far as to give their own labels to different CAPSI formats, such as the Emporium Model and the Buffet Model. (For a full list of formats, see Twigg, 2003.) However, these approaches are clearly CAPSI in design: course content is modularized in a series of content units and accessed via computer technology, students progress at their own pace with the ability to repeat modules until they have demonstrated topic mastery, lectures are minimized or completely eliminated, and tutors and

instructional assistants play an increased role while instructors' roles are reduced. All these entities, then, draw upon the tenets of CAPSI course delivery to improve educational programs, particularly those multi-section, high-enrollment, first-year courses with low student success and retention rates (NCAT, 2010e, para.1), which includes developmental writing courses.

The promise of reduced instructional costs paired with successful student outcomes makes CAPSI-based developmental programs highly appealing both to administrators and students, and it also allows for attention and resources to be paid to student demographic which has historically been placed at the academic margins. However, as a technology-driven course delivery method, CAPSI exits within the same terrain of struggle as online and hybrid courses. Further, the unique self-paced, personalized nature of CAPSI instruction might add to the struggle for developmental writers rather than lessen it.

In general, CAPSI courses show much promise in increasing student success rates and cutting instructional costs. The success of PSI- and CAPSI-based courses in math and the behavioral sciences is well documented (Eyre, 2007; Sherman, 1992). Despite detractors who railed against the method in the 1970s, an abundance of research on the teaching method was conducted, especially in Canada where behavioral scientists embraced the method and began to view it as the perfect model for distance education (Sherman, 1992). There was a journal dedicated to PSI, titled the *Journal of Personalized Instruction,* and the Center for Personalized Instruction served as a clearing house for the flood of articles and studies that indicated that PSI was superior to traditional delivery methods and put forth the best ways to motivate students, train student proctors, and maximize the potential for all the elements in the system (Sherman, 1992). NCAT also claims success with the majority of its redesigned courses:

> More than ten years of experience with NCAT's basic methodology, proven in scores of courses in different disciplines in different institutional settings, has resulted in an approach to redesign that can reliably produce positive academic outcomes at reduced costs. NCAT's leadership reported, "at this point, we can say with certainty what works in redesigning mathematics and, to a certain extent, in foreign languages." Steadily increasing numbers of success stories in psychology, humanities and the sciences are adding confidence to the conclusion that the redesign methods will work for any faculty team that "follows the rules" faithfully and that is located in a campus setting where the basic readiness criteria are met. (National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, n.d., section Lessons Learned)

Using a method to assess the overall success of its models which it calls Proof of Concept, NCAT claims that its concepts are highly successful, and among the programs it has helped redesign since 1999 are a large number of success stories in various disciplines, ranging from mathematics to biology. In its first redesign initiative alone, NCAT worked with thirty two- and four-year colleges nationwide and claimed success both in terms of improved student learning and decreased instructional costs with courses in several disciplines. It reported that twenty-five of the programs showed significant increases in student learning, with the other five showing learning equivalent to traditional course delivery format; eighteen programs reported a "noticeable decrease in drop-failure-withdrawal rates, ranging from 10 - 20%, as well as higher course-completion rates" (NCAT, 2010c, Sec. "Initial Proof of Concept," para 2). Cost-cutting proved just as successful: "Most dramatically, all thirty institutions reduced their costs by 37% on average, ranging from 20% to 77%, and produced a collective annual savings of about $3 million" (NCAT, 2010c, Sec. "Initial Proof of Concept," para 2). Two subsequent rounds of

course redesign initiatives conducted and evaluated by NCAT at schools nationwide showed similar results.

However, for developmental writing students, CAPSI courses might very well increase inequalities and marginalization rather than reducing them. Despite the reported successes of CAPSI delivery, the overwhelming majority of these successes has occurred in non-composition courses, and compared to the large amount of data available from CAPSI courses in other disciplines, especially mathematics and the behavioral sciences, very little data is available on the success of CAPSI writing courses. This lack of research has created a split among developmental educators on whether to offer CAPSI courses, with the two sides exemplifying Giroux's terrain of struggle.

On one side of the struggle are those who seek to disrupt this hegemony and lessen marginalization by offering computer-assisted courses and CAPSI delivery. They believe that developmental writers are not only capable of using the technology and achieving successful outcomes but that denying these students access to computer-assisted courses puts them into a weaker position than their non-developmental counterparts in higher-level courses and job opportunities (see Carpenter, Brown & Hickman, 2004). In addition, the individual elements of CAPSI delivery can aid in speeding the students' inclusion into the greater academic community by allowing students to proceed more quickly through the course, thus potentially putting them into college-level courses sooner than if they had matriculated in a traditional course. Further, the personalized study targets individual deficiencies and gives every student a unique learning experience; instead of spending time listening to lectures on topics in which they are already proficient, students receive instruction only on those areas in which they demonstrate weaknesses. Some CAPSI-based programs would even allow for students to test out of content

modules completely. Finally, the computerized delivery prevents course drift. All students use the same materials and complete the same assignments, regardless of instructor, and course competencies are standardized across all sections for all students.

On the opposing side of the struggle, the hegemonic forces which strive to perpetuate the status quo empower those who believe that developmental writers lack the access to the technology and the student skills necessary to matriculate in a class which can be considered a de facto independent study, thus perpetuating traditional course delivery which continues the long-established marginalization of developmental writers. If these educators are correct, then CAPSI courses might very well perpetuate inequalities and marginalization rather than reducing them. Cost-conscious schools might use CAPSI technology as a way to slash instructional costs as its computerized format allows schools to replace full-time instructors with adjuncts and tutors and drastically increase the student-to-instructor ratio. This deepens the second-class feeling of the instruction given to developmental students by further limiting student contact with highly qualified instructors. In addition, if developmental writers who do not have access to technology or the academic skills necessary to succeed in an independent study situation are forced into CAPSI classes, their failure and withdrawal rates might increase. This could prove academically devastating to a student population whose educational progress is already tenuous at best. Further, CAPSI is an enhanced independent study; instead of working to eliminate the marginalization, it might actually increase it. Developmental students are moved so much to the academic fringe that they are not even part of a class anymore but only a presence in a campus lab, and they might have no contact at all with other developmental writers. Adding technology-based classes to the existing course offerings to give students a choice between traditional delivery and CAPSI delivery is a possible solution, but in most cases, it is not this simple.

Economic realities and employee constraints often mean *replacing* courses program-wide and eliminating instructor positions rather than adding additional courses (NCAT, 2010b). This restricts the student's choices in course selection, and instead of opening additional opportunities and choices for an already marginalized segment of the college community, it further limits them.

An examination of the effects of CAPSI delivery on the marginalization of developmental writers is further complicated by the defining element of CAPSI delivery which differentiates it from other types of computer-assisted courses—the personalized, self-paced nature of a CAPSI course. In online or hybrid courses, the students all work at the same pace on the same material, and they can take advantage of class discussions, either in person in hybrid courses or on discussion boards in online courses. In CAPSI courses, students progress at different rates through the course as they learn the material through self-paced mastery learning (Pear & Kinsner, 1987-1988), so it is possible that no two students are working on the exact same course activities at the same time. It is further complicated if students are allowed to test out of skills modules and individualize course content. Such classes make the discussion tools which are a staple of online courses difficult to use, if not impossible. Some CAPSI courses, such as the eStudio courses at Edison State College (E. Bunting, personal communication, August 2010), require students to regularly meet in groups. Such meetings are problematic, however. Instructors have to weigh the merits of trying to include all students in the group discussions, no matter where they are in their coursework, by leading a generalized discussion which can be too superficial or by delving deeper into specific skills topics in which some of the students have already demonstrated proficiency and do not need to study. The personalized nature of CAPSI courses also has the potential for increased student procrastination when

compared to online or hybrid courses, which has been a perennial problem with PSI-based courses since Keller's invention of the method in 1968 (Eyre, 2007). This is because the assignment deadlines must be flexible to meet the needs of students who work more slowly or who need to repeat skills modules until mastery is achieved. Such flexibility might prove too much to overcome for students who lack the autonomy to work independently to meet deadlines or who wait until the last minute to do their coursework.

CHAPTER TWO

LOCATING THE MARGIN:

THE GAP IN THE LITERATURE

The conference center's meeting room is filled with developmental educators from across Tennessee, all of whom seem to be either nervously inhaling coffee from small Styrofoam cups or fidgeting with the plastic name tags hanging around their necks. An unusually hot, humid spring day, an overcrowded and stuffy room. A woman in a beige business suit introduces herself as a Tennessee Board of Regents' Vice President and explains the new state-wide initiative—redesigned developmental courses which make use of technology to modularize course content to speed students through developmental courses and to save money for both schools and students.

The instructors shift in their plastic chairs. It's becoming clear that we are going to be expected to design completely new developmental programs.

The Vice President introduces the NCAT consultant hired to oversee the redesign process, who shows a PowerPoint about the history of NCAT, its philosophy, its successes…the instructors nervously slurp more coffee, waiting for the ax-fall we all know is coming—

Then it flashes onto the screen. A slide which details ways to slash instructional costs.

Save Money for Both Students and Institutions By…

1) Increasing the student to faculty ration
2) Lowering the number of offered sections
3) Reducing the number of full-time instructors by hiring adjuncts and student facilitators to directly interact with students
4) Eliminating time spent duplicating work in creating course materials

Everyone wins, she claims. Students progress more quickly because they're allowed to go at their own pace rather than be held back by the instructors and the rest of the class. Full-time faculty are free to spend their time on other, more important activities like research and teaching upper-level courses. And the college saves money by lowered instructional costs, which they can roll over into other projects and educational needs.

The developmental instructors stare down into our coffee cups. We don't teach upper level courses nor do research—only four of the schools in the system offer courses above the sophomore level, and at the community colleges, time spent researching is frowned upon as it takes time away from teaching our5-5 writing course loads. Very few of the attendees have doctorates, some don't even have master's degrees. A bachelor's degree is all that's required in Tennessee to teach developmental writing, and those of us without master's degrees and 18 hours in English cannot teach classes at the college level.

The audience sits in awkward silence. It's becoming clear that we are going to be expected to design completely new developmental programs which put our own jobs in jeopardy.

The consultant seems oblivious to the increasing anxiety levels in the room. NCAT has forms which must be completed, she tells us, which detail the cost effectiveness of the proposed programs, proposed assessment methods, and available resources. All schools are required to submit a redesign plan, and the plans which hold the most promise for reducing costs and speeding student progress will be funded for a two-year pilot period. At the end of the pilot period, those programs which are the most successful will be implemented state-wide. The change is coming, she announces, and it's up to you to create it and assess it.

The room stares back at her.

Reports are due in June, she concludes.

A collective groan breaks the silence cloud hovering near the fluorescent-lit ceiling. A few stifled laughs sound out disbelievingly. There's not enough coffee to stop the rumbling now. She blinks from behind her podium, not understanding why the deadline announcement created such instant opposition. It's three months away, she reminds everyone, there's plenty of time to write it.

"We don't work in the summer," a lone educator ventures bravely from the back of the room.

Another blink. "Pardon?"

"We're on nine-month contracts," he explains. "We're done the first week of May. We aren't even on campus in the summer."

"Well…but it has to be done by then."

The Vice President steps forward to mollify the room, more by her authoritative position on the state governing board than from anything she says, enough that the PowerPoint presentation can continue.

Slides about programs that other schools have previously designed flash by. Click—Emporium Model. Click—Buffet Model. Click—Replacement Model.

The successes of other schools are detailed. Click—Tallahassee Community College which created freshman composition sections of 1000 students. Hundreds of thousands of dollars were saved. Click—a school in Texas which replaced full-time instructors with student assistants and adjunct facilitators, eliminating classes completely. Thousands of dollars saved.

Click, click, click…but not one developmental program is showcased, and not one highlighted program had attempted to test students out of content modules as the Tennessee Board of Regents wants.

There are no more attempts to hide by staring into coffee cups now. It is the Big Bad Wolf of slashed instructional jobs covered in the sheep's clothing of student success, all writ large in colorful PowerPoint bean people.

The consultant then chastises the room. The preliminary data supplied by the colleges in February as part of the first stage of planning is unacceptable. Few programs had assessment data at all. The math for the instructional costs didn't add up realistically, when one school reported a cost of $450 per student and another just $98. Colleges were unable to recognize and leverage existing resources. Colleges failed to explain how they would modularize course content and charge tuition only for those units the students needed to complete. Some colleges failed to explain how the redesign would save the school money while others actually increased the amount per student.

"But we haven't done any assessment on our developmental program in years," another instructor ventures, "at least not the kind of data you wanted. And we weren't told how you wanted us to create the new program."

"Well, I can't tell you that," the consultant counters, her own frustrations rising. "You have to figure it out on your own because every school is different."

"But you wanted it a certain way, you just said so."

Grumbling and mumbling fills the room while the consultant nervously tries to turn back time ten minutes. The Vice President comes forward and again tries to mollify the room. This time, it doesn't work. So ignoring the growing frustration and general sense of rebellion infiltrating the room, the consultant orders us into break-out groups, to share ideas on how each school plans on redesigning its programs, how each will determine modules and mastery testing, how each will speed student progress, how each will lower costs.

"Mastery?" a writing instructor leans toward me as we play musical chairs and end up in a group of math instructors. "What's mastery in writing? How do you decide if a thesis statement is 'masterful'? What if you have an essay that's well-developed but has significant grammar errors, and an essay that's shallow in thought but has perfect grammar—which is mastery?"

"I have no idea," I mumble, avoiding making eye contact with both the Vice President and the consultant.

"Have you seen any research on mastery learning for developmental writing? Have they given us any information at all on best practices?"

"No. Nothing."

As shown in Chapter One, developmental writing has traditionally existed on the margins of the academic community. Because of this marginalized position, developmental writing can be seen as a terrain of struggle between forces of resistance against and forces of acquiescence to hegemonic structures maintaining the status quo. Further, technology works to create a secondary terrain of struggle within the developmental writing classroom, and one form that this technology takes is CAPSI course delivery. CAPSI, like developmental writing itself, has the potential to lessen the marginalization of developmental writers by increasing student success rates and speeding student advancement into college-level courses, but it also has the potential to maintain marginalization by preventing success for those students who do not have access to the technology and by isolating students through a course delivery which functions as enhanced independent study.

Unfortunately, even as the use of CAPSI course delivery is growing in developmental writing classes nationwide, few articles have been published about technology and its affect on developmental writers (Stine, 2010), and no research has been published to date in peer-reviewed journals or in dissertation work on the success of CAPSI developmental writing programs. This lack of data has perpetuated a division among developmental educators which makes visible the terrain of struggle: those educators who believe that technology benefits developmental writers by disrupting forces of inequality, and those who believe it harms students by perpetuating them. Because of this gap in the research, the extent to which CAPSI works to lessen or maintain the marginalization of developmental writers by affecting student success remains unknown.

The Division Between Developmental Educators

The idea that educational technology in developmental writing courses exists as a secondary terrain of struggle can easily be seen in the published literature. This appears as a clear division that has emerged between developmental educators on whether classroom technology helps or hinders developmental writers. Rebecca Mlynarczyk and Bonnie August, editors of the *Journal of Basic Writing*, concisely described in their Editors' Column in 2004 this split within the developmental education community:

> At first glance, it would seem that computers can solve many of the problems our students face. Word processing programs greatly facilitate drafting and revising and help students to correct many of their grammar and spelling errors. Online courses provide the time and space for busy students to join a community of writers whenever and wherever they log on. Course management software offers a range of convenient features: students can access course syllabi and assignments, click on links to read relevant sources, "voice" their opinions on the class discussion board, and submit their essays at any time of day or

> night through an electronic drop box. But while we welcome the convenience that computers offer to us and our students, we are also conscious of the possible inequities that come along with them. "The digital divide" is a phrase that resonates especially strongly for teachers of "basic" writing." (p. 1)

This leads them to a conclusion that that "using computers to teach basic or second-language writing leads to questions and complexities as well as opportunities" (p. 1). Unfortunately, the lack of research on the subject has prevented a closure in this divide since the first articles about technology and developmental writing appeared in the late 1990s.

On one side of the division are those educators who embrace technology and who believe that technology can bring both educational and financial gains to developmental writers, thus working to lessen marginalization. They realize the benefits that technology can bring, such as the flexible scheduling to matriculate around work and family obligations, financial savings, and a knowledge of technology (Carpenter, Brown, & Hickman, 2004). These educators assume developmental students already have access to the technology and the ability to use it while simultaneously learning course content. An early and important article on the effects of classroom technology on developmental writers was Hansman and Wilson's 1998 article, "Teaching Writing in Community Colleges: A Situated View of How Adults Learn to Write in Computer-Based Writing Classrooms," which was among the first articles to investigate how the writing tools themselves affect the writing processes for adult, developmental learners; they determined that writing in computer classrooms changed the way that these students wrote because it gave them both a social context within which to write and a way to construct their own writing process that traditional, pen-on-paper processes did not. Yet even in this early article, the authors do not mention to what extent a lack of computer skills or typing abilities might hinder

students' ability to use these new tools and interfere in learning the writing process. Another example is Simms and Knowiton's 2008 article on electronically delivered developmental math courses for adult learners, in which they begin their abstract by succinctly stating, "A pertinent question for developmental educators is not whether computers should be used in developmental education, but how" (p. 20). Citing the work of Oblinger (2003), Boud and Prosser (2002) and Knowiton's own work with Thomeczek (2007), they conclude that adult learners gain from the efficiency, flexibility, and other benefits that the integration of computers and learning experience provides, yet admit that "Few practical examples of appropriate learning experiences have been disseminated in the academic literature. Therefore, developmental educators struggle to create efficient and relevant learning experiences for nontraditional students" (Knowiton & Thomeczek, 2007, p.20). Caverly and McDonald, leading researchers in the use of instructional technologies at the developmental level, also belong to this side in the struggle. In "TechTalk: Access to Distance Education" (2002), they introduce the article by writing that "One lynchpin in the success of any distance education effort is access" (Caverly & McDonald, 2002, p. 38). However, they assume that students have both access to and the ability to use the technology. This is evident in the fact that they dedicate only two paragraphs to statistics on demographics demonstrating that developmental students as a group are least likely to have high-speed/DSL access but conclude that schools provide computer labs for student use, thus providing access; this is followed in the rest of the 3-page article by a lengthy prediction of how students will benefit from the technology in the future, including microchips implanted directly into students' bodies.

On the other side of the division are those educators who believe that developmental writers do not possess the computer skills and affective characteristics necessary to succeed in a

computer-based course. While some educators consider students to be digital natives, others such as Vaidhyanathan (2008) have warned that such assumptions are not only untrue but can also be debilitating to students. An early article in the *Journal of Developmental Education* was even more blunt: "For students of the 'computer generation,' assumptions regarding their previous experience with computers may be erroneous. As a result, many entering freshman who have had limited access to computers in their high schools or homes find themselves in a deficit position upon entry to college" ("Jumpstart," 1998, p. 38). Lei (2009) provided support for this position; her study of pre-service education students showed that while they might know how to use cell phones and social network sites, they lack knowledge about the various types of technology used in classrooms. Educators on this side of the divide fear that pushing developmental students into computer-assisted courses could prove harmful for those already on the educational fringe who lack the access, learner autonomy, and self-motivation needed to complete self-paced, self-directed work while simultaneously learning to write (Maffett, 2007; Morrison, 1999). They fear that students risk being frustrated and overwhelmed by the technology, isolated in an absence of classmate interaction, and left behind (Maffett, 2007; Martyn, 2003; Yena & Waggoner, 2003). All of this, then, would work to maintain the marginalization of the status quo rather than lessen it. As Stine (2004) succinctly asks, "Are we justified in requiring basic writing students to work online, given the hardships that may cause for some?" (p. 51).

Even in the earliest articles about technology and developmental writing, which did not appear until the end of the 1990s, this division among educators on whether technology could be helpful or harmful to developmental writers had already been formed. This is seen most clearly in the conflicting viewpoint of a pair of early articles about technology and curriculum development. One of the first articles to focus on online technology specifically in

developmental writing courses, “Basic Writing: Curricular Interactions with New Technology” (Stan & Collins, 1998), presents the findings of a nationwide survey of basic writing teachers about the ways in which developmental writing curricula have changed because of new technologies. Researchers found that classroom technology use among instructors was characterized by resistance to using the technology, a lack of infrastructure and access to the technology, a lack of access to professional development opportunities, and a lack of visibility for successful integration of technology. Although this article shows a hesitancy by instructors to embrace technology, a second article published the same year, “Technology, Basic Writing, and Change” (Grabill, 1998), contradicts this hesitancy and urges developmental educators to embrace technology as a “wedge for engaging in decision making” (p. 91) at the institutional level to shape the purpose and identity of basic writing programs.

The division and struggle between the two sides of the technology debate only grew over the next decade. Interestingly, a conflict emerged between contributors to the *Journal of Basic Writing* on whether developmental writers possess the necessary technology skills and access to be successful in courses which make heavy use of online technology. This conflict is clearly visible in four important articles published between 2004 and 2010.

In “Issues of Attitude and Access: A Case Study of Basic Writers in a Computer Classroom,” Pavia (2004) presents her findings from a case study of students’ technology skills. The article details the frustrations felt by two developmental writers in a technology-assisted classroom who have access to the computers but experience difficulties using the word processing program, and so they fall behind in coursework and are intimidated by their peers who have superior knowledge of the technology. Pavia demonstrates how having access to the

technology hardware does not necessarily mean having access to the technology when a lack of skills interferes with use.

Stine's (2004) article on hybrid course delivery also supports Pavia's position. Although Stine argues that hybrid delivery might prove to be the best of both worlds, she also details all the potential pitfalls and problems that developmental writers might encounter when half of the class is completed online; she also implies that not all students are digital natives when she confides in her endnotes that the students she writes about spent the semester prior to her class learning the technology in a traditional classroom before they began her hybrid course. (It is also worth noting that Stine's developmental students are not true developmental students in the traditional sense; they are returning students in a master's level program, and so are already experienced with the expectations of a college classroom.)

In contrast to Pavia and Stine, Klages and Clark in "New Worlds of Errors and Expectations: Basic Writers and Digital Assumptions" (2009) make a broad assumption that "students come to the classroom with the basic fluency of digital natives" (p. 32) and that "most basic writers are adept at accessing information digitally" (p. 32); where these writers lack digital skills, they argue, is in producing digital information and code-switching between informal cyber-chat and academic cyber-literacy. While Klages and Clark might very well have legitimacy in claiming that their urban students who matriculate at LaGuardia Community College have technology access and skills, that their claim cannot be generalized to other programs is exemplified in an article appearing the following year by Stine.

In what is perhaps the most important article on technology and developmental writing to date, "Teaching Basic Writing in a Web-Enhanced Environment" (Stine, 2010), Stine admits that "Internet-based learning is not a natural fit for BW (basic writing) students, and instructors

planning hybrid or distance learning courses face a difficult task" (p. 33). Here, with an additional six years experience working with developmental students and online technology since her first article, Stine clearly counters the overly optimistic belief seen in her earlier article, and the fact that she does so in a recently published article is telling about the immediacy of such lack of access. However, what makes this article so important is not her stance on access and ability or her conclusions about ways to ease these students into technology but her literature review which begins the article. In it, Stine notes that surprisingly little has been published about what works in online developmental writing instruction and that little theory exists to guide developmental writing instructors. This lack is exemplified in the low number of articles published in the journals, including surprisingly the *Basic Writing e-Journal*, which is the online sister publication to the *Journal of Basic Writing*. A search of its archived issues from 1999 to the present revealed only one article on technology (see Otte & Collins, 1999), and this article, which appeared in 1999, focused on now-common technologies, such as online databases and email.

The Literature on CAPSI Courses

The lack of research about technology's effect on developmental writers that Stine presents so effectively in her article is especially important in regards to CAPSI courses. As explained in Chapter One, despite the uncertainty of whether CAPSI delivery works to lessen or maintain the marginalization of developmental writers, it has spread widely at the developmental level since 2007. Unfortunately, the amount of research and data on CAPSI developmental writing courses has not kept pace with its implementation. The amount of research available on CAPSI writing courses is minimal compared to the research available on PSI and CAPSI delivery in general, as well as the increasing number of publications on CAPSI developmental

math courses. Further, a review of the literature finds not a single published article on the success of CAPSI course delivery for developmental writers, yet CAPSI developmental writing courses are proliferating nation-wide as administrators insist on top-down program redesigns. This reveals an obvious gap about the success of CAPSI developmental writing courses. This lack of research only serves to perpetuate the division between educators and makes it difficult to determine if marginalization is lessened for developmental writers by using computer-assisted delivery.

The amount of research on PSI and CAPSI delivery in general is very large. Overwhelmingly, it shows that personalized instruction is not only highly successful across a variety of disciplines, as shown in works by Sherman (1992) and by Eyre (2007) which give an historical overview of the data, but that it also proves effective for low-aptitude students, as demonstrated by Ironsmith and Eppler (2007). In the 1970s, an abundance of research on PSI was conducted, especially in Canada, where behavioral scientists embraced the method and began to view it as what Sherman (1992) called the perfect model for distance education. There was a short-lived journal dedicated to PSI, titled the *Journal of Personalized Instruction,* and the Center for Personalized Instruction served as a clearing house for the flood of articles and studies that indicated that PSI was superior to traditional delivery methods. By the 1980s, interest in personalized instruction had waned, despite moving the delivery method online and creating CAPSI courses, and by the end of the decade, as Eyre (2007) demonstrates, the number of published articles about PSI or CAPSI had fallen off drastically.

Although research continued on this course delivery method into the 1990s, the research became more focused. It dealt mainly with the most common problems associated with PSI courses since its inception—procrastination, mastery learning, and improving proctor

feedback—rather than its success in specific disciplines (Eyre, 2007). As in the 1970s, the majority of interest in PSI classes today still lies in behavioral studies with occasional forays into other disciplines, especially mathematics. The majority of research on PSI continues to come from scholars in Canada, particularly at Manitoba University, home of the ongoing CAPSI website, and at Athabasca University, which as the open university of Canada and home to the *International Review of Research in Open and Distance Education* gives them ample opportunity to observe CAPSI in action. It is also important to note that in these articles when researchers call for additional study they are usually referencing the traditional problem areas rather than exploring the possibilities of expanding PSI across the disciplines or into the developmental level.

Most recently, a small increase in articles about CAPSI has occurred. This is most likely due to the increasing acceptance of alternative delivery formats and to the advances in technology which have eliminated many of the time-intensive tasks associated with the method (Eyre, 2007; Grant & Spencer, 2003). These technology advances have led Grant and Spencer (2003) to proclaim CAPSI to be an ideal format for online classes. This position is mirrored in several studies by Joseph Pear, who has distinguished himself as the leader in CAPSI research and whose 1999 article with Crone-Todd, "Personalized System of Instruction in Cyberspace" was the first article to consider the beneficial intersection of online and PSI deliveries.

Likewise, a search of dissertations and theses during the past two decades reveals over two dozen works which focus on PSI or CAPSI, demonstrating that PSI is still appealing to emerging researchers. In general, the dissertation and thesis work on PSI and CAPSI concludes that this course delivery method is equal to and most often more successful than traditional courses and those online courses which do not make use of self-pacing and mastery learning.

This substantiates research findings from Canada since the advent of PSI in 1968. (In fact, it is interesting to note that the overwhelming majority of theses on PSI are by students from Manitoba University and that nearly half of all dissertation and theses work on PSI combined comes from this single university.) Assuming that PSI is a viable delivery method, then, many of the dissertations and theses focus on researching those specific elements of PSI which have traditionally been viewed as problematic. This includes the use of peer proctors (see Lambert, 2009; Martin, 2000; Wirth, 2004; and Worland, 1998), procrastination (see Murdock, 2000; Schnerch, 2007), and self-paced mastery learning (see Crone-Todd, 2002; McNeal, 2004; and Springer, 2006). Dissertations and theses also focused on researching the effectiveness of PSI in specific courses, such as algebra (see Sheehy, 1989), an EFL course in Japan (see Shinohara-Egawa, 1996), medical courses (see Doom, 1999, and Shpritz, 1993), and even one on bowling (see Cregger, 1994) and one on golf (see Leech, 2011). All of these concluded that PSI was a successful course delivery method.

Three dissertations broke away from focusing on the specific components of PSI and its effectiveness in various disciplines to research those characteristics brought to a PSI course by the students themselves. Lubber (1992) examined the influence of individual student characteristics to academic success and overall satisfaction in a PSI basic communication course; although learning style preferences, test anxiety, and communication apprehension were studied, results indicated that only learning style preferences significantly correlated with academic success. In a similar investigation on using personality variables to predict academic success in PSI courses, Petska (2006) determined that extraversion does not have a direct relationship to academic success as measured by final course grade; additional analysis suggested that conscientiousness and unit completion, which is a measure of learning strategy, predicted the

successfulness of group membership within the introductory psychology class studied. Mintz (2001) focused on success rates if a discussion group component was added to a traditional PSI course model and determined that the addition of such a discussion group improved overall performance, both at the individual and group levels.

More important to this dissertation are three dissertations which researched CAPSI, and all found the course delivery method to be successful. The first dissertation is an action research study of changes in a CAPSI course (Davis, 2002). Although Davis never uses the term CAPSI, which is surprising given that the term had been in use since 1988 (Pear & Kinsner, 1988), what she describes is a CAPSI course—an internet-based PSI psychology course. Not surprisingly, she determined that the combination of PSI and the internet was a successful instructional strategy and that the labor-intensive issues associated with PSI were mitigated by the technology. Liu's (2003) findings concur with Davis when she concludes that the Master's program she created using an online PSI delivery is viable; like Davis, Liu also does not use the term CAPSI. Svenningsen (2009), however, does use the term, and not surprisingly, he matriculated at the University of Manitoba, where the leading CAPSI researchers are based. What differentiates Svenningsen's research from that of Davis and Liu is his systematic approach to comparing CAPSI to other forms of instruction. He conducted three experiments in which different assignments were substituted for CAPSI activities in order to assess CAPSI's effect on course content knowledge and critical thinking development; in all three experiments, the students who participated in CAPSI sections consistently outperformed those in non-CAPSI sections on both content knowledge and critical thinking questions on the final exam.

Unfortunately, none of these dissertations or theses researched PSI and CAPSI in writing courses. When connected specifically to writing, the picture on the success of personalized study

is much murkier. An early dissertation from 1980 researched the viability of exporting a PSI English class from the private laboratory school where it was created to a public school setting in terms of economical efficiency, teaching effectiveness, and desirability (Rose, 1980). Although Rose found that PSI was a successful method for teaching grammar, composition skills were not taught, and Rose's study never determined if the students' overall writing skills increased. Corbin's 1985 dissertation focused on PSI and developmental writers—the only dissertation to do so—but the focus was not on whether writing abilities improved but on the personality trait of persistence as a predictor of future academic performance. His results are hardly surprising: persistence was found to be a strong predictor of future academic success, while non-persistence was a strong indicator of failure. He further concludes, although his supporting information is weak, that positive evidence of PSI as an effective instructional method appears in his study. What is important, however, is his admittance that his conclusions about the effects of mastery learning for developmental English are tentative due to unknown variables such as student motivation. Another dissertation that was directly related to writing and PSI does not mention PSI at all, and at its 1988 date, the course was too early to be a CAPSI design. However, its focus on self-paced learning in a writing course makes it an important study for this dissertation. Misegadis (1988) conducted an experiment among Composition I students to determine if self-paced or traditional course design resulted in greater student achievement. What she concluded was that difference in instruction had no effect on writing skills achievement; there was no significant difference in writing skills post-test scores nor in final grades. In addition, students preferred the traditional delivery method to the self-paced method.

Unfortunately, no other dissertations on PSI or CAPSI and writing, self-paced writing instruction, or the moduralization of writing course content have appeared since 1988. This lack

of dissertation research points directly to the large gap in the literature about CAPSI developmental writing courses. Even Joseph Pear and Kathleen Silva, researchers working with the CAPSI System project at the University of Manitoba were unable to provide documentation on its use in writing courses when an email inquiry was sent to them in August, 2011, requesting information.

The Literature on CAPSI Developmental Writing Courses

This minimal amount of research on PSI or CAPSI in writing courses is paralleled in the lack of published articles about CAPSI developmental writing courses. Only a handful of articles have been published on personalized, self-paced study for developmental students, and none were found during this literature review process that focused on developmental writing courses. Those articles which have been published about CAPSI and developmental students have focused almost exclusively on math. For example, the only article in the *Journal of Developmental Education*'s TechTalk column to discuss actually implementing a CAPSI course focused on developmental math (MacDonald & Caverly, 1999) and is now over a decade old. Despite the proliferation of CAPSI-based developmental courses nationwide since 2007, the TechTalk column has not revisited the topic.

In the 1990s, Thomas Brothen developed an interest in computer-assisted, personalized study and wrote a series of articles about the topic, including one of the earliest articles in 1994 on computer-assisted delivery and developmental students. This article, "A Computer-Assisted Exercise that Increases Self-Regulated Studying," touched on using technology to create a self-paced and individualized course, yet the article focused only on one exercise that students could complete on computers and did not mention CAPSI specifically as a course delivery method. Brothen continued to explore the idea of PSI and computer-assisted, personalized instruction

during the next five years, but none of his articles focused exclusively on developmental writers and CAPSI. "Transforming Instruction with Technology for Developmental Students" (Brothen, 1998) specifically mentions PSI and its possibilities for transforming writing, but no new research or data is given. This article simply repeats research results by James Kulik, conducted nearly a decade before, who found that PSI interventions are beneficial for 90% of students and increase average performance on exams from the 50th to the 70th percentile (as reported in Bonham, 1990). Likewise, no data specific to developmental writing students is shared. This article also does not present anything significantly different about personalized study that was not in Brothen's earlier 1996 article, "Comparison of Non-Performers and High Performers in a Computer-Assisted Mastery Learning Course for Developmental Students," which, despite its title, focused on CAPSI in a introductory psychology class, not in a developmental-level course. Although correlations were drawn between the psychology course and developmental level courses, there are too many differences for an accurate comparison, especially considering the difference in disciplines and the college-level of the psychology course. A 1999 follow-up study to this article by Brothen and Wambach appeared three years later, but it, too, investigated personalized study in an introductory psychology course. To date, Brothen has not published an article that focuses exclusively on developmental students in CAPSI writing courses.

During the literature search for this dissertation, only one peer-reviewed article was found which presented research data directly connecting personalized study to writing improvement. Published in 1984 in *Teaching of Psychology* (Allen, 1984), the article predates CAPSI, and the author presents findings from an abnormal psychology class in which the instructor created a personalized system of instruction for student writing. Results showed that a personalized system with multiple attempts at revision improved student writing in 12 of 18

criteria. There are two interesting aspects about this article. The first is its reference to the work-intensive nature of mastery learning of writing, for which the grading cannot easily or accurately be done even now via computer. Second, its literature review section references Keller's concept of PSI but does not mention any other articles on PSI or personalized writing instruction. Apparently, the lack of research on PSI and writing was just as large in 1984 as it is today.

The Gap in the Literature

As shown, then, the amount of research published in journals and studied for dissertations on CAPSI developmental writing courses is minimal, and none of the published articles researches in-depth to what extent such delivery is successful for developmental writers and or how success is determined. The most extensive information to date on the success of CAPSI developmental writing courses comes from non-published sources which, unfortunately, are connected to commercial interests and so cannot be trusted to be completely unbiased. This includes the National Center for Academic Transformation (NCAT), which has posted information on its website on approximately 150 CAPSI programs of various types and disciplines, including eight which focused on writing and three which created personalized developmental writing programs. The information collected by NCAT on CAPSI writing programs is large compared to the minimal amount that has been published in journals and gives an in-depth look into many of its programs, but it needs to be approached cautiously. (For a full analysis of all the writing courses that have been guided by NCAT, please see Harrington, 2013.) For its unsuccessful or incomplete programs, little detailed information is provided beyond the initial abstracts of the program proposals. Unfortunately, no conclusions are drawn for why programs failed, and in the final status report for all of its unsuccessful programs, NCAT writes the same conclusion: "The project serves as a good example for how to think about redesigning a

large-enrollment course." (For examples, see NCAT, 2008d and NCAT, 2009b.) Pearson Publishing also posts to its website selected case studies of programs which have used its software successfully in their classes, although many of these use the computer-assisted activities as supplemental activities rather than as complete course delivery.

Clearly, then, a gap in the literature exists regarding the success rates of CAPSI developmental writing programs and how success is determined. Few articles have been published about this course delivery method for writers, and no articles have been published which present research about CAPSI and developmental writers. This is despite the large amount of research and data available showing that this delivery is very successful for courses in other disciplines and for low-aptitude students, as described above, as well as the rapid proliferation of CAPSI developmental writing programs since 2007. Further, this lack of research has allowed the struggle to continue between educators who believe that developmental writers can benefit from computer-assisted courses and those who believe that such courses may be harmful. This dissertation, then, targets this gap in the literature.

CHAPTER THREE

FRAMING THE NEW MARGIN:

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

----- Message -----

From: Anna Harrington

Sent: Tuesday, September 13, 2011 2:37 PM

To: Dayton, Matt

Subject: Redesign Plan

Dear Matt ,

My name is Anna Harrington, and I'm the new person at Valley State who will be overseeing the redesign in reading and writing. My contacts at Pearson said that you might like to be contacted about the redesign. I have the proposal that was sent to TBR, our proposed modularized syllabi, as well as other information that you might find helpful. We're implementing our reading redesign this spring and writing the following fall. For writing, we're going to follow a modified version of the composition program that was used at the University of West Alabama. If you'd like copies of any of this, please let me know. -- Anna

----- Message -----

From: Dayton, Matt

Sent: Tuesday, September 13, 2011 5:09 PM

To: Anna Harrington

Subject: RE: Redesign Plan

Anna,

Thank you so much for writing. We'd love to see anything you can share. Our specific challenge is that the Board has been discouraging about our determination to include a traditional classroom (discussion/workshop) component. It seems that a whole-group discussion is inconsistent with the rule about repetition, which prohibits us from asking students to work on something they've already mastered. We think we can do both. Thanks again for writing. Good luck in your new position!

Matt

----- Message -----

From: Anna Harrington

Sent: Wednesday, September 14, 2011 9:35 AM

To: Dayton, Matt

Subject: RE: Redesign Plan

Hi, Matt,

I'm interested in learning more. Is this a writing or reading course? And can you share with me how you've been trying to defend including the traditional/group component? And another question that pairs with this, which might help with the rationale--why do you still want to include traditional course delivery?

The problem that I've seen with having whole group discussions like what you're proposing comes down to this: What topic do you talk about when each student in the course could be working on a different skill? (Because TBR wants a personalized course in which students can

progress at their own pace, you will have students at all different places in the course at all different times.) You'll have some who have already worked through that topic weeks ago (and so it's meaningless to them), others who are weeks away from getting to the topic (so they feel left out and frustrated), and still others who are repeating the course and will be bored hearing a lecture/discussion on a topic they already know. So, you might have a whole group discussion in which only 2 or 3 students can participate, and the rest of the class is left out. Those programs that I know of who have tried to do this ended up either not showing any improvement over the traditional course and eventually scrapped the group discussions and whole class meetings because they couldn't figure out what to discuss, or changed the nature of the discussion all together so that it strayed from course content --for example, instead of talking about writing, they discussed study skills, time management, etc. But, then the problem with that situation is that they were using contact time to do work other than what fell within the content of the course, and none of it applied to meeting the student course learning objectives.

I've attached some documents which you might find helpful. If you would like to have a meeting in which we could brainstorm ideas and discuss rationales/best practices, I'd be happy to do that. We're in the middle of redesigning Reading to roll-out this spring, and writing next fall. I hope this information helps.

Anna

----- Message -----

From: Dayton, Matt

Sent: Monday, September 19, 2011 7:12 PM

To: Anna Harrington

Subject: RE: Redesign Plan

Anna,

Thank you so much for your generous reply. Your information has been very helpful. I'd heard about the West Alabama program but hadn't seen the details. They've done some terrific work.

Our redesign I mentioned is for both writing and reading. The Board has given us tentative approval, but we've had to defend our desire to include discussion. Our feeling is that teacher-led workshops are the gold standard in the teaching of reading and writing. Of course, we'll exclude them if we have to.

We know it's going to be a challenge to shape a workshop/ discussion so that it accommodates everyone--from the student who is working a little ahead of the others to the student who returns from a previous semester (and has to be able to pick up where he left off) to the student who falls behind. We'll have to create some very specific lesson plans.

There will no doubt be some repetition, and some students may have to listen to information they've heard before or participate in a discussion about a passage they're read before. But the alternative--dumping the workshop/discussion entirely--makes us too unhappy. We hope we can retain some piece of a traditional classroom--or maybe I should say non-traditional traditional classroom, in which we jettison the lecture and the grammar review and do what those guys in West Alabama do (but with, alas, groups a bit larger than 10).

Thank you again for taking so much time to share ideas with us.

Matt

As explained in Chapter Two, a gap in the literature exists regarding the success of CAPSI developmental writing programs. Few articles have been published which discuss computer-assisted course delivery for developmental writers, and no articles were found which present unbiased data on CAPSI course delivery for developmental writers. Despite the lack of research on CAPSI writing programs, the research which is available on CAPSI delivery demonstrates that it is highly successful in math, basic psychology, introduction to sociology, and other large-scale, foundational courses. When the available research on CAPSI is examined, we can easily recognize both the tempting positive possibilities for such programs, such as increased student success and faster integration into the greater academic community, and the negative possibility that such programs might not be successful for developmental writers. Colleges are designing and implementing CAPSI developmental writing courses at an increasing rate, yet there is no pool of research to draw from for information relating to success in such courses. Further, it is still undetermined if the delivery method is even viable for the unique needs of developmental writing students who often lack both the academic skills and general traits needed for successful matriculation (Morrison,1999; Saxon & Boylan, 1999), who are less likely than their college-level peers to have access to the technology due to socio-economic factors (Boylan 1999; Boylan & Bonham, 2007; Caverly & McDonald, 2002; Rainie, 2010), and who display anti-authority and anti-matriculation tendencies (Morrison, 1999).

The lack of research results in developmental educators being divided on whether to use computer-assisted delivery for developmental writing courses: those educators who believe that

developmental writers can benefit from computer-assisted courses and those who believe that such courses may be harmful. This split exemplifies the terrain of struggle within which developmental writing courses currently fall.

Critical Framework for Examining CAPSI and the (Re)Marginalization of Developmental Writers

In this divide between educators, Giroux's terrain of struggle is made real. The traditional, lecture-based courses represent the hegemonic forces working to maintain the status quo of marginalization, and CAPSI courses represent the forces seeking to disrupt the hegemony and lessen marginalization. In this, then, a theoretical framework of critical inquiry, which seeks to examine the extent to which marginalization can be reduced and hegemonic forces can be disrupted to create change, is ideal for examining CAPSI's potential as a course delivery method.

With its roots traced to the Frankfurt School, critical theory is viewed as a way "to liberate human beings from the circumstances that enslave them" (Horkheimer, 1982, p. 244). Because it allows for the investigation of societal power hierchies and inequalities, we can use Dewey's (1972/1897 and 2008a/1902) proposition that educational institutions mirror the greater society in which they exist to narrow its focus to investigate those power hierchies and inequalities found in traditional education. In particular, it allows us to focus on those student groups who have been historically marginalized or disenfranchised by school systems themselves, and by doing so "recognize connections between their individual problems and experiences and the social contexts in which they are embedded" (Stevens, 2002, para. 2).

A framework of critical inquiry also exposes the need for action to disrupt the hegemonic forces suppressing traditionally oppressed groups within educational settings, such as those relating to social class, race and ethnicity, and gender (Shor, 1992). In education, that also

includes the academically under-prepared students matriculating in developmental writing. In this, critical theory reveals the "moral choice" that MacLaren (1989, p. 158) views as distinguishing "education as a function of society and society as a function of education. We need to examine that choice: do we want our schools to create a passive, risk-free citizenry, or a politicized citizenry capable of fighting for various forms of public life and informed by a concern for equality and social justice?" (p. 158). Posited within this moral choice, then, we are compelled to examine course delivery methods to discover if they are meeting students' needs and ensuring the greatest success for the greatest number of students, for success at the developmental level translates into leaving the marginalization of developmental courses for the greater college-level community.

Therefore, a framework of critical inquiry is a natural fit for examining the terrains of struggle within developmental writing classes. It allows for attention to be focused on how issues regarding student success connect to the marginalization of developmental writers and whether this delivery works to lessen this marginalization or perpetuate it. Further, if the use of CAPSI course design is ultimately proven to decrease marginalization, a critical framework allows for supporting this method as a course delivery for changing the current positioning of developmental writers.

The Focus of the Study and its Primary Research Question

Within the framework of critical inquiry, this dissertation proposes to investigate the terrain of struggle created by the use of CAPSI course delivery for developmental writers. The primary research question focuses on a fundamental aspect of this delivery: to what extent are CAPSI developmental writing courses successful? In order to address this primary research question, two sub-questions are raised: 1) How is program success defined, measured, and

determined?; 2) How do the individual design elements of their program design affect success? To answer these questions, two case studies of CAPSI developmental writing programs are presented: Delta State Community College and Mountain State Community College.

These two schools were specifically chosen for several reasons. First, each school is a community college which offers similar degrees, programs, and majors. Second, the schools present an overview of developmental programs in the state of Tennessee, as they are located in the western and eastern sections of the state, respectively. Third, each school belongs to the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR), which means that both have been mandated by TBR to redesign their developmental writing courses by the fall semester of 2013, meeting the same program competencies. Fourth, they are both required to use the ideas and concepts presented by NCAT, the educational consulting group TBR hired to help with the program redesign, who have adopted the elements of CAPSI delivery for their redesign initiatives. Lastly, following the initial pilot periods, each school measured and presented the extent of its success to the same TBR officials, using the same reporting tools.

Both colleges have been preparing for redesigned developmental writing programs for the past six years. In 2007, TBR mandated reform of its developmental programs, including writing, at all of its thirteen community colleges and six four-year universities. The organization had conducted a study in 2005 which determined that 74% of all recent high school graduates enrolling at the community colleges were required to take at least one developmental course; further, 50% of all non-traditional students tested into developmental courses (Twigg, 2007, para. 2 - 3 and para. 10). Compounding the problem, these developmental courses typically posted high drop-failure-withdraw rates of 40 - 50% (Twigg, 2007, para. 2 - 3). TBR concluded that developmental courses created a significant barrier to degree attainment in terms of time and

costs (Twigg, 2007, para. 10). Therefore, they sought reform to remove these barriers and mandated redesign of all developmental programs. Their goal was to "develop and implement a more effective and efficient assessment and delivery system that will increase completion rates for students, reduce the amount of time that students spend in remedial and developmental courses, and decrease the amount of fiscal resources that students dedicate to remedial and developmental education" (Twigg, 2007, para. 1).

What TBR was asking for without actually stating it was the implementation of CAPSI courses. They wanted to use technology to individualize matriculation for each student and give students an opportunity to master content at their own pace. However, the element of the TBR developmental program redesign that distinguished it from other personalized study programs was a highly individualized modularization of both course content and tuition (NCAT, 2007a). Specifically, TBR wanted the colleges to design programs which included the following elements:

- Customize the learning environment for each student based on background, learning preference, and academic/professional goals;
- Create a learning environment that allows students and faculty to focus on the skills that students are lacking, to study only topics in which they are unprepared, and to receive mediation assistance only in the areas where they have deficiencies;
- Remove skills overlap that may be present among courses in the current structure to streamline the curriculum;
- Create diagnostic assessments that evaluate specific skills linked to content modules to ensure that students only take the modules in which they have skills deficiencies;

- Allow students to start anywhere in the course sequence based on their learning needs and progress through the content modules at their own pace, spending the amount of time needed to master the module content, proceeding at a faster pace if possible or at a slower pace if necessary; and,
- Permit students to earn variable credit based on how many modules they successfully complete during a term. (Twigg, 2007, Sec. "Modularization: a Key Strategy")

In practice, this meant designing a program comprised of a system of short, targeted content modules which would enable students to save time and money by enrolling in and paying for only those modules that address their deficiencies (Twigg, 2007). Traditional course sections and classroom activities would be done away with, as personalized study and self-pacing meant that each student could be working on skills modules and assignments different from the rest of his or her peers. Also, because students could work at their own pace to complete the modules, they could finish the developmental requirements faster than in traditional, semester-long classes. This would create the possibility that students could finish two courses during one semester if they progressed quickly enough through the modules (Twigg, 2007).

Because both colleges studied in this dissertation belongs to the Tennessee Board of Regents system, both had to follow the same set of state-mandated guidelines in their program development (See Appendix A: TBR Program Guidelines). However, each program was allowed freedom in implementing these guidelines in ways that best met the needs of its student population and available resources. What resulted was two different programs with different syllabi, content, and paths for student success, but both delivered in CAPSI format and measured against the same criteria for success.

Research Methodology

The best research method for investigating these two programs to determine to what extent each was successful is case study. Case study corresponds to critical theory's desires to illuminate forces of inequality and enact social change. As Hays (2004) explains, "case studies investigate contemporary cases for purposes of illumination and understanding. In some instances, case studies are used to provide information for decision making or to discover causal links in settings where cause-and-effect relationships are complicated and not readily known, such as school reform or a particular government policy" (p. 218). Therefore, case study research methodology can shine light on what is meant by success in CAPSI developmental writing courses and the extent to which hegemonic forces are disrupted, allowing educators to implement changes that provide more opportunities for student success and lessen marginalization. Further, it allows for multiple sources of data for triangulation and an embedded analysis of specific issues (Yin, 2008), all within specific and limited boundaries of study (Smith, 1979).

In this dissertation, a critical case study of both programs gives insight into the success of CAPSI developmental writing courses by providing a rich description of both programs selected for study. The methodology addressed the elements of case study as explained by Hays (2004), analyzed data according to the within-case and cross-case methods described by Yin (2008), and allowed for the presentation of findings in two detail-rich descriptions, following the example set by Lightfoot's (1983) seminal case study work, *The Good High School.*

Elements of the Case Study

For this dissertation, the elements of case study were followed as put forward by Hays (2004) in her explanation of case study as a valid qualitative research method. The bounded

limits of the study were established; research questions were created; data sources were selected and collected; and the final data was presented and analyzed. Each element is detailed below.

The bounded limits of the study. One reason case study was selected for this dissertation is because it does not attempt to explain everything happening within a given program; instead, it focuses on answering a few specific issues or problems through creating in-depth, rich descriptions over a short, limited period of time. This matches this dissertation's focus on the limited topic of success rather than an evaluation of all elements of each program. Two elements were necessary to bound this study: the determination of the case, which is also known as the unit of analysis (Patton, 1980), and the length of study.

The unit of analysis. The study was conducted at two community colleges located in different geographic regions of Tennessee: Delta State Community College (hereafter DSCC) in the western end of the state and Mountain State Community College (hereafter MSCC) in the southeastern tip. Both schools offer university-parallel majors for transfer and professional-technical programs leading to either a certificate or an Associate's Degree in the Applied Sciences. Both were part of TBR's developmental program redesign and were required to consult with NCAT throughout the redesign process. Although both schools were also required to follow the TBR A-100 guidelines when designing their new programs (See Appendix A: TBR Program Guidelines), each school was allowed to create individual programs that would best meet the needs of their own student populations.

Length of study. For this study, it was important to differentiate the timeframe in which the programs were created and implemented from the length of study. The timeframe for the creation and implementation of the pilot programs consisted of 2007–2009 for DSCC and 2011–2013 for MSCC. The length of study, during which time the data was gathered, consisted of one

academic year per school, 2011-2012 for DSCC and 2012-2013 for MSCC; all site observations took place during this time.

The Research Questions

According to Stake (1995), one of the most serious obstacles to effective case study research is the temptation to be drawn away from the intended focus of the study and to include too much information not related to the study's focus. To effectively counter this temptation, the primary research question—To what extent are CAPSI developmental writing courses successful?—was referred to throughout each step of the data gathering and analysis processes. Specific sub-questions were also created which worked toward answering the primary research question: 1) How is program success defined, measured, and determined?; 2) How do the individual design elements of their program design affect success? These sub-questions both bound the study and kept the focus on CAPSI's effect on program success and student marginalization.

Further, two key terms needed to be defined in order to answer the primary research question and to draw conclusions about the effect of CAPSI delivery on developmental writers: success and marginalization. The idea of *success* is an extremely large topic, which can range from single course grade assignments to measurements of applied skills in the workplace. For this study, because of the gap in the literature on CAPSI developmental writing programs, there were no previous definitions of success that could be used; therefore, the documentation first needed to be analyzed in order to determine a common, working definition of what success means, and then the documentation was analyzed a second time to determine to what extent this success was reached. Unlike the term success, *marginalization* is a persistent and pervasive idea commonly used to describe developmental writing, which includes a variety of factors from

academic isolation to socio-economic "othering" of the students outside the educational institution. To limit the boundary of the case study for this dissertation, as described below in the Methodology section, marginalization was studied primarily in terms the amount of time students spent in developmental writing—for example, a decreased amount of time spent in developmental writing results in faster enrollment into college-level courses, thus faster inclusion into the greater academic community—and the types and amount of instructional resources dedicated to these students. The effect of CAPSI delivery on marginalization is explored in the conclusions to this study, in Chapter Seven.

Data Sources & Collection Procedures

As justified by Yin (2008), case study methodology allows for multiple data sources to be examined in creating rich descriptions of the programs. For this study, these multiple sources included interviews with program directors and instructors, artifacts which documented the programs' creation and outcomes, site visits, personal reflection, and narratives. Student interviews were not be conducted; however, any information from the students already gathered by the programs as part of their existing assessment program, such as grade distributions, completion rates, test scores, and feedback, was used. The following data sources were collected:

Interviews. An important source of data collection was interviews which helped to establish triangulation of data in that it allowed for checking the perspectives of the interviewees against the documentation for discrepancies. Dr. Tina Madonowitz, former Developmental Program Director at DSCC was interviewed to glean information about how the traditional program was run, the history surrounding the development and implementation of the redesigned CAPSI course, and how success was determined in the DSCC program. In addition, her thirty years of developmental writing instruction provided insight into the overall history of

developmental programs in Tennessee, the problems associated with developmental instruction, and the mind-set of developmental students. The interview was held off-campus in a private location; Dr. Madonowitz member-checked for accuracy and intent both the interview transcripts and the completed dissertation chapters in which her quotations appear. Interviews with several developmental writing instructors at MSCC were interviewed to determine what perceptions they have of the redesigned CAPSI courses and their students' ability to successfully complete them. These interviews were conducted in a variety of coffee shops around the urban area. Although these interviews were conducted, they were not used in the case study.

In accordance with deMarrais's philosophy that in qualitative interviews "researchers learn from participants through long, focused conversations" (2004, p. 52), interviews were conducted which followed what McCracken (1988) labeled the in-depth, open-ended, unstructured, and conversational interview styles which make up the long interview form. The interview process described by deMarrais (2004) was followed: acknowledging the role of theoretical perspectives on shaping the study, beginning with a clear statement of purpose, selecting participants, and creating an interview guide.

1) Acknowledge the role that theoretical perspectives play in shaping the interview — The critical theory in which this dissertation is framed had a direct effect on the interview process. Working within the critical theoretical framework, I constructed general questions which focused on examining issues of marginalization, lack of opportunity, and unequal resources, as well as the perpetuation of such forces and the possibility for change.
2) Begin with a clear statement of purpose —The purpose of these interviews was to gather qualitative data related to the determination and measurement of success in

CAPSI developmental writing courses. It allowed me to determine what steps each program took in creating standards for mastery and assessment tools; what difficulties they encountered; and how/if they resolved these difficulties.

3) Select participants — Selection of participants was criterion-based. The criteria was that the participant had an active role in the design and/or implementation of the CAPSI program, specifically program directors and instructors who had taught in the traditional courses and the new CAPSI courses and could comment on their experiences with the two delivery methods.
4) Create an interview guide — deMarrais posits several suggestions to follow for constructing the questions on the interview guide: create clear, short questions that lead to a detailed response from the participant; formulate questions that ask participants to recall specific events or experiences, which results in fuller narratives; ask a few broad, open-ended questions which work better than a series of close-ended questions; include a mix of descriptive and evaluative questions (pp. 61-63). Keeping these in mind, I created interview guides for the participants (see Appendix B: Interview Questions), which formed the initial round of questioning. Questions focused on the main area of program success and the elements used to determine its extent, as detailed in Chapter Four. Tangential questions focused on those issues related to student success which have perennially plagued CAPSI programs (see Eyre, 2007). For writing programs, these issues translate into issues of mastery criteria, including transference of skills, academic isolation, and learner autonomy. I also heeded deMarrais's advice that the guide is just a guide and the researcher can stray from it when needed: "Because each participant is unique, each qualitative interview

experience will also be unique. Questions can be tailored to fit comfortably into the experience of each interview" (p.53).

Site visits. Site visits to the two schools were conducted in order to understand the importance of location and resources to the program. The visits allowed for conducting face-to-face interviews, gathering documentation, and experiencing first-hand each program's context. This included but was not limited to the resources available at each school, such as computerized classrooms, number and size of computer labs, and locations of labs. These details aided in developing the rich description of each program and in establishing the importance of context, which Merriam (1988) argues is vital to successful case study.

Artifacts. The artifacts related to the programs were examined and provided the most important data for the case studies. These documents were supplied directly from the programs' directors and were either public documents presented to TBR, program assessment documents, or documents created in committee.

1) Redesign proposals — Each program was required to submit to TBR a detailed proposal about their redesigned course. Elements of the proposals included how each program planned to use technology to modularize the course and provide students the opportunity for self-paced study, as well as cost-cutting strategies, assessment plans, and anticipated improvements in success rates and learning. These documents helped to gauge the extent to which the two programs qualified as CAPSI programs, as well as providing vital information for determining success criteria.
2) Other program documentation — A wide variety of other program documentation was also made available for analysis. This included program audits, course outcomes in the semesters prior to the redesigned courses, position papers, and various reports

to administrators and state officials. Also important for determining success criteria were documents provided by NCAT and TBR on their websites and distributed to the two programs.

3) Student course outcomes — Gathered as part of the program assessment and presented in aggregate, student course outcomes and retention data were compiled and analyzed after the initial program designs and pilot semesters were implemented. Data was compared to pre-CAPSI outcomes data to determine whether students were more or less successful in the new CAPSI courses and what effect CAPSI delivery had on accelerated learning and student retention.

Personal reflection and narrative. Personal reflection and narrative provided a personal perspective on program redesign and were used at the beginning of the chapters. This allowed for the use of a dual discourse of the informal tone within the personal narrative and the formal academic discourse within the chapters. It also allowed an opportunity to disclose researcher positionality as a participant in both pilot programs, which is essential due to the nature of case study in which gathered data is analyzed through the researcher's perspective (Hays, 2004), as well as in the selection of the quotes also used to start some of the chapters. The creative non-fiction elements of the opening narratives also offset the formal authority of academic discourse (Johnston-Bailey, 2004).

Data Analysis and Presentation

Once the data was gathered, it was analyzed twice. Looking for emergent patterns, I followed the within-case and cross-case methodologies described by Yin (2008). First, the documentation was analyzed in order to establish the criteria used to determine program success; this was done through cross-case analysis by isolating those elements related to assessment and

success that appeared most prominently in both sets of documents. These criteria are described in detail in Chapter Four. Once the success criteria were determined, the documentation was examined a second time to determine to what extent those success criteria were met. Although generalization is not a primary goal in most case studies, it is possible when based on several studies of the same phenomenon (Hays, 2004); therefore, the second analysis was examined to draw conclusions of whether CAPSI course delivery, overall, provides a pedagogical method that lessens the marginalization of developmental writers within the academic community. The presentation of the three analyses was modeled on Lightfoot's (1983) case study of six schools, titled *The Good High School*.

CHAPTER FOUR:

FINDING THE MARGIN:

DETERMINING CRITERIA FOR CAPSI

DEVELOPMENTAL WRITING PROGRAM SUCCESS

TENNESSEE BOARD OF REGENTS

DEVELOPMENTAL STUDIES REDESIGN INITIATIVE

The Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) invites participation in the TBR Developmental Studies (DSP) initiative to redesign its remedial and developmental math and English curriculum using technology-supported active-learning strategies. The goal is to achieve improvements in learning outcomes as well as reductions in instructional costs. The initiative expects to award a total of $240,000 in grants to participating institutions to support their redesign efforts. The goals of the initiative are to:

- *Increase the quality of learning and assessment that leverage new and emerging technologies against the best of traditional classroom instruction.*
- *Increase remedial and developmental course completion rates and placement rates into college-level coursework.*
- *Demonstrate improvements in student learning outcomes through rigorous assessment.*
- *Streamline the amount of time that students--traditional and non-traditional aged--devote to remedial and/or developmental studies, thus creating significant costs savings for individual students.*
- *Create significant costs savings for institutions that can be reallocated to sustain the redesign of developmental studies and to fund future operations.*

• Expand access to and success in postsecondary education for disadvantaged minority and low-SES students by removing barriers to progress.

• Develop models that are scalable for delivery in diverse settings including 12th grade dual enrollment, mini-term environments such as summer sessions, online delivery, and other modular environments.

• Develop the internal capacity of TBR faculty and staff to continue the redesign process.

…Because access remains a major commitment of the TBR system, there will be increasing demands for remediation efforts as Tennessee's recent and projected population growth is exacerbated by shifting demographics. If Tennessee is to remain competitive, students who are unprepared cannot be casualties of the leaks in the education and workforce training system. Recent TBR policy discussions surrounding the challenges of educational preparation, participation and persistence have placed a great deal of emphasis upon "why" these dynamics exist and "what" the system can do to make a significant difference in the transition to post-secondary education and in students' success once enrolled.

-- From *Call to Participate* (NCAT, 2007a)

As explained in Chapter Three, the primary research question to be answered by this study explores the extent to which developmental writing courses redesigned using elements of CAPSI course delivery are successful. The terrain of struggle in which developmental writing classes function is directly affected by success because this success determines whether and how quickly developmental students are able to move away from the "frontier," the "boundary," the "academic margins," and the "alien world" (see in order Shaughnessy, 1977; Rose, 1989; Mutnick, 2001; and Mutnick, 1996) of developmental writing and into the greater academic

community of college-level matriculation and to what extent such programs are being marginalized. In order to understand the extent of success, we have to address two sub-points: 1) How is program success defined, measured, and determined?; 2) How do the individual elements of program design affect success?

This chapter addresses the first of these two sub-points. It presents an analysis of the redesign documents generated by TBR and NCAT, which mandate use of course design elements found in CAPSI delivery. From this analysis emerges four criteria upon which the overall success of redesigned programs were judged. The extent to which the individual elements of the two redesigned programs studied in this dissertation addressed these four success criteria answer the second question above and form the boundary limits of the critical case studies presented in Chapters Five and Six.

In 2005, TBR conducted a study of its developmental programs at its 13 community colleges and 6 four-year universities state-wide and determined that "academic preparation continues to be a major barrier to successful matriculation among first-time freshmen, regardless of age at time of entry" (Twigg, 2007, para. 2). Study findings revealed that a substantial percentage of recent high school graduates failed to meet college readiness criteria, with 74% of recent graduates required to take a remedial studies course at the two-year colleges and over 40% at the four-year schools; among non-traditional aged students, 50% were required to take developmental courses. Further compounding this problem is the realization that many students who begin a developmental course withdraw or stop attending due to family, work, health, or financial aid issues, resulting in a typical drop-failure-withdrawal rate of 40% to 50% (Twigg, 2007, para. 2). As NCAT noted, these students face significant challenges in persisting: "Completing a series of non-credit courses to overcome deficiencies involves significant time

and money for students, slowing academic progress, and sometimes derailing the momentum that comes with initial enrollment in postsecondary education" (Twigg, 2007, para. 4).

In order to improve their developmental programs, TBR decided to partner with NCAT, who provided the following critique of the programs:

> The current delivery strategy…does not afford an opportunity for students to quickly get up to performance level in one stage so that they can move to the next stage sooner. Students are required to take an entire course even though they may only be deficient in a portion of the topics. Restated, even if someone is marginally below the standard for freshman-level College Algebra, they are still placed into a 16-week course in Intermediate Developmental Algebra that requires them to sit through the full course to satisfy one or two limited or missing competencies. (Twigg, 2007, Sec. Need to Redesign, para. 3)

and

> the current course structure standardizes the student learning experience as if all students' learning needs, interests, and abilities were the same. All students are required to learn at the same pace and with the same instructional strategies as the entire class. Because learning occurs in specific increments—especially in these skills-based courses—and the time required to master each increment varies from person to person, the current system lacks the flexibility that could lead to greater student success. (Twigg, 2007, Sec. Need to Redesign, para. 6)

Overall, they determined that "The developmental course structure can present a significant obstacle to students' ability to realize their educational goals" (Twigg, 2007, Sec. Need to Redesign, para. 4).

In response to the study and a need for improvement, TBR decided to radically restructure its developmental programs. In addition to hiring NCAT to oversee the implementation of CAPSI elements in its developmental programs, TBR also took three steps which changed the fundamental nature of its developmental courses, the enrollment numbers, and the academic background of its students:

1) It eliminated a two-tiered structure of developmental courses that had previously offered both DSPW 0700: Sentences to Paragraphs and DSW 0800: Paragraphs to Essays level courses and replaced it with a single developmental writing course known as ENGL0810: Learning Support Writing.

2) It changed the ACT placement scores. Two significant changes to ACT scores were made. First, it increased the number of students matriculating in college-level courses by lowering the required college-level placement score from 19 to 18. Second, it mandated that only students who scored from 13 to 17 could enroll in ENGL0810: Learning Support Writing. Those students who score 12 or below must be offered non-credit tutoring and allowed to retest; no limits were placed on the amount of tutoring or number of retests the students could complete.

3) It eliminated mandatory enrollment into learning strategies or college success classes in which students learned various note-taking, test-taking, and other soft student skills. Previously, TBR policy stated that students who had two or more academic deficiencies (there had been a total of seven—two in reading, two in writing, and three in math) were automatically enrolled into the college's learning strategies course. TBR changed the policy to make these courses optional. (Tennessee Board of Regents, 2010a)

TBR also issued new student competencies that each program was required to meet and a set of best practices (See Appendix A). Each school was required to submit a proposal on how it would redesign its program to meet these expectations and cut costs, and staff members at TBR reviewed each proposal and decided whether to accept or reject it. However, citing the needs of individual colleges to have flexibility in their designs, they did not give the programs specific criteria to use to create the new courses nor criteria on which to determine if the new program was successful. Each college, therefore, created a different program and assessment tools.

Although TBR did not give specific criteria to determine overall program success, it can be determined from the available documents and the changes which TBR made that they were working under a set of clearly implied criteria. As NCAT wrote in its description of TBR's redesign initiative, "The goal is to develop and implement a more effective and efficient assessment and delivery system that will increase completion rates for students, reduce the amount of time that students spend in remedial and developmental courses, and decrease the amount of fiscal resources that students dedicate to remedial and developmental education" (Twigg, 2007, para. 1). As explained below, the areas which were discussed the most in the redesign documentation included the four main areas of increasing student success rates, increasing retention, decreasing time spent in developmental courses, and decreasing costs.

Increased Success and Retention Rates

One way in which TBR wanted programs to gauge their overall success was through rates of successful completion. This meant the number of students 1) who received final grades of A,B or C (D is not awarded in developmental courses in Tennessee), and 2) who persisted in matriculating, both through the end of the developmental writing course and from fall-to-fall. Long-term goals were to increase the number of students who persisted to graduation, which for

community colleges meant increasing the number of associate degrees and program certificates awarded annually. That this should be a primary assessment indicator is evident in the focus on success and retention rates in the 2005 study described above and in fiscal changes made in 2010-2011 by the state legislature's Tennessee Higher Education Commission which tied college budget funding to a variety of factors, including fall-to-fall retention and graduation rates (Garrett, 2010).

Decreased Time in Course/Acceleration of Learning

Both TBR and NCAT saw time spent in developmental courses as negatively impacting overall matriculation: "Students who withdraw and return the following semester must begin the same course from the beginning, even though they may have demonstrated mastery of some portion of the material prior to their withdrawal" (Twigg, 2007, Sec. Need to Redesign, para. 4). TBR's solution was to require programs to modularize content and delivery so that 1) students only had to study those skills or content areas in which they showed deficiency in placement testing, and 2) repeating students only had to complete those modules which they did not successfully finish during their previous attempts at the course. Although modularization had been part of PSI and CAPSI delivery from the beginning, NCAT called it "unique" and a "key strategy" to the program: "The development of better placement systems combined with shorter, more tailored instructional modules will enable students to save time and money by only engaging in…developmental modules that address their specific deficiencies" (NCAT, 2007c, para. 1). The proposals that each program had to complete and submit to TBR for approval contained several questions directed at modularization of content and placement testing, and TBR listed content modularization among its best practices (Tennessee Board of Regents

Developmental Studies Redesign Task Force Subcommittee for English Curriculum, 2010b; see also Appendix A).

NCAT dedicated several articles and documents to modularization as it related specifically to TBR. One article detailed exactly how programs were expected to modularize:

> What were we looking for in a successful redesign proposal? In addition to describing a solid plan to improve learning and reduce costs…the TBR proposals needed to include a plan to modularize the remedial and developmental course sequences. Specifically, we wanted each institution to develop a plan to:
>
> - Customize the learning environment for each student based on background, skill level, learning preference and academic/professional goals;
> - Create a learning environment that allows students and faculty to focus on the skills that students are lacking, to study only topics in which they are unprepared, and to receive remediation assistance only in the areas where they have deficiencies;
> - Remove skills overlap that may be present among courses in the current structure to streamline the curriculum;
> - Create diagnostic assessments that evaluate specific skills linked to content modules to ensure that students only take the modules in which they have skill deficiencies;
> - Allow students to start anywhere in the course sequence based on their learning needs and progress though the content modules at their own pace, spending the amount of time needed to master the module content, proceeding at a faster pace if possible or at a slower pace if necessary; and,
> - Permit students to earn variable credit based on how many modules they successfully complete during a term. (Twigg, 2007, Sec. Modularization: A Key Strategy, para. 3)

Although clearly expected to modularize, programs were not given specific instructions on how to design and implement modularization. Finding ways to modularize tuition for each individual student to match the number of required skills modules was encouraged, so was finding ways to tailor study plans not just to each individual students' diagnostic placement but also to their intended major or program. This had been done successfully in developmental math courses, and TBR wanted schools to find a way to extend this idea to reading and writing. Further, a focus on expediting students through the developmental level and into college-level courses meant the possibility of offering 7-week college-level courses that begin at mid-term for those students who finished early; it would be possible, then, for a student who tested into developmental writing to finish both developmental writing and Composition I in the same semester.

However, when program instructors set out to modularize their developmental writing courses, NCAT was not satisfied with their proposed ideas. Content was modularized but not student learning:

> Most of the proposals we received struggled with the concept of modularization. No one had trouble dividing the course content into modules–after all, that's like chapters in a textbook. Almost all recognized that today's high-quality instructional software is itself modularized. But most planned to have students continue to meet in small groups in traditional classroom settings, and most planned to have "teacher-led" activities dominate the redesign. They could conceptualize how to modularize course content but not how to modularize the student experience. (Twigg, 2007, Sec. Modularization: A Key Strategy, para. 5)

NCAT believed that regularly scheduled class meetings stand in direct contradiction to modularized learning, which has to occur as an individualized student learning experience:

> There is a contradiction between individualizing the student experience (i.e., diagnosing individual students' strengths and weaknesses and creating individual paths for them to correct their deficiencies) and meeting in traditional classes in which students are grouped together primarily for scheduling reasons. Student progress through the course materials will vary considerably. One-third may be in the middle of the material in any given class, one-third may have already accomplished the goals of today's class, and one-third may be lagging behind. Some students may be bored because other students' questions result in repetition of conceptual material they have already mastered, while other students feel overwhelmed by the amount of material covered in one class. (Twigg, 2007, Sec. Modularization: A Key Strategy, para. 6)

Traditional classes with instructor-led presentations and group work would slow the learning process for high-achieving students and leave behind those students needing additional scaffolding and practice. NCAT would later claim that the Emporium Model— a course design most similar to Pear and Kinsner's (1987-1988) CAPSI format which is set entirely in a computer lab in which it is possible for students to work without ever having a group meeting with their classmates or face-to-face instruction from their professors—to be the ideal way for TBR's schools to modularize their courses (Twigg, 2008a, para. 6).

Decreased Instructional Costs

That decreasing costs is the primary goal for NCAT is evident from even a cursory glance of its website and materials, and that cutting costs was a driving force for TBR's decision to redesign its developmental courses was openly stated from the beginning: "Reductions of overall costs and time to completion is a primary goal of the initiative, which will represent future permanent cost savings to students and to institutions" (Twigg, 2007, para. 4).

Collectively, the colleges within the TBR system spend approximately $25 million each year on developmental instruction, the cost of which is split 50/50 system-wide between state appropriations and student tuition (Twigg, 2007), and the redesign initiative was seen as a way to cut costs for both schools and students. It should be noted that not once in the NCAT articles about the TBR redesign did NCAT describe the necessity of developmental courses for under-prepared students to succeed in college. Instead of being seen as a necessary and vital way to increase students' skills, developmental courses were described as being detrimental to the pursuit of a college education: "Weaker students may be required to complete up to three full semesters of coursework prior to advancing into regular college-level courses. Many students are delayed in applying for admission to specific academic and professional programs. Others give up and drop out completely" (Twigg, 2007, Sec. Need to Redesign, para. 4) and "Those tuition costs can add quickly to students' overall debt. In addition, none of the tuition payments and classroom effort results in credit toward a degree" (Twigg, 2007, para. 3). It should also be noted that NCAT does not include reduced materials costs for students as part of their instructional cost reduction strategies; they use the term "cost reduction" only in terms of institutional cost savings.

Cost savings were specifically addressed in detail from the very beginning of the redesign initiative, unlike the elements of the course delivery method itself, which were left for the individual colleges to design. This is exemplified in a 2007 TBR questionnaire. In the questionnaire, programs were required to submit answers to open-ended, general questions on how they planned on redesigning their courses, but they were also required to submit the NCAT Course Planning Tool. This detailed tool ignored course content and learning objectives and focused instead on breaking down instructional costs to the exact dollar amount, going so far as to factor in the costs of benefits packages for full-time instructors and cost per hour of instruction

for adjuncts, and listing exactly what kinds of savings and in what amounts each school expected as a result of the redesign (NCAT, 2010a). The proposal package submitted to TBR also required schools to explain what they planned on doing with the resulting cost savings.

This focus on savings is not surprising given NCAT's emphasis on cutting costs. On its website, it often refers to cost cutting and contains several articles written by its executive staff which compare colleges to businesses and use business terminology to describe matriculation. It uses the statistic of how much money it has saved colleges overall since its inception as an advertising lure for administrations to hire its consulting services. (For examples of this focus on costs, see the NCAT website, www.thencat.org, section "Who We Are"). In addition, every description of every program which has worked with NCAT contains a large section dedicated to explaining how they cut instructional costs, and NCAT goes so far with some programs as to declare them a success based upon cost savings rather than improved student learning. For example, NCAT declared Tallahassee State Community College successful, citing its cost savings of 43% even though its assessment procedures and reported success rates are questionable (see Harrington, 2013.) Further, NCAT gave specific examples of how colleges who had worked with them previously had saved money. A PowerPoint presentation contained the following slides: "It is Possible to Increase Learning While Reducing Costs" (slide #18), "What Happens to the Savings?" (slide #19), and "What is the Most Important Thing that we have Learned about Quality and Cost?" (slide #21), with five slides which describe what NCAT calls the Five Principles in Successful Course Redesign giving explanations comprised of only two bullets, Quality and Cost, for each principle (Jarmon, 2007). For NCAT, then, cost savings is fifty percent of a redesign rationale: "The factors that lead to increased student learning and

increased student retention are the same as those that lead to reduced instructional costs!" (Jarmon, 2007, slide #21).

NCAT also details specific ways that colleges can cut costs. The following pieces of information come from an NCAT document entitled "Cost Reduction Strategies":

There are three ways to re-structure the course that will reduce costs.

1. Each instructor carries more students. (The instructor may be a tenured full-time faculty member, a temporary instructor, a graduate teaching assistant or an adjunct faculty member.)

a. Increase section size

Examples

Traditional: 800 students: 40 sections of 20 students each taught by 40 instructors. S/F ratio = 20:1

Redesign: 800 students: 20 sections of 40 students each taught by 20 instructors. S/F ratio = 40:1

b. Increase the number of sections that each instructor carries for the same workload credit.

Examples

Traditional: 800 students: 40 sections of 20 students each; each instructor teaches one section for the same workload credit. S/F ratio = 20:1

Redesign: 800 students: 40 sections of 20 students; each instructor teaches two sections for the same workload credit. S/F ratio = 40:1

2. Change the mix of personnel from more expensive to less expensive.

If your enrollment is stable, this will allow you to offer the same number of sections and reduce the total cost of the people teaching the course since adjuncts, tutors and undergraduate tutors are paid less than full-time faculty, and tutors and undergraduate tutors are paid less than adjuncts.

Examples

Traditional: 800 students: 40 sections of 20 students each; 30 sections taught by full-time faculty; 10 sections taught by adjuncts.

Redesign: 800 students: 40 sections of 20 students; 10 sections taught by full-time faculty; 30 sections taught by adjuncts.

3. Do both simultaneously. (NCAT, 2007b, p. 1-3)

Only one example of following these cost cutting strategies was given from an actual writing program, which was the English composition program at Tallahassee Community College.

TCC reduced the number of full-time faculty involved in teaching the course from 32 to 8 and substituted less expensive adjunct faculty without sacrificing quality and consistency. In the traditional course, full-time faculty taught 70% of the course, and adjuncts taught 30%. In the redesigned course, full-time faculty taught 33% of the course, and adjuncts teach 67%. Further savings were realized by reducing the amount of time and resources that the Writing Center staff had traditionally spent in working with students on basic skills. Mid-stage drafts were outsourced to SMARTHINKING, an online tutorial service. Overall, the cost-per-student was reduced from $252 to $145, a savings of 43%. Full-time faculty were freed to teach second-level courses where finding adjuncts was much more difficult. (NCAT, 2007b, p. 3)

Its cost analysis assumes that no quality loss was experienced when replacing full-time instructors with adjuncts and peer tutoring with online tutoring, but given the results of its assessment data (see Harrington, 2013), this assumption can be considered suspect.

For NCAT, then, immediate and effective cost cutting strategies involve only two methods: 1) increasing the student-to-instructor ratio through increasing section enrollments and decreasing the number of offered sections, and 2) replacing full-time instructors with adjuncts, graduate teaching assistants, or even tutors. NCAT mandated one of these two strategies for all of its program schools: "Because it is difficult to predict how these various elements will play out until you have some experience with the redesign over time, your plan for cost reduction must include one of the strategies listed above which will result in immediate savings during the first term of full implementation" (NCAT, 2007b, p. 5). Other ways to measure cost savings, such as increased retention and graduation rates, are treated tangentially, and strategies that would result in cost savings for instructional materials for students are not mentioned in this document.

Obviously, then, these four areas are the criteria against which developmental program redesign success is to be measured, both within the TBR system and by those administrations who hire NCAT as consultants. Two developmental writing programs which were required by TBR to redesign were the program at Delta State Community College and Mountain State Community College. What each program sought to achieve through their redesigned, CAPSI delivery developmental writing courses was to meet this set of informal yet clearly implied criteria for program success.

CHAPTER FIVE

EXPLORING THE NEW MARGIN:

CASE STUDY OF THE CAPSI DEVELOPMENTAL WRITING PROGRAM

AT DELTA STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

WHY IS THERE A LEARNING SUPPORT PROGRAM (LSP)?

Like most community colleges, Delta State has an open door policy that does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, age, religion, or physical or mental disability. However, in the past, higher education was not so broadly accessible to Americans. In fact, until 50 years ago, college was available only to the more privileged classes. In recent decades, social upheaval demanded changes in American institutions to admit more women and minorities (1960s), more economically diverse students (1970s), and more Americans with disabilities (1990s). Rigorous admission standards that once kept all but a select few out of higher education are now more flexible.

With the new open door policies, however, students were given the freedom to fail, and many did. In many cases students were not prepared for the differences between high school and college. Because of the tremendous failure rate, in the 1980s developmental programs were created to give underprepared students the skills necessary to succeed in college courses.

-- From the Delta State Community College website

As detailed in Chapter One, all schools in the TBR system were required to begin redesigning their developmental writing courses in 2007 using technology to increase student success and lower instructional costs. Each college would be required to

- Customize the learning environment for each student based on background, learning preference, and academic/professional goals;
- Create a learning environment that allows students and faculty to focus on the skills that students are lacking, to study only topics in which they are unprepared, and to receive mediation assistance only in the areas where they have deficiencies;
- Remove skills overlap that may be present among courses in the current structure to streamline the curriculum;
- Create diagnostic assessments that evaluate specific skills linked to content modules to ensure that students only take the modules in which they have skills deficiencies;
- Allow students to start anywhere in the course sequence based on their learning needs and progress through the content modules at their own pace, spending the amount of time needed to master the module content, proceeding at a faster pace if possible or at a slower pace if necessary. (Twigg, 2007, Sec. "Modularization: a Key Strategy")

Although TBR and NCAT never acknowledges CAPSI instruction in any of their documents, these requirements matched the elements of CAPSI course delivery—primarily in content modularization, repeated attempts at mastery, use of student proctors instead of instructors, reliance on written communication and instructions, and use of lectures primarily for motivational purposes (Pear & Kinsner, 1987-1988). It was toward a CAPSI course delivery format that Delta State Community College (hereafter DSCC) began to work for its developmental writing redesign.

Description of the College and its Pre-Redesigned Program

Located in west Tennessee, Delta State Community College is a two-year school situated on the industrial edges of a county seat of approximately 60,000 in population. It represents a

service area of 14 counties (Delta State Community College [DSCC], Office of Institutional Effectiveness, 2005), of which thirteen are considered heavily rural and only one city has a population of more than 10,000 (U. S. Census Bureau, 2010). Although the area is largely blue collar and rural, there are several four-year colleges within a one-hour drive: Union University, a private school with a large endowment and affiliation with the Southern Baptist Church; Freed-Hardeman University, a private school with a large endowment and affiliation with the Church of Christ; Lane College, an HBCU school; UT Martin, a branch of the University of Tennessee system; Bethel University, a private university affiliated with the Presbyterian Church; and the University of Memphis—Lambuth Campus, a branch of the Tennessee Board of Regents system, which used to be a private, four-year college affiliated with the Methodist Church until financial difficulties in 2011 forced Lambuth College to lose its accreditation and be purchased by the University of Memphis. In addition, there is a small Tennessee Technology Center located in the city which offers certificate programs in various professional-technical areas. Despite the large number of colleges in the area, U.S. Census data from 2010 shows that the number of high school diplomas and baccalaureate degrees held by citizens in this service region is lower than both the state and national averages.

The last demographic data about the student population released by the college prior to the redesign to CAPSI delivery was in 2005. At that time, the school enrolled a total of 3,963 students at all of its campuses and online, with 2,224 full-time students (56%) and 1,739 part-time students (44%) (DSCC, Office of Institutional Effectiveness, 2005). Student enrollment by program included 1,619 students in university parallel/transfer programs, 1,668 in career programs, and 93 in technical certificate programs (DSCC, Office of Institutional Effectiveness, 2005). However, its graduation rate hovers at 9%, tied with Mountain State Community College

for the second lowest rate in the state after Southwest Community College in Memphis (Garrett, 2010). A demographic breakdown reveals that the average student age is twenty-seven; 66% are female and 34% are male; and the largest ethnic or minority group are African-Americans who comprise 18.3% of the student body (DSCC, Office of Institutional Effectiveness 2005). In 2006-2007, students who scored less than 19 on the ACT were placed into a two-tiered developmental writing program (Tennessee Board of Regents, 2010a). During the 2008-2009 academic year, when the new CAPSI program was piloted, there were 37 developmental writing sections of approximately 20 students per class, for an approximate total of 740 students, including summer sessions.

Dr. Tina Madonowitz, the Director of Developmental Studies at the time of the pilot, was interviewed for information for this dissertation. Her description of the emotional and academic attributes of the typical developmental student at DSCC provides a fuller understanding of these students than just the demographic breakdowns provided by the college.

> The average developmental student at DSCC, can be put into 2 categories. The first, large category are returning students…They would be nontraditional age. They would be people who lost their factory jobs or they never got the chance to go to college in the first place. They are returning veterans. They are people who might have had some good academic skills in high school but had forgotten their academic skills because they have been on the job. And so, that's a large percentage, and those students are almost always successful in developmental classes. They had the high school skills to begin with. They were in K-12 when the standards were different than they are now. And most of them come with a pretty good work ethic and academic background. They've just forgotten things, like how to factor in math, or they haven't read academic reading in a long time

> so it's hard for them to find a main idea, for example. So they don't do as well on the pre-test, but when they get into the class, they realize that they are college material and that they can pass these classes pretty easily. They also have excellent attendance and excellent attitudes because they've been in the work place, and coming back to school is something easier than working in a factory. So they're eager to make a life for their families and themselves. So this group is very successful in developmental classes. They [returning students] are also the group that some people say would do okay if they are thrown into a college-level class…They're a big success group. The group we have the biggest problem with is recent graduates because they assume, and they should assume rightly, that when they have a high school diploma that they should go into a college class. So we are keeping them back--we are a barrier, as far as they're concerned, and their parents are concerned. We are a barrier to them getting a college degree because we expected something from high school that they did not get. (T. Madonowitz, personal communication, 2012)

In 2008, a survey was given to developmental students in order to understand the needs of this specific student population. A total of 259 developmental writing students were surveyed. The developmental writing population aligned closely with the overall college student body in terms of gender—68% female and 32% male. However, developmental students were much more likely to be minority students, with African-Americans comprising 36%. In addition, 83% were enrolled as full-time students compared to a much lower 56% in the overall college population. Most telling for the mandated TBR redesign, however, which required colleges to use online technology for modularized course delivery, were the questions related to technology access. A total of 86% had reliable computers in their homes, but only 61% had the DSL/high-

speed internet access needed to use the online course management software and course tutorial programs (Harrington, 2008). Although students lacked adequate internet access at home, they had access to computers in the library and computer labs in the classroom building, and every developmental writing class was held in a computer classroom.

During 2008-2009, the program enrolled approximately 350 writing students per semester in sections of no more than 20 students. Overall, 77% of all developmental sections were taught by adjuncts, which is consistent with the national average of 75% (Gerlaugh, Thompson, Boylan & Davis, 2007), and of the 400 students enrolled in sections of no more than 20, only one section was offered online. This is also consistent with the low national average of less than 4% of developmental writing courses offered online (Gerlaugh, Thompson, Boylan & Davis, 2007). Although the program was situated within the Developmental Studies Program and overseen by the Director of the Developmental Studies Program, it was scheduled, staffed, and assessed by the English Department.

Prior to the redesign, all the developmental writing sections were traditional, lecture-based courses which focused heavily on grammar instruction and were targeted toward the goal of teaching essay writing by semester's end. The course had gone through its first major instructional change when classes moved from regular classrooms to computer classrooms in the 1990s, shifting from lecture-based sessions to more in-class writing. "There was still a lot of grammar instruction, and there was still lecture, but much less than when we were in regular classrooms," Madonowitz explained. The writing assignments themselves focused largely on writing paragraphs rather than essays and demonstrate a disconnection between what was being taught in developmental writing and what was required at the college level:

> I think almost everyone but me wrote paragraphs. My contention is that if you're going to do academic writing, you might as well just jump into the essay. However, I was the only one in the group who did that, and partly, it's because of the grading. You just don't have time to grade that many essays, so if they did, say, 12 paragraphs, they felt pretty good about that kind of writing, [and] I mean perhaps one essay at the end…I think it's much more difficult to write a good paragraph than it is to write a good essay. Plus, Comp I is writing essays; it isn't writing paragraphs. So I felt I wasn't helping them much if I wasn't teaching them the essay structure or to write essays. (T. Madonowitz, personal communication, 2012)

One reason for this disconnection was that the developmental writing instructors had been largely overlooked in terms of professional development and instructional guidance. Adjunct instructors were given a handbook, but no formal mentoring program was in place. Except for a one-hour meeting as part of adjunct orientation prior to fall semester, no other information or guidance was given in a systematic manner. Although the Director of Developmental studies held teaching workshops, attendance was not mandatory due to a reluctance to require low-paid instructors to commit time outside class. There was no consistency of assignments or grading standards across sections, and teaching observations were not conducted.

> [Prior to the 2007 Redesign initiative] the department was overwhelmed by the number of adjuncts that we had teaching developmental, and there was no way to have a good enough mentoring system to help them out. So, in most cases, the adjunct was hired [and] had very little orientation. We gave them an adjunct handbook that was as good as we could do at the time, but there was almost no contact between the English department,

> the administration, and the adjunct teacher. Anyone who had trouble and called us, we would help. But as far as day-to-day things going on, there was almost no communication unless something went wrong, and things went wrong sometimes and then we had to jump in. But other than that, if we didn't hear anything bad, we assumed everything was okay instead of being proactive and helping out on the front end. So what happened usually was a teacher might be thrown into a class the first semester to survive and then the second semester sort of figured out what to do, but there was not a set curriculum they had to follow. We would say something like, "A student has to write a thousand words" or whatever it was; we would give them very general requirements. There was a common syllabus, but it was so general that you could do anything with it. (T. Madonowitz, personal communication, 2012)

Despite Dr. Madonowitz's assertion that, "we were pretty lucky that we hired good people, and they just did the right thing without much guidance," the documented evidence suggests the opposite. Grade inflation was high, especially at the branches, and as revealed in the program redesign proposal, many students were being passed into college-level courses who did not possess the basic writing skills necessary to pass Comp I.

Program assessment was limited. All developmental writing instructors were required to give a timed, 50-minute essay approximately three-fourths of the way through the semester, which was assessed on a 6-point rubric by the full-time English instructors, some of whom had never taught developmental writing or had not taught it in years and one of whom was the full-time Spanish instructor. Norming sessions were not held. The quality of the timed essays were decided by two readers, and a third reader was used if the first two disagreed. Even though this

assessment was carried out, the data that was collected was not used to directly change instruction methods nor the program content.

A Readiness Criteria report was submitted to TBR and NCAT in March, 2007 (see Madonowitz, 2007b). This mandatory report was the initial step in the redesign process for all TBR schools and determined the need for redesigned developmental programs, the available resources, and the willingness of the administration and faculty to support a new course delivery.

The need for a new program was made clear immediately in the report. The primary concern that the college wanted to address with the redesign was lack of uniformity across all sections, and it was this lack of uniformity which lead to grade inflation and the passing of students into college-level courses who lacked sufficient writing skills:

> The greatest impact from the redesign DSPW courses will be to make standards uniform across all sections. We currently have a problem with too many students with insufficient skills being passed out of the DSPW program; thus, an inflated success rate among DSPW students is resulting in a high failure rates among these students in Comp I and affecting their performance in other college-level courses. Uniform standards and more rigorous assessment will ensure that only those students with college-level skills are passed, thus potentially increasing overall college retention rates and student success. (Madonowitz, 2007b, Question 1)

That passing students still lacked basic writing skills was evident across campus. In a survey conducted in 2005 as part of the college's SACS reaccredidation process, faculty in all academic areas reported concerns about poor writing skills among students. Almost 30% admitted to changing or eliminating writing assignments or long-answer test questions due to poor student writing. Nearly 40% of the faculty believed that 40% of all their students had significant writing

deficiencies, with another 25% of faculty citing up to 60% (DSCC, Quality Enhancement Plan Committee, 2005). Although these figures represent all students and not just developmental students, they represent a clear need for improved student writing skills.

As TBR and NCAT had hoped, DSCC also recognized the limitations of traditional, lecture-based delivery:

> Under current course design, all students spend the same amount of class time working on course elements; it does not allow for variances in skills areas or learning differences. Modularizing these courses will target individual skills areas for each student, thus theoretically speeding up student learning, as students will participate in self-paced learning that gives more time to deficient skills and less time to those skills at which they are already competent. (Madonowitz, 2007b, Question 1)

They also did not have a way for repeating students to begin where they had left off during the first attempt at the course. "If a student did not pass developmental writing," Madonowitz explained, "there was no way to do anything except start over with the next teacher" (T. Madonowitz, personal communication, 2012). Therefore, DSCC's traditional lecture format presented a difficult learning environment for these students.

One key problem often cited as plaguing CAPSI and redesigned courses is a lack of support by the faculty and administration. However, at DSCC, the faculty and administration were both very committed to improving writing on campus and developing a new course delivery. Although the nature of this support would later change and end this version of redesigned instruction at DSCC, support was very high when the initial report was submitted. Full-time English faculty were supportive and optimistic about the new program despite being unable to devote a lot of time to the project, and the entire campus was involved with its

reaccredidation Quality Enhancement Plan initiative, entitled Write Away!, a five-year plan begun in 2006 which focused on improving student writing at all levels (DSCC, Quality Enhancement Plan Committee, 2005).

Despite support from the faculty and administration, and the acknowledgement in the Readiness Criteria report that DSCC already had the resources and materials in place that the students would need in order to matriculate in a self-paced, individualized course (Madonowitz, 2007b, Question 3), DSCC lacked the manpower and monetary resources needed to fully implement, assess, and perpetuate the new program. While the two lead administrators—Dr. Mack Perry, Chair of the English Department, and Dr. Tina Madonowitz, the Director of Developmental Studies—were highly experienced in program management and with developmental studies, both were already overworked with their existing workloads. Likewise, the full-time faculty, who taught a 5-5 class load and had additional campus service activities, including assessing the developmental students, were just given by the state Board the additional task of assessing the Comp I students.

Program Design and Planned Assessment

DSCC outlined its new program design in a detailed proposal to TBR during the summer of 2007 (See Madonowitz, 2007a). In it, the program administrators continued their focus on addressing course drift, reducing grade inflation, and ensuring that students met established competencies by attempting to achieve the five principles of CAPSI instruction (Keller, 1968). However, a tension is also clearly seen between creating a standardized program of study which individualized course content and maintaining instructor autonomy in the classroom. Although administrators established mastery criteria for writing and grammar that were to be used in all

sections, administrators also gave responsibility for determining whether mastery in writing was achieved to the individual instructors themselves.

Program administrators at DSCC stumbled into CAPSI delivery accidentally, and at the time the 2007 proposal was written, they were unaware that what they were proposing was a version of what researchers had labeled a PSI "SLI" program—a "Something Like It" course which met some but not all of Keller's principles of PSI (Eyre, 2007). They knew they were required by TBR to use existing technologies to deliver and modularize course content, and because of a strong commitment to technology, DSCC was already positioned to be able to use computer-assisted course delivery. What they did not know how to do, however, was modularize the course content to allow for the individualized study that TBR required, and they had not been given any detailed models for developmental writing by NCAT to guide them on exactly how to do that. By sheer accident, what DSCC eventually proposed was a program which would utilize technology to create the five principles posited by Keller (1968): self-pacing, repeated attempts to demonstrate mastery of course material, use of lectures and demonstrations primarily for motivational purposes, use of student proctors for feedback and tutoring, and a dominant reliance upon written communication. Although the new delivery and focus on modularized content would eventually be stopped due to organizational changes before all five elements could be fully realized, all five were implemented in a basic form from the beginning of the piloted course, thus the program at DSCC can be considered a CAPSI program.

Although course content would largely remain the same, the way in which the content would be delivered was completely redesigned. Before the program change, instructors were largely allowed to do whatever they wanted in class, and the only requirement for the course was a timed essay given at the end of the semester which was holistically graded by college

composition faculty as part of the program's assessment. In order to prevent course drift that would result in instructors teaching only grammar and no essay writing, or vice-versa, course time was redesigned so that it would be divided into thirds—1/3 time spent on grammar, 1/3 time spent on in-class writing, and 1/3 time given to faculty for presentations or other types of activities. As described in the proposal, "During faculty presentations, individual instructors can concentrate on grammar topics that students find difficult, model or discuss writing issues, or give up the presentation time to allow students more individual time to work on the grammar and writing software" (Madonowitz, 2007a, p.2). To support this structure, the program made use of the elements of CAPSI delivery. (Unless otherwise noted, the information in the remainder of this section comes from the Readiness Criteria report (Madonowitz, 2007b) and the Redesign Final Project Plan (Madonowitz, 2007a) submitted to TBR and NCAT.)

Repeated Attempts to Demonstrate Mastery of Course Materials Through Unit Tests

Allowing students to demonstrate mastery of course materials through unit tests is one of the distinguishing elements of CAPSI course delivery, and DSCC was required to use this element because TBR and NCAT insisted that course content be modularized in order to individualize study for each student, with the hope that tuition could be divided by modules. The course was divided into two large content modules: grammar and writing. These two large modules were further divided by individual grammar sub-topics and writing skills. During the first week of the semester, each DSPW student took two diagnostic tests reflecting the two large modules: an online diagnostic test through MyWritingLab and a timed essay which was scored by the individual class instructor using a common rubric. The results of these two tests revealed those skills areas in which each student was deficient. An individualized plan of study was then

created, based on these deficiencies, which each student had to complete successfully in order to pass into Composition I. Both grammar and writing modules were completed simultaneously.

Students completed the grammar module through mastering exercises on Pearson Publishing's MyWritingLab online program, either in-class as time allowed or on their own as homework. During the first week of the semester, students took four, un-timed, multiple choice, comprehensive grammar tests which were graded by the computer. Students who scored 80%+ in each specific grammar area were considered to be proficient with that grammar skill and did not have to complete the additional exercises; those skills areas which did not receive an 80%+ score were listed as required exercises to be mastered at 80%+ by semester's end. Students completed these modules at their own pace, moving more quickly through those skills areas which were easier for them to learn and spending more time on those areas in which they struggled. The number of mastery attempts was unlimited, and students were also able to practice on grammar skills in which they were deemed proficient, either on the diagnostic test or through mastery learning, for additional review as the semester progressed. Once all the grammar exercises were successfully completed, students took a grammar post-test which was similar to the diagnostic—four multiple choice, un-timed, comprehensive grammar tests. They were required to score a minimum of 75% - 80%+ on the post-test in order to pass the course. Students were allowed to repeat this post-test, but they were first required to work through their deficient areas again.

Writing was also modularized. During the first week of class, the students completed a 50-minute, diagnostic writing assignment with a prompt determined by each instructor. Instructors assessed their classes' essays using a rubric created from a 6-point holistic scale that was previously used in program assessment and from the course's learning objectives/outcomes.

From this assessment, the instructor generated a list of writing skills in which the student was determined to be deficient. Each week, the student focused on improving one of these skills areas through completing exercises on MyWritingLab, reading corresponding pages in the textbook, and consulting with the instructor and writing tutors. Then, the students would try to demonstrate this improved skill in the weekly writing assignment, which was assessed by the instructor. Students continued to practice these skills on each new weekly writing assignment.

Self-Pacing

By using modularized content, students were able to self-pace through the exercises and spend more time on deficient skills and less time on those skills at which they are already proficient. Grammar exercises were completed at their own pace and repeated as necessary until mastery was reached. On MyWritingLab.com, the results were returned immediately; students knew as soon as they finished the section whether they had successfully completed the module or if they needed to retake it. Although the students did in-class writing assignments as a group and had set deadlines for finishing the essays, the exercises which made up the writing module were also completed as self-paced, and students and instructors could focus on those writing areas which needed the most attention for improvement.

This self-paced approach led to the possibility for early exit from the course. Every four weeks, students would complete an assessment essay to be graded using the same common rubric as the diagnostic essay. These assessments would be reviewed **"**to show areas where the students are progressing and where they still need additional help" (Madonowitz, 2007a, p. 5). Those assessment assignments also functioned as "exit points"—if a student had completed all required grammar exercises and was deemed by the instructor to have demonstrated writing competencies, then that student would have the opportunity to pass immediately from the

developmental writing course. Theoretically, a student, then, could pass out of the developmental class and into the next level by mid-term, allowing for the possibility of taking another class which started at mid-term, thus completing two writing classes in one semester.

Use of Lectures and Demonstrations Primarily for Motivational Purposes

Although the new program dedicated one-third of the class time to hands-on grammar work and another 1/3 to in-class writing, it also reserved one-third of the time for instructors to use however they saw fit, including lectures and presentations, if necessary. However, such presentations were to be minimized "in favor of hands-on, self-paced learning." (Madonowitz, 2007a, p. 4). In addition, instructors were encouraged to spend their one hour peer week "giving more writing assignments and exercises or requiring more grammar practice." (Madonowitz, 2007a, p. 4).

Program administrators were careful not to correlate the desire to minimize or eliminate the traditional lecture format with eliminating class meetings. The requirement for regular class meetings and a set attendance policy was highlighted throughout the program's proposal to TBR. Although the attendance policy was modified in the new syllabus, allowing students to miss three weeks in the CAPSI course instead of the two weeks allowed in the traditional course, administrators were clear in their belief that developmental students needed the regular class meetings and face-to-face interactions with their classmates and instructors. Requiring these regular meetings would teach those soft skills that the students lacked, while eliminating the meetings would generate the potential for frustration, poor study skills, and poor time management habits. As explained in the proposal,

> Program administrators believe that full class meetings and direct interaction with instructors on a regular basis is best for DSPW students. According to *What Works:*

> *Research-Based Best Practices in Developmental Education,* developmental students benefit from structured curricular models because they tend to have "weak study skills, poor time management skills, and low-level independent learning skills" (74). Most of these students are either returning adults who have been out of school for several years and thus lack confidence in their abilities, or they are traditional students who lack "good student" habits. Both groups need the structure and time management that regular class meetings provide; they also need personal contact with their instructors, especially concerning issues of building confidence, giving encouragement, and clarifying concepts. (Madonowitz, 2007a, p. 3)

Regular class meetings also gave the instructors an opportunity to work more closely with their students and gave students more individual attention than in a lecture-based course. Instructors worked to create a hands-on workshop environment by assisting students on the computers, answering questions, giving one-on-one tutoring for grammar and revision, explain content and materials, etc. This method differed slightly from the instructor interaction envisioned by Keller in "Goodbye, Teacher" (1968), in which the instructor was physically removed from the students.

Dominant Reliance Upon Written Communication

This CAPSI element is tightly connected to the previous element of using demonstrations mostly for motivational purposes and works with that other element to reinforce the elimination of lectures. This element of CAPSI format was ultimately the least realized by DSCC because the program did not completely eliminate the use of presentations and lectures. However, it did move toward this goal by using online information and exercises for teaching grammar rather

than having students listen to lectures on grammar. The program ended before it could more fully implement this element.

Use of Student Proctors for Feedback and Tutoring

Students in the program had several options for obtaining help outside the classroom, although not all of them were manned by student proctors as Heller (1968) had envisioned. A new campus Writing Center, established in Fall 2007 through the SACS reaccredidation Quality Enhancement Project initiative, provided one-on-one help from peer tutors in the Center. In addition, the Center also provided peer writing fellows in the classroom to those instructors who requested them. A writing fellow is an advanced Writing Center tutor who is assigned to work with a specific class during its regular meeting times "to give assistance, answer questions, assist with computer problems, and provide peer tutoring, functioning almost as an additional 'instructor'" (Madonowitz, 2007a, p. 5). Additional help was provided through the internet-based academic assistance program called SmarThinking, where students could get help from specialized writing tutors through real-time chat or through submitting their papers for detailed review. Although instructors were allowed to require tutoring in the Center and/or paper submissions to SmarThinking, not all of them made this additional feedback a course requirement.

Program Assessment

Before the redesign, instructors were asked to provide scores for a writing diagnostic given at the start of the semester, and composition instructors holistically graded a second timed essay given near week eleven. Final grade distributions by instructor were also kept as records. However, little was done with this data; no mentoring program was in place to help instructors improve upon their teaching methods based upon the data, and no consequences were bought

against instructors who did not participate in the holistic essay assessment or who inflated grades.

Administrators planned to assess the overall success of the program by expanding upon their current assessment methods and by using the outcomes data to improve instruction. Student competency—which Keller (1968) refers to as "mastery"—would be determined from a combination of grammar test scores and holistic writing scores. For grammar, students who achieved scores of 80+% on the computer-based post-test would be considered successful. For writing, mastery would be determined by the instructor using a rubric created from the course objectives and the standard holistic grading scale that was currently in use for assessment. A lack of resources prevented the use of outside readers, so student writing would be assessed by the course instructor. Students would have the opportunity to write an assessment essay every four weeks which assessed all writing skills areas, not just those within a given module, and "test out" of the remainder of the semester if the writing demonstrated overall competency, possibly moving into the next level of writing during the same semester.

Data on student success and retention rates would also be gathered and used to gauge program success; however, this data would not be considered as important in determining overall program success and student learning as the data from the writing assessments and grammar tests. This was because the administrators knew that grade inflation was a serious problem in their program, deciding that "Overall success would be assessed using data from student performance on tests, not from final grades" (Madonowitz, 2007a, p. 2). This statement demonstrates that grades themselves could not be used as trustworthy indicators of student learning in the new program, although they would be used as a tool for identifying and working to lessen grade inflation by individual instructors.

Although the administrators had plans for long-term tracking of students through the remainder of their studies at DSCC, no long-term information was gathered. The program as originally envisioned in the proposal was changed due to organizational restructuring just two semesters into the pilot program, and significant changes made by the new program director to the basic course delivery method made long-term comparisons impossible.

The Effect of CAPSI Delivery on Program Success at DSCC

It is difficult to track the effect that the individual CAPSI elements had on program success at DSCC for two main reasons. First, the program did not report in their design proposal to TBR any student success data from previous semesters. Second, data from the redesign program exists from only one semester, which was the Fall 2008 initial pilot semester. Long-term data does not exist.

A lack of specific assessment data reported to TBR and NCAT in the initial redesign proposals made benchmark comparisons extremely difficult. In its Assessment Plan, which was filed as part of the official application for redesign in 2007, the only data DSCC supplied concerned overall student enrollment; no retention or success data was given as benchmark criteria for future comparisons. DSCC was not alone in its lack of assessment data. One of the key areas that TBR sought to improve through its redesign was better assessment methods (Twigg, 2007), and the NCAT consultants at the system-wide meeting in spring 2007 announced that the data supplied by the programs with their initial readiness reports was insufficient. For this dissertation, data from the previous year in Fall 2007 is used for comparison.

Further complicating the analysis was the short duration of the redesigned program. The redesigned CAPSI program lasted just two semesters, from fall 2008 to spring 2009. A reorganization of college positions in summer 2009 eliminated the Writing Courses Coordinator

position which was responsible for creating, implementing, and assessing the new program and combined the two full-time positions of Writing Center Director and Director of Developmental Studies Program into one position. As a result of this personnel change, the CAPSI program as originally envisioned at DSCC was terminated, and data from the Spring 2009 semester was lost.

Increased Student Success Rates

Administrators detailed in the Assessment Plan that they planned to track success data by comparing a common final essay, comparisons of grammar pre- and post-tests, and comparisons of student work using common rubrics, although no detailed information was given pertaining to which specific assignments the rubrics would be used. They also proposed comparing success rates (final grade of C or better) in Composition I between those students who took developmental writing and those who placed directly into Composition I. However, as with retention data, no baseline data was given in the proposal as a benchmark upon which to make comparisons. Fortunately, other data is available which makes comparisons possible, albeit limited.

What the pilot data shows are success rates that are lower than the previous year's averages and far below that of the 73% national average (Gerlaugh, Thompson, Boylan & Davis, 2007). In the pilot semester, 52.8% of students succeeded in passing the course with an A, B or C grade; of the 40.9% who did not pass the class, 18.5% received a PR or Progressing grade, meaning they were improving and had passed approximately 50% of the course content. In comparison data from Fall 2007, 62.8% passed; of the 32% who did not pass, 14% received a PR grade.

However, a decrease in overall success rates might not indicate a failure of the pilot program. This is because of the attention paid to grade inflation by the program administrators.

One of the concerns listed by the DSCC program directors in the original proposal was grade inflation, especially among adjunct instructors, and steps were taken in the redesign to combat this. One of the primary ways grade inflation was targeted was the sharing of grade averages. As Dr. Tina Madonowitz, the Director of Developmental Studies at the time of the pilot, explains,

> To me, the easiest way to deal with grade inflation is to do just exactly what they did to me. Give me, as an adjunct, give me a print-out of my grades and show me what the departmental grades are so I can see if I'm in line. If I'm above the department, then maybe I need to think about something. If I'm below the department, maybe I need to make some adjustments. And I'm not saying that the average is good, except that I need to see if I am teaching about the same level as everyone else. Because we don't want students shopping for instructors. We want everybody teaching the right things in the classroom. (T. Madonowitz, personal communication, 2012)

Adjunct instructors were shown two breakdowns—their own class grade averages and the overall program's grade averages. The hope was that teachers who were shown the distributions would realize that 1) their grades were out of line with the rest of the program and/or the full-time instructors and 2) that their grade distribution was being monitored, and from this realization, they would self-correct (T. Madonowitz, personal communication, 2012). It was also explained to them that grade distribution was even more important than student survey feedback, which was the only feedback the adjunct instructors received until the pilot. As Dr. Madonowitz acknowledges, "[If] that student feedback is the only thing you have going for you, then you're going to have grade inflation because you're going to have to have good reports from the students" (T. Madonowitz, personal communication, 2012).

When looking at the aggregate data from the pilot semester, what is revealed is that grade inflation did not happen with adjuncts overall—the pilot data reveals a 52% pass rate for all adjunct-taught sections versus a slightly higher 56% for full-time instructors. When compared to the 2007 rates of 67% for adjuncts and 56% for full-time, we see that grade inflation was successfully reduced overall, even among adjuncts, but was still high overall. Where grade inflation mostly occurred was within sections taught away from the main campus at the branch locations, where students passed adjunct-taught sections at 77.0% versus 44.8% at the main campus—an astonishing difference of 32.2%. During the previous fall semester in 2007, adjuncts passed 84.5% at the branches compared to 59.3% at the main campus—a difference of 25.2%. The data shows, then, that while grade inflation by adjuncts was being lowered overall, the gap between grading standards at the main campus and those at the branches actually increased.

This comparison is not conclusive that grade inflation occurred, however, once retention rates are considered. As shown above, student attrition in the branch sections was a very low 6.6%, compared to a much higher attrition rate of 22.7% at the main campus. We must cautiously consider the cause and effect, if any, between grade inflation and student retention: did the branch instructors retain more students because they inflated grades, or did the increased retention result in better writers deserving of higher grades? Unfortunately, with the limited data available and the short duration of the program, it is impossible to determine exactly to what extent and why grade inflation occurred.

To determine the overall semester grade, student course work during the pilot semester was assessed on two main areas: grammar and writing. Grammar work was completed and graded online through MyWritingLab, and students' grammar knowledge was assessed on how

much their post-test scores increased over their pre-test scores after they had completed over 30 different grammar exercises during the semester. Writing assessments were given as 50-minute timed essays and graded holistically by the instructors. Scores were based on a department-approved rubric using a holistic scale of 1 to 6, with 6 equating to an A in college composition, 5 equating to a B, 4 equating to a C (students needed an average score of 4 on their writing assignments by the end of the semester in order to pass into college composition), 3 to DSPW0800-level competency (paragraphs to essays), 2 to DSPW0700-level competency (sentences to paragraphs), and 1 as completely lacking in basic essay and sentence structures. While no norming sessions were held, adjuncts were given samples of essays which had been pre-determined to be representative of the 6 numbers on the holistic rubric scale.

Grammar scores were reported in the assessment data as the average scores for the program and then broken down by full-time instructors and adjuncts. On the pre-test, given within the first two weeks of the semester, the overall program average was 63.1%, with no significant difference between those students in adjunct-taught sections (at 63.3%) and those taught by full-time instructors (62.9%). Students received grammar instruction throughout the semester through completing exercises on MyWritingLab, completing grammar chapters in the textbook, listening to grammar lectures from the instructor, and completing and correcting grammar quizzes in-class. Then, at the end of the semester, they took a post-test on MyWritingLab. The overall program average was 79.7. However, on the post-test, there was a notable difference of 2% between the adjunct-taught sections (78.7%) and those taught by full-time instructors (80.7). While the grammar post-test score was not used as a cut-score to determine whether a student received a passing grade for the semester, the program required

instructors to use the post-test score as one factor in determining the final course grade, with 80% as the ideal minimum score for demonstrated success.

Writing was assessed at three points during the semester: a diagnostic essay given during the first week of the semester which also functioned as a secondary placement assessment, a mid-term essay which was used to determine if students were progressing toward college-level competency, and a final essay which was used to determine if students had reached college-level competency by semester's end. All three assessments were scored by the individual instructors. As with grammar, writing scores were reported as the average scores for the program, then broken down by full-time instructors and adjuncts. Overall, the program's average holistic score on the diagnostic essay was 2.9, which signified that most of the students who had been placed into DSPW0800 were writing at the 0800 skills-level; full-time instructors averaged 3.1, while adjuncts averaged just 2.6. By mid-term, students program-wide averaged 3.3, which signified that most of the students were writing in the middle of the 0800 skills-level and improving; full-time instructors averaged 3.6, but adjuncts averaged just 2.9. At semester's end, the program averaged 3.7, which signified that while the students were improving most of them had not reached the 4 required for passage into college-level courses; full-time instructors continued to average 3.6, but the adjunct average increased dramatically, nearly a full point to 3.7.

Increased Retention

During the pilot semester, data was made available from instructors for 286 students in various sections across the program, out of an approximate 350 total enrollment, and it is from this report that course retention and success rates were determined for the new CAPSI program. Of these 286 students, 231 students—or 80.8%—persisted to the end of the semester, 18 students officially withdrew from the course, and 37 received an FA (failure to attend) grade. The overall

system-wide retention percentage is close to the national average of 83% (Gerlaugh, Thompson, Boylan & Davis, 2007), and exactly the same as the previous year's fall semester of 81%, when 363 total students were enrolled across all sections.

A deeper look at the data reveals large differences within the program, not between full-time instructors and adjuncts but between sections taught at the main campus and those taught at the branches. On the main campus, where the overall retention rate during the pilot program was 77.3%, retention among adjuncts and full-time instructors was similar, with adjuncts retaining 76.1% and full-time instructors retaining slightly fewer students at 78.4%. At the branches, where all sections were taught by adjuncts, retention rates were drastically higher at 93.4% when compared to the main campus. Although this difference is large, there is very little difference between the pilot program data and that of the previous fall semester, in which the main campus retained 77.6% and the branches retained 94.4%. As with the pilot program, the drastic difference is not between full-time and adjunct instructors overall—78.6% for full-time versus 84.2% for adjuncts, for a difference of 5.6%—but between those instructors who teach in the branches and those who teach on the main campus, for a 16.8% difference in Fall 2007 and 16.1% during the pilot program.

Student attendance can also be seen as an indicator of persistence. While attendance reporting was voluntary in the DSCC program, for those faculty who shared attendance data, students who persisted to the end of the semester in sections taught by FT faculty missed an average of 3.4 days, and those in sections taught by adjuncts missed 3.2 days. Therefore, no significant difference in attendance occurred between full-time and adjunct-taught sections. 12.94% of students overall violated the attendance policy, which allowed students to miss the equivalent of 2 weeks, or stopped attending class completely and were failed due to excessive

absences. No data was kept on why students withdrew or stopped attending. Attendance data from previous semesters is not available for comparison.

Overall, then, no significant change in course retention occurred during the pilot period. Students persisted to the end of the semester at the same rates as prior to the redesigned CAPSI course.

Reduced Time in Course/Acceleration of Learning

In the original proposal submitted to TBR and NCAT which explained how the new course would be structured, DSCC addressed the issue of acceleration of learning, which was referred to in the documents as "early exit." Students were given three opportunities throughout the semester to demonstrate college-level competency and to exit the course early:

> Students will complete one assessment essay every four weeks, graded using the same common rubric as the diagnostic test. Those assignments will be reviewed to show areas where the students are progressing and where they still need additional help. Those assessment assignments also function as "exit points"—if a student has completed all modules and is ready to pass to the next level, his/her writing will be evaluated to demonstrate competency. If it is deemed by the instructor that the student is ready to pass, his/her work is passed on to the Writing Courses Coordinator, who will review the materials and determine whether the student can "exit" from the course. Theoretically, a student, then, could pass out of the DSPW class and into the next level by mid-term, allowing for the possibility of taking a class which starts at mid-term, thus completing two writing classes in one semester. (Madonowitz, 2007a, p. 5)

Knowing that the adjunct instructors, especially, would have difficulty in determining if a student was ready for early exit or might exit students who were not ready for Composition I, restrictions were implemented:

> To ensure that all standards have been met, the instructor will give the collected work and assessment results of any student recommended for early "exit" to the Writing Coordinator, who will review the work and determine if that student may exit early from the course; at the end of the semester, the Writing Coordinator will review the results of all students that the instructors feel are ready to pass into the next level. If the Coordinator determines that the students are successful and ready to pass into the next level, then the instructor will determine the final grade for those students. If the Coordinator determines that students have not successfully completed the course requirements, they will continue in the course until they can prove they are ready to move on. (Madonowitz, 2007a, p. 9-10)

During the pilot program, these guidelines for early exit were followed, and students were allowed to exit early. However, the number who were allowed to exit early was minimal (T. Madonowitz, personal communication, 2012). The instructors, most of whom were adjuncts, did not feel comfortable making this determination and kept their students until the end of the semester. (T. Madonowitz, personal communication, 2012). According to Madonowitz, better training and mentoring for the adjuncts would have increased their confidence for letting students exit early. However, limited to funds to pay for additional training, lack of interaction between adjuncts and full-time instructors, and a lack of a formalized mentoring program prevented this training from occurring.

It is clear, however, that acceleration of learning was not a primary concern of the DSCC plan and that quality time-in-course was valued more than early exit. While it was addressed in the proposal as required, it was not a primary consideration in redesigning the program, and there is a notable lack of detailed focus and explanation of it in the data.

Reduced Instructional Costs

At the time of the 2007 redesign, DSCC already had very low program costs. The college used the NCAT Course Planning Tool and determined that it spent only $161 per student—one of the lowest per student rates among TBR schools. DSCC had very little room to work toward lowering costs. A computer classroom which held all the developmental writing sections at a maximum of 20 students per section had already been put into place, along with Smart Classroom technology, and all costs for purchasing and maintaining this technology came out of a Technology Access Fund, into which students paid fees upon registration. 84% of the sections were taught by adjuncts who earned approximately $1200 per section. For students, tuition rates and fees were approximately $100 per credit hour, or $300 per developmental writing course. Students were required to purchase a book which came bundled with software for roughly $95.

Despite a focus by TBR and NCAT on cost-cutting as a benchmark of program success, ironically, the DSCC developmental writing program was actually generating revenue for the school before the redesign. Students paid $139 each beyond the $161 cost of their instruction, for a collective total of $102,860 in revenue per year. In addition, part of the annual funding received from the state of Tennessee was marked as performance funding, which was based on Composition I completion rates. In 2007, the Composition I completion rates were funded at 97%. As part of the 2007 redesign, then, DSCC had little room to work with cutting program

costs. NCAT's two ways of cutting costs—increasing section enrollments and replacing more expensive instructors with cheaper labor—could not be implemented. 84% of sections were already taught by adjuncts, and increasing this percentage meant risking sanction by the school's accreditation agency. Further, section enrollment could not be increased because the size of the room and the number of computers limited each section to 20 students. Program administrators were also firmly against attempts to increase section enrollment:

> …it is against the pedagogical opinion of the department and instructors nationwide in our discipline to increase class size or eliminate class meetings. A statement from the National Council of Teachers of English sates that "Remedial or developmental sections should be limited to a maximum of 15 students. It is essential to provide these students extra teaching if they are to acquire the reading and writing skills they need in college." (Madonowitz, 2007b, p. 3)

To save students money, the program cut materials costs wherever possible. For students who could not afford the materials, the program placed a copy of the book on reserve in the library for students to use, and instructors let students know that the code could be purchased for approximately $10 less online than from the bookstore. Also, DSCC did not use a modularization of course content that allowed students to take variable credit courses, nor was tuition modularized based upon anticipated major. Students who did not pass the course were required to re-enroll for the 3-credit course.

Determining the Extent of CAPSI Success

Based on the analyzed data from the redesigned CAPSI program at Delta State Community College during its pilot period, a determination can be made about the extent to which the redesigned program was successful. This determination is based upon the four

elements of program success established by NCAT and TBR and detailed in the Chapter Four: increased pass rates, increased retention, deccreased time in course, and decreased costs.

Overall, the redesigned program at Delta State was not successful in two of the four categories—reduced time in course and increased retention—and only partically successful in the other two—increased success rates and decreased costs—and only then if special considerations are made as to what justifies success. Student success rates actually declined under the pilot program. However, this does not necessarily mean a failure of the program as one of the problem areas the designers of the redesign wanted to target was grade inflation by the adjuncts. Grade inflation was lowered, thus partially achieving the program's goal regarding final grades, but this was not the acheivement that NCAT and TBR wanted. This area was partially successful at best. The same holds true with decreased instructional costs. Instructional costs at DSCC were not reduced; however, they were already incredibly low, and an argument can be made that they had no means for going lower. This aspect of the program can be labeled as successful only if their original low instructional costs are recognized and are considered successful because they did not increase. In contrast, reduced time in course for students was not acheieved as increased acceleration of learning and early departutre from the class was minimal. Although faculty were given a clear policy for allowing students to exit early and encouraged to move along those students who were ready, there is no evidence that more than a handful of students were given this option and released early from the course, including those repeating the course (T. Madonowitz, Personal communication, 2012). Lastly, there was no evidence of increased retention. The course retention rate remained consistent with the traditional course, and the termination of the initial redesign program by the administration did not allow for long-term

tracking data. Overall, then, the DSCC developmental writing redesign cannot be considered successful.

CHAPTER SIX

EXPLORING THE NEW MARGIN:

CASE STUDY OF THE CAPSI DEVELOPMENTAL WRITING PROGRAM

AT MOUNTAIN STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

TRANSITIONAL STUDIES

The Transitional Studies Program offers [a] foundation in English, reading, writing and math to students who are under prepared academically for college level work.

There are several levels of Transitional Studies courses designed for each student based on individual assessment. Students are encouraged to remove deficiencies as rapidly as possible. However, students may enroll in certain college level classes concurrently while doing Transitional Studies coursework.

The goal of the Transitional Studies Program is to prepare students for academic success. The program's structure is based on guidelines set by the Tennessee Board of Regents. Credit hours earned in Transitional Studies courses do not count toward requirements for graduation.

-- From the Mountain State Community College website

Unlike DSCC, where faculty were largely apathetic to redesign, thus not standing in the way of change and allowing these changes to begin immediately, the redesign at Mountain State Community College (hereafter MSCC) was slow in coming. A position paper written by the full-time faculty in 2007—the first year of the state redesign initiative—exemplifies a resistance to change: "One thing seems pretty clear to those of us in the front lines, however," the paper

concludes, "developmental students, by definition poorly prepared in the disciplines as well as in the habits of an independent learner, require time to learn and specific, professional guidance to do so. There isn't a 'cheap' or fast way" (Keating, 2007, p.5) and "We need answers to a number of questions before we begin" (Keating, 2007, p. 5). These questions were listed as follows:

- Mountain State once was nationally recognized for the quality of its developmental program by the graduate school at Appalachian State University. What were the strengths of that program?
- What data do we have concerning the changes that have been made so far? Do we know that reducing the hours of the developmental courses was an effective way to cut costs while maintaining quality?
- What data do we have concerning the use of specific types of technology and software?
- Over the twenty years of the TBR program, what specific techniques have worked best?
- What are the reasons for differences in achievements of students (assuming there are differences) taught by adjuncts? By hybrid classes? By RODP? By eLearn?
- Has class size made a difference in achievement over time?
- Do instructors with specialized degrees have better results than instructors with a master's degree in a language based field?
- And others. (Keating, 2007, p. 5)

This desire to keep a traditional, lecture-based program continued over the next four years, with little movement made toward creating and implementing the new program. In early 2011, facing

an implementation deadline of fall 2013, the faculty submitted a proposal to TBR; this proposal was rejected. The Transitional Studies Director and the Vice President of Academic Affairs wrote a new proposal, which was successfully approved that summer. In August 2011, and a new Assistant Department Head for Developmental Reading and Writing Redesign was hired to finalize the program details, implement, and assess the new program. The new CAPSI writing program was piloted in all sections system-wide in Fall 2012.

Description of the College and its Pre-Redesign Program

Located in southeastern Tennessee, MSCC has a wooded campus stretching along the banks of the Tennessee River, complete with outdoor sculpture museum and a flock of geese on the pond anchoring the center of campus. It is a large school, with a total student enrollment of approximately 10,400 students and over 60 majors, and it shares its campus with a branch of the Tennessee Technology Center. Its location gives it a mix of rural and urban students; it is located in the fourth largest city in Tennessee with approximately 167,000 residents, and its five satellite sites serve a six-county rural service area in southeast Tennessee and along the borders with Georgia and Alabama (Mountain State Community College [MSCC], n.d.). Its service area is historically under-educated. Grundy County, for example, graduates from high school only 55.2% of its students, compared to the statewide percentage of 75.9%, and only 7.1% of persons possess a bachelor's degree, compared to the statewide rate of 19.6% (MSCC, Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Research, 2010a). The area's under-education is reflected in the incoming student average ACT composite score of 18 (MSCC, 2010b), which is below the composite score of 26 necessary to avoid placement into any developmental courses (MSCC, Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, n.d., Section 03:42:01 – Transitional Studies). While MSCC's total student population is nearly evenly divided between

full and part-time students (49% full-time students compared to 51% part-time), its gender and ethnic demographics are uneven. In 2010, females outnumbered males 61% to 39%, and the ethnic make-up of the student population heavily favored Caucasian students: 77% self-identified as white, 19% as black, with all others making up less than 5% combined (MSCC, 2010b). Among developmental students, the ethnic make-up is the same as the general student population, but males make up a slightly larger portion of developmental students at 43% (Benchley, 2009-2010). Notably, the developmental student population is made up of a much greater proportion of full-time students carrying at least 12 credits—70% full time to 30% part time (Benchley, 2009-2010).

Recognizing the area's educational shortcomings and the lack of diversity in its student population, MSCC made institutional goals to attract more rural and ethnic students and to increase its retention and graduation rates. As noted in the 2005-2010 Strategic Plan report, MSCC increased course offerings at the five satellite sites and targeted marketing toward rural students in its service area. They also sought to further diversify by targeting increased enrollments among African-American students. By 2011, they had successfully increased student enrollments from rural areas, African-American students, and Hispanic students (MSCC, 2010a.). In addition, they created a campus-wide diversity plan which seeks to create a more diverse student population and provide opportunities for ethnic student populations and increased cultural awareness (MSCC, 2010a). Concern has also been focused on the low graduation and retention rates. Currently, MSCC graduation rate is only 9%, tied with DSCC for the second lowest rate among Tennessee's two-year (Garrett, 2010). Its retention rates are also lower than the TBR system average. First-time cohort retention rates were 59.8%, compared to the TBR two-year school average of 62.3% (MSCC, 2010b). To combat low graduation and retention

rates, MSCC has focused on improving work ethic for its quality enhancement program as part of its reaccredidation process with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (MSCC, QEP Committee, n.d.).

Although the developmental program at MSCC was called Transitional Studies until its redesign in 2012, when it became Learning Support, it is a traditional developmental studies program like that at DSCC, and it follows the same guidelines mandated by TBR. However, the *MSCC Policies and Procedures Manual* outlines additional foundational guidelines for program evaluation:

> Program evaluation must be a continuous process. The institution is responsible for supplying all information required by the TBR First-Time Freshman Reports and Retention Reports used for program evaluation. Evaluation will be based on a set of objective and qualitative standards. The DSP will be evaluated at least once every five years. The evaluation will compare the following DSP components with national standards:
>
> - overall program quality and effectiveness;
> - quality and effectiveness of each program component;
> - administrator, faculty, and staff effectiveness;
> - student retention, performance, and persistence.
>
> Specific standards comparable to national standards (e.g. NADE's Self-Evaluation Guides, NCTM, NCTE, AMATYC) for each program component must be established, published, and maintained. (MSCC, Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, n.d., Section 03:42:01 – Transitional Studies)

Student success data was collected in spring, 2009 by the Director of Transitional Studies, who gathered data on the previous three fall semesters from the National College Benchmark Study which had been conducted of the college. She concluded that the average success rate (i.e., students who received a final grade of C, B, or A) was 58% (Herenton & King, 2011). Full-time faculty reported similar success data in the 2009-2010 Academic Audit (Benchley, p. 28), which covers all semesters from 2001 – 2006 (why the three years of data from 2007 to 2009 was not included in the academic audit is unknown). The Academic Audit claims a success rate of 65.1% for the last three fall semesters reported; however, this does not include students who dropped/withdrew or received an incomplete. If these students are factored into the data, then an average success rate of 59% results—a figure nearly identical to the 58% reported by the Director in the proposal.

It is worth noting that the program faculty and administrators knew that assessment was an area in which they were lacking, as evidenced by repeated admissions in the 2009 - 2010 Academic Audit report. Benchley (2009-2010) acknowledged that "assessment is a definite weakness in our program" (p. 9) and "Only sporadically do we review our assessment methods to see how they might be improved" (p. 10). Further, while they follow "successful students informally and with occasional statistical studies" (Benchley, 2009-2010, p. 6), they admit that "Our data collection and analysis is admittedly weak. We certainly envision keeping better data for tracking our students" (Benchley, 2009-2010, p. 6). They were hopeful that this might change in the future with a dedicated coordinator to oversee the developmental writing classes (Keating, 2010). However, because the faculty and coordinator used the term *assessment* to refer to both program assessment and student placement protocols, it is unclear in the Academic Audit to which use of the term they are referring.

In a December, 2010 draft of the original redesign plan, which was later rejected by the state Board, the coordinator uses the term *assessment* when addressing the two key areas in which the program needed to improve (see Keating, 2010), but context places the usage as referring to student placement protocols rather than program assessment. In other documents, such as the Academic Audit (see Benchley, 2009-2010), the term *diagnostic* is also used to refer to secondary placement. Proper placement was an ongoing concern, as mentioned repeatedly in several program documents during this period: "During the 30 years that we have had Developmental Studies at Mountain State in a TBR required format, there have always been a significant number of students who have been misplaced because of poor assessment, and over the years there has always been some attempt to correct the placement" (Keating, 2010, Sec. I. Improve Placement). The coordinator and faculty repeatedly state in several documents during this time period that the ACT is not a good tool for placement (for examples, see Keating, 2010; Keating, 2009; Keating*;* and Benchley, 2009-2010); however, they do not offer any evidence or data to support this assumption except that they moved a large number of students in the program due to what they deemed improper placement. In fall semester, 2010, 190 students, from an approximate total of 1400 reading and writing students, were deemed to be improperly placed and moved into a different class level after the start of the semester (Keating, 2010), but program faculty believe that this number was actually too small: "We anticipate that the number of students who would benefit from the earlier assessment is much larger than the 190 [reading and writing students] that we had this semester…It is very possible that we might see 400-500 [reading and writing] students placed properly this way" (Keating, 2010, Sec. I. Improve Placement). As with the claim about the ACT being an invalid placement tool, no data is offered to substantiate this.

In the 2009-2010 Academic Audit, faculty admitted that developmental writing did not have a viable secondary placement verification procedure:

> …during the early days of each semester, placement is verified and those students who have serious specific problems are identified through the use of a diagnostic writing sample and a grammar test. Students who are misplaced…may be moved to the correct placement…Instructors in writing do not often make the effort to move misplaced students. Classes are mostly taught by part-time instructors. Their opinions, based upon diagnostic essay results, have had to be confirmed by the students' writing another placement essay that must be reviewed by two full-time professors. The coordinator and the director are currently working on streamlining this process. (Benchley, 2009-2010, p. 5)

The originally proposed plan to improve secondary placement procedures was to make all incoming students complete a writing sample on Criterion, a computer-based grading system that the program had just implemented and mandated for all its developmental students for all writing assignments; ideally, this sample would be written immediately after taking the ACT and be graded immediately. It would also have served as a diagnostic tool "to give students information immediately about what skills they have and what skills need improvement" (Keating, 2010, Sec. I. Improve Assessment). Despite a detailed piloting plan for using this new tool, this system was never implemented, and it is not clear from the documents how replacing the ACT with a completely computerized grading system would produce more accurate placement or how the skills it differentiated as a diagnostic tool would be addressed in the course. The program continued to use the same traditional placement procedure as before.

Another problem which plagued the program was quality control of teaching. As stated in the Academic Audit report, "Quality assurance is decidedly the weakest of the focal areas for Mountain State" (Benchley, 2009-2010, p. 12). (It should be noted that documents from this period also referred to quality control as *assessment*.) Poor instruction led to ill-prepared students who were passed along to the college level, as well as significant course drift, even among full-time faculty, which included teaching from individualized class syllabi rather than a standard syllabus with common learning objectives and texts (Benchley, 2009; Keating, 2010). However, a lack of time and resources prevented better quality control measures: "We do not periodically review our quality assurance practices. Indeed, until this semester, we have had almost none for part-time faculty because we have had no system of quality assurance except the end-of-semester folders" (Benchley, 2009-2010, p. 12).

One of the most important concerns regarding quality control was the program's lack of a regimented, consistently offered training program. Although the program had previously held training sessions specifically for its developmental instructors and provided an updated faculty handbook, this targeted training ceased when the program was absorbed into the Arts & Humanities Division. Sessions were reduced to a one, two-hour annual orientation session that was part of the larger, multi-disciplinary orientation offered by the Arts & Humanities Division as a whole (Benchley, 2009-2010). The lack of instructor preparedness was extensive:

> [M]any of our adjuncts require additional training. They need to learn the importance of following the syllabus, the instructional strategies for teaching various topics in both reading and writing, the need for integration of grammar study with writing, the methods of grading, particularly essays…They also need to develop enough confidence so that they do not feel they must pass a certain percentage of students or feel that they must

> excuse a student's lack of responsibility. (Keating, 2010, sec. II, Better Trained Adjuncts)

There was also a lack of adequate supervision. According to the Academic Audit, "efforts to monitor and promote [adjunct instructors'] progress have been woefully inadequate" (Benchley, 2009-2019, p. 11). Classroom observations had previously been the responsibility of the Humanities Department Head, who was already overburdened by having to observe all the full-time faculty each semester and thus was not able to observe the adjuncts, except for those who received student complaints, gave odd grade distributions, or showed other indications of delinquency of teaching duties. Compounding the lack of proper training and supervision was the communication gap between full-time and adjunct faculty: "We hold annual orientations for adjuncts," a full-time faculty member admitted, "however, we do relatively little to follow up" (Benchley, 2009-2010, p. 12). In the past, a department newsletter and teaching handbook had been created and disseminated, but by the fall of 2009, both had become defunct; there were no plans to reinstate the newsletter, and intentions to create a new handbook were not realized.

The concern over quality control at MSCC is certainly warranted given that the overwhelming majority of developmental classes are taught by adjuncts—the least experienced, least educated instructors, who earn as little as $310 per credit hour. The pay is so low, in fact, that program and department administrators feel guilty about requiring them to do any extra training or work for the program. (In fact, it was suggested by the program coordinator that adjuncts who completed a proposed training course should receive an additional $100 per credit hour, bringing the total pay per course for new hires with B.A. degrees from $930 to $1230 (Keating, 2010); however, to date, the administration has not raised starting adjunct pay, which remains at $310 for instructors with B.A. degrees.) Despite these obstacles, plans were made to

increase supervision and improve the quality of teaching, although the majority of the plans focused on improved supervision rather than increased training. Plans in 2009-2010 included developing a new syllabus; creating a new system of classroom observations in which adjuncts would be observed at least once per year and preferably once a semester by full-time faculty who would report their observations back to the department head and also advise adjuncts on how they can improve their teaching; reviewing student portfolios by the department head to ensure that students write the required number of papers and that proper grading has been done by instructors; and requiring all instructors to use the online grading software Criterion for all essays, which could be monitored through the program's administrative functions by the coordinator, who would then notify the department head when an adjunct did not complete his or her teaching responsibilities (Benchley, 2009-2010; Keating, 2010). Plans for improved training included creating a mentoring program, coordinating assistance with Criterion, creating an online site for posting standard course materials and professional development information, and instituting a hybrid or on-line training course. Unfortunately, these plans were not fully implemented, and except for the standard syllabus and annual observations, none of these initiatives were in existence by Fall 2011 when the new CAPSI program was being created.

Another area of concern mentioned in the 2009-2010 Academic Audit was program assessment. (It should be noted that this is the third different definition of the term *assessment* appearing in the documents—referring to student placement, teaching quality control, and program assessment.) However, creating a viable program assessment method received little attention in the documents when compared to other problems, such as quality control and proper student placement. No clear program assessment plan nor initiatives appear in the original redesign proposal nor in any of the pre-redesign documents that were available for review; the

space that was dedicated to this problem in the documents detailed its lack rather than a plan for improvement. However, faculty were cautiously optimistic that program assessment would be implemented:

> Only in the past year [2009], with the creation of a Developmental Reading and Writing Coordinator position, have reading or writing professors discussed the need to analyze assessment data systematically to improve the curriculum. Again, we desire to follow the cycle of assessing our students' achievement of the learning objectives, collecting and analyzing the data, and altering our practices to improve our students' learning, and the new Criterion software will provide some holistic grading data. However, assessment is a definite weakness in our program. (Benchley, 2009-20129, p. 9)

The writing program had used a standard exit exam prior to 2006, when coordinator positions were eliminated and made administering the exam too logistically problematic to continue. However, as reported in the Academic Audit, "the writing faculty are currently striving to find a way to return to mastery testing of some kind" (Benchley, 2009-2010, p. 10), although this exit exam, as with the quality control measures, had not been implemented by the time the redesigned CAPSI course was created.

In 2009, TBR required all colleges to complete a Developmental Studies Redesign Survey, whose purpose was to detail their progress toward redesign. What the survey revealed about the developmental writing program at MSCC was a reluctance to change. Although the program had already had two years in which to make steps toward using technology to modularize course content, the only attempt to work toward the redesign goals was the required use in all sections of Criterion, ETS's computer-grading system that evaluated student writing and allowed the Coordinator to monitor each instructor's class:

> The Criterion paper grading software has this year (for the first time) allowed at least some significant window for monitoring whether our faculty are following the standard schedule or not and whether their students are in fact making progress. In spring 2009, Criterion allowed us to identify two problem instructors, and this semester (fall 2009), it has already allowed full-time faculty to give aid where it is needed. Also, we identified through Criterion one instructor who was irresponsible about grading, and he will not be given any other classes. In the past, discovering this person's negligence might have taken several semesters. (Benchley, 2009-2010, p. 11)

Although it is clear that the coordinator and full-time faculty used Criterion because they truly believed it aided in meeting course and program goals, every question on the 2009 program survey was answered only with descriptions of Criterion. Even questions meant to reflect on the redesign process and program as a whole, such as "In general, what has/have been your biggest challenge(s)?" and "What worked best and why?" were answered through the tunnel-vision of Criterion, with "The biggest challenge has been getting all faculty members to use the website [i.e., Criterion] systematically and appropriately" and "Criterion worked best," respectively (Keating, 2009). No mention was made of any other strategies, plans, or activities that would have moved the program closer to the redesign goals, and it was later admitted within the answer to the second question that "The only real difference in instruction [between the traditional course and their current progress in the redesign] was Criterion" (Keating, 2009). Also noticeably missing from the survey were answers regarding modularization of content and acceleration of learning, two key goals of the TBR redesign. When asked directly about secondary placement assessment in the survey, the program coordinator admitted that they did not yet have one in place although they were hoping to use Criterion in the future, and a direct

question about cost savings was answered incompletely: "It is too early to tell whether cost savings result. Most faculty members who used the program felt that time grading was saved, and that more time would be saved as they became more proficient. Savings may result from students developing better skills and passing at a higher rate, saving time in other classes" (Keating, 2009). No specific dollar amounts were calculated pertaining to saved instructional costs, and there was no mention of the nearly $16,000 annual cost to the college for Criterion subscriptions.

Program Design and Planned Assessment

The approved program design that MSCC eventually implemented in Fall, 2012, was not the original plan that was submitted to TBR. A previous proposal submitted to TBR during the 2010-2011 academic year was rejected. Although the exact reasons for rejection are not available, a review of the proposal indicates that the design failed to meet TBR expectations for early exit, modularization of course content, and study plans individualized to meet each student's needs, as described in the TBR Outcomes and Best Practices document. Further, the rejected proposal did not meet NCAT's expectations of lowered instructional costs. It is unclear why the original proposal that was submitted failed to address these expectations.

Although there is evidence in the documents that the program coordinator and full-time faculty were aware of the new expectations for redesign, they failed to follow them in designing their originally proposed program. In the 2009-2010 Academic Audit document, the history of the state mandated redesign is described as follows:

> In January 2007, the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR), in cooperation with the National Center for Academic Transformation (NCAT), called for college Transitional Studies programs to engage in an "initiative to redesign its remedial

> and developmental math and English curriculum using technology-supported active-learning strategies." The goal of what has become known as "the redesign" was stated as "to achieve improvements in learning outcomes as well as reductions in instructional costs." These redesigns were to be whole course modular redesigns combining active learning and mastery learning, using computer-based learning resources, and providing on-demand help with alternative staffing ("undergraduate peer mentors and course assistants") for those support tasks that do not require expensive faculty. (Benchley, 2009-2010, p.5)

A lengthy description later in the same document gives their interpretation of the new guidelines and the changes that would take place as maximum allowable credit hours for developmental writing courses were lowered and new ACT placement guidelines were instituted. The program coordinator and full-time faculty clearly understood these changes and the importance of implementing them when they wrote that "The highest priority now has to be restructuring our program to accord with the new (Fall 2009) Tennessee Board of Regents A-100 guidelines" (Benchley, 2009-2010, p. 15).

However, just as clear was their reluctance to exchange the traditional, instructor-as-focal-point classroom for computerized instruction. Their opposition appears midway through the Academic Audit:

> The elimination of courses for the lower level students means practically that the College will be putting them on computers to use PassKey, where they can take a diagnostic test that will create a curriculum for them; thus, weak students with ACT scores of 1-13 who have little self-discipline, as well as low level reading and problem

solving skills, will be asked to teach themselves in one semester what human experts with years of experience can often barely teach them in two semesters….

The upper level students may still be well served….The desires expressed here to eliminate unnecessary repetition and to certify mastery of various writing and reading skills is [*sic*] a legitimate one. Some elements of a mastery curriculum can be handled asynchronously (i.e. students can pass pre-instructional and post-instructional mastery tests, and students can show via their writings that they have mastered the non-grammatical elements of ChSCC [i.e., MSCC] writing, such as basic paragraph structure and its modal varieties, essay structure, and summarizing sources). So a checklist of skills can be developed, and students can be checked off on these skills by an instructor so that students do not have to repeat them.

…However, retention studies generally conclude that emotional connection is the key to retention, and students connect emotionally with neither their instructors nor their fellow students via computerized modules, so some vestige of the traditional classroom should remain. Also, students often need the explanation of a human instructor who can predict common student misconceptions and avoid them prior to the student learning, and then having to unlearn, a practice that is wrong. In addition, computer programs are not yet competent enough at grading compositions that they can replace the judgment of a well trained and experienced human instructor. Since, unlike computers, instructors cannot handle large numbers of students each at a different skill level, some grouping of skills and students is needed so that cohorts of students are kept together on the same pace. (Benchley, 2009-2010, p. 14 -15)

What this passage clearly establishes, then, is both an awareness of what requirements and policy changes have been issued by TBR and a reluctance to change from an instructor-driven course to individualized instruction via CAPSI delivery. This passage also demonstrates several contradictions. First, there is no reconciliation between the two contradictory positions of mandating the use of the computer-based grading system Criterion by the program to initially evaluate all student writing, on one hand, with the assertion that "computer programs are not yet competent enough at grading compositions that they can replace the judgment of a well trained and experienced human instructor," on the other. Second, although they admit that "unlike computers, instructors cannot handle large numbers of students each at a different skill level," they do not acknowledge that the new ACT placement scores (of 13 – 17) will force instructors into that exact position if they continue to choose traditional course delivery over computer-based instruction. Last, they do not acknowledge the logistical contradictions between being able to allow repeated attempts at modularized content through mastery learning and requiring students to all move at the same pace on the same topics.

Because of a failure to reconcile these contradictory positions, what was described in the original proposal was roughly the same course as before but with the addition of mandatory tutoring for those students who fall behind and a checklist instead of a grade book:

> Thus, the program is developing a modularized DSPW 0800 plan that allows for slower students to have individualized or small group instruction by backup instructors while the main class continues mastering modules at a prescribed pace with a combination of Socratic lecturing, cooperative learning activities, individualized, guided, and often computerized practice, skills combination through writing, and mastery certification via graded paragraphs, summaries, and tests. As the course progresses, the instructor certifies

> each student's mastery level via an individualized checklist of skills. (Benchley, 2009-2010, p. 15 -16)

A master syllabus for a combination reading/writing class written for the original proposal does not explain individualized study or describe modularized content, each daily class lecture on the course schedule was simply re-labeled as a "mini-presentation," and while it contained the statement that students would be allowed to work ahead, there was no explanation of how students would be able to do this given the stated caveat that early exit would not be allowed prior to week twelve. Therefore, despite assurances that "The current redesign program initiated by the Tennessee Board of Regents has provided an opportunity for revitalization" (Benchley, 2009-2010, p. 4), what was set forth in the original proposal was a continuation of the status quo.

The developmental writing program also lacked strong leadership during this time, which may have led to the faculty being unwilling to accept the changes required by the redesign initiative. Originally, developmental classes were located in their own Transitional Studies division and apart from their discipline departments, operating under the direction of a Director of Transitional Studies, but in 1998, the program was divided and classes absorbed into their disciplines. The Director position remained, but direct responsibility for the courses fell under the supervision of the department heads. As noted in the Academic Audit, "With faculty under the auspices of their respective departments, the office of the Director of Transitional Studies is disconnected from the faculty and has largely been limited to keeping statistics, communicating with TBR in Nashville and with other directors around the state, administering an occasional pilot experiment, and controlling the study skills (DSPS) courses" (Benchley, 2009-2010, p. 4). A system of coordinators was implemented to help fill this leadership vacuum, but it was noted several times in the documents that both the Department Head and the Coordinator of Freshman

English were too overworked and possessed too little resources to properly supervise the developmental writing program. The coordinator system was abolished in 2006. In 2009, one of the full-time developmental faculty was named Coordinator of Developmental Reading and Writing, and a redesign committee was composed to create and implement program changes. While they were confident in asserting that "led by an energetic developmental reading and writing coordinator, it [the committee] has provided the unified effort and direction the program has needed since the division was dissolved" (Benchley, 2009-2010, p. 4), the failure to meet TBR redesign requirements demonstrates otherwise, and very few of the expectations for the program were realized. In fall 2011, faced with a rejected redesign proposal by TBR and faculty who were unwilling to change, the college administration wrote a new proposal and replaced the Coordinator with an Assistant Department Head for Developmental Reading and Writing Redesign, an outside applicant who was not tied to the history of the program. This position now serves as a de facto reading and writing program director, overseeing all aspects of the program from hiring and training to scheduling and assessment. The second proposal was accepted. Of the four full-time writing faculty who taught developmental courses at the time of the original redesign, only one still teaches in the program.

The faculty were also outspoken against the administration, with several anti-administration and anti-redesign sentiments finding their way into the documents. The full-time faculty describe themselves as "a few highly experienced and expert professors" (Benchley, 2009-2010, p. 11) running a "stable and isolated program of excellence" (Benchley, 2009-2010, p. 11) in the face of daunting circumstances: "a small group of teachers unto themselves, continuing in near isolation the best practices they had developed in earlier years" (Benchley, 2009-2010, p. 3).). In a statement regarding the importance of their jobs, they write: "The

largest numbers of developmental students by far are going into Allied Health and are transferring to other schools. Thus, we have to do a good job. Literally, our lives and our sacred honor as a school depend upon it" (Benchley, 2009-2010, p. 5). However, they contradict themselves. Just one page later in the document, instead of lamenting the lack of leadership and connection that has them working in "near isolation," they seem to want exactly that: "The history of the program suggests that, left to their own devices, the faculty of Mountain State are capable of creating a program worthy of national recognition" (Benchley, 2009-2010, p. 4). This quote also demonstrates anti-administration sentiments. Specifically, these sentiments appeared in comments related to past changes made by the administration, which the full-time faculty regarded as unwarranted interference that resulted in detrimental changes to the program. One such passage reads,

> Efforts to fix what was not broken have resulted in no significant improvement with the 1996 Kaplan experiment and indeed in real setbacks to the program when the division was dissolved in 1998 and later when the coordinator system was demolished in 2006. These setbacks include a lack of coordination and pollenization of ideas between and among disciplines, a lack of follow-through in dealing with students; lack of concentration of faculty on this level course as their responsibilities broadened. (Benchley, 2009-2010, p.4)

As with the administrators at DSCC, who anticipated TBR's statewide redesign plans and set out to implement changes even though they were not yet required to do so, the MSCC administrators also sought to implement a new program before being mandated. This pro-active step was also viewed as interference by the faculty: "despite the Reading and Writing application's being

neither submitted nor funded, the College nonetheless began redesigning Transitional Studies Reading and Writing" (Benchley, 2009-2010, p. 5).

The documents also reveal fatigue resulting from mandated program changes in the past. (For a complete description of these changes by year, see Benchley, 2009-2010). Given this history of program change every few years it is not surprising that faculty were reluctant to engage in yet another program redesign in 2007. Although the program submitted a proposal to TBR, as described above, an available draft of this proposal shows a lack of key factors that TBR wanted in the program redesign. Also obvious in the redesign documents was a lack of understanding of the expediency with which TBR wanted the redesigned courses to be implemented system-wide by fall 2013:

> We have been trying small pieces of the new curriculum for the last several semesters, but in the Fall of 2011 we will begin piloting new courses. Some of these ideas are in the process of being designed; others are still just ideas. If we are interested in doing these, we will need to design, then pilot, then make corrections, and finally implement, so we need at least three terms before we are ready to fully implement a course. (Keating, 2010)

What appears in the draft of the original proposal, then, was not an effort to meet these requirements but rather a detailed explanation of how they were *not* planning on meeting them.

A second proposal was created and successfully submitted in summer 2011. As with DSCC, the new proposal made use of CAPSI course delivery elements. Although a reference to NCAT's computer lab-based "Emporium Model" signifies a more thorough knowledge of individualized, mastery-based learning and computer-delivered instruction than the DSCC proposal of four years prior (Herenton & King, 2011), the administrators who wrote the report

were just as unaware that they would be using CAPSI elements as those administrators at DSCC. It was not until 2011 when the new Assistant Department Head, who had knowledge of CAPSI, was hired to oversee the details of the redesign that the elements of CAPSI delivery were knowingly connected to the MSCC redesign. The information below comes from the second proposal (Herenton & King, 2011) and the redesign status updates filed with TBR and MSCC's Vice President of Academic Affairs from fall 2011 to spring 2013.

Repeated Attempts to Demonstrate Mastery of Course Materials Through Unit Tests

A requirement of the TBR redesign initiative was that programs find a way to modularize course content and to modularize it in such way that students who repeated the course would not have to complete those modules in which they were already deemed proficient. MSCC would use Pearson Publishing's MyWritingLab online program and the eLearn online course management system to modularize course content. The course would be divided into two main modules, Module 1: Grammar and Module 2: Writing, which would be completed concurrently. Students would be required to pass all the individual grammar exercises at 75% in order to pass Module 1; these would be done as homework outside the class, and they could be repeated as many times as necessary. In Module 2: Writing, student would use a combination of online writing exercises, which they would have to master at 75%, and five writing activities, which they would have to mastery at 70%/C, based on different types of writing: personal writing, description, argument, critical research, and timed writing. Each activity would be comprised of a set of individual tasks students would complete in order to produce a finished, college-level essay, and students would be able to repeat the tasks as required, including revising and resubmitting the essay, until they achieved mastery for the activity.

Self-Pacing

As at DSCC, this is the element of CAPSI which would be the least realized. This is because the MSCC faculty feel that developmental students lack the self-motivation and self-efficacy skills necessary for independent study at their own pace. However, administrators wanted to give students the opportunity to self-pace as much as possible. Therefore, deadlines for each activity and grammar skills exercise were set throughout the semester and given to students in a detailed course schedule. This allowed students who wanted to exit the course early to work ahead without being held back by lectures and group work/discussions, but it also reminded those who worked more slowly that they needed to finish assignments by a specific date in order to be on track to finish the semester. When the deadline came, those students who did not turn in passing work (or turn in any work at all) would receive an F in the grade book and move on to the next activity as scheduled; however, they would have to also keep working on the previous assignment until it was passing caliber. The intent was to keep students from fixating on one activity early in the semester and falling too far behind to finish all the course requirements, and working on multiple writing activities would expose students to how all writers must balance multiple writing projects simultaneously. Students who wanted to exit the course early would be allowed to work ahead. The class would only keep the same pace on the first writing activity, which is a guided activity to teach the basic parts of an essay and the writing process.

Use of Lectures and Demonstrations Primarily for Motivational Purposes

Lectures were to be limited. Grammar instruction during class time was eliminated in favor completing online grammar exercises as homework and receiving additional grammar help on writing assignments as necessary from instructional assistants in the lab and one-on-one from the instructor. Instructors gave presentations on the parts of an essay and the writing process

during the first four weeks of the semester when the students progressed together through activity 1; they would give presentations again during the last four weeks of the semester when students were taught research and documentation. During the rest of the semester's class time, the students worked individually at their own pace on their writing activities, and except for introducing each new essay according to a set schedule, the instructors did not lecture but circulated through the classroom, offering one-on-one assistance and tutoring. Although the overall amount of contact time was the same, the amount of individual attention each student received would increase.

Dominant Reliance Upon Written Communication

Because lectures and demonstrations were to be minimized, written documents became the dominant form of communication for students. An informal estimate gauges the time spent in lectures and presentations before the introduction of CAPSI elements to the time spent after as a reduction of at least two-thirds. Therefore, all activities and instructions had to be fully explained and posted for all the students to read and review. All instructions were typed and posted on eLearn, including detailed step-by-step task sheets for each writing activity, PowerPoint files explaining in detail topics such as MLA documentation, and other supporting materials, including grammar handouts and pre-writing aids. The large amount of instructor-generated support materials and free access to the library's databases made the use of a book unnecessary.

Use of Student Proctors for Feedback and Tutoring

At community colleges, it is usually difficult to have student tutors available for writing assistance. This is because the strongest students who would make the best tutors are often not identified until they have gone through the freshman writing sequence, which typically leaves

only one additional year at the college to be a tutor before they transfer, which means constant turnover and often a lack of quality tutoring as they are just becoming fully trained, experienced tutors before they leave. Further, work study requirements at community colleges often limits who can and cannot be a tutor. For these reasons, MSCC decided not to use peer tutors, but professional help was made available from several sources. These sources include full-time managers and hourly instructional assistants, most whom are adjuncts instructors or graduate students from UTC, in three different academic assistance labs. Writing students can either seek assistance with grammar or writing through their own initiative or be referred to the labs by their instructor when they need additional help.

Program Assessment

Assessment would be kept simple, yet it would work to fix the problems described in the pre-redesign documents. Cost savings were not detailed in the proposal, and most of the savings would come from the elimination of annual Criterion subscriptions and sections of DSPW0700—Basic Writing, which was eliminated by TBR in 2011-2012 system-wide. However, the creation and staffing of a mandatory Academic Success Center to tutor students who scored 12 or less on the ACT would nullify whatever savings were realized.

Under the new program, student placement would still be determined by ACT, SAT, or COMPASS test scores, but as with all the colleges in the TBR system, these scores changed in 2011-2012: students with ACT scores from 16-18 were previously placed into developmental writing, with 19 required for placement into college-level courses, but these scores were lowered to include much weaker students with scores from 13 – 17, with 18 now the college-level requirement. Students who did not successfully test into college-level courses were tutored and allowed to retest. A structured, secondary placement assessment requiring a full essay written

the first week of class replaced the multiple-choice grammar test and single paragraph previously used for secondary placement assessment.

Program assessment would result in multiple data sources. End of semester final grades would be analyzed to determine how many students passed (A, B or C grades), how many did not pass (F and PR grades), and how many withdrew (W grades). Last date of attendance information would also be analyzed to determine within-course retention rates, as well as rates of early exit. The MyWritingLab software would give measures for time-on-task and activities scores; the online pre-test and post-test scores would demonstrate if improvements were made in grammar, and comparisons of these scores to their writing would be used to determine if learning occurred. Those students who successfully passed developmental writing would be tracked into ENGL1010—College Composition I; final grades would be analyzed to determine the success and retention rates. Because the Tennessee Legislature changed the funding formula for colleges and increased the importance of graduation rates, overall fall-to-fall retention rates would be tracked, both at the developmental and college levels, and graduate rates would be analyzed to determine if former developmental students who went through the new program had a higher graduation rate than those who matriculated in the traditional program. The program set a goal to reach an institutional benchmark that was 10% above the baseline data.

The Effect of CAPSI Delivery on Program Success at MSCC

Because the program at MSCC came late to the TBR initiative and had administrators more familiar with the criteria that TBR and NCAT wanted in the new programs, the program assessment at MSCC was much more detailed and complete than the assessment at DSCC. Further helping the assessment were the complete design of the program prior to implementation and the full implementation of the program across all sections; in contrast, the administrators at

DSCC were moving into the program more slowly, planning to improve each element of CAPSI course design gradually over time. Also included in the MSCC data that was missing in the DSCC assessment were feedback surveys completed by both student and faculty participants. Although the better assessment plans and tools at MSCC allowed for a richer description of program success than at DSCC, the overall findings were similar.

Increased Student Success Rates

In the proposal submitted to TBR, success rates from the 2010 – 2011 academic year were used as benchmark data:

> 408 students were enrolled in DSPW0700 fall semester, with 51% passing. 852 students were enrolled in DSPW0800 fall semester, with 57% passing. [In] Spring 2011, 269 students enrolled in DSPW0700, with 43% passing, and 629 students were enrolled in DSPW0800 with 51% passing. The department will strive to reach an institutional benchmark that is 10% above the baseline data. (Herenton & King, 2011)

Three caveats should be noted about this information which complicate comparisons to the pilot semester data. First, the numbers provided in the proposal do not make any reference to student withdrawal rates, and it is unclear if the numbers provided include or exclude withdrawals. Second, the Fall 2010 numbers included data from three class sections whose success rates appear as anomalies: one section in which the branch adjunct instructor passed students at 90%, and two sections taught by adjuncts who were removed from writing instruction at MSCC after the completion of that semester and so did not participate in the pilot, who both passed students at 78%. When these three outliers are removed, the Fall 2010 0800 pass rate is 50.6%—nearly identical to the spring 51% pass rate. Third, the benchmark data is based on the old program structure of two levels: a 0700 course for students with ACT scores below 16 who spend a

semester learning to write sentences and paragraphs, and an 0800 course for students with ACT scores from 16 – 18 who spend a semester learning to write paragraphs and essays. (This was not the case with the DSCC pilot program; that program was piloted before the change in ACT scores and so had the same level of student skills as the traditional course, making direct comparisons possible.) This complicates comparisons because the redesigned pilot program eliminated the 0700 level and changed the ACT placement scores for the new ENGL0810 course; students who had ACT scores of 13 – 17 were placed into the 0810 course. Those high-achieving students who scored 18 are no longer in the course, and weaker students who were previously taught sentences and paragraphs were placed into the higher level where they were expected to write complete essays and demonstrate proficiency in one semester what had previously taken them two semesters to complete.

It is impossible, then, to make more than rough comparisons of the data, and the numbers need to be adjusted for the inclusion of those students who would have formerly been placed in the 0700-level course. Taking the old 0700-level success data into consideration, the combined averages of the traditional program, weighted for twice as many 0800 students to 0700 students, gives an approximated average of roughly 55% for Fall 2010, and 48% for Spring 2011.

During the pilot semester, instructors returned performance data for 717 enrolled students in 32 sections, including those who withdrew from the course. These students passed at only 41% (44% if W's are excluded); only 55% (58% if W's are excluded) successfully completed roughly half the course and received a PR grade to signifying that they were progressing but not passing. This is below the traditional program's success rates and far below the last national average pass rate collected by the NCDE (Gerlaugh, Thompson, Boylan & Davis, 2007). Complicating these numbers, however, is the large percentage of students who did not submit

any writing assignments, thus effectively not attempting the course. Of the 717 enrolled students, and excluding those students who withdrew from the course and so did not have completion data reported, 189 students (28%) did not attend class at least once nor successfully submit a single writing assignment all semester. Therefore, only 528 students attempted the coursework; of these, 61% successfully passed the course, and 81% received PR grades. When only the students who attempted the course content are considered, the pass rate exceeds the benchmark goal of a 10% increase from the traditional course pass rates, of roughly 60% based upon the averages from Fall 2010 and 53% based upon the averages from Spring 2011. Unfortunately, there is no way to know how many of the traditional, pre-redesign students also did not meet the minimum requirement of attending class at least once and submitting at least once writing assignment.

Increased Retention

During the Fall 2012 pilot semester, 42 students (6%) officially withdrew from the course. Withdrawal rates for the previous year are not available for comparison and were not reported on the redesign proposal; the most recent withdrawal rates that are available are from Fall 2005, which was 10.2% and Fall 2006, which was 9.32% (Benchley, 2009-2010). Unfortunately, withdrawal rates are heavily influenced by financial aid policies, which changed in 2011-2012 to emphasize repayment for lack of attendance, and a low number of withdrawals is not necessarily indicative of student persistence. A better indicator of student persistence is last date of attendance; even this is not completely accurate, however, as students who have missed months of school will return during finals week in order to avoid repaying financial aid and will be recorded as having a last date of attendance in December. The MSCC instructors reported last date of attendance information for 696 students; no student successfully finished the

course prior to December. Twenty-five students stopped attending by the end of August, and another 66 had stopped attending by the end of September; 117 students stopped in October and another 83 in November. Only 405 students (58%) persisted to the end of the semester.

Of the 32 sections from which data was reported, 5 sections were taught by full-time instructors; 27 sections were taught by adjuncts. The 84% of classes taught by adjuncts is higher than the 75% national average (Gerlaugh, Thompson, Boylan & Davis, 2007). The pilot data does not indicate an overall discrepancy between full-time and adjunct instructors nor between outcomes at the main campus and those in the branches. Only one section appears as an anomaly to the averages—an adjunct at a branch site clearly inflated grades and passed all 20 of his enrolled students, including one student who turned in only two of five writing assignments. When this section is removed from the data, the other sections fall close to the overall data averages for retention.

Persistence can also be indicated by course work completed. Course work was standardized across all sections in the new CAPSI course; every instructor was required to give the same number and type of assignments so that repeating students would not have to complete any assignments which they had passed the previous semester and to prevent course drift. Therefore, comparisons can be easily made with all enrolled students based upon work completed. What this comparison clearly shows is a lack of persistence and self-motivation on the part of the students to do the basic required work for the course. Passing grades of 70+% were required on five writing activities, a final exam timed essay, and a final grammar exam to successfully pass the course. Of the 675 students who did not withdraw from the course, 189 students (28%) did not successfully complete *any* writing assignments during the semester (late submission were accepted; students could revise their writing unlimited times until it was

passing). The research essay, which was assigned during week 11, had the lowest completion rate of all the assignments at just 45%.

Although student attendance can also be seen as an indicator of persistence, this information is not available from the MSCC program. This is due to many factors. First, the college does not use the FA (failure to attend) grade as DSCC does; therefore, when a student earns an F for the semester, there is no method for determining if the F is an earned grade that signifies lack of competency in the course or lack of attendance. Second, although instructors are required for financial aid purposes to note the last date of attendance for all students who receive an F, this date can be misleading; students who know that they will have to pay back their financial aid if they fail the class due to attendance will often return to class during the last week of the semester, and that date is what is recorded with the final grades. Third, the MSCC program changed its attendance policy for the pilot. Students are now allowed to make up absences by putting in additional time in the college Reading and Writing Centers. Responses on a survey given to 100 students who persisted to the completion of the course in December indicated that they liked this policy: 93% indicated that they liked the opportunity to make up missed days, and 30% of them admitted to having done so.

Reduced Time in Course/Acceleration in Learning

Little data is available on reduced time in course or acceleration of learning. Although several students took advantage of the self-pacing to move ahead in the course and finish early, they only finished a week before the regular end of the semester, and none of the students who passed finished prior to December. We also do not know how repeating students will be affected. One of the program's requirements from the Board of Regents was that repeating students would not be required to study any skills in which they had already proved competent,

meaning that repeating students would not have to rework and resubmit any assignments that they had passed in their first attempt of the course. Because the pilot semester data is from one semester only, data from repeating students is not available.

Another way in which the program hoped to cut instructional costs was through the creation of a new course: ENGL 0900 – Learning Support Combined Reading and Writing. This course would combine the two separate READ0810 and ENGL0810 courses together into a single, 3-hour credit course, and it would be open for enrollment by only those students who had tested at the very high end of developmental placement: ACT English of 16 or 17 and ACT (Reading of 17 or 18 (Herenton & King, 2011, p.2). By allowing only high-scoring students, this class could skip the first and most basic of the two required TBR competencies in reading and writing and begin with the second competency, thus effectively halving the amount of required coursework and tuition. However, the proposal's claim that it would save students time is unfounded; these students, who would have placed into the 0800 course under the traditional program, would have taken reading and writing at the same time and still spent only one semester at the developmental level. The new 0900 combination class, then, would save approximately $300 for each qualifying student, but it would not lessen the required time at the developmental level. However, due to several logistical problems detailed below in the next section, the course was not implemented as part of the redesign.

Reduced Costs

One of the primary reasons that colleges are redesigning their developmental writing programs is for reduced instructional costs. NCAT listed on its website two ways that costs can be reduced: by raising the student-to-faculty ratio and by replacing expensive labor with cheaper labor, which means replacing full-time faculty with adjuncts (NCAT, 2007b, p. 1-3). Like many

colleges, MSCC was unable to do either of these. It's student-to-faculty ratio was already at 23:1, well above the average recommended for writing courses by NCTE and above the average national average for developmental courses (Gerlaugh, Thompson, Boylan & Davis, 2007), and because all its writing classes were held in computer classrooms, there was no room to add additional computers and desks to accommodate additional students. As for replacing expensive full-time faculty with inexpensive adjuncts, MSCC already had a large percentage of its courses taught by adjuncts—approximately 80% before the redesign and nearly 85% after, even with the elimination of the lower-level 0700 course. MSCC, therefore, had to seek reductions in instructional costs elsewhere.

The primary way that MSCC—and indeed, all the colleges in the TBR system—saved money was the 2011-2012 restructuring of the Learning Support programs. This restructure eliminated the old two-level system, comprised of an 0700—Basic Writing (sentences to paragraphs) course and an 0800—Developmental Writing (paragraphs to essays) course—and replaced it with a single ENGL0810 Learning Support Writing course into which all developmental students with ACT scores from 13 to 17 were placed. Placement scores were also changed. Previously, students who scored 19 or above on the ACT were placed directly into college-level courses; students who scored from 16 – 18 were placed into the DSPW0800 course; and those with ACT scores below 16 were placed into DSPW0700. With the restructure, TBR lowered the college-level placement to 18 and prevented students with ACT 12 or below from registering at all. While the overall effect was lowered instructional costs, this was only because changing the numbers resulted in fewer students be allowed to register at the developmental level.

In actuality, the redesigned program ended up saving more money for both the college and all its students than anticipated and from different ways than what was listed in the proposal. This was done by changing the required materials and eliminating Criterion completely.

Changing instructional materials saved students money. The textbook, which cost approximately $90, was replaced with an online program, which cost $33 for one calendar year of access, and free readings from the library databases. With the elimination of the 0700 level course, students who tested below ACT 16 only purchased one access code when before they had to purchase two separate books at about $90 each to matriculate through the program and into college writing. This resulted in a minimum cost savings of $74,100 for the 1300 students enrolled annually in the program (Roberts, 2012).

The savings to the college is more complicated. Predictably, the school saved money through the elimination of the 0700-level courses and the change in ACT placement scores, which lowered total enrollment at the developmental level, thus requiring fewer instructors. Thirty-eight sections were eliminated per year, which were taught by adjunct instructors at an average of $1080 per section, for an approximate yearly total savings of $41,040 (Roberts, 2012). However, the school was also required to create an instructional program for those students with ACT scores of less than 13 who could not enroll in developmental courses, which meant the creation and staffing of a new Academic Success Lab where these students receive one-on-one and online tutoring (Roberts, 2012). The cost data for this lab's creation and ongoing operation was not available for inclusion in this dissertation, but it most likely offsets whatever savings was gained by reducing the number of instructors.

The most interesting cost savings amount came with the elimination of Criterion, which was an online grading program to which the college had been subscribing for approximately

$16,000 per year. This was a complete reversal from what had been in the original proposal which had been rejected by TBR in which Criterion would have been the lynchpin for the proposed program. In the rejected proposal and other pre-redesign documents, the use of Criterion was described as a valuable resource for saving time and money. One claim was that it saved instructional costs:

> So far, as benefits, our students have begun to receive more interim and immediate feedback on their work, saving time between drafts; the coordinator has been able to monitor the efforts of the instructors (uncovering problems with some instructors and impressive efforts with others); statistics have become easier to generate, and the College has been able to save money in paper costs. (Benchley, 2009-2010, p. 11)

How the college saved enough money from paper costs to compensate for the $16,000 annual subscription is unclear. It was also proposed that Criterion could be used as a more accurate secondary placement tool than the COMPASS tests they were using—these tests were taken by all students who scored ACT scores below college-level to ensure proper placement—and save money for both the college and students:

> We anticipate that the number of students who would benefit from the earlier assessment is much larger than the 190 that we had this semester…It is very possible that we might see 400-500 students placed properly this way, saving $354 in tuition for each student, or a total of $141,600 to $177,000, and saving the college a comparable amount. Of course, the students will save time, generally a semester of course work, but in a few cases two, by the improved placement. (Keating, 2010, p. 2)

Although students who are truly misplaced will save one class's tuition costs, it is unclear how using Criterion as a placement tool will save the *college* money, since placement has no direct

effect on the number of students enrolled but only on whether those students are placed into developmental or college-level courses. The numbers of potentially affected students also seems high; the 400 – 500 students referenced in this passage account for approximately one-third of all enrolled developmental writing students. In an earlier document from the previous year, the expectations for Criterion are stated more realistically:

> It is too early to tell whether cost savings result [from the use of Criterion]. Most faculty members who used the program felt that time grading was saved, and that more time would be saved as they became more proficient. Savings may result from students developing better skills and passing at a higher rate, saving time in other classes. (Keating, 2009, Question 9)

Therefore, while Criterion might have been effective in saving time, the cost savings of purchasing the program could not be quantified. Criterion was eliminated in the redesigned course in favor of MyWritingLab online teaching software, which the students purchased as part of their course materials and so did not cost the college anything (Roberts, 2012).

Another way they had planned to save money, but which ultimately did not happen, was the creation of the aforementioned reading and writing combination class for high-achieving students. By combining enrollment, this course would clearly save students approximately $340 each in tuition: "Savings for the student will result from a reduction in the number of courses and the amount of time necessary to achieve college-level skills, especially for those students who need both Reading and Writing and can take one 3-hour ENGL0900 course" (Herenton & King, 2011, p.1). Savings to the college is much more nebulous. Although faculty claimed that the college would "also save in terms of use of resources and tuition support" (Keating, 2010, p. 6), there was no detailed breakdown of how much money or what resources would be saved. In

fact, the original course document proposed a limit of 15 students per section and that sections would be taught by full-time instructors and supported by additional help in the College Reading and Writing Center (Keating, 2010, p. 5); this situation would end up costing the college more money for instruction than the two 23-limit, non-combined courses taught by adjuncts.

However, this course was not run as part of the pilot. This was due to many unresolved problems with the course:

> Instructors have always known that reading and writing instruction dovetails nicely, and in years past, we have experimented with combining the courses. Combining them, however, brings with it some challenges. First, there are few instructors who are qualified in both reading and writing…If the hours of instruction in the course are to be reduced dramatically from the six hours that taking them separately uses, it is impractical to anticipate using joint teachers. Also, students frequently are at widely disparate levels of reading and writing, generally being better readers than writers, but not always. Therefore, some clear requirements for the admission to the class will have to be met. And, then, the class size will have to be limited and sufficient help provided in the Reading/Writing Center to aid students while they use software including Criterion, some grammar tool, and some reading tool. (Keating, 2010, p. 5)

Other issues were also raised:

> There are some issues that will have to be decided:
>
> 1) Will the students know ahead of time that they are getting three hours' credit but must attend five hours? That's been a problem in the past.
> 2) What happens if a student fails the class? Must he/she repeat the class, or must she return to the separate classes? If the student repeats the joint class,

then the advantage of having picked the most likely to succeed students is compromised. If the student takes the separate classes, then there is a problem with the changing of the grade.

3) At best, right now we have two instructors who could potentially teach this class. It will not be easy to find other instructors who are qualified. The course will not lend itself to team teaching, because the time saved by integrating the instruction will be lost again if the subjects are divorced from each other in the presentation…
4) What does this do to students' schedules and, therefore, financial aid? Often, students take Reading, Writing, Math, and RI 100 in order to fill their schedule for Financial Aid. Reading and writing are prerequisites to most college entry courses. (Keating, 2010, p. 6)

These problems were not resolved in time for the pilot semester of the new program, and so no cost savings came from this combined course.

Determining the Extent of CAPSI Success

As with DSCC, it is difficult to determine if the program at Mountain State was successful. Of the four criteria, only in one area—decreased costs—did the program clearly achieve its goal. MSCC cut materials costs by nearly two-thirds and saved the college money by eliminating the 0700-level course, offering fewer sections, and ending its Criterion contract. It also increased the number of adjuncts, thus lowering salary expenses. In contract, in decreased time in course, the program was unsuccessful. While there was little increase in acceleration of learning during the pilot semester, the students repeating in the spring 2013 semester have the opportunity to complete the remaining work from the first semetser and exit early. It is too early

to judge this category of success until the progress of repeating students can be tracked. The other two areas—increased success rates and increased retention—are more difficult to measure. It is difficult to give a single answer to the question of whether success rates increased. If all enrolled students are factored into the data, then success rates decreased from the traditional course. However, if only those students who attempted the course are considered—that is, if we exclude the 28% of students who did not turn in a single assignment all semester and who did not attend class at least once—then pass rates increased approximately 10% over the traditional program. Likewise, the effect on retention is also difficult to gauge. As with DSCC, there is no evidence yet of the effect of the program on retention. Given that 28% of the students did not successfully complete a single writing assignment all semester, it seems likely that retention among this group of students is low and might possibly even decrease. However, a marked improvement in student writing was noticed for those students who did complete the course; these students, who are better prepared for college writing by the CAPSI program than the traditional program, might be more successful in college-level courses and more likely to be retained in the long run. Given, then, that the program was successful only in one area, unsuccessful in another, and its effect truly unknown and marginal at best in the remaining two areas, the program cannot be considered an overall success.

CHAPTER SEVEN

REDESIGN, (RE)MARGINALIZATION, AND THE TERRAIN OF STRUGGLE: CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND CALLS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

DUNCAN CITES NCAT AS AN EXEMPLAR IN LOWERING COLLEGE COSTS

Arne Duncan, U.S. Secretary of Education, recently called on colleges and universities to reduce costs at their institutions. According to the November 29, 2011 New York Times*, Secretary Duncan pushed higher education officials to "think more creatively—and with much greater urgency—about how to contain the spiraling costs of college and reduce the burden of student debt on our nation's students."…He praised recent reform efforts like the National Center for Academic Transformation, which "pioneered the redesign of high-enrollment courses at more than 100 institutions, substantially reducing their costs and others." While such programs are now the exception, Mr. Duncan said, "I want them to be the norm."*

— *From* The Learning MarketSpace *(NCAT, 2012)*

The most important thing a community college can do is to teach a student how to be a part of a community, and I think it's the stupidest thing we say that "I teach at a community college" if I don't have a community in my class. Students have to know each other's names, they have to be able to be free to talk to each other without getting into fights or getting their feelings hurt—all those adult ways of dealing with each other…It's something our students don't know how to do because they don't see it in society and so it becomes even more important, and yet we don't have the time to do it, especially if it's computer-based. And that's how a lot of schools do it

now…[Students are] just in this great, big, huge room, and all of them just doing their own thing on a computer screen…I wouldn't want to be there. If this is college, I wouldn't want to do that.

— Dr. Tina Madonowitz, 30-Year Developmental Instructor

Conclusions on the Extent of Success of CAPSI Developmental Writing Courses

This dissertation began as a critical exploration of the "terrain of struggle" (Giroux, 1987, p.2) for students who matriculate within a CAPSI developmental writing course to determine what effect such course delivery has on marginalization. The literature review in Chapter Two reveals a lack of research on CAPSI developmental writing courses, particularly the lack of basic data on the extent to which this course delivery can be effective for developmental writers, while at the same time demonstrating that this delivery method, or "something like it" courses (Eyre, 2007), are proliferating nationwide (NCAT, 2010b). This juxtaposition of the extreme popularity of an unproven course delivery method led to the primary research question for the critical case study of two community colleges in Tennessee who were mandated to redesign their developmental writing programs: to what extent are CAPSI developmental writing courses successful? In order to address this primary research question, two sub-questions had to be answered: 1) How is program success defined, measured, and determined?; 2) How do the individual design elements of their program design affect success?

As detailed in Chapter Four, it was determined from the documentation available from the Tennessee Board of Regents which governs both programs and the consulting agency NCAT, who was hired by TBR to assist in the redesign from traditional delivery to a new course delivery

that incorporated the elements of CAPSI delivery, that four criteria were primary in determining program success: increased student success, as measured by passing A,B, and C grades; increased student retention, both through the course and long-term; decreased time in course, which is also known as acceleration of learning; and decreased instructional costs.

In Chapters Five and Six, each program's plan for creating its new CAPSI-based course and determining its success was detailed, and the extent of their success was analyzed against the four criteria. Neither program conclusively improved student success—in fact, student pass rates in both CAPSI courses declined from those of the traditional program—and neither program showed increased course retention rates. Although both programs had the potential for accelerating student learning by reducing the time in course, in neither program did students actually exit the course early. The only criterion in which one of the programs was clearly successful was in cost reduction. The data from these two programs correlates with the limited information available about other redesigned developmental writing programs. As briefly referenced in Chapter Two and detailed in Harrington (2013), none of the programs which are found in the literature were successful; the majority were not able to continue past the design stage, and those that were heralded as successful by groups like NCAT were succesful almost exclusively when it came to cost reduction and not student success. From this, it is possible to generalize that, overall, CAPSI is not a successful course delivery method for improving the matriculation of developmental writing students.

What effect, then, does this movement toward CAPSI redesign have on the marginalization of developmental writers within the academic community? This final chapter addresses this question by once again visiting the terrain of struggle encountered by developmental writing students. It seeks to find an answer about which side of Giroux's

"double-edged sword" of literacy CAPSI courses reflect: is the sword "wielded for the purpose of self and social empowerment or for the perpetuation of relations of repression and domination" (Giroux, 1987, p. 2)?

The Effect of CAPSI Courses on Marginalization

As explained in Chapter One, marginalization is a persistent part of developmental writing programs (see Shaughnessy, 1977; Rose, 1989; Mutnick, 1996 and 2001). These programs are routinely given less experienced instructors with weaker credentials, given fewer resources, and placed into departments separate from their disciplines in separate buildings or labs from college-level courses. The students, themselves, are stygmatized by being placed into developmental courses in the first place, thus being effectively told that they are deficient and thus somehow less than their college peers. They are further separated from their college peers by having their enrollment restricted until developmental competencies have been satisfied. For many students, this amounts to a double-marginalization because the majority of these students belong to oppressed socio-economic groups which have been routinely marginalized in general society and who now find themselves pushed to the margins of academia (Boylan, 1999; Mutnick, 2001).

One way in which the marginalization felt by students manifests itself is in feelings of anger and frustration toward the college and the instructor. This anger, which has been documented in the literature about developmental students (Morrison, 1999), has a direct impact on student learning. As Dr. Tina Madonowitz, a developmental writing instructor for over three decades acknowledges, "one of the biggest problems I have to face is angry students when I walk in" (T. Madonowitz, personal communication, 2012). Madonowitz sees student anger as the result of three factors: 1) anger that they do not possess the writing skills necessary for college-

level courses, which they thought they possessed; 2) anger that developmental classes do not count toward their degrees or certifications; and 3) frustration from repeating students who must begin the course over from the beginning and redo work which they have already successfully completed. "Instead of being able to teach to those students on the first day," Madonowitz explains, "it takes about two to three weeks for them to realize that they don't have the skills that they should have had and that the class is designed to help them. Instead, what we're having to overcome for three weeks [is] students' attitudes" (T. Madonowitz, personal communication, 2012).

Ironically, developmental education programs were created as a way to lessen the marginalization of low-achieving students and to prepare them for the demands of successful college matriculation (Mutnick, 2001). Developed as a result of the open admissions policies of community colleges in the 1960's and 1970's, their presence was institutionalized in the following decades by legal actions seeking equal opportunity and resources for all students. Since then, these programs have continuously been restructured, renamed, revised, shifted in and out of their discipline departments, and had their resources reduced until it can be argued that the overriding theory of developmental writing instruction has become a de facto theory of marginalization (for a complete discussion of the void of theory related to developmental writing, see Mutnick, 1996 and 2001).

Unfortunately, it appears that the newest trend among developmental programs—to redesign them using CAPSI delivery elements—does little to alleviate the marginalization. Rather, half of the trend's four goals—decreased time in course and decreased instructional costs—seem to increase marginalization and the inequality of academic resources. Worse, they are actively working against the other two goals of increased student success and increased

student retention, both of which function as the means for a student to exit the marginalized world of developmental writing and find inclusion in the greater academic community of college-level courses.

At first glance, decreasing the amount of time that a student spends at the developmental level would seem to work against his or her marginalization. This is because less time spent at the developmental level means faster inclusion into the greater academic community at the college-level and would work to lessen the frustration that developmental students experience. As Madonowitz describes about her students being required to start over each semester when they fail a course, "I know how I would feel: angry that I wasted my time, because I already had this part. And I did have a couple students who took my class again and I made them start over too because I couldn't individualize it for that student…So even though they took me, they had to do everything again" (T. Madonowitz, personal communication, 2012). It would seem, then, that modularizing course content to personalize learning for each student would be beneficial in lessening feelings of hostility toward the course and instructor. However, the way that redesigned courses using CAPSI elements go about accelerating learning might actually not accelerate learning at all; rather, as demonstrated in the two case studies for this dissertation, except for a few high-achieving students with strong self-motivation, the course does not result in less time at the developmental level and works instead to increase the already present feelings of isolation, frustration, and anger that accompany marginalization.

The first potential problem for acceleration is found in the CAPSI format itself. The key to CAPSI course delivery is its self-paced, mastery learning, which has the potential for a student to work ahead rather than at the slower pace of the entire class. The benefit for this type of learning is that it allows a student to remain working within one content unit as long as necessary

for the content to be learned and mastery demonstrated (Keller, 1968). Potentially, this allows a student to move more quickly through the areas which he or she learns more easily and spent more time on those areas which are more difficult. As detailed in the literature review in Chapter Two, this element of CAPSI delivery has been proven successful in many disciplines and with low-achieving students (Eyre, 2007; Ironsmith & Eppler, 2007; Sherman 1992).

However, mastery learning has the potential for problems for developmental writers. One of the main probelms has been discussed and documented in the CAPSI literature since Keller's inception of the plan in 1968—the potential for procrastination, even with milemarkers for task completion in place (Eyre, 2007). With developmental writers, who often lack the soft skills associated with being good students—maintaining attendance, arriving to class on time, being able to plan out tasks to meet deadlines, being able to interact meaningfully with the instructor and fellow students (Morrison, 1999; Boylan, 1999)—the potential to procrastinate increases even more. As demonstrated in the pilot program at MSCC, which was a fully implemented CAPSI course with self-paced, mastery leearning, 28% of all enrolled students did not successfully submit a single assignment although they remained enrolled in the class until the end of the semester, and instructors complained of being inundated with submissions from procrastinating students during the final week of the semester. Only 44% of all MSCC students completed the course requirements on time. The self-paced nature of mastery learning, then, did not accelerate learning. Rather, it allowed for procrastination that caused students to fail the course and be required to repeat it the following semester.

While TBR also sought mastery learning as coupled with modularization, so that repeating students would only work on those assignments not successfully completed during the first semester (Twigg, 2007; Twigg 2008a), there is no evidence from the two case studies that

modularizing program content accelerates learning. Students who initially fail the course are still required to complete the failed or undone course content the following semester, thus delaying entry into college-level coursework. Some schools see this as an opportunity for repeating students who finish their remaining work early in the second semester to take college-level courses the same semester, thus not having their progress toward their degree slowed (Madonowitz, 2007a; Twigg, 2007). However, those students who repeat the course and finish their remaining work before the end of the semester are limited by course offerings, scheduling conflicts, inability by campus registration processes to register mid-semester, and financial aid rules (N. Lee, Personal Communication, 2013), and so end up not going into college-level courses during the same semester. This also assumes that they are not deficient in reading, which also prevents registration into college-level courses. Even more insidiously, developmental writers whose skills are already underpracticed will now have several weeks' or even months' time at the very minimum between early exit of developmental writing and the start of college-level composition in which their skills will deteriorate (T. Madonowitz, Personal Communication, 2012). They might still be attending other courses, but these courses are for developmental-level students and so are not writing-intensive by their very nature. Sadly, then, instead of putting students into a position in which they are better prepared to succeed at the college level, early exit deteriorates their skills and makes them less prepared for the same level of success they might have had had they continued in the writing course and practiced their skills to the end of the semester (T. Madonowitz, Personal Communication, 2012).

There is also doubt that writing skills can be modularized for mastery learning. For example, a student who demonstrates competency with a thesis statement with one writing prompt might not be able to write a strong thesis with a different prompt or assignment. The

inability to modularize writing skills is supported by ideas in composition studies which counter the myth of transference and purpose instead the theory that writers must develop an awareness of how they approach different writing tasks, how they learn to shape and control their writing, and how they decide how and how much to conform to and resist the writing context (For examples, see Hartman, 2010; Johns, 1997; and the collected essays in Vandenberg, Hum, & Clary-Lemon, 2006). An inability to modularize content was evident when NCAT consultants chastized writing faculty for not successfully envisioning how to modularize writing skills in the initial TBR meetings in 2007 (see Twigg, 2007), and even a cursory review of current writing textbooks demonstrates this as most books are organized not by skill but by mode. As Dr. Madonowitz reflects,

> Basketball is a perfect analogy [to learning to write]. You know why? Because to be able to play basketball you have to be able to dribble, and dribbling is hard. You have to be able to pass, and passing is hard. You have to be able to catch a pass, and that's all hard. You have to play defense, you have to be able to hit shots, and then you have to know all the rules. But if you know all the rules and can watch the game, then you have to go and learn all the skills [to play the game]. But just because you're a good dribbler, that is just because I can write a good introduction or write something without mistakes, just because I can dribble, I'm not a basketball player. See, that's the difference between football and basketball. In football you are a particular person in a particular place—you do one job. In writing and basketball you have to be able to do it all. It's holistic. So to me, I can't modularize writing. I can't do it. (T. Madonowitz, personal communication, 2012)

Her viewpoint is also supported by the data from two programs studied in this dissertation. Although both modularized grammar skills, neither modularized individual writing skills; course passage was based on successfully writing full essays (Herenton & King, 2011; Madonowitz, 2007a).

Mastery learning also further marginalizes developmental writing students by increasing their isolation. Self-paced mastery learning means that potentially, even within the same class, all the students might be working on different tasks or content areas at the same time (Pear & Crone-Todd, 1999; Pear & Kinsner, 1987-1988). A student struggling with a particularly hard concept might not realize that others in the class also struggled with that same concept (T. Madonowitz, personal communication, 2012), thus artifically lowering their feelings of accomplishment. They also can not turn to their fellow students for help or feedback because the classmates sitting near them might not yet be to that skill or did not have to complete the skill at all. This is especially problematic with writing, given the lack of transference of skills. These students, who already hold feelings of resentment toward educational institutions and their instructors (Morrison, 1999) might not seek out the instructor's help. Unless the instructor is proactive and hyper-aware of where each of his or her students are currently matriculating in the course, it is easy for a student to feel isolated. As documented in research regarding online classes, feelings of isolation can lead to frustration, to the point when students stop attending class (Yena & Waggoner, 2003). Although the success data from the two case studies cannot be definitively linked to increased feelings of isolation or frustration because students were not surveyed about these feelings, the course completion rates for the two case studies indicate a possible connection: fewer students at MSCC completed the redesigned course than the traditional course, and completion rates at DSCC did not increase during the pilot program.

Further, CAPSI mastery learning means holding class not in a traditional classroom but in a computer lab, especially as envisioned by the Emporium model purported by NCAT and as implemented in the two case studies for this dissertation. Thus, these programs are exchanging the social dynamics, face-to-face accountability, and mutual support of a traditional class for individualized work in a lab setting. Doing so undercuts the aspect of community, both in the classroom and as the mission of the community college itself. As Madonowitz states,

> Students have to know each other's names, they have to be able to be free to talk to each other without getting into fights or getting their feelings hurt--all those adult ways of dealing with each other when you don't have those modeled on the television. Instead you have *Jersey Women* and *Rude Housewives*. You're enjoying watching those shows, and you say "Okay, that's how adults treat each other" and then you model that, come back to school and think that's how you're supposed to be by screaming and yelling. [Proper social behavior is] something our students don't know how to do because they don't see it in society and so it becomes even more important, and yet we don't have the time to do it, especially if the class is computer-based. (T. Madonowitz, personal communication, 2012)

Research on computer-based courses has demonstrated the potential for feelings of isolation and frustration, especially among students with low confidence with technology, and the high attrition rate that continues to plague online courses testifies to the ease with which students can simply disappear from a course (Carpenter, Brown & Hickman, 2003; Yena & Waggoner, 2003). As Stine (2004) admits about developmental students in computer-assisted courses, "When family, work, and other personal problems interfere, students can easily—and invisibly—fade away" (p. 54).

Also troubling is the potential for personalized study to deteroriate those soft skills that students need in order to matriculate successfully, such as attending class, arriving on time, knowing how to study, etc. "I'd say that most developmental writing students lack the knowledge of how to be a student," according to Madonowitz, "and so you know, one of their ninety things that you could list under what makes an essential student—all those essential skills you need to know—developmental writers don't have those skills" (T. Madonowitz, personal communication, 2012). In a traditional class, the socialization of being with other students works to reinforce these skills, but this reinforcement is missing in individualized courses:

> Okay, so let's think. How do you learn those skills? Do you learn those skills by having a model that you're watching? So on the job, are you watching someone who is successful on the job and you're saying, "I want to be successful," so you're modeling that behavior? Okay, so that's one way you can learn those skills. Are you learning those skills by reading? Probably not because we don't read much anymore. Are you learning those skills by making mistakes? Probably that's how they're learning most of them. They're screwing up and getting fired, so "I'm not going to do that next time." So what happens in mastery learning is, we are putting them in front of a computer…and then they're not learning [good student skills]. (T. Madonowitz, personal communication, 2012)

In traditional courses, developmental writers are able to use other skills to compensate for those areas in which they are weak. This is seen most prevalently with verbal skills in class discussions compensating for weaker reading and writing skills. "They are very weak at writing, so they don't really want to write," Madonowitz explains. "They've always been told that they're bad at writing. They make a lot of mistakes…so they'd rather talk than write" (T. Madonowitz,

personal communication, 2012). In a mastery learning course, however, the opportunity for verbal exchanges with the teacher and fellow students is lessened in favor of a greater dependence on written communication, and individualized, self-paced learning makes group discussions difficult when each student could be working on a different assignment at the same time. There also exists the possibility for deteriorating social skills and those skills associated with being a valued member of the greater community.

> …what we do in developmental isn't just helping them get through academics; it's helping them be a better citizen, better parent, better neighbor…all those other things that we could help them with, even if they don't finish a college education. We could make their lives better, more productive, and happier if we could work with them. But, I would say most developmental students lack the essentials--not just academic skills, but life skills. And those are the things we have got to teach them. (T. Madonowitz, personal communication, 2012)

The two case studies in this dissertation demonstrate this erosion of teaching soft skills. In Tennessee, the Board of Regents changed enrollment requirements for developmental students and no longer requires the college success courses that were previously required for all students who tested into two developmental courses (Tennessee Board of Regents, 2010a); now, this course is an elective. The elimination of this course means that developmental students are not being systematically taught the expectations and basic requirements of college matriculation.

Additional marginalization occurs when programs are fundamentally changed to decrease the amount of time students spend on the developmental level by changing course content and which students are allowed to enroll. As explained in Chapter Four, community colleges in the TBR system formerly offered two levels of developmental writing classes: a sentences to

paragraphs course and a paragraphs to essays course. In the redesign to CAPSI, these schools eliminated the lower level course and enrolled all pre-college students into a single developmental writing course with the intention of lowering the required time in developmental for the students from two semesters to one. TBR also changed its placement test scores. Previously, students had to score 19+ ACT to enroll in college composition, 16 – 18 ACT for the paragraphs to essays cours, and those 15 ACT or below were placed into the basic sentences to paragraphs class. TBR changed these requirements. ACT scores for college composition were lowered to 18, and students who scored from 13 – 17 ACT are now all placed together into one paragraphs to essays course. Those with 12 or below are not allowed to enroll and must seek tutoring until they are able to restest and score high enough to enroll. Responses to this change are mixed. "We piloted combo classes for a long time…So all of us knew that really you could put people with a 14 and a 15 into a developmental class," Madonowitz explains. "I'm not sure about 13s, I'm not even certain abut 14s, but those 15 people easily. I couldn't tell the difference…So I really think that having the 12 and below in some kind of better circumstances…is good. They could not pass our classes" (T. Madonowitz, personal communication, 2012). Although more help is now available for the weakest students—those below 13 ACT—those with ACT scores of 13 – 15 have been pushed further to the academic fringes. These students have been placed into courses with content above their competency level, and the basic skills instruction formerly given to them in the 0700-level course has been eliminated.

Accelerating learning is not the only way that CAPSI redesigned courses are affecting marginalization; they are also affected by cutting instructional costs. It cannot be denied that reducing instructional costs is one of the prime goals of redesigned courses. It is a primary

concern of NCAT, as demonstrated by the pervasive references to cost savings throughout its website and promotional materials, and TBR has repeatedly highlighted this aspect of course redesign in the reports it has asked its schools to submit since the beginning of the redesign initiative in 2007. It is also a top-down initiative often driven by state legislatures who see developmental classes as a waste of taxpayer money because those classes are repeating what the students should have learned in K-12 (T. Madonowitz, personal interview, 2012). However, this element of program success also holds the potential to be the most influential in the perpetuation of marginalization of developmental writers because of its direct impact on resources and quality of teaching.

According to NCAT, there are two ways to reduce instructional costs for new courses: replace expensive full-time instructors with part-time instructors, or possibly even student tutors, and increase the size of the class so that fewer instructors are necessary (NCAT, 2007b). Both of these ways work only to reinforce and heighten elements of marginalization that are already in place at the developmental level. Computer-based, individualized courses in which content is developed by a program administrator and not changed by individual instructors as a way to prevent course drift more readily allow for less experienced, less credentialed instructors (NCAT, 2007b). In a 2007 national report from NCDE, which was the last time that the organization gathered such data, 75% of all developmental courses were taught by adjuncts (Gerlaugh, Thompson, Boylan & Davis, 2007). (In comparison, a report released in 2008 by the American Federation of Teachers found that overall adjunct use by community colleges in all programs was much lower at only 53% and much lower still at 27% for comprehensive four-year colleges (JBL Associates, 2008).) Organizations like NCAT only compound this marginalization by encouraging schools to save costs by assigning even more adjuncts to

developmental courses, and sometimes, these organizations go as far as suggesting the elimination of instructors completely in favor of student tutors, as adjuncts make less than full-time instructors and tutors make even less than adjuncts (NCAT, 2007b). Also factoring into reduced costs is an increase in section enrollment. NCAT praises schools, like Tallahassee Community College, which eliminated traditionally sized sections and formed sections of over 1000 students (see Harrington, 2013). Although programs like this are not the norm right now, programs are increasing class size. The two pilot programs in this dissertation both enrolled students in sections of 20 – 23 students, above the ideal of 15 recommended by the National Council of Teachers of English (1987), and at MSCC in higher numbers than the Comp I classes which are capped at 20. The work load is seemingly managed by computer-based grading (see Eyre, 2007; Pear & Crone-Todd, 1999; Pear & Kinsner, 1987-1988; NCAT, 2007b), but high enrollment numbers mean students receive less one-on-one attention during class time. For many developmental students, who have work and family obligations that limit the amount of time they can spend on campus (Carpenter, Brown & Hickman, 2004; Tinto, 2008), time in-class might be the only opportunity they have to interact face-to-face with their instructors.

The focus on cutting instructional costs also affects an area of developmental programs that is overlooked by organizations like NCAT and TBR and which was not factored into the four criteria for program success: quality of teaching. As explained previously in this dissertation and noted by NCAT (2007b), more experienced, better qualified instructors cost more money. More insideously, and as seen in the DSCC case study's breakdown of grade distributions between full-time and adjunct faculty and faculty at the main campus versus faculty in the branches, is the potential that more experienced, better qualified instructors also do not inflate grades, which has a direct effect on determining a program's overall success. And both

reasons only perpetuate marginalization. "We have to have trained, motivated, innovative teachers," Madonowitz explains. "If we leave that teaching [element] out and people who are concerned about student learning, student learning isn't going to happen. It doesn't matter how good we are on the other things, without the teaching element" (T. Madonowitz, personal communication, 2012).

Developmental instructors are often less experienced, less credentialed than their college-level counterparts. Because developmental courses are not considered college-level courses, accrediting agencies do not require the same level of credentials for developmental instructors as for college-level instructors. A collegel-level instructor must possess a minimum of a master's degree and 18 graduate hours in the discipline being taught, whereas a developmental-level instructor needs only a bachelor's degree in the discipline and no prior teaching experience or a master's degree in anything as long as he or she has training in developmental education (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Colleges, 2006). Instead of agreeing with NCAT about removing full-time faculty from the developmental level, Dr. Madonowitz believes the opposite should happen:

> I think it would strengthen a program if all full time instructors took a turn at teaching developmental writing for several reasons. First of all, they need to know what goes on in developmental writing, and they need to know the kind of students that come into developmental writing and then they'll quit complaining when they get those students in Comp I because now they understand what the parameters are teaching those students. And also, developmental writers deserve to have chance to have full time teachers teaching them. (T. Madonowitz, personal communication, 2012)

Because these instructors are not qualified to teach college-level writing courses, many of them do not know how to prepare developmental writers for Composition I. Instructors need to know the requirements not only for their own courses but also for the one above them to make certain that students are being taught the right skills and the right expectations for their matriculation (T. Madonowitz, personal communication, 2012). As demonstrated in the DSCC case study, one problem resulting from inexperienced instructors is grade inflation. This is the result of many factors. In addition to lacking the grade norming opportunities of full-time instructors who interact frequently with each other, adjuncts often do not participate in training or grading sessions, which are voluntary, if held at all. Inexperienced adjunct instructors also believe that their job performance is perceived as being better if they pass more students, and they know that student evaluations are higher when students receive higher grades (T. Madonowitz, personal communication, 2012). Unfortunately, the repercussions can be detrimental for developmental students: "If we inflate their grades in developmental," Madonowitz explains, "they have expectations in Comp I that aren't right, and we're doing students a disservice if we call them an A or B student in developmental [when] they're not going to be able to pass Comp I" (T. Madonowitz, personal communication, 2012).

Instead of giving developmental writers an educational experience on par with their college-level peers, then, colleges are implementing CAPSI-based courses which perpetuate their marginalization and which increase academic inequality, as demonstrated by the two case studies described in this dissertation and supported by the literature about developmental writing courses. CAPSI courses which focus on the four success criteria discovered in Chapter Four work to lessen the quality and amount of resources allocated to developmental students in their efforts to reduce costs. Their attempts to increase acceleration and personalize study work not

to speed inclusion into the greater academic community but to create situations of isolation and frustration. Matriculating is made even more difficult for those students who already exist on the fringes of academia and who possess the weakest of skills and student abilities. For developmental students, then, who often lack the academic, critical thinking, and self-regulated learning behaviors necessary to survive in college without intensive assessment, counseling, and other learning assistance services (Saxon & Boylan, 1999), a CAPSI developmental writing class might very well become a terrain of struggle in which they cannot succeed.

Call for Future Study

This dissertation sought to fill a gap in the literature regarding the success of CAPSI developmental writing courses by answering the primary research question of how developmental writing programs determine their success. A critical case study of two such programs isolated four primary success criteria—increased student success, increased retention, decreased instructional costs, and decreased time in course. It was also established how these criteria seem to reinforce the marginalization of developmental writers rather than lessening it. Ironically, by successfully determining these criteria, additional gaps have been revealed.

The most obvious gap is the effect of quality of teaching on program success, which was not considered at all by either program in this study beyond an attempt to lessen grade inflation and not given attention by either TBR or NCAT in any of their documents. When either organization speaks of a need for further training, it is training in the new program delivery methods which is implied, not training on teaching content. Quality of instruction should not be overlooked. However, additional research is needed to determine to what extent quality instruction matters in a course delivery which emphasizes self-paced work over group projects and discussion and in which lecture is minimized in favor of self-learning. Studies also need to

be conducted which isolate the best skills for instructors to possess in a CAPSI course and the effect those skills have on student achievement and retention. For example, while it seems obvious that instructors who possess strong one-on-one tutoring skills would find more success in a CAPSI format than those instructors who possess strong presentation skills, there have been no studies conducted yet which confirm this, nor have studies been conducted which look at personality traits among instructors—patience, empathy, background, etc.—to determine who is more likely to be a successful instructor in a CAPSI format.

Also glaringly absent in the success criteria is the effect that technology has on student success. Although CAPSI advocates provide detailed explanations of the ways that personalized systems of instruction have benefited from computers—reduced instructor workload, multiple options for mastery learning, etc. (see Eyre, 2007; Pear & Crone-Todd, 1999; Pear & Kinsner, 1987-1988)—neither CAPSI researchers nor those groups who advocate for course redesign factor student access to technology and the limits of technology knowledge into their criteria for judging program success. However, this information is especially important for community college developmental writing programs whose students who tend to come from those socio-economic groups who are less likely than their four-year peers to have high-speed internet access in their homes (Rainie, 2010). Numerous studies have demonstrated the effect that a lack of computer skills have on college-level students, but researchers have largely ignored the same effect on developmental students. When Garnham and Kaleta (2002) reported results for their computer-based college-level course, they admitted that "All participating instructors agreed that the first week of class should be dedicated to technology, especially since some students were concerned that they lacked the necessary technology skills and access to fast modem connections" ("What did the students say?", para. 2) More telling is their acknowledgement that

"Some students dropped the hybrid course because of their fear of the technology…But the instructors feel that if students survive the first two or three weeks, they can successfully manage a hybrid class" ("What did the students say?", para. 2). For developmental students, who are already on the educational fringe, catching up after falling behind during the first few weeks prove impossible, yet a similar study on developmental students has not been conducted. Also missing is student engagement in computer-based developmental writing classes. In Welker and Berardino's study (2005-2006) of hybrid college-level classes, faculty referenced students who did not log on to the course often enough; students who did not check their folders or emails; students who fell behind and had trouble catching up; visual learners who struggled with the format and materials; and auditory learners who got lost. If these problems appear in college-level courses, we can conclude that they will also appear to the same extent—if not greater—in developmental courses in which the students not only have poorer student skills but also more pressing personal and work obligations than their college-level counterparts (Carpenter, Brown, & Hickman, 2004). Stine (2004) cuts directly to the core of the issue: "Are we justified in requiring basic writing students to work online, given the hardships that may cause for some?" (p. 51).

Additional studies need to focus on the students themselves. By its individualized structure, a CAPSI course demands more self-responsibility and a more fully developed sense of motivation from students than traditional courses, as procrastination has long been recognized as a perennial problem in CAPSI delivery (Eyre, 2007). No studies have examined yet how much of these traits need to be present in order for developmental writing students to be successful in CAPSI courses. Likewise, no one has yet to examine to what extent soft student skills should be developed in order to be successful in a course which is a de facto independent study. In a

comparison of social interaction in hybrid and traditional courses conducted by Welker and Berardino (2005-2006), the students reported "reduced camaraderie with peers, reduced face-to-face exposure with the professor, reduced class-to-teacher interaction and reduced number of team building activities" (p. 46); faculty noted "inconsistencies in classroom dynamics related to optional attendance policies that occur when few if any students attend class and the class mix is different each time the class meets" (p. 42) and "too little personal interchange with students that blocks the evolution of extemporaneous discussion" (p. 42). As one student in their study commented, "I just learn best when someone is telling me information face-to-face" (p. 46).

Previous studies on CAPSI delivery show that class meetings improve student success and retention (see Mintz, 2001). However, this study was conducted among college-level students. There is no information about the amount of social interaction that is needed with class peers by developmental students nor about how working in isolation on individualized assignments affects their performance. Further, for those students who are successful at the developmental level in a personalized, mastery-learning course, what effect does this type of learning in a foundational college course have on long-term matriculation? Once they no longer have the opportunity to complete multiple attempts at mastery—that is, once they are no longer able to revise until their writing has reached an acceptable level—will they be able to produce writing of passing quality in a single attempt? How well do students who learned the basics of writing in a self-paced course adapt to a highly structured, traditional first-year writing course?

Clearly, much work is left to be done. What we cannot do, even in the face of daunting reforms and increasing marginalization, however, is simply give up and eliminate developmental level courses or reduce their content to the point at which students enter college-level courses

unprepared. In this regard, Dr. Madonowitz aptly summarizes the sentiments of many developmental instructors:

> I prefer working with under-prepared students to any other group I have, and that's why I love community college because most of our students are under-prepared. I love working with them and I feel like a missionary, and it's been my choice to work in that area. It's absolutely marvelous and wonderful…I still see what developmental classes can do for students. That's why for me, I'm all with the NADE philosophy that reform is wonderful, I'm happy for change. Technology is terrific. Let's modularize if that will work. Let's do *whatever* works…but let's not do what doesn't work. And what doesn't work is putting them into a regular classroom because we tried that before, and it didn't work. So let's not go backward. Let's go forward. (T. Madonowitz, personal communication, 2012)

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Appendix A: TBR Program Guidelines

Overview and Best Practices: Learning Support for Writing

Placement in learning support for the writing area will be determined by the student's ACT English score and by a secondary diagnostic assessment, preferably a writing sample that is scored holistically. Those students who are not prepared for college-level composition must complete the required learning support.

Formats for offering learning support in writing may vary. Possibilities include a semester-long course; a set of modules or mini-courses; a college-level writing course paired with intensive learning support; a stretch course extending a one-semester college-level writing course over two semesters with learning support provided. Each institution will submit a plan to the TBR for approval.

Assessment of satisfactory completion of learning support in writing will be made on the basis of each student's written products. Student writing will demonstrate mastery of the skills described in the Outcomes table. While it is recommended that students gain experience writing a series of essays in a variety of genres, exit assessment should be based on expository essays that are similar to the placement essays required in SAT and ACT writing tests. Institutions can award learning support credit only to students who demonstrate at least *limited* or *developing* competence in writing expository essays. To exit learning support students will demonstrate *adequate* competence when writing such essays. This mastery of competence should be demonstrated with some consistency.

Each institution will indicate in BANNER when a student has completed learning support in writing. After completing learning support in writing students should enroll immediately in college-level composition.

The delivery of learning support for the writing area should be based on the following accepted principles:

Learning support in writing

- should emphasize (in placement, instruction, and assessment) the application of skills in the context of authentic writing tasks like those tasks assigned in college-level courses.
- should be customized, as much as possible, in response to individual students' strengths and weaknesses. Instructional design should allow students to exit the program once mastery of skills is demonstrated.
- should employ technology to make instructional materials easily available, to provide timely feedback and reinforcement, and to expand opportunities for practice.
- should reflect the understanding that competence and proficiency in writing depend upon a set of fundamentally interdependent skills and habits that a student develops concurrently. The process of developing these skills, like the process of writing, is a recursive process.
- should include interaction with and feedback from one or more careful readers, which is essential to the development of composition skills.
- should recognize that assessment of a student's writing skills must be made, essentially, by assessment of the intermediate and final products of the composition process, rather than of any exercises or drills meant to help a student develop familiarity with standards of correctness.
- should emphasize the importance of the social component in the learning process, particularly for students who require learning support in writing. Interaction among students and between students and instructors motivates, provides feedback, and promotes understanding of the requirements of effective communication.
- should recognize that competence in reading at the college level is essential to competence in writing at the college level.

Two Competency Mastery Points for Learning Support for Writing

	FIRST COMPETENCY MASTERY POINT FOR LEARNING SUPPORT IN WRITING* Students will demonstrate limited or developing competence† in writing expository essays. **Student writing will**	**EXIT COMPETENCY MASTERY POINT FOR LEARNING SUPPORT IN WRITING**** Students will demonstrate adequate competence†† in writing expository essays. **Student writing will**
Task/Purpose	address the assigned writing task and have a discernible purpose that is sustained throughout most of the text.	fulfill the requirements of the assigned writing task and have a clear purpose that is sustained throughout the text.
Audience Awareness	display awareness of the audience and the requirements of the writing situation, and maintain that awareness with some consistency.	respond adequately and appropriately to the needs of the audience and the requirements of the writing situation.
Organization	have a discernible and logical organization. The organization may be simple, with a basic thesis statement, topic sentences, and transitions, but the reader is able to discern an overall logical progression of ideas.	be logically organized in support of the text's purpose with a clear thesis statement and topic sentences, supporting points that are presented in a logical progression, and appropriate transitions.
Support	provide logical support for the thesis and main ideas, but may display some weaknesses in evidence provided.	provide logical and adequate support for the thesis by employing appropriate rhetorical strategies/patterns and, when appropriate, integrating material from primary and/or secondary sources.
Language Skills	display some variety in sentence structure, vocabulary, and level of formality appropriate to the purpose, audience, and context.	display variety in sentence structure, vocabulary, and level of formality appropriate to the purpose, audience, and context.
Grammar And Punctuation	display basic control of surface features such as basic syntax, grammar, punctuation, word choice, and spelling, particularly those errors that interfere with a reader's understanding. The writing may display some grammar and punctuation errors, but not consistent patterns of serious errors.	display competent control of surface features such as basic syntax, grammar, punctuation, word choice, and spelling, particularly those errors that interfere with a reader's understanding and/or undermine the writer's authority.
Writing Process	reflect the use of basic strategies for generating ideas, drafting, revising, editing, and proofreading, although students may still be in the process of developing an individualized and highly effective writing process.	reflect the use of effective strategies for generating ideas, drafting, revising, editing, and proofreading.
	**In order to receive credit for learning support in *Writing students must demonstrate limited or developing competence in writing expository text as described in column one of the chart.* *†The Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program uses the term "limited" for writing at this level of competence; the Education Testing Service, responsible for the SAT writing rubric, and the American College Testing Service, responsible for the ACT writing rubric, use the term "developing." All three of these tests--the TCAP, the SAT, and the ACT score student essays using a 1-6 point scale and would award a score of 3 to the student with "limited" or "developing" competence.*	***In order to exit learning support in writing **Students must demonstrate adequate competence in writing expository text as described in column two of the chart.* *††The TCAP, the SAT, and the ACT score student essays using a 1-6 points scale and would award a score of 4 to the student with adequate competence.*

Appendix B: Interview Questions

Part I: Determining Success for the Program, Student, and Mastery Learning:

Program Success

- What was your program assessment plan? What was the rationale for creating such an assessment plan? What processes did you go through to create this plan? What resistance or problems did you face creating and implementing this plan?
- What type of plan did you have in place for the traditional program, if any?
- How does your program assessment address long-term assessment, after students have passed developmental writing and entered college-level courses?
- In your opinion, to what extent was the program successful overall? What specific elements did you take into consideration when determining whether the program was successful overall?

Student Success

- How was individual student success in the course determined? Why?
- Were students allowed to matriculate at their own pace? If so, how did this affect success?
- Were students given individualized study plans, and if so, to what extent? How did this personalization affect success?

Mastery Learning

- Which skills were modularized and how were they determined?
- What components make up each module and how were they determined?
- What is considered "mastery" for each module and how was it determined (such as grammar, non-essay assignments, and essay assignments)?
- What limitations (time, length, format, etc.) were placed on the units, and how were they determined? What effect did these limits have on completion and success rates?
- What were the outcomes? How did they determine validity?
- What would they do differently if they could do the redesign again?

Part II: Areas Related to Overall Student Success and Performance

Writing in Isolation

- Writing is a social act—how did writing in isolation affect the students?
- How were readings and discussions accounted for?
- How was peer interaction accounted for in the writing process?
- How was writing as a process (drafts, revisions, editing) conducted?
- How were students taught the concept of audience and in what ways was it addressed?
- How were critical thinking skills addressed and developed?

Learner Autonomy

- To what extent do CAPSI courses require learner autonomy and self-direction?
- Do such courses foster its further development, or does learner autonomy function as a gatekeeper for the course, and thus for college?
- How did each program deal with student procrastination?

Appendix C: Definitions

Computer-Aided or Computer-Assisted Personalized System of Instruction (CAPSI): Computer-Aided or Computer-Assisted Personalized System of Instruction, or CAPSI, courses were first named and described by researchers Pear and Kinsner (1987-1988) as a hybrid of computer-aided instruction and Fred Keller's (1968) Personalized System of Instruction (PSI). Although PSI experienced a brief moment of popularity in the 1970s, by the end of the 1980s, instructors had largely returned to traditional delivery due to the work-intensive nature of the instructional system. However, the subsequent proliferation of computers and internet-based grading tools has lessened the workload and again made PSI a viable alternative to traditional course delivery, and CAPSI courses have been described as the perfect delivery method for PSI instruction (Grant & Spencer, 2003). Pear and Crone-Todd (1999) called CAPSI an important like between educational technology and computer technology, and the website *CAPSI* (n. d.) reports that the system is "an empirically supported teaching method" which is "currently being used at a number of educational institutions" (sec. Welcome, para. 1). In general, CAPSI courses show much promise in increasing student success rates and cutting instructional costs, and the acceptance of online learning at all levels has helped facilitate a resurgent interest in personalized instruction in recent years (Eyre, 2007). Although largely ignored in the past as a viable delivery method for developmental students, the use of CAPSI delivery has increased at the developmental level since 2007 and is now being implemented by several state-wide systems, including Tennessee and Kentucky.

Developmental Students: Developmental Students are students who have been deemed by their institutions of higher education to be deficient in basic college skills and not yet ready for

college-level writing, usually through scores on standardized tests. For this dissertation, I will refer to them as developmental students because that was the designation used by the State of Tennessee when research began for this dissertation; Tennessee has changed since changed its terminology and has done away with the term "developmental" in favor of the designation "learning support." In Tennessee, prior to 2011, students were designated as developmental if they scored 18 or less in English on the ACT, with 19 as the college-level cut-off; beginning in 2011, students are placed into learning support classes if they score 13 – 17 on the ACT, with 18 now the college-level cut-off, and students who score 12 or lower are not allowed to enroll in credit-earning classes at all. In the published literature, these students are referred to as basic, developmental, remedial, transitional or intermediate; for this study, I make no distinctions between these labels.

Marginalization: Marginalization refers to the isolation of developmental writers from their college-level counterparts and inferior quality of resources and instruction; further, it also refers to how developmental writers have been referred to as matriculating outside the academic mainstream (Mutnick, 2001). Also known as basic, intermediate, remedial, learning support, or transitional writers, these students have been identified as possessing writing deficiencies which prevent them from enrolling in college-level courses. Traditionally, they have been isolated in separate programs, often located outside the English Department; they have been forced to attend tutoring sessions in separate writing labs for developmental students only; they are restricted from enrolling in most college-level courses until the developmental courses have been successfully completed; they have been given inferior resources and inexperienced instructors; and they have not been

offered the same course delivery methods in the same numbers as their college-level counterparts. Their positionality has been referred to as existing on the "frontier," the "boundary," the "academic margins," and even in an "alien world" (see in order Shaughnessy, 1977; Rose, 1989; Mutnick, 2001; and Mutnick, 1996). To limit the boundary of the case study for this dissertation, marginalization will be studied primarily in terms the amount of time students spend in developmental writing and the types and amount of instructional resources dedicated to them.

Personalized System of Instruction (PSI): Fred Keller developed the concept of PSI to help students who were geographically isolated to learn course content on their own without depending upon the constant presence of an instructor. This approach was explained in his seminal article, "Goodbye, Teacher" (1968). In this system, Keller divided course material into small units of study, then detailed five basic elements that he considered to be essential to personalized learning: self-pacing, repeated attempts to demonstrate mastery of course material through unit tests, use of lectures and demonstrations primarily for motivational purposes, dominant reliance upon written communication, and use of student proctors for feedback and tutoring. This concept of learning through a self-paced, modularized program was embraced by a large community of teachers and researchers in the 1970s as an alternative to traditional, lecture-based teaching methods (Eyre, 2007) and has been proven to be successful in many disciplines, especially in math and the behavioral sciences (Sherman, 1992). After this brief spurt of popularity, however, PSI fell out of favor with instructors, and by the 1980s, interest in PSI waned considerably (Eyre, 2007). This was most likely due to the large amount of time required to administer a PSI course. The time and work related to developing the materials,

training and supervising proctors, and grading multiple test attempts drove many in the PSI camp back to more traditional delivery methods (Eyre, 2007; Grant & Spencer, 2003). With the recent proliferation of computers and classroom technology, which has considerably lessened the workload, PSI has seen a recent resurgence, mostly in the form of CAPSI courses.

Student Success: Student success refers to student performance and ability to master course requirements. It is extremely large topic, which can range from single course grade assignments to graduation rates and measurements of applied skills in the workplace. As with marginalization, to limit the boundary of this case study, student success will be defined primarily as increases in student pass rates, retention rates, and pass rates in subsequent college-level classes.