(Un)voicing a field's expertise: A two-pronged citation and language analysis

Emily K. Suh, Na Wu, Agustín J. García, Candice Oelschlegel[1], Sonya L. Armstrong

Abstract

The field of Developmental Education (DE) draws from a distinct and multidisciplinary body of research and scholarship to facilitate students' transitions to college and to support their postsecondary academic success. However, highly cited scholars and policymakers external to the field perpetuate negative perceptions of DE, arguing for reform or elimination without inclusion of field experts. Through a combination of Citation Content Analysis and Transitivity Analysis, this study examined citation trends and verb transitivity to uncover the voices privileged as experts within an influential publication by the Community College Research Center and aimed to uncover how the authors (re)presented the DE field, literature, scholarship, its members, and its students. Findings revealed a single citation of an in-field DE scholar and repeated erasure of developmental educators and DE scholarship through passivation of DE professionals as social actors. Implications are discussed for the importance of including inside-field experts' voices in discussions about their field as a necessary component of developing a critical praxis of integrating scholarship and practice in support of students.

Keywords: citation content analysis; critical discourse studies; Developmental Education; positioning theory; transitivity analysis; voicing; un-voicing

Developmental Education (DE) exists, in some form, at almost every two-year college in the United States. Although many operational definitions exist, we define DE as systems of asset-based supports, both course-based and non-course-based, that facilitate students' transitions to college and further support success across their college journey. Within the United States, the practitioners and scholars who do the work of and study DE comprise a very small, multifaceted, multidisciplinary

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[1] Authors Na Wu, Agustín J. García, and Candice Oelschlegel are all equally second authors.

professional field. Professional organizations such as the National Organization for Student Success (NOSS), College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA), and the Council for the Study of Community Colleges (CSCC) focus on conducting and disseminating research and practices related to college student development, learning, and success within postsecondary education.

Unfortunately, however, current popular depictions of DE originate outside the field and perpetuate negative representations of DE used to justify its reform or elimination (e.g., Bailey, Jeong, & Cho, 2008; CCA, 2011, 2012, 2016, 2018; Gates Foundation, 2010; Jacimovic, 2021; Martorell & McFarlin, 2011; MDRC, 2013). The language used by highly cited scholars and policymakers shape their own and others' understanding of phenomena, and, in the case of DE, this language can translate to policies that tangibly impact college students' access to academic supports. In addition, this "negative press" also shapes DE practitioners' conceptualizations of their field, their practice, and, when internalized through reflection, their praxis (McGee et al., 2021). Given these impacts, a critical examination of the origins of current representations of the DE field is in order. In this manuscript, we employed a close and critical analysis of one pivotal piece of out-of-field scholarship, which we refer to as a *power-language event*, and which we view as representative of the sort of "negative press" described above. Although the impacts on DE as a field and its practices are irreversible, such an examination of the process of the historical shifting of language may contribute to what will ultimately be told as the history of the DE field.

Background and rationale

Some background is necessary en route to our rationale for this study. The DE field (including its scholarship, practice, professionals, and students) has a long history of being critiqued and stigmatized in the United States. The research prompted by these critiques focuses on outcome measures from a labor market and economic perspective rather than the sociocultural one inherent to the DE field. One such criticism is that DE courses are costly interventions (Scott-Clayton et al., 2014) yielding null to negative results to academic-related outcomes (Calcagno & Long, 2008; Martorell & McFarlin, 2011). Another major critique is the high rates of non-completion and stop-outs due to corequisite (enrollment in dual DE and college-level) or prerequisite courses (Schak et al., 2017). However, previous critiques have not resulted in the same degree of policy change as has occurred over the last decade. Indeed, the resultant policy change has had a direct influence on what can

only be described as the attempted (and in many respects, successful) eradication of a field.

Moreover, the origins of so much of the current policy, news media, and social perception critical of DE can be traced to just a handful of entities in the United States. For example, policy-driving organizations such as Complete College America (CCA), MDRC, and Jobs for the Future draw from a limited body of research on DE that lacks reference to the field's theoretical foundations, research traditions, or professional expertise. One source of frequently cited research is the Community College Research Center (CCRC) and that unit's various extensions: National Center for Postsecondary Research, Center for Analysis of Postsecondary Education and Employment, and Center for the Analysis of Postsecondary Readiness. Staffed by experts in higher education economics, labor markets, and education policy, this well-funded center at Teacher's College, Columbia University does not include experts with DE practitioner knowledge. In short, the Center perpetuates an age-old omission of expertise: practice is being shaped by policy that is being shaped by research that does not account for or acknowledge a field's expert practitioner knowledge. The result is a rupture in the field's reflective cycle, or *praxis* (Freire, 1970), of using theory and scholarship to shape practice/instruction.

With this background in mind, we aim to explore this phenomenon through a close examination of a particularly influential published research report produced by key scholars within the CCRC. We posit that an examination of the relevant power-language events—as represented in this publication—will not only unveil the origins of a conceptual shift that has prompted widespread negative framing of an entire field but will also shed light on the process for this shift. In other words, we situate ourselves in praxis to push back on current ideas around the field of DE and to transform existing language practices that position DE practice as disconnected from theory and scholarship. In doing so, we aim to critically examine the discourse that has effectively muted an entire field of professional experts, erased the field's scholarly history, and recreated the field's identity.

Positionality

There are two primary aspects of our positionality that reveal the assumptions that both compel us toward the present investigation and inform our approach to it. These two aspects are, simply, the *who* and the *what* of the DE field.

With respect to the *who,* we first acknowledge our own identities related to this study's focus. Collectively, the members of our research team identify as DE

practitioners who are presently affiliated with a doctoral program in the field, and who study issues in and around the field. That is, we view ourselves as members of the DE field: we work with college students on a daily basis as a result of our primary professional roles (indeed, the authors of this manuscript have a collective 56 years of in-field DE work with college students); we are active in professional organizations that explicitly support the work of DE practitioners; and we attend academic conferences where we engage in conversations about DE work. As such, we operationally define someone as being in the field of DE if they hold a primary professional or scholarly role that includes sustained engagement in teaching and/or service endeavors related to support for new-to-college students, whether directly in working with beginning college students or indirectly in working with current/future field practitioners.

Next, our assumption about the *what* of the field is that we see it as a potential facilitator of access to postsecondary education. We also see access to postsecondary education as a right and an issue of justice. As noted previously, DE is a small field of practice, one that is multidisciplinary and multifaceted, and includes an array of courses and student support initiatives. DE is also a field of study, however, that studies learning—and correlates to learning—within formal academic (college) settings. Although we cannot, as practitioner-researchers within the field of DE, neatly separate the two (field of practice and field of study), our primary framing for this project is examining the impact of power-language events on DE as a field of practice.

Purpose of the study

The study's purpose was dual-pronged: first, we aimed to examine citation trends to uncover the voices privileged as expert within an influential publication widely disseminated by the CCRC (Bailey, Jeong, & Cho, 2010); such an examination necessarily also sought insights about voices muted, or not included as expert. Second, we aimed to uncover how these authors elected to (re)present the field, literature, scholarship, history, and people of DE.

Theoretical framework

As a theoretical starting point, this study was driven by a critical perspective that specifically integrates a combination of Positioning Theory (PT) and Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) to express our assumptions about othering through

language and resulting power structure differentials. Each theory is discussed separately here before explaining the interdependence of these two theories in driving our study.

Positioning Theory

Positioning theory (PT) stems from Davies and Harré's (1990) conceptualization of positions that 'permit us to think of ourselves as a choosing subject, locating ourselves in conversations according to those narrative forms with which we are familiar and bringing to those narratives our own subjective lived histories' (p. 52). Using McVee et al.'s (2019) analogy of a tree, PT has its roots in speech-act theory and other language-focused perspectives, so is often used to guide identity-related work specifically focused on the spoken word (p. 388): 'It is with words that we ascribe rights and claim them for ourselves and place duties on others' (Moghaddam & Harré, 2010, p. 3). Our use of PT drives not only the assumptions underlying the impetus for this exploration but also our analysis of key linguistic features and citation trends toward the construction of positions in the context of expertise surrounding a field.

Critical Discourse Studies

Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) is a research movement seeking to understand the relationship between language and power (Catalano & Waugh, 2020) and specifically how discourse is utilized as 'an instrument of power and control as well as...the social construction of reality' (van Leeuwen, 1993, p. 193). Although CDS encompasses a range of related interest areas and critical discourse analytical tools, for this study, we applied the Social Actors Approach (van Leeuwen, 2016) which explores the ways in which social actors (e.g., the human subjects of a particular text) are represented with a particular focus on their agency (e.g., whether they are represented as active agents or receptive patients). The approach is equally concerned with uncovering the suppression or backgrounding of social actors and activities are suppressed or backgrounded in various discursive spaces.

According to van Leeuwen (1996), representations 'include or exclude social actors to suit interests and purposes in relation to the readers for whom they are intended' (p. 38). Although some exclusions may be 'innocent' based on assumptions about what readers already know or need to know, other exclusions 'tie in close to the propaganda strategy of creating fear, and of setting up... enemies of 'our' interests' (van Leeuwen, 1996, p. 39). By exploring which social actors are represented, especially how they are represented in discourse, discourse analysts uncover how ideology is instantiated through language.

Theoretical Interdependence

Together, these theories examine how language constructs reality and assigns positions of power and influence. PT and CDS share a focus on how symbols of power are used to position or present people in a storyline. Particularly, PT concerns itself with the macro level of how authors choose to position the subjects or actors they describe. The phenomenon of positioning is also influenced through others' language, which is primarily our focus here as this is a CDS-informed study. More directly, we are interested in DE field professionals' positioning of themselves and their field as a result of *negative* language. There are many invisible implications of such self-positioning, and, specific to professionals in the field of DE, this can affect not only their conceptualizations of themselves and their field, but also their students. There is a long line of theorizing about the connections of thought and language (e.g., Bakhtin, 1981), so it stands to reason that such a shift in positioning and conceptualizing will in turn affect one's practice.

Ultimately, all authors' citation choices explicitly (through direct quotation or paraphrase) or implicitly (through narration of certain actors or subjects) shape their representations of a topic. CDS offers a complementary, and necessary, micro-level focus on how authors use linguistic features to represent subjects or actors. When combined, the theories explain how the texts that authors choose to cite influence the way they write about their subjects, and how the authors then create representations of their subjects as having or lacking power based on their language use. In this way, authors amplify or silence the words of others as well as the authority and power of their written subjects.

Literature review

We began our literature review by looking for other examples of the phenomenon of interest (the muting of a field's expertise by external entities) in and around educational policy. Interestingly, though our examination crossed multiple disciplines and fields, the most closely analogous examples emerged within two specific areas, both central to the field of Developmental Education (literacy and English studies). Although the specific situation we are addressing appears to be unprecedented, our review of related literature uncovered a few key comparable situations worthy of note.

First, for many years, much educational policy reform in the United States has ignored the voices of educators, both in PK-12 contexts and in higher education (Ashraf, 2019; Calfee, 2014; Ellis, 2014). One significant example of federal policy imposed on public schools that effectively silenced professional voices is the *No*

Child Left Behind Act (*NCLB*). Calfee (2014) explained that a driving force in how *NCLB* was enacted was based on the definitions and discourse put forward by the National Reading Panel (NRP):

Under *NRP,* 'reading' was very specifically defined, as was 'scientific evidence.'

'Reading' was portrayed as a set of basic skills, to be trained during the early school years by direct instruction. 'Scientific evidence' was restricted to findings from *randomized controlled experiments (RCTs)*, excluding much of the available evidence. *NCLB* and *Reading First (RF)* then took shape according to *NRP* pronouncements. (p. 2)

These imposed definitions in large part contradicted the professional knowledge of educators and reading experts, effectively ignoring their expertise. Importantly, despite much pushback by literacy scholars, these policies altered reading instruction, assessment, and the training of pre-service teachers. In other words, this policy ultimately impacted practice without including an inclusive approach to what counted as expertise.

In a different scenario—one not involving policy—the discipline of English appears in the literature as an example of devaluing a field of scholarship and practice, as a significant internal divide led to the devaluing of composition practitioners. Although many causes for this divide are named in the literature, among the most notable reasons involved the increasing enrollments in nineteenth-century American universities, which left professors of English with unbearable workloads of course planning and grading. According to Horner (1983), the solution was 'to delegate instruction in writing to the lower schools, or to graduate students, or to adjunct part-time faculty' (p. 5). As a result of the negative attitudes about the workload associated with teaching composition, the course became one that tenured and higher-ranking faculty avoided, creating a self-fulfilling prophesy of lowly status. More importantly, however, the resulting need to staff the course with less well-trained faculty negatively impacted composition instruction in ways that persist today as composition classes continue to be taught primarily by educators with adjunct or contingent positions (Hanson & de los Reyes, 2019; Suh et al., 2021). This positioning of the course and those teaching it within English has necessarily impacted the larger positioning of this particular sub-field of English across the academy; in particular, this lower-status position necessarily had an impact on curriculum and instruction as well (Connors, 1997).

Across these similar, but not identical, scenarios identified in the literature, what we find in common is that one group is dominant and holds the power to

influence decisions about the second group by using its language of power and authority without including the non-dominant group's voices, expertise, or scholarship. As a result, practice is altered without the input or agreement of practitioner-experts.

Although less prevalent, there are also examples of non-dominant educators asserting their expertise to shape national curriculum. In the U.K., the Knowledge about Language movement resulted from educators and linguists pushing for the inclusion of studying language-in-use, rather than grammatical, spelling, or phonetic rules (Carter, 1997; Doughty, Pearce, & Thornton, 1971). The movement became the forerunner of Language in the National Curriculum (LINC) which was largely influenced by practitioners' demand for a focus on language function over form (Carter, 1997; Shapiro, 2022). When lawmakers decided not to publish the curriculum in the early 1990s due to concerns about its political nature and the explicit connections it drew between language and power, educators distributed the materials anyway. Further, support for critical language awareness has increased in each new iteration of the U.K.'s literacy curriculum (Shapiro, 2022). Important to the present exploration of power-language, we note that U.K. teacher voices and expertise were recognized and valued in national conversations about curriculum so that even when lawmakers later attempted to reject the educators' perspectives, the group already possessed recognized authority. Additionally, because of their largely united stance in favor of LINC, educators were able to mobilize informally to disseminate materials. However, as the other previously discussed examples of language-power events indicate, educators have not always been as successful in mobilizing or gaining external power players' recognition for their expertise. Finally, both the awareness of the interconnected nature of language and power, and the strong collaboration between practicing teachers and scholars illustrate how a critical praxis can influence national education policy.
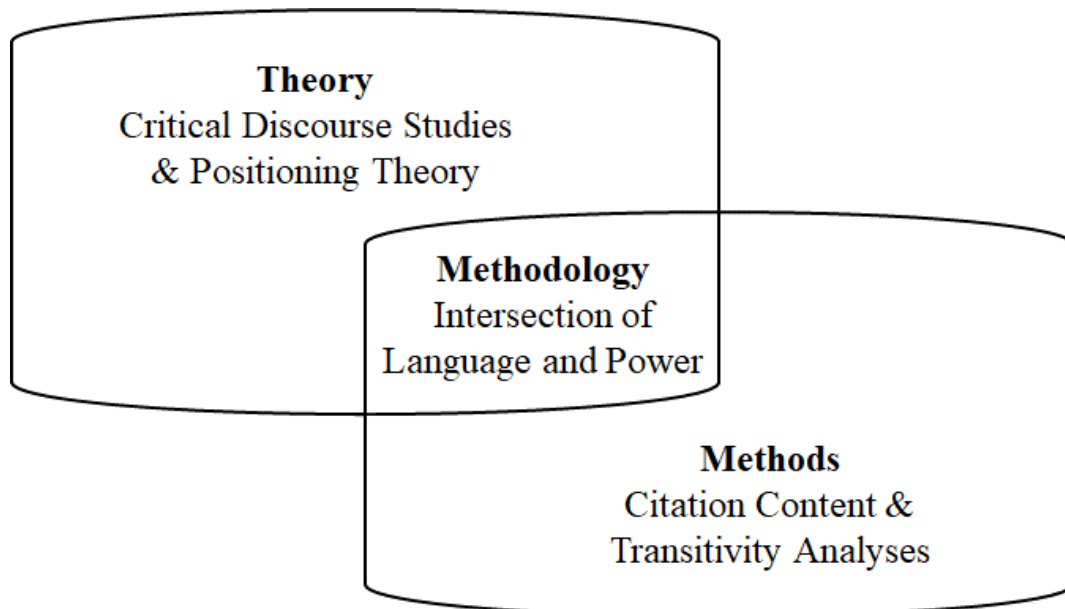
Notably, because we were specifically interested in the (un)voicing of expertise via citation-representation, our review extended to studies that incorporated bibliometrics and other citationology methods. Given the nature of scholarly debates, to some extent, (un)voicing and privileging of expertise via citations occurs organically across all fields and disciplines; thus, our search was multidisciplinary in scope. Across areas that critically explored the ethics of citation, we identified discussions of the potential hazards of exclusion of scholarship. For instance, in sciences where historical literature is excluded when currency is privileged (Kumashiro, 2012; Nature, 2019). Strategic self-citation to the exclusion of other scholarship offers a similar concern (Robinson & Goodman, 2011) with consequences ranging from unethical and irresponsible scholarship to short-sighted evidence bases. In some fields (medicine, climate science), ignoring

expertise has led to disastrous results (Bradburn & Townsend, 2014). Analyses of policy as power-language events have applied CDA's social actors approach to understand how regulating teachers' work in Britain's New Labour party policies delegitimized teachers' professional expertise and autonomy (Mulderrig, 2015). Similarly, CDA has uncovered how transnational educational reform policies (un)voice national higher education expertise (Saarinen, 2008).

Conceptual framework

We applied our theoretical framework to analyze how scholars "outside the field" choose citations and language to construct a "truth" or (re)presentation of DE and those affiliated with DE. For our purposes, we view socially constructed "truths" through choice of citations and choice of verb-process language. Within our conceptual framework (see Figure 1), the shared focus on language and power in CDS and PT informs our choice of methods: Citation Content Analysis and Transitivity Analysis. This conceptual framework allows us to explore the representation of social actors within the DE field (i.e., authors, developmental courses, developmental programming, practitioners, students). Together, the analyses illuminate how discourse surrounding DE has shifted and thereby influenced the positioning of the field and its actors.

Theory
Critical Discourse Studies
& Positioning Theory

Methodology
Intersection of
Language and Power

Methods
Citation Content &
Transitivity Analyses

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Study design

Because of the philosophical nature of our inquiry, scope of our research questions, and interest in exploring and understanding a social issue, our methodological approach is rooted within a constructivist qualitative paradigm (Creswell, 2013) and specifically within sociocultural and critical traditions. This study was designed to explore the construct of expertise within the field of DE by exploring voicing within one influential publication from a powerful research entity (Bailey, et al., 2010). We define 'voicing' as the privileging of and 'unvoicing' as the muting of voices through scholarly channels, including those cited—and not cited—as well as deliberate representation of others through linguistic choices. We therefore designed an investigation to explore this construct on two levels: a macro level that allowed us to analyze the voicing of expertise via a citation analysis, and a micro level that allowed us to analyze the linguistic features that illustrate how the authors represent the people within that field. Two multi-layered questions guided our research:

1. How is expertise in the field constructed through (un)voicing as evidenced by citation choices, frequency, purpose, function, relationship, and disposition?
2. How are linguistic features (e.g., verb transitivity, passivation, and nominalization) used to present the field, literature, scholarship, history, and people of DE?

Methodology

In this section, we briefly introduce our methods (Citation Content Analysis (CCA) and Transitivity Analysis) and our rationale for combining them.

Methodological Triangulation
This study explored how perspectives within a professional field are amplified or silenced through (un)voicing of/within texts and actor representations. We sought to examine the citation and language choices of a particular power entity via a scholarly publication which we have identified as a major driver of the current narrative of the field. We applied a two-tiered analysis to explore (un)voicing.

First, we applied Citation Content Analysis (CCA) to illuminate (un)voicing of field expertise based on the authors' citation choices within the publication. Citation analysis is a general term to describe methods applied to bibliometric

inquiries (Garfield, 1977). The purposes for such analyses (e.g., calculating citation frequency, tracing scholarly lineages, identifying scholarly impact and influence, determining origins of ideas) vary as widely as the terms used (e.g., citation content analysis, citation network analysis, bibliometric analysis, citationology). Given our Critical Discourse perspective, citations within scholarly writing serve as semiotic representations of value by serving as evidence. As a form of signaling device, citations are a way of communicating to the reader that the author is familiar with the work of another; further, a reference may also indicate a strategic placing within a particular intellectual milieu or a well-known endorsement (Cronin, 2000, p. 440). Regardless of authorial awareness or intent, citation choices influence the authors' conceptualizations of the subjects about which they write by normalizing and privileging the cited authors' perspectives. CCA provided a macro-level illumination of how the authors' use of sources rationalized, or set the stage for, the authors' own descriptions of the field and its actors.

Second, we applied Transitivity Analysis to uncover how the authors' own language choices contributed to their representations of the field of DE (Halliday, 1967). Transitivity Analysis examines how text producers use specific verbs to assign greater or lesser degrees of agency or power to certain nouns. Verb transitivity is determined by classifying verb phrases into six processes: material, verbal, behavioral, mental, relational, and existential. Different verb processes are associated with varying levels of power or control which social actors can exert or have exerted over them (see Table 1). Transitivity Analysis tools can also highlight which social actors are presented as agents (i.e., the nouns controlling the action of the verb) acting upon others, and which social actors are positioned as patients (i.e., the persons or things affected or acted upon by the action of the verb) or are erased. Erasure of the social actor is accomplished through nominalization (i.e., replacing an active verb with a noun construction which thereby eliminates the social actor responsible for the action). In certain instances, passivation can also result in erasure if the social actor performing the passivized verb is removed. Erasure is a more extreme version of deidentification in that the social actor is not just removed from the grammatical subject position but is completely eliminated from the sentence. In examining texts for passivation and erasure, the relationship between ideologies embedded within texts and the text's clausal structures can be uncovered. This micro-level exploration illustrated how the authors described people within the field as having or lacking power. When paired, CCA plus Transitivity Analysis became powerful tools that illuminated how authors positioned the subjects about which they write.

Table 1. Verb process types and examples.

Process	Definition	Example Quote
Material	Processes of physical action; requires an *actor* who does the process, may contain a *goal* who/which is affected by the process (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004; Machin & Mayr, 2012)	"more students exit their developmental sequences" (p. 1)
Behavioral	Processes of psychological or physiological behavior, expressing outer manifestations of consciousness or physiological states; requires behaver (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004)	"We examine the relationship between referral to Developmental Education and actual enrollment..." (p. 2)
Mental	Internalized processes of thinking or feeling; requires senser, phenomenon which is thought/perceived (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004)	"Most high school graduates who enroll in remediation believe that they are prepared for college" (p. 14)
Verbal	Processes of saying; requires sayer and verbiage, may include target who receives the verbiage (Thompson, 2004)	"others argue that the costs of remediation, for both society and student, outweigh the benefits" (p. 3)
Relational	Processes expressing an actor/object's attributes or identifying identical properties of independent actor/objects; requires token being described and value that gives the token meaning, status, or referent (Halliday, 1994; Thompson, 2004)	"the student was in need of remediation in other subjects" (p. 10)
Existential	Processes of existing or happening; requires an existent (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004)	

Data identification and delimitations

Delimiting the scope of this study to a single peer-reviewed piece was intentional as we aimed to understand the origins of what we perceive as an expertise-power shift that has occurred as a result of the U.S.-based reform movement focused on DE. Authored by researchers affiliated with the CCRC at Columbia University, the Bailey et al. (2010) piece remains the most cited article about Developmental Education reform. With over 1,600 citations, including many from policy-driving organizations, the piece acted as a catalyst, influencing practice-policy and scholarly conversations. The piece is also cited by professionals as a pivotal article

in the reform (Suh & Jensen, 2020). Further, we view this piece as representative of CCRC's work and influence; it is a symbol of power and a case in point for how researchers outside the field have had such an impact on the work and lives of those inside the field.

Coding and analysis procedures
The nature of our inquiry required both a macro- and micro-level approach represented in our two research questions and involving two separate coding processes.

Citation Content Analysis
We designed a codebook (Table 2) based on the philosophical assumptions of Swales' (1986) Citation Content Analysis (CCA) procedures, adapted by Zhang, Ding, and Milojević (2013), to answer our first research question 'How is expertise in the field constructed through (un)voicing as evidenced by citation choices, frequency, purpose, function, relationship, and disposition?' We next designed an Excel spreadsheet and logged each of the 42 mentionings from the 32 separate cited references by number. In our codebook, we included the entire referencing sentence from the text (reminders of the context for the citation) for each mentioning, the page number on which the citation occurred, the date, and the name of the publication (for journals). The codebook also included columns for the mentioning's type, location, frequency, substance, function, and whether it fit within our operational definition of a DE-based source (we operated under an assumption that a DE-based source was written by someone we identified as being a member of our field, using the criteria detailed in the Positionality statement).

Table 2. CCA coding sheet.

Citations

Categories	Codes & Descriptions
Types of cited document	1 - Peer-reviewed journal article 2 - Internally reviewed, full-length report 3 - Internally reviewed, full-length white paper 4 - Internally reviewed abstract or executive of a larger document 5 - Book chapter 6 - Book 7 - Government Paper 8 - Unpublished manuscript
Location of mentioning	1 - Abstract 2 - Introduction 3 - Literature Review 4 - Methodology 5 - Results 6 - Discussion 7 - Conclusion 8 - Footnote 9 - Appendix
Frequency of mentioning	1 - Once 2 - Twice 3 - Three times 4 - Four times 5 - Five or more times
Substance of mentioning	1 - General parenthetical only–no specific text devoted to the source (like an e.g.) 2 - General narrative reference, including paraphrase or summary made to the source 3 - Specific data referenced 4 - Directed quotation 5 - Specific narrative reference, including paraphrase/summary of source
Function of mentioning	1 - Provide general background information 2 - Construct theoretical framework 3 - Provide specific background or empirical evidence 4 - Support methodological decisions or terminology choices 5 - Corroboration
DE or not DE	1 - DE 2 - Not DE

Transitivity coding

Following van Leeuwen (1996), we based our analysis heavily in Systematic Functional Linguistics (SFL; Halliday, 1967) and coded for noun participant position (i.e., the grammar of the clause in which the social actor is described), verb process of clausal structures, and noun participants (i.e., referents)—the author(s), DE courses, DE programs, the field of DE, individual developmental educators, policy makers, or students enrolled in/referred to DE. We considered a noun participant to be deidentified if their subject position was obscured by passivation or nominalization: in either such instance, the noun participant is no longer identified as the grammatical subject of the sentence (Figure 2). All transitivity coding was conducted using MaxQDA software.

When the noun participant was deidentified, we first determined whether it was passivized or completely erased (which occurred through nominalization of its attributed verb) and whether the verb process was attributed to the participant. The resulting coding identified the social actor, their level of activation (as identified or de-identified), and the verb process attributed to them. Through this process, we identified whether social actors were represented as having greater or lesser ability to act and the frequency of their representation in the text. Verb phrases were analyzed for activation, passivation, or erasure of the social actors. Each active verb phrase was coded based upon its identified verb process and the social actor performing the action of the verb (Table 3); because passivized and nominalized verbs did not attribute any transitivity to the social actor, their verb processes are not documented in the table.
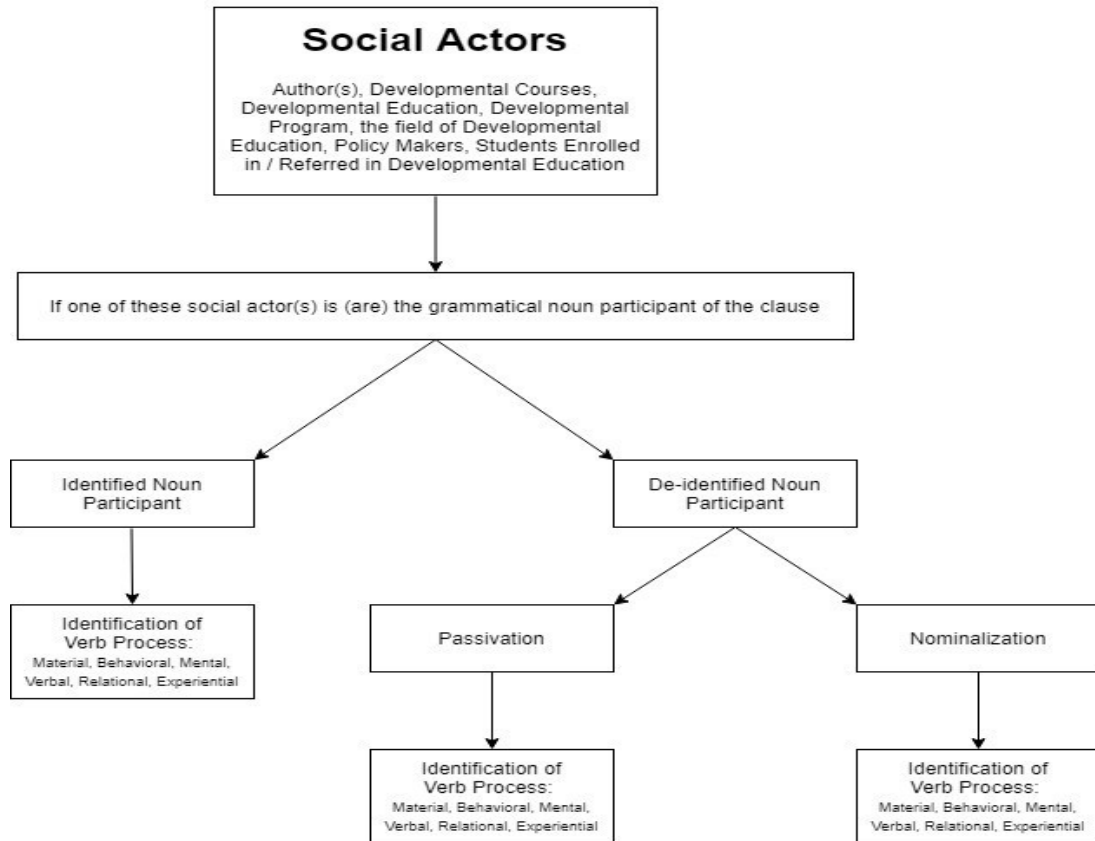
Figure 2. Social Actors.

Table 3. Social actors as identified and deidentified noun participants.

Verb Process	Students	Developmental Educators	DE Programs/ Courses	DE Field	Authors	Policy Makers	Total
Material	178	2	16	5	35	2	238
Relational	31	1	3	3	2	0	40
Behavioral	3	0	0	1	1	0	5
Existential	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Verbal	0	0	1	2	2	0	5
Mental	13	0	0	0	14	0	27
Passivation	1	45	0	2	11	0	59
Nominalization	6	0	2	3	10	4	25
Total	232	48	22	16	75	6	798

The focus of the analysis was on the overall representation of social actors, which we determined by a social actor's frequency of representation in the identified noun position (as opposed to representation through a deidentified noun position due to passivation or erasure) and verb process type. We focused on the frequency of how processes were paired with identified noun positioning in our examination of how the authors represented various social actors as acting, being acted upon, or erased from the discourse. Frequency counts were established for the pairing of each verb process and activated (i.e., an active rather than passive verb construction), passivized, and nominalized social actors. Data were compared across social actors to determine whether and how the authors represented different social actors.

Findings

For clarity, we report the findings from each analysis separately.

Citation analysis
The citation analysis was intended to answer our first research question: How is expertise in the field constructed through (un)voicing as evidenced by citation type, location, frequency, substance, function, and field origin?

The *type* category was about the citation itself (regardless of the number of mentionings). Of the 32 citations that appeared in the article, the largest number of

citation types were split between peer-reviewed journal articles (n = 10) and government reports (n = 10). Six book citations were included, followed by four internally reviewed full-length reports, and one book chapter and unpublished manuscript each.

The *location* category included nine locations within the article where citations might appear (abstract, introduction, literature review, methodology, results, discussion, conclusion, footnote, and appendix). For any footnote or appendices, we made note of the referent's location. Of the 42 separate mentionings, the most often-used location for a citation was a literature review (n = 18), with an additional four appendices with referents in the literature review. The next most often-used location was the methodology section (n = 6), not including the two footnotes and one additional appendix with referents in the methodology section. Only four mentionings were included in the conclusion section, three in the discussion section, and only two footnotes appeared in either the abstract or the introduction.

The *frequency* category allowed us to account for any citations with multiple mentionings and treat each one separately. Across the article, seven citations had two mentionings, and one citation had three mentionings. All other citations only had one mentioning.

The *substance* category was specific to each mentioning (n = 42). We included five descriptors of the substance of the mentioned citation in context (general parenthetical only with no specific text devoted to the source; a general narrative reference, including paraphrase or summary made to the source; specific data referenced; a direct quotation; and a specific narrative reference, including paraphrase/summary of source). The greatest number of mentionings (n = 20) took the substance of a general parenthetical citation only, with no specific text devoted to the source's explanation. Another 16 mentionings were specific narrative references, including a paraphrase or summary of the source. Just three mentionings included specific data referenced from the cited source; two mentionings were general narrative references that included a paraphrase of the cited source; and only one mentioning was a direct quotation.

Following Zhang et al. (2013), the *function* category was also specific to each mentioning (n = 42). We included five descriptors of the function of the mentioned citation in context (to provide general background information, to construct the theoretical framework, to provide specific background or empirical evidence, to support methodological decisions or terminology, or to corroborate information). The greatest number of citation functions (n = 17) was to provide specific background or empirical evidence, followed by a function of providing general background information (n = 12). An additional eight mentionings had the

function of supporting methodological decisions or terminology, and the remaining five had the function of providing corroboration.

Finally, we looked at each citation individually, examining the original source (context of publication, role/affiliation of authors, etc.) to determine whether they fit our operational definition of a DE source. Of the 32 citations included in the article, only one fit our definition (Boylan, 2002), with all remaining citations categorized as "Non-DE."

Transitivity Analysis

Transitivity Analysis addressed the second research question: How are linguistic features (e.g., verb transitivity, passivation, and nominalization) used to present the field, literature, scholarship, history, and people of Developmental Education? Our analysis uncovered a repeated erasure of developmental educators and their active participation in student placement, instruction, and support. As indicated in Tables 3 and 4, developmental educators (n = 3) were far less likely to occupy the identified noun participant role than students (n = 225), authors (n = 54), or even developmental programs/courses (n = 20). Furthermore, when positioned as the identified noun participant, developmental educators were represented only twice as engaging in material verb processes, such as 'educators working with students with weak academic skills, should "accelerate, do not remediate"' (Bailey et al., 2010, p. 269). As Machin and Mayr (2012) explain, material verb processes demonstrate the highest transitivity, signifying the greatest ability of noun participants to act upon others or their environment. Thus, their limited representation as engaging in material processes belied the passive position of developmental educators in a text about Developmental Education services.

Table 4. Developmental educators as noun participants.

Social Actors & Verb Processes	Identified Noun Participant	Deidentified Noun Participant	
		Passivation	Nominalization
Authors			
Material	35	3	5
Relational	2	0	0
Behavioral	1	3	1
Existential	0	0	0
Verbal	2	2	0
Mental	14	3	4
Authors Total	54	11	10
Developmental Educators			
Material	2	40	0
Relational	1	0	0
Behavioral	0	0	0
Existential	0	0	0
Verbal	0	1	0
Mental	0	4	0
Developmental Educator Total	3	45	0
Field of Dev Ed			
Material	5	1	2
Relational	3	0	0
Behavioral	1	0	0
Existential	0	0	0
Verbal	2	0	1
Mental	0	1	0
Field Total	11	2	3
Students			
Material	178	0	6
Relational	31	0	0
Behavioral	3	0	0
Existential	0	0	0
Verbal	0	0	0
Mental	13	1	0
Students Total	225	1	6
Grand Total	293	59	19

In addition to rarely being the identified noun participant of material processes, developmental educators were erased in 40 material processes throughout the article (Table 4). Most commonly, erasure occurred through statements such as 'Many individuals are *referred* to a sequence of developmental courses' (Bailey et al., 2010, p. 259). Indeed, the phrase 'students were *referred* to developmental courses' appeared 29 times in the article, and an additional five statements erased developmental educators in references to enrolling students in developmental courses. Although seemingly focused on students, these passivized descriptions erase the developmental educators who *teach* the developmental courses or who otherwise support students. Instead of acknowledging the holistic system of support that DE encompasses, such descriptions contribute to incorrect, partial representations of DE as only remedial courses, or course sequences. In all, the text included 45 instances in which the actions of developmental educators were passivized. These grammatical choices had the combined effect of erasing developmental educators from the authors' overall discussion of DE while simultaneously appearing to center the discussion around students.

The article contained 178 occurrences of students as identified noun participants engaged in material processes. Students were erased from attributed material processes only 24 times, suggesting their ability to exercise their agency over their circumstances and other actors. Upon closer examination, however, the analysis suggested the presence of an underlying deficit view of students through phrases such as 'Many of those referred to Developmental Education *fail to complete* a college course' (Bailey et al., 2010, p. 260). The language 'fail to complete' rather than 'did not complete' emphasized student fault; the authors chose this marked form of *fail to* six times. This deficit perspective was also indicated outside of the verbal process itself, for example 'students arrive at the end of high school *without adequate academic skills*' (Bailey et al., 2010, p. 256); the authors included nine such instances where deficit descriptions of students occurred outside of the material verb process. In contrast, the article included only two positively marked material verb processes attributed to students as social actors, such as 'students who have *successfully navigated* their often complicated sequences' (Bailey et al., 2010, p. 260). The predominance of negative language about students was particularly striking given the authors' portrayal of students as relatively agentive in their education.

Developmental educators were rarely represented as engaging in highly transitive verb processes; however, the DE field, which we conceptualized as including DE research, scholarship, and general references to practice (e.g., not identifying the researcher by name), was the identified noun participant in 11 instances, including five material verb processes—three more than Developmental

Education practitioners. In four of these instances, the social actor was identified through nominalizations 'studies' and 'research,' again illustrating how research about DE is given more prominence than the developmental educators engaged in such work.

Unlike the limited number of mentions of the DE field, the authors, also contributors to the body of DE knowledge, presented themselves as the identified noun participant of 35 material verb processes. These verb processes described how the authors conducted the study, most frequently through material processes such as 'analyze,' 'check,' 'use,' 'estimate,' and 'include.' In comparison to their descriptions of developmental educators, the authors were less likely to present themselves as deidentified noun participants through passivation (11) or nominalization (10). These choices served to highlight the active role of the authors as researchers exploring a phenomenon of student persistence—which was largely portrayed as not involving the developmental educators who worked directly with those students.

Discussion

Here we discuss our findings from each analysis separately, and then we shift to look across the findings together.

Macro-level analysis findings (CCA)
Some of the findings from the CCA are unsurprising, given scholarly publication norms in the United States. For instance, primary choices for types of texts cited were peer-reviewed journal articles and government reports. Given the nature of the analyzed article, as a scholarly piece reporting on formal educational research, this choice of lending voice to sanctioned academic text types such as those is not surprising. Similarly, most citations appear in the literature review section of the article. Here again, this finding is not surprising when one considers the purpose and function of the literature review section of most academic research reports.

However, several of our CCA findings seemed far enough out of line with academic publication conventions for a research article to warrant additional reflection, particularly when we examine the findings through a theoretical lens that is critical of (un)voicing. For instance, our finding regarding citation frequency surprised us, as these are mostly single-use citations, which suggests less engagement in the discussion and conclusion with reviewed literature from the literature review. Similarly, many citations were of a general parenthetical nature only, which suggests little specific engagement with the cited text. From our

perspective, such limited engagement with the extant literature suggests a reluctance to situate within a literature base, a standard expectation of educational research. Further, it is important to realize that most of the article's citations were included to provide evidence for the claims being made; however, given how few were included in total, what is striking is how this approach ensured that the primary voice of expertise belonged to the authors' (and, in several cases, those in the authors' lineage; see also Robinson & Goodman, 2011). Again, within much educational research, this is not particularly unusual, especially when an author or author group are the experts in a particular field or with a particular phenomenon. However, as previous discussions have highlighted (e.g., Ashraf, 2019; Calfee, 2014; Ellis, 2014) just as important as who is given voice is who is not.

This takes us back to our first research question: 'How is expertise in the field constructed through (un)voicing as evidenced by citation choices, frequency, purpose, function, relationship, and disposition?' The primary answer to this research question comes in our final and simplest piece of analysis. In the entire article, there is only one citation, Boylan (2002), that fits our operational definition of an in-field DE source based on the author's direct work with college students, membership in professional organizations focusing on Developmental Education, and involvement in the field's professional conferences. The authors' position is clear: even in a paper on DE, about DE, and entirely affecting DE, scholarship from within the field of DE is not valued and is thus not given voice. This echoes previous CCA and similar citationology-based explorations critical of unvoicing through citation.

Indeed, although all of the CCA results here are interesting, we recognize that there may be publication space limitations, different disciplinary assumptions about professional/academic publication ethics, and other journal-specific expectations that also affect citation usage. Thus, our primary critique is not about the number or placement of the citations, but rather the omission of DE citations. Indeed, we further recognize that this lack of engagement with in-field expertise via citation is problematic only in the hindsight of the power and influence this piece had on field professionals. But, as this was among the *first* publications from authors connected to the CCRC that held such power, we should note that many other such analyses are needed of similar power-language events written by CCRC authors who don't represent a field but hold such influence over it.

Micro-level analysis findings (Transitivity Analysis)
In their analysis of Achieving the Dream data, the authors' language choices to describe the DE field, including developmental educators and students, further suggests their dismissal of DE expertise. Following their practice of ignoring in-

field DE literature, the authors rarely positioned the field of DE as a social actor. Furthermore, each of the three times that the authors included what could be perceived as a positive assessment of in-field scholarship, they immediately followed that assessment with a critique or counterinterpretation. For example, 'Proponents argue that it [DE] can be an effective tool to improve access to higher education... (McCabe, 2006), while others argue that the costs of remediation, for both society and student, outweigh the benefits' (Bailey et al., 2010, p. 258). In this way, even the few instances in which the field was presented as a social actor highlighted its perceived shortcomings.

Similarly, developmental educators rarely were identified as the social actor or as engaging in material processes. Instead, the authors passivized the developmental educators as social actors engaging in the material verb processes of enrolling or placing students in DE programs. Developmental educators were never presented as engaging in the material processes of teaching, tutoring, or advising—the tasks that make up their work. Removing teachers and educational institutions as agents delegitimizes their expertise and perceived ability to provide quality education in national and transnational conversations (Mulderrig, 2015; Saarinen, 2008). Moreover, removing educators from an agentive position limits recognition of the scope of their authority, such as Bailey et al.'s (2010) sole emphasis on placement, to the disregard of teaching, tutoring, or advising, which perpetuates a mischaracterization of DE as solely remedial classes. In the same way that the National Reading Panel, rather than reading teachers, became the authority on reading teaching (Calfee, 2014; Ellis, 2014), this narrow perspective of DE further identifies the authors as outsiders to the field.

Our analysis also uncovered how students are the most frequent social actor in the article, suggesting the authors' focus on students as agents in their own educational experiences. However, despite the authors' repeated portrayal of students as social actors with high transitivity, students were most frequently engaged in verb processes that negatively reflected on their ability to persist through college, suggesting a deficit focus out of alignment with representations of students within the DE literature produced by in-fielders (which is beyond the scope of the present investigation).

The findings indicate that the authors used linguistic features like verb transitivity and passivation to erase DE as a professional field of study and minimize the impact of developmental educators as professionals actively working to support students. The result is a piece of scholarship which, in addition to privileging certain voices, erases the DE field of study and the actions and effectiveness of the practitioners engaged in the work.

Cross-analysis findings

Together, the findings illustrate how one group of authors external to a field used language to unvoice a field's scholarship and the professionals within that field. Like both the linguistic erasure of reading professionals via the *Reading First Panel* (Calfee, 2014) as well as power-language that divided and (re)positioned sub-fields within English (Horner, 1983), the authors engaged in a combination of unvoicing through selective citation with minimal literature engagement and erasure of the work of developmental educators through oversimplification and passivation. Given that a single, isolated in-field (DE) citation is offered across an entire article, it is unsurprising that the authors hold a dismissive view of developmental educators and a deficit-based perspective of students receiving DE support. Ultimately, the authors' macro-level failure to engage with DE scholarship amplifies their micro-level failure to acknowledge the agency of DE practitioners, resulting in a double unvoicing and erasing of the field's expertise. The authors' language choices to describe both developmental educators and students are reflective of their limited engagement with DE literature: they lack a nuanced understanding of either group. Furthermore, others' frequent and extensive subsequent citation of the Bailey et al. (2010) piece intensifies the authors' erasure and oversight with long-term and far-reaching consequences in the areas of DE scholarship as well as DE practice.

In response to this unvoicing of DE field expertise, we offer the following suggestions for future studies that present an active representation of developmental educators. Specific to our CCA findings, we recommend in-field authorship of developmental educators who are the 'who' of the field; inclusion of such expertise amplifies the positioning of DE practitioners who work in and with DE students daily. Related to our TA findings, we suggest authors be conscious of to whom and how they assign power/active roles in their scholarship. We do not accuse authors of malice in placing developmental educators in passive roles; however, intent aside, this unvoicing negatively impacts those who daily live and labor in the DE world.

Conclusion

As this analysis highlighted, DE continues to be a focus for those wielding language as a weapon in debates over higher education reform: 'One interpretation is that the Developmental Education obstacle course creates barriers to student progress that outweigh the benefits of the additional learning that might accrue to those who enroll in remediation' (Bailey et al., 2010, p. 261). To some extent, this is not a new

phenomenon for the field; however, the stakes are much higher now that legislation is mandating curriculum and limited external scholarship, rather than the field's own experts, drive those policy decisions. Thus, we call upon researchers, regardless of the strength of their identification with the field of DE, to increase their incorporation of and engagement with in-field scholar and practitioner perspectives. Most within the DE field agree that meaningful and lasting reform is necessary but cannot be accomplished without the support of the individuals who do the work that external researchers report on.

To that end, we wonder about what a piece might look like wherein the authors chose to have their scholarship vetted by DE experts, or at the very least adopt a more inclusive approach and extend the scope of expertise to the field at the heart of the critique. We envision this hypothetical article as having included citations from a greater breadth of field origin (again, inclusive of DE). Similarly, we envision such an article would take into consideration the language used to refer to people, and, of course, students. Readjusting deficit language toward more assets-based phrasings would be a first step toward that. Indeed, an article with more inclusive referencing and more affirming language choices would have—no doubt—served as a catalyst for a very different trajectory for the present DE reform. The outcome might not have been a dehumanizing erasure of a field and its work, but rather a renewed focus on the people of the field.

Such an article could also have supported the evolution of a DE praxis in which both the scholarship and practice of DE were reciprocally examined through the authors' critical reflection—instead of the erasure—of developmental educators' contributions to the field. Freire (1970) explains how "true reflection—leads to action. On the other hand, when the situation calls for action, that action will constitute an authentic praxis only if its consequences become the object of critical reflection" (p. 66). In contrast, the authors engage in both the unvoicing of developmental educators' scholarly contributions and the erasure of their agentive role as social actors performing the actions of DE. The result is a multilayered assault on a field, its praxis, and the students involved. Ultimately, as van Langenhove and Harré (1999) remind us, 'The social future can influence the social past' (p. 15). Bailey et al. (2010) elected to both grant and dismiss expertise in what became a highly cited publication, which in turn has influenced what and how others cite in future publications about DE and has undoubtedly impacted DE practice. Similarly, phrasing and terminology choices related to social actors has set in motion a narrative laden with deficit language. Frankly, we remain puzzled at how scholars who purport to be supportive of students employ such deficit language in their descriptions of learners. Language awareness is an expectation of scholarship, so critical analyses such as this one is important because if

uninterrupted, such power-language events perpetuate assumptions and ideas about the field and, importantly, about the people within and affected by it. And that benefits no one.

Author biographies

Emily K. Suh is Assistant Professor of Developmental Education and Integrated Reading and Writing Coordinator at Texas State University. Her research applies multimodal and critical discourse analysis tools to examine the intersection of equity, identity, and engagement for postsecondary developmental literacy practitioners. She is the Equity, Access, and Inclusion Network Chair for the National Organization for Student Success and a former Research Associate for the National Center for Developmental Education.

Na Wu is a doctoral candidate in Developmental Education at Texas State University. She has has assisted on multiple critical discourse analyses related to language, identity, and postsecondary education.

Agustín García is a student development specialist for the College of Education Advising Center and a doctoral student in the Graduate Program in Developmental Education at Texas State University. His current research interests center on understanding the psychosocial, sociocultural, and academic achievement factors of first-generation and Latino/a/e college students and collegiate student-athletes.

Candice Oelschlegel is a current adjunct lecturer and PhD student at Texas State University. She is a former high school English teacher who found inspiration in the field of Developmental Education and is interested in learning how to answer the questions: what are students' experiences in the college classroom? What can we learn from college students?

Dr. Sonya L. Armstrong is Associate Dean of Student Success for the College of Education and a Professor in the Graduate Program in Developmental Education within the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at Texas State University. She is a practitioner-researcher, and her scholarly endeavors are guided by over twenty years of designing and teaching developmental reading, composition, and learning strategies courses in community colleges and universities. She is Past-President of the College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA) and a Council of Learning Assistance and Developmental Education Associations (CLADEA) National Fellow.

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