

SUCCESS STORIES:

DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION IN  
THE FLORIDA COLLEGE SYSTEM



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# WHO ARE FLORIDA'S DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION STUDENTS?

## introduction

The Florida College System is a crucial access point to higher education for many Floridians. As open access institutions, we provide opportunities to anyone with a high school diploma or GED interested in seeking an associate degree. These are student success stories that were impacted by developmental education in the Florida College System.

THEY BECAME TEACHERS

# THEY BECAME TEACHERS



## Amanda – Edison State College

Amanda is a first-generation in college student born in Venezuela. She immigrated to the U.S. when she was 5. After completing high school, she was awarded a scholarship to attend Edison State College through the Hope Scholars Program. She tested into Developmental Mathematics. After completing the Developmental Mathematics sequence she went on to become involved in many activities and gained employment as a student assistant. She earned an AA degree, graduating with an overall GPA of 3.81. She then transferred to a nearby university, earning a Bachelor's Degree in Environmental Studies. She is now employed as a middle school science teacher.

## Barbie – Palm Beach State College

It had been 15 years since I had been in HS. Back in MY day algebra wasn't even a requirement and the closest I had ever been to an algebra course was 'Pre-algebra' in 7th grade, which I had earned a D in. The placement test for PBCB landed me in prep 1, but after the first couple of classes I thought there must be some kind of mistake on my score, since I know how to add/sub/mult/div triple digits. So, I went back and took the CPT again. I did do better; by 1 point, so I ended up having to face my fear of math by being required to take Prep 1, and then on to Prep 2, which led to Intermediate Alg.,

THEN I could begin my credit math courses. Even though I earned a B in both courses, I struggled the whole time, crying and stressing over it all. My instructor was M. K., and she was wonderful. So much so, that I followed her to Intermediate Alg. and begged her to teach all upper level math courses just for me...she didn't. She was the first inspiration of what I wanted to become. At the close of Intermediate Alg., she asked me to be her Supplemental Instruction leader for the upcoming term. Since I had only earned a C, I thought that was an odd request. But she saw some kind of potential in me and she also knew that the more I could help others, the more I would learn and OWN the material. After 3 years of assisting her as an SI leader, she retired and suggested that I come to work in the math lab. I took her advice and soon after, changed my Major.

I feel my success in prep level math is because of my instructor and the potential she saw in me. If it wasn't for her, not only would I have continued to fear the math, I would be teaching Elementary school students how to write creatively...something I now can't even imagine doing because I LOVE teaching Developmental Math to college students. I share this story to the students who attend my "Math Anxiety Strategy Seminar", saying I'm the 'poster child' for YOU CAN DO IT!

## Eileen -- Palm Beach State College

My journey as a math professor began at Palm Beach Community College during Fall Term 1991 when I reluctantly enrolled in an evening Basic Algebra course. Like many of the students I now teach, I hated math and I did not expect to pass the class. I had failed algebra in high school and firmly believed I did not possess the ability to do math. To my surprise, not only did I pass the class with a 99% average, I knew when the term ended that one day I would teach Basic Algebra at the College.

I graduated from the College with presidential honors in May of 1994, and in April of 1997, I graduated magna cum laude from Palm Beach Atlantic College with a Bachelors of Science Degree in Mathematics. That same year, I began teaching Basic Algebra at the College as an adjunct professor and part-time learning specialist in the College's Math Lab. In 2005, I became a full-time prep math faculty member, and now serve as the Prep Math Department Chair at the Lake Worth Campus. In 2011, I received the NISOD Award for excellence in teaching.

## Karen - Palm Beach State College

Karen's official start at Palm Beach State College was in developmental math. This class would be her first in over 18 years, but far from her last, as she sought an associates degree to be a substitute teacher at the elementary school level. The foundation she gleaned in that basic math class was enough to not only help her succeed in her credit math courses, but it completely reset her career path. A seed was planted to work with college students who struggled in mathematics. In four years, she had completed her associates degree with

honors and her bachelor's degree in mathematics. During those first four years, Karen helped other students as a Supplemental Instructor for two credit math courses, and began to develop resources for developmental math students. Once the degree was complete, she became an adjunct instructor and then a faculty member at Palm Beach State, teaching developmental math. She went on to complete her masters degree in math education, and is currently pursuing a doctorate in higher education leadership. In addition, she serves at the college's QEP Manager. Karen does not doubt that where she is now can be attributed to that very first course in developmental math.

## Maria – Edison State College

Maria was born in the U.S. to immigrant parents in a Mexican-American community in Florida. She had a dream of being a teacher to help other Mexican-American children succeed in school. During the admissions process, she tested into the lowest course in all three areas (English, Reading, Mathematics) of Developmental Education. Though these courses were a struggle, she completed the Developmental Sequence and earned an AA Degree. She was later admitted into the Bachelor's of Education program where she earned a B.S. in Elementary Education. Maria is now fulfilling her dream teaching elementary school in the county where she grew up.

## Valerie – Palm Beach State College

It all started in second grade: A new city, a new school, and order of operations (parentheses, exponents, multiplication—left to right, division—left to right, addition—left to right, and subtraction—left to right). Now I know it, but my first day in Mrs. N.'s math class was the week after she taught it, and almost all the math from that point on (at least that's how it seemed to me) required it. I had no confidence, and I didn't want to draw attention to myself by asking questions. So I didn't. From that point on, I assumed that if I didn't get something the minute the teacher discussed it in class, any class, I wouldn't get it. And I also assumed something else—that I was stupid. All the other kids seemed to be able to keep up with the teacher. I knew this because they were able to answer questions right away. This feeling of intellectual inadequacy flooded through me, convincing me that I would never be smart enough to graduate from college, and math--particularly algebra--would be my greatest challenge.

Of course, after high school, I worked at uninspiring, dead-end jobs until I moved to Charlotte, North Carolina, where I worked for a perfectionist politician who taught me that good speeches took a lot of thought and revision. This drove me crazy at first. Before my job with Sue, I used to create one draft with little planning, print it out, and think it was good enough. After all, I had believed I wasn't capable of producing anything above mediocrity. All that changed when Sue and her husband handed me drafts, drafts, and more drafts of her speeches. For days, sometimes weeks, it was a group effort to make her



speeches perfect, and they were never finished until she had to hop in her car and deliver the speech. Those in the audience often requested copies of her speeches because her words were so powerful and inspirational, for her very essence existed in them. Hence, this experience with Sue taught me that excellence takes time and effort and that I should always strive for it in all that I do so that I can inspire and empower the lives of others.

So, when I moved with my husband to Boynton Beach, I decided that I needed to follow my heart and become a teacher, a dream of mine since I was a child. However, the ever present fear of algebra contracted around me and would spasm every time I thought of needing it to graduate. Before coming to PBCC, I failed prep algebra three times at Hillsborough Community College and gave up on the idea of getting a degree. But I was determined as I sat in Ms. R.'s prep algebra class. For the first time in my life, a teacher told the class that it wasn't about understanding the content immediately upon receiving it. It was about the study skills a student employed before, during, and after class that would help the student eventually connect with the material. I was both dumbfounded and fascinated. I actually began to believe I could do it as long as I didn't give up. So, after countless hours in the CPI Math Lab, sitting by "Mrs. R.'s" side for tutoring (and plain old moral support) and at home, relentlessly battling problems until I conquered them, I finally overcame my greatest fear—algebra. This newfound confidence rushed through me with every academic success until I graduated Suma Cum Laude from Florida Atlantic University.

After witnessing the resounding legion of "ah ha's" from the students in the math lab and helping my classmates work through their problems, I dreamed of being just like "Mrs. R.," my second mentor. I wanted to show all students who lacked confidence and felt inadequate that they could succeed just as I had. So I became an SI Leader; a prep math, prep reading, and prep English adjunct; a tutor; a multidisciplinary learning specialist; and eventually a fulltime faculty member at the school to which I felt such an allegiance—and still do—Palm Beach State College.

Although my job can overwhelm me because many of my students face severe obstacles in their lives like homelessness, drug addiction, childhood abuse, teen parenthood, and extreme poverty, to name a few, I know that each day, I have the opportunity to inspire and empower them just as my mentors at this college did me. This gives me the strength and energy to give my best in each class session and to constantly seek new ways to connect with them. And I believe that I am living my vocation, not my occupation, like so few know. I also believe that every day my students have lessons to teach me, and I feel like I have grown as both an instructor and a human being. So, when I hear others complain about their jobs or their employers, I have to smile because I know that I am where I belong in life—working with instructors and administrators committed to making a difference in the lives of others and working with developmental writing students at Palm Beach State College.

THEY ARE VETERANS

# THEY ARE VETERANS



## Anthony – Edison State College

Anthony is a veteran of the United States Armed Forces, having served in Iraq and in Afghanistan. Upon returning from active duty, he tested into Developmental Writing. Within two years of having left the military, he completed an Associate of Arts degree in General Studies as well as an Associate of Science Degree in Criminal Justice Technology.

## Floyd – Pensacola State College

Floyd, a veteran, came to Pensacola State College as part of a rehabilitation program. The first-generation, first-time-in-college student had been out of school for over fifteen years. His placement scores indicated that he needed remediation in all three academic areas: one level of reading, one level of writing and two levels of mathematics. He completed his developmental courses in two semesters, earning the Department Scholar award for his GPA and volunteer service. In just over two years, Floyd earned his AAS in Computer Information Technology and left Pensacola State College with a 3.34 GPA.

## Matthew – Edison State College

A veteran of the United States Air Force, Matthew tested into the lowest level of Developmental Mathematics, following a break of several years between high school and college. He struggled with Mathematics, but after

multiple attempts, completed the Mathematics sequence. He later earned an AA degree and graduated with an overall GPA of 3.21. He served as a legislative aide to two different members of the Florida House of Representatives and earned his Bachelor's degree from The Florida State University. He plans to complete a Master's degree from Florida Gulf Coast University. He now serves as Director of Governmental Relations at Edison State College.

## Michael – Indian River State College

Michael is a former Marine who signed up for classes at IRSC when he returned home from a tour in the Middle East. Michael knew that going back to school would be a challenge, so he enrolled in a SLS1101/Student Success course his first semester, along with a Prep Math class. His time in the Marines taught him real discipline, and although the work wasn't easy he stuck it out and earned a 4.0 GPA his first two semesters. He went on to be admitted to IRSC's Honors Program, became a member of Phi Theta Kappa, and graduated with an Associate in Arts degree in the spring of 2010. He is now at the University of Florida pursuing a degree in Electrical Engineering, where he is also the president of the Collegiate Veterans Society.

## Phillip – Polk State College

Phillip enrolled at Polk State College during the fall of 2010, after returning home from a recent 09-10 Navy Reserve activated deployment. He was 28 years old, which had been 10 years, since his first semester when the college was previously called, Polk Community. When Phillip took the college placement test, he was one point from passing the test; consequently, this made him take the Basic Algebra course to refresh the material. After passing the class with an A, he continued moving up the levels in college math to Intermediate Algebra, College Algebra, Probability and Statistics, and finally, Applied Calculus. The Basic Algebra course had been crucial for passing each class, referring back to the basic principles to answer problems.

The two year degree for the Associates of Science in Business Administration & Management, will be completed at the end of this spring semester, May of 2013. Phillip's 3.2 GPA will be a stable foundation in pursuing the Bachelor's degree the next two years at Polk State. Once the bachelor degree has been accomplished, he plans to possibly go back to active duty as a commissioned officer in the Navy.

There is never a wrong time to refresh the basics, and build a firm understanding of knowledge for the future.

## Robert – Indian River State College

Robert came to IRSC as a veteran of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. It took some time to get used to civilian life again, and Robert was a little shaky on his study skills and math. He enrolled at IRSC with the vision of pursuing a degree in the medical field. He was enthusiastic but needed remediation in math so he enrolled in a Developmental Math course while also taking a full load of other

courses. Although it was challenging, Robert managed to earn four A's and a B his first semester. He went on to earn straight A's in every other class he took and earned his AS degree in Medical Laboratory Technology, graduating with Highest Honors and a cumulative GPA of 3.96. He is currently completing his AA degree (he will graduate this spring) and intends to pursue higher degrees in the medical field.

ENGLISH IS THEIR  
SECOND LANGUAGE

# ENGLISH IS THEIR SECOND LANGUAGE



## Ileana – Florida State College at Jacksonville

Growing up in a family where education has always been highly valued, I could recount of numerous occasions when my parents refer to college education as the only way of life. I was born and raised in Central America, and my parents always made sure that my siblings and I would be instructed in the best institutions in the nation. Later on in life, I found myself living in the United States of America, and even when I was considered fully bilingual, I also understood the importance of further polishing my writing and communication skills.

Through a developmental program in reading and writing at the start of my first academic degree in the United States, I was able to experience first hand the benefits of such programs for my future scholarly involvements. After finalizing the second semester of this course, I was even awarded with a 'critical thinking' prize, which was of great merit for me, and for my family. I was then transferred to a bigger institution where my recent acquired skills were put to practice, and which won me eventually several academic honors, talent grants, including studies abroad scholarships. At the end of my bachelors, I was accepted to the best institution in the region, where I underwent my first master's degree. Today, I undergo a second master's degree through a very competitive program from one of the top five universities in the world.

The road has been lengthy; however, the rewards have been numerous. I attribute all of my academic achievements to my faith, my perseverance, and to the presence in my life of successful programs such as the developmental educational courses I took exactly a decade ago. I believe in educators who continually form individuals through these significant programs, and wish that others

could benefit from these courses just as I and other students before me have enjoyed.

## Juan – Broward College

Juan is 34 years old. He came to the US from Argentina in 2001. He first enrolled at Broward College in 2005, taking an EAP classes that he failed. He returned in 2009 to complete EAP and two developmental math classes and bring his GPA up to a 3.0. He is now majoring in finance and will graduate with an associate's degree this summer. Currently, his GPA is 3.45. He has applied to six schools, including Harvard and Columbia, to complete his BA in finance. His accomplishments at Broward include: Member of the Honors Institute, Member of Phi Theta Kappa, Member of the model UN, which took third place in Tallahassee last year, One of two students from Broward's South Campus nominated for a USA Today scholarship (in total, only 100 students from Florida are nominated), Mentor for the C2C (Connect to Complete) program, Member of the Competitive Edge program, which teaches students about state politics.

## Maricruz – Miami Dade College

Expectant spring 2013 graduate Maricruz plans to become a senator. Getting there will take hard work, but she believes her personal (non-English speaking immigrant parents who fled Nicaragua as war-prisoners) and academic struggles (dropping out of high school two months before graduation) have prepared her well. She also knows that her initial frustration—failing the CPT and having to take a remedial math course—is now her greatest source for gratitude, “not everyone gets it right on the first try. Without the remedial support, I would have another barrier holding me back.” Approaching a 3.75 GPA, Maricruz admits that math is her favorite subject. Maricruz will receive a bachelor's degree in psychology and expects to transfer to the University of Miami or Florida International University to pursue a law degree. Maricruz is committed to become a public servant and advocate for others that face similar challenges, “at some point, everyone needs extra help.”

## Renor – Palm Beach State College

PBSC Security Officer Lake Worth Campus, is his new title. His former title was English for Academic Purposes student at the Lake Worth Campus, and he was my student summer 2010 and fall 2011. He now patrols the campus and keeps us all safe, including me. The great thing about Renor is that he immigrated here from Haiti, and English is not his first language, so it is a big accomplishment that he now serves the institution where he was once a student. He said, “I feel that with the support of the English Prep program and the college as a whole, I was able to achieve my goal.” I often see Renor on campus, and he always makes sure to express his thanks to me as his English professor.



THEY ARE RETURNING  
ADULTS

# THEY ARE RETURNING ADULTS



## Allison – Polk State College

Allison enrolled at Polk State College in 2009, two decades after she graduated from high school. Returning to the classroom after such a long period of time proved challenging for Allison, who was also juggling her roles as a mother to three children and a small-business owner. At Polk State, she tested into three developmental courses — English, Math, and Reading — which were vital to her transition back to the classroom. “When I was in those classes, the lights came on,” she said. “I was able to grasp the material, and that felt good. Those classes gave me the foundation I needed to take the next step, and then the next step.” She went on to become a member of Phi Theta Kappa, the international honor society for two-year colleges, and Polk State’s Honors Program. She graduated with her Associate in Arts degree in 2012 and plans to ultimately pursue a career in nursing.

## Angela – Indian River State College

Angela was a single mom who needed to go to work for the first time. Angela wanted a career in nursing. Upon enrolling at IRSC, she took Developmental Math and Developmental Reading. She had a successful semester and went on to earn an associate degree in nursing with Honors. She has since gone on to pursue a BS in nursing at UCF where she is scheduled to graduate Spring, 2013. She is currently working as a pediatric nurse in Orlando.

## Betty – College of Central Florida

At the age of 55, Betty enrolled in courses at the College of Central Florida in the fall of 2012. Betty's PERT scores indicated that she required remediation in reading, English, and math. Betty successfully completed three of the required developmental courses in her first term and is currently enrolled in the remaining three courses. One of those courses is developmental math which is a modularized course covering the competencies for two levels of developmental math.

Although, Betty works full-time as a school bus driver, she was able to complete all 8 modules in the developmental math course in just 5 weeks. Betty is on target to enter college coursework toward her associate in arts degree this summer!

## Brett – Indian River State College

Brett Bailey came to IRSC from the GED program. Although Brett was painfully reclusive, he enrolled at IRSC and began his college career with Developmental Math and SLS1101/Student Success. Since then he has gone on to be a member of the All-Florida Academic Team, made the Dean's List and was inducted into Phi Theta Kappa. After completing his AA degree with honors, he enrolled in IRSC's BAS program in Digital Media (with a concentration in Graphics and Web). He is on track to complete his Bachelor's degree this spring.

## Ed – Edison State College

Ed began college at the traditional age. He was not successful and withdrew and went into the workforce. He came back to college when he was in his forties after facing hardships and realizing that he wanted to make a better life for himself. He has a wife and five children. He tested into Developmental Reading and Mathematics. He completed the Developmental Sequence in each of these areas and is currently enrolled in the AS Radiologic Technology Program. He has an overall GPA of 3.25. He also works in the Developmental Studies Center as a student assistant, providing support to students currently in Developmental courses.

## Elise – Pensacola State College

After a brief attempt at college (earning nine credit hours) in her thirties, Elise returned to college at 54. After being away from the classroom for so long, she required two levels of developmental reading and two levels of developmental math to refresh her academic skills. It took her three semesters to complete those requirements. Within three years, she had earned an AAS in Office Administration, and after two more years she completed the AA in Criminal Justice, leaving Pensacola State College in 2010 with two degrees and a 3.35 GPA. She stopped by the Developmental Studies office earlier this month to thank her teachers and let them know that she would be graduating this May from UWF with a bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice.

## Erica – Santa Fe College

Erica graduated high school in 1992, earned a cosmetology and nail technician certificate, and worked for various salons. While at SuperCuts, she managed a salon in North Providence, R.I., was promoted to corporate positions, and was sent to various markets to hold training seminars, to analyze markets, and to acquire franchises. During this time, Erica married and started a family, eventually giving birth to three children. In Fall 2010, some 18 years after finishing high school and after having a successful career, she decided to devote her efforts to college.

Erica completed two prep math courses to prepare her for College-level math. She completed her SF degree in Fall 2012, after six semester. During her time at SF, she proved herself an exceptional student, maintaining a 3.88 grade point average while taking at least one Honors course or Honors contract in three semesters. She graduated from SF having successfully completed the requirements for the Honors Program Certificate with Highest Honors! Erica is currently enrolled at the University of Florida, majoring in Food and Resource Economics.

## Gisella – Broward College

Gisella enrolled at Broward College two years ago at the age of 34 and is the first in her family to attend college. Like the majority of “older” students, she needed to refresh her skills in mathematics and reading before taking college-level courses. Gisella needed three pre-college math classes and one developmental reading class, which she completed during her first two terms. After overcoming the developmental education challenge along with some personal challenges, Gisella progressed quickly. She even began taking Honors level courses within a year of enrolling and became a peer advocate for new developmental education students. Gisella currently has a 3.8 GPA and will graduate this term. She hopes to transfer to UM to major in public administration and social services, and ultimately become a lawyer. Without the bridge that developmental education offered, Gisella would not be where she is today. She is one of Broward College’s Jack Kent Cooke nominees this year.

## James – Santa Fe College

James came to Santa Fe College from New York State to enroll in our Zoo Animal Technology Program. James particularly struggled in math. He had several attempts at the first level college prep math, here at Santa Fe. His instructor, who had been at Santa Fe for many years, told me in confidence, that he did not think James would ever be able to master the math concepts required for the program.

At about this time, James’ mother’s cancer was coming out of remission. James’ mother has been a single mother to James and his brother, who has been developmentally disabled since the loss of their father at a very young age. Therefore, James felt he needed to move back to New York to help with his brother and give moral support to his mother in her battle with cancer.

When James left Santa Fe I was almost certain I would never see him again, but after a couple of years James returned to Santa Fe. His mother had won her

battle with cancer again and while in NY he had been taking classes at the local community college and had completed the required math.

I saw James the next year at a fund raiser for the Zoo Program and he was telling all of the students how we had helped him get into the program. All night I heard what a great student James was in the program. The confidence he had obtained, since the first time we met, was amazing.

I was very fortunate to be asked to attend James' graduation from the Zoo Animal program and sit with his mother and brother. I have since spoken with James' mother and she is so appreciative of the assistance he was given at Santa Fe. James is now working at a Zoo in northern New Jersey and doing very well. James was awarded one of our First College Prep Advisement Awards.

## Jeremiah – Edison State College

In the spring of 2011, Jeremiah, a first generation in college student had been out of high school for nearly a decade, enrolled at Edison. When he took the College Placement Test, his scores placed him in the first of two levels of Developmental Reading, Developmental English, and Developmental Math. Even with having to complete a developmental sequence of six courses, Jeremiah completed an Associate in Arts degree with two years with an overall GPA of 3.33. He credits the tremendous support he received in the College Prep Labs as well as caring and passionate professors. He plans to pursue a Bachelor's degree after he graduates from Edison State College in spring of 2013.

## Jose – Indian River State College

Jose graduated from IRSC's GED program. Upon graduation, he enrolled in IRSC's A.S. Business program. He began his college career by taking SLS1101/Student Success and Developmental Math. After successfully completing these courses, he moved through his program successfully and earned his AA degree. He transferred to the University of Florida and earned a B.S. in Business. He was recruited by AT&T out of college, went through their management training program for one summer, and is now working in a management position with AT&T.

## Kionne – Miami Dade College

Former Miami Dade College, Homestead Campus student, Kionne struggled with poverty, low academic attainment, violence, and crime before deciding to turn his life around. Upon entering college, he required two developmental math classes, one developmental reading class, and one developmental writing class. He transferred from Miami Dade College to Howard University and later earned a Juris Doctorate degree from Thurgood Marshall School of Law. Today, he is a State Representative, former Assistant State Attorney, college professor, national motivational/keynote speaker, author, mentor, founder and president of 2NOIT Media and Publishing, featured personality on the reality television show "College Hill," recognized professional by AT & T and the Miami Herald's "Miami's Rising Voices," and current president of Transition, Inc., Greater Miami Service Corps, MPACT, and other community non-profit organizations.

## Maria – Broward College

Maria enrolled at Broward College two years ago at the age of 34 and is the first in her family to attend college. Like the majority of “older” students, she needed to refresh her skills in mathematics and reading before taking college-level courses. Maria needed three pre-college math classes and one developmental reading class, which she completed during her first two terms. After overcoming the developmental education challenge along with some personal challenges, Maria progressed quickly. She even began taking Honors level courses within a year of enrolling and became a peer advocate for new developmental education students. Maria currently has a 3.8 GPA and will graduate this term. She hopes to transfer to UM to major in public administration and social services, and ultimately become a lawyer. Without the bridge that developmental education offered, Maria would not be where she is today.

## Marie – Palm Beach State College

My name is Marie. I started college when I was 20 years old. After high school I never really knew what I wanted to do with my life. It wasn't until I had my first born child that I realized that I was wasting my life away. I was tired of the dead beat jobs that I had and, I wanted a better life for my family and I. I knew the first step was to apply for school, so I did just that. I got accepted at Palm Beach State College. I graduated high school at the age of 17 and I just knew that my memory was a blur from what I learned in school. I ended up taking the college prep test and testing into almost every prep class there was. I didn't get upset, I was actually glad because my prep classes helped me to succeed in the classes that I have been taking now. I am so happy to have taken my prep classes especially math because I really needed it.

Thanks to Professors like Ms. E. and Ms. B. my prep classes were very important to where I am today with my education. Now almost two year since I first started college I am waiting on my acceptance into the nursing program, in December I will have completed all the requirements for my associate degree and I will be graduating with a 3.9 GPA. All in all, I started off as a prep student and now I feel that I have conquered and achieved so much.

## Mark – College of Central Florida

At 34 years old, Mark entered the College of Central Florida in the summer of 2010. Mark's college placement scores required him to enroll in two levels of developmental math and one level of developmental reading. Mark completed his required developmental course work during his first summer term and entered college level course work in the fall. Majoring in medicine, Mark earned a place on the Dean's List in spring of 2011, enrolled in the college's Honors program and later that fall was inducted into the honor society Phi Theta Kappa. Mark earned his Associate in Arts degree in May of 2012 with a 3.5 GPA.

Continuing his education, Mark subsequently earned a college credit certificate in Emergency Medical Technology and is currently enrolled in CF's BAS program in Business & Organizational Management – Health Care Specialization. In addition to his academic success, Mark was also elected to serve as president for

CF's Student Activity Board where he serves as a role model and leader for fellow students. Mark is on target to graduate in the spring with his BAS degree and plans to enter UF's Physicians Assistant program in fall 2013.

## Mary – Santa Fe College

Mary came to Santa Fe after many years of working as a server at a local restaurant. I already knew Mary from the many times she had been our server, as she worked at one of our favorite restaurants. Mary was an adult learner and very apprehensive about returning to college to work on an AS degree in Legal Assisting. After a couple of semesters Mary gained confidence and learned she was very capable and did well in her classes. But, just when things were going well for her in school, the restaurant she had worked at for so many years was sold, due to the death of the previous owner. The new owners decided not to keep any of the previous staff. Mary had also recently lost her longtime domestic partner to an unexpected illness. Mary still persisted in school! She found a new job and I have had the pleasure of her being my server again at her new location. She has recently told me that this is her last term in college and that she will graduate this semester. She stated she is very grateful for Santa Fe College and College Prep for the opportunity she had to pursue her education. I look forward to great things from Mary with her persistence!

## Natalie – Pensacola State College

With an empty nest at 49, Natalie, a first-generation college student, came to Pensacola State College. She was required to take developmental courses in all three academic areas, including both levels of mathematics. She completed her developmental courses in two semesters. It took four years, but Natalie earned her AS in Nursing, graduating with a 3.2 GPA. She is enjoying her new career as a nurse at The Specialty Center in Pensacola. In a recent card sent to the Developmental Studies Staff & Faculty, she expressed her gratitude "...for helping make this dream come true."

## Nicholas – Palm Beach State College

"After I was laid off from my position as an auto mechanic, I realized that I wanted to head in a different direction; I wanted to learn more about myself while pursuing a college degree. I enrolled at Palm Beach State College with the eventual goal of becoming a mechanical engineer. Upon taking the College Placement Test, I tested into developmental Algebra 1 and developmental English 2. I was convinced that this placement was an indication of the challenges that would lie ahead, and that math would be my worst subject. And although, in retrospect, some of the developmental math topics may have seemed trivial to me at the time, now that I am taking a calculus course, I find myself relying and referring back to them on a continuous basis.

The developmental classes provided me with a solid academic foundation for all my future studies. Indeed, somewhat ironically, the most profound example of this has been my success in math. I find that every mathematical concept is intimately based on those that I had learned while taking developmental

mathematics. As an example, the derivative in calculus can be interpreted as the instantaneous slope of the so-called tangent line to the graph of a function at a point. Had I not had a developmental math background in fractions, I would not understand the difference quotient, let alone how to compute the derivative as its limit. Additionally, these foundational classes have significantly increased my ability to think critically through real-life situations.

During my first years at the college, I have developed a passion for sharing my knowledge and passion about mathematics with fellow students. I am currently working as an SI Leader for Developmental Math 1 and 2 and, as an officer of the Palm Beach State College Math Club, I coordinate the Math Therapy Initiative -- a peer outreach toward students struggling in math. I have also been admitted into the Dr. Floyd F. Koch Honors College, and I have plans to participate in various honors activities and projects. In the future, I hope to work both as an engineer and as an educator to help students better understand the language of numbers. Developmental classes have given me the best foundation to be successful."

## Primrose – Palm Beach State College

Primrose was an older student who started school in 2006. While going to school she was working 40 hours and she was born in Jamaica. She tested into all three remedial areas (English, reading and math). The first time I met Primrose she could do nothing but cry because she could not pass her math classes. She felt like there was a barrier put in front of her and her degree. She truly believed that she would never be able to get her degree. We talked for a long time and I encouraged her to utilize the math labs as much as she could. Although she was working full-time she spent many of her waking hours in the lab. She graduated from Palm Beach State not only with an AS degree in Human Services, but also with her Associate of Arts degree. She is now in FAU working on her Bachelors degree in Social Work. She graduated with honors at Palm Beach State College.

## Rolando – Miami Dade College

Rolando's college "adventure" began 21 years ago, when he enrolled at Miami-Dade College (MDC). His education plans were short-lived, as Rolando chose to support his infant daughter and pursue a career as a police officer, taking advantage of the County's re-opened hiring freeze. Over the past two decades, Rolando's law enforcement career took off, starting as a unit patrol officer and working his way to an investigator of money-laundering crimes and drug-related kidnappings to his current role in marine patrol.

His now adult daughter's graduation from MDC and a strong desire to become a teacher motivated Rolando to re-enroll two years ago. At age 41, Rolando immediately faced the challenge of most adult learners—needing refresher courses while juggling a career, family and school. With the help of patient professors, Rolando quickly progressed with high grades through two of developmental math classes, and he is finishing his third and final class. Without the refreshers, Rolando would be unable to pursue a Bachelor of Arts in Emergency Management. Rolando plans to put the degree to good use for the County, teaching life-saving rescue and first response courses after he graduates next spring.



## Steven – Polk State College

Steven also started in MAT 0012 in 2009, graduated from Polk with an AA this past term, and is attending UCF this term. He graduated with honors with a 3.53 GPA. He is studying Mass Communications at UCF.

## Student – Florida State College at Jacksonville

When I thought about going to college, the only thing that I could think about was the math classes that I was going to have to take. When I was in high school, over twenty years ago, it was my worse subject in school, and I failed it every year. I just couldn't get the hang of it, and I avoided it like the plague. However, I knew that if I wanted to go to college, it was something that I would have to at least pass with a "C" to get through. When I took my placement test, I tested in the lowest math course, MAT0018. I was told that I could retest and try to get in a higher placement, but I knew that there was no way possible for me to do that.

On the first day of my first semester, I went in and sat down anxiously, and as the professor came in and started teaching the lesson, I became overwhelmed and decided not to return to math class. I started speaking with different people and decided to take another shot at it with another professor. I decided to try Professor A. who, little did I know, was going to turn math around for me. She taught me different ways and tricks to solve math, and made me feel very comfortable in that subject. She, as my professor, has made something so scary, and avoidable, to be my favorite subject in college. I finished my first semester with a 95.7 average.

I have chosen to continue my math classes with the same professor as far along in college as I can. She has truly turned math around for me, and has made it my favorite subject in school.

## Student – Florida State College at Jacksonville

Ms. F. is an awesome teacher. I had the honor of stumbling into one of her reading classes when I first started. It was a good thing that I did. I might not have continued with college if I had not. When I returned to college it had been almost six years since I had been in school. I wasn't really sure if I was up to returning back to school, but then I met Ms. F. Ms. F. showed me that I was able to do the work that I was so scared of doing. Ms. F. was able to encourage me through the whole semester with all of my classes. She has now become my mentor. Any time I have an issue with a subject or any other problem I stop to see her. She has a way of showing me that I'm able to do what I need. Because of her and a few other really awesome teachers I am almost done with my AA. I'm moving on to my AS in the spring. Even though I'm having to attend a different campus Ms. F. is always there for me when I need her.

## Victor – Polk State College

Victor started in MAT 0012 in 2009 and completed an AS in nursing in 2011. Working as a nurse he also worked as a tutor in our Math Lab while achieving his degree.

THEY ARE RECENT HIGH  
SCHOOL GRADUATES

## THEY ARE RECENT HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES



### Alison – Broward College

Alison is a traditional college student with big dreams! She is currently a mentor in the Peer Advocate Program (Connect2Complete) at Broward College and she is holding down 2 jobs. Alison began her college career as a member of the Project Degree Learning community in Fall, 2011. This Learning Community was split into two cohorts and Alison emerged as a leader of her cohort. While in the learning community, Alison completed 4 developmental courses: REA0017, ENC0015, ENC0025 and MAT0028 and these courses strengthened her for future courses. She now has a 3.8 GPA with 24 credits completed toward an A.A. degree. She serves in the Connect2Complete program and completed a Broward College Leadership Class which has prepared her to begin service as an Americorp volunteer. Because

of her dedication to her studies and educational success, Alison served as a guest panelist for the Gateway to College Peer Learning Conference in Portland Oregon this past summer. She was also awarded a Service Learning Project award for her contribution to Broward College—North Campus Service Learning Showcase.

## Ashleigh – Santa Fe College

Ashleigh was home-schooled her elementary, middle, and high school years. While that experience allowed her to discover and to explore her interests as well as to develop a strong work ethic, dedication, effective time management, goal-setting, initiative, and self-motivation, it left her underprepared in mathematics. During her first two semesters, Ashleigh completed two pre-College math courses while enrolling in college-level classes in the liberal arts.

While at Santa Fe, Ashleigh became actively involved in Student Government and other organizations on campus. She was appointed Social and Behavioral Sciences Academic Senator, Administrative Assistant to the Student Body President, Web smith of the SF Republican Club, and was an active member of the College's Model United Nations team. In Spring 2011, she campaigned for and was elected Student Body Vice President. In Summer 2011, she helped found the Santa Fe College Psychology Club, and now serves as the organization's President. And in July 2011, she was inducted into the College's Alpha Zeta Phi chapter of the Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society. While at SF, she earned a place on the Student Life Honor Roll and the College's Deans List.

Ashleigh graduated from SF in Spring 2012 with a 3.84 GPA and completed the Honors Program's requirements for an Honors Certificate with Highest Honors. She is currently enrolled at the University of Florida, majoring in Psychology, and preparing for law school admissions.

## Christian – Florida State College at Jacksonville

My name is Christian and I am writing on the positive impacts of developmental courses on my academic progress. Developmental courses like reading/writing and mathematics have helped me tremendously – coupled with encouragement and help from my professors and academic advisers, especially from Ms. S and my writing professor Ms. A.

During my freshman year in college, I had a retentive memory problem in mathematics and I forgot easily every formula and method learned in my math class. This infuriated me and I wanted to quit, but thanks to Ms. S who introduced me to the flash card method, I started having my flash cards with me wherever I went and I glanced at them at intervals in refreshing my memory. At the end of the semester, I made a B in the course. Onwards, I progressed on my studies. As time went by, I stopped using flash cards because I have learned basic math formulas that help me in my subsequent math classes.

In my reading/writing class, I can't thank Professor A. enough who taught me fervently the rules of academic writing. I remembered writing on the topic, "Misuse of Financial Aid by Students," in which she taught me the rules of academic writing and said that I should always quote my source, which is very important in academic writing.

Undoubtedly, developmental courses in reading, writing and mathematics have broadened my horizons and helped me tremendously in smoothly advancing to my major.

## Jonathan – North Florida Community College

My name is Jonathan. I am twenty year old college student in my freshman year at North Florida Community College. I have taken two redesign courses in my time at North Florida. The structure and importance of this style of college course cannot be understated. I began my freshman year at North Florida in the fall of 2012. I had been out of school for over a year by that point and felt behind the curve in math. The redesign course allowed me to refresh and then catch back up to where I should have been. In one semester's time I was able to take two courses and complete them both. I started in a refresher course and was able to complete that course within two months. This is of importance because if I had been in a regular lecture math course, I would not have been able to complete the course in a short time period. Then I was allowed to continue on to a course that was a regular level course. I was able to complete this in just about three months because it was a redesign course. If it had not been for the redesign course, I would be one class level under where I am now. I am thankful for the style of redesign being offered. Had it not been for the redesign courses, I would probably not have made straight A's like I did that semester. I am thankful for the courses and firmly believe that the courses should be continued.

## Kathy – Brevard Community College

My name is Kathy. I first enrolled at Brevard Community College when I was 19 years old. Since I had not taken a math class my senior year of high school, I did not do well on the CPT. I also have always struggled with interpretation in reading, which caused me to not do well in that part of the cpt. Because of the test scores, I had to take two pre-college math classes and one developmental reading. I completed these courses over my first two terms. I have progressed quite quickly. My first semester I got on the presidents list. I also have been accepted into the Dental Assisting program but found it was not for me. Now I am heading towards becoming a paralegal and am trying to earn my associates in science. Taking the developmental education courses helped me succeed and caught me up to where I am supposed to be.

## Nichole – College of Central Florida

At age 18, Nichole enrolled at the College of Central Florida in the fall of 2008. Based on her college placement scores, Nichole was required to take two levels each of developmental reading, English, and math. While challenging, Nichole successfully completed all of the required developmental coursework in two terms and was prepared to pursue required college credit courses toward her Associate in Arts degree in the summer of 2009. Earning a place on CF's Dean's List in 2010, Nichole completed her Associate in Arts degree in Business Administration in August of 2011.

Currently a senior in CF's Bachelor in Applied Science Business and Organizational Management program, Nichole has maintained an overall grade point average of 3.35. In fall 2012, Nichole earned a 4.0 GPA and was placed on the prestigious President's List and is on track to graduate in May. Nichole walked through the open door of CF, across the bridge of developmental education, and on to successful degree completion and more!

## Ronald – Miami Dade College

Miami Dade College student Ronald is thriving academically as a result of taking college prep reading and math courses. Moving to Miami after studying in Ecuador, Ronald attributes the skills learned during prep as necessary for his dream of becoming a dental surgeon. He completed all his college prep requirements to enter into the Dental Hygiene program next term and needs a few credits to complete his associate's degree. Ambitious, Ronald has a 3.0 GPA and is concurrently working toward a Bachelor of Science in Biology, expected in 2015. After graduation, Ronald plans to transfer to the University of Florida's dental school.

## Student – Florida State College at Jacksonville

The first day of my MAT0018 class I felt lost, and I felt like I was walking into the unknown. I was afraid of not knowing what I was getting into. I came into class bringing a pen, pencils, paper, and even erasers! Little did I know that most of the work would be computer based. I was not comfortable using a computer, so this made me even more nervous. However, throughout the semester, Professor H. made me feel much more at ease with the material. He explained that we needed to spend double time studying. This meant that if we spent 2 hours in class, we would need to spend 4 hours outside of class studying. Slowly, I started to feel more and more comfortable with the materials. By the time the class was finished, I felt much more confident about my computer skills. I know that the organizational skills, study skills, and communication skills I learned in this class will continue to help me throughout the rest of my college career.