

The SEEK Department FIPSE Project

DEP III

Making the Core A Reality for Disadvantaged Students The SEEK Pre-Core Program

A FIPSE Dissemination Project

Sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education Fund for the Improvement of Post Secondary Education (FIPSE)

Background of the Project

Over the past six years, the Department of Educational Services/SEEK at Brooklyn College (CUNY) has been successful in mounting a program to address the nationwide need for a curricular process that will provide remedial and developmental instruction to college students so that they will succeed in core curriculum and general education courses. SEEK is the New York State legislative mandated higher education opportunity program for educationally and economically disadvantaged students.

In its first FIPSE-funded grant, *Developmental Education Program: Making the Core a Reality for Disadvantaged Students* (1995), Brooklyn College's SEEK Department developed a curriculum and a curriculum model that combined some of the best practices in the field with new features so that there is a seamless transition from developmental education to Brooklyn College's nationally acclaimed core curriculum. In the second FIPSE-funded grant, *Developmental Education Program II: Making the Core a Reality for Disadvantaged Students Across New York State* (1998), a pilot dissemination project was developed at John Jay College of Criminal Justice and Queens College to determine whether the process and the curriculum were transportable to other campuses.

Since the implementation of the first DEP I FIPSE-funded project, access and retention have gained importance as major issues in American higher education. The chief problem that universities face with the raising of standards and the raising of the bar is: can they continue to offer access for students, and if they do, what role should remediation, developmental, and/or compensatory education play?

At the City University of New York, a mandate passed by the Board of Trustees in January 1999 and confirmed by the New York State Board of Regents in November 1999 phases out remediation at four of the senior colleges as of January 2000 and shifts the focus of remediation to the community colleges. The only exemptions to this mandate are for ESL and SEEK students and for summer and intersession

programs for regularly admitted students. But the City University of New York is not the only one struggling with this issue.

Within New York State, its sister opportunity program, Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) also admits disadvantaged students to the 64 branches of the State University of New York. In December 1998, SUNY's Board of Regents for the first time mandated a core curriculum for all of its colleges. With these new demanding requirements, the issue of preparation becomes even more important.

New York State is clearly not alone in this problem. Faculty and institutions across the country are grappling with the issue of underpreparation and how to prepare students for their general education courses. This is true at both public and private institutions.

National data confirm the urgent need to reverse the limited number of underrepresented minorities in graduate studies in academic disciplines and the widening gaps of achievement between African-American and white students since 1978.

The successes of Brooklyn College's first FIPSE grant, as well as the replication at John Jay and Queens Colleges under its second grant, indicate a promising solution to the problem of preparing students for core curriculum and general education requirements.

DEP I AND II

Originally Brooklyn College's Department of Educational Services/SEEK proposed the DEP project in the context of its nationally renowned core curriculum. Over more than 20 years, Brooklyn College's core developed and became a national model of undergraduate curriculum under the leadership of former Provost Ethyle R. Wolfe. The Core Curriculum Visitors' Programs brought faculty teams to Brooklyn College from other institutions to observe not only the specific core that was developed by Brooklyn College faculty but more importantly the faculty development process involved in its implementation, and its continual renewal and reaffirmation.

Instead of throwing up their hands at the rigors of the core curriculum or at the challenges presented, the faculty in Brooklyn College's Department of Educational Services/SEEK learned very quickly that having this core provided them with a very real target for preparation of their students. The Department enthusiastically progressed through its first FIPSE grant to establish a curriculum and a curriculum model that might play the same role in educating disadvantaged students. The goals from DEP I were:

- To revise the Department's basic skills curriculum to meet the demands of the College's mission and University's goals by using the best research and practices available. Thus, a curriculum was developed with a coherent approach integrating core curriculum materials, multicultural

approaches, and critical inquiry to address the persistent problems of underpreparation, general education and multiculturalism.

- To develop a model of the curriculum process that faculty at other colleges and universities can use to provide seamless transitions for their students from developmental education to the core curriculum or other general education requirements.

The aim was to use some of the best practices currently available. The essential strategies were employed including the critical inquiry technique. Through these techniques, students learned to be in charge of their own learning by annotating texts, asking questions, and working in collaborative groups. In addition, faculty taught theme-centered coordinated courses employing a wide range of core curriculum and multi-cultural materials.

Goals of the Project

1. Dissemination

The Department of Educational Services/SEEK proposes to further this dissemination project by establishing a national network of colleges and universities along with their faculty who are trained in developing and implementing the curriculum models based on the one originally established at Brooklyn College. The program works with faculty in departments from ten new colleges as they develop their innovative curriculum and learn how to make the process an ongoing one. These colleges could become regional hubs for further dissemination and training in the model.

In the first year of the project, three regions will be established, and the first group of faculty trainers will begin to work. In the second year of the project, the three original regions will continue to function, implementing their curriculum. The first group of faculty trainers will reach out to two new regions. In the third year, faculty from the regions established in year one will assume training functions and reach out to new schools in their regions.

2. Visitors' program

At the end of the first year, 13 colleges including the original three will be participating in some phase of the curriculum development process. However, it is important to reach out beyond this audience. Brooklyn College has had many requests from across the country from colleges who wish to come and observe the program. Part of the proposed project will be to expand the Visitors' Program by bringing in teams from colleges around the country to participate in Brooklyn College's intensive faculty development retreats with faculty workshops, sample courses, problem solving case study workshops, and implementation strategy sessions. This is modeled after the highly successful Brooklyn College Core Curriculum Visitor's Program. Colleges participating may be invited to join a regional group in the second year of the grant.

3. Developing a national network

A major part of the FIPSE grant will be to position the DEP Program as a national dissemination network that will continue beyond the life of the FIPSE grants. In the first FIPSE grant, careful attention was paid to the development of the curriculum model. For the second FIPSE the transportable elements were defined and carried forward to the two new

colleges. The third FIPSE grant focuses on developing materials and a web site that will allow the process to go forward and expand to include other disseminating campuses and still retain control of the process so that the essential elements are not lost. These important materials include, but are not limited to:

- a. critical inquiry training materials
- b. handbook or guide with questions and answers
- c. faculty development process outline
- d. regional network discussion groups
- e. series of annual conferences or meetings
- f. evaluation guidelines, instruments and questionnaires
- g. web site for posting materials with chat room for participants and project coordinators' discussion and mentoring.

4. Faculty development element

Each college will:

- a. establish a project coordinator
- b. appoint a coordinating committee with broad representation in their department
- c. identify particular core curriculum and general education courses that would be the focus of instruction through the grant
- d. identify key faculty and staff in the college who need to cooperate with the project
- e. participate in a series of faculty development retreats at the Brooklyn College campus and at their home campus
- f. make a commitment to an ongoing faculty development process
- g. form working teams both according to subject areas and across curricular areas

Transportable Elements

1. **Critical inquiry**

Critical inquiry – a method of focusing on questioning, annotation, close reading and writing. Students are taught to acquire control over their own learning.

2. **Multicultural perspective**

Readings for all courses must be inclusive of the diverse racial, ethnic and subcultural composition of the learning communities that constitute the student body.

3. **Core materials**

Readings and other learning materials should reflect all the disciplines in the core curriculum or general education requirements of the institution.

4. **Block programs, learning communities**

Students must be scheduled for courses with coordinated schedules planned by faculty working jointly to develop related syllabi, materials and activities.

5. **Collaborative learning**

Instructors help students learn how to work together in small groups and pairs in order to improve the learning process by shaping a student-centered environment.

6. **Theme-centered instruction**

All courses focus on themes related to topics relevant to the core curriculum or general education requirements of the college and give shape and focus to the learning communities process.

7. **Tutoring/supplemental instruction**

Classes have all-important role model tutors and supplemental instructors to extend the learning process and work with students both in and outside the classroom.

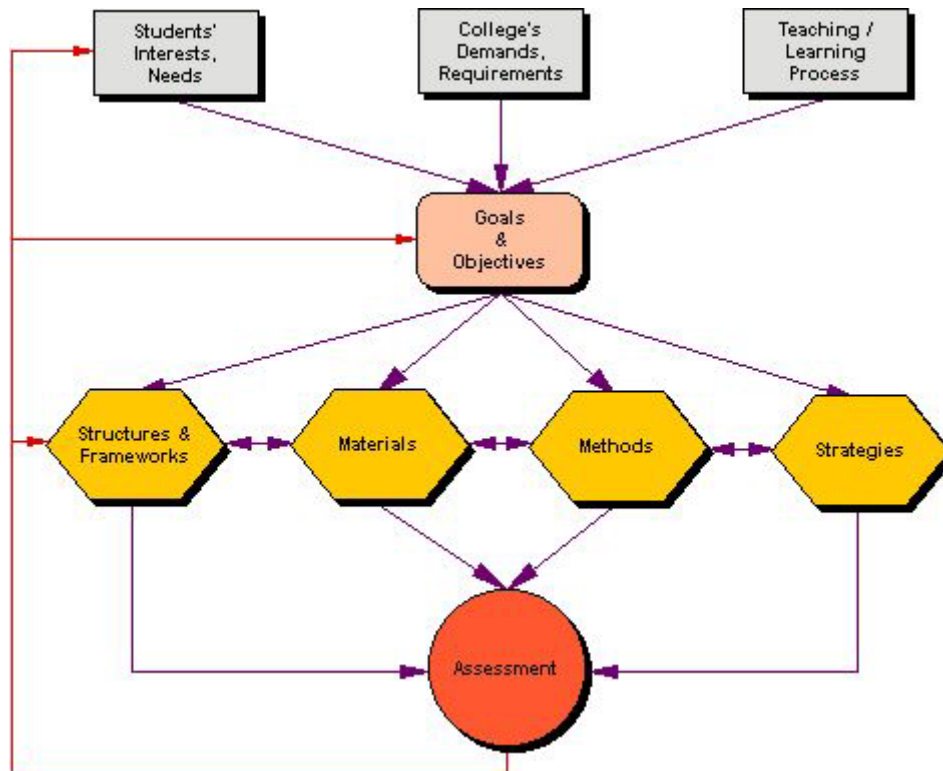
8. **Benchmarks for Success/Outcomes**

Each student must submit a portfolio assessing his or her growth in academic, personal and social development. Students become responsible for their own learning.

9. **Summer Bridge Program**

Summer programs that promote both academic and personal development are an essential element through which the other transportable elements may be combined.

Graphic Representation of the Curriculum Model



M. Sobelman and M. Bell, 1977
(Redesigned 2001 with *Inspiration 6*)

DEP I Curriculum Model

	CURRICULUM MODEL STEPS	FACULTY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS
Year 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Statement of needs 2. Statement of goals 3. Processes and strategies identified 4. Themes selected 5. Texts reviewed 6. Units planned 7. Summer program planned 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Opening faculty development retreat 2. Bi-weekly meeting with focus groups on needs and goals 3. Discussions with Brooklyn College's core faculty 4. Mid-year retreat 5. Consultants on multiculturalism, inquiry methods, writing, curriculum development process 6. Curriculum teams formed 7. Year-end retreat
Year 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students enrolled in block programs 2. Critical inquiry summer course implemented 3. Theme-centered courses, inquiry method, multicultural and core materials 4. Class projects and trips 5. Improved tutoring 6. Study groups 7. Second semester courses begin 8. Counseling interventions 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Opening retreat 2. Bi-weekly team meeting 3. Demonstration classes 4. Readers response groups 5. Assessment of progress 6. Mid-year retreat – setting of 2nd semester goals 7. Bi-weekly meeting 8. Consultants on counseling, motivation, ESL 9. New course development 10. Year-end retreat
Year	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Year 2's students enter 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Opening meetings

3

mainstream

2. New students enrolled in blocks
3. Tutor training
4. Study groups
5. New science sequence planned
6. Special courses for 2nd semester planned and implemented

2. Curriculum revisions
3. Bi-weekly team meeting
4. Readers response groups
5. Problem solving sessions
6. Mid-year retreat
7. CUNY/SEEK dissemination
8. Regional visitors program
9. Retreat with core faculty
10. End term retreat

Continuing Steps in Building the Program

1. Continue biweekly meetings
2. Evaluate the summer program
3. Set an agenda of on-going concerns:
 - a. critical inquiry
 - b. other transportable elements
 - c. materials and text
4. Reader's response groups
5. Review curriculum
6. Critical inquiry in the academic year – developmental, compensatory, mainstream
7. Demonstration classes
8. On-going data collection

Assessment Tools

It is important to assess your program using the following tools for evaluating outcomes:

1. Student Self-Assessment – Benchmarks for Success
2. Faculty and Tutor Questionnaires (download a copy of the faculty survey)
3. Student Growth – For Control and Experimental Groups
 - a. Student basic skills scores - pre/post
 - b. Student retention: 1 semester - 1 year
 - c. Student grades in first core or general education course after exiting from program

Lessons Learned

Formative evaluation has been an integral part of Brooklyn College and DEP's success. Data, recommendations, and new developments have created a path leading to collaborative commitments and greater student outcomes. Six years of analysis are included as nine lessons for adopting institutions to consider:

1. All colleges do not move at the same pace. Successful implementation varied with the amount of control and stability they were able to find on their home campuses. Campuses in flux or turmoil experienced the most difficulty in getting projects started.
2. Projects work best in environments where project directors have established relationships with key faculty across the campus. Much of the dissemination project involves the project coordinator and faculty understanding general education requirements and relating to the liberal arts faculty in a broad range of disciplines. Directors who have good relations in key general education departments have had an easier time implementing new curricula.
3. Community colleges have had the most difficulty in initiating projects. This may stem largely from the fact that community college opportunity programs or student affairs programs are more isolated from the academic mainstream and have smaller staffs with which to work.
4. Having a core curriculum like Brooklyn College's is not a necessity for a DEP III dissemination college. What is necessary is a clear set of specific target courses. Large course distribution menus must be limited to a reasonable number of appropriate courses in order for the planning to work. Faculty need to know exactly what courses students will be programmed for in subsequent semesters in order to plan their pre-general education or pre-core critical inquiry experiences.
5. Faculty training and participation in the development of curriculum are essential. Faculty must experience the critical inquiry methodology and then work with it over a period of time in order to be invested in the curriculum development process.
6. The faculty development aspect of the model is exceptionally important and must be ongoing.
7. Other campuses cannot and should not attempt to simply import the Brooklyn College curriculum in toto; they must develop their own and shape it to the particular requirements of their institutions and the needs of their students.
8. The critical inquiry methodology that is at the head of this project is confused with "critical thinking." Critical inquiry is not the same as verbal logic. It is instead a series of strategies that enable students to ask questions and control their own text-based learning.
9. The methodology of using hubs or regional centers is one that works. It facilitates training in which several schools work together. Where the faculty were not already familiar with one another more time had to be taken to build a community of scholars in order to get the hubs functioning. Schools and colleges in each region need to be compatible.

A summary of results from FIPSE I and II:

1. A model curriculum for developmental education can be effective in providing best practices in remediation.
2. A model curriculum process involving faculty participation in the curriculum process can be developed. This process model is important and is transportable.
3. In order to prepare students for the Brooklyn College Core Curriculum, an integrated curriculum was developed.
4. Developing a model of the curriculum process that links developmental education to general education works well.
5. Using administrators and faculty from across the disciplines increased the College's commitment to the project.
6. To begin the process of curriculum development, large, group brainstorming retreats should be organized to lead to bi-weekly faculty meetings that focus on the specific strands of the FIPSE project: multiculturalism, critical inquiry and the core curriculum.
7. Using tutors as role models in the classroom is essential. Peer tutoring benefits both the students in remediation and the tutors themselves.
8. When students learn critical inquiry strategies, they begin to take control and responsibility for their own learning.
9. It is important for any new curriculum to reflect the culture, educational goals and requirements of the College community.
10. Curriculum change can generate creativity, innovation and enthusiasm.
11. Regular reflection, *i.e.*, essays, lists, questions, summaries, etc., help generate plans for further development and innovation.
12. Student reflection of what they need, where they've come from, what they've learned, helps to focus their attention on their accomplishments and help faculty adjust curriculum.
13. Programs need to connect to the culture of the College/general education/core courses.
14. Programs should connect to the students' experiences, ideals and values.
15. A multicultural curriculum can be enriching.
16. Block scheduling beyond DEP: study groups, networking.
17. Campus tours for entering students generate a sense of ownership and a connection to the institution.
18. The essential elements of curricula planning are:
 - a. small group classes
 - b. block programming
 - c. critical inquiry methodology
 - d. authentic materials
 - e. materials that connect with exams of the College

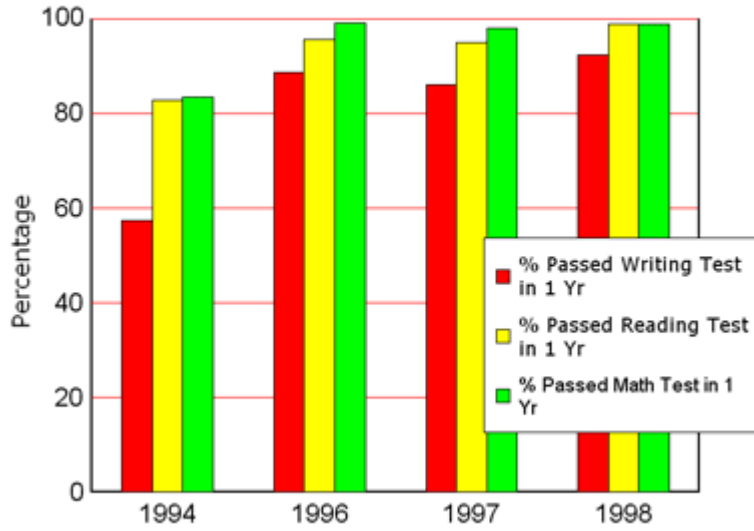
- f. summer program with intensive work and very high standards setting the tone
19. The essential elements of faculty development are:
- a. pride in participation
 - b. equality between full-time and part-time faculty
 - c. involvement of senior college administration and mainstream faculty
 - d. targeted work sessions
 - e. faculty commitment to renewal – to try new strategies and new materials

Data

Results from the first- and second-year classes in the Developmental Education Program

	Pre-DEP	DEP I	DEP II	DEP III	
Students	1994	1996	1997	1998	2000
% Passed Writing Test in 1 Year	57.3%	88.7%	86%	92.3%	95.6%
% Passed Reading Test in 1 Year	82.8%	95.6%	95%	98.8%	97.5%
% Passed Math Test in 1 Year	83.5%	99%	98%	98.8%	97.8%
% Retained after 1 Year	76.4%	80.5%	79.3%	78.6%	86%
% Passed Core Courses in 1st Year after DEP	72.2%	86%	81%	93.1%	86%

Brooklyn College Basic Skills Results



SEEK Student Pass Rates for Brooklyn College Core Courses



For questions or further information about the Brooklyn College DEP FIPSE project, e-mail Dr. Martha J. Bell.

Participants in FIPSE Dissemination Project

The following institutions are participating in the Brooklyn College SEEK Department DEP III FIPSE Project:

The City University of New York (CUNY)

- John Jay College - SEEK Department
Contact: Dr. Chevy Alford
- Kingsborough Community College - College Discovery (Bilingual)
Contact: Dr. Diego Colon
- Medgar Evers College - SEEK Department
Contact: Prof. Janice Zummo
- Queens College - SEEK Program
Contact: Frank Franklin

The State University of New York (SUNY)

- University of Buffalo
Contact: Dr. Henry Durand
- SUNY at Geneseo
Contact: Isom Fearn
- Monroe Community College
Contact: Ethel Lewis
- SUNY at Old Westbury
Contact: Alonso McCullum
- Fashion Institute of Technology
Contact: Taur Orange
- SUNY at Oswego
Contact: Dr. Rolando Arroyo-Sucre

Additional Institutions

- Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis at Indianapolis, IN
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Previous Participants

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