



UNTOOLD BARRIERS

FOR BLACK
STUDENTS
IN HIGHER
EDUCATION:

PLACING RACE AT
THE CENTER OF
DEVELOPMENTAL
EDUCATION

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In our pursuit to advance creative and promising initiatives that enhance institutional practices and student outcomes, the Southern Education Foundation's Minority-Serving Institution (MSI) Consortium for Innovation and Change focused their attention on significant barriers to completion in higher education for Black students. This mission is aligned with SEF's broader commitment to identifying best practices and proven interventions that may better assist low-income students and students of color. This report specifically addresses developmental education (also known as remedial education) approaches that serve as major barriers and, conversely, opportunities for success that are often overlooked and disproportionately affect Black students who gain access to higher education.

In a utopia where all students have equal access to education, resources, and high quality teaching, developmental education (DE) would be unnecessary. However, this ideal state has yet to be achieved. There is considerable evidence that the educational trajectory of Black students is hindered by structural issues largely outside of their control, issues that include inadequate funding and all the circumstances associated with it, such as aging facilities, limited academic and non-academic support, large class sizes, and a limited pool of teachers equipped to address the unique challenges often confronted by under-resourced students. Upon their admittance into college, many of these students encounter a continuation of the educational pipeline that mirrors the barriers they faced during their P-12 experiences. If students experience the same conditions within their developmental education courses, how much different can we expect their outcomes to be? If stakeholders wish to support members of these communities, who are routinely shortchanged when it comes to education, they have an obligation to serve well the students most often supported

by developmental education programs. This publication offers recommendations to accomplish this goal.

Students' inability to adequately perform on the collegiate level is not the result of developmental education, but rather a symptom of systematic neglect. On the contrary, developmental education occupies a space where it can serve as a significant solution for students who may need extra assistance academically. Hence, DE cannot be viewed primarily as a costly expenditure, but should instead be seen as a long-term investment to meet the nation's goal of increasing college completion rates across all communities. Therefore, stakeholders should prioritize ensuring the quality and efficiency of DE rather than being hyper-focused on its cost alone.

Ultimately, the quality of DE is of critical importance for Black students. This report is not an indictment of DE and those who serve as instructors, nor is it one of P-12 teachers and leaders. Its primary focus is to draw light to the systemic issues many Black students face within the education pipeline. This report argues that many of the Black students who require DE have experienced a P-12 education that left them deficient in some areas. In order for Black students who require DE to succeed and persist to graduation, their time in DE cannot mirror that of their previous education experiences. Although the quality of DE does require some funds for resources, such as proper assessment tools, supporting DE instructors, and providing a number of options based on the student's level of academic preparedness, the quality of education—especially for Black students—does not solely rest on funding. A high-quality developmental education program for Black students can also be supplemented through providing culturally relevant topics within the curriculum, communicating a willingness to be flexible, and displaying a belief that students are intelligent and possess the ability to succeed. This report details recommendations for curriculum development and administration of developmental education programs where students of color are most likely to be served, and it ultimately has implications for all institutions of higher learning.



INTRODUCTION

For far too many years, the United States has been characterized by a narrative that describes two Americas: one Black, one White; one rich, one poor. In essence, America is a place where individuals have access to opportunities based on their race and/or socioeconomic status, which undoubtedly leads to dissimilar life experiences. In policy discussions, the term “pipeline” is often used to refer to the transitions made by different groups of individuals as they navigate our society’s core systems (schools, higher education, criminal justice, etc.). The school-to-prison pipeline is an all-too-familiar story, a seemingly inescapable trajectory for low-income students and students of color who attend schools with the least resources, and who receive the least exposure to “academically rigorous” courses that adequately prepare them for college. The insufficiencies of the educational system have created significant barriers to success, and has locked many into what has been characterized as second-class educational environments that neglect their core needs (NAACP, 2005).

A less familiar story is one that details how many Black students have fared in higher education. Data has shown that only 9% of Black students attend top public research universities, while 40% and 51% of Black students attend four-year regional colleges and community/technical colleges, respectively (Baylor, 2016). Blacks are also overrepresented at community colleges in 44 states (Baylor, 2016). Unfortunately, many low-income students and students of color who successfully graduate from the P-12 system begin their academic journeys in what some would characterize as the least desirable college track: developmental education.

Developmental education (DE), also known as remedial education, are courses designed for students who have not met certain standardized test and placement scores set by institutional and/or state policies. DE is pre-college courses intended to prepare students for entry into college-level classes. More than half of Black students (56%) are faced with the conundrum of the same colleges that granted them admission labeling them as “unprepared” for college-level instruction (Jones & Assalone, 2016). Once developmental education curriculum is deemed necessary, students are expected to pay for a series of DE courses—as many as two or three depending on the institution

and placement—that cost the same as any other college-level course. Yet, unlike typical college-level courses, DE courses are not credit-bearing. Students are thereby required to enroll in and pay for courses that do not count toward the completion of their degree, which can further contribute to the financial challenges many students face in higher education (Jones & Assalone, 2016).

Unfortunately, many low-income students and students of color who successfully graduate from the P-12 system begin their academic journeys in what some would characterize as the least desirable college track: developmental education.

Additional barriers are found within the courses themselves as well as in the outcomes achieved by enrolled students. Inexperienced personnel often serve as instructors for students who are required to take DE. This may lead to poor student outcomes once they transition

to college-level courses. Research shows that less than half of all students pass developmental education courses and successfully move on to college-level courses that count toward a degree (Radford & Horn, 2012). Among those who do pass, many do not successfully complete the entry-level courses that follow (Radford & Horn, 2012).

be found detailing how developmental education helps increase Black student enrollment at predominantly White institutions (Marbley et al., 2013). Despite researchers' acknowledgement of the over-population of Black students in DE and their recommendations, the fact remains that Black students continue to be overrepresented in DE and reforms have

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Scholars have tracked the overrepresentation of Black students in developmental education (Attewell, Domina, & Levey, 2006; Complete College America, 2016; Hoffman & Lowitzki, 2005; Melguizo, Hagedorn, & Cypers, 2008). However, far too little is known about Black students who are required to take DE. Davis and Palmer (2010) conducted a review of the research that examines the role of DE in higher education and how it may affect Black students. Other scholars have studied Black males who have enrolled in DE (Palmer & Davis, 2012; Palmer, Davis, & Maramba, 2010) and Blacks in developmental education mathematics (Bahr, 2010; Larnell, 2016). Research can also

yet to make a true impact on this particular demographic.

Although DE is a higher education issue that affects students from all racial and ethnic backgrounds, Black and Latina/o students are impacted the most: 56% of Black students and 45% of Latina/os require some form of DE (Complete College America, 2016). Enrolling in DE can delay or disrupt college completion, which, given the high percentage of Black and Latino students enrolled in DE, contributes to racial gaps in college completion. However, scholars and researchers have given inadequate attention to the overrepresentation of Blacks and Latina/os while addressing developmental

education as a whole. However, as the United States strives to raise these groups' college graduation rates, more attention must focus on DE and its impact on the experiences and educational outcomes of students of color.

Given that most literature provides statistical information on Black students in DE, this report will address the overrepresentation of Black students in DE and their subsequent academic

outcomes. It also provides a landscape of Black students in DE and describes strategies implemented by Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) to better address the needs of Black students. Lastly, we provide recommendations for policymakers, funders, and institutions of higher education on strategies they should consider when addressing developmental education in the future.





PIPELINE TO DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION

College access for Black Students in the United States has increased from 11.7% to 14.5% from 2000 to 2014 (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). Part of the increase can be attributed to DE for serving as a conduit to college for many Black students (Attewell et al., 2006). However, the racial gap between Black and White students who complete college is still significantly and unacceptably large (Camera, 2015). The historical context in which Blacks have received little support for formal education (Jackson, 2007) greatly contributes to this racial divide. In predominantly Black K-12 school settings, present-day problems include weak college preparatory

curricula, low advanced placement exam passing rates, ineffective and insufficient guidance counselor services, unqualified teachers, minimal and outdated school materials, and inadequate school facilities (Kozol, 2005). These same Black students also face racial discrimination that affects their educational progress (Jackson, 2007).

Scholars have shown that institutional or systemic racism is often embedded in many public policies, which have a negative impact on the educational out-

Standardized tests, such as the SAT and ACT, are not the only high-stakes testing that contributes to the overrepresentation of Black students in DE. One must also consider placement testing.

comes of Black students (Harper, Patton, & Wooden, 2009). Institutional structures such as the SAT, ACT, and state tests, where historically Black students have not performed as well as their White counterparts, hinder college preparation and college access (Darling-Hammond,

2000). Although research suggests that standardized tests are weak measures of academic success, colleges and universities continue to use these measures to determine college admission and whether a student should be placed in DE (Hoffman & Lowitzki, 2005).

Unfortunately, public policy and high stakes testing do not adequately address equity issues in education. To the contrary, they exert pressure on students and institutions to succeed with less support and fewer resources (Haney & Hurtado, 1994). When policymakers focus exclusively on high standards and assessment, it often comes at the expense of providing access to high-quality education taught by competent and caring teachers who have high expectations for students who underachieve (Jones, 2002).

Standardized tests, such as the SAT and ACT, are not the only high-stakes testing that contributes to the overrepresentation of Black students in DE. One must also consider placement testing. According to Bettinger and Long (2005), “Placement tests consist of a variety of sections that measure students’ skill levels in certain subject areas” (p. 20). Typically, institutions of higher education designate a hard cutoff score, and students who score below the established marker are assigned to DE courses

(Bettinger & Long, 2005). Essentially, students have one opportunity to determine their trajectory within the higher education pipeline, and these tests do not take into consideration students' ability to take tests or the stressors that come with taking an exam of such magnitude. Research suggests that a broader achievement from kindergarten through high school, which carries forward into college (Bahr, 2010). While it would be ideal to eliminate the need for DE, the fact remains that all students do not receive a fair and equitable education before enrolling in college. Indeed, as the research makes clear, a disproportionate

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look at an individual's high school profile, which is inclusive of both their academic and extracurricular accomplishments, may be a more accurate predictor of success for both Math and English than exam scores alone. High school grades capture a wider range of cognitive skills than an evaluation of a brief placement exam, and they incorporate non-cognitive factors such as student motivation (Scott-Clayton, 2012). As such, it is questionable to use placement tests as the sole determinant of college access (Scott-Clayton, 2012).

The path to DE does not begin in higher education, but is a bi-product of a number of factors students face before entering the higher education system. Many Black students have low

number of Black students complete high school "underprepared" for college-level courses as a result of inequitable P-12 educational opportunities. Consequently, any move to completely eliminate DE would negatively affect access to higher education for a larger proportion of Black students than it would White students (Bettinger & Long, 2007). Thus, while higher education cannot solve all the issues facing students before they enroll, they can be more effective once the student is accepted. This begins by addressing the overrepresentation and inequitable outcomes of Black and Latina/o students in DE.



WHO IS IN DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION?

Data show that more than half of all first-time students enroll in DE at two-year colleges. At two-year institutions, more than 70% of Black students enroll in at least one DE course. At four-year institutions, Black students are almost twice as likely to enroll in DE than all students combined. Additionally, Black students are more likely to need DE courses in both Math and English (Zaback, Carlson, Laderman, & Mann, 2016). In comparison to other racial/ethnic groups, and even Pell-eligible

students, Black students are more likely to be required to complete DE at both the two- and four-year institutions (see Figures 1 and 2).

Figure 1

First -Time Student Enrollment in DE At Two-year Institutions									
	All	Female	Male	Pell	Asian	Black	Latino	White	Non-Pell
Math	26%	28%	22%	27%	17%	20%	25%	27%	23%
English	8%	7%	9%	8%	13%	12%	9%	7%	7%
Math & English	25%	27%	24%	33%	22%	39%	30%	20%	18%
Any DE	58%	62%	54%	68%	53%	71%	63%	53%	49%

Data provided to SEF from Complete College America in July 2016. Data includes Median for all states reporting data to CCA in 2014 and represents Full-time and Part-time students who started in Fall 2010.

Figure 2

First -Time Student Enrollment in DE At Four-Year Institutions									
	All	Female	Male	Pell	Asian	Black	Latino	White	Non-Pell
Math	18%	19%	14%	22%	11%	24%	20%	15%	15%
English	5%	4%	5%	5%	8%	8%	7%	4%	4%
Math & English	8%	8%	7%	12%	6%	19%	12%	5%	4%
Any DE	30%	31%	26%	40%	26%	51%	39%	23%	22%

Data provided to SEF from Complete College America in July 2016. Data includes Median for all states reporting data to CCA in 2014 and represents Full-time and Part-time students who started in Fall 2010.



WHO TEACHES DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION?

Although Black students comprise a large percentage of students who enroll in DE, the same cannot be said for those providing developmental education instruction. Non-tenure track faculty or instructors are largely composed of White women (44%) and White men (34%). Black college instructors make up only 5% of women and 3% of men in the profession (U.S. Department of Education, 2014). While DE faculty positions vary by institution, they are largely composed of non-tenure track

faculty, adjunct faculty, and/or part-time faculty. Prior research suggests that the lack of faculty of color is not beneficial to the success of Black students. Often, faculty of color offer a broader range of pedagogical techniques and have more

three-quarters of the instructors are part-time employees who typically work at multiple institutions and are less likely to have office hours, or even an office (Kolodner, 2016). However, DE instructors need an office and consistent

Unfortunately, higher education institutions do not always have the proper tools or personnel to work effectively with students of color in DE, and one could argue that DE instructors are asked to yield the highest returns with the least investment.

frequent interactions with students than their White counterparts (Umbach, 2006). Also, diversity among faculty can lead to an increased use of effective educational practices, such as utilizing culturally responsive pedagogy (Umbach, 2006).

Unfortunately, higher education institutions do not always have the proper tools or personnel to work effectively with students of color in DE, and one could argue that DE instructors are asked to yield the highest returns with the least investment. In many cases, professors and developmental education instructors have little to no training on how to teach (Kolodner, 2016). Typically, there is no requirement for teaching experience; all that is needed is a master's degree (Kolodner, 2016). Approximately

office hours to offer private assistance or answer questions for the very students who would most benefit from such one-on-one time. These instructors often have the least amount of support on campus and are more likely to lack access to professional development and on-campus resources. As a result of an unstable work environment and wages that lack parity with their faculty counterparts (Jones & Assalone, 2016), there is a higher turnover among DE faculty (Bickerstaff & Cormier, 2015; Boyer, Butner, & Smith, 2007).



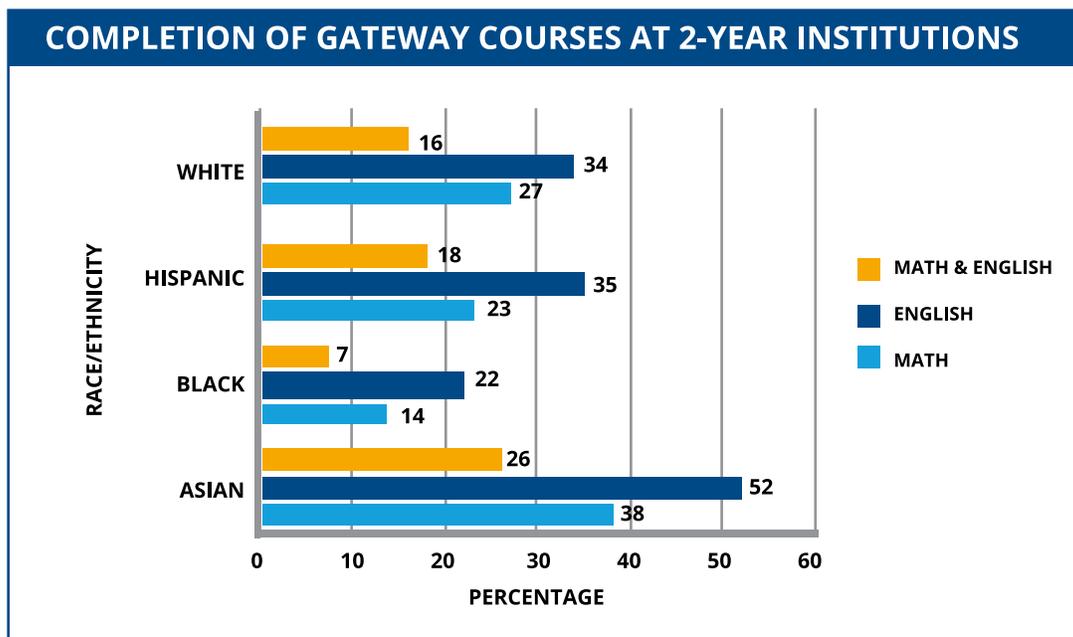
OUTCOMES FOR BLACK STUDENTS IN DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION

Gateway courses are the first credit-bearing courses for students who are required to take developmental education courses. The success of students who begin in DE and continue to a gateway course is extremely low. Only 20% of students who enroll in a developmental mathematics class actually enroll in a gateway class, and only 37% of students in a developmental English course move forward. Among the many Black students who require developmental education, very few go on to complete gateway courses within two years. Because DE courses do not count towards a

students' degree or number of credit hours earned, the goal for students is to enroll and complete requisite gateway courses. Therefore, it is imperative for students to complete gateway courses quickly after entering secondary education, since these courses often serve as prerequisite requirements for other classes required for a degree (Zaback et al., 2016).

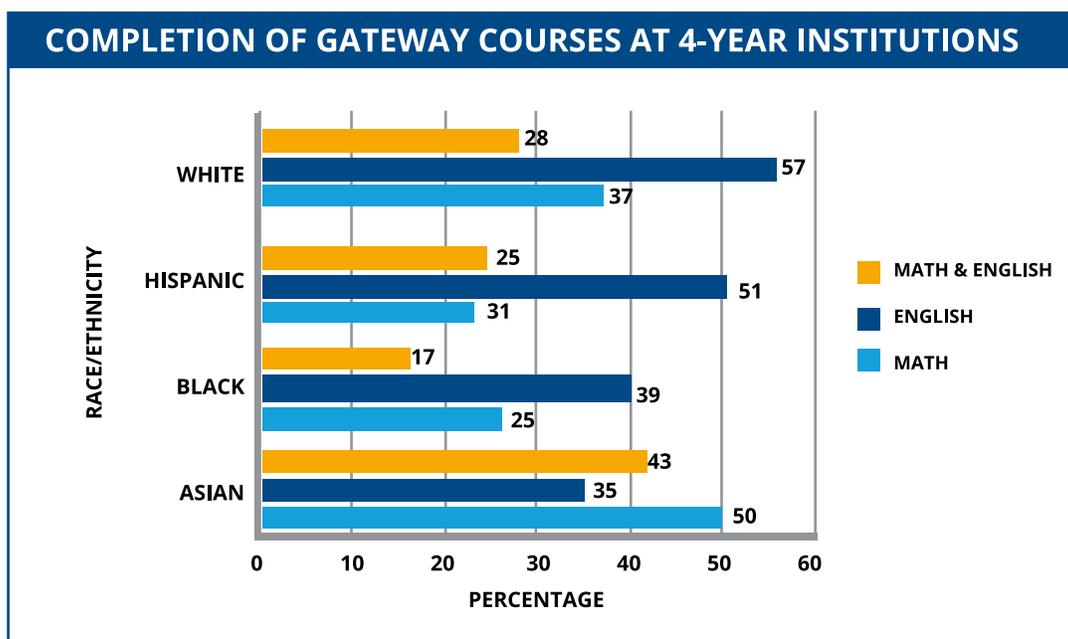
At two-year institutions, only 7% of Black students complete both Math and English gateway courses after completing their developmental education courses. Of the Black students who are only required to take English, 22% complete the gateway course, while only 14% of Blacks who are required to take DE Math complete the gateway course. For Black students who are required to take both Math and English DE, only 17% complete the gateway courses. Of the Black students who are required to take English, 39% complete the gateway course while 25% of Blacks who are required to take only Math complete the gateway course. To show how Black students fare in comparison to all racial groups, Figures 3 and 4 provide comprehensive outcomes of gateway courses across all racial groups. They also show that Blacks at four-year institutions tend to complete gateway courses at a higher percentage than those at two-year institutions.

Figure 3



Data provided to SEF from Complete College America in July 2016. Data includes Median for all states reporting data to CCA in 2014 and represents Full-time and Part-time students who started in Fall 2010.

Figure 4



Data provided to SEF from Complete College America in July 2016. Data includes Median for all states reporting data to CCA in 2014 and represents Full-time and Part-time students who started in Fall 2010.

It is important to note two observations from the outcomes of Black students in gateway courses. First, if students do not complete these courses, they cannot move on, which adds to the time it takes for such students to earn their degree. Second, Black students who are required to take DE have better outcomes at the four-year

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institutions, as well as other ethnic and racial groups represented. With more positive outcomes from the four-year institutions, policymakers should exercise caution when considering removing DE from all four-year institutions. The more positive

outcomes at four-year institutions may be attributed to the fact that Black students who attend two-year institutions are more likely to be placed in DE courses when they are moderately or highly prepared for college level courses (NCES, 2013). Students who appear to be moderately or highly prepared may be placed in DE due to local policies or cutoff placement scores (Chen, 2016). Students at two-year institutions also tend to take more DE courses than their counterparts at four-year institutions, which also ultimately affects their overall outcome (Chen, 2016). Based on the data, it may behoove states to allow more four-year institutions to offer DE to increase the success rate in DE and ultimately increase graduation rates. However, there is no one true explanation for why students have better outcomes at four-year institutions than two-year institutions. There should be more research conducted to examine the difference in positive outcomes at both two-year and four-year institutions.



EXAMPLES OF DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION AT HBCUS

The Southern Education Foundation's (SEF) Minority-Serving Institution (MSI) Consortium for Innovation and Change sponsored a five-year project to advance creative and promising initiatives to enhance and accelerate developmental education. SEF partnered with six MSIs: two Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and four Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs). As this report focuses on Black students, we share examples from our partner HBCUs whose innovations in DE have proven to enhance the outcomes of Black students who require DE. The two institutions represent both the public and private sector of HBCUs in the southeastern part of the United States.

Morgan State University



Morgan State University (MSU) is a public four-year HBCU with a population of approximately 6,300 undergraduate students. More than 80% of its undergraduate student population identifies as Black or African American. MSU developed and implemented an integrated curriculum that would serve a group of nearly 60% of

first-year students who require DE. The state of Maryland allows all institutions of higher education to address DE at their own discretion. Each campus has its own standards for placing students in DE and may use a variety of tools to determine college readiness. With such liberties, MSU’s Arts and Humanities department collaborated to integrate DE curricula in reading, English, and college-level history courses to enhance student learning and outcomes in all three courses.

Faculty members took part in the project, and they developed integrated course syllabi and selected a textbook centered on the history curriculum. The chosen textbook takes an Afro-inclusive approach to history instruction that neither focused solely on nor ignored the experiences and contributions of the African diaspora in world history. Faculty chose the textbook for the new integrated course in order to support positive academic identity development for the majority of their African American student population, which has the potential to develop confidence and self-efficacy among the African American students who are required to take the course.

Morgan State examined the impact of the revised integrated curriculum on the 102 students who participated in the pilot. In order to determine its effect, an experimental group received the integrated curriculum and a control group remained in traditional DE courses, where instructors were not connected to other departments in the arts and humanities. Students who participated in the project took pre-, mid-, and post-tests throughout the semester to gauge their progress.

Figure 5

MORGAN STATE’S INTEGRATED ENGLISH AND HISTORY		
	Groups	Average Test Scores
Pre-Test	Experimental	77.59%
	Control	80.26%
Mid-Test	Experimental	63.59%
	Control	75.50%
Post-Test	Experimental	78.29%
	Control	84.57%
Final Test	Experimental	74.57%
	Control	83.58%

Figure 6

MORGAN STATE'S INTEGRATED HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENTAL READING		
	Groups	Average Test Scores
Pre-Test	Experimental	75.58%
	Control	80.00%
Mid-Test	Experimental	81.90%
	Control	85.23%
Post-Test	Experimental	82.02%
	Control	74.41%
Final Test	Experimental	82.58%
	Control	75.73%

Figure 7

MORGAN STATE'S INTEGRATED HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENTAL READING		
	Groups	Average Test Scores
Pre-Test	Experimental	64.7%
	Control	63.5%
Mid-Test	Experimental	66.2%
	Control	64.5%
Post-Test	Experimental	85.5%
	Control	78.9%
Final Test	Experimental	78.3%
	Control	73.8%

The findings from Figure 5 suggest that the integrated curriculum for English had no significant difference between traditional DE and the integrated curriculum in DE. However, the integrated curriculum in Figures 6 and 7 proved a significant difference in students' test scores compared to the students who took traditional DE for both developmental reading and history. In both instances, the integrated curriculum yielded higher test scores.

The results from the integrated curriculum are consistent with research conducted by Wolf and Brandt (1998), who determined that one of the best ways to develop problem-solving skills is through enriched environments that connect several

disciplines. The integrated approach is beneficial, as it allows students to develop skills in multiple classroom settings within the frame of a content area. The integrated curriculum approach can result in greater intellectual curiosity, improved attitudes towards schooling, enhanced problem-solving skills, and higher achievement in coursework (Austin, Hirstein, & Wale, 1997; Kain, 1993). Instructors participating in the project described comments they heard in class, noting that some students found the classes easier to follow and understand. Students were heard saying things such as, “I had this in developmental reading,” or “I had this in History and now I am going to write about it in my English class.” The integrated approach allowed students to see the connection between reading, writing, and critical thinking.

Clafin University



In 1995, South Carolina decided to eliminate developmental courses from four-year institutions. In response, Clafin University, a private four-year HBCU, began to place students who were identified as needing DE into extended English courses. These extended courses, also known as co-requisites, were established for developmental English and Math post-ban, and met three days per week with an additional two days for more instruction. Between 2012 and 2015, Clafin enrolled approximately 1,504 new incoming students, of which 1,416 (94%) were Black. It was determined that approximately 1,306 students were in need of further assistance in English, and 1,081 needed further assistance in Math. During the additional two days, Clafin assigned students to attend a writing center with peer tutors and a Math lab in conjunction with the extended English and Math courses.

Over the four-year period, 25% of the students who required DE were placed in the extended English course with mandatory attendance at the writing center, and 29% were placed in the extended Math course with lab assistance. The remaining students who were in need of further assistance were required to take entry college Math and English that did not include the writing center or Math lab emphasis. At the

writing center and Math lab, students in the extended courses received individualized assistance from a group of peer tutors. It was revealed that students from both groups received multiple interventions (e.g., out-of-class assistance from the teacher). The instructors developed the multiple interventions because of the disparities in students' level of college preparation. On the other hand, the tutors in the writing center and Math lab worked based on their availability, and were not required to sit in the classroom during instructional time. This caused some inconsistency in the English courses between the instructor and the tutor, prompting students to stop going to the writing center when their grades did not reflect the work done there. As a result, students met with the faculty for tutoring. (Since making this discovery, Claflin has mandated that peer tutors sit in on the class during instruction time and work with the faculty.)

The outcomes suggest that Black students who participated in the extended courses were successful, as indicated by passing rates above 81% for English. The higher passing rate for the control groups was due to the tutor-faculty inconsistency and the fact that both groups received some form of intervention. The outcomes for Math suggest that students in the program group were much more successful, with a passing rate of 75% in comparison to the control group at 41%. Based on an exit survey completed by students, both the program and control group indicated that there is no effect on whether students persist to the second year in both English and Math.

Figure 8

CLAFLIN UNIVERSITY'S EXTENDED ENGLISH COURSE		
	Passing Rate	Persistence
Program Group	81.2%	48.6%
Control group	87.1%	56.8%

Figure 9

CLAFLIN UNIVERSITY'S EXTENDED MATH COURSE		
	Passing Rate	Persistence
Program Group	74.9%	48.5%
Control group	40.7%	60.3%



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

1. Fund and support Developmental Education innovation and improvement at HBCUs
2. Ensure that policies support multiple methods of Developmental Education
3. Ensure that the curriculum offers culturally responsive pedagogy
4. Students must have the support and encouragement of faculty and staff, and faculty and staff must have support and resources from the institution

CONSIDERATIONS FOR DE POLICYMAKERS & FUNDERS



FUND AND SUPPORT DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION INNOVATION AND IMPROVEMENT AT HBCUS

HBCUs have a willingness to give “underprepared” students a chance that other institutions might not offer, and many place an emphasis on developing these students’ basic skills (Jones & Richards-Smith, 1987). The mission at HBCUs enables them to provide “academic remediation, environmental support, and cultural relevance that appears to minimize the effect of differential pre-college preparation” (Brown & Davis, 2001, p. 44). HBCUs are situated to provide effective DE courses that enable students to persevere after being labeled “underprepared,” thus helping them obtain degrees and eventually enter the workforce (Davis, 1998). Based on the historic role HBCUs have played and continue to play in providing an education for Black college students who are in need of extra academic assistance, there is a need for funding to help HBCUs continue the work in support of students who require DE.

Taking into consideration HBCUs’ historic mission and success with working with “underprepared” students, it is imperative that policymakers do not restrict the delivery of DE solely to two-year institutions. HBCUs and MSIs serve as a better pipeline for students of color who require DE to succeed, as opposed to two-year institutions (Bustillos, 2012; Palmer & Davis, 2012; Palmer & Davis, 2010). Moreover, DE is a necessity for many students attending MSIs. Policies that restrict DE to two-year institutions exclusively will only hinder them rather than promote student access and success.

On average, 70% of students who attend MSIs require at least one course in remedial education (Bustillos, 2012; Li & Carroll, 2007). Delegating developmental

education to two-year colleges may cause enrollment to decrease at MSIs and HBCUs. More importantly, shifting where DE is offered could possibly take away the only opportunity for many Black students to obtain a degree. For example, students who are required to take one DE course may decline college altogether because of the already-existing stigma placed on attending two-year institutions, or some may even choose to attend college out-of-state (Smith, 2015). Black students in DE courses at two-year institutions tend to feel particularly ostracized about their placement, powerless about their futures, and unclear about how to meet their academic goals (Jenkins & Fink, 2016), which may cause negative outcomes for Black students who enroll in DE courses at two-year institutions. College admission policies in states that have delegated DE to two-year institutions are designed under the false assumption that the community colleges already have a thriving transfer system and general education courses to guide these students into the four-year institutions upon completion (Smith, 2015). However, students who require DE are more likely to complete their gateway courses at four-year institutions rather than two-year institutions. Indeed, although 81% of students who enter community colleges indicate a desire to earn a bachelor's degree or higher, only 33% of these students actually transfer to a four-year institution within six years (Horn & Skomsvold, 2011; Jenkins & Fink, 2016).

ENSURE THAT POLICIES ARE MEETING THE NEEDS OF ALL STUDENTS

Policymakers and institutions must be cautious when determining how to address DE in more efficient and effective ways. Although states and institutions are looking for ways to accelerate the rate at which students complete the developmental education process, it is counterproductive if it comes at the expense of quality education or the needs of the student. At the same time, however, it is challenging to scale one successful approach to DE when the institution and needs of the students differ. When it comes to offering DE courses, students are often placed in the same class despite their level of preparedness. However, Boatman and Long (2010) discovered that DE might help or hinder students differently depending on their level of academic preparedness. Hence, states and schools should not treat DE as a singular policy, but should instead consider it as an intervention that varies in impact

according to students' needs (Boatman & Long, 2010).

From this study, we learned about students' various levels within DE, and it turns out that one size does not fit all. Delegating DE to one approach can be ineffective and even harmful due to the various levels of student preparedness. For example, an instructor from Claflin categorized the students into three academic levels: severely underprepared, moderately underprepared, and slightly underprepared. Some students read on a middle-school level (severely), while other students were only weak in one or two areas (moderately), and others were reading at a high-school level (slightly). When scaling for developmental education courses, it may better suit the institution and the student if there is a determined level for the student's preparedness. There are also more accelerated models such as co-requisites that work for students who are on the border of the cut-off scores in placement tests¹. Other students who may be a little further behind may need additional academic support, such as tutoring and/or a developmental writing or Math center. This is why it is important to offer multiple developmental course options that are sensitive to the variations in student needs most often found on college campuses. These options include such successful models as summer bridge programs, accelerated courses, integrated curricula, and co-requisite models (Jones & Assalone, 2016).

Of course, detecting variations in readiness is another challenge. The knowledge of what is best suited for students may come by way of improving the placement tests currently in use so that they provide better information on students' needs. Presently, these tests have proven to be poor indicators of college readiness. Among other things, they fail to assess other measurements (e.g., prior academic performance, non-cognitive factors that impact students' performance) that have a substantial effect on whether students will truly be successful in college (Saxon & Morante, 2014). Policymakers and institutions should consider the following approaches to addressing placement tests:

- (1) Modify placement tests to better diagnose students' skill levels. This will help meet the needs of students' assessments and improve faculty understanding of test results;

[1] The information we have gleaned from our interview data is that campus-based strategies that are in tune with the known variation in student need hold the most promise for success. At the same time, it is important to note that there is emerging evidence that co-requisite strategies are effective across a broad range of students, which is encouraging, especially for institutions that may find it difficult to institute multiple approaches in developmental education.

- (2) Use score ranges to determine placement, which allows for other student data to be taken into consideration to better inform the placement decision; and/or
- (3) Consider other measures of students' academic affective attributes; this will help advisors to more accurately determine the course level at which a student should begin (Saxon & Morante, 2014).

CONSIDERATIONS FOR INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

1 ENSURE THE CURRICULUM IS CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE

Culturally responsive pedagogy is defined as the academic development of students with a willingness to nurture and support their cultural competence (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Culturally responsive pedagogy helps increase the engagement and motivation of students of color who have historically been academically neglected and socially alienated in their schools (Vavrus, 2008). Culturally responsive pedagogy refers to teaching practices that attend to the specific cultural characteristics of underrepresented communities—or, for the purposes of this report, Black students in postsecondary settings. Cultural characteristics can include commonly thought-of concepts such as values, traditions, and language, but also extends to include concepts such as communication, learning styles, and relationship norms (Gay, 2002).

Assuming a culturally responsive approach at HBCUs is part of a historic legacy that continues to this day (Kynard & Eddy, 2009). Black students are taught to

appreciate their culture throughout the curriculum, whether it be in college-level or developmental education courses. For example, one of the English instructors at Claflin assigned her students to write about the Black Lives Matter movement in the wake of recent events involving police brutality. Another instructor at Morgan State spoke of her use of an Afro-inclusive approach in World History, which allowed her to delve deeper into the Black culture that existed in ancient Egypt. These topics made the learning process more accessible to Black students, and even provided a greater appreciation for the subject. Whether students are attending an HBCU, MSI, or Predominantly White Institution (PWI), instructors must take it upon themselves to incorporate culturally relevant topics within their curricula, even if it is through current events, or by allowing students to use their personal experiences to learn.

2 STUDENTS MUST HAVE THE SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT OF FACULTY AND STAFF; FACULTY AND STAFF MUST HAVE THE SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT OF THE INSTITUTION

Although innovative and creative ways to support students in developmental education is great for students and institutions, it is even more important for instructors of DE courses to support their students and have faith in their abilities to truly succeed. Instructors must reject a deficit-based perspective that suggests Black students—and particularly Black students in DE—cannot achieve. Instead, instructors must operate from a standpoint that recognizes student strengths and seeks to build on them (Howard, 2012). Through culturally responsive pedagogy, instructors recognize the rich and varied cultural wealth, knowledge, and skills that diverse students bring to schools, and seeks to develop dynamic teaching practices, multicultural context, multiple means of assessment, and a philosophical view of teaching that is dedicated to nurturing students' academic, social, emotional, cultural, psychological, and physiological well being (Howard, 2012, pg. 2).

During numerous campus visits and in-depth conversations, the SEF technical reviewer observed how impactful the instructors of developmental education were to these courses. It was apparent that instructors at both institutions believed their students could succeed, as exemplified by their interactions with students. For example, faculty at both Claflin and Morgan State reflected on how they would

provide additional instruction time to ensure students were grasping the information taught in class. Instructors were always accessible to their students; one instructor even provided her phone number and created a group-chat with her students via text messaging. Additionally, instructors were flexible, recognizing that life happens outside of the classroom. Some spoke of giving extensions on assignments, or reaching out to students who were absent from class. One instructor at Claflin even changed the format of class on Fridays based on students' attendance. Recognizing that their students played a significant role in their instruction allowed faculty members to build relationships and better support their students in the classroom.

The sad reality, however, is that many of the instructors in developmental education lack the support and resources needed to fully engage their students. It is imperative that instructors have the proper professional development to support students of color who are placed in DE, and the support cannot stop with professional development. The conditions faced by instructors on the institutional side must also improve. Providing more competitive compensation packages, more robust instructional materials, more updated and user-friendly textbooks, and adequate space and time to meet with students is vital to student success in DE. Institutions cannot expect DE instructors to adequately address the needs of their students when instructors are not supplied with the tools they need to ensure their students' success. Fortunately, faculty members working with Claflin and Morgan State on this developmental education project were provided such means of support.



CONCLUSIONS

Policies and institutions of higher education cannot take a colorblind approach to developmental education reform. The statistics are clear: developmental education is a serious barrier for students of color that cannot be ignored. In order to address the overrepresentation of Blacks in developmental education, race and class must be acknowledged as significant predictive factors of students' ultimate success in college settings. Simply placing all DE courses at community colleges does not solve the problem. In fact, conditions are not improving, with overall attendance increasing as matriculation and completion among Black students decrease at

four-year institutions (Casselmann, 2014). DE serves as an opportunity for many Blacks to gain admission into four-year institutions. Therefore, there are pertinent questions for stakeholders to consider as methods for developing developmental education are sought out:

1. How may current DE policies negatively affect students of color and institutions that serve these students?
2. How can policies better assist students of color who are required to complete DE?
3. What policies and practices can be implemented to decrease the enrollment of students of color in DE?

It is imperative to transition from a student deficit viewpoint to an asset-based approach in order to support students' authentic success. Far too often, the blame for the lack of success among Black students is not placed on inequities within the education system, but on Black students themselves. Students who are forced into developmental education are not there by choice; it is usually

In order to address the overrepresentation of Blacks in developmental education, race and class must be acknowledged as significant predictive factors of students' ultimate success in college settings.

a by-product of inequities that exist within the educational system. Statistics prove that the majority of the students in developmental education come from low-income areas and schools with high enrollment of students of color. These are often the schools with little to no resources and support, leaving students neglected and/or pushed through the system without gaining crucial information for college readiness or completion. The structural inequities only continue, as these students gain admission but are placed into developmental education courses with even less support and resources from the state and institutions of higher education. Stakeholders interested in reforming developmental education should consider:

1. How can we better support students who are on track to enter DE or who are already in DE (via financial resources, curriculum changes, policy changes, and encouragement)?
2. Are DE instructors receiving the proper resources and professional development that is required to help their students succeed?
3. What can be done to ensure the success of students once they enter gateway courses?
4. What other racial/ethnic groups are being affected by the current education system?

These questions have been provided to assist funders, policymakers, campus leaders, faculty members, and organizations as they continue to address issues surrounding DE. As the United States looks to increase its college completion rate and better address DE, the outcomes of Black students cannot be ignored. In order to improve the conditions for Blacks within DE, there has to be more than a mere acknowledgement of Black student overrepresentation in DE. An assortment of higher education advocates must coordinate and support those who are making an attempt to assist Black students in DE and beyond.



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