

PROSPECTUS

GATEWAY ACADEMIC PROGRAM--GAP

ALGEBRA, READING AND ENGLISH

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Washington, DC 20008

What is GAP?

GAP is a research-based program designed to reduce the need of remedial math, reading, and English courses for recent high school graduates who will be entering colleges and universities. Specifically, GAP serves those high school graduates whose performances on nationally based placement tests show they will have to enroll in remedial courses. Each program component uses a pre-post testing model with an instructional intervention designed to fill the identified gaps in the students' learning. Students are tested using the national *Accuplacer* college placement test before they enter the program and once again after completing the program. The program can save many students at least a year of remedial courses in a college. Students who have taken a particular GAP component began their freshman year with an academic success rather than a marginal or failing outcome. In short, GAP offers the prospect of increasing students' college graduation rates from a low percent of 12-15 percent to a high of 70-80 percent.

The GAP instructional process is designed to meet very specific and targeted performance objectives through carefully structured and sequenced tasks. Frequent testing is used to see if the students are mastering the academic tasks. Program content priority is on creating mastery of essentials. Academic tasks are carefully introduced (explained and illustrated), practiced, checked for understanding and re-explained, re-taught and re-practiced as necessary. Each session is taught with a sense of excitement and the conviction that students can and will successfully learn what is being taught. Classroom management strategies that are used allow students to experience success on a daily basis.

Successes of the Program Components

Math

- During summer 2008, 60% of the participating students (sample of 25) tested out of both remedial math courses (Basic Math and Introductory Algebra), thereby saving themselves at least one year of remedial math. Another 16% tested out of one remedial math courses (Basic Math), thereby saving themselves at least a semester of math remediation. Others showed a marked improvement in excess of 60% in their math and algebra skills.
- During summer 2007, 56% of the participating students (sample of 16) tested out of both remedial math courses. Another 31% tested out of one remedial math courses. Others showed a marked improvement in excess of 65% in their math and algebra skills.
- Similar results in terms of percents of success rates were achieved during summer 2006, but the sample size was only 12.

Reading and English

- During the summer 2008 pilot program, 36% of the students (sample of 11) tested out of both the remedial Reading (English 014) and English Fundamentals (English 015) courses based

on the scores of the *Accuplacer* and the program tests, thereby saving a year of remedial Reading and English. Another 18% tested out of the English Fundamentals remedial course, thereby saving a semester of remedial English. On the average, students' performance improved by 48% in Reading and by 18% on English.

We had a retention rate of 100% in both programs.

The Description of the Programs

The programs do not use any prescribed books for teaching. Rather, the teaching professors from the departments of math, English, physics, chemistry, sociology, and education use curriculum material developed or selected by themselves with the assistance of their colleagues. All sections cover the same material in the same amount of time. The concepts learned are constantly reinforced. The basic concepts and rules are drilled everyday to guarantee complete mastery by the students. Additionally, in the math program, calculators are not allowed throughout the program period.

The GAP programs are currently designed to operate during the summer months. The programs are structured for eight weeks, five days a week, from 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM, the morning sessions, and 2:00 PM- 6:00 PM, the afternoon sessions. Multiple sessions are organized to accommodate the needs of various departments/agencies/systems.

Management Tactics and Teaching Principles of the Programs

For academic learning to take place, the students' attention must be focused on the particular topic or task to be learned. So, the first task is to gain every student's attention—and keep it. Another point is to find out what they do and do not know (the gaps), and then start there. As a result, we start where the students are. Another point is that we find our students gradually sharing in our unflagging love for, enthusiasm with and excitement about our respective disciplines. All of these add up to igniting the spark that fire student academic learning and teacher success.

Examples of Management Tactics

The “No’s” of the tactics in the classroom: use of cell phones, “spontaneous” trips to the restroom, eating, calling out before being recognized, putting head down on the desk or table, grooming, talking with one another while the instructor or another student is presenting.

The teacher “must do’s” of the tactics: learning every student's name in the class on the first day if at all possible, one-time-and-one-time-only statement of directions for a given task, watching the students for signals of not understanding or not attending and immediately taking action.

Examples of Teaching Principles

Some examples of effective teaching techniques are: anchoring new concepts and skills to students' everyday experiences and determining and using students' differential knowledge bases in classroom discussions and problem-solving. This involves continuous calling on every student during a class session, always standing when making a presentation, varying voice pitch and style when presenting, keeping presentations and explanations short, use of the inductive rather than deductive approach in presentations, and involving students in applications of new ideas, and practice, practice, practice,

GAP Teaching Faculty

The lead GAP teaching faculty is composed of experienced and deeply motivated professors in the teaching of math, science, reading and/or English. Every faculty member has had extensive experience in teaching and working with academically under prepared minority students in his/her respective disciplines at UDC. Each of these faculty members had achieved a retention rate of 90 percent or better in their regular courses. The GAP instructional techniques and philosophy are documented in *Color Blind Teaching—Excellence for Diverse Classrooms* by Khatri and Hughes and are embraced by all teacher in the program.