

# Schools Initiative NEWSLETTER

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*The Office of Bilingual Education's Development & Dissemination Schools Initiative is a unique opportunity that New York City Bilingual/ESL teachers have to identify best practices and share their expertise as educators and professionals. This initiative also provides the opportunity for educators to disseminate their findings and share their stories with other colleagues. Using action research as the vehicle to identify best practices and document their efforts, teachers may confirm their beliefs about their practice and /or reflect on ways to improve it.*

*The schools that have embraced this initiative have been able to identify the best practices that have contributed to the success of their students as well as to confirm which strategies are not the most appropriate or effective. These efforts all have been supported with data and research. With these findings, teachers and administrators have been empowered to make decisions that have improved their pedagogy and students' learning, and have also been fundamental in the creation of an environment that nurtures learning as well as professional growth.*

*It is my hope that in year three we continue developing teachers to become more aware of their practices that impact our ELLs, and document these findings, while increasing the number of school participants. I would also like to disseminate our findings locally in a more forceful manner. Through our efforts of disseminating these findings we can assure the strengthening of our Bilingual/ESL programs across the city and help our educational community have a better understanding of what Bilingual/ESL instruction can do for our English Language Learners.*

### *Reporting from DeWitt Clinton High School: How a school becomes data-driven.*

*DeWitt Clinton is a large academic comprehensive high school in the northern Bronx with about 600 English language learners, most of whom are Spanish speakers. During the past six years, the International House of DeWitt Clinton High School has gone through a major renovation — an instructional reform process.*

*Since 1992 DeWitt Clinton has achieved a remarkable growth in its student achievement indicators, so remarkable, that in 1996 it was chosen by Redbook as one of the best high schools in America. In 1997 it was awarded the Council of Supervisors and Administrators' Most Effective School award. This improvement has been noted*

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### Citywide Dissemination -- Year 3 (2000-2001):

- Effective Practices Portfolio  
Video Project*
- Orientation for new schools*
- Share Fair and Conference*
- Citywide AR Institutes*
- Updated Website*

## What's new?

### *PS 18 / CSD 6 and PS-189 / CSD 17 Two more schools join D&D!*

*In the project's second year, we added two more schools. There are now eleven schools in the D&D Initiative. We would like to share a few of the many highlights from both of these schools.*

*P. S. 18, The Park Terrace Early Childhood Academy, is a unique early childhood public school where over 400 Pre-K through second grade children, representing various linguistic and cultural backgrounds, gain their first school experience in a nurturing atmosphere, where they are at the center. The school maintains high expectations for academic achievement of all of its students. The children are provided with instruction that develops their sense of competence and positive feelings toward learning. The literacy curriculum, "Invitations to Literacy," provides students with a literature-rich environment that encourages communication and thinking. PS 18 enhances this curriculum by integrating thematic units of study,*

*technology, cooperative learning and the arts. The children's differing levels of ability, development and learning styles are assessed and considered in the design of learning activities.*

*During 1999-2000 P.S. 18 piloted the early childhood literacy program, Breakthrough to Literacy. Kindergarten and first grade students in eight classrooms read a new story each week. Literacy skills are taught through reading, retelling, writing, listening and speaking. All of the skills are reinforced daily through the use of the two or three computers in each classroom. Student progress is monitored through ongoing teacher observation and computer data available for each student. Other programmatic highlights include Literacy Through the Arts, extracurricular activities, peer mediation, parent volunteers, family literacy program, and ESL courses.*

*Presently, PS 18 / CSD 6 supports two collaborative Action Research teams related to the D&D Schools Initiative. One team is comprised of teachers, staff and administrators. The other team is entirely made up of parents. Victor B. Cole, Elieser De*

*Jesus and Dr. Carmen Mercado work collaboratively to support both teams.*

*P.S. 189 of District 17 is a K-8 school in Crown Heights, Brooklyn. The school grew out of a community-based effort to offer children a bilingual and bicultural education. With large Haitian and Latino populations, P.S. 189 remains one of the few schools in New York city that offers bilingual Haitian Creole, as well as bilingual Spanish classes. All students study either French or Spanish to meet the school's goal of developing two languages in addition to English.*

*ELLs at P.S. 189, approximately 20% of the student body, out-performed students in similar schools on the city English and Spanish reading tests. Programs that support this high performance include ARISTA, Project Arts, and an extended-day program for reading, mathematics and computers.*

*The Action Research team is meeting regularly with Dr. Grace Ibañez Friedman and Dr. Nancy Lemberger, hoping to establish a strong collaboration. Ω*

*(Five more schools will join the Initiative in 2000/01. Look for their highlights)*

*Dr. Judith Torres*

*There's lots new in 2000-2001!*

*The D&D Schools Initiative is focussing on "what works" for ELLs. What's new this year is an effective practice video! We'll be interviewing some of you and doing some videotaping this fall.*

*Mark your calendars for February 9, 2001! OBE is planning a citywide*

*effective practices share fair in the morning, which will be followed by our mid-year conference in the afternoon. This is a D&D "time-out" to reflect on our work and share what we've learned.*

*Learn more about collaborative Action Research! The Northeast and Islands Educational Laboratory at Brown University is offering two*

## In the works...

*Action Research Institutes—January 22 and March 5, 2001. Call the Education Alliance/NYC Office for more information. Spread the word, and sign up quickly, since space will be limited to 75 at each session.*

*D&D is on the web!  
Come see what's posted there!  
[www.alliance.brown.edu/dnd/](http://www.alliance.brown.edu/dnd/)*

Marina Craioveanu with Victor B. Cole

## D&D Schools

*Bronx:*

*PS 29/CSD 7*

*PS 35 / CSD 9*

*DeWitt Clinton High School*

*Brooklyn:*

*PS 24 / CSD15*

*PS 189 / CSD 17*

*PS 200 / CSD 20*

*Manhattan:*

*PS 165 / CSD 3*

*PS 18 / CSD 6*

*Queens:*

*PS 11 / CSD 30*

*Newtown High School*

## IHE Partners

*Adelphi University*

*Brooklyn College*

*Fordham University*

*Hunter College*

*Long Island University*

*New York University*

*Queens College*

*St. John's University*

*Teachers' College*

*Marina Craioveanu is an ESL teacher at Newtown High School, Queens. She spent two years looking at what she did in the classroom to support students' learning. In her second year as a member of the D&D collaborative Action Research (AR) team, she recorded what she did, and her reflections on the experience. When asked in a recent conversation how she saw herself in the AR process and as a member of a team, she replied, "I think that I am achieving something. I am putting some order in my teaching. It has helped me to put some order in my daily planning. I am also using more materials. I am busier, that is clear. But, hopefully this will show in the end. The whole study has helped me be more ordered. I'm focusing on listening. We have to do everything, but my focus on listening has helped me." In this first issue of the D&D Newsletter, we offer Marina's thoughts on her teaching practices that are*

### *"Preparing Students for the Listening Part of the Regents Exam."*

*In the fall semester of 1999 I taught three ESL classes: one ESL-1 and two ESL-2 classes. My goal was to find out how early we can start preparing students for the Listening part of the Regents, what methods and exercises are best to use.*

*Listening is a very important part of understanding and learning a language, but it cannot be done alone. Understanding the sounds and words is nothing if students don't understand words in context, if they don't learn patterns and how to use them in Speech and Writing. Ultimately this is the aim of the Regents Exam: "students should be able to understand the passage the teacher is reading, take notes and then write an essay based on that topic."*

*Almost all my students know how to take notes in their first language; what they need to know is how to use the English vocabulary they have acquired. Even in ESL-2, where students are somewhat more advanced, we are not going to rush to note taking before teaching them the vocabulary, word order, verb tenses, comparative adjectives or the place of adverbs. This grammar will help them reconstruct the sentences from which they have taken notes.*

*In order to show the necessity of thorough preparation (Vocabulary, Grammar, Sentence Patterns) before we rushed to notes taking, I compared the results [of introducing a lesson using audio and video equipment] obtained in my two ESL-2 classes, the first periods (6 and 7) and the last periods (11 and 12) of the day. (Newtown schedules consecutive ESL classes for emerging English-language users) I used both periods to teach the lesson, but I found out that introducing the [particular phrase] patterns the previous day was essential in understanding the Listening.*

*When asked how this intense look at how she taught students to become better listeners in English showed in student achievement, Marina responded, "They got better results on the final tests. I give a final marking test every two weeks. One came just after the listening with the tape and then the VCR. The test followed and the students did much better. It was better than any other years that I taught this and with students at that level. The visual memory is very important."*

*(This article excerpted portion of fuller body of work written by Ms. Craioveanu.*



Newtown H.S. Staff participate in an Action Research Institute, 11/00.

both among students formally classified as English Language Learners and among its general education population, many of whom are graduates of its bilingual/ESL program.

Between 1992 and 1998 the percent of DeWitt's LEP students achieving proficiency in English rose from 6.6% to 23.8%; between 1993 and 1998 the percent of graduates receiving Regents diplomas more than doubled from 10% to 23%; and in 1999 68% passed the English Language Arts (ELA) Regents.

The question remains: How did a school make a turn-around so quickly with a population of students that has historically struggled? The increased achievement of DeWitt's ELLs is due to several factors, including:

- A strong Native Language Arts program that parallels the ELA curriculum;
- Close collaboration between NLA teachers and ESL teachers, who are both housed in the same Foreign Language Department;
- Continuous use of student data to make programmatic decisions;
- Continuous revision and upgrading of curriculum to meet Regents standards; and
- Transformational leadership at the school and departmental levels.

The Foreign Language Department at DeWitt Clinton exemplifies the incorporation of reflective practice and data-driven decision-making at the departmental level. Prior to the D&D initiative, a core group of faculty and administrators had established a culture in which the cycle of examining student performance, revising instruction, and re-visiting student outcomes is constant. The D&D initiative has added additional resources, in terms of coaching and professional development, in the areas of action research, data analysis and performance assessment. The group conducts weekly reflection and planning meetings with the principal.

The D&D team at DeWitt has identified several problems for ELLs, and has continued to devise solutions for them. Two principal ones are:

- Transitioning from bilingual/ESL to mainstream classes. Two problems have been identified in this transition:
  - a) The loss of the support services and familiar network provided by International House. As a result of interviewing students who passed the English Regents exam but still failed the LAB, the team decided to allow students who test out of ESL instruction (FLEPs) to continue as International House students for support services.
  - b) Students who barely test out of ESL instruction are still not ready for regular classes, especially as the school upgrades its curriculum to Regents levels. Additional elective English classes are now being designed for FLEPs.
- Aligning NLA and ESL instruction to the expectations of the ELA Regents exam. Several initiatives are underway.
  - a) A team of teachers is devising performance assessments for ESL classes that will be consonant with the expectations of the ELA Regents exam.
  - b) In fall 1999, the department piloted a test readiness class in Spanish after school for seniors with good first-language literacy skills, but who were functioning at the beginning or intermediate level of ESL. They had to take the ELA Regents test, but their chances of passing were considered remote. They were offered an experimental, enhanced language arts class in Spanish, in which the Regents tasks were taught. The results were very promising: of 14 students enrolled, 6 took the test and 5 passed. Based on these results, this course was incorporated into the program for seniors in International House. In spring 2000, a State review of test scoring revealed that one of the highest scores in the school was earned by an ESL student.
  - c) In spring 2000, the team devoted its research agenda to studying International House student performance on the ELA Regents, in order to identify those factors which contribute to students' passing the exam. Student records of those who have taken the test over the past several years are being examined and students and teachers are being interviewed.

DeWitt Clinton thus demonstrates how much can be accomplished in a traditional high school to support high achievement for ELLs, when a committed faculty and administration come together, examine student performance, and devise innovative responses to the problems they identify. In this case, it has been essential to engage the creativity and energies of teachers, and support them as they devise interventions. Ω

*(This article is an excerpt of the 1999/2000 D&D Year-end Report)*

## On the road...

Dissemination has been a growing feature in the D&D Schools Initiative since the beginning. Besides the continuous efforts of the Education Alliance to spread the good work of New York City teachers of English-language learners (ELLs), teachers have proven to be their own strongest advocates in talking about their own work. The first year included individual teachers' sharing locally the work of their school-based collaborative Action Research team. By the end of Year 2, the D&D Schools Initiative was represented on ten separate occasions at four national conferences.

Here are some highlights:

### School- and District-wide:

A CES 35 staff member visited PS 11 and PS 29;

Teachers from PS 200 and PS 11 made school-wide presentations to their peers, at professional development days and staff meetings; Staff from DeWitt Clinton High School made a presentation about their AR work at a Bronx high schools principals' meeting;

PS 24 hosted visits from Providence Public Schools; and

The AR team at CES 35 shared their work with peers during a staff development day.

### School Intervisitations to Share Insights and Program Models

Staff from CES 35 visited PS 24, 11, and 29 to share their AR work;

PS/MS 279 staff visited PS 24

Teams from DeWitt Clinton and South Bronx High School have been meeting together and visiting each others' schools to discuss data-driven instructional decision making and other issues.

### D&D Project-Wide Conferences

D&D participants met, shared and celebrated their accomplishments, and plan for the year ahead;

School teams, district superintendents and bilingual coordinators, and IHE Consultants attended an intense discussion/ reflection activity; and University partners met to plan following year.

### New York Citywide Conferences:

D&D staff presented to over 200 bilingual educators at OBE's citywide conference;

Through OBE, a teacher from DeWitt Clinton, a teacher and principal from PS 165, and members of OBE and D&D staff presented at the UFT's Annual Citywide Conference;

D&D staff demonstrated the Initiative's new website at OBE's spring software fair;

### NY State Association of Bilingual Education (SABE):

Presentations by school AR teams and principals from PS 24 and 35 in 1999;

A presentation by the AR team from PS 11 in 2000;

Shared presentations by OBE and Education Alliance project staff; and PS 24's principal and a teacher from PS 200 joined the D&D staff in presenting a workshop.

### National Conferences:

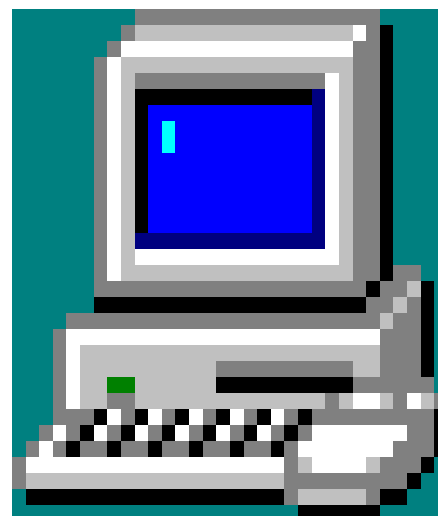
Two presentations by OBE and D&D staff at the National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE) winter, 1999;

Two presentations by D&D staff, OBE staff, IHE Consultants, and a teacher and principal from CES 35 to a total audience of over 100 at NABE, February, 2000;

Two presentations by D&D staff at the Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) conference, March, 2000;

A teacher and the former principal from DeWitt Clinton featured at the Second Institute on Cultural and Linguistic Diversity at Brown University; and

D&D staff, university partners, and a teacher from CES 35 participated in three presentations at the American Educational Research Association (AERA).



[www.alliance.brown.edu/dnd/](http://www.alliance.brown.edu/dnd/)

**check out the website!!!**

## Article Summary

"Chapter One:

The case for bilingual education"

Stephen D. Krashen wrote that "underlying successful bilingual education is the fundamental principle of language acquisition and literacy development." He continued his argument for bilingual education by stating that children would be given knowledge of the world and subject matter, which transfer across languages and knowledge of literacy, which transfers across languages in a bilingual setting.

To underscore his pedagogical principles for good bilingual education, Dr. Krashen stated that programs include the following:

- comprehensible input in English, in the form of ESL and sheltered subject matter classes
- subject matter done in the first language, without translation; and
- literacy development in the first language, strategies and knowledge that transfer to the second language.

Ω

To read more, look for: Under Attack: The case against bilingual education, Language Education Associates: Culver City, Ca. 1996.



*The Development and Dissemination Schools Initiative is a project of the New York City Board of Education, Office of Bilingual Education in partnership with the Education Alliance at Brown University*

### *The Development and Dissemination Schools Initiative*

*Rising academic standards in NYC and NYS have changed the climate of expectations for New York's students and the teachers whose task it is to support them. Teachers are challenged to develop innovative strategies to raise the academic performance of students that, historically, were too often thought to have little chance of achieving at a high level – students whose first language is not English, and whose limited knowledge of English makes it difficult for them to participate effectively in "mainstream" classrooms without appropriate support.*

*Given the city and state emphasis on achieving higher academic standards in English language arts, mathematics and other core content areas, there has been increased concern as to which instructional approaches and other support strategies will be most effective in helping ELL students reach the same academic goals as students for whom English is the first language.*

*The instrumental goal of the D&D Schools Initiative is to increase the capacity of the New York City Public Schools to develop and make good use of a wide range of effective approaches and strategies to deliver high-quality instructional and other supportive services that will help English Language Learners achieve the standards. To increase capacity includes creating and strengthening collaborative Action Research teams; developing and documenting effective practices for ELLs; and disseminating and replicating what teachers of ELLs in NYC know or have learned.*

*Available: Call or write to have these documents sent to you. Mid-Year Report 1998/99; Year-end Report 1998/99; or the D&D Schools Initiative's Year-End Report and Portfolio 1999/2000.*

***\*\*\*INTRODUCING: The first newsletter of the D&D Schools Initiative\*\*\****

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