




Summer Program for **Boston Adult Technical Academy** (BATA) Graduates

# Becoming a Freshman: Planning and Working for College Success

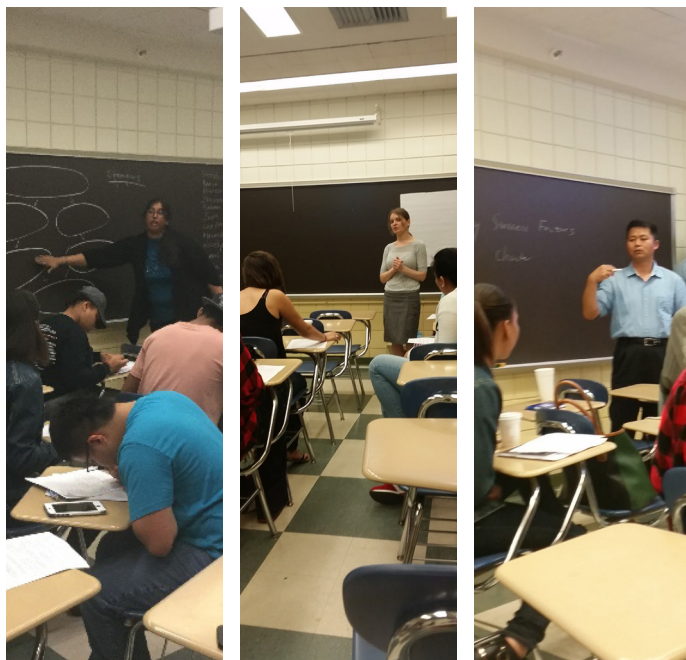
**Report  
2016**

June 21 -July 14

Classes held at:  
UMass Boston, Harvard University & MIT



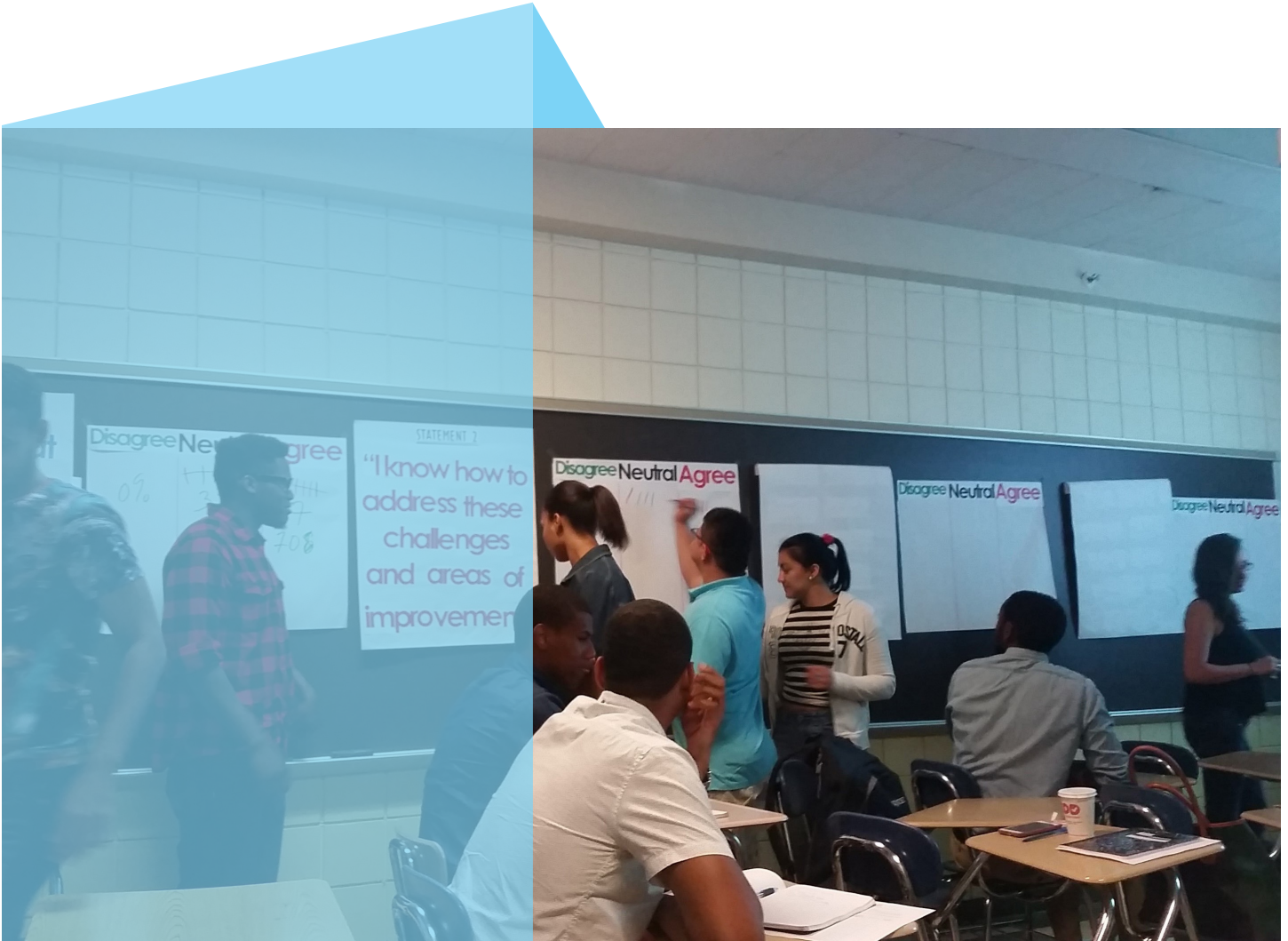
This report outlines the main results, conclusions, and recommendations from Summer School for graduates of Boston Adult Technical Academy (BATA), organized by Educational Divide Reform (EDR) and held from June 21 – July 14, 2016.



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# THE PROGRAM

## Becoming a Freshman: Planning and Working for College Success



**“Becoming** a Freshman: Planning and Working for College Success,” aimed at helping graduates of Boston Adult Technical Academy (BATA) become successful college freshmen.

The content and the classes of the program were especially designed to help students increase self-confidence; improve skills in self-motivation and self-discipline; improve English language skills; and advance students’ understanding of academic offerings including majors and course requirements. The curriculum and teaching methods were student-centered and reflected participants’ expectations.



## Individual student expectations included:

“I am expecting to be less doubt about what I want for my college education. I want to be pretty sure where I going to go and finally do it”.

“My expectations are to improve my English, writing, reading and speaking English skills”.

“I speak more English, I write, help other, work together”.

“To know more about college, to solve challenge and to make improvement English language”.

“I need to practice more language and know more information”.

“I expect in this program to hear more about skills, how to study like college education, etc”.

“My expectations from participating in this program is to learn as much as possible I can to educate myself”.

“I expect to learn more vocabulary and prepare myself to the college. Be able to speak out from the art side of school what I learn during this program”.

“I want my peers to know my story and to know their stories as well. I want to learn in an interactive way, so people can learn from and I can learn from them as well”.

“The knowledge I want to learn it is a little bit about everything they give and I want to learn the skills that can be helpful for college and for life”.

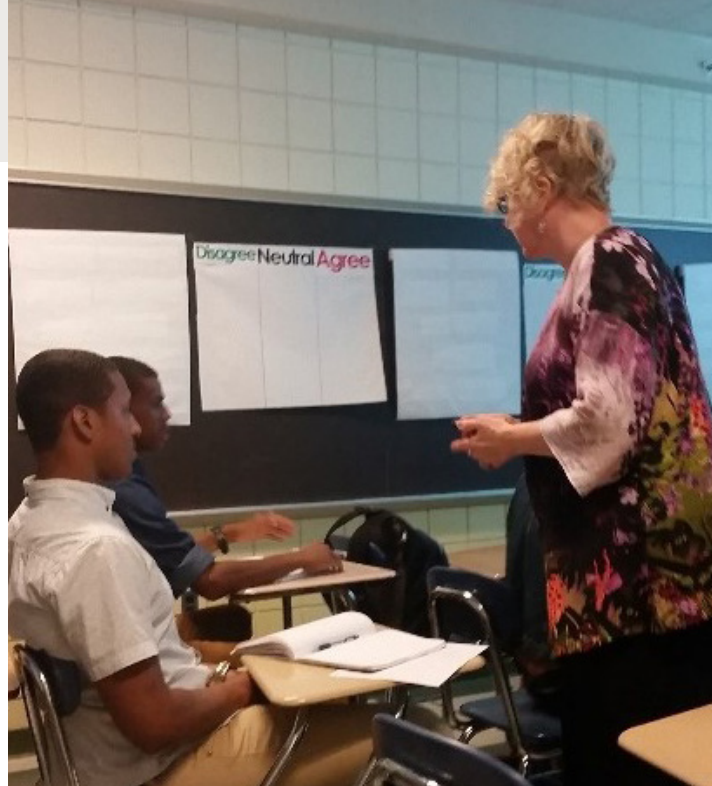
“I would like to share the ideas and work together, trust each other”.

“Science skills and comprehension”.

**Twelve** BATA graduates received scholarships to study in the program. The participants agreed to comply with the following rules: (1) regularly attend classes during June 21 – July 14, 2016; (2) arrive on time; (3) actively participate in class activities; (4) complete homework assignments; and (5) be respectful to others. These rules aimed to ensure a productive and friendly learning environment.

Classes were held at the University of Massachusetts Boston and Harvard University to enable students chances to experience a college campus life throughout the program.

Program courses included Academic Writing and Oral Presentation in the Sciences. The Oral Presentation in the Sciences course acquainted students with communication skills necessary in an academic setting by giving student practice in self-introduction, science presentations, and receiving and providing feedback; the Academic Writing course allowed students to engage in writing self-introduction, email simulations of communication with professors, writing essays, and writing posts for discussion forums on different topics.



While enrolled in the program, the participants, who are also English language learners, received ESL support so that they may prepare for college and share their rich cultural backgrounds (e.g., Colombia, Cape Verde, Haiti, and El Salvador) within their community of learners.

Taught by seasoned instructors of English and Science, the immigrant students boosted their self-confidence and self-motivation by improving their learning, studying and communication skills. At the end of the program, students shared with one another as to how the program helped them understand the expectations of college life, and how to take necessary steps to ensure their own success.

## RESULTS AND FEEDBACK

Ninety percent (90%) of the participants indicated that their expectations were met during the program and self-reported to be very satisfied with the program. Among the topics that the program covered, the students especially concurred that English Language Education, Higher Education: “Aspirations, Expectations, and Actions”, and “Academic Writing” were very essential preparation for college.

# STUDENT'S TESTIMONIALS

When asked to specify the “single most important thing” that the participants learned during the Program they responded as outlined below:

“How to write Professor email”

“When I was working in group”

“How to communicate with others”

“American History”

“If we effort hard, we can achieve our goal”

“How to be prepared for the college”.

“The single most important is that I went to MIT because I learned a lot”

## **Correa Marin Jhovana**

“...The program is close to end and I was thinking in what I learned while I was on it, then I will tell you that I learned a lot new information such as to have clear goals in my life, listen to my peers when they have something to say, how to see beyond of something, like to see any picture and imagine what it really want to make you think, and use our sense to figure it out. Another important thing is what kind of person I want to be and why is important to be a role model. I learned a lot new information such as to have clear goals in my life, listen to my peers when they have something to say, how to see beyond something...Another important thing is what kind of person I want to be and why is important to be a role model... something I will remember is the class from July 12 when we visited MIT and saw a beautiful project in our space named CHANDRA...”

## **Peterson Desmoulin**

“It was a grand pleasure for me to participate into the summer [program]. I have learned the experience of many fact about life after high school and visited places, where I learned a lot about what is going on outside the earth, and learned new skill that will help me for my future learning. I can't thank enough people who made the program possible, also I wish this program continue for next summer vacation and more student can learned and experience what life look like after high school”.

## **Luz Agudelo**

“What I like about the program is all the dedication that give to all the students and the help, when we have a question the answer and we also went to other places like Harvard and MIT, what I remember the most from the program is when we went to MIT, because I learn more about science and is also something I was interested to know about it, was something different for us the students and I am glad that we went there, what I have learned during this four week, I improve in my writing skills, also about history and science, i think I will not change anything about the program, all was great and I really liked”.

## **Anonymous:**

“I realize that I got a lot of things that I do not know before”.

“I am so proud to be here”

“Good experience”

“Thank you for being here for us”.

# CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



## 1. Attendance

Attendance is highly correlated with students' academic performance, their sense of responsibility and learning outcomes. Chronic absenteeism is prevalent among students of low-income households, and it is important in similar programs to continue to highlight attendance as one of the main factors which contributes to the success of the program.

Recommendation: EDR should continue to develop and implement the strategies of managing program participants' attendance. To ensure regular attendance of program participants, EDR should emphasize the importance of attendance at the recruiting stage; check attendance; communicate with students to better identify and address the reasons for tardiness and missing classes; and to continue to recognize and reward good attendance.

## 2. Homework

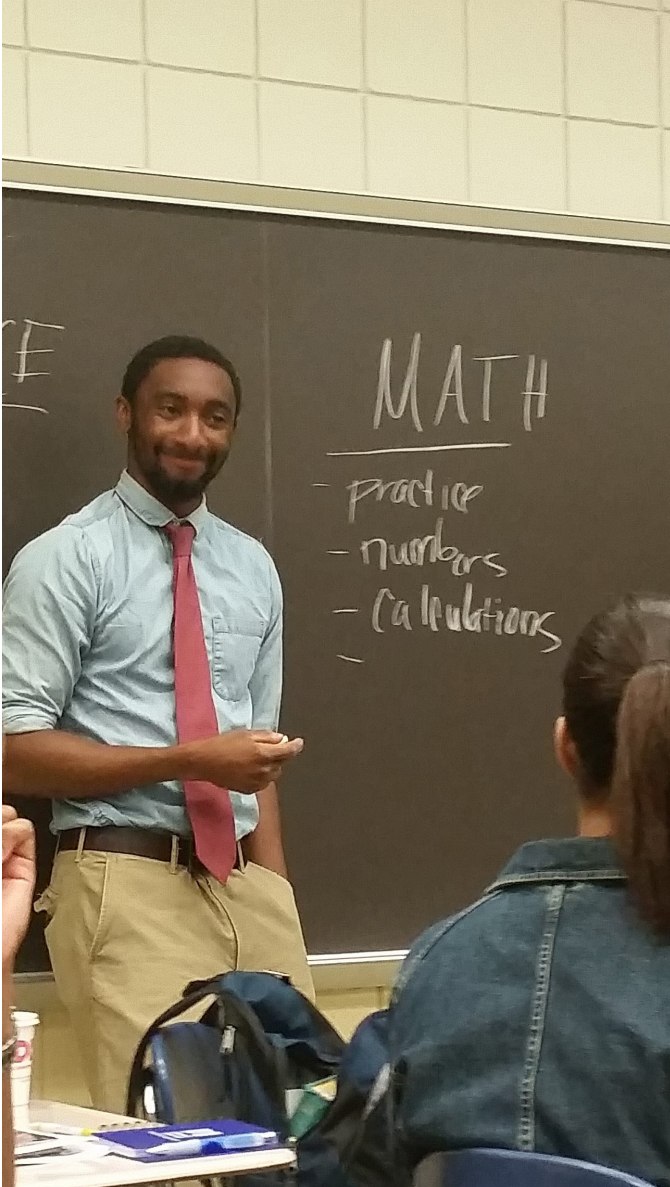
Considering the short duration of the program, EDR decided to help facilitate participants' learning through homework assignments. Homework assignments included choosing and working with materials that fit individual students' academic interests, writing essays to stimulate analytical processing of class materials, and planning.

Recommendation: As an important component of educational experience, EDR should continue to integrate homework related content in the curriculum and to ensure support for the participants not only in doing homework but also in responding to teachers' feedback.

## 3. Group Exercises

The participants were given groups assignments during the program to help them learn from each other and share their stories with their peers. Group exercises also broaden cultural horizons of students and contribute to creating stronger





bonds among the students working and learning together.

Recommendation: EDR should continue to incorporate group exercises in its future programs, allowing students to learn from each other, to share their personal experience and stories, as well as to practice their English speaking.

#### **4. Program Funding**

The program was fully funded by EDR. Program participants received scholarships from EDR to participate in the program.

Recommendation: Securing sustainable funding for future programs similar to the BATA programs is a high priority, and EDR should continue to explore more sources of funding and sponsorship for participants of future programs and possible expansion to other BPS graduates.

# EDR

Educational Divide Reform

EDR ([www.edrworld.org](http://www.edrworld.org)) is a nonprofit organization 501(c)(3) that strives to create a global community where anyone can achieve his or her dream and live in harmony through education.