

Dual Enrollment Literature Review
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Dual enrollment programs are both ubiquitous and diverse with 42 states having dual enrollment policies. (Hoffman, Vargas & Santos 2009) This paper will focus on programs that are defined by collaboration between a high school and a college or community college that allows students to earn college credit through the postsecondary institution while still in high school. These programs, unlike the Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate programs, are largely governed by state and local regulations and policies, thus the details of the program can vary greatly from place to place. A basic dual enrollment program would allow high school students to enroll in courses taken at the local community college or on-line. Often such programs serve students with strong academic records who are seeking to escape from the high school setting. (Hoffman et al., 2009) Many programs seek to attract a broader student population. Often, these programs provide a sequence of courses that ramp up the general student's skills towards the college level. Tech prep programs, which often operate in within career and technical education centers frequently fit this model, as they serve students who may not be viewed as likely to be college bound. Some programs include remedial coursework that prepares students for eventual college level study. Courses may be taught on the college campus by regular college faculty, or they may be taught by high school teachers acting as adjunct faculty. With the diversity of models for programs and the limits this diversity places on data collection, benefits to the student, the school and the college can currently only be looked at in broad terms.

One of the most important benefits of dual enrollment to the student is cost. Participating students may be able to earn college credit at little or no cost. This, of course is advantageous to families who may not be prepared to pay for college costs.

However, depending on the program, students may not be able to earn both high school credit and college credit for the same coursework. (McCarthy, 2009. Hoffman et. al. 2009) Further, it is unclear how college coursework may be reflected on a student's high school transcript and within the high school G.P.A. One study pointed out that college courses are often reflected on the high school transcript as pass/fail, which is not calculated into the student's G.P.A. The same study noted that replacement of a core academic course could result in scrutiny from the NCAA with regard to a student's athletic eligibility.(McCarthy, 2009) A second feature that may benefit many students is the availability of non-credit coursework that serves to prepare students academically for the full college experience. Many programs focus on building a better transition for students who may have not seen themselves as college bound.

In light of the number of students who enroll in post-secondary programs only to leave early on, it is important to look at the long term outcomes for students. Hoffman Vargas and Santos suggest that by comparing dual enrollment credit earning to the experience of regular college students who after earning twenty credits in their first year are more likely to earn postsecondary credentials, it is likely that dual enrollment can be supportive of the same outcome (2009). One study of students in the CAP program in Oklahoma found that students who had participated in dual enrollment were likelier than others to continue their education They had an GPA of 2.899 for post CAP versus 1.944 for Non CAP. Also, those who persisted in their degree programs had earned an average of 53.97 credit hours... while non-CAP students who persisted in their degree programs had earned an average of 43.67 credit hours. (Foster, 2010)

A final benefit to students is simply that many of them enjoy these opportunities to advance. They note positive interactions with faculty, interesting and challenging curriculum and simply a chance in environment as positives (Pathways, 2006) Benefits to high schools may be less consistent, yet are worth noting. Faculty morale can be improved in cases where they are participants (Hoffman et al., 2009), schools with fewer enrichment offerings including small, rural districts, can provide more offerings to students. and even issues such as overcrowding can be eased. (Pathways, 2006) One area discussed within the Pathways report was the importance of guidance within these programs. Often students hear of these programs by word of mouth. Providing knowledgeable guidance is important to these programs (Pathways, 2006). Historically, there has been a gap between secondary and post-secondary institutions with regard to curriculum. In the best cases, dual enrollment programming can increase meaningful communication between high schools and colleges to reduce this gap. The colleges involved with dual enrollment are often community colleges. Local outreach and service to students who may not see themselves as ready for traditional four year colleges may be part of the mission of such institutions. Therefore, dual enrollment may be well suited for them.

One clear benefit to participating colleges is the tuition gained for enrolling high school students.. In some cases families pay the tuition, but many states have programs that provide tuition money. Interestingly, there is debate over the funding in some states, as whether the student receives college or high school credit for a course may determine if the college is paid through public money. This money may be drawn from funds allocated to secondary education. Florida has had a statewide dual

enrollment program that initially funded the college but not the participating high school. When the funding between the two was equalized, the program grew substantially. (Hunt, E. 2007). In Florida, as well, there is state scholarship funding for students that is available to dual enrollment students. Hunt and Hoffman et al speculate that the state is interested in dual enrollment is due in part to their interest in seeing students complete college degrees in the shortest time possible, thus reducing overall financial aid costs. In particular, Hunt suggests that this may be of concern from an educational standpoint.

Overall dual enrollment programs have many positive features that benefit students their high schools and their colleges. The difficulty in pinpointing the exact level of benefit comes from the difficulty in gathering consistent data across the wide variety of programs that exist. Even the differences in the ways high schools and colleges describe credit hours differently can add to the confusion (Hunt, 2007) There are few easy comparisons across the breadth of regulations, laws and funding structures that exist, and even basic data collection can be impeded by the number of different players within the field.

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