

The University of Texas System Dual Credit Study

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Background

Austin Independent School District: High School
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Austin Community College: Early College Start
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Slide about mixed methods – what this allowed us to see





Participation: Students' motivations

From the online survey and interviews with students

- Saving time/money (mentioned most often)
- “Knocking out” courses due to disinterest or perceived irrelevance
- Seeking challenge, exploring courses, enjoyment of learning
- Strategic reasons (advantage in the college application process, improving class rank, satisfying diploma requirements)





Participation: How is DC delivered?

Location	Model	Instructor	Delivery	Classmates
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community College campus• High School/Early College campus• 4-Year University• Virtual/online	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Traditional High School with dual credit• Early College High School• School within a school• Independently	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dual employed high school and college instructors• College-only instructors• College instructors paired with high school facilitators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Physical classroom• Online (asynchronous)• Online (synchronous: interactive or one-way)• Recorded	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Other dual credit students only• Dual credit and AP students mixed• Mixed with traditional college students



Proposed slide:

- Exposure:
 - Experience:
 - Immersion:
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- We know from students' descriptions of their participation that their experiences varied – could be categorized as exposure, experience, immersion (but even this somewhat erases the variety)
 - We did not systemically dig into the correlations between certain types of experiences and learning, but we know there are varied affordances





Student Perspectives

Survey OER: “Looking back on your own experiences, what advice would you give to younger students considering dual credit? What do you wish you had known?”

Focus Groups: 1 hour interviews on experiences, motivation, advantages, and disadvantages





Student Perspectives: A Major Academic Benefit

Multi-faceted college readiness:

Understanding the norms, values, and expectations of postsecondary institutions

Developing key academic behaviors

Acquiring disciplinary knowledge and skills





Understanding the norms, values, and expectations of college

Exposure/experience with:

- College workload
- Deadline expectations
- Quality expectations
- Communication norms
- Experience with pedagogies like lecture
- Resources like tutoring or office hours
- Expectations for collaboration/independence
- Processes like application and registration

“For me, the transition from high school to college was like a huge, huge thing for me because... Well, the dual credit classes helped me a lot because I knew what to expect, and how the classes were going to be, and how the professors talk to us, how they organize the course and teach us. It was pretty interesting. Dual credit helped a lot with that college experience.”





Academic Behaviors

Settings for cultivating or refining:

Time management skills

Study skills

Willingness to seek challenge

Independence as a learner

Methods for seeking help/collaboration

Sense of self-efficacy/confidence as learner

Identity as a college student

Self-awareness

“Okay well it helped me improve my time management skills. The classes let me know that it's not just going to be given to me. My education has to be earned. I felt like it was more like I learned time management, I learned how to transition from the high school setting into the college setting because of [dual credit courses].”

“I was really scared because it was this college class starting. I started and it wasn't too terrible but... they're a lot more hands off. You have to take care of everything. You have to pretty much grow up right now. To get your work done, you've got to get your groups together. Nobody's going to remind you and I kind of like that because it definitely prepared me for college. That's exactly how the year starts out.”





Disciplinary Knowledge and Skills

Students acquire knowledge and skills for use in specific follow-up courses and as a foundation for their postsecondary learning.

Commonly mentioned:

Math and science knowledge

Writing skills, particularly specific genres and conventions like citation.

“My writing class was awesome, I was writing different types of essays all the time. When I came into college and I was writing more like STEM type lab reports, and then project reports. I was really good at those because I had done so many different types of essays in dual credit.”

“I’m a computer science major so it’s a lot of math background. Thankfully my math classes in dual credit were all very good, so I was well prepared there.”





Cautions and Caveats

Logistical challenges
&
Academic downsides





Cautions and Caveats

“I felt that there were both advantages and disadvantages to acquiring so many college credits before starting college, especially since I did not have a clear idea of what I wanted to major in, how I would pay for college, and what programs I would eventually join. I ended up joining [a special program on the UT campus], which was basically a part-time job, and this program required that I be a full-time student taking 12 hours every semester to receive tuition and stipend. So, I ended up completing the requirements for a minor over three years so that I could be a full-time student and keep my position in the program. The minor is not really related to my degree, but these courses were not as challenging as my major courses, and helped to balance out my course load. I also had room in my schedule to join the honors college and to complete the honors requirements for graduating with highest honors and international distinction.

So, overall I would say that these considerations are important, but how important these considerations are will vary from person to person.”



Cautions and Caveats

Students reported on dual credit experiences that were:

- Misleading (False sense of confidence)
- Great stepping stones to later college
- Mirrors of later college credit only experiences

Students' perspectives cause us to ask...does dual credit have to be exactly like college credit-only coursework? If not, how different is too different?





Two separate worlds or a third space?

Student 1: I guess taking dual credit in high school, it was like a slack off class, honestly. It was really lenient. We got a lot of curves, when we came to college we had to learn on our own also. There is no curves and it was like more set compared to high school where it's more flexible, if that makes any sense?

Discuss.

Student 2: I felt that mine was better than that in the sense that it was a mix of high school and college. We had reviews that we still had to fill out for tests, you don't get that in college. At the same time there was still, you had to go and do this on your own to learn it before you got to class, kind of thing.

Student 3: I think it was a really good experience because it prepared me for college because they treated us as if we were already college students. When I transitioned to college I felt like it was my dual credit classes because it was independent like how college is.-- Conversation between 3 students in a focus group



Recommendations

- Improve student record-level data collection for students participating in Texas dual credit programs
- Encourage UT System academic institutions' dual credit programs to conduct program evaluation
- Continue to monitor and research the relationship between dual credit and student success



Recommendations

- Enhance dual credit communication with students and families to enable informed decisions
- Establish a list of dual credit-related policies, empirical dual credit research findings, and dual credit practices that can be communicated to staff at the UT System institutions
- Improve dual credit program alignment among high schools, two-year and four-year institutions



Questions this invites us to consider

What must we attend to as we grow or refine dual credit programs?

How do we ensure that everyone has access to meaningful dual credit that serves their future goals?

How do we inform stakeholders, particularly students and their families, about dual credit?

