

THE DIFFUSION OF DUAL CREDIT IN ILLINOIS

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Dual Credit

- Students receive both high school and college credit for a college-level class successfully completed.
- Courses may be offered at high schools, colleges, via distance learning, or online.
- Students must meet course pre-requisites to enroll.

Dual Credit in Illinois

- At all 48 community colleges in the state
- 19,289 students
- Range- 5 to 4,710 students
- Years implementing- 2 to 18
- Average high school credits earned- 1.2/year

Source: Summary of ACE grant reports FY02, Barnett, 2003

Purpose of Research

To learn why dual credit has diffused unevenly in the state

Questions:

- What characteristics of dual credit made it attractive to colleges?
- What characteristics of colleges made them likely to undertake an innovation?

Methodology

MIXED METHOD RESEARCH PROJECT

- Conducted phone interviews with dual credit contact people at all IL colleges
- Did site visit to a college and feeder high school

Theoretical framework

- Characteristics of innovations (Rogers, 1995)
 - Relative advantage
 - Compatibility
 - Complexity
 - Trialability
 - Observability
- Characteristics of colleges (Fullan, 2001)
 - Leadership support
 - Faculty advocacy
 - Change agents
 - Community support
 - Funding
 - Capacity building orientation

Variables and analysis

- Dependent variable- number of students participating in dual credit per college
- Independent variables- indicators of the “characteristics”
- Quantitative analysis relied primarily on correlations
- Qualitative analysis done by coding and identifying themes (see paper for results)

Findings- characteristics of the innovation

Correlation between number of students and Rogers' factors (significant findings):

- Relative advantage **.392**
 - Student recruitment .259
 - Associated with leaders .315
- Trialability (initial small scale implementation) **.293**

Findings- characteristics of the college

Correlation between number of students and Fullan's factors (significant findings:

- Community support
 - Student interest .292
 - General community interest .309

Conclusions

- Relative advantage most important factor, especially “student recruitment” and “leading colleges.”
- Being able to test an idea before committing also helps.
- High community and student support was associated with larger programs.

Implications

- Benefits to colleges (rather than students) most strongly associated with larger programs
- Widespread support for program by leadership may be present without affecting program size
- Little support was found for the role of other characteristics.

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