Evidence in Action
A K20 Center Research Brief

Does Dual Enrollment Influence High School Graduation, College Enrollment, Choice and Persistence

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2022

Introduction

This intervention brief explores the impact of dual enrollment on high school graduation, college enrollment, choice, and persistence. The research by Lee et al. (2022) investigates the relationships between dual enrollment and educational outcomes among Nebraska's 2018 high school graduating class. The authors highlight the significance of dual enrollment as a policy tool to promote college access and success, particularly for historically underrepresented students. The literature review indicates that dual enrollment helps students prepare for college, earn higher GPAs, and accumulate college credits before entering college, which promotes access, persistence, and on-time college graduation.

Methodology

Research Design

The study employs a quasi-experimental design using propensity score matching to control for baseline differences between students who participated in dual enrollment and those who did not.

Sample

The sample includes 21,688 twelfth graders from Nebraska's public high schools during the 2017-2018 academic year. Approximately 29% of these students took at least one dual enrollment course.

Data Analysis

The researchers used logistic regression and propensity score matching to estimate the effects of dual enrollment on high school graduation, college enrollment, choice between 2-year and 4-year colleges, and first-to-second-year persistence. Sensitivity analyses were conducted to test the robustness of the estimates.

Results

The study found that taking at least one dual enrollment course significantly increased the probability of graduating from high school on time, enrolling in college, choosing a 4-year college over a 2-year college, and persisting into the second year of college. The positive associations were particularly strong for racial minority students, first-generation students, and low-income students. These findings suggest that dual enrollment can help close achievement gaps for historically underrepresented students.

Application into Practice

To replicate this intervention, schools should do the following:

1. **Identify Eligible Students:** Focus on recruiting students from underrepresented backgrounds, including racial minorities, first-generation college students, and low-income students.
2. **Partnerships with Colleges:** Establish strong partnerships with local colleges to offer dual enrollment courses.
3. **Financial Support:** Provide financial assistance for tuition, textbooks, and transportation to ensure equitable access to dual enrollment opportunities.
4. **Support Systems:** Implement support systems such as counseling and academic advising to help dual enrollment students succeed.
5. **Monitor and Evaluate:** Continuously monitor and evaluate the program's effectiveness and make necessary adjustments to improve outcomes.

Work Cited

Lee, J., Fernandez, F., Ro, H. K., & Suh, H. (2022). Does dual enrollment influence high school graduation, college enrollment, choice, and persistence? *Research in Higher Education, 63*(4), 825-848. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11162-021-09667-3