

**“IT FELT MORE ‘COLLEG-EY’ BECAUSE
IT WAS WITH OTHER UNDERGRAD
STUDENTS”**

**STUDENT EXPERIENCES IN COHORT AND
MIXED EARLY COLLEGE CLASSES**

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12:40PM-1:40PM

Salem 1A

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Emma's Story

Presentation Agenda

- Significance
 - Literature Review
 - Research Questions
- Theoretical Framework
 - Methodology
 - Findings
 - Discussion
- Contact and Resources

Significance

Dual enrollment is. . .

- growing
- effective

But dual enrollment. . .

- varies widely based on local circumstances
 - can contribute to educational inequity
- needs research to understand why it works

Literature Review

Dual enrollment is effective

High school success (Berger, 2013)

Entry to college (Song, 2019)

Success in college (An, 2013)

Program design matters

Authenticity (Karp, 2012)

Relationships (Duncheon, 2020)

Location (Hu & Chan, 2021)

Equity is a challenge

Access (Gilbert, 2017; Xu, 2019)

Arms Race (Klugman, 2013)

Pitfalls of a “laissez faire” approach (Fink & Jenkins, 2023)

Literature Review

Taylor et al. 2022 proposed the following research question:

“In what ways do mixed DE classrooms (classes with DE and non-DE students) operate and how does the nature of the mixed classroom enhance and/or diminish the educational experience for DE and non-DE students?”

Taylor, J. L., Ozuna Allen, T., An, B. P., Denecker, C., Edmunds, J. A., Fink, J., Giani, M. S., Hodara, M., Hu, X., Tobolowsky, B. F., & Chen, W. (2022). *Research priorities for advancing equitable dual enrollment policy and practice*. University of Utah. Retrieved November 27, 2023 from https://cherp.utah.edu/publications/research_priorities_for_advancing_equitable_dual_enrollment_policy_and_practice.php

Research Questions

1. How do dual enrollment program graduates characterize the effects of the program on their process of taking on the role of a college student?
2. In what ways (if at all) do the experiences of dual enrollment graduates differ if they took part in dual enrollment courses mixed with traditional undergraduate students (mixed classes) compared to those who took dual enrollment courses composed exclusively of high school students (cohort classes)?
3. In what ways (if at all) do these differences impact the process of dual enrollment graduates taking on the role of college student?

Theoretical Framework- Role Theory

Karp (2012) theorized that dual enrollment is effective because it allows students the chance to **authentically** try on the role of college students and rehearse the attitudes, behaviors, and strategies that make up the role.

Bork and Karp's (2014)
Model of the Community College Student Role

Four domains

Each consists of specific behaviors / attitudes with the practical strategies that college students use to express that attitude

Theoretical Framework- Role Theory

Bork and Karp's Model of the Community College Student Role

Academic Habits

Behavior or Attitude:

Manage workflow independently

Strategy:

Use a syllabus

Exhibiting Cultural Know-How

Behavior or Attitude:

Engage in collegiate discourse

Strategy:

Engage in discussion about opinions

Balancing Multiple Roles

Behavior or Attitude:

Make college a priority

Strategy:

Take responsibility for deadlines

Help Seeking

Behavior or Attitude:

Develop a sense of agency

Strategy:

Advocate for oneself

Methodology

- Sample- 22 high school graduates who took dual enrollment in high school. Graduates did cohort only, mixed only, and both mixed and cohort classes
- Data Collection- Interviews using a semi-structured interview protocol. Member checking and reflective journaling for quality and trustworthiness.
- Analysis- 1. Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis
2. Narrative Plot Analysis 3. Linguistic High Point
- Positionality- Professional connection to dual enrollment. Focus on listening to student stories and elevating student voice in the development of dual enrollment models.

Findings- Metaphors of Transition

“Dip your toe in the water”

“Learning the ropes”

“Laid the ground work”

“A way to just dive right in”

“This doesn’t fly in college”

“This doesn't slide in colleges”

Findings- Common Experiences

Learning to independently manage time and workload

“Its really on your shoulders”

“They weren’t holding your hand throughout the course”

“Had to lock down what I was going to do to be able to get assignments done”

“Juggle those, and in-class work, and also a paper that was due in a week”

“Got me really used to not having a teacher bombard you with due dates”

Findings- Common Experiences

Gaining comfort and learning norms for communicating with college faculty

“We were told we didn't necessarily have to raise our hands”

“You don't have to ask to go to the bathroom”

“They want the mister or the doctor”

“Truly just ask questions”

“It was very, very easy to talk with them compared to the first class”

“You don't know, go ask somebody, find your answer”

Findings- Common Experiences

Finding validation of level of college readiness through earning course credit

“I’m prepared for this. I can do this going forward”

“It just gave me a huge confidence boost”

“I’m really doing this”

“I had gained 21 credits”

“I ended up having about 34 college credits”

“I put on my grad cap that I had 28 college credits”

Findings- It felt more colleg-ey

Juno, cohort and mixed dual enrollment

“So 180. . . but it was just the energy of being in a college classroom is a lot different than being in a high school class because everyone is an adult It felt more “colleg-ey” because it was with other undergrad students . . . So it just helped me understand what a class was gonna be better”

Howard, cohort only dual enrollment

“Not exactly one-to-one. . . . wasn't something that was engulfing my life and where I was heavily immersed into, if anything, I was a lot more immersed and still into the high school life”

Findings- Differing Experiences

Socialization to collegiate discourse

Mixed

“After the first week, I was like, ‘oh this is easy.’ College students are pretty chill”

“I felt like I belonged there and I was accepted as a student, just any other student that was in the class”

“I'm at their level. It's okay to talk”

Cohort

“You're in school with your high school classmates . . . makes it easier to adapt”

“It eased me into it a little bit more and I knew the people around me”

Findings- Differing Experiences

Connection to education and career plans

Mixed

“It helped me the most figure out what I wanted to do in college”

“I love this, and I would spend my entire life learning about this”

“You see people being happy in their majors, like the friends that I made, and that's what I want to be. Happy”

Cohort

“Took a lot of gen eds”

“Classes which had nothing to do with anything I would be majoring in, they were just prerequisites. So, I didn't really think about what I want to go into afterwards”

“Things that I knew wouldn't apply towards my future”

Findings- Differing Experiences

Learning to use the fluidity of the college student role

Mixed

“I skipped like two months of class. . . I did the work, and she was giving me credit for it”

“Some people just really don't want to engage and that's fine”

“They were just taking it for the elective. So, they didn't really, necessarily, super care about the course”

Cohort

“I definitely learned to pay attention in class”

“I think that that helps in college, because it's on you, it's your work, it's your, your future, I guess”

Discussion

Socialization and Preparation- “Social cushioning” (Emma, 2024)

Cohorts as comfort zones (Brady, 2024)

Mixed motivates initial college socialization while students are still in supportive environment (Cuellar & Allen, 2024)

Alignment with college and career plans

Students want more course options & better advising (Garcia Tulloch, 2024)

Too many credits is a “thing” (Cortez et al., 2024)

Learning to use the fluidity of the college student role

The hidden curriculum (Kanny, 2015)

What is the purpose of dual enrollment? (Duncheon & Hornbeck, 2023)

Limitations, Practice, & Directions for Future Research

Limitation- Few adverse cases

Limitation- Mixed dual enrollment interviewees high school type

Recommendation for Practice- Intentional cohort and mixed model

Future Research- Longitudinal outcomes differences between mixed-only, cohort-only, & both

Future Research- Rhetoric and policy purposes of dual enrollment

Questions and Feedback

Thank you!

Resources and Contact

- Dissertation: Goodwin, A. C. (2025). *“It Felt More ‘Colleg-ey’ Because It Was With Other Undergrad Students:” Student Experiences in Cohort and Mixed Dual Enrollment Classes* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Massachusetts Lowell). [Available Open Access on Google Scholar](#)
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