

An, Brian. (2009). The Effect of Dual Enrollment on College Persistence and Attainment.

Abstract

The purpose of this dissertation is to examine the relation between dual enrollment programs (i.e. students who concurrently participate in college courses while in high school) and college outcomes. Five specific questions will be addressed: (1) Does participation in dual enrollment influence students' college outcomes? (2) How does dual enrollment fare as compared to other benchmarks (e.g. Advanced Placement, college preparatory track) in their effect of college outcomes? (3) Are there systematic group differences that exist in dual enrollment participation? (4) Is dual enrollment a viable option for individuals who would otherwise not have dually enrolled? (5) Does dual enrollment have a beneficial impact for members from a particular social group more so than for members of other groups?

Participation in dual enrollment programs is not random and I am unable to conduct a randomized study in a timely manner. Therefore, this dissertation will use existing observational data from the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88), a nationally representative longitudinal study of eighth grade students in 1988. To address casual inference, this dissertation takes advantage of an econometric approach—known as endogenous switching regression—that takes account for both endogeneity and selection into dual enrollment. Currently, there are no findings.

Dual enrollment is seen as a promising way to bridge the transition between high school and college because dual enrollment directly addresses the issues of low levels of academic preparation among a large number of college students and the low college graduation rates. Some policy makers, educators, and researchers have already pushed for less academically prepared students to participate in these programs in the hopes of raising their college expectations and academic preparation. However, there is little rigorous research to suggest one way or the other that dual enrollment is benefiting individuals. Therefore, one of the hopes for this dissertation is that the results will lead to better policy decisions regarding ways to improve college completion rates.