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
  - Trialibility
  - 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: 0.392
  - Student recruitment: 0.259
  - Associated with leaders: 0.315

- Trialibility (initial small scale implementation): 0.293
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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