2018

Community College Transitioning Experiences of Dual Enrollment Students

Sandra Lucille Fuline
Walden University

Walden University

College of Education

This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

Sandra Lucille Fuline

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

Review Committee
Dr. Laura Weidner, Committee Chairperson, Education Faculty
Dr. Alice Eichholz, Committee Member, Education Faculty
Dr. Dimitrios Vlachopoulos, University Reviewer, Education Faculty

Chief Academic Officer
Eric Riedel, Ph.D.

Walden University
2018

Abstract

Community College Transitioning Experiences of Dual Enrollment Students

by

Sandra Lucille Fuline

MBA, Franklin University, 2009

BS, Franklin University, 2008

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Education

Walden University

April 2018

Abstract

Dual enrollment transitioning experiences of students are poorly understood, leaving higher education stakeholders without the proper information to smooth the transitioning process and keep students in college. This basic qualitative study using interviews explored how 10 dual enrollment students described their transitioning experiences from high school to community college by investigating their motivations, ability to acknowledge self-efficacy, and understanding of social interactions using Badura's self-efficacy model and Keller's motivational theory and the attention, relevance, confidence, and satisfaction model. Data were analyzed through an open coding method to categorize themes and patterns as well as discrepant information. Key findings indicated that dual enrollment students embraced the rigor of courses and transitioned their learning skills to their non-dual enrollment college education. They reported strong self-efficacy and indicated both internal and external motivators and good support systems that contributed to their completion. They did not attribute their completion of the dual enrollment program to school-based relationships or club affiliations. The social change implication is that good transition experiences between high school and college for these students assisted them in staying in college and completing programs. Increased graduation rates and attrition rates could result in better qualified and more marketable graduates, impacting a more educated community and productive economy.

Community College Transitioning Experiences of Dual Enrollment Students

by

Sandra Lucille Fuline

MBA, Franklin University, 2009

BS, Franklin University, 2008

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Education

Walden University

April 2018

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the members of my family who have influenced the decisions I have made, making me the person I am today. To my husband, Dr. Daniel Fuline Jr., you were my inspiration to tackle such a grave endeavor. Every day you teach me something new and allow me to grow. Thank you for always being supportive of my need to constantly better myself and always achieve more. To my sister, Rani, who always made me feel safe and loved. To my sister, Suzi, who taught me I had to throw before I could pitch. To my sister, Amii, who was always more intelligent, but never made me feel anything less. To my brothers, Karl and Scott, who complete our family with humor, especially, when it is needed most. To my parents, Sandra and Ken, who will never know how my childhood experiences have shaped me. To all of my grandparents, who have taught me hard work and dedication will never go unrewarded. To my girls, Marissa and Rylie, may you reach every goal you set for yourself and overcome any obstacle you might encounter with confidence and poise. Finally, to Isabella and Giovanni, your smiles kept me both blissfully distracted and motivated during the last 6 years. I love you both dearly, and I hope you both create a life of both purpose and happiness!

Acknowledgments

I want to acknowledge both Dr. Laura Weidner and Dr. Alice Eichholz. Both of you have been more than supportive and more than patient with the multiple drafts of this important research. Thank you for your words of encouragement and never-ending belief that I could finish this goal. I know the faculty work just as hard as the students when I get a response to an e-mail after my mentor just had surgery the same day. I also want to acknowledge my dear friend, Melissa Rose, who has impacted my goals and this success in particular through quality friendship and encouragement. Thank you for your dedication to me and always believing in me.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Dual enrollment programs totaling more than 2 million high school students have become an integral part of higher education in the United States (Taylor, 2015). College and high school partnerships form the underlying foundation of dual enrollment programs. These partnerships are responsible for implementing, promoting, sustaining, and evaluating their programs' effectiveness (Taylor, Borden, & Park, 2015). Dual enrollment provides the opportunity for students to enroll in both high school and college courses at the same time, often at little or no additional cost to the student; however, financial specifics and many other elements of programs vary greatly by state models (Taylor et al., 2015). In addition, credit is determined by the successful completion of on-level college courses (Karp, 2012). Remedial courses are not included in the program.

Through dual enrollment programs, college classes can be offered in a variety of settings (Roach, Gamez Vargas, & David, 2015), as discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2. Regardless of the nature of the program, environment, or instructor, high school students are most likely to incur a different experience in dual enrollment courses with elevated levels of rigor and expectations (Karp, 2012; Stephenson, 2013). As a result, dual enrollment is not appropriate for all high school students. Many choose another option, such as an Advanced Placement (AP) courses, International Baccalaureate programs, or an extra study hall (Hoffman, 2012).

Tinto (2010) indicated that the transition into college must be successful in order for students to be retained. According to Wolf-Wendel, Ward, and Kinzie (2009),

students who integrate successfully into college undergo three phases: (a) separation from the past; (b) transition, when the individual begins to interact with the new setting and people; and (c) incorporation, when the individual adopts the norms and expectations of the new environment. Dual enrollment students are unique in that they do not fully transition to college because they do not need to separate from their past, although they do practice in role rehearsal as they begin to adopt the norms and expectations of a college student (Karp, 2012). The majority of the research that focuses on the transition process addresses different topics, including, but not limited to behavioral risks of the transition process (Fromme, Corbin, & Kruse, 2008), the role of family and emotions (Johnson, Gans, Kerr, & LaValle, 2010), or social norms (Pelletier, Graham, & Laska, 2014). While there might be an abundance of literature that addresses college transition topics, there is little research that concentrates on dual enrollment students and their transition to a community college.

Student retention is a viable topic in higher education with Tinto's (2010) research at the forefront of the conversation, but for the dual enrollment population, there is much to be learned. Minimal research has addressed community college dual enrollment students' transitioning experiences to college, leaving not only the student but also those directly involved with the student, such as parents, faculty, and staff, more vulnerable to circumstances where they are not understood. The experiences that students retain from these college bound programs, specifically dual enrollment, are yet to be understood in the community college environment. If these experiences are better

understood, then there is greater potential for social impact. Students who participate in the program could possibly improve their college experience and become more successful during the educational journey. In addition, college faculty and personnel are more informed about this population of students and how to better assist their learning and transition into college, making them more likely to succeed and become more marketable to an employer.

There is a need for more in-depth understanding of the dual enrollment student experience in the transition from high school to community college in order for future students to be more likely recruited and retained as well as graduated. This study adds to that literature need. Specific sections for Chapter 1 include the background of dual enrollment approach, a problem statement with researchable problem, purpose, research questions, theoretical and conceptual framework, nature of the study, definitions, assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, significance, and an overall summary for this study.

Background

In the past two decades, as dual enrollment has grown in visibility and popularity, several studies have emerged addressing dual enrollment (Allen & Dadgar, 2012; Taylor et al., 2015). Dual enrollment student motivation and demographics are as diverse as those in general postsecondary education, with one exception: Age. According to the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC, 2016), the average age of the community college population is 29 years-old. Those who participate in dual enrollment

are more than 10 years younger than the average community college student's age, and could be considered more inexperienced than the traditional college student (Karp, 2012). Karp (2012) explained that new dual enrollment students have not yet learned what it means to become a college student. They have not yet adopted more advanced ways of behaving, critically thinking, and producing mature and positive social interactions (Karp, 2012). The development of college ready skills, self-efficacy, and behaviors is a slow process that may or may not have been fully developed in high school (Allen & Lester, 2012).

In empirical research conducted in the field of dual enrollment, a number of positive outcomes for the student have been found (Hanson, Prusha, & Iverson, 2015; Hebert, 2001; Hughes & Edwards, 2012). Positive outcomes of dual enrollment include increased GPA (Allen & Dadgar, 2012; Foster, 2010), role rehearsal (Karp, 2012), increased retention with at-risk populations (An, 2013; Medvide & Bulstein, 2010; Taylor, 2015) and increased time to degree completion (Allen & Dadgar, 2012; Foster, 2010; Wang, Chan, Phelps, & Washbon, 2015). Each advantage is expanded upon in the literature review in Chapter 2. Role rehearsal is the most relevant to the research questions, because it allows for the understanding of the dual enrollment experience. Students in dual enrollment programs experience role rehearsal in practicing the role of a college student through developing a sense of community, belonging, and connection (Foster, 2010; Karp, 2012; Lewis & Overman, 2008; Lukes, 2014). It is through role rehearsal that students naturally develop confidence approaching instructors, registering

for courses, and seeking help to face the challenges of being a college student (Kanny, 2015; Karp, 2012). Wang et al. (2012) concluded that most college freshman lacked the social and emotional competence necessary to be efficacious during the first year. Consequently, students who practiced role rehearsal or participated in an orientation that focuses on social and emotional learning were more likely to be successful and have higher grades than those who had not. In addition, An and Taylor (2015) stated that students who finish their dual enrollment courses "become acclimated to their new role quicker than non-dual enrollees" (p. 5).

One of the more prominent weaknesses of the dual enrollment program model has been transferability and consistency (Taylor et al., 2015). While there may be many additional benefits to the dual enrollment program, the time efficiency and financial outcomes are void if the college credit earned does not transfer (Allen & Dadgar, 2012; Hughes 2010; Kanny, 2015). In Chapter 2, I determine that there appear to be several gaps in communication between high school and college representatives and the information provided to students and their parents as they are advised when entering into a dual enrollment program (Howley, Howley, Howley, & Duncan, 2013; Pretlow & Patteson, 2015). As a result, most students are not fully educated about the outcomes of dual enrollment or are unaware of the dual enrollment program. Currently, there appears to be limited research to support the levels of student awareness as it relates to different educational pathways. Howley et al. (2012) argued that dual enrollment exposure from the high school perspective could be insufficient because local funding for its

programming is reduced when more high school students are taking college courses as opposed to high school courses. After an exhaustive literature search, I determined there was minimal research exploring transition experiences of dual enrollment students in community college.

Two peer-reviewed studies surveyed how dual enrollment experiences have influenced student self-efficacy and motivation (Oliver et al., 2010; Ozmun, 2013). Ozmun (2013) found dual enrollment students did not necessarily possess college and academic self-efficacy skills prior to being enrolled in the program. As a result, dual enrollment instructors and curriculum have played a significant role in the development of these skills. Oliver et al. (2013) determined that students enrolled in dual enrollment courses not only developed self-efficacy, but also a notable amount of motivation and commitment toward degree completion. Self-efficacy and motivation are important components to the research questions in this study. Neither of these studies isolated for course modality or a community college setting.

Dual enrollment models vary across the nation and underpin the operations of the program. Inconsistency between the dual enrollment models plays a valid role in understanding key components of the program and terminology (Kinnick, 2012; Mokher & McLendon, 2008). One example of this is *concurrent enrollment* or PSEO (postsecondary enrollment option). Some states or institutions have assigned program specific names to their models. Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne offered dual enrollment courses through a program called Collegiate Connection (Adkin et al.,

2014). Southern Maine Community College uses the term Career and Technical Education (CTE) Concurrent Enrollment program. The setting of my study is in Ohio, and Ohio's most recent program updates are outlined in the Settings section of Chapter 4.

Problem Statement

Students who transition from high school to community college experience a wide variety of changes in culture, environment, and responsibility (An, 2015), and are often not prepared for the transition (Hicks & Heasite, 2008; Morrow & Ackermann, 2012; Venezia & Jaeger, 2013). Discovering transitional issues, such as lack of confidence and self-awareness, or trouble with time management and study skills, could provide insight into addressing college retention (Wang et al., 2012). Dual enrollment students offer a unique perspective into high school to community college transition, since dual enrollment was implemented to counteract and decrease these challenges. However, there has been limited research conducted on the experiences of dual enrollment students and what sources of motivation they identify in their transitioning experience.

Currently, faculty and administrative voices surrounding the dual enrollment program have been heard (Hanson et al., 2015; Hoffman, Vargas, Santos, 2009, Leonard, 2013; Lukes, 2014). It appears that dual enrollment students' experiences have not been recently explored in depth. Overall, many high school and college faculty have indicated several positive outcomes of the program (Hanson et al., 2015; Hebert, 2001; Hughes & Edwards, 2012), while some have expressed the opposite (Lukes, 2014; An, 2015). The lack of research surrounding dual enrollment students' experiences as they transition

from high school to community college has become a problem for college educators who wish to properly instruct and reach this subset of students (Lukes, 2014). For example, Hughes and Edwards (2012) examined the pedagogies of dual enrollment classrooms, and found many teachers struggling to understand expectations of rigor and student autonomy. Many were unsure about how much help they were allowed or expected to provide their dual enrollment students. In addition, some states are accepting dual enrollment participants as young as 12 years old (Carey, 2014). Most higher education instructors have never taught minors, and are unaware of their level of cognitive ability, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) expectations, and liability issues; often they are unaware that dual enrollment students are in their class (Hanson et al., 2015; Hughes, 2010).

An (2015), Lukes (2014), and O'Connor and Justice (2008) recommended there is a need for further research to explore student views of the dual enrollment program to discover what challenges occur in the transition from high school to community college, a process that has a direct impact on immediate college enrollment. A student's direct decision to attend college could be affected by his or her experience in the dual enrollment program (Kanny, 2015). If a student's experience is neither enhanced nor improved by the dual enrollment program, the student may choose not to continue postsecondary education, and a benefit of the program becomes void. Dual enrollment programs offer a variety of vocational qualifications and more rigorous coursework. They

can provide a positive social change within the communities housing the dual enrollment programs, but not unless students are successful (Kinnick, 2012).

The most relevant social implications and outcomes of this study impact future high school students and instructors of the dual enrollment program. As a result, policymakers and additional stakeholders, identified in the critical stakeholders section of Chapter 2, will be better informed to make decisions surrounding the dual enrollment program. Positive results of this study could yield differences in future grade point averages and college completion rates, as well as the overall experience students encounter in the dual enrollment program. An increase in graduation rates and better qualified and more marketable graduates impact the community and economy as a whole, as employment rates are maintained or increased and additional industry advances are provided by those graduates in, for example, technology, which impacts society as a whole through a more educated workforce.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of including interviews in this basic qualitative study was to discover how students reflect on and describe their experiences as dual enrollment high school students in their transition to community college. Through interviews I developed an understanding of dual enrollment students' perspectives in transitioning from high school to community college.

Research Questions

RQ1: How do dual enrollment community college students describe their experiences transitioning from high school?

RQ2: What sources of motivation do dual enrollment community college students identify in their transition from high school?

Conceptual Framework

This study uses Bandura's self- efficacy model (Bandura, 1977; Bandura, 1995; Bandura, 1997), and Keller's (2010) motivational theory and the attention, relevance, confidence, and satisfaction (ARCS) model. These models guided an investigation into student experiences, which may or may not include social interactions and students' ability to learn or overcome transitioning challenges as a part of their experience in the dual enrollment program. Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy model provided a framework for understanding students' descriptions about their capabilities in transitioning from high school to community college. Bandura (1986) stated that self-efficacy beliefs produce diverse effects through four major processes, which were cognitive, motivational, affective, and selection processes. These processes were used to interpret data collected in this study. Additionally, the students' motivational choices and circumstances were examined through Keller's (2010) theory and model. According to Keller (2010), self-efficacy plays a strong role in motivation because it contributes to a learner's confidence which, in turn, impacts his or her interests in a subject and ability to become an independent learner. Keller's (2010) ARCS model provided a way to isolate four

potential components of dual enrollment students' experiences related to motivation: Attention, relevance, confidence, and satisfaction. Both Bandura's (1977) and Keller's (2010) works provided the framework for developing an interview protocol and analyzing data and conclusions.

RQ1 considered Bandura's self-efficacy model, which Bandura (1995) defined as "the belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations" (p. 2). According to Bandura (1997), self-efficacy is developed from four areas: Mastery experiences, social modeling, social persuasion, and psychological responses. Mastery experiences are achieved through repeated achievements. The student gains self-confidence in an ability to accomplish a task independently. During the interviews in this study, I inquired about which experiences allowed students to master skills necessary to become a successful college student. Identifying how the students in the study described their motivations was illuminated by Bandura's four sources and necessary self-management skills. Students need to obtain these skills through education and build upon them early in their college pathway in order to be successful (Bandura, 1995).

RQ2 was best understood with the use of Keller's (2010) motivation theory and ARCS model. The theory and model allowed me to isolate different components of the student experience. These various components helped me focus on how the experience sustained the students' attention, what factors about the experience were most relevant to their success or failures, and how the experience related to student confidence and

satisfaction. The intent was to understand how dual enrollment students describe their motivation in transitioning to community college, and what aspects of their experience play a role in their motivation during their college experience. Those aspects are identified through Keller's ARCS model.

Nature of the Study

In this basic qualitative study, students who previously participated in a Northeast Ohio dual enrollment program and have completed at least 12 credits of coursework on campus were recruited from Slate Community College (pseudonym). An Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Ethical Standards in Research approval process was completed through Slate Community College where there are currently over 3,500 dual enrollment students from 97 different high schools in Fall 2016. A basic qualitative study with interviews allowed me to explore the students' experiences in order to collect data representative of their perceptions of transitions from high school to community college.

Definitions

Dual enrollment students: Students enrolled in both high school and college courses simultaneously regardless of modality, instructor, or credit, all of which vary by state models (Burns & Lewis, 2000; Taylor, 2015). Dual enrollment is also known as dual credit, concurrent enrollment, and coenrollment, among other terms.

Dual enrollment student sample: For the purposes of this study, the dual enrollment student sample was defined as current or former Slate Community College students who completed 12 or more on-campus or online credit hours during the 2012-

2016 academic school years. Students who completed dual enrollment classes only at their high schools were not eligible.

Assumptions

Assumptions must be identified and minimized to ascertain accuracy. As with any semistructured interview, honest and valid answers were sought out to add validity to the study, but they could not be guaranteed. It was assumed that participants responded truthfully. Another assumption of the research was instrument validity. Before analyzing the data, this validity was addressed by ensuring that the interview questions were grounded in the framework and supported through recent study findings. Keller's (2010) ARCS model and Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy model, along with open coding, were used to analyze data to determine what additional themes emerged. A final assumption was that the sample identified through initial recruitment and snowball sampling was representative of the entire dual enrollment population.

Scope and Delimitations

The purpose of this basic qualitative study using interviews was to discover how students reflect on and describe their experiences with self-efficacy and motivation, as well as their overall experiences regarding their transition to community college. In order to ensure that participants have had sufficient experience within the program, only students who completed 12 or more credit hours in the dual enrollment program were recruited. Twelve or more credit hours was considered full-time at most if not all colleges (Mullin, 2012). Students who have this minimum number of credit hours were considered

as having completed the equivalent of one full semester of college courses. In addition, participants must have received their dual enrollment classes on the college campus or online from a college instructor. Students who received instruction at their high schools were not eligible. Therefore, only Northeast Ohio dual enrollment students who completed 12 or more credit hours at Slate Community College during the 2012-2016 academic school years on the college campus or online via the learning management system (LMS), or with a college instructor, were recruited to participate.

Transferability of the data may be applicable to other state models that have adopted similar dual enrollment programs. The scope in which the study was conducted should be considered during the application of specific topics, such as modality, instructor impact, and specific state model policies. The information rich data obtained as a result of the interviews could be considered applicable beyond dual enrollment programs and considered for application to the general higher education population. Since all students entering into college for the first time experience transition, these data could assist advisors and other first-year staff with insights into the college transition process and how it influences student motivations and self-efficacy. All efforts were made to produce the most universal and transferable data for all stakeholders seeking information about dual enrollment higher education.

Limitations

One of the primary limitations of this study was the narrow parameters used to select participants in the region. For example, only one community college was used to

recruit participants. Regardless, the results of this study have the potential to impact not only where this study occurred, but other geographic locations in which dual enrollment is offered as well. Although the results returned implications for further study, generalizability of the results needs to be considered in the context of the research.

A second limitation of the study was that only student perspectives were included as data sources. Interviews with parents or administrators could produce additional understanding regarding the processes and experiences with the dual enrollment program. However, only student perspectives were sought out specifically to allow no other perspectives to influence the themes emerging from data coding. Other sources of data that could have been addressed include graduation and retention rates.

Limitations were minimized through the nature of the study, which allowed for open coding and reduced a certain amount of bias since there were no predetermined codes (Maxwell, 2013). If prestructured codes had been used, they could have jeopardized seeing emergent themes and caused inadvertent one-way thinking (Maxwell, 2013), or made improper connections to information that was not there or observed links based on those preexisting codes. Therefore, prestructured codes were not used in this study. In order to eliminate bias and increase dependability of the study, transcripts of the interviews were provided to participants to review and to confirm themes and patterns. Any additional bias was minimized through immediate transcription of the interviews and by using combination coding. Rubin and Rubin (2012) suggested starting coding with the

concepts and themes that the researcher asked about that were most evident in the research, then moving toward ideas and explanations that the interviewees emphasized.

Significance

The results of this study indicated additional insights into dual enrollment student transition from high school to community college. In this research, I explored the experiences of students in the dual enrollment program with the expectation that results might assist stakeholders in making more informed decisions surrounding the dual enrollment programs. Having more faculty and students engaged with dual enrollment opportunities has potential for good outcomes for students and communities alike, with increased opportunities for college enrollment, improved attrition rates, and commitment to program completion, as seen in research on higher education persistence. Lastly, the results indicate research-based evidence to support dual enrollment programs in reaching their full potential through the outcome of successful, marketable, and employable students.

Summary

Dual enrollment programs have had an important impact on college enrollment through making college more accessible to over 2 million students (National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), 2015a). For a program with such influence, minimal research appears to be available regarding the experiences of the program's target audience: High school students. The problem, purpose, and significance of this study have been identified in Chapter 1. The research questions concentrated on the most

understudied aspects of dual enrollment while providing insight into the transition process and how students identified the role of motivation and self-efficacy in the transition process. In Chapter 2, I present an extensive literature review of current research in order to document the gaps in research and determine the best approach for this study in Chapter 3.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Student enrollment at the community college level is declining or plateauing nationwide (U.S. Department of Education, NCES, 2015b). Dual enrollment can help alleviate this trend (An, 2012; Carey, 2014). According to Hoffman et al. (2009), dual enrollment has become a "central strategy for increasing college-going rates of local high school students, and community colleges are leading the way in making accelerated learning options available" (p. 44). This type of program can benefit the students as much as the high schools and colleges implementing it. However, the speed at which dual enrollment has evolved in education has become a concern because many of the program's components such as funding and accessibility are still being ironed out by the governing states while students are already benefiting and/or suffering from their results (Cowan & Goldhaber, 2015; Lukes, 2014). What was missing from the discussion was the students' perspectives on the transition process.

Dual enrollment has resulted in both positive and negative effects on student success (An, 2015; Taylor, 2015; Wozniak & Palmer, 2013), but experts in the field of higher education have minimal understanding regarding student perspective (Kanny, 2015). College faculty and staff have accumulated little research to connect to this subset of students through quality lesson plans and advising. Little is known regarding what motivates dual enrollment students (Nash-Ditzel & Brown, 2012; Oliver et al., 2010). Understanding the transition process will inform college personnel about the transition students are experiencing, as well as how to accurately recruit, advise, and retain

incoming dual enrollment students (Hongwei, 2015). In addition, this study provides applicable and valuable insight into student perceptions of the transition process. These perceptions could provide answers regarding student perceptions of postsecondary education and give policymakers and stakeholders empirical research to make more informed decisions regarding dual enrollment policies and processes in order to better benefit the stakeholders of the dual enrollment program.

In this chapter, I explain the literature search strategy and expand on the conceptual framework. Finally, in the literature review, I provide an in-depth review of the current themes surrounding dual enrollment. The sections in this chapter include the literature search strategy, the conceptual framework, including both Bandura (1997) and Keller's (2010) theories, the literature review, and summary. In this literature review, after exposing the strengths and weaknesses in current studies, I confirm the need for research.

Literature Search Strategy

The most current peer-reviewed research was obtained using several education databases, including ERIC, SAGE, ProQuest, and Education Research Complete through Walden University's Thoreau Library portal. From the topics to be discussed in this chapter, the key words *dual enrollment*, *concurrent enrollment*, *student perspective*, *college transition*, *community college dual enrollment*, *student motivation dual enrollment*, *self-efficacy dual enrollment*, and *dual credit* were entered to generate results in each of the databases. This study is to take place in Ohio; therefore, to return results

specific to Ohio, the term *College Credit Plus* was also used, although no results specific to Ohio's College Credit Plus program were identified. Initially, each keyword was entered individually, then additional keywords were added to filter search results to return more specific literature. Articles were analyzed and coded to identify themes and topics to be discussed as they relate to the research questions and problem statement of this study.

Google Scholar was also used to exhaust the research and obtain the greatest number of articles from the Internet. Each of those articles was manually sorted and vetted for current, peer-reviewed material with the exception of a few seminal articles that provided a unique contribution to this literature review. Next, I discuss the conceptual framework used as the basis for this basic qualitative approach to the study.

Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

The relationship between student experience, student learning, and student self-efficacy is best addressed through Bandura's self-efficacy model (1997) and Keller's (2010) motivational theory and ARCS model, which depict that experience, self-efficacy, and motivation are all directly related. This conceptual framework will provide the foundation to the research and guide the interview questions, as well as data interpretation and application. Both Bandura and Keller's theories are expanded upon in the following two sections.

Bandura: Self-efficacy

Bandura (1997) developed the three-phase cycle of self-regulation. In the first phase of this cycle, the learner reflects on his or her own performance or knowledge of a subject. Second, the learner sets a goal. In the third phase of the cycle, the learner takes action on the goal, then reflects on what has happened (Bandura, 1997). For example, a high school math student may have struggled with math in the past, but has set a goal to do well on an upcoming quiz. If the results of the quiz are negative, the student will be more likely to resist learning math. If the results of the quiz are positive, the student may become more likely to be proactive about the next quiz. Self-regulation has a direct influence on self-efficacy and self-esteem. Both self-efficacy and self-esteem are at the foundation of the Bandura's self-efficacy model.

With regard to this research, self-efficacy is defined as "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective action required to manage prospective situations" (Bandura, 1995, p. 2). Bandura's social cognitive model shows that there are three factors that influence self-efficacy: Behaviors, environment, and personal/cognitive factors. These factors produce diverse effects through four major processes, which are cognitive, motivational, affective, and selection processes. An individual's performance can be either enhanced or challenged by his or her self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997).

A high sense of self-efficacy results in successful visions for oneself, and is followed by positive steps to make the vision more realistic (Bandura, 1997). Conversely,

if an individual perceives him or herself as inefficacious, successful visions are challenging, and seem more apt for others to accomplish than the individual (Krueger & Dickson, 1994). Self-directed learning is one of the primary outcomes of a student with high self-efficacy. Additional student outcomes of higher efficacy span a wide range, from the development of flexible learning styles and coping strategies (Keller, 2010) to a higher emotional intelligence and a greater likelihood to achieve goals. Bandura (1997) believed that perceived efficacy has the greatest impact on academic performance through higher levels of thinking and use of acquired knowledge, and indirectly by heightening persistence in the search for solutions.

Keller: ARCS Model

Similarly, Keller (2010) concurred that students with higher self-efficacy are more likely to perform better than students with lower self-efficacy. An individual with lower self-efficacy is more likely to have increased anxiety when facing a challenge and focus on his or her inabilities than the given task (Keller, 2010). Keller's (2010) ARCS model accounts for self-efficacy in the confidence category. According to Keller (2010), getting and sustaining the attention of a learner is the first step in human motivation. The second step is for the learner to identify relevance, and the third is to gain confidence. The last step of the model is to gain some type of satisfaction from the experience. The ARCS model assisted the combination data analysis process and served as a starting point to identify the attention, relevance, confidence, and satisfaction of a dual enrollment learner.

Engaging students is often one of the most challenging aspects of teaching. If students are not engaged, they are less likely to become motivated (Hughes & Edwards, 2012). Gaining their attention for a new concept must be seen as relevant to them per the Relevance portion of Keller's (2010) ARCS model. According to Keller (2010), attention can be gained through perceptual arousal or inquiry arousal, and is sustained through variability. In order to find out what attracts the attention of students and moves them to enroll in dual enrollment programs, responses can be classified as perceptual arousal or inquiry arousal. Perceptual arousal, as defined by Keller (2010), is the ability to generate interest using surprise or uncertainty, whereas inquiry arousal stimulates challenge or critical thinking for an individual. Relevance is determined through goal orientation, motive matching, and familiarity. This became another key component to understanding how students identify their sources of motivation to enroll in a dual enrollment program. Their goals might be seen as a part of the bigger picture, such as graduation, or less significant milestone, such as taking a challenging course. Confidence plays a direct role in how students perceive their self-efficacy upon completion of the program and high school graduation (Ozmun, 2013). Finally, satisfaction is determined through natural consequences or positive consequences. If a student has completed the program, gaining a vast amount of knowledge satisfaction is natural; however, if a student completed the program and gained a substantial amount of credit hours, then his or her satisfaction is classified as a positive consequence. Student motivation is more likely to be understood and applied to the research study through Research Question 2. After all four categories

of the ARCS model were addressed, motivation was better understood and applied to the results of the research.

The conceptual framework for this study was critical for developing the research and interview questions. They also inspired several components of the research discussion and interpretation of the findings. The theories discussed in this section provide a solid foundation for addressing the problem statement and guiding interpretations of the findings in Chapter 3. Self-efficacy theory was also utilized in dual enrollment research conducted by Ozmun (2013). Next, the discussion of policies and guidelines will provide an overview of the systematic underpinnings of the dual enrollment program.

Literature Review

Current peer-reviewed literature has been exhausted to identify a gap in dual enrollment literature, develop a problem statement, and support the overall dissertation. Dual enrollment research findings will highlight topics such as transition, retention, effect on GPA, culture, and so on. Retention has become a debatable outcome of the dual enrollment program; while some researchers claim it provides a seamless transition into postsecondary education (Hoffman, 2012; Hoffman et al., 2009, Lukes, 2014), others are apprehensive about its impact on transition (An & Taylor, 2015; Cowan & Goldberg, 2015). Several additional studies have found that dual enrollment has exerted a positive influence on student retention (Allen and Dagar, 2012; An, 2015; Cowan & Goldhaber, 2015; Foster, 2010). In research completed by Foster (2010), similar to An (2015),

findings determined that the more credit hours earned in an accelerated/transition program, the more likely students would be to remain in their degree programs and maintain higher GPAs than students who did not participate in an accelerated program. Additionally, Cowan and Goldhaber (2015) found that "students who participate in dual enrollment are more likely to attend any college immediately after high school graduation, but are no more likely to attend college full time and are less likely to attend a four-year university" (p. 450). This finding disagrees with Hughes (2010), who found that, while much dual enrollment is popular among community colleges, participating students in the study who went on to postsecondary once completing high school were more likely to enroll in a four-year institution. Whether students are more likely to enroll in a two-year or four-year institution, the outcome of persistence is the same, according to Morrow and Ackerman (2012).

Before dual enrollment students can successfully integrate into college, they must be recruited and retained by the college. Very few studies address the recruitment of dual enrollment students. For example, Haag (2015) tracked a cohort of Career Technical Education (CTE) students attaining college credit through courses offered at the high school and found that only 35% of the cohort matriculated to college post-graduation (Haag 2015). Recommendations to improve enrollment and overcome program challenges were to better educate faculties, both college and high school, about the opportunities and benefits of the program. Also, the initialization of incentives for

recruitment, and analysis of decisions to offer nontransferable classes and the long-term impact of those classes, could significantly improve the retention efforts of the program.

One article by Adkins, Anderson, and Skekloff, (2014) resolved a need for recruitment in Indiana by identifying an opportunity through high school librarians. Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne offered dual enrollment courses through a program termed Collegiate Connection, where students attended college classes at the high school with a high school instructor. This presented a unique demand for the librarians, as more and more students were engaged in higher levels of research, and the librarians became more and more familiar with the Collegiate Connection program. Adkins, Anderson, and Skekloff (2014) discovered that efforts to recruit students through the librarians for dual enrollment were successful. In addition, it recognized the librarian's role in the education process and enhanced their profile within the school.

Dual enrollment is not the only program offered throughout the country in which postsecondary opportunities are available. Tinto (1993) identified college bridge programs that he referred to as transition assistance programs, and noted that unfortunately, they have become less popular, especially among high risk groups and two-year colleges. Most institutions have replaced these types of programs with a one-day optional, sometimes mandatory, orientation (Tinto, 1993).

Other programs include, but are not limited to, early college programs, bridge programs, jump start programs, or upward bound programs. These programs all have the same goal: To help high school students transition to college more easily. However, their

structure, funding, and administrative elements are quite different, and vary by state. In addition, students in some states do significantly better than others (Fink, Jenkins, & Yanagiura, 2017). The term “early college” refers to students in high school taking high school classes that are college level. They can earn high school credit just the same as dual enrollment students; however, the courses are high school or early college high school driven. In some states, they are not monitored or guided by the college, but in other states they are. In data uncovered by Arshavsky, Bernstein, Edmunds, Fesler, Furey, Glennie, and Unlu (2017), the early college model was a catalyst for successful college completion for underrepresented and low-income populations.

“Bridge programs” is a general term used to describe any program in which high school students are being *bridged* to college. The objectives of a bridge program are similar to those achieved in the dual enrollment program, with the exception of earned college credit. In a study cited by Lonn, Augilar, and Teasley (2015), outcomes of a summer bridge program are insignificant, and do not appear to have any major effects on student retention or motivation. A study conducted by Fletcher, Newell, Newton, and Anderson-Rowlands (2001), as cited in Lonn et al. (2015), indicated similar findings.

Conversely, a study conducted by Strayhorn (2011) found students who completed the bridge program successfully between high school and college developed greater study habits, and had higher GPAs and increased confidence in seeking support and college resources. This specific program allowed for minimal role rehearsal, where student college academic skills were enhanced through explanation of the syllabus,

integrated use of technology, time management and prioritization, and focus on contingency plans, all of which were not emphasized in the above-mentioned studies. There is little description about the bridge program, and how or when specifically it was implemented differently from other programs. Research surrounding bridge programs and other transition programs is limited. One could conclude that the popularity of dual enrollment has overpowered less popular transition programs.

Upward bound programs and jump start programs both could be categorized as specific programs in different state operating and funding models. While the objectives remain the same, there is little evidence of significant impact transition and motivation of high school students to college (Tinto, 1995). These programs are brief in nature and do not allow for extended, if any, time in role rehearsal at all. They fail to influence student competencies, decrease time to completion, or provide the same financial benefits (Taylor, 2015), although, in a study conducted by Strayhorn (2011), outcomes of the bridge program proved to influence academic outcomes.

Very few studies have been conducted specific to dual enrollment in Ohio. Pretlow and Patteson (2015), in agreement with Dever (2017), indicated Ohio's dual enrollment policies are more decentralized and dependent on the interpretations of specific policies. The transferability of courses is one example. Ohio has adopted a specific transferability system in which specific courses are either or both Ohio Transfer Module (OTM) or Transfer Assurance Guides (TAG) classified. Both classification

systems are for general education courses or program-specific courses. This system has been integral to ensuring transferability within Ohio.

Aside from the study conducted by Pretlow and Patteson (2015), investigating dual enrollment policies in Ohio and Virginia, there is no research available, with Ohio as its setting, in which student perspectives of the program are sought. This study is needed to develop a better understanding of how the program influences community college student motivation and self-efficacy. Both are equally critical to the success of students and, therefore, the success of the dual enrollment programs.

Discovering what occurs after dual enrollment is a critical component to a program's ability to empower students. According to Tinto (1993), these programs provide a number of benefits and successful outcomes. He noted that there is a vast amount of communication involved in these programs among the participants with regard to academic, social, and /or residential issues. According to Tinto (1993), these programs place a strong emphasis on academic expectations and strategies for being successful academically. For example, as a result of the programs, study groups and student learning communities, both of which are highly influential in the main areas of student retention-academic, motivational, and social challenges especially, promote connections that are formed and may last longer than the program requirements.

Researchers Medvide and Blustein (2010) interviewed 12 dual enrollment high school students from low-income backgrounds. Students interviewed were asked a total of 48 questions focusing on their career aspirations. Study findings identified motivation

to achieve academic and career goals, goal orientation, and self-identity as patterns found in dual enrollment students. “Students’ discussion of their participation in the dual enrollment program… seems to be associated with optimism and a sense of confidence about the participants’ abilities to pursue their academic and career goals” (Medvide & Blustein, 2010, p. 550). Internal motivation was determined by personal desire to succeed through personal growth or acquisition of knowledge. External motivation was apparent through external rewards, such as earning good grades, being accepted into college, and receiving financial support or scholarships at their postsecondary institution. One of the study’s limitations was the lack of longitudinal research or follow-up with those students to find out if they had enrolled in postsecondary education or followed their career interests.

This research conducted by Medvide and Blustein (2010) was relevant to this research study. Although their questions 35 through 48 examined culture and background, and were therefore irrelevant for the scope of this study, other questions focused on relationships developed with college personnel, work experience, support received, transition into the program, and perceptions of course instructor and curriculum. The courses were taught by college professors, and were limited to mathematics, science, and technology at a private, technology-based community college. There was no mention of the students’ prior or post GPA. Finally, it should be noted there was insufficient information on how the sample size was obtained.

In contrast to the above studies, Cowan and Goldhaber's (2015) findings indicated that dual enrollment students are more likely to drop out of high school or to complete high school by achieving a General Education Diploma (GED). In addition, they found dual enrollment students appeared to achieve lower final grades than expected, possibly due to rigorous standards of college level courses, and were less likely than non-dual enrolled students to complete high school. The researchers argued findings in the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (2010a, 2010b, & 2011) have been misrepresented with narrowed perimeters and misclassification bias on college enrollment (Cowan & Goldhaber, 2015).

Students who have earned college credit while in high school are more likely to be successful during their postsecondary education as demonstrated through GPA (Allen et al., 2010) and a higher likelihood of immediate college entry upon high school graduation (Allen & Dadgar, 2012; Wang et al., 2015). In addition, students who participate in dual enrollment courses are less likely to complete remediation courses in college (Grubb, Scott, & Good, 2017). According to Wang et al. (2015), the more credits of postsecondary education completed in high school, the greater the positive outcomes that can be contributed to academic momentum. Allen and Dadgar (2012) found that time to completion was greatly impacted by the number of dual enrollment courses successfully completed. Consequently, students who successfully completed a higher number of courses while in high school were more likely to complete a degree in college. More importantly, student confidence and commitment towards degree completion could

be gained upon the successful completion of dual enrollment courses (Lewis & Overman, 2008; Oliver, Ricard, Witt, Alvarado, & Hill, 2010).

Dual enrollment has been shown to influence retention for low income minority students (An, 2013; Taylor, 2015) and urban minority students (Medvide & Bulstein, 2010; Taylor, 2015), as well as those students who did not visualize themselves successful in the challenges that a college education presents (Hoffman, Vargas, & Santos, 2009, p. 44). Students who face challenges in high school because of their socioeconomic background may be less likely to enroll in college (Hoffman, 2012) and attempt challenges in which the resources to be successful have proven to be scarce (Barnett, Maclutsky, & Wagonlander, 2015). For example, students who are first generation college students encounter difficulties obtaining informative personal college experiences (Oliver et al., 2010). As a result, sources for these experiences are strictly non-family, making them dependent on the stories reported by others (Oliver et al., 2010).

Wang et al. (2015) identified the lack of research available to understand how dual enrollment impacts two-year colleges with respect to momentum. They predicted that dual enrollment students who attempt more course credits and experience increased academic progress will gain positive, significant influence towards their longer-term educational outcomes. Wang et al. (2015) investigated secondary source data from the National Student Clearing House and Wisconsin Technical College System Office (WTCS). A sample of 15,449 student transcripts was analyzed for four indicators of

momentum: Attempted credits, delayed entry, summer enrollment, and first-semester GPA. The results showed early academic momentum indicators, such as college entry without delay and summer enrollment, as well as stronger academic performance, were positively correlated to more attempted credits hours in the dual enrollment program.

Moreover, Wang et al. (2015) pointed out that dual enrollment promotes uninterrupted enrollment into postsecondary pathways from high school by minimizing the likelihood of delayed college entry. During a student's first year, first-term GPA and attempted credits both positively correlated the relationship between dual enrollment and student retaining or completion, similar to quantitative findings in research conducted by Wang and McCready (2013). Dual enrollment students established higher GPAs during the first semester of college and attempted more credit hours during the first year, which related to their longer-term outcomes. Finally, summer enrollment was positively connected with dual enrollment and retention as well.

Wang et al. (2015) found that, among key indicators, summer enrollment appeared to be the strongest predictor of retention and completion. They stated that "students who took summer courses were 13% more likely to be retained at the fourth term or have achieved a credential by then, compared to their counterparts without summer enrollment experience" (Wang et al., 2015, p. 176). Effect sizes and *p*-values were accurately interpreted and described in the results of the data. For example, the momentum indicator, attempted credit hours, has a greater effect on fourth-term retention (.01) than delayed entry (-.04). Results described in the article were aligned with the rest

of the study, and depicted accurate, well-supported statements derived from the findings. Finally, Wang et al. (2015) expressed a tremendous need for more research of more casual impacts, such as modality, rigor, and motivation, all of which I intend to explore through a basic qualitative interview in this study. Each of those sections are discussed below to assist in synthesizing aspects of this study.

Modality, Rigor, and Motivation

Three topics that are often changing and being discussed in state dual enrollment models are course modality, rigor, and motivation (Taylor et al., 2015) Course modality is an appealing characteristic for most high school students who often want something outside the traditional high school classroom environment, but present an issue of transportation and scheduling for those taking on-campus courses (Roach et al., 2015). Rigor has become one of the more abundant topics in dual enrollment, since students are treated as college ready academically once registered for a dual enrollment course (Hanson et al., 2015). In most states, remedial classes are not permitted to be taken in the dual enrollment program, and for students who do not place into college courses, this presents an additional barrier to enrolling in dual enrollment courses (Taylor et al., 2015; Ferguson, Baker, Burnett, 2015). However, there are a wide variety of classes available for those who excel academically and want to enroll in on-level college courses and beyond on-level courses. Finally, the notion of motivation presents either a barrier for those students who do not have a full understanding of what it means to be a college

student (Karp, 2012), or an opportunity to be gained for those who develop the confidence that comes with mastering college curriculum (Allen & Dadgar, 2012).

Course modality. Course modality plays a significant role in dual enrollment programs; effective course modality is based on course rigor and the benefits available for the student (Burns & Lewis, 2000; Nash-Ditzel & Brown, 2012; Hanson et al., 2015; Hebert, 2001). One of the key features of the dual enrollment program is the location where the student is taking the college courses. Most institutions offer courses in three distinct locations. First, high school students can take courses with a college instructor online through a learning management system, such as Blackboard or ANGEL. Second, courses could be taken from a high school instructor on site in the high school environment. Gerwin, Hooker, and Vargas (2017) suggest this arrangement as preferable to high schools in order to save on costs for transportation in circumstances where the districts are responsible for providing transportation. Third, a high school student can enroll to take courses face-to-face on a college campus with a college instructor. Additional, less common modalities do exist, such as a college instructor conducting a college class at the high school.

In a study conducted by Arnold, Knight, and Flora (2017), the researchers investigated whether or not there was a variation in dual enrollment course grades in three different modalities: Online, face-to-face at the high school, face-to-face at the college. They also investigated four different subjects, adding more validity to the study: English, math, biology, and history. After comparing 3,639 final grades in the areas of

English and math, they found that students who completed courses on a college campus had a significantly lower ANOVA than those who completed them at high school or online, which is consistent with the English findings of Dixon and Slate's (2014) study. Dixon and Slate also found psychology to be another subject yielding the same results as English. However, in the area of biology, there was not a significant difference in the outcomes of the ANOVA test (Arnold et al., 2017). The final content area tested was history, and since fewer than 5 students took the course on the college campus, this modality was excluded. Results from Welch's t test showed students who completed the history course online did significantly better than those who completed the course in high school. The article did not specify the instructor type, whether a high school teacher or college teacher of each modality, which yields significant impact in results of delivery, according to Howley et al. (2013), and the amount of face-to-face contact time each student had with the instructor, which is an explanation the findings of Herbert's (2001) study described next.

Hebert (2001) explored learning outcomes for dual enrollment math students taught by high school faculty and college faculty. In Hebert's research, there was an opportunity to explore a fourth course modality, where students could enroll in a course at the high school, but it is taught by college faculty. This arrangement presents an opportunity for research to cross analyze different academic rigors, student discussions, and key motivators. In Hebert's research, the course modality was considered only as a part of the independent variable. One of the strengths of Hebert's study was the five-year

time period in which new and existing data on students who were enrolled in dual enrollment math was analyzed. Students were divided into two groups for Hebert's quasi-experimental research. Group A, 920 students, was taught by a high school teacher, and Group B, 913 students, was taught by a college faculty member. Data were analyzed and controlled for specific variables (by group, by race, by sex). After enrolling in college, students in Group A, those taught by a high school teacher, achieved higher final grades in the course. This is consistent with Arnold et al.'s (2017) findings in the content area of Math.

Hebert (2001) provided one possible explanations of this outcome was that college instructors were scheduled to meet with the students approximately half the time that high school instructors were scheduled with their students. One interesting factor that Hebert (2001) added was that high school teachers who taught dual enrollment courses felt this was a privilege and part of seniority. In other studies, high school teachers were shown to be underprepared as to how best create a college environment, and those teachers questioned the amount of support that should be provided to students (Hughes & Edwards, 2012), because rigor might have exceeded the expectations of the student (Hanson et al., 2015). Hebert's study was large enough to make a valid assumption about the high school environment, and compare college instructors and high school instructors in their separate environments. Implications for further research included taking into account all four modalities or collecting raw interview data from students that investigated how their dual enrollment courses helped them succeed or not in their post-

math courses. The quantitative analysis was well conducted; however, it indicated the need for further research across different teaching subjects, institutions, and modalities.

Course modality appears to play a significant role in dual enrollment programs because of the benefits students receive from successfully completing courses at specific locations (main campus, satellite campus, high school, or online). However, Dixon and Slate (2014) caution that findings gathered from location specific studies as student motivation and site advising play a significant factor in student success. There is often a lack of literature available to both students and parents regarding dual enrollment options, and students and parents are dependent on the knowledge of high school advisors (Dever, 2017). Burns and Lewis (2000) investigated the impact of the facility on the instructional benefit of the course. Six dual enrollment students were interviewed, with three having taken classes at a college and three having taken classes at a high school. The research question for this study asked how the location of co–enrollment courses (high school or community college) impacted the climate of the classroom (Burns & Lewis, 2000). While the research approach was fitting, the study was small and fairly outdated. In addition, the author noted several construct validity, internal validity, external validity and reliability considerations which were concerns for the quality of the study. Final conclusions of the study determined that the dual enrollment course was of greater value if the college course was taken on the college campus. Additional conclusions about the climate of the classroom and course rigor could not be determined, and a plea for more research to be conducted was heavily apparent throughout the article.

Online learning environments continue to grow significantly and prove to be an opportunity for dual enrollment students, according to Veletsianos, Beth, Lin, and Russell (2016). The most successful delivery to online dual enrollment students incorporates problem-based learning (PBL) and project-based learning (PBL), according to Veletsianos et al. (2016). With the exception of Arnold et al. (2017) and Veletianos et al., (2016), online environments are an understudied modality of dual enrollment course delivery. There is little research done in which dual enrollment online environments are considered an independent variable, making them comparable to non-online environment where dual enrollment courses take place. One reason for this could be that students enrolled in dual enrollment courses online are often mixed in with the general population of students, and therefore, for the purposes of this study, these courses cannot be classified as solely dual enrollment courses.

Course rigor. Lewis and Overman (2008) determined that dual enrollment courses improve efficiency to degree attainment, but not academic skill sets. They summarized two different studies conducted, both focusing on dual enrollment students and their transition to college academics. The first was done by (Karp et al., 2007) and the second was completed by (Kotamraju, 2005). Two control groups were used in both experiments, along with regression methods, to determine that dual enrollment students were 16% more likely to enroll in postsecondary education than those who had not taken dual enrollment courses. One of the conclusions both studies indicated was that the outcomes of the program, which included increased grade point average and a head start

on succeeding in college courses, were nearly identical no matter the course of study; however, this declined as postsecondary exposure increased. The article notes that some policies had been modified in order for students to receive college credit based on the grade earned in the course. However, one of the stated limitations of the study was that the quality of the dual enrollment course was not investigated.

An (2015) analyzed data from the Wabsah National Study of Liberal Arts Education, completing a quantitative analysis that found a positive impact of dual enrollment on first-year college GPA and the impacts remaining after monitoring for academic motivation and engagement. Additional analysis concluded that dual enrollment students were more motivated and responsive in classrooms; however, the difference was less than 20%. Hughes and Edwards (2012) disagreed with An's (2015) conclusions, as they examined innovative pedagogical practices of dual enrollment classrooms. Pedagogies in dual enrollment classrooms (at the high school or on the college campus) are similar to traditional classroom settings. Hughes and Edwards's (2012) action research project for Concurrent Courses Initiative (CCI) was implemented to investigate rigor and expand academic skill sets. They found that by investigating some of the learning and development issues in a dual enrollment setting through self-reflective methods, they were able to adjust their teaching strategies to benefit both dual enrollment and matriculated students.

One strategy used to create motivation and uphold rigor in Hughes and Edward's (2012) research was student–centered learning. Through student-centered learning,

projects take into account students' history and needs--critical for underrepresented populations. Another strategy used in the study to uphold rigor was to make content meaningful to the student. Students were more engaged and achieved higher standards when a course, such as a cultural diversity course, implemented projects where students explored their own backgrounds. In addition, the faculty being studied by Hughes and Edwards integrated supports beyond class time and student validation in order to ensure that students were more successful in their dual enrollment courses. After modifying efforts (instructional scaffolding, validation, student-centered projects, emphasis on cultural relevancy), without the sacrifice of rigor, in the classroom and outside the classroom, students showed an increase in rapport with their teachers, stronger academic skills, and appreciation for the supportive and collaborative classroom environment. Rigor was not reduced nor ignored by the small number of faculty participants (exact number not provided by the article) when implementing these new strategies to become a part of a new pedagogy to make dual enrollment students more successful. Through the lens of the teacher, new pedagogical strategies appeared to be successful; however, through the lens of the student, it was still uncertain how success is defined.

Aside from there being little validity and structure to the study, the Hughes and Edwards (2012) collaboration among the colleagues seemed to be most apparent through the use of an internal project website. The challenges discussed seem to indicate reoccurring themes that would have been established with the presence of a more structured study. More importantly, the solutions that resulted from these discussions

indicated a number of benefits to adjusting the pedagogies of the instructors of dual enrollment students and led them to more eye-opening information about the preparedness of their students.

Institutional perspectives of success are traditionally portrayed as number of degrees earned or graduation rates (Mullin, 2012). However, community colleges typically measure student learning through "analytical reasoning and critical ranking, communication, innovative and creative thinking, quantitative literacy, information literacy, teamwork and collaborative skills, global understanding and citizenship, and content or career – specific skills and knowledge" through a survey tool (Mullin, 2012, p.137). As explained by Karp (2012), in role rehearsal, the course modality gives the student the opportunity to work independently, become independent by taking on tasks such as following a syllabus, develop higher levels of thinking, and participate in multifaceted discussions. Students who are enrolled in dual enrollment classes at the high school are often positioned in the classroom with non-dual enrollment students. As a result, Karp (2012) notes that their role-related-learning was nonexistent. This can prove to be a major setback for a dual enrollment program, as those students are not benefiting from role rehearsal as much as those who receive a college course on a college campus. However, there is no current study that questions students one–on–one about their role rehearsal and how it has affected or not affected their ability to learn as well as transition.

Nash-Ditzel and Brown (2012) conducted a study in which a third space learning environment was adopted. As cited in Nash-Ditzel and Brown (2012), Gutierrez (2009)

defines third space as a place where contested thoughts, values, beliefs, and languages are exposed. Similar to the student-centered learning strategy used in dual enrollment pedagogies stated previously in this section, third space environment projects are created by students rather than teachers (Nash-Ditzel & Brown, 2012). The outcomes of this interview-based study did not include dual enrollment students. However, the results are applicable to my study, as they relate to the questions. The five participants placed in the third space, a digital reading log provided by Nash-Ditzel and Brown, developed heightened engagement in reading material and motivation during the digital reading log activity. There were significant outcomes as a result of the study, where students transferred strategies they had learned to other classes as well as to their peers. This study was evidence that course modality, rigor, and motivation are directly linked.

Student motivation. Motivation begins to take place when students become more independent in their ability to think critically about the material they are learning and develop autonomy through study habits and self-discipline (Nash-Ditzel & Brown, 2012). In a quantitative study conducted by An (2015), and consistent with Karp, Calcagno, Hughes, Jeong, & Bailey, (2007), the dual enrollment program did not impact the degree attainment of students with college–educated parents. As a result, students with less-educated parents who completed dual enrollment courses yielded the greatest impact of motivation for degree attainment (An, 2015). Another interesting finding in An's study was that those students who earned only three college credits were no more likely to attain a degree than non-dual enrolled students: However, those who obtained six or more

credits were 12% more likely to attain a bachelor's degree than non-dual enrolled students. There is little in way of conclusion to explain how those six or more credits influence the motivation of students to move forward to completion.

In a separate study, Ozmun's (2013) quantitative research surveyed 114 high school juniors to explore students' reported levels of college and academic self-efficacy prior to their enrollment in a dual-credit class. They explored the connection between academic achievement (in terms of reported letter grade) and high school students' perceptions of their own self-efficacy. Data were collected while students were on campus for a program orientation by the college's Office of Institutional Research, then forwarded to the researcher. Survey responses indicated that the decision to enroll in dual-credit classes was influenced by none other than the students themselves. In addition, students were most confident when running for a student government office or writing a high-quality term paper. Survey responses indicated students felt the least confident in attending class regularly, socializing with roommates, and getting along with roommates. Academic motivation was measured, and the rating of the statement "getting the best grades I can is very important to me" was the highest of the nine statements that were a part of the survey. Results of this study indicated students who reported being academically motivated did not report high levels of college and academic self-efficacy. It was also determined that college and academic self-efficacy are not indicators for enrollment in a dual-credit program. Findings indicated that the researcher underestimated the program's effect on student transition. Ozmun stated the transition

role instrumented by dual-credit programs may be more pronounced and play a larger causal part than the researcher originally predicted (Ozmun, 2013).

Dual Enrollment Populations

Dual enrollment has a diverse range of students who enroll in the program. Student demographics vary widely in reference to age, grade level, race, economic status, academic skill levels, location, chosen major, first-generation status, and so on. In addition, their support systems (Barnett et al., 2015), motivations (An 2015; Ozmun, 2013), and confidence all vary greatly for each student. McCord and Roberts (2014) argue that, regardless of age, students' preparedness and motivation are key factors to a successful experience in the dual enrollment program. With this logic, students who are pressured to take part in the program by their parents and counselors are less successful than those who inquire and enroll in the program on their own.

As stated previously, the more college credit hours students completed while in high school, the greater the impact the dual enrollment program has on retention, grade point average, and overall dual enrollment experience (Allen & Dadger, 2012, An, 2015; Foster, 2010; Wang et al. 2015). Students who do not accumulate as many credit hours in high school as other dual enrollment students may not reap the same benefits. To date, there no studies which explore the experiences of students who chose to attempt one course and did not enroll in a second term. This population is not relative to this study, since students who were immersed in the college culture were investigated; however, future research could help identify students who could be at risk in dual enrollment

courses or recognize issues with a specific program that otherwise might not be problematic for students who completed a greater number of credit hours.

A final consideration in the population of dual enrollment students is the growing number of high school students from other countries who are taking U.S. college credit. According to Jiayi and Hagedorn (2015), international students who successfully participate in an international dual enrollment program, have stronger retention rates than their American counterparts. Since the data collected for this study took place at only one specific Midwestern University, it is recommended that further research be done to explore the understudied area of international students enrolled in dual enrollment programs while still residing in their home country.

Critical Stakeholder Considerations

Critical stakeholder considerations target those affected by the program, and the gap in the literature leaves stakeholders with critical unanswered questions (Hanson et al., 2015). Overall, there are very few qualitative studies found in dual enrollment research. Howley et al. (2013) conducted one of the few, interviewing 22 individuals who had direct contact with the dual enrollment program. Interviewees included 12 high school participants - six teachers, four principals, one technology coordinator, and one guidance counselor. Ten college participants, including six faculty members and four administrators, were interviewed as well. Students were not interviewed as a part of the study. Post data collection two separate analyses were performed. After the first inductive coding analysis proved to be insufficient because it did not expose patterns that were

significantly powerful to understand important dynamics, the second analysis, adopting both inductive and deductive codes, was utilized to achieve a more thorough understanding of the student responses (Howley et al., 2013).

The primary focus of the semi-structured interviews was to generate themes and suggestions for developing strategies in order to establish and sustain early college and dual enrollment programs. These suggestions were grounded in the following fundamental themes: “organizational conditions and motives, border crossers, organizational power dynamics, and personal attitudes regarding early college and dual enrollment” (Howley et al., 2013, p. 77). Border crossers were identified as individuals who bridged communication gaps and worked to create a cohesive environment between high school and college similar to outcomes found in research by Dever (2017). In addition, the research design was suitable for obtaining the perspectives of a variety of individuals involved within programs, with the exception of students.

Another qualitative study that was just recently published by Kanny (2015) interviewed 5 high school students to explore the advantages and disadvantages of the dual enrollment program. This small study took place in Los Angeles, California. While the study was published in a peer-reviewed journal, there was minimal structure to critical components of the research. For example, there was no mention of how participants were recruited, and there was a lack of foundation supporting a purpose or problem statement. In addition, the study lacked transparency regarding the researcher’s role within the institution and disregarded any bias that may or may not be evident.

Findings from Kanny (2015) and Stephenson (2013) indicated students in the dual enrollment program benefited from exposure, learning the hidden curriculum, and independence and freedom. Early experience with college level expectations, development of skills, and coping strategies allowed students the opportunity to successfully emulate the role rehearsal also seen in Karp (2012). Hidden curriculum, as discussed by Kanny (2015), is the importance of developing relationships with college instructors and becoming aware of learning styles. Several participants noted that their dual enrollment courses challenged them with regards to freedom. Some students developed confidence in their ability to manage their time, whereas others felt alone and struggled with assignments, especially if they missed class or were not as attentive during lecture as they should have been. Most students were thankful for the opportunity to fail on their own.

Drawbacks of the dual enrollment program included issues with credit and grades, negative interactions with others, and limited support systems (Kanny, 2015). The transferability of credits remains one of the top concerns of dual enrollment (Pretlow & Wathington, 2014). Moving forward on one's educational pathway is one of the many benefits and opportunities of dual enrollment courses. However, if credits cannot be easily transferred, one of the greatest benefits of the program cannot be accomplished (Hebert, 2001). Students in Kanny's (2015) study experienced poor grades in their dual enrollment courses, and, as a result, their high school transcripts were impacted negatively. There were also issues with earning high school credit while taking some of

the college courses--meaning, the college courses were not being considered for high school credit. As a result, some students took classes that they did not need to graduate from high school or college for their chosen degree.

College and high school personnel must have a well-developed partnership to minimize clerical and communication errors (Hughes, 2010). Both college and high school personnel, as well as dual enrollment faculty, may need to emphasize support systems available to dual enrollment students, especially if those support systems are not identified during an orientation or advising appointments. Hughes (2010), as well as Hanson, Prusha, and Iverson (2015), argued the importance of collaboration and communication among high school teachers and staff, college faculty, and students as a key component to the success of a program.

In a study limited to students enrolled in either systems engineering technology or design and drafting technology, Azimzadeh, Koch, and Rollins (2015) found similar positive results through surveying 22 students electronically. In addition to Kanny's (2015) findings, students expressed positive responses in relation to tuition savings, job opportunities, and improved time management. Student suggestions for improvement of the program included decreased lecture time and face-to-face math and science courses. Even though the host institution offered these courses face-to-face, students who took the survey had taken math and science courses online. The learning style of this particular subset of students also indicated a desire for more group projects to help enhance social learning as one of the additional benefits to dual enrollment courses.

Summary

Dual enrollment offers a tremendous financial and time-saving opportunity that has surfaced in recent years (Azimzadeh et al., 2015; Hoffman, 2012). Research suggests that there are far more positive outcomes than negative outcomes of dual enrollment programs (Allen & Dadgar, 2012; Hoffman et al., 2009; Howley et al., 2013; Hughes 2010; Kanny, 2015; Oliver et al., 2013; Ozmun, 2013). Despite the positive findings indicated in dual enrollment research, previous studies are limited in a number of ways. First, they lacked raw information, rich one-on-one data that can be achieved only through an interview process. Second, researchers had not allowed for controlled settings, especially with regard to courses taking place over a period of time. Third, there appeared no research to date where dual enrollment online courses were discussed and analyzed with regard to self-efficacy and motivation.

While success may depend greatly on the modality in which students receive their courses, program structure and communication carry a significant amount of impact on student success (Howley et al., 2013; Mullin, 2012). According to Wang et al, (2012), students' college and academic self-efficacy has surprisingly little impact on the outcomes of a dual enrollment student. However, further research was needed to investigate students' self-efficacy progression through a dual enrollment program while controlling for the number of credit hours achieved in the program. Self-efficacy plays an invaluable role in student success, and provides a strong foundation for the development of student learning (Ozmun, 2013).

The success of dual enrollment students was one key predictor in demonstrating that a program is operating and being sustained successfully. If students are not successful in the dual enrollment program, graduates are not being produced. As a result, there is no positive social impact and very limited benefits as a result of the program. Both faculty and staff are struggling to educate and advise dual enrollment students with the proper background knowledge and research in order to retain students despite insufficient research to guide them in their efforts. Hughes (2010) emphasized the desperate need for college faculty, high school teachers, and staff at both levels to increase collaboration to help lessen the gaps in the research.

In order to discover how students reflected on their experiences in dual enrollment programs, a qualitative study through an interview approach was needed to understand their experiences. In the next chapter, the research approach and design is discussed to align with the research questions discussed in Chapter 1. Finally, the methods described in Chapter 3 are supported by the theoretical and conceptual framework discussed within this chapter and focus on filling gaps within the research.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this basic qualitative study using interviews was to explore Slate Community College's students' perceptions of their experiences in the dual enrollment program and their transition to community college. Student perceptions provided insight into their experiences and generated themes related to self-efficacy and motivation to be coded and categorized. Those themes delivered relevant information for educators and advisors to better reach this subset of students, enhancing their overall postsecondary education experience and making them more likely to become college completers.

The purpose was achieved through the interview process and procedures outlined in this chapter and grounded in the conceptual framework described in Chapter 2. In this chapter, I discuss the research design for this study as well as its rationale. Additional sections in this chapter are methodology, including participant selection logic, instrumentation, procedures for recruitment, participation, and data collection, and a data analysis plan. I conclude with issues of trustworthiness (credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability) and ethical procedures.

Research Design and Rationale

The central focus of the study was the experiences that dual enrollment students describe in relation to their transition to college. The research questions as identified in Chapter 1 guided the elements of the methodology.

RQ1: How do dual enrollment community college students describe their experiences transitioning from high school?

RQ2: What sources of motivation do dual enrollment community college students identify in their transition from high school?

As these are qualitative research questions, the various types of qualitative designs, as identified by Creswell (2013) were considered: Phenomenology, case study, grounded theory, narrative research, and ethnography. A case study would allow the concentration of one individual or group within the dual enrollment program. There would be several limitations for a case study that would impact the applicability of the results to other settings. A case study generally adopts boundaries within the case or "bounded system" (Creswell, 2013, p. 101). Since I identified a larger problem in the literature review, an individual case study was not designed to address it. Alternative methods are too specific for the type of data needed to investigate the research questions. In a basic qualitative study, there are minimal limitations set on the type of data collected as long as they are relevant to the research questions. Grounded theory requires the researcher to allow a substantial theory to emerge (Patton, 2002). Grounded theory research is particularly about the phenomenon being studied. In phenomenology studies, complex lived experiences are explored through the many participants in the same phenomena.

The research questions were best addressed through the understanding of transition experiences of students moving from dual enrollment to full college enrollment. Specifically, a basic qualitative study could bring a deeper understanding of students' views and perceptions of the dual enrollment program and how it has

influenced their self-efficacy, motivation, and overall adjustment to postsecondary education. This approach enabled me to explore student experiences in the dual enrollment program and allowed me to recognize commonalities in order to discover themes and patterns.

Role of the Researcher

My role as the researcher was to recruit participants, collect data, and analyze the data to identify themes and patterns to best answer the research questions. I was the only researcher in this study, and therefore the author of all correspondence, interview questions, transcribed data, and analysis. I did not have any prior relationship with any of the participants in the study. However, I am currently employed at the institution from which the participants were recruited. I work as an instructor in a separate building and division from the academic outreach office that currently works directly with students who were recruited for the study. I disclosed my position as a doctoral researcher and current higher education instructor to emphasize credentialing and minimize any challenges. There was a possibility that I could be currently teaching a dual enrollment student who accepted participation into the study. This did not occur, and no participant was excluded from the study to eliminate any implied coercion.

Managing bias was achieved through keeping a researcher journal and reflecting on my experiences throughout the research process. This assisted me with bracketing any research bias. In addition, having the data reviewed by my committee helped to confirm

that my biases as the researcher were bracketed, and did not affect final outcomes of the data.

Methodology

This section is broken into four separate sections: Participant selection logic, instrumentation, procedures for recruitment, participation, and data collection, and the data analysis plan. In each, I provide details on the process applied in conducting the study.

Participation Selection Logic

The population included Slate Community College individuals who had completed 12 or more credit hours during the 2012-2016 academic school years on the college campus or online via the LMS with a college instructor. In order to elicit the most information rich responses, students who completed dual enrollment classes only at their high school were not eligible. This population of on-campus or online enrolled students was chosen because those students receive the greatest benefit of role rehearsal (Karp, 2012). As Karp (2012) suggested, “finding ways to shift dual enrollees experiences more dramatically, such as moving dual enrollment to the college campus or at least expecting students to spend significant time on campus, is likely to increase the program’s impact on college readiness” (p. 27).

For this study, purposeful sampling of a homogeneous group included college students who had been dual enrollment students during the 2012-2016 academic school years and had completed 12 or more credit hours on the college campus. Individuals

eliminated from the sample included those who took dual enrollment at their high school because this impacted both environment and course instructor. They were not integrated into the classroom with college students and did not have the instruction of a college instructor who has different credentialing than a high school instructor.

The site chosen for this study was determined specifically by geographic proximity to the researcher. Upon Slate Community College's IRB approval, I obtained Walden University's IRB approval, allowing a one-year timeframe to complete the study. Participants were identified with the help of the Slate Community College's research center personnel, who had the ability to filter for the exact criteria of the sample through Argos software. Once those participants had been identified, they were contacted, and I recruited them with an email invitation and informed consent form, asking them to participate in an interview. There were three recruitment rounds over a span of the study in order to achieve the most accurate representation of the population being studied and achieve the desired sample size. Table 1 summarizes each round of recruitment that took place over a three-month time span.

Table 1

Recruitment Revisions Summarized

Round of Recruits	**Freshman Status During the 2016-2017 Year**	**Dual Enrollment Hours Completed**	**Year Dual Enrollment Courses Were Completed**	**Sample Pool Result**	**Recruitment Steps**
First Round of Recruits	Freshmen Status >30 credit hours attempted outside dual enrollment	Dual Enrollment credit hours completed >12 on campus or online, not at the high school	Dual Enrollment Courses were Completed between the 2015-2016 academic school year	13 Students in Sample Pool; resulted in 1 who agreed to participate	E-mail invitation was sent twice and all potential participants were called once; sample size not reached
Second Round of Recruits	Freshmen Status >30 credit hours attempted outside dual enrollment	Dual Enrollment credit hours completed >12 on campus or online, not at the high school	Dual Enrollment Courses were Completed between the **2012-2016** academic school year	45 Students total in the recruitment pool, resulted in 4 who agreed to participate	E-mail invitation was sent three times and all potential participants were called once; sample size not reached
Third Round of Recruits	**Enrolled with no minimum credit hour attempted outside dual enrollment**	Dual Enrollment credit hours completed >12 on campus or online, not at the high school	Dual Enrollment Courses were Completed between the 2012-2016 academic school year	165 students total in the recruitment pool, resulted in 7 who agreed to participate.	E-mail invitation was sent three times; sample size obtained successfully

Each of the three times the sample size changed as a result of refining the parameters, specific notes were kept. First, specific parameters set were: (a) freshmen, defined as those who took 30 or more credit hours, college students during the 2016-2017 academic school year (b) who completed 12 or more credit hours on campus or online credit hours, excluding high school dual enrollment courses (c) during the 2015-2016

academic school year. The initial sample of participants who met the criteria was 13 students. In order to obtain data saturation, my goal was approximately 10 interviews. With a sample of 13 students, this sample yielded an unrealistic expected participation rate of 76%. Those students included in the initial sample were contacted twice by e-mail and once via phone. Only one student was willing to participate in the study.

Second, the sample was then widened to include those who were (a) freshman, defined as those who took 30 or more credit hours, college students during the 2016-2017 academic school year (b) who completed 12 or more credit hours on campus or online credit hours, excluding high school dual enrollment courses (c) during the 2012-2016 academic school years. This result totaled 45 students in the recruitment pool, and this included the original 13 from the first sample. These students were e-mailed on three separate occasions in June 2017, and I attempted to reach all of them by phone. An additional 4 participants were recruited; however, one was a snowball sample and one interview was only partially conducted, and therefore eliminated from the study.

Third, the sample was adjusted one final time to include anyone who was enrolled at Slate Community College (a) at any time after having completed the dual enrollment courses academic school year at Slate Community College regardless of credit hour, and who (b) completed 12 or more credit hours on campus or online credit hours, excluding high school dual enrollment courses (c) during the 2012-2016 academic school years. This final sample pool, including the previous samples who were not re-contacted, totaled 165 potential participants. The additional participants were e-mailed a total of three

times, and no recruitment phone calls were made, unlike the first two samples. In early November 2017, the last interview was conducted with the 12th participant of the study.

The final sample was the best representation of the population needed for the study because it removed a time frame and minimum credit hour from the post high school enrollment. According to Slate Community College's definition of freshmen, whether or not these students enrolled directly after high school or sometime later, they still were considered first year at the college, but not freshmen, since they did not complete a minimum of 30 credit hours their first year. These factors had no influence on dual enrollment experiences sought out by the research questions, and they provided a more balanced opportunity for those who did not transition to college directly after high school to be represented. These widened parameters did not violate any IRB agreements that were in place.

Sample Size

Though sample size needed for qualitative studies will vary, Marshall (1996) stated "an appropriate sample size is one that adequately answers the research question[s]" (p. 523). Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (2008) identified three challenges for researchers when it comes to determining a sample size: (a) the definition of the population, (b) the sample design, (c) the size of the sample. Since the first two challenges were addressed in participant selection logic, the last challenge to address was the exact sample size. Information rich structured interviews were attempted with 12 participants in total, but only 10 were successful. This is further explained in the Chapter

4 under the subheading Data Collection. Similar studies have had sample sizes ranging from 6 participants (Burns & Lewis, 2000) to 26 participants (Karp, 2012). Sample saturation or redundancy as described by Patton (2002) can be achieved through information becoming repetitive through the interview process. Through the true sample size of 10 participants, redundancy was achieved within this number to ensure data saturation.

As a result of the response rate from the initial sample, snowball sampling was used to recruit one additional participant from someone who was already participating in this study. This student was a part of the original sample, but declined the initial invitation. This recruit was included as one of the 10 successful interviews conducted.

Instrumentation

The interviews I conducted were the primary data source for this research. The semi-structured interview protocol (Appendix) that I developed in consultation with my committee included open-ended questions as guided by Rubin and Rubin (2012). These questions were reflective of the two conceptual frameworks that were the basis for the research questions. The use of probes, once original responses were received, allowed individuals to elaborate further on the question topics. Probing, as described by Patton (2002), also generated extended responses from the interviewees. Additionally, Rubin and Rubin (2012) found that interviewees were more likely to talk about a topic in depth if they felt a connection with the interviewer. To create an open and friendly environment, I repeated responses for accuracy, and used statements such as “I

understand," as well as expressed nonverbal cues to let my interviewees know that I was listening and finding that what they had to say was important.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

After IRB approval from Slate Community College and Walden University, participants were recruited from lists provided by Slate Community College's research center. In an attempt to recruit 10-12 participants, the sample pool was sent an electronic invitation via email from me that included the informed consent form. This e-mail was sent to each potential participant more than once every time the aforementioned sample evolved as described in the Participation Selection Logic section. My contact information was included in the email, asking potential participants to reply to the email to indicate acceptance of participation. Upon receipt of the informed consent, I scheduled four face-to-face interviews and eight phone interviews at a mutually agreed time and place. In appreciation for their participation, as noted in the consent form, a $10 gift card was given to each participant after his or her face-to-face interview or mailed to the participant directly after the phone interview.

In relation to participation and data collection, the interviews were scheduled with the first 12 participants to reply to the invitation. Since interviews were the only source of data collection, it was critical to have a sufficient number of participants. The final sample size of 10 participants achieved redundancy and rich data.

At the beginning of the 45-60 minute audio recorded interview, I explained that individuals could terminate their participation at any time. Participants were made fully

aware of the audio recording in the invitation and consent form with the reiteration of confidentiality during the interview. The purpose of the study was reiterated, and participants were reminded of the approximate time needed to complete the interview. It was important to understand and interpret nonverbal cues during the interview to establish and continue rapport with the interviewee. Once the interview had concluded, I thanked them for their participation, and participants were given or mailed their $10 gift card. Debriefing procedures consisted of reminding participants about the importance of checking their e-mail over the next week in order to watch for the request to review their transcript. The e-mail contained their password protected transcript file, and inquired about any clarifications, as well as any additional details they would like. Only one participant returned additional information to be added to a transcript, and there were no corrections to be made. All participants confirmed the accuracy of their interview transcripts.

For data collection, I conducted and recorded all interviews using a digital recorder. Interviews I conducted that were recorded via a digital recorder were the source of data collection. If participants were uncomfortable being recorded, they had the option to drop out of the study at any time. As a backup, a second digital recorder was used in case there was a technical malfunction. I listened to each recording, and transcribed each question and response for every interview. The reviewed transcript of each interview was used for data coding and analysis process. Finally, the transcripts provided me with the data to analyze for answers to the research questions. All research documents were stored

on password protected files, on a flash drive, in a locked cabinet in my home, and will be manually destroyed after a 5-year time frame. Pseudonyms were used to protect the identity of the institution and any individuals in the study.

Data Analysis Plan

Once I transcribed the interviews, and the participants had reviewed and approved the transcripts, I began the data analysis portion of the study. I copied and pasted the data into Microsoft Office Excel 2016. This allowed me to manually define, find, and mark similar concepts and themes within the data, and then sort them into weighted categories in the form of columns and rows. The most common theme was listed first and the least common was listed last. I was able to manage the codes found in the data most efficiently with this software. Microsoft Excel 2016 allowed me to filter for specific topics and themes. Finally, I was able to use a concatenate function to track each response and transcript line of each interview for better identifying themes and patterns without losing the source of the data.

Data were continuously analyzed without any predetermined codes. Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) recommended the use of pre-coding, also referred to as a *priori coding* in research. This means that the researcher would begin with an initial list of codes drawn from the literature, conceptual framework, research questions, and field notes. The researcher would then add or remove additional codes based on the review of the data. However, I preferred open coding, as described by Rubin and Rubin (2012), which means I began coding without a list of pre-determined codes, and observed what

emerged from the data. The debate between open coding and pre-coding, or a priori coding, is whether pre-coding introduces a subtle bias that may blind the researcher to emergent codes. The other side of the debate is that open coding is a long process, and not as efficient as pre-coding.

In order to connect the research questions with the data, interview questions were developed with the conceptual framework in mind, and carefully worded to draw out information needed to fully answer the research questions. Microsoft Excel 2016 allowed me to track the sources of the data and to recognize significant themes or patterns in the data through the use of spreadsheets for each interview, the notes taken, as well as the time and place those notes were taken. In addition, I kept the researcher's journal in Microsoft Excel 2016. During the coding process, key notes from the transcripts were categorized into a number of categories yet to be determined. Developing distinctions between organizational categories and substantive or theoretical categories was a critical part of the data analysis process (Maxwell, 2013). As themes and patterns emerged, data that were unique were used in contrast and as a way to broaden the research about dual enrollment.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Qualitative research includes four main components for ensuring trustworthiness. The following subsections--credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability and ethical procedures--address areas of the study to confirm validity and reliability. Both validity and reliability were assured through triangulation, rich descriptions, and

clarification of any research bias. Research that is transparent has the most potential for creating stimulating discussions and universal recommendations (Maxwell, 2013). I described the research process in complete detail and reported the data and interpretations with the support from the conceptual framework so that the conclusions were well documented and supported.

Credibility

Credibility establishes that the elements of a participant's experience were represented accurately (Hoepfl, 1997; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The participants' responses were explored to create a comprehensive report of their lived experiences. Analyzing the entire interview data, and not only the highlights, gave deeper meaning to the data, influencing the overall results in creating a more balanced outcome.

Triangulation was limited, as data were gathered using only one instrument; however, I interviewed multiple individuals. Triangulation also included keeping detailed field notes in my journal to properly track information and encounters I have had with each interview participant. The ability of interviewing as an instrument and the recording of a variety of individuals added to credibility, making interpretations more just (Patton, 2002). Saturation of the data and redundancy also addressed any issues of incomplete information. Finally, the opportunity for interviewees to review the transcripts prior to data analysis also increased credibility and added to rich responses.

Transferability

Transferability was best determined after data analysis. With thick description and transparency into the study, other educators, administrators, or stakeholders of the dual enrollment program will find the conclusions of the research credible and valid. Any outlier data were handled with care and provided an opening for further future research.

Dependability

Data that were consistent became reliable (Maxwell, 2013). Once the interview had been recorded, I was able to review it as many times as necessary to ensure the data were authentic. In addition, my field journal enhanced reflexivity by confirming I was self-checking to ensure I was considering alternate data conclusions. As stated previously, all correspondence and recordings between the researcher and the interviewer are being kept confidential in password protected files, on a flash drive, in a locked cabinet in my home for a period of five years, at which time the electronic files and recordings will be deleted.

Confirmability

Confirmability indicates to what extent the findings of the study were determined by the research elements and not the researcher's bias (Hoepfl, 1997; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Having the data reviewed by my committee, if necessary, will help to confirm that my biases as the researcher have been bracketed, and have not affected final outcomes of the data. Since I transcribed the data and coded the data, I have accurate and detailed

explanations for how the data were coded and analyzed. My researcher's journal ensured that I reflected on each individual's interview and kept bias bracketed.

Ethical Procedures

Upon receipt of approval number # 2017-6 from Slate Community College's IRB and approval number # 06-15-17-0380383 from Walden University's IRB, I sent recruitment e-mails for participation in the study to the population to be sampled. Within the initial recruitment email and follow up e-mails, I asked participants to review the informed consent form. Participants willing to partake in the study responded 'I consent' to the e-mail over a period of 3 months during which participants were recruited and interviewed. E-mail responses were kept on file with the research data. The consent form helped alleviate any concerns from the participant about the study and provided a resource for additional inquiries into the study if the participant would have liked to contact the IRB of record. The informed consent was also approved by both IRBs and included the IRBs' approval reference numbers. It clearly explained to the participants the purpose of the study, background information, procedures, voluntary nature of the study, risk and benefits of being in the study, thank you gift card, and privacy.

All participants attended and were recruited from Slate Community College. In order to address any perceived power over the participants, individuals who might have been currently enrolled in any of my classes would have been excluded from the study. No such participants were included. Additionally, I had no prior relationship with those

who participated in the study. My role as the researcher was clearly communicated with all interviewees and Slate Community College.

As stated previously, data were kept private and confidential. Both Microsoft Word 2016 and Microsoft Excel 2016 allowed for a password protected files and were accessed only through a secure personal laptop on password-protected Wi-Fi. Any paper notes were shredded after data were transcribed and coded. All files and recordings were stored on a password protected file on a flash drive, in a locked cabinet in my home, and will be maintained for a period of five years, at which time the electronic files and recordings will be deleted.

Summary

Each of the components in Chapter 3 is critical to the overall study: Research design and rationale, role of the researcher, methodology, issues of trustworthiness, and ethical procedures. The reflections and interpretations of students who were in the dual enrollment program would not be accurately captured if it were not for well-constructed interview questions, a formal informed consent process, and a framework to guide the data analysis. Chapter 4 reports the results of the study in the sections: Setting, demographics, data collection, data analysis, evidence of trustworthiness, and overall results of the study.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore how previous dual enrollment students describe their experiences transitioning from high school to community college. My intent was to explore key factors developed in the dual enrollment program that played a vital role in their transition from high school to community college. Using a basic qualitative study design, the goal was to develop a better understanding of students' perspectives in reference to their motivations surrounding the dual enrollment program and their personal experiences with the program.

The research questions for this study were as follows: (a) How do dual enrollment community college students describe their experiences transitioning from high school? and (b) What sources of motivation do dual enrollment community college students identify in their transition from high school? The additional understanding of the transition process was expected to assist in keeping dual enrollment students moving toward completion of programs which could have long term effects on influencing the community through social impact. Increased graduation and attrition rates could lead to better qualified and more marketable graduates, which involves the community and economy as a whole through a more educated workforce.

Emerging themes and discrepant data retrieved from the interviews detailing how students describe their dual enrollment experiences are presented in this chapter. This chapter depicts the setting, the demographics, and an overview of the approved IRB data collection procedures for the study as well as the data analysis and evidence of

trustworthiness. Within the data analysis, I provide an explanation of the coding process that I used, along with the participants' responses, which provide support for the findings. Finally, included in this chapter are the research results framed by the research questions and theoretical and conceptual framework that provided the structure for this qualitative research.

Setting

This study took place at Slate Community College located in Northeast Ohio. Students who participated in this study often referred to the program as Postsecondary Option (PSEO). In 2014, Ohio's state legislature coined the phrase College Credit Plus, formerly known as PSEO and dual enrollment, when Ohio adopted new legislation to merge the two previous terms and implement new guidelines around the state model (Carey, 2014). For consistency and the use of most universal jargon, the term *dual enrollment* has been used throughout this dissertation.

Dual enrollment in Ohio underwent many changes in 2014 to improve the quality and sustainability of the program. It is important to note that these changes did not affect all participants in the study, but are reflected in the recommendations made in Chapter 5. The most significant changes were as follows:

- Mandatory site observations were required for high school instructors to be conducted by college personnel.
- Eight hours of professional development were required for high schools' dual enrollment faculty to be conducted by college departments.

- Dual enrollment period was extended to include summer semester; students now receive credit towards high school for college courses they have taken in the summer.
- Dual enrollment instructors were required to complete Title IX training.

These changes in the program were significant because of their impact on all stakeholders involved in the program. Dual enrollment instructors were held accountable in their classrooms and completing training that had not been previously required but was required for college instructors. Course accessibility also became easier for students. Only the last two changes affected the participants of this study because students who were taught by high school instructors were excluded. With these changes, dual enrollment offerings at high schools have increased statewide (Carey, 2014). There were no external factors such as budget cuts or excessive employee turnover that influenced any of the results. In addition, participants originated from a variety of high schools, and each high school's ability to offer the program to all qualifying students was equal.

Demographics

In the 10 interviews that were transcribed and coded, participants included one male and nine females. I have assigned each participant a pseudonym, and those pseudonyms will be used throughout this chapter to better explain the reporting of responses. Participant demographics and pseudonyms are identified below in Table 2.

Table 2

Participant Demographics

Participant	Gender	Total Credit Hours Attempted	Major	Reported or Projected Graduation Date	Currently Enrolled in SCC as of Fall 2017
Daniel	M	16	Welding- changed to Business Management	TBD	No
Rylie	F	24	Middle Childhood Education	May 2018	No
Suzanne	F	22	Health Science	May 2018	Transferred to Four-year University
Allison	F	22	Nursing	May 2018	Transferred to Four-year University
Marissa	F	92	Associate of Arts- General	August 2016	No
Isabella	F	77	Civil Engineering Technology –Architectural Major	May 2017	No
Ariana	F	62	Civil Engineering Technology & Construction Management	May 2018	Yes
Kristen	F	39	Dental Hygiene	May 2018	No
Rania	F	35	Early Childhood	TBD	No
Gina	F	96	Emergency Medical Services	May 2018	Yes

There was a variety of chosen majors represented among the participants. Gina is the only student who did not experience online courses as a dual enrollment student. Isabella and Marissa both took their dual enrollment face-to-face classes at a satellite center and not on the main campus, but completed their non-dual enrollment classes at the main campus. In addition, Isabella and Marissa were the only two participants who had completed their college degrees by the time the interview had taken place, Daniel was undecided about a major, and the remaining participants had projected graduation

dates. The time to degree completion was explained differently by each student. Ariana and Gina were the only two enrolled at Slate Community College as of the Fall 2017 semester.

Participants were asked about their completion of dual enrollment courses only, and not about the completion of other community college courses. All participants completed all of the dual enrollment courses they attempted with passing grades, and none of the participants withdrew from any courses or had to retake any courses. Rylie took dual enrollment classes both at Slate Community College and an additional local college. During the interview, Rylie was asked to answer questions about experiences only at Slate Community College for consistency in the data. Daniel completed the fewest number of credit hours at 16. Gina completed the greatest number of credit hours at 50.

Gina was a home-schooled student who started taking college courses as a high school sophomore in the attempt to achieve an honors diploma. She was enrolled as a dual enrollment student, and shared many of the same experiences others involved in the study had during their first year. She had attended a fully online Virtual Academy since seventh grade.

Data Collection

The data collection process began by meeting with the head research analyst at the Slate Community College. I discussed the recruitment pool specifications and an Access database designed to generate the initial sample pool. Participant names and

contact information for data collection were emailed to me in a password protected Microsoft Excel 2016 file. This file allowed for specific tracking of the recruitment process, and included dates, times, and locations of the interviews and recruitment attempts. I also developed my researcher journal in Excel, which included a reflection after each interview. This sample as described in Chapter 3 was derived from the 9,800 students who had taken some form of a dual enrollment course during the 2012-2016 academic school years.

All except one interview was scheduled ahead of time. The one that was not scheduled early occurred as a result of an email reply that requested immediate contact. Of the initial 12 interviews, 8 were conducted via phone at the request of the participant and 4 were conducted face-to-face at a local restaurant, all according to participant convenience. All 12 participants who began the study provided consent forms via e-mail, were thoroughly briefed at the beginning of each interview, and were mailed or handed a $10 gift card as a thank you for their time. Two participants were eliminated from the sample, resulting in a total of 10 who participated fully. The first participant's responses were eliminated, and therefore not included in the analysis because, after only four questions were answered, the respondent requested a continuance via a second call at a later time. After approximately two days, I attempted on three separate occasions to finish the interview, but was unsuccessful. The participant was still sent the $10 gift card as a thank you. The second participant's interview was eliminated because the student had been incorrectly coded in the system as having taken dual enrollment courses. This

participant had not taken any dual enrollment courses, and had not thoroughly read the email sent before agreeing to participate in the study. A gift card was still provided to this participant as a thank you for the willingness to participate in a doctoral study. Neither of these participants was assigned a pseudonym. The data collection process took approximately three months to obtain a sample, recruit participants, conduct the interviews, and transcribe and code the data. Each participant was sent his or her respective transcript for review, although none of the participants requested any content changes to the transcripts.

Data Analysis

I used a data analysis process outlined by Ose (2016), where Microsoft Word 2016 and Microsoft Excel 2016 were recommended to code all data. After each interview, the information was transcribed within the following week into a password protected Microsoft Word 2016 document. Each interview was then sent to the participant for review and approval. Once all 10 interviews were transcribed and approved, interviewer questions were bolded for easier identification in the Microsoft Excel 2016 workbook. Each interview was copied and pasted into Microsoft Excel 2016 on a separate spreadsheet labeled with the interview number to be able to trace where the interview originated. The coding process was done in three phases.

In the first phase, after the information was pasted into 10 spreadsheets of a Microsoft Excel 2016 workbook, four columns were added to identify the interview source, the line of text, the individual responsible for the line of text, and the code.

Autofill, a Microsoft Excel 2016 feature, was used to assist with this process. Each code was assigned a number and stored on a separate spreadsheet titled *Codes*. Each interview was analyzed thoroughly and carefully in order to identify emerging themes and patterns in the data, and codes were assigned to each line of text, including the questions asked by the interviewer. I continually checked the previous interview to make sure coding was consistent with the interview previously coded, especially regarding interview questions. Seven themes and 14 codes emerged in total. It should be noted that more codes were evident throughout the process; however, they were consistently revised to avoid duplication.

The second phase involved establishing a spreadsheet that combined all of the interviews. After the coding was complete, all 10 interviews were merged into a sheet titled *Combined*. There was a total of 698 rows of both questions and responses that were coded. On the combined spreadsheet, a concatenate function was used to bring together the interview source, the line of the interview, and identification of the individual responsible for each line. The exact formula for the first line of text was =CONCATENATE(D2,"("," ",A2,"_",B2," ",C2," ",")"). This formula was auto filled through all 698 rows. Next, the codes were copied and pasted under the new formulated rows containing the concatenate function, and additional numbers were added to assist with the sorting of information and enabling each code to be placed on top of the lines of text that were classified under that code. The sorting feature in Microsoft Excel 2016 was then used to correctly sort each line by code.

The final phase of the coding process included copying and pasting the combined data into Microsoft Word 2016. After the information was pasted, the table was converted to text and formatted. The conceptual frameworks of the study were reviewed and encompassed into the appropriate existing open coding process that took place. Using Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy model and social cognitive theory, informing RQ1, and Keller's (2010) ARCS model, informing RQ2, seven main themes and 14 codes were discussed in the results relative to their research question. Table 3 lists each theme and each categorized code with the exception of demographics, already reported.

Table 3

Interview Data with Themes and Codes by Research Question

Research Question 1: Transition Experiences	**Research Question 2: Sources of Motivation**
Program Choice	Intrinsic Factors
Entry decisions	Independence
Location	Self-efficacy
Perceived Benefits	Extrinsic Factors
Exposure	Lack of Personal Relationships
Environment	Institutional Supports
Finances	Student Life
Perceived Personal Strengths	Study Groups
Study habits	Realizations
Confidence	
Perceived Challenges	
Course rigor	
Gaps in enrollment	

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility was built into the research design of this study. Outlined in Chapter 3, the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the study were upheld through the data collection and analysis process. Rubin and Rubin (2012) recommended

linking every result and conclusion to evidence. This was achieved using Ose's (2016) method of coding. I report evidence in the next section of this manuscript and report conclusions in Chapter 5. Dependability was achieved throughout the data collection process, as I kept precise records on participant recruitment and recruitment pool revisions, which included e-mail correspondences and meeting notes. Coding the data in Microsoft Excel 2016 has ensured that I will always be able to locate the source of the data within the original transcripts located in Microsoft Word 2016. In my journal, which added to the confirmability of the study, I made several notes during the transcription process about information on the recorder that I did not remember hearing in the interview. In those cases, participants were asked to double check those sections for accuracy during the transcript review. During coding, participants' responses started to echo each other. This repetition was defined as rich thick description, which allowed for generating new themes and fine-grained analysis (Rubin & Rubin, 2012), enhancing transferability in the study.

Results

The following research questions guided this study: (a) How do dual enrollment community college students describe their experiences transitioning from high school, and (b) What sources of motivation do dual enrollment community college students identify in their transition from high school? Both research questions are addressed in Table 3 with their resulting themes and codes from the data analysis to guide the discussion that follows. The first research question was assigned four themes and nine

codes. The first theme was *program choice* with the codes *entry decision* and *location*. The second theme was *perceived benefits* with the codes *exposure* and *environment*. The third theme was *perceived personal strengths* with the codes *study habits* and *confidence*. Lastly, the fourth theme to address research question one was *perceived challenges* with this codes *course rigor* and *gaps in enrollment*. The second research question was assigned three themes and six codes. The first theme was *intrinsic factors* with the codes *independence* and *self-efficacy*. The second theme was *extrinsic factors* with the codes lack of *personal relationships*, *institutional supports*, *student life*, and *study groups*. An additional theme, *realizations*, emerged from the data and is listed at the end of the results.

RQ1: Transition Experiences

To understand how dual enrollment community college students described their experiences transitioning from high school, students were asked directly how they would describe any positive or negative experiences they encountered transitioning from high school to community college, and in what ways their participation in college credit plus classes influenced their adjustment to college. Themes from the data presented in Table 3 that address this research question are explained further in the following subsections: (a) program choice, (b) perceived benefits, (c) perceived personal strengths, and (d) perceived challenges.

Program choice. A student's choice to enroll in the dual enrollment program happens for a variety of reasons. Participants were asked why they chose to enroll in dual

enrollment and why they chose the host institution. The codes that were classified under this theme were entry decision, location, and gaps in enrollment.

Entry decision. All participants stated that, while being influenced by another, it was their own choice to enroll in the dual enrollment program. Some entry decision responses informed how participants were made aware of the program and what or who influenced them to enroll. Eight of the participants found the program through word of mouth from someone who had completed the program, usually a friend or family member. However, two participants, Daniel and Isabella, were influenced by their high school guidance counselors. Daniel noted he was strongly encouraged by a guidance counselor to enroll, and the counselor was "a big help" assisting with the paperwork. Similarly, Isabella stated the following about her decision to enroll:

> I definitely knew I wanted to do dual enrollment, and the counselors do push for it a lot. They were trying to get more people at [Slate Community College], and I think that was the first year they were really pushing it.

Location. Location was the main reason participants chose to complete their dual enrollment courses at Slate Community College. Five participants stated that the location was close to their high school or home. Ariana stated, "I knew the area well." Only one participant, Marissa, explained she was not given any other choice than Slate Community College.

Perceived benefits. The perceived benefits of the program were revealed when participants were asked about any advantages they felt they received compared to other

students they knew who did not enroll into the dual enrollment program. The two codes classified under this theme were exposure and environments.

Exposure. Students received exposure through meeting new people, navigating various locations, and experiencing new pedagogies. One of the primary results of exposure was that participants gained experience indicating decreased nervousness and preparedness. Allison stated, "If I hadn't done dual enrollment, I would have been lost the first two or three weeks of college … because I wouldn't have known how to organize my stuff, how to take notes, how to study. By day one, I knew what to do for every class." Rania noted the following:

> I already knew classroom expectations, for example, a syllabus; and I had to help other students who didn't understand that they weren't in high school anymore; the teacher isn't going to push you like they did in high school to get your A.

Suzanne reflected on the advantage of dual enrollment courses, explaining:

> A typical freshman has to move to a dorm and figure out food, managing money, budget, everything, on top of that college classes now. All of that combined is really stressful, and the biggest factor on top of that their grades. Everyone is worrying about their grades. I really just learned how to manage grades first, and then like I was thrown into working and joining clubs and everything as well, so I was definitely more prepared than they were.

Navigation around the college was discussed frequently as a benefit, as it increased the amount of time saved the first week of non-dual enrollment courses and decreased anxiety. Daniel stated, “buying books and navigating around the college, knowing where to make payments, etcetera, were all benefits. And nerves, I wasn’t as nervous transferring to college because I had already been there and had those experiences.” In agreement, Marissa noted, “it wasn’t really that scary for me to go to college. It really wasn’t that big of a deal because I had been doing it for the last 3 years.” Even though four-year university students were not the central focus of this study, Allison and Gina, who transferred to a four-year institution noted negative experiences. During reflection, they compared to their experiences at the two-year community college level to the four-year institution. These included annoyances with commuting, campus life, increased class size, and increased rigor. Allison stated, “the teachers were not as lenient and flexible as compared to those at Slate Community College…I don’t think any of my teachers even knew my name.” Gina noted, “I was working multiple jobs, and spending time with my family was important to me…. Slate Community College was just better for me, for my lifestyle and work schedule.” Gina’s negative adjustment to college life ultimately resulted in withdraw from the four-year institution and re-enrollment into Slate Community College.

Environment. Environment emerged as a code in this study to encompass student experiences in the classroom and online. Gina and Kristen noted that the diversity in the classrooms was a positive element to their exposure. Kristen stated, “it was nice to have a

different variety of people and facts of life, so I could talk about my paper. They would give me a different point of view." When asked about transition out of the program Suzanne indicated:

> I think just being in the college environment really, because I basically did 1 year at Slate Community College, and I was exposed to a non-high school environment, and definitely non-high school classes, with students and professors and everything. So just simply transitioning during high school was nice because moving to college I was surprised, like, for example, about how to communicate with your professor. I already had the confidence to do that.

There was one reference to the ability to focus more in a college classroom setting compared to a high school setting. Daniel stated the following:

> It's just regular classroom, like you don't have to deal with high school distractions, and I would say everybody in the classroom is just kind of… that they're all just focused; no one is talking to the person next to them about what they did last night.

An additional advantage of dual enrollment courses identified by Isabella was the ability to become familiarized with the learning management system (LMS) at the college before being enrolled as a non-dual enrollment student. Even though all participants had completed a dual enrollment course using the college's LMS, only Isabella identified this as an advantage.

Marissa mentioned a case where age difference in the environment was considered a concern. Marissa revealed that, as a younger student, unwanted advances received from others at the college made her uncomfortable. She stated, “they [students] didn’t know I was only 15, and I got hit on a lot.” Further verbal investigation occurred to determine whether the participant needed or desired additional help, which was not the case. Referral to additional services was declined.

Financial. All participants mentioned the financial benefits of free college, and most of them mentioned having to pay for the class if they failed as a motivation for them to do well in their courses. For example, Isabella and Marissa shared similar statements. Marissa explained, “I didn’t want to have to pay for the classes if I failed them.” Similarly, Rylie stated, “one repeated motivation was not having to pay for the classes if I failed them.” Suzanne stated, “I got my degree without going into debt, which is hard to say for somebody my age, even for an associate’s degree.” The greatest benefit of dual enrollment, as described by Isabella, was she received her degree “debt free.”

The above perceived benefits were different for each participant. The exposure and the environment set the foundation for their perceived personal strength coded in study habits and confidence.

Perceived personal strengths. The participants described strengths that became apparent through the dual enrollment program. These personal strengths were reported during reflection of the question which asked participants about their strengths in the role of a community college student. The two codes that were classified under this theme

were study habits and confidence.

Study habits. Participants most frequently indicated that notetaking skills and test preparation were important to their goal-setting and achievement. Several participants reported that notetaking skills improved dramatically once enrolled in dual enrollment courses. Daniel indicated his notetaking improved largely after completion of the dual enrollment courses by stating, “I used to write everything down. I only write down the important stuff, the main ideas, and my notetaking did improve dramatically after taking dual enrollment courses.” Similarly, Rania stated, “note taking definitely improved with the dual credit classes.”

None of the participants reported a change in test taking skills; however, test preparation needed to be increased, as participants reported college instructors were less likely to distribute study guides and tests for some subjects that were more rigorous. Allison noted, “studying on a weekly basis rather than a couple of days before a test” was important to be successful in what she perceived as the more rigorous dual enrollment courses. All participants acknowledged the ability to manage schedules while decreasing procrastination as an important component to the successful completion of their dual enrollment courses.

Confidence. Many participants recognized that being motivated by challenges built their confidence. Rylie stated, “the professor told us, like, ‘you will not pass my class,’ and it was like a challenge for me.” She followed up by stating the following:

> I love a challenge. Everybody at my school was shocked; there were only a few of us at the time who were taking postsecondary, but everyone else was like 'oh my gosh you're taking so much', but it was totally worth it.

Rania indicated that she developed discipline through her dual enrollment experience. It gave her more confidence, as she noted, "time management and learning to do stuff outside the classroom and having the discipline to do it" helped her be successful in her courses. Daniel stated, "I gained confidence and college readiness." Rylie also stated, "I was terrified, like, oh my gosh, this going to be awful; but we got the grades back, and I got a 100 on every single paper." Suzanne also noted an increase in confidence with mastering the content when "it clicked." Even though many students exercised personal strengths in their dual enrollment experience, they still reported challenges in their experience as well.

Perceived Challenges. Each participant was asked about what challenges they encountered enrolling into the program and throughout the program. Few described issues with paper work or obtaining accurate information about the program, but mostly discussed were the two codes of this theme—course rigor and gaps in enrollment.

Course rigor. The rigor of the courses came up frequently in responses. There were several reports of dual enrollment classes being comparable to high school classes, except in more rigorous courses requiring higher levels of critical thinking, such as chemistry and physics. Marissa explained the impact of dual enrollment classes on her ability to decrease her procrastination:

> College classes were so easy for me at the beginning, and then I got into the harder ones, like chemistry and stuff; and, then I was, like, wait a minute; what am I doing? I think I only then learned how to study because before it was just so easy for me I didn't have to.

Rylie offered the following advice about the rigor of the courses: "Don't neglect like a science course has a ratio of, like, three credit hours equals nine hours of your own study time is not a joke, and a piece of advice is golden and it's for sure accurate." Participants who transferred to a four-year university noted a drastic change in rigor compared to Slate Community College. Three participants, Suzanne, Allison, and Gina, stated that the rigor increased at a four-year level. Suzanne, who transferred to a four-year institution, indicated a positive adjustment to four-year college life by stating:

> I was really excited to be in my core courses, and meet people in my career field…. I liked that there was rigor in the course work because I know it was making me work harder and it was prepping me for PA [physician's assistant] school.

However, Rylie noted of the four-year institutions, "I wasn't used to it, the big auditoriums too, like, you never had one-on-one with your professors. I can count multiple times I got to talk to Slate Community College professors." In addition, they also added that the faculty at Slate Community College seemed more caring and understanding of their personal situations.

Gaps in enrollment. Six participants were not currently enrolled in college at the time of the interview, indicating a current gap in enrollment. Each participant was asked about any gaps in enrollment and future plans for completion. Students who explained their gaps in enrollment either changed majors or took time off for financial reasons. Gina explained both as she "took a year off so [she] could save up money and go back to school." Then she later explained her goal was "to pursue one avenue that [she] thought [she] wanted, and then [she] realized that it wasn't at all what [she] wanted, so [she] took that second year off to kind of try to figure out where to go next." Rania explained:

> I took about a year off to work, and I was in a relationship, so I kind of stopped and we did our own thing. I was working somewhere full-time completely different because it was not an option for me to cut down my hours and go to school. Now it is an option, so I went back.

Suzanne explained her gap in enrollment was due to program wait, ultimately causing her to change her major.

Once enrolled in college as a non-dual enrollment student, three participants expressed a decrease in motivation or diminished desire to finish due to the decision they made to change their major. They experienced periods where they became either disinterested in their major or struggled to find a new one. For example, Daniel started out enrolled in welding but, during an apprenticeship, he decided the field was not a good fit for him, and was struggling moving forward with a career choice after a gap in

enrollment. Leaving the welding program left him indecisive moving forward: “I don’t think I was ready to go back for business and accept I want to do this, like, business wasn’t just, like…it just wasn’t something I was committed to fully; but now I think am committed to it fully.” Daniel did not indicate a term in which he would be re-enrolling. Daniel’s previous statements and nonverbal cues stated in my journal indicated a lack of motivation toward future degree attainment. His responses seemed forced with extended pauses and lack of eye contact.

All participants responded with satisfaction regarding the dual enrollment program and described the benefits of the program, listed previously, as both internal and external motivators. In the next section, RQ2 is identified and explained through two themes—intrinsic factors and extrinsic factors to understand sources of motivation.

RQ2: Sources of Motivation

To understand what sources of motivation dual enrollment community college students identified in their transition from high school, students were asked a variety of questions about relationships they established while in the program and involvement in student life. Both themes in Table 3 that address this research question are explained further in the following subsections–intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation.

Intrinsic factors. How well a student preforms can be either enhanced or challenged by his or her self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997), and positive successful student performance is one of the objectives of dual enrollment. Independence and self-efficacy are the two codes that were categorized under the intrinsic factors theme.

Independence. One of the primary intrinsic motivators identified was independence. Ariana noted, “I thrived in the college setting with more independence. I was happier with the freedom, and I liked doing it for myself, not because someone was making me.” Daniel, Gina, and Ariana shared similar statements about gaining independence quickly and feeling satisfaction from it. More specifically, Ariana expressed a desire for autonomy, stating, “I wanted independence.”

Self-efficacy. Participants used statements that indicated strong self-efficacy regardless of their desire to develop relationships with others at the institution, discussed under extrinsic factors. For example, Rylie stated, “I was really good at focusing, other than that I was good at communicating with the professors or teachers about anything I didn’t understand or about how to prepare for a test or a quiz.” Then later, in a response about developing relationships, she added, “I had enough on my plate, and I didn’t really want to add more.” Kristen explained:

> I didn’t want to waste my time in high school taking classes that I didn’t feel would benefit for me. I wanted to do classes that were going to be worth my time in the long run. And just taking college classes was the next step.

Extrinsic factors. An extrinsic factor influencing course completion and sustainment of motivation was students’ ability to maintain a healthy support system and surround themselves with people who supported their decision to be enrolled in college. Gina, who was consistently enrolled, stated, “there were a couple of times where it was a

little overwhelming, but my support group was really good… my family, my mom, and my dad…they helped me take a break." Rylie indicated her Dad was a big support for her with his philosophies on education. Additionally, Isabella, Ariana, and Kristen attributed their support systems to family. Daniel was the only participant who identified college resources, the writing center and math lab, as a support system. Rania attributed her support to a high school teacher, explaining, "she let me take lunch to come in there and work on her computer, or she would let me come in during study hall to work on the dual credit classes during that time too." While these relationships were mainly relegated to outside Slate Community College, these support systems proved to be vital particularly for those who did not have a gap in enrollment or who completed their degrees by the time of the interview. When asked about support systems during her dual enrollment experience, Isabella specified, "I had a lot of support from my family, and I have great parents, I mean great family; we are all very close."

Lack of personal relationships. Eight of the participants indicated they did not develop any relationships beyond acquaintances in their dual enrollment courses. Kristen is the only participant who sought out other dual enrollment peers, stating, "I was able to get with them and kind of form friendships." Two participants reported feeling disjointed or isolated from other students, and struggled to make connections with college pupils. Isabella described the feeling in detail:

> I really missed the social aspect of high school because I went to a small school, and everybody knew everybody. When you go to a big college,

> [Slate Community College] is not even that big, but when you go to college, different people are taking different classes, and you really don't, like, Slate Community College doesn't have anything social going on, like, I mean they have some clubs, but they're not very big.

Relationships that did develop occurred within specific cohorts of their programs after dual enrollment courses were completed. Marissa stated she developed relationships beyond acquaintances with students in her nursing cohort, wherein they met with each other outside of school and depended on each other for classroom absences. She stated, "I enrolled with other nursing students who helped me with some of the courses." Rania also noted relationships with other students in her dental assisting program. Some individuals noted the importance of making contacts once enrolled in program specific courses for career exposure. Isabella explained, "I got to talk to people who were already pursuing my field, which, when you're in high school, it is hard to get those kinds of connections." Daniel's contact with other welders in the welding program ultimately resulted in his change of major and withdraw from the college. Daniel explained his decision in the following way:

> They said its great, but if it's not for you, then it's not for you. So, it's just for them--that is why they're doing it. They enjoy it, they enjoy the work, they enjoy the pay, they enjoy all the benefits; but, for me, I don't see the work as something paying off for me as it is paying off for them.

Institutional supports. When asked about advice to give future dual enrollment students, Suzanne shared, “it’s okay to see your advisor, like, if you’re failing a class.” Kristen elaborated on the assistance from an advisor at Slate Community College. During a session with Kristen’s advisor, the advisor informed Kristen of prerequisite classes, scheduling considerations, and gave Kristen “a realistic point of view of what the professors were going to expect.” In addition, Suzanne identified an external relationship impacting her success in courses. Suzanne stated, “my advisor supported me trying to help figure out, like, my course work and my course load, and just helping me move from high school to college.” Isabella explained that one teacher was able to provide her with assistance for projects, and their relationship grew so far as to providing child care for her instructor. Conversely, Allison explained, “I didn’t feel like I got close to my teachers in any way, and it was probably because I was balancing both high school and college, and balancing the two out.”

Institutional support at the high school level was described as limited. Ariana indicated, “our high school didn’t talk about it; I found out from another student, and my parents had to go into the meeting.” Isabella indicated that the first year she enrolled in dual enrollment was “the first year they were really pushing it.” Daniel also noted assistance from a guidance counselor: “the guidance counselor was a big help making sure you had certain papers turned in so you can qualify for the program.” Similarly, Allison credited her guidance counselor with the following:

> My counselor from high school helped me the most because I didn't really know what dual enrollment was, or how it was beneficial in the future, until she explained everything to me and how it works. Basically, my counselor helped me pick the classes that I would need going into a premed major.

Student life. Six participants indicated limited time for college extracurricular activities, then asked about direct involvement with student life or activities. Of those six, four were still active in high school activities. For example, Isabella had "band class twice a week" and Rylie noted she "played soccer too." Suzanne and Allison, who were both enrolled in a four-year university at the time of the interview, indicated increased levels of involvement in student life or recreation activities once enrolled at the four-year university, whereas involvement in student life was limited and presented a challenge for the other dual enrollment participants who did not transfer out of the institution both while in and out of their respective programs. Conversely, Gina had no interest in establishing relationships with students at the four-year university. During her reflection Gina stated:

> Everybody was kind of completely involved in just, like, that school, and you know going to events there and eating on campus and sleeping there, and it was just like they lived in a college bubble…. I wasn't going to be living on campus and be there for all the events.

Study groups. While seven of them reported being active in assigned group projects, participants noted that they rarely joined in study groups or tutoring sessions. Rylie reported feeling cheated while participating in study sessions because other students did not reciprocate her sharing of notes and resources. She stated, “I just kind of feel like I can do more by myself. Like, I’ve done them before, and I just kind of feel like I lead the show. I don’t like bringing all my resources, and then I don’t even get to study them. I just prefer to study by myself.” Almost all participants preferred independent studying over any type of study group. Kristen explained, “I didn’t have a study group, but there were people in my classes that were kind of like, ‘oh, you have this grade too, and we can study together’; but it was just kind of when it was convenient for them.” Gina indicated studying outside of class with an individual from the class while in the dual enrollment program by stating, “we would come maybe an hour before class to work on homework.”

As a final question of the interview, participants were asked to reflect on their experience, share any advice for others entering into the program, and provide any additional information that they felt might help me better understand their experience with the dual enrollment program. The theme that emerged from most of these responses was realizations.

Realizations. Rylie stated that she would recommend dual enrollment because “you can get your degree done so much sooner, and I will have my master’s by the time people I graduated with will have their bachelor’s, and that’s huge to me.” Marissa

attributed her completion of college by concluding, “if it weren’t for dual enrollment, I probably would not have finished college.” Isabella warned, “it comes with a lot more responsibility, and it’s not for everybody; but if you’re up for the task, then it’s a really good opportunity.” Daniel suggested, “students should take advantage of the classes, but be ready to provide their own transportation.” During Rylie’s final thoughts, she stated, “It was the best decision I ever made in my life. I would not go back and change it.”

Summary

In this chapter, the following topics were presented: Setting, demographics, data collection, data analysis, evidence of trustworthiness, and results. The results presented through themes generated from the data based on conceptual frameworks that included Bandura’s (1997) self-efficacy model and social cognitive theory, informing RQ1; and Keller’s (2010) ARCS model, informing RQ2. In regard to the first research question, participants described their experiences transitioning from high school to community college as less intense because of the exposure and environment provided by the dual enrollment program. They all enrolled in the program for a different reason, but were usually influenced by a friend, family member, of high school guidance counselor. In addition, students acknowledged an increase in confidence to complete non-dual enrollment courses. Participants identified two main challenges during transition—course rigor and gaps in enrollment due to financial responsibilities or change of major.

In regard to the second research question, sources of motivation were identified in two themes—intrinsic factors and extrinsic factors. The dual enrollment program allowed

them to find out that their chosen major was not a good fit for them while in high school. Most participants attributed this decrease to the personal challenges of changing a major and not knowing what to change it to. This downtime experienced left participants with little direction in their education, and presented a struggle with motivation. Intrinsic motivators identified were independence and self-efficacy. Participants wanted to be responsible for themselves and succeed or fail on their own. Extrinsic factors revealed in the results were described under the lack of personal relationships, institutional supports, student life, and study groups. A final and most frequent motivation identified by participants, and categorized under RQ1 in the gaps of enrollment section, was not having to pay for classes if they failed them.

Finally, realizations added additional results to the study to better assist me in understanding the impact the dual enrollment had on the participants. These results extend knowledge of the current literature regarding dual enrollment, and deliver credible results for Chapter 5 discussion while providing a basis for recommendations for future research, as well as implications for positive social change.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to discover how students reflect on and describe their experiences as dual enrollment high school students in their transition to community college. I planned to answer RQ1 and RQ2 through the use of qualitative interviews in a research study design outlined in Chapter 3. Through frameworks presented by Keller and Bandura, I coded, analyzed, and presented the results of the 10 interviews in Chapter 4. In this chapter, I synthesized the information from those results to report the interpretation of the findings, limitations of the study, recommendations, and implications. I analyzed student experiences to better inform all stakeholders, including, but not limited to, faculty and policymakers moving forward with dual credit policies and any administrative decisions. In addition, my goal was to provide information to assist both high school and higher education faculty and counselors to make more informed choices about how to advise and impact this unique subset of students.

Summary of Findings

Key findings related to RQ1 appeared to indicate that the participants of this study transitioned successfully to non-dual enrollment courses as a result of their dual enrollment experience. Each participant described a unique experience within the dual enrollment program. Students responded about their transition through responses regarding program choice, perceived benefits, perceived personal strengths, and personal challenges. Program choice was discussed for a variety of reasons, but participants were mostly influenced by a friend or family member. In addition, the proximity of the college

to their home or high school played a factor in participants choosing Slate Community College in particular. Three of the perceived benefits reported by the participants were exposure, environment, and finances. Participants' perceived personal strengths were the growth of confidence and disciplined study habits. Perceived personal strengths were strongly influenced by their perceived challenges. For example, they embraced the course rigor of more challenging courses and transitioned their learned study habits to their non-dual enrollment college education. Perceived challenges identified by participants were course rigor and external obligations causing gaps in enrollment.

Results related to RQ2 included both intrinsic and extrinsic factors as sources of motivation for successful transition. Intrinsic factors for motivation were independence and self-efficacy. Participants described increased self-efficacy as a result of courses that they chose to be in and were not forced to enroll. Extrinsic factors that impacted transition were lack of personal relationships within the institution and positive institutional supports from both the high school and college faculty and staff. Participants explained minimal student life involvement and the nonparticipation of study groups inside Slate Community College appeared to have no bearing on the successful completion of course work.

Interpretation of Findings

The following research questions guided this study: (a) How do dual enrollment community college students describe their experiences transitioning from high school? and (b) What sources of motivation do dual enrollment community college students

identify in their transition from high school? I analyzed the results through the conceptual frameworks of Keller's ARCS model, informing RQ1, as well as Bandura' self-efficacy model and social cognitive theory, informing RQ2. In Bandura's three-phase cycle of self-regulation, the learners reflect on their own performance or knowledge of a subject, then set a goal and reflect on the results. The ability to achieve this goal is influenced by Bandura's social cognitive model, which states there are three factors that influence self-efficacy: Behaviors, environment, and personal/cognitive factors. Keller's ARCS model accounts for self-efficacy in the confidence category, and the ARCS model assisted the data analysis process and served as a starting point to identify the attention, relevance, confidence, and satisfaction of a dual enrollment learner.

Keller: ARCS Model

The codes best examined through Keller's ARCS model were entry decisions, study habits, and confidence. When participants were asked to describe how they became enrolled in the dual enrollment program, most of them responded that they were influenced or referred to by a friend or family member who had been enrolled in the program. As a result, they saw benefits of enrolling in the program, and found the benefits relevant to their current situation. Attention and relevancy are the first two steps to motivating students, according to Keller (2010). Participants noted through high school preparation their confidence increased, the third step in the ARCS model. Participants expressed similar supporting statements, claiming "they really made sure I was very

prepared for college work" and "I was definitely being challenged in high school, and it definitely became more important when I took college classes."

Three students reported that they were not allowed to select a major in high school, but all participants responded that they had an idea which career field they wanted to be employed in upon completion of college. The majority of the participants discussed gaps in enrollment and changes in majors throughout their higher education experience because they found a program or specific skill set, such as welding or dental assisting, was not a good fit for them. They acknowledged the time and financial benefit of learning this early in their college education. They also noted that they received no emotional satisfaction, the final stage in the ARCS model, from these chosen majors later abandoned. Daniel, in particular during the interview, had no solidified plans to return to school after abandoning a major and indicated decreased motivation.

Bandura: Self Efficacy

The majority of participants indicated having a strong self-efficacy, a direct result of positive self-regulation according to Bandura (1997). Many of the participants noted time management as an important perceived personal strength. They described how it directly impacts their performance in classes. Study habits such as notetaking and increased test preparation skills were also additional perceived strengths learned in dual enrollment courses that made the transition into non-dual enrollment courses smoother. Some participants attributed their intrinsic factors, independence and self-efficacy, to the dual enrollment courses where the participants gained both self-efficacy and

independence throughout their dual enrollment course. Their experience left them with the confidence to move forward toward non-dual enrollment courses, furthering the completion of their degree. However, gaps in enrollment were explained differently by each participant and their individual situations included many of the elements identified in Bandura's self-efficacy theory and social cognitive model. Those who did have gaps in enrollment made different statements expressing doubt in their choice of major or lack of interest in finishing their degree demonstrating a lower self-efficacy. Those who did not have gaps in enrollment were found to have strong self-efficacy.

Extrinsic factors, such as lack of personal relationships, were analyzed through Bandura's social cognitive model and self-efficacy theory. According to Bandura (1997), if participants struggle to make connections with their peers, there is a possibility that their self-efficacy could be negatively affected. Participants did not make connections with their peers while in the dual enrollment program and this did not affect their self-efficacy. Also, Bandura (1997) indicated environment as one of the key factors of a student's ability to develop relationships. The on-campus environment which was specifically sought out for this study proved to be a factor for developing relationships. Some participants saw the institution as a temporary location—a transition point to a four-year institution. Other participants expressed no desire to seek out support from fellow classmates but maintained open communications with instructors. Most participants attributed their success in college courses to family support. These relationships were based on encouragement, understanding of time commitment, and the

promotion of college education from parents. Other participants attributed their success to friends from the same high school who were also taking dual enrollment courses at the same time. Suzanne explained, “we went through classes together, filled out study guides together, took advice from each other, and learned new concepts together and she was a big support.” Even though the majority of participants did not develop any relationships with students at the receiving institution, they maintained a steady support system at home. Only one of the participants took an interest in and sought out study groups for support and none took an interest in extracurricular activities. According to Bandura’s social cognitive theory, if participants struggle to make connections with their peers, there is a possibility that their self-efficacy could be affected. This was not the case for any of the participants in this study. In addition, according to Wolf-Wendel et al. (2009), as stated in Chapter 1, students who integrate successfully into college undergo three phases: (a) separation from the past, (b) transition, the individual begins to interact with the new setting and people, and (c) incorporation, the individual adopts the norms and expectations of the new environment. Again, this was not the case for any of the participants in this study. Even though the participants of this study had no interest in fully integrating into college as demonstrated by lack of personal relationships and no interest in student life involvement, they completed all dual enrollment course work successfully.

Limitations of Study

One of the primary limitations of this study was that only one community college was used to recruit participants. A second limitation to the study was that only student perspectives were included as data sources. Interviews with parents or administrators could produce additional understanding to the processes and experiences with the dual enrollment program. Only student perspectives were sought out to allow no other perspectives to influence the themes emerging from data coding. Regardless, the results of this study have the potential to impact not only where this study occurred, but also other geographic locations in which dual enrollment is offered.

Transferability of the results was limited by the sample population and size. The 10 participants represented a range of majors and came from diverse backgrounds. They all completed a minimum of 12 credit hours at Slate Community College, and therefore their experiences with dual enrollment programs may reflect outcomes of this institution, and how it interacts and supports dual enrollment students.

Limitations were minimized through the nature of the study, which allowed for open coding and reduced a certain amount of bias (Maxwell, 2013). If pre-structured codes had been used, they could have counteracted acknowledging emergent themes or made improper connections to information that were not there, or observed links based on those pre-existing codes. Therefore, pre-structured codes were not used in this study. In order to eliminate any research bias and increase dependability of the study, transcripts of the interviews were provided to participants for review. Any additional bias was

minimized through reflection. I journaled after each interview in the Microsoft Excel workbook used to track the interview. I reflected on my assumptions, dispositions, and biases in relation to dual enrollment. I transcribed each interview and referred back to the recordings throughout the data analysis process, as needed.

Recommendations

Recommendations for future research could include a follow-up study with the same 10 participants in order to determine completion or sources of diminished commitment. An analysis of their GPA and completion time could also indicate further constructs of Bandura's (1997) self-regulation model. Analyzing not only the sample, but a larger sample of how quickly some students complete a degree compared with GPAs might predict the level of quality of completion. A study such as this would not only prove to be helpful for a larger population, but also specifically dual enrollment students. I further recommend that additional research sites under different policy structures be compared for analysis both quantitatively and qualitatively.

Ohio's dual enrollment model continues to change with hopes of enhancing the program and its effectiveness. A future study could explore student experiences under new policies and regulations. Comparisons could be made using this qualitative data with future qualitative data. Furthermore, a narrative study could be beneficial for both high school and higher education institutions to understand specific challenges a student may or may not go through from the beginning to the end of his or her dual enrollment experience.

It is also recommended that an environment study be conducted to explore the experiences of dual enrollment high school students taking their courses online versus on-campus versus at the high school. Researchers could isolate for a specific subject, and investigate further how environment affects the ability to develop relationships, and how relationships affect students' ability to self-regulate. Finally, exploration into low income dual enrollment students, minority dual enrollment students, or a subset of dual enrollment students who failed their courses could further produce an understanding for additional populations.

Implications

The results of the study have the potential to positively impact higher education administrators, faculty, and staff, as well as high school guidance counselors and future dual enrollment students. The results suggest that dual enrollment students could have positive experiences within the program if they have a support system at home. The results also indicate that external motivators of dual enrollment students are greatly conditioned by advising from high school guidance counselors and state dual enrollment models allowing for flexible scheduling, free tuition, as well as high school and college credit upon completion. Bandura's self-efficacy and self-regulation model form the foundation for positive outcomes for dual enrollment students and their internal motivators. Faculty should be aware that dual enrollment students embrace the rigor of the courses and adopt the independence provided by the program. It is recommended and encouraged that dual enrollment students should be treated equally alongside their non-

dual enrollment classmates. These students demonstrated a higher level of study habits and test preparation that could be beneficial if shared with students who have little college preparation.

This study further enhances literature on dual enrollment students, and delivers positive social implications for the acceptance of dual enrollment students into the college classroom and into higher education as a whole. Participants made statements that implied confidence that is not easily found in higher education. Dual enrollment students have the potential to affect non-dual enrollment students positively with their experiences, enhancing camaraderie in the classroom. Increased graduation rates and attrition rates affect the community and economy as a whole. Employers are able to carry out organizational objectives with higher educated and quality graduates.

Conclusion

This study confirms that dual enrollment students never fully integrate into college while still in high school, yet demonstrate many of the characteristics needed for a successful college completion, such as confidence, strong self-efficacy and regulation, support systems, and the development of study habits. I was surprised that only two out of the 10 students I had interviewed had completed their degrees. As a result, I cannot conclude that dual enrollment programs increase or decrease time to completion. Dual enrollment was often viewed at as a stepping stone to another venture. Whether it is a four-year university, a way of completing high school, or a venue to experiment with a technical skill, dual enrollment courses at the community college level were not viewed

by the majority of my participants as a milestone--earning an associate degree. However, I can suggest that during these specific participants' dual enrollment experience, they remained committed to their coursework, and they did not fail or withdraw from a single class. With proper support, the benefits of the program allow students the experience they need to develop confidence and more meaningful self-efficacy moving forward in their education transition experiences.

References

Allen, D., & Dadgar, M. (2012). Does dual enrollment increase students' success in college? Evidence from a quasi-experimental analysis of dual enrollment in New York City. *New Directions for Higher Education*, (158), 11-19. doi:10.1002/he.20010

American Association of Community Colleges. (2016). Students at community colleges. Retrieved from http://www.aacc.nche.edu/AboutCC/Trends/Pages/studentsatcommunitycolleges.aspx

An, B.P. (2012). The impact of dual enrollment on college degree attainment do low-SES students benefit? *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 35*(1), 57-75. doi:10.3102/0162373712461933

An, B.P. (2015). The role of academic motivation and engagement on the relationship between dual enrollment and academic performance. *Journal of Higher Education*, *86*(1), 98-126. doi:10.1353/jhe.2015.0005

An, B.P., & Taylor, J.L. (2015). Are dual enrollment students college ready? Evidence from the Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, *23*(58/59), 1-26. doi:10.14507/epaa.v23.1781

Arnold, B., Knight, H., & Flora, B. (2017). Dual enrollment student achievement in various learning environments. *Journal of Learning in Higher*

Education, *13*(1), 25-32. Retrieved from http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1139694.pdf

Azimzadeh, R., Koch, D., & Rollins, R. (2015). Dual enrollment in Missouri innovation campus: Students' perceptions of taking college courses. *Global Education Journal*, (3). Retrieved from http://ezp.waldenulibrary.org/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ehh&AN=110509750&site=ehost-live&scope=site

Bandura, A. (1977). Self-efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behavioral change. *Psychological Review*, *84*(2), 191.

Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J: Prentice-Hall.

Bandura, A. (1995) *Self-efficacy in changing societies*. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.

Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. New York, NY: W. H. Freeman.

Barnett, E., Maclutsky, E., & Wagonlander, C. (2015). Emerging early college models for traditionally underserved students. *New Directions for Community Colleges*, (169), 39-49. doi:10.1002/cc.20131

Bruner, J.S. (1966). *Toward a theory of instruction*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Burns, H., & Lewis, B. (2000). Dual-enrolled students' perception of the effect of classroom environment on educational experience. *The Qualitative Report, 4*(1), 1-10. Retrieved from http://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol4/iss1/7

Carey, J. (2014). *College Credit Plus: Chancellor John Carey's recommendations for Ohio's dual credit program.* Retrieved from Ohio Department of Higher Education website: https://www.ohiohighered.org/sites/ohiohighered.org/files/uploads/CCP/CC%2BFINAL-Report-Dec30C.pdf

Cowan, J., & Goldhaber, D. (2015). How much of a "running start" do dual enrollment programs provide students? *Review of Higher Education, 38*(3), 425-460. doi:10.1353/rhe.2015.0018

Creswell, J.W. (2013). *Quantitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches.* (3rd Ed.). Thousand Oaks, SAGE.

Denecker, C. (2013). Transitioning writers across the composition threshold: What we can learn from dual enrollment partnerships. *Composition Studies, 41*(1), 27-50. Retrieved from http://www.compositionstudies.uwinnipeg.ca/archives/411.html

Dever, R. (2017). Academic partnerships to strengthen college credit plus. *AURCO Journal, 23*31-41. Retrieved from https://eds-b-ebscohost-com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=5&sid=65d98893-7a3a-4d06-9a88-e13330eb329b%40sessionmgr104

Dixon, D.B., & Slate, J. (2014). Differences in selected dual credit courses' success rates by location for Texas college students. *International Journal of University Teaching and Faculty Development*, *5*(3), 175-185. Retrieved from https://search-proquest-com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/docview/1841113091?accountid=14872

Edmunds, J.A., Unlu, F., Glennie, E., Bernstein, L., Fesler, L., Furey, J., & Arshavsky, N. (2017). Smoothing the transition to postsecondary education: The impact of the early college model. *Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness*, *10*(2), 297-325. doi:10.1080/19345747.2016.1191574

Ferguson, C., Baker, P., & Burnett, D. (2015). Faculty members' perceptions of rigor in dual enrollment, accelerated programs, and standard community college courses. *New Directions for Community Colleges*, (169), 83-91. doi:10.1002/cc.20135

Fink, J., Jenkins, D., & Yanagiura, T. (2017). *What happens to students who take community college "dual enrollment" courses in high school?* Retrieved from Community College Research Center website: https://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/media/k2/attachments/what-happens-community-college-dual-enrollment-students.pdf

Foster, R. (2010). Cooperative and concurrent enrollment and college retention. *Journal of Career and Technical Education*, *25*(2), 38-45. Retrieved from: http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ931096.pdf

Frankfort-Nachmias, C., &Nachmias, D. (2008). *Research methods in the social sciences* (7th ed.). New York: Worth Publishers.

Fromme, K., Corbin, W.R., & Kruse, M.I. (2008). Behavioral risks during the transition from high school to college. *Developmental Psychology, 44*(5), 1497–1504. http://doi.org/10.1037/a0012614

Grubb, J.M., Scott, P.H., & Good, D. W. (2017). The answer is yes: dual enrollment benefits students at the community college. *Community College Review, 45*(2), 79-98. doi:10.1177/0091552116682590

Haag, P. W. (2015). The challenges of career and technical education concurrent enrollment: An administrative perspective. *New Directions for Community Colleges*, (169), 51-58. doi:10.1002/cc.20132

Hanson, J.M., Prusha, T., & Iverson, C. (2015). Principal, teacher, and counselor views of concurrent enrollment. *New Directions for Community Colleges*, (169), 71-81. doi:10.1002/cc.20134

Hebert, L. (2001). A comparison of learning outcomes for dual enrollment mathematics students taught by high school teachers versus college faculty. *Community College Review, 29*(3), 22-38. doi:10.1177/009155210102900302

Hicks, T., & Heastie, S. (2008). High school to college transition: A profile of the stressors, physical and psychological health issues that affect the first-year on-campus college student. *Journal of Cultural Diversity, 15*(3), 143-147. Retrieved from

http://digitalcommons.uncfsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1013&context=soe_faculty_wp

Hoepfl, M.C., (1997). Choosing qualitative research: A primer for technology education researchers. *Journal of Technology Education, 9*(1).

Hoffman, N., Vargas, J., & Santos, J. (2009). New directions for dual enrollment: Creating stronger pathways from high school through college. *New Directions for Community Colleges,* (145), 43-58. doi:10.1002/cc.354

Hofmann, E. (2012). Why dual enrollment? *New Directions for Higher Education,* (158), 1-8. doi:10.1002/he.20009

Hongwei, Y. (2015). Student retention at two-year community colleges: A structural equation modeling approach. *International Journal of Continuing Education & Lifelong Learning*, *8*(1), 85-101.

Howley, A., Howley, M.D., Howley, C.B., & Duncan, T. (2013). Early college and dual enrollment challenges: Inroads and impediments to access. *Journal of Advanced Academics*, *24*(2), 77-107. doi:10.1177/1932202X13476289

Hughes, K.L. (2010). Dual enrollment: Postsecondary/secondary partnerships to prepare students. *Journal of College Science Teaching*, *39*(6), 12-13.

Hughes, K.L., & Edwards, L. (2012). Teaching and learning in the dual enrollment classroom. *New Directions for Higher Education,* (158), 29-37. doi:10.1002/he.20012

Jiayi, H., & Hagedorn, L.S. (2015). Jump start: International high school students from other countries earning early U.S. college credits. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice*, *17*(2), 243-263. doi:10.1177/1521025115578236

Johnson, V.K., Gans, S.E., Kerr, S., & LaValle, W. (2010). Managing the transition to college: Family functioning, emotion coping, and adjustment in emerging adulthood. *Journal of College Student Development*, *51*(6), 607-621. doi:10.1353/csd.2010.0022

Kanny, M.A. (2015). Dual enrollment participation from the student perspective. *New Directions for Higher Education,* (169), 59-70. doi:10.1002/cc20133

Karp, M.M., Calcagno, J.C., Hughes, K.L., Jeong, D.W., & Bailey, T.R. (2007). The postsecondary achievement of participants in dual enrollment:" An analysis of student outcomes in two states". *Community College Research Center, Columbia University*.

Karp, M. (2012). “I don’t know, I’ve never been to college!” dual enrollment as a college readiness strategy. *New Directions for Higher Education,* (158), 21-28. doi:10.1002/he.2011

Keller, J.M. (2010). *Motivational design for learning and performance: The ARCS model approach*. Tallahassee, FL: Springer Science & Business Media.

Kinnick, K.N. (2012). The impact of dual enrollment on the institution. *New Directions for Higher Education,* 39–47. doi:10.1002/he.20013

Kotamraju, P. (2005, April). The Minnesota post-secondary enrollment options program: Does participation in dual enrollment programs help high school students attain career and technical education majors and degrees in college? Paper Presented at the Council for the Study of Community Colleges, 47th Annual Conference, Boston, MA.

Krueger, N., & Dickson, P.R. (1994). How believing in ourselves increases risk taking: Perceived self-efficacy and opportunity recognition. *Decision Sciences, 25*(3), 385. Retrieved from http://ezp.waldenulibrary.org/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/198096140?accountid=14872

Leonard, J. (2013). Maximizing college readiness for all through parental support. *School Community Journal*, *23*(1), 183-202. Retrieved from http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1004338.pdf

Lewis, M., & Overman, L. (2008). Dual and Concurrent Enrollment and Transition to Postsecondary Education. *Career & Technical Education Research*, *33*(3), 189-202. Retrieved from http://content.ebscohost.com/ContentServer.asp?T=P&P=AN&K=85443734&S=R&D=ehh&EbscoContent=dGJyMNHr7ESep644yOvqOLCmr06e

qLBSrqm4Ta6WxWXS&ContentCustomer=dGJyMPGss0q1qK5IuePfgeyx44Dt6fIA

Lincoln, Y.S. & Guba, E.G. (1985). Naturalistic inquiry. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Lonn, S., Aguilar, S.J., & Teasley, S.D. (2015). Investigating student motivation in the context of a learning analytics intervention during a summer bridge program. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *47*90-97. doi:10.1016/j.chb.2014.07.013

Lukes, L.A. (2014). Considerations and recommendations for implementing a dual-enrollment program: Bridging the gap between high school and college level science. *Journal of College Science Teaching, 44*(1), 17-22. doi:10.2505/4/jcst14_044_01_17

Marshall, M.N. (1996). Sampling for qualitative research. *Family practice, 13*(6), 522-526.

Maxwell, J.A. (2013). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (3rd ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

McCord, M., & Roberts, L. (2014). Success in dual enrollment: Motivation and maturity. *Teaching English in the Two Year College, 41*(4), 401-403. Retrieved from https://search-proquest-com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/docview/1520301726?accountid=14872

Medvide, M.B., & Blustein, D.L. (2010). Exploring the educational and career plans of urban minority students in a dual enrollment program. *Journal of Career Development, 37*(2), 541-558. doi:10.1177/0894845309350920

Miles, M.B., Huberman, A.M. & Saldana, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A Methods sourcebook* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Thousand Oaks, CA.

Mokher, C.G., & McLendon, M.K. (2009). Uniting secondary and postsecondary education: An event history analysis of state adoption of dual enrollment policies. *American Journal of Education, 115*(2), 249-277. doi:10.1086/595668

Morrow, J. & Ackermann, M. (2012). Intention to persist and retention of first-year students: The importance of motivation and sense of belonging. *College Student Journal*, *46*(3), 483-491. Retrieved from http://www.projectinnovation.biz/csj_2006.html

Mullin, C.M. (2012). Student success institutional and individual perspectives. *Community College Review*, *40*(2), 126-144. doi:10.1177/0091552112441501

Nash-Ditzel, S., & Brown, T. (2012). Freedoms in the classroom: Cultivating a successful third space for literacy growth. *Language & Literacy: A Canadian Educational E-Journal*, *14*(3), 95-111. Retrieved from http://ezp.waldenulibrary.org/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/1428558461?accountid=14872

O'Connor, K.B., & Justice, M.C. (2008). Evaluating dual credit enrollment at selected rural northeast Texas high schools. *Southeastern Teacher Education Journal*, *1*(1), 27-34.

Oliver, M., Ricard, R.J., Witt, K.J., Alvarado, M., & Hill, P. (2010). Creating college advising connections: Comparing motivational beliefs of early college high school students to traditional first-year university students. *NACADA Journal*, *30*(1), 14-22. doi:10.12930/0271-9517-30.1.14

Ose, S.O. (2016). Using Excel and Word to structure qualitative data. *Journal of Applied Social Sciences (19367244)*, *10*(2), 147-162. doi:10.1177/1936724416664948

Ozmun, C.D. (2013). College and academic self-efficacy as antecedents for high school dual-credit enrollment. *Community College Enterprise*, *19*(1), 61-72. Retrieved from http://www.schoolcraft.edu/a-z-index/community-college-enterprise/search-archives/394#.UriPMvRDtPo

Patton, M.Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Pelletier, J.E., Graham, D.J., & Laska, M.N. (2014). Social norms and dietary behaviors among young adults. *American Journal of Health Behavior*, *38*(1), 10.5993/AJHB.38.1.15. http://doi.org/10.5993/AJHB.38.1.15

Pretlow, J., & Patteson, J. (2015). Operating dual enrollment in different policy environments: An examination of two states. *New Directions for Community Colleges*, (169), 21-29. doi:10.1002/cc20129

Pretlow, J., & Wathington, H.D. (2014). Expanding dual enrollment: Increasing postsecondary access for all? *Community College Review*, *42*(1), 41-54. doi:10.1177/0091552113509664

Public School Review. (2017). *Stark county public high schools.* Retrieved from https://www.publicschoolreview.com/ohio/stark-county/high

Pyrczak, F. (2009). *Evaluating research in academic journals: A practical guide to realistic evaluation (4th ed.).* Los Angeles, CA: Pyrczak.

Ramson, A.J. (2014). Service-learning: A tool to develop employment competencies for college students. *Journal on Excellence in College Teaching*, *25*(1), 159-187. Retrieved from http://celt.muohio.edu/ject/issue.php?v=25&n=1

Roach, R., Gamez Vargas, J., & David, K.M. (2015). Eliminating barriers to dual enrollment in Oklahoma. *New Directions for Community Colleges*, (169), 31-38. doi:10.1002/cc.20130

Rubin, H.J., & Rubin, I.S. (2012). *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data* (3rd ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Stephenson, L.G. (2013). Dual-credit in kentucky. *Community College Journal of Research & Practice*, *37*(11), 844-850. doi:10.1080/10668921003781019

Strayhorn, T.L. (2011). Bridging the pipeline: Increasing underrepresented students' preparation for college through a summer bridge program. *American Behavioral Scientist*, *55*(2), 142-159. doi:10.1177/0002764210381871

Taylor, J.L. (2015). Accelerating pathways to college: The (in)equitable effects of community college dual credit. *Community College Review, 43*(4), 355-379. doi:10.1177/0091552115594880

Taylor, J.L., Borden, V.H., & Park, E. (2015). State dual credit policy: A national perspective. *New Directions for Community Colleges,* (169), 9-19. doi:10.1002/cc.20128

Tinto, V. (1993). *Leaving college: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition* (2nd ed.). Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

Tinto, V. (2010). From theory to action: Exploring the institutional conditions for student retention. *Higher education: Handbook of theory and research, 25,* 51-89.

U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2003). Fast response survey system (FRSS), "Dual credit and exam-based courses," FRSS 85.

U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2015a). Fast response survey system (FRSS), "Dual Enrollment Programs and Courses for High School Students at Postsecondary Institutions: 2010–11" FRSS 85.

U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2015b). *The condition of education 2015* (NCES 2015-083).

Vargas, J., Hooker, S., & Gerwin, C. (2017). Blending high school and college can sharpen the focus of each: Dual enrollment and early college

experiences help students make smooth and successful transitions from high school to higher education. *Phi Delta Kappan*, (3), doi:10.1177/0031721717739587

Veletsianos, G. v., Beth, B., Lin, C., & Russell, G. (2016). Design principles for thriving in our digital world. *Journal of Educational Computing Research, 54*(4), 443-461. doi:10.1177/0735633115625247

Vygotsky, L.S. (1978). *Mind in society. The development of higher psychological processes.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Wang, N., Wilhite, S.C., Wyatt, J., Young, T., Bloemker, G., & Wilhite, E. (2012). Impact of a college freshman social and emotional learning curriculum on student learning outcomes: An exploratory study. *Journal of University Teaching & Learning Practice*, *9*(2), 1-20. Retrieved from http://ro.uow.edu.au/jutlp/vol9/iss2/8

Wang, X., Chan, H.Y., Phelps, L.A., & Washbon, J.I. (2015). Fuel for success: Academic momentum as a mediator between dual enrollment and educational outcomes of two-year technical college students. *Community College Review, 43*(2), 165-190. doi:10.1177/0091552115569846

Wang X., McCready, B. (2013). The effect of postsecondary coenrollment on college success: Initial evidence and implications for policy and future research. *Educational Researcher,* 42(9), 392-402. doi:10.3102/0013189X13505683

Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. (2010a). Running Start 2008-2009 Annual Progress Report. Olympia, WA: Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges.

Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. (2010b). Running Start Finance Study Report. Olympia, WA: Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges.

Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. (2011). Running Start Annual Progress Report, 2009–2010. Olympia, WA: Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges.

Wolf-Wendel, L., Ward, K., & Kinzie, J. (2009). A tangled web of terms: The overlap and unique contribution of involvement, engagement, and integration to understanding college student success. *Journal of College Student Development*, *50*(4), 407-428. doi:10.1353/csd.0.0077

Appendix: Interview Protocol

Demographic Information

1. How many college credit hours did you attempt while in high school? How many were online and how many were face to face?
2. Did you have a major selected when you were in high school?

    Probe 2a: Is it the same major you currently have selected now?

    Probe 2b: If not, why did you change?
3. When is your projected graduation date?
4. Did you only complete classes at Slate Community College or did you complete classes at other colleges as well?
5. Did you pass all college credit plus classes attempted?

    Probe 5a: If not, what were the circumstances?
6. Other than summer, was there a gap between your completion of your high school diploma and enrollment into college?

    Probe 6a: Tell me more about that.

Interview Questions

7. Prior to your college credit plus courses, how would you describe your self-awareness of weaknesses and strengths in reference to study habits?
    a. What about test taking skills?
    b. What about time management? Textbook reading, notetaking?

8. Did these weaknesses and strengths improve or stay the same with the completion of your college credit plus classes?

    Probe 8a: Tell me more about that.

9. How would you describe any positive or negative experiences you had in moving from high school to college?
10. In what ways did your participation in college credit plus classes influence your adjustment to college courses?
11. What kinds of support, if any, did you receive during your college credit plus experience?
    a. Was this helpful to you in the CC+ program? What about when you went to college?
12. What types of relationships or connections, if any, did you make during the completion of your college credit plus courses?
    a. Effect if any when beginning at Stark College
13. What advantages or disadvantages do feel you have gained compared to your peers who did not complete college credit plus courses?
    a. What about this is significant to you?
14. What were the most challenging aspects of becoming a college credit plus student?
15. What were the most challenging parts of completing the college credit plus classes?
16. What factors played the greatest role for you in completing your college credit plus classes successfully?

17. What were your reasons for choosing Slate Community College as your postsecondary institution for college credit plus?
18. Why did you continue at Slate Community College after completion of your college credit plus classes?
19. Would you recommend college credit plus classes to high school students?

    Probe 19a: Why or why not?
20. Is there anything you would like to add to help me better understand your college credit plus experiences?