What is this research about?
Dual-credit systems, or the opportunity for secondary students to earn credits at high school and college levels simultaneously (Lekes et al., 2007) is well established in the United States. As part of a larger study that examines secondary school apprenticeships and partnerships, this study investigates the tensions that exist in the implementation of dual credit systems in the provinces of Ontario and British Columbia with a specific focus on dual-credit for apprenticeship training.

What did the researchers do?
From November 2007 to July 2008, the researcher used qualitative research methods, in the form of interviews and focus groups with 35 people from industry, government, organized labour, high schools, boards of education and colleges with experience in dual-credit programming, to answer her research question. The researcher selected High School Transition Program in Apprenticeship located in British Columbia’s Peace River District, and the School College Work Initiative program and Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program located in southern Ontario’s Simcoe County.

What you need to know:
This study examined the challenges facing dual-credit programs for apprenticeship training in both British Columbia and Ontario and found that key tensions exist in the form of ownership, funding, and alignment of organizational structures (secondary schools with colleges). The researchers suggest that government support is needed to sustain these programs financially, and to set parameters for how, when, where and by whom these programs are delivered.

Columbia’s Peace River District, and the School College Work Initiative program and Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program located in southern Ontario’s Simcoe County.

The researcher chose these locations because, according to 2006 census data, these areas relied on resource-based
industries and had past experience with dual credit activities.

Interviews were analyzed with a particular focus on the concepts of partnerships, dual-credit programs, funding and organizational concerns, and other tensions.

What did the researchers find?
The researcher found that funding for dual-credit programs will require increased cooperation between secondary and post-secondary institutions who are currently funded from separate sources.

The misalignment of secondary and post-secondary institutions’ timetables exist as a barrier to the implementation of dual-credit programs. When timetables don’t align, it is more difficult for students to take advantage of these programs.

Ownership for dual-credit programs brings into question who has jurisdiction over the delivery of these programs (high school or post-secondary staff?), and the accreditation and regulation of those who deliver these programs. Clarifying ownership may establish the parameters for partnerships and reduce apprehensions about offering dual-credit programs.

How can you use this research?
This research may be of interest to Guidance Curriculum Leaders responsible for making dual credit programs known to the student body and timetabling coop partnerships into the secondary curriculum. Educational administrators may find this research useful for identifying the potential tensions that can arise with dual-credit partnerships and may encourage administrators to take a proactive approach to minimize these tensions.

Further, educational administrators and education policy makers can use this research to understand the complex nature of dual-credit programs and the importance of government support in sustaining these opportunities for secondary students. The researcher suggests that partnerships with local businesses and the community may help alleviate the overall costs to provincial governments and territories, and lead to the increased sustainability of these programs.

The researcher also outlines three key recommendations for policy makers:
1) Define boundaries for dual credit programs with clearer expectations for instructor training and qualifications;

2) Set clear standards and funding guidelines;

3) Align secondary and post secondary timetables to facilitate partnerships.

Further, *college and secondary school administrators* may wish to consider the possibility of the alignment of timetables and academic calendars to facilitate the implementation of dual-credit programming.

**Original article:**
For more information about this study, we invite you to read the original article:


**About the researcher:**
At the time of this research, Bonnie Watt-Malcolm was an Associate Professor in Secondary Education, Faculty of Education, University of Alberta. bwatt@ualberta.ca

**Other references**

**Keywords:** Dual credit, education policy, secondary education, apprenticeship, school to work transition programs

**About this summary**
The Ontario Education Research Ex-change (OERE) is a project of the *Knowledge Network for Applied Education Research*, an Ontario network pro-moting the use of re-search in educa-tion. The OERE’s clear language sum-maries of academic research aim to support this mandate.

This summary has been adapted from the *ResearchSnapshot* series developed by *York University* and *ResearchImpact* and has been developed according to writing and design principles unique to OERE. For more information about this summary or the OERE network please contact oere.knaer.oise@utoronto.ca.

This summary reflects findings from this study only and is not necessarily representa-tive of the broader body of literature on this subject. Please consult the original document for complete details about this research. In case of any disagreement, the original docu-ment should be understood as authoritative.

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