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DUAL CREDIT IN SOUTHEAST KENTUCKY: ACCELERATING APPALACHIAN  
SUCCESS OR A MODE TO REGRESS

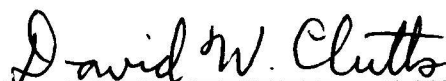
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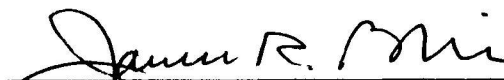
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Dual Credit in Southeast Kentucky:  
Accelerating Appalachian Success or a Mode to Regress

By

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Master of Science Industrial Education

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Richmond, Kentucky

2003

Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of  
Eastern Kentucky University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of  
Educational Doctorate  
Leadership and Policy Studies  
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## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my much loved family and friends  
for their unwavering support.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Returning to school in pursuit of my Doctorate degree has been an interesting experience, ranging from very challenging and joyful to often being confusing and at times a little frustrating. Yet, all-in-all, I am happy to have gone through the process. Graduate school is a great resource for personal and professional development. I could not have accomplished my goal without the support and encouragement of many people along the way. I am grateful for the Eastern Kentucky University's—Doctoral program in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies—outreach and support of the people of rural Southeastern Kentucky in recruiting and establishing the Manchester cohort, bringing this opportunity to the region.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge Dr. Deborah West for serving as my committee co-chair and mentor from my initial orientation through the dissertation defense. Her dedication to providing me with the guidance and support necessary to see this dissertation through, despite her vast responsibilities, is sincerely appreciated. I would also like to thank Dr. Charles Hausman for serving as my committee co-chair and advisor. Committee member Dr. James Bliss has been very supportive and a tremendous source for knowledge and guidance. A special thanks to my outside examiner, Dr. David Clutts. His support, encouragement, and guidance is greatly appreciated.

Colleagues and friends, including cohort comrades and Southeast Kentucky Community and Technical College staff, have provided both moral and material support. They not only showed interest in my research on dual credit, they took interest in me

personally in supporting my professional growth and development. I am truly fortunate to be a part of a network team of such support.

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## ABSTRACT

Dual Credit in Southeast Kentucky:  
Accelerating Appalachian Success or a Mode to Regress

By

Roger A. Bowling

Eastern Kentucky University

This dissertation is a qualitative study about high school student participation in dual credit programming in the rural Appalachian setting of Southeastern Kentucky. The research region is comprised of resource extraction based communities and the coal markets have plummeted. Void the once robust coal industry, Southeast Kentucky will have to reconstruct a new economy. Today's students in this region can no longer be prepared to enter an established workforce, they must be able to acclimate to and/or forge new jobs. Sustainability requires a refocusing on education. This dissertation provides a qualitative research contribution to the statistical literature available on Kentucky's rural Appalachian dual credit programming. This study examined levels of student engagement in the regional service area of Southeast Kentucky Community and Technical Colleges' current Dual Credit programming, the benefits associated with enrolling in dual credit courses, and exploration of barriers that prevent student dual credit enrollment or impair their performance. This study identifies five key components of dual credit that have an impact on student participation and performance. Also, triangulation methods were incorporated to evaluate research validly and establish areas of interest for further study.

Finally, this dissertation describes how a local college and high school collaboration is becoming a powerful influence in encouraging youth to challenge themselves and achieve.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This qualitative dissertation investigates student participation in the Southeast Kentucky Community and Technical College (SKCTC) dual credit program, as viewed by personnel who assist students. The motivation of this study is to add to the research on dual credit enrollment in Kentucky—studying preceptions of programming personnel to gain a better understanding of the regions’ system of early college credit earning educational opportunities—reviewing integration strategies and high school student inclusiveness throughout the rural regions of Appalachia in Kentucky. Furthermore, the purpose of this study is to examine awareness of dual credit enrollment opportunities in a remote Appalachian area as well as potential stimulus incurred for the pursuit of higher education. The criteria for dual enrollment vary widely from state-to-state; therefore, this study will focus on the rural Appalachia within the Kentucky guidelines. The primary focus of this project is to gain knowledge of the regional dual credit process and the factors that influence student participation. This inquiry will explore possible barriers and potential biases that may exclude or impede remote Appalachian students from the opportunities of receiving equality in education. The current economy in southeast Kentucky, based on the lack of coal production, is at best described as *non-progressive*. The residents in this region need reassurance that opportunities for educational advancements leading to gainful employment are as common here as anywhere in the Commonwealth of Kentucky.



## **Growing Up in Harlan, Kentucky**

Growing up in the Coalfields of rural Kentucky, a region made up of small towns serving the needs of close knit communities, has more positive features than negative. Harlan County, in the heart of the region is not perfect by any means. Living here does not offer the amenities of larger areas with well-funded and established infrastructures. However, life in the mountains can be rich and fulfilling without the luxuries of big city living. Historically, Southeastern Kentucky has been portrayed as uneducated, poverty stricken, and shack living people who are incapable of achievement or even happiness. If one were to visit Harlan, Kentucky you would find many examples to justify these perceptions of the uneducated and poor inhabitants. However, a prolonged stay may provide a different perspective.

I grew up in a neighborhood with a lot of kids where skin color or economic status was not an issue. We all played together in each other's homes. It was not a neighborhood in which children were raised; it was a neighborhood raising children. I was never told that I needed to hate anyone and never got the impression that anyone hated me. The adults of the neighborhood were protective of all kids, not just their own. Schools integrated when I was in the second or third grade. But, I didn't know much about it. There was nothing ever said about it at my house, in the neighborhood, or school. Albeit, there may have been some problems in which I was not aware. If so, I don't recall knowing anything about them. We all played together and then we all went to school together. As I progressed through school, I had the privilege of being taught by a diversified faculty who gave every effort to instill worth into every student. They took pride in helping all students grow. Teaching was about the students, without regard to

race or gender for that matter. In fact, some of my most supportive teachers were not of my color. As the rest of the country, for the most part, was in turmoil, Harlan County stayed united, refusing to allow outside influences to destroy our community focused bonds.

Times have changed and I know there is no turning back; yet, it is hard to watch that way of life slipping away a little more each day. Now, with the jobs lost due to the collapse of the areas coal industry, the lack of diversity in economic opportunities, and the accompanying crime and drug problems, moving away has become a commonplace option. The local leadership is struggling with the concept of resource extraction communities that no longer have a market place for the coal. I do not see coal ever returning to anywhere near the extent as it has been in the past. I believe the sustainability of this region will come from our youth having an optimistic outlook, having a renewed focus on educational achievement, and having the self-confidence to incorporate the changes that will create a new economic base—education and employment. Dual credit may be the key toward achieving this goal for our youth.

### **College Credit-Based Transition**

Credit-based transition programs provide qualifying high school students an opportunity to achieve college credit before graduation and include the following methodologies: *Advanced Placement (AP)*; *International Baccalaureate (IB)*; *Dual Enrollment /Concurrent Enrollment credit*; and *Dual Credit*.

1. *Advanced Placement (AP)*, established in the 1950s, college credits are awarded based on classroom performance and proficiency score on an exit exam.
2. The *International Baccalaureate (IB)*, recognized for over 30 years as excellent academic preparation by most postsecondary institutions, course credit transfers hinge on test scores. There are only seven schools in Kentucky utilizing the IB curriculum, and none are in the Appalachian region.
3. The *dual enrollment /concurrent enrollment Credit* approach allows high school students to enroll in a college course, autonomous to his or her high school, receiving credit at the college providing the course only. Course delivery is generally conducted via traditional college scheduling with students enrolling in standard evening and/or weekend classroom classes or by online conveyance.
4. *Dual credit* permits eligible student enrollment in courses earning high school and college credits simultaneously. These classes are taught using collegiate curricula and do not require additional proficiency assessment. Students may be asked to pay tuition or an application fee in order to enroll, and this will vary according to school and district policy. This form of credit-based transition, dual credit, will be the focus of this research. Data collection will be conducted within the service area of Southeast Kentucky

Community and Technical College (SKCTC). SKCTC's dual credit programming is governed by the Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS) as aligned with the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE), Kentucky Education and Workforce Development Cabinet, and the Office of Career and Technical Education (OCTE). Dual credit programming in Kentucky, for the purpose of this study, will include credits earned in Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses as well as academic core and/or approved transferable electives.

The dual credit topic came about as the result of class discussions while enrolled in an Educational Leadership and Policy Studies course at Eastern Kentucky University. The thought-provoking dialog created a personal desire to obtain an in-depth understanding of the dual credit process. As an educator who is a native of rural Appalachia, the quality of education in Southeast Kentucky only appears to have been adequate. In actuality, the rural Appalachian regions of Kentucky have a much lower percentage of students being evaluated as college and career ready. This assessment is confirmable by reviewing the Kentucky Department of Education, 2011 High School Graduates College/Career Readiness Percentage annual report (Appendix A). Harlan County school district tabulated 13% with the state average for districts being 38%. The economy at this time calls for much more. Educational attainment encourages student success and stimulates a vision of achieving gainful employment. The current effects of the recent economic downturn in rural Appalachia could perhaps be minimized through earlier intervention in education. A refocusing on career guidance for visualized markets

such as tourism, mountain crafts, hospitality, or the expansion of service and production employment opportunities is needed. An educational structure providing high-quality and rapid-paced instruction geared toward student encouragement as well as academic advancement is a must in preparing students for today's society. Ormell (2012), in *The Economy and Education*, states "Even more urgently we need a form of schooling which inculcates a strong sense of the possibility of progress, sustainably material, obviously, but also including a fairer, less unequal, society" (p. 14). Being college-ready means that a student has obtained the level of academic preparation needed to succeed in credit-bearing courses in college without the need for remediation. With student preparation for college access and success being at the core of dual credit programming, research is vital for improving student participation. Interviewing local participants involved in higher education transitioning processes of students from local high schools in southeastern Kentucky can provide viewpoints that are a representation of the entire Appalachia region.

Credit-based transition programs are vital links in the chain strengthening secondary and postsecondary educational collaboration (Southern Regional Education Board, 2013). High school students are given an opportunity to prove to themselves that they have what it takes to be successful at the college level. Documentation provided by the Southern Regional Education Board (2013) confirms dual credit programs increase student matriculation from high school to college and decrease the remediation rates of program participants upon postsecondary enrollment (p. 50). The number of high school students receiving college course credits is increasing annually (Andrews, 2004; Griffith, 2009; Ramirez, 2008). According to Waits, Setzer, & Lewis (2005), the popularity of

dual credit programming and exam-based courses was becoming evident during the 2002-03 school year. The research revealed 71 percent of the nation's high schools offered courses for dual credit, 67 percent offered AP courses, and 2 percent offered IB courses (p. 4). Griffith (2009) revealed that over 87% of all high schools offer students one or more advanced course credit options from dual credit, Advance Placement, International Baccalaureate, and/or technical prep classes. Kentucky leadership is working to improve the state's statistics On July 9, 2013, Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS) President Michael McCall and Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) Commissioner Terry Holliday signed a *Dual Credit Memorandum of Understanding* that reduces student expenses and time in completing postsecondary goals (KCTCS, *Dual Credit Handbook*, 2012-13).

### **Kentucky Education Reform**

In 2010, the U. S. Department of Education released it's National Education Plan establishing two education achievement benchmark targets by the year 2020. First, 60% of all high school students graduating in the United States will go on to obtain a two-year or four-year college degree. Second, closing the achievement gap by improving college enrollment and completion rates, all high school graduates will be prepared to succeed in college or the workforce. The current percentage of college graduates for U.S. citizens across the nation is 41% (p. 7). This plan declares education to be primarily a state and local responsibility with equality in mind, as acknowledged by the U.S. Department of Education Secretary Arne Duncan's statement, "state and local public educational institutions must ensure equitable access to learning for all students, and especially students in underserved populations" (p. 13). The categories of under-served were

defined to include low-income, minorities, and students with disabilities. Bridging the educational access gap from secondary to postsecondary levels is where “dual credit” plays a vital role. Dual credit is a program that allows students to take college courses while concurrently enrolled in high school (Osumi, 2010; Valdez, 2012). President Barack Obama, in a March 30<sup>th</sup> White House press release (2010), introduced a 100 million dollar College Pathways Program promoting college readiness that would increase “dual credit programs and other accelerated courses” (p. 2). Making such a financial commitment in current economic conditions is a tribute to the value of dual credit programming. Kentucky’s efforts in educational reform have revealed the need for postsecondary educational institutions to partner more closely with the K-12 schools to remove barriers and improve the transition processes to higher education (Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education, 2013).

*The No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) of 2001 required states to develop assessments in basic skills. States must give these assessments to all students at selective grade levels in order to receive federal funding. Achievement standards are set by individual states, not a national standard. Attaching federal funds to achievement has driven the nationwide development of dual credit partnerships in secondary and postsecondary programming in recent years. On March 30, 2010, President Obama signed the Health Care and Education Affordability Reconciliation Act (White House, 2010). This law established an even greater incentive for high school and college collaboration. This reforming of the NCLB includes improvements such as involving parents in education, improving technology in schools, making college more affordable, supporting community colleges, improving accountability, addressing equality, and the

Race to the Top: Early Learning Challenge (Gillette, 2012, p. 5). These educational transformations provided the incentive for improving the networking of high school and college dual credit programming. The NCLB created a need for a shared vision in education effectiveness, albeit, again federal monies are attached.

The trickling down effect of our nation's lawmakers' interest in educational reform has created more than just a wading pool of calm waters as the states join in *The Race to the Top* campaign. Kentucky appears to be learning how to swim as we plunge into the depths of transformation to provide higher levels of educational attainment for the students of the Commonwealth. Kentucky has taken major strides over the last 20 years to break through the negative stereotyping of lacking in educational achievement. In response to some of this negative stigma and truth revealing national statistics, state officials have brought educational reform to the forefront of congressional scrutiny. Major components of educational reform transforming Kentucky include: The Kentucky Educational Reform Act of 1990, 1997 Postsecondary Educational Improvement Act (better known as House Bill 1), and the Congressional Kentucky Educational Excellence Scholarship (KEES) of 1998. Thus, restructuring the secondary educational delivery system and incorporating accountability standards through student testing and institutional assessments. The 1997 legislation created the Kentucky Community and Technical College System and re-established the state's Council on Postsecondary Education. Beginning in 1998 Kentucky lottery funds (KEES Scholarships) were awarded to students based on their grade point average (GPA). These monies are a motivation for high school students to improve classroom performance and promote achievement.



Kentucky's educational reform movement appears to be working, according to Nathe & Hancock (2011) in *Kentucky Advances in Education Rankings*: Kentucky's national ranking for education has risen more dramatically than virtually any other state in the country in the last 20 years. That finding is according to an Index of Educational Progress conducted by the Center for Business and Economic Research, at the University of Kentucky. Based on multiple educational attainment and achievement factors combined into a single index, Kentucky climbed from ranking 48th in 1990 to 33rd in 2009. Only two states, Kentucky and North Carolina, were able to advance out of the bottom 10 with double-digit gains by 2009, which marks significant educational improvements over the years and advancements over other states.

Further evidence of Kentucky's surfacing brain power is revealed by Lexington Kentucky (centrally located in the state) being named as one of the top 10 smartest cities in America with a 39.5 percent of the population, age twenty-five or older, with bachelor degrees. The survey included the entire population of each city over the age of 25 and Lexington was listed number 10 (Christie, 2006). Kentucky as a state, educationally, is improving vastly.

Yet, rural educational researchers like Snidow (2009) contemplate the imbalances in Kentucky's educational attainment statewide. Writing on the role of education in Eastern Kentucky's economic future: "Those with competing visions of the economic future of Eastern Kentucky agree on at least one thing: education is central. Almost every county school district in the state's eastern coalfield has test scores below the state average, and the region has Kentucky's lowest share of high-school graduates. Even when they do attend college, Eastern Kentucky students often lag behind, especially in

science and mathematics” (p. 1). Representative Robin Webb from Carter County reported, “Two of our valedictorians went to UK last year, and both of them had to take remedial math” (p. 1). Governor Steve Beshears also expressed his concern: “They're brilliant children, and there's just no excuse for that. There are such stories all around the state, but East Kentucky remains the biggest challenge for educators” (p. 1).

Reports of this type indicate the educational growth of Kentucky's intellect is not spread evenly throughout the Bluegrass state. Furthering evidence that the educational playing field for the underserved, economically deprived, and socially disadvantaged may not be level. The educational track for students of the state's rural Appalachian region may well be as rocky as the mountains that corral the eastern coal fields (Eller, 2008; Payne, 2003). Research is an important tool in discovering the root causes of such socio-economic and educational imbalances.

### **Problem Statement**

The Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) has taken on a holistic approach to preparing students to be competitive on a national level or beyond. The following is taken from the KDE's mission statement: “to prepare all Kentucky students for next-generation learning, work, and citizenship by engaging schools, districts, families, and support” (Southern Regional Education Board, 2013 p. ii). Yet, little accountability is offered the students of rural Appalachia Kentucky being educationally in arrears. Leaders need a comprehensive understanding of dual credit and its application to foster the college and career initiatives for all students in Kentucky. Statewide progress and prosperity require collective input from all stakeholders. There are numerous data sets

available for national and state statistical analysis, but dual credit is a participant self-selection process. Therefore, an ethnographic investigation is necessary for analyzing the real reasons why students choose to participate or not to participate in such programming. To ensure a true system of access and success, the perspectives from the indigenous is paramount. The expected outcomes of this study are to expose any unspoken or uncategorized measures that would address barriers or biases preventing or impeding Kentucky's rural Appalachian students' participation in dual credit programming.

The underlying reasons for low, dual credit participation rates of rural Appalachian students are hardly ever deliberated. The focus of dual credit programming remains primarily on individual successes; thereby, increasing the risk of overlooking program inclusiveness. The intent of this study was to discover reasons for students' lack of interest in dual credit and to develop suggestions for future inquiry and statistical analyses. Statistics make a very powerful contribution to our society. However, perhaps the most important component of statistical inquiry is in having the right question to answer. A good portion of today's qualitative researchers would agree with Snider's (2010) observation that numbers impress, but unfortunately, can also conceal far more than they reveal. These researchers would perhaps also agree with Davis's (2007) observation that "good qualitative research has equaled, if not exceeded, quantitative research in status, relevance, and methodological rigor" (p. 574). The goal of qualitative data analysis is to uncover emerging themes, patterns, concepts, insights, and understandings (Patton, 2002). Theories need to be developed to provide insight and explanations of dual credit programming's potential contribution to the expedited growth and development of our region's youth as they prepare to enter adulthood. The brightness

of their future is being diminished by the smog like effect of viewing life forthcoming from within a non-progressing region. Rapid and meaningful educational attainment is vital as local and regional employment opportunities seem to vaporize daily. A refocusing on educational attainment offers the probability of providing a path to a brighter future. Educational achievement is equally important for those that chose to relocate and for an outlook of entrepreneurs for implementing innovative economic opportunities for those that choose to stay; allowing southeastern Kentucky to once again positively contribute to the sustaining of a united Commonwealth. By identifying the particular strengths and weaknesses of local dual credit programs, all Appalachian school districts and postsecondary institutions will be able to design future dual credit programs that will better serve the needs of their students.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to add to the body of literature on Kentucky's rural Appalachian dual credit programming. The service area of Southeast Kentucky Community and Technical College (SKCTC) was selected for this study due to its locality and accessibility of data. SKCTC is one of 16 colleges incorporated in the Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS) providing two-year tertiary education on a statewide level. KCTCS was formed in 1998 as part of Kentucky's educational transformation. The system is comprised of 16 colleges providing localized opportunities for higher education across the state. According to information obtained from the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education (2013), KCTCS enrolls the highest percentage of the state's high school students through dual enrollment. An evaluation of regional dual credit outcomes is necessary to provide stakeholders and

policymakers' information when considering future educational directives. Therefore, a thorough review of the college and the nine local school districts within the service area of SKCTC's current dual crediting programming was necessary. Information obtained from this demographic investigation will be assembled, examined, and used in this dissertation for the purpose of research validation.

### **Conceptual Framework**

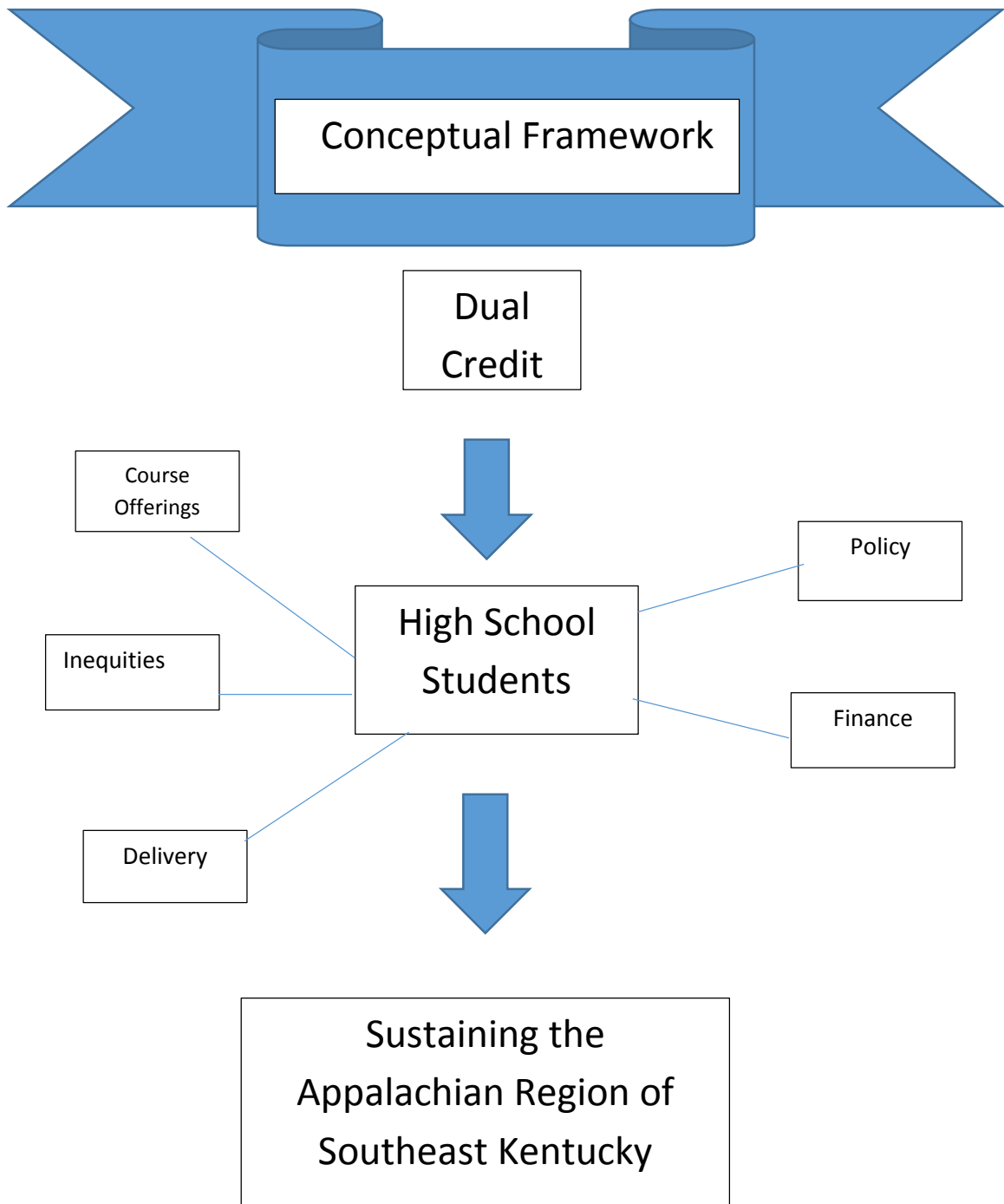
Figure 1.1 on the next page shows the organization, structure, and various parts of the conceptual framework.

*Dual Credit* is programming in which the student receives both high school and college credit for the same course. Successful completion of the class is required, but no additional testing is involved.

*Southeast Kentucky* was selected as the research area because of convenience and because its location puts it in the heart of Appalachia. Thus, this sample of the population should be an acceptable representation of the entire Appalachian region.

*Appalachian Success* – For the purpose of this study, success will be on basic comparisons of program participation rates for students of the research area with national statistics. Kentucky's annual college and career readiness reports will be used for paralleling student performance at the state and regional levels.

*Mode to regress* – If we stand still or even progress at a slower rate than those around us, statistically we have regressed.



*Figure 1. 1: Conceptual Framework for Dual Credit in Southeast Kentucky: Accelerating Appalachian Success or a Mode to Regress*

This study will examine student awareness of the benefits and barriers associated with dual credit enrollment opportunities in a remote Appalachian area and the stimulus (or sway) associated toward the pursuit of higher education. The criteria for dual enrollment vary widely from state to state, but this study will focus on the guidelines in rural Appalachia, Kentucky. The primary focus of this inquiry is to gain a better understanding of the dual credit process, the cost of enrollment, course availability, class times and locations which can assist students in post-secondary advancement while in high school. These are only a few of the factors that influence student participation. The current economy in southeast Kentucky, based on the lack of coal production, is at best described as *non-progressive*. The residents in this region can benefit with the reassurance that opportunities for educational advancements leading to gainful employment are in fact as common in the rural Appalachian section as anywhere else in the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

### **Research Questions**

1. How do dual credit transition programs in Kentucky, specifically in the remote southeastern Appalachian region, facilitate access and success for all students qualifying to participate in them?
2. What is the perception of the personnel who are dual credit programming facilitators and who assist students in accessing and participating in postsecondary education in Kentucky's rural Appalachia?
3. What are the perceived benefits of dual credit programming in rural Appalachia Kentucky regarding student success?

4. What are the perceived barriers to dual credit programming in rural Appalachia Kentucky regarding student success?

### **Significance of the Study**

I recall a professor from one of my earlier Educational Foundation courses at Eastern Kentucky University, referring to General Education as the process of acquiring the skills necessary to function normally in everyday life. In coping with the regional socio-economic paradigm shift, mandated by the collapse of the region's coal markets, dual credit programs could be the key to establishing a new norm; an educationally enhanced society in the rural Appalachian regions of Kentucky. Residents of resource extraction communities, having a solid employment base, tend to be lacking in the support of local educational efforts (Eller, 2008; Howley & Howley, 2010; Portelli, 2010). A refocusing on education in the coal fields of eastern Kentucky is vital if the inhabitants are to remain a positive contributor to the economic status of the Commonwealth. Without educational reform, our human resources may lay dormant along with the coal reserve.

### **Summary**

Kentucky is struggling with shortfalls in state revenues and federal funding due to the ongoing economic downturn in the state as well as the nation, to emerge a stronger competitor in the arena of attracting and securing high-wage employment opportunities throughout the Commonwealth. The rural Appalachian sector of the state, better known as the Eastern Coal Fields, has suffered an extreme recession. The markets for eastern Kentucky coal have plummeted with no indication of resurgence in sight. As educators,



we have an obligation to ensure our students are equipped with the skills necessary to function normally and become active and productive members of society. They must be prepared with the adaptability for new jobs that will come as the economy rebuilds, and the infrastructure realigns. Dual credit is a vital part of the education process necessary for Appalachian students are to acquire the skills to remain competitive in today's work world.

There has been a wave of acceptance of dual credit programming as the practice of this type of transitional course offering, earning college credits and fulfilling high school requirements simultaneously, surges across our nation. All 50 states have enacted dual enrollment policies, according to the Education Commission of the States (2013). The research region of this study encompasses the service area of Southeast Community and Technical College (SKCTC) with emphasis on Bell, Harlan, Knox, and Letcher Counties. The college has five campuses providing ease of access in this mountainous terrain and is well diversified in career pathway options. Southeast Kentucky Community and Technical College offers over 50 programs at five campuses encompassing much of Southeastern Kentucky. With an enrollment of over 5000, Southeast is the preferred college choice for students who are ready to reach their life goals. Whether you are interested in allied health, technical, or transfer programs, "Southeast is your choice to stay close, yet go far". (2012, SKCTC Website, Programs of Study)

### **Definitions of Terms**

The following is a list of terms used throughout this document. For the purpose of clarity and uniformity in terminology, these definitions were extracted from the Kentucky

Community and Technical College System (KCTCS) *Dual Credit Handbook 2012-2013* as used for the implantation of the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE), Office of Career and Technical Education (OCTC), and Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

**Articulated Credit** - College credit for a college-level course that a student did not earn through dual credit offerings while in high school due to credit hour, grade level, or other restrictions. College credit may be awarded while the student is enrolled at a KCTCS college. Students continuing in the same career pathway as the course in question may apply to have the articulated credit posted to their transcripts after they have completed the first class in the major at a KCTCS college.

**Career Pathways** – A systemic framework for transforming Kentucky educational institutions by proactively addressing the needs of students and employers across the learning continuum. A program of studies for each career pathway is a coherent, articulated sequence of rigorous academic and career/technical courses including dual credit opportunities, leading to postsecondary degrees and/or industry recognized certifications and/or licensures. Career Pathways are developed, implemented and maintained in partnership among secondary and postsecondary institutions, business and employers. They are available to all students, including adult learners and are designed to lead to rewarding careers.

**College and Career Ready**- Initiative mandated by Senate Bill 1 (2009) for the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE), the Kentucky Board of Education (KBE), and Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) to develop a unified strategy to

reduce college remediation rates of recent high school graduates by at least fifty percent by 2014 from the rates in 2010, and to increase the college completion rates of students enrolled in one or more remedial class by three percent annually from 2009 to 2014.

**Concurrent Enrollment** – Courses or programs offered at a secondary education campus that allows students to earn both high school and college credit by completing one course (see Dual Credit below).

**Dual Credit** - A college-level course of study offered to high school students. KCTCS considers dual credit as concurrent enrollment whereby a high school student may earn both high school and college credit for the same course upon completion of course requirements. A high school student must apply to a KCTCS college and be accepted, and the KCTCS College handles the academic integrity of the course(s) for which postsecondary credit will be awarded. This definition is consistent with Kentucky Revised Statute 164.002 and KCTCS Administrative Policy and Procedures 4.15.

**Dual Credit Delivery Methods** - Dual credit courses may be delivered at the college site, the local high school, another site (i.e. area technology center, local technology center) not on the high school or college campus, in a virtual environment, or in a delivery method that utilizes a combination of these delivery methods.

**Dual Enrollment** - Students enrolled in postsecondary credit courses on the college campus while simultaneously enrolled in a secondary institution.

**ILP (Individual Learning Plan)** - A web-enabled technology application that became available to schools and students in the fall of 2006, allows students in grades 6–12 to participate in their individual learning planning. The ILP incorporates assessments

results, education plans, outcomes, student needs, academic and career interests, supports for successful transition and readiness for postsecondary learning opportunities and work. Students, parents, teachers, and administrators can access the plans from any computer with internet access increasing the use and accessibility (KDE).

**NACEP (National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships)** - A professional organization for high schools and colleges that fosters and supports rigorous concurrent enrollment courses throughout the country. NACEP serves as a national accrediting body and supports all members by providing standards of excellence, research, communication, and advocacy. NACEP standards were utilized in the creation of the Dual Credit Memorandum of Understanding and these standards will serve as a guide for KCTCS colleges' Dual Credit programs.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a holistic understanding of the research topic and its significance to the region. This review of literature is organized around core components of the study. The first section is a historical account of the process of in high school students receiving enhanced educational opportunities, foregoing the traditional college entrance criteria -- high school diploma in hand -- and earning secondary and post-secondary credits simultaneously. Followed by, an overview of enlightening information obtained while rummaging through publications concerning the evaluation of obstacles, achievements, and ambitions of dual credit programming on the national, state, and local levels. A thorough overview of the targeted research area of rural southeast Kentucky featuring the regional service area of Southeast Kentucky Community and Technical College has been performed. Harlan County, located in the coalfields of Central Appalachia, is at its core. This investigation of literature will focus on dual credit programming and any associated stimulus toward facilitating access and success in post-secondary education. Continuing with reasoning for why there is a sense of urgency in ensuring educational opportunities are readily available for the selected research region, establishing the need for an ethnographic inquiry in order to examine the perceived value of local dual credit education from a local participatory point of view.

## **History of Early College Credit**

Advanced learning for selective high school students has been accessible for quite some time. College preparatory high school courses date back to the “Advance Placement” programs of the 1950’s (Nodine, 2009). In 1966, a liberal arts college, Simon’s Rock, began enrolling academically advanced students prior to high school graduation (p. 4). The concept of high school and college dual crediting is not a new phenomenon. In 1972, Project Advance, a credit-based transition program, was developed by Syracuse University and officials from the local school districts to provide challenging curricula for high school students. This program proved to be quite successful in that numerous students completed graduation requirements by the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> grade (Syracuse University, 2014). Syracuse University’s Project Advance is ongoing today and currently serves more than 200 high schools in New York, New Jersey, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, and Rhode Island with the largest concentration in New York State, approximately 8,000 students enroll annually. Advocates explained that properly designed and supervised credit-based transition programs could reduce senior-year boredom and change students’ sense of “senioritis” by maintaining their enthusiasm for learning, such as Andrews, 2000; Kim and Bragg, 2008; King and West, 2009; Fowler and Luna, 2009 to mention only a few. Andrews (2000), stresses the importance of high expectations for student achievement in order to maintain the integrity of dual credit programming. A strong working relationship between the high school and college is a key component in continuing the success and growth of such programs. His early concerns in the implementation of dual credit were providing students a challenge to take on higher level classes and avoid the temptation of “blowing off their senior year”

(p. 31). Wilber and LaFray (1978) suggested that such cooperative programs would have the following impacts: (a) eliminate unnecessary course duplication and college course remediation, (b) give students a taste of college before large financial or time commitments to college were made, (c) enable high schools and colleges to adjust their curricula to ensure a smooth transition between the two educational systems, and (d) allow seniors the opportunity to earn college credit while still in high school (pp. 22-23).

A charter high school on the college campus, one of the first structured forms of dual credit programming, was referred to as “Middle College” and was established by the New York City Board of Education in 1974 under the direction of Dr. Janet Lieberman (Lewis & Overman, 2008, p. 189). Students were able to satisfy high school graduation requirements and earn college credit. This original Middle College model was later used as the foundation for the Early College High School Initiative in 2002, which owes its existence to seed money provided by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (Edmunds, 2012, p. 81). In the Early College Initiative, schools are driven toward providing students underrepresented in higher education with rigorous support services leading to college completion (Nodine, 2009). Nodine also reports that in 2001, before the initiative began, Stanford University professor Michael Kirst wrote that “with the exception of the AP program, there are no major [nationwide] efforts to provide curricular coherence and sequencing between the senior year [of high school] and postsecondary education” (p. 6).

Currently, dual credit enrollment programs are a major component of rigorous high school curricula and are virtually coast to coast. These Early College programs would have to consume a great expense to establish and operate, yet, they should be

applauded for the efforts to extend opportunities for educational equity for a diverse and underserved population.

### **Credit-Based Transition Programs**

Programs that allow secondary students to obtain advanced credit for college while still in high school, *credit-based transitional programs*, have existed for many years (Andrews, 2004; Bailey & Karp, 2003; Fowler & Luna, 2009; Hoffman, Vargas, & Santos, 2008). The opportunity for students to earn a combination of secondary and postsecondary credits before completing high school is now available in all 50 states (Ozmun, 2013). According to the Educational Commission of the States report titled *Dual Enrollment – All States Profiles*, released in December 2013, 47 states and the District of Columbia have statewide policies governing at least one statewide dual enrollment program. In the three other states, these programs are administered by local school districts and institutional-level policies. These programs come in various forms and with many different paths of implementation. Yet, they can be generalized into five categories: Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, Early College High School, Tech Prep, and Dual Credit Enrollment (Bailey & Karp, 2003). Credit-based transition programming reduces course duplication and reduces the need for college remediation courses. They provide high school students a glance at college before making a large financial commitment to college. Program networking also establishes collaboration between secondary and postsecondary institutions to adjust their curriculum to provide a smooth transition into higher education (Fowler & Luna, 2009). Advocates also proclaim that well planned and properly supervised college credit programming reduces senior-year boredom and relieves their sense of “Senioritis” by maintaining



enthusiasm for learning (Andrews, 2004; Bailey & Karp, 2003; Fowler & Luna, 2009). Credit-based transition program delivery models differ from state to state, institution to institution, district to district, and within each of the established categories. The literature divides credit-based transition programs into three groups. Bhatt and Best (2009) report information contained in a study entitled *Accelerating Students Success through Credit-Based Transition Programs* sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education in 2004. The authors define the three types of dual enrollment programs as follows:

*Singleton programs* are courses that offer students' academic rigor, but that can be taken separately from other courses (e.g. Advanced Placement courses).

*Comprehensive programs* offer students a rigorous curriculum that "subsumes most of the student's academic experience" (e.g. International Baccalaureate programs).

*Enhanced comprehensive programs* offer students college course work as well as nonacademic support such as counseling or mentoring services (e.g. middle college high schools). (p. 1)

This literature review has thus far revealed a consistency amongst researchers that such programming has an indication of positive results. However, the inconsistency of program design and implementation suggest improvements to enhance overall performance, and productivity is plausible.

## **Dual Credit in Kentucky**

Advanced Placement is a well-established method of receiving college credit while in high school dating back to 1955 under the direction of the College Board, a non-profit organization based in New York City, according to AP Central retrieved from the collegeboard.com website on April 13, 2014. The Advanced Placement program offers over 30 courses with 26 of them currently listed on the Kentucky Department of Education website as being offered in the local high schools. Students take an end of course exam and college credits are awarded based on the numerical score achieved. A minimum score of 3 is generally accepted by Kentucky postsecondary institutions with additional credits being available for obtaining scores of 4 or 5 depending on courses taken and the institution awarding the credits (Kentucky Department of Education, n.d.).

International Baccalaureate programs are not common in Kentucky. There are only seven schools incorporating the IB curriculum in the state. Two of them are The Primary Years Programs for pupils aged 3 to 12 with a focus on the development of the whole child in the classroom and in the world outside. One is a Middle Years Programs for students aged 11 to 16 and provides a framework of academic challenge and life skills through embracing and transcending traditional school subjects. The remaining four are Diploma Programs for students aged 16 to 19 delivering a challenging two-year curriculum that meets the needs of highly motivated students, and leads to a qualification that is recognized by leading universities around the world (Kentucky Department of Education, Educational Programs - Accelerated Learning). Of these seven schools, three are located in Jefferson County two are in Fayette County and one each in Daviess and

Kenton Counties. These counties are not rural and are far removed from the Appalachian coalfields of eastern Kentucky and will not be inclusive for this study.

A Middle College or an Early College is a high school located on a college campus that targets students whose demographics are traditionally underrepresented on college campuses. It will typically have a small enrollment and will focus on advising for college readiness. These schools often provide students the opportunity to take courses for both high school and college credit. One example found in the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education website is the *Morehead State University Special Initiative*. This is a collaborative project among Morehead State University, Big Sandy Community and Technical College, and the Pike County Board of Education. It creates an Early College at Pike County Central High School that will allow participating students to earn up to two years of college credit while in high school. This type of programming is exploratory and does not have the implementation to be inclusive for this study.

Dual enrollment is very similar to dual credit. However, with dual enrollment, the student will be enrolled in both high school and college taking segregated classes. Therefore, the college level classes are nearly always taught on the college campus. These types of course offerings are widely incorporated across the Commonwealth but due to barriers in access and financial limitation are not generally pursued by rural Appalachian students. In dual credit, a student is enrolled in a course which allows him/her to earn high school credit and college credit simultaneously. This course may be taught on a college campus on a high school campus or online but it will be in conjunction with a college or university. Students may be asked to pay tuition or an application fee in order to enroll, and this will vary according to school and district

policy. This form of dual credit will be the focus of this research and will be conducted within the service area of Southeast Kentucky Community and Technical College (SKCTC) that is governed by the Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS) as aligned with the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) and the Kentucky Education and Workforce Development Cabinet, Office of Career and Technical Education (OCTE). Dual credit programming in Kentucky and for the purpose of this study will include credits earned in Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses as well as Academic core and/or approved transferable electives.

### **Dual Credit Benefits**

The literature delivers numerous studies containing discussions of reasoning for adopting dual credit programs at various educational levels, with themes of cost effectiveness, retention, and graduation most prevalent. Dual credit programming is a positive and productive part of promoting higher learning for our nation's youth (O'Conner & Justice, 2008). The concern is with implementation, regulation, and oversight, each state establishes the criteria for dual crediting (Educational Commission of the States, 2013). Each state, region, on down to the individual high school districts have specific needs and circumstances that deserve being addressed independently. The true benefit of dual credit is that programming can be tailored to the location and situation.

### **Cost Effectiveness**

Greenberg (1989), Boswell (2001), and Fowler and Luna (2009) agree that financial savings are key benefits of dual credit programs. They contend that students are

better prepared for postsecondary education and that these programs limit duplicative courses, resources, and time. Dual credit programming generates savings not only for institutions but students and parents as well. For parents of students who participate in dual credit programs, one notable advantage is savings on tuition costs. Each state has an independent means of regulating credit-based transition programming. In some states, Colorado, Florida, and Iowa as an example, the local school district pays all tuition cost directly to the postsecondary institution (Education Commission of the States, 2013). Most states allow for local collaboration between systems. Kentucky has a unique set of regulations concerning tuition. Tuition is assessed in all circumstances. Then, dependent on three factors, faculty expense, location, and delivery expense, a tuition waiver may be applied. The balance not covered by the tuition waiver may be paid by the student/parent, the secondary school, scholarships, or other funding sources. If a course is offered on a KCTCS campus and supported by SEEK funding to the college, the student is deemed to have paid tuition. A 50% tuition waiver is offered to students in dual credit CTE and/or general education courses if the course is taught by a college faculty member at the partnering high school or area technology center/technical high school when all instructional costs are covered by the college. The college charges for faculty, location, and expenses incurred. A 100% tuition waiver is offered to students in dual credit CTE and/or general education courses if the course is taught by a secondary teacher at the partnering high school or area technology center/technical high school, and all instructional costs are covered by the secondary school. Students receiving a 100% tuition waiver are assessed a KCTCS charge for the administrative expense of \$50 per semester for creating and maintaining student records. The charge is paid by either the

student/parent, the college by using a scholarship, or a third party. Parents and students can explore college-level work, a self-evaluation of performance, prior to making long-term commitments of time and money (SKCTC, *Dual Credit Handbook*, 2012-13).

### **Retention**

Educational retention refers to students' continued study until successful completion. All secondary educational institutions continually strive to retain their high school students. By providing high school students with access to college courses, usually for college credit, dual-credit programs may actually contribute to student success in terms of matriculation and persistence (Bailey & Karp, 2003). Dual credit programs are intended to reduce the high school drop-out rate, reduce the need for course remediation at the college level, and encourage more high school students to enter higher education. By offering the programs on college campuses, high school students have regular college students as role models, increasing their confidence and providing the encouragement to continue their education. Ozmun (2013) concluded that students did not enroll in dual credit courses based on their level of self-confidence in being successful. He attributes student self-efficacy as the result of being successful in dual credit courses and thus helping high school students' transition successfully to college (p.61). Dual credit programming enhances college and career readiness, reduces the time and cost to attain a postsecondary credential, and will increase student matriculation from high school to college (Southern Regional Education Board, 2014).

## **Graduation**

The literature suggested that secondary students graduate at higher rates when placed in academically challenging learning environments. The La-Guardia Middle College High School Program in New York, as a credit-based transition program, found 95% of their students graduate from high school, and 90% go on to college (Fowler & Luna, 2009). Additional studies indicated increased graduation rates and college attendance for high school students participating in credit-based transition programs. Researchers indicated high school students experienced the richness of college life by enrolling in credit-based transition programs (Bailey & Karp, 2003). Going on to college empowered with knowledge of what it takes to succeed at the postsecondary level seems to improve the likelihood of graduating from college. Dual credit adds another advantage to the graduation rate by in making college access more equitable in rural and low-income areas; where advanced courses may not be available to high school students, accelerated learning options may be provided virtually or by high school teachers or adjuncts certified by a college (Hoffman et al., 2008).

## **Dual Credit Barriers**

The literature demonstrates that secondary and postsecondary partnerships can help undo the high school-college divide and provide collaboration toward a greater alignment, creating better-prepared students and academic success among underrepresented and underserved populations. Yet, serious barriers remain that make doing this work a challenge. The research of Ozmun (2013) acknowledges that dual credit programs are certainly not a cure-all for the concerns and considerations of college

transition. Bums and Lewis (2000) argue the need to address issues such as student transportation to college campuses, costs of dual-credit courses, and ensuring academic rigor. Hunt and Carroll (2006) bring attention to the problem of transferability of dual credit credits from the granting community colleges to state universities and other institutions. Catron (2001) expresses concerns about demands on faculty time, scheduling dual-credit classes, assessment and testing of dual-credit students, and the maturity level of high school students for college-level work. Dual credit program partners in Kentucky are working together to address these same obstacles. Senate Bill 1 (2009) requires all students to be prepared for college and career readiness (KCTCS, *Dual Credit Handbook*, 2013, p. 8). The state of Kentucky defines career readiness as the level of preparation a high school graduate needs in order to proceed to the next step in a chosen career, entering higher education, obtaining industry certifications, or directly joining the workforce. Plus, college ready implies the need for postsecondary remedial coursework less likely.

### **Demographics of the Region**

Southeast Kentucky with Harlan County as the core area of this research is an area limited in access imposed by the overwhelming Appalachian Mountains. The Pine, Black, and Stone Mountain ranges that corral the region provide habitation qualities that many would consider as unique and absolutely wonderful:

Located in southeastern Kentucky, Harlan is one of the oldest of Kentucky's 120 counties. In the midst of the Appalachian coalfields and the county seat of Harlan County, Harlan is known mostly for its rich coal history and beautiful scenery.



Harlan was originally named “Mount Pleasant” due to a nearby Indian burial mound. In 1912, the Kentucky General Assembly renamed “Mount Pleasant” to Harlan since there was already a “Mount Pleasant” in the state. (Kentucky Department of Travel, 2013, para, 8)

The fresh air and nature’s beauty is truly a treasure in the scenic Appalachian Mountains. The drawback to the Appalachian way of life in southeast Kentucky is that coal mining is the foundation of the economic structure. The coal industry controls the economic livelihood of everyone in the region. Kentucky, as with many states in the Appalachian region, experienced the phenomenal development of its coal reserves after the turn of the twentieth century (Eller, 2008; Estep, 2011; Portelli, 2011). “Railroads opened up the richest sections of the Eastern Coal Field in the 'teens, allowing the state nearly to triple annual production rates from 1909-1919” (Kentucky Coal Education, 2007, p. 6). These increases in coal production depended upon a labor force far beyond eastern Kentucky's native population, transforming the region from rural to an area that resembled an urban society. Coal towns were essential to support this explosive industrial growth. The fluctuation of market demands over the past one hundred years are reflective in census reports showing radical changes in population as the coal industry for the region transformed from robust economic communities to jobless and impoverished conditions. Current population trends according to data retrieved from the U. S. Census Bureau (November 2, 2013) indicate this region, as far as numbers go, will step back in time one hundred years in population comparisons sometime during this decade, as indicated in the chart below.

*Table 2.1: Harlan County Kentucky: Population for the last 100 Years*

Census	Population	Percentage ±
1900	9,838	
1910	10,566	7.4 %
1920	31,546	198.6 %
1930	64,557	104.6 %
1940	75,275	16.6 %
1950	71,751	-4.7 %
1960	51,107	-28.8 %
1970	37,370	-26.9 %
1980	41,889	12.1 %
1990	36,574	-12.7 %
2000	33,202	-9.2 %
2010	29,278	-11.8 %
Ext. 2014	28,163	-3.8 %

The people of southeast Kentucky take pride in being Appalachian. (Caudill, 1963; Eller, 2008; Portelli, 2010) They are a valuable part in improving the quality of life for all of Kentucky. The monies generated by Coal Severance taxes have also been distributed for the betterment of all Kentuckians. As an example, according to the Kentucky Coal severance report for 2006-07, the gross value of coal mined and processed in Kentucky during Fiscal Year 2006-2007 was \$4.9 billion. State Representative Waide (2012) in a report on where Coal Severance funds end up provides a brief overview of the process. The Coal Severance Taxes go into the General Fund. Without going into a complex review of the laws, regulations, and policies, the Commonwealth takes 15% straight off the top for specific usages. This money is placed in the general fund before any distribution begins. Then there is a 50/50 split of the remaining 85%, half going again into the state General Fund and the other 50% divided into two additional categories. The Local Government Economic Assistance Fund (LGEAF) getting 15% and the Local Government Economic Development Fund (LGEDF) getting remaining 35%. For the year 2011-2012 the taxes collected totaled \$323,172,070. When coal production is down, regardless of regulatory restraints, market demands, or competitive reasoning, the whole state hurts. However, the southeast region becomes somewhat disabled. Coal transformed eastern Kentucky from a rural agrarian environment to that of an urban style stature with the majority of other business and industry existing as support for mining operations. When coal production is down this area reverts to truly rural, and the terrain of the natural environment alone cannot support the industry based population.

## **Appalachian Community Characteristics**

Inhabitants of rural communities are generally noted for their pride, work ethic, strong community ties, and the ability for job skill learning (Eller, 2008; Howley & Howley, 2010; Portelli, 2010). An excerpt from Portelli's research conducted in the rural resource extraction environment found in the central Appalachian region of southeast Kentucky (Harlan County) provides a depiction of the independence he observed:

Insisting on self-sufficiency is a way of rejecting an image of poverty that implies a stigma of failure and shiftlessness. Though they hardly had money, they had food and a roof over their heads, and they worked hard for it: Therefore they were not poor in that sense. (p. 32)

However, the pursuit of higher education for the sake of intellectual advancement has been lacking. (Howley & Howley, 2010). Also, being typical of a rural resource extraction type of community, educators tend to favor the local elite (Duncan, 1999; Gaventa, 1980).

The coal reserves of southeastern Kentucky make it a region of great wealth, "Appalachia is not poor, but its people are" (Gaventa, 1980, p. 35). The absentee land and coal owners consume the wealth and are able to levy an authority that is accepted with tolerance. Gaventa contends:

Central Appalachia is a region of poverty amidst riches; a place of glaring inequalities. Moreover, yet, at least on the basis of social science literature on the region, the inequalities do not appear to have prompted major challenges from the deprived. (p. 36)

The segregated social networks of Southeastern Kentucky have been time-honored and are apparently the result of a well-established, often unseen and seldom challenged hierarchy. The mandate of rural life in Appalachia is praiseworthy of any organizational chain of command as Duncan (2000) indicated “The poverty of the have-nots is inseparable from the privilege of the haves” (p. 192). Moving forward, as the coal markets plummet, will require a paradigm shift that must include a value-added refocus on education. If people only prepare to do the job they have today, then they will only be equipped to do that job (Pate, 2013). The past practices of local employment opportunities being filled with little regard to prior academic performance are vanishing. Harlan County, Kentucky, over the last five years, has consistently been above the state average in the percentage of unemployment, and recording the highest rate in the state with a staggering 16.3% for September 2013. In February 2014 the unemployment for Harlan recorded an even higher rate of 17.7%, in contrast to the state average of 8.3% and the national average being 7.0% (Kentucky Office of Employment and Training, 2014).

### **Displacement in Southeastern Kentucky**

When it comes to displaced workers, it is within reason to conclude; the older workers, the less educated workers, and the less skilled are the hardest hit during a major economic shift. Regional economic diversity can lessen the hardships of the unemployed, but in rural resource extraction communities, entire economy based on a single industry, layoffs can be devastating (U, S, Congress, 1986). The document titled *Technology and Structural Unemployment: Reemploying Displaced Adults*, introduced another factor in displacement recovery, the “Handicap of Affluence”, stating “The workers who lose the

most are generally those who held the best jobs, with good pay, generous benefits, and job security in unionized industries” (p. 124). These workers are the last to be let go and have the heaviest burden in finding comparable employment. The effort required in retraining and starting over in a new career at the bottom rung of the ladder can be devastating.

Facing the options of being removed from current established social standings or relocating for better opportunities leaves such communities with what is referred to as the *Fished out Pond* effect. The best and brightest simply move away. Thus, the sudden void of good jobs results in an area stricken with poverty. Payne (1996) provides some key point to consider when searching for an understanding of poverty, including:

1. Poverty is relative. If everyone around you has similar circumstances, the notion of poverty and wealth is vague. Poverty or wealth only exists in relationship to known quantiles or expectations.
2. General poverty and situational poverty are different. Generational poverty is defined as being in poverty for two generations or longer. Situational poverty is a shorter time and is caused by circumstances (i. e., death, illness, divorce, etc.)
3. An individual brings with him/her the hidden rules of the class in which he/she was raised. Even though the income of the individual may rise significantly, many of the patterns of thought, social interaction, cognitive strategies, etc., remain with the individual.

4. Schools and businesses operate from middle-class norms and use the hidden rules of middle class. These norms and hidden rules are not directly taught in schools or in business.
5. For our students to be successful, we must understand their hidden rules and teach them the rules that will make them successful at school and at work.
6. We can neither excuse students nor scold them for not knowing; as educators we must teach them and provide support, insistence, and expectations.
7. To move from poverty to middle class or middle class to wealth, an individual must give up relationships for achievement (at least for some period of time).
8. Two things that help one move out of poverty are education and relationships.
9. Four reasons one leaves poverty are: It's too painful to stay, a vision or goal, a key relationship, or a special talent or skill (p. 10).

Thus, poverty has become a reality in this region, as the citizens cope with the impact of losing the one major industry. Moreover, this situation impacts the young, who must now acknowledge that shifts and changes must occur as they seek employment in business and industry choices beyond the one that developed the area. The sustainability of southeastern Kentucky [lacking the coal industry] will come from our strong-willed

youth searching for success. They will not be able to follow in the footsteps of those before. Armed with a solid, accelerated, and optimistic education is key for our region's economic revitalization.

Based on the mission phrase, "employability of the citizens," a summit occurred to address the how that could be accomplished. Today's technology allows access to worldwide employment. Cheves (2014) reported that at the Shaping Our Appalachian Region (SOAR) Summit in December, Gov. Steve Beshear and U.S. Rep. Hal Rogers delivered a \$100 million plan to expand high-speed Internet access in the state, with emphasis on Eastern Kentucky. Beshear said, "Government has to take the lead in connecting sparsely populated areas because it's not profitable for communications companies." Rogers said, "With high-speed broadband, students can engage in long-distance learning and virtual field trips, patients can get remote medical diagnoses, and businesses swiftly can sell their goods and interact with the outside world". Cheves reported both politicians agreed "Without it, most communities won't even be considered by companies looking to move or expand." Such political efforts and recognition of advancing technology for the area bodes well for achieving this mission as stated.

### **Divergent Paths**

The works of researchers Kretzmann and McKnight (1993), assembled as a guide for the rebuilding of troubled communities, contends in general "Well-intended people are seeking solutions by taking one of two divergent paths" (p. 1). 1.) The Traditional Path – A Needs-Driven Dead End. This Path views troubled communities as "Images of needy and problematic and deficient neighborhoods populated by needy and problematic



and deficient people.” In this model residents become dependent on help from outsiders and resort to that as a way of life. The authors referred to this as “the creation of client neighborhoods” and conveyed, “They think of themselves and their neighbors as fundamentally deficient, victims incapable of taking charge of their lives and of their community’s future” (p. 2).

2) The alternative Path: Capacity-Focused Development. The alternative path is based on the concept of enabling the lower income residents to explore their capabilities and the development of their community assets. The authors report, “All historical evidence indicates that significant community development takes place only when local community people are committed to investing themselves and their resources in the effort”. Kretzmann and McKnight conclude their support for the Capacity-Focused Development concept by stating, “For it is clear that even the poorest of neighborhoods is a place where individuals and organizations represent resources upon which to rebuild” (p.4). Therefore, it is critical that our educational institutions seek every opportunity to enhance the development of our human resources and reduce the temptations of dependency.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

#### Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology of this dissertation study. It includes details of the research design with sections addressing participants of the study, data collection procedures, data analysis, and trustworthiness. The intent of this ethnographic study was to discover the perceived educational advantages and disadvantages of the high school / college dual credit transition programming for the rural Appalachian regions of Kentucky. Qualitative research, according to Creswell (1998), focuses on circumstances and people to acquire an understanding and interpretation of experiences of individuals. Creswell states, “The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural settings” (p. 15). The review of literature revealed some administrative issues and/or concerns in legislating dual credit programming. However, the overall consensus is that dual credit is a positive program for students. Judd, Woolstenhulme, Woolstenhulme, and Lafferty (2009), calculated a 75% satisfaction rate for received classroom instruction from students that had taken dual credit courses. Lewis (2009), reported that high school students described dual credit classes as being more satisfying and more engaging than Advanced Placement courses. Students declared the dual credit classes were more like “real, live college classes” (p. 89).

## Research Design Overview

Dual credit programming is currently in a stage of metamorphoses and is evolving through implementation and experimentation on a national, state, and local scale. The opportunity for students to earn a combination of secondary and postsecondary credits before completing high school is now available in all 50 states (Ozmun, 2013). In order to provide a meaningful contribution to the concept of dual crediting in rural Appalachia in Kentucky, additional research is needed to determine why students participate or choose not to participate in dual credit programming. This study sought to gain specific detailed answers to the research questions by examining documents and interviewing those people who have a thorough knowledge of these programs at the secondary and postsecondary level. Given the small number of local dual credit programs in the region, a qualitative method of inquiry was utilized for this field based project to understand student perceptions. Hendricks (2009) and Bogdan and Biklen (2007) suggest utilizing qualitative inquiry when sample populations are small and substantial in-depth information is sought. According to Gay and Airasian, (2003) ethnography seeks to describe and analyze all or part of the culture of a community by identifying and describing the participants' practices and beliefs (p. 166). There are seven characteristics categorized by LeCompte and Schensul, (1999, p.9) that mark a study ethnographic:

1. It is carried out in a natural setting, not a laboratory.
2. It involves intimate, face-to-face interaction with participants.
3. It presents an accurate reflection of participants' perspectives and behaviors.

4. It uses inductive, interactive, and recursive data collection and analytic strategies to build local cultural theories.
5. It uses multiple data sources, including both quantitative and qualitative data.
6. It frames all human behavior and belief within a socio-political and historical context.
7. It uses the concept of culture as a lens through which to interpret results.

### **Sample Selection**

Given that the purpose of this study was to identify the characteristics of local dual credit programs that support student participation and achievement, this qualitative study utilized purposeful sampling in order to determine who to interview at both the secondary and postsecondary levels and what documents to collect. Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, and Allen (1993) state that purposive sampling is ideally suited when attempting to identify themes under specific contexts and cultural norms. Also, Hendricks (2009) and Bogdan and Biklen (2007) suggest that purposive sampling is warranted when feedback is sought from participants regarding effectiveness.

This research project was approved by the Eastern Kentucky University Institutional Review Board (IRB). Permission to conduct this study was granted by the President of the Southeast Kentucky Community and Technical College. The interviewed participants of this research project were selected due to their direct contact with high school students and their knowledge of the integrating processes and procedures of the

dual credit programming of Southeast Kentucky Community College and the network of partnering high schools. A list of potential participants to solicit was compiled with the assistance of the SLCTC Dual Credit program coordinator. Participation was completely voluntary and individuals were initially solicited representing the following categories: admissions, administration, counseling, and teaching. The number of interview participants sought for this stratified sample was initially set at 10 (3 teaching, three counseling, two admissions, and two from administration). This would allow a weighted proportion toward personnel with the most interaction with students. However, during the recruitment process of selecting potential participants, it became evident that the administrative personnel would be better utilized as a continuing source of data. In an effort to avoid any potential conflicts or concerns, college and high school district administrative personnel were used as a council in interpreting programming and, therefore, recused from the formal interview solicitation process. The participant total was reduced to eight participants.

Interview participant recruitment in this research was conducted with direct communication by phone with persons that had been identified as viable candidates from a list compiled with the assistance of the college dual credit program coordinator. A description and explanation of the procedures was developed and recited to the potential participants. Telephone script attached (Appendix C). Temporary staff and adjunct instructional personnel were excluded from this research. Participants for this study also must have been assigned exclusively to the service area of Southeast Kentucky Community and Technical College, and a confirmed full-time member of the college or associated high school dual crediting program. Interviews were scheduled once the

preliminary selection process was complete, and the constituents selected had expressed a verbal confirmation to participate in the research project. I provided the participants, at the beginning of the interview with an Informed Consent Form (Appendix D). In order to verify my commitment to confidentiality, the form was for read-only with no requirement of signature, verifying my commitment to confidentiality. Those interviewed were assigned pseudonyms for this dissertation and are not identifiable. This participant range generated eight interviews representing student interactions, associated with college, high school, and area center institutions. This stratum of the research population provided a holistic approach for data examination. Each interview was transcribed by me and presented to the participants for a review of the accuracy and is stored in a locked file cabinet at my home. This information will remain sequestered for three years, after which everything associated with the interviews will be destroyed. Participants will have complete anonymity.

### **Interview Questions**

The research questions guiding the study will focus on five core areas of dual credit courses: course offerings, delivery methods, inequities, financial factors, and policies. The following questions were developed as a guide to investigating these core concepts of dual credit.

1. How can dual credit assist participating students in accessing postsecondary education?
2. How can dual credit enhance participating students' success in postsecondary education?

3. What additional impacts can dual credit enrollment have on participating students?
4. Who is being served by dual credit programming in southeast Kentucky?
5. Why is dual credit programming offered?
6. Why do students participate in dual credit programming?
7. How are students made aware of dual credit programming?
8. What discourages students from participating in dual credit programming?
9. How is dual credit programming organized and administered?
10. Who teaches dual credit courses and what are the required qualifications?
11. How is dual credit programming funded in Kentucky?
12. Who benefits from dual credit programming?
13. What do you most like or dislike about dual credit programming?
14. Does politics play a role in dual credit programming? If “yes”, can you describe how politics plays a role in dual credit programming?

### **Data Collection**

Data was collected during individually recorded interviews with each being assigned a code referencing information that only I could reveal for purposes of data analysis. The interviews were conducted at scheduled times convenient to the participants and generally concluded in approximately one hour. Statistical data obtained from the colleges' PeopleSoft data banks, Kentucky Department of Education, Kentucky Council

on Postsecondary Education, media reports, and other pertinent sources were incorporated into triangulation strategies of assuring research validity. Student information used for numerical data has not and will not be made identifiable; the statistical accounts are not connected to the individual. No names or student identification numbers of any sort will be disclosed.

The interview sessions were conducted at the convenience of the participant. Each interview was transcribed by me personally, and a printed copy is stored in a locked file cabinet at my home. For convenience, a copy of the data has been stored on electronic storage units. The storage devices are secured in my locked briefcase, when not carried in my pocket during data collection. No documentation of this study is left on my office computer. E-mail correspondence and other material downloads are copied to the jump drive and then promptly deleted. Dual credit enrollment and student statistical performance information was obtained from the college's Department of Institutional Effectiveness and the Director of Dual Credit Enrollment. These records will be kept secure for three years after project completion and then permanently disposed of.

### **Trustworthiness**

I have put forth an effort to design a study that could be as trustworthy as possible. Roberts (2010) describes the importance of validating the findings “It’s the credibility factor that helps the reader trust your data analysis” (p. 161). I am aware of the possibility of biases based on my personal experience in being a lifelong resident of southeast Kentucky, employment by Southeast Kentucky Community and Technical College, and my affiliation with the local high schools. I have put forth a strong effort to



design this research with validity in mind. Although this research, “Dual Credit” is a topic I am very interested in, I wanted this study to help create a stance based on the information obtained and not to produce information based on a stance. One may wonder what biases might have influenced how an observation was made or reported? It is important that I avoid assumptions and partiality. My intent is to ensure that research results are consistent with the data collected.

Documents collected included articulation agreements developed between the community and technical college and the local secondary schools, informational brochures on dual credit provided by the community college, the early admission policy for the community college, and numerous informational letters distributed by one of the secondary schools to students and parents. Interview transcriptions were checked against each other as well as the collected documents in order to substantiate information and improve the credibility of the study. Hendricks (2009) and Erlandson et al. (1993) suggest that utilizing multiple forms of data gathering through triangulation lend credibility to qualitative research and thereby improve trustworthiness.

After all interviews had been transcribed, reviewed for errors, they were set aside for a few days to avert a narrow-minded approach to data interpretation. Each transcript was read through once for a reference to compare and contrast sampling of each question. The transcripts were read a second time to note recurring themes for coding purposes. As a means of assurance, I have incorporated the strategies of Dey (1993) in identifying six questions intended to help researchers check the quality of their data (p. 224).

1. Are the data based on one’s own observation, or is it hearsay?

2. Is there corroboration by others of one's observation?
3. In what circumstances was an observation made or reported?
4. How reliable are those providing the data?
5. What motivations might have influenced a participant's report?
6. What biases might have influenced how an observation was made or reported?

In any qualitative study, the researcher is in charge of the development and implementation of the study. Personal opinion was excluded in the analysis of any and all data collected throughout the course of this project. This investigator's interest in dual credit programs is directly related to the potential benefits successful programs could render to the local area. Knowledge of dual credit programming has been developed over time through investigation throughout the course of this project. NACEP (National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships) were used as a tool in guiding this research. NACEP is a professional organization for high schools and colleges that fosters and supports rigorous concurrent enrollment courses throughout the country. NACEP standards were utilized in the creation of the Dual Credit Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), and these standards serve as a guide for KCTCS colleges' dual credit programs. Clarification of defining associated terms, policies, procedures, and regulations governing dual credit programming are referenced in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Kentucky Community and Technical College System, Kentucky Department of Education and the Kentucky Office of Career and Technical Education (KCTCS Dual Credit Handbook, 2012-2013).

The *KDE, OCTE, and KCTCS Memorandum of Understanding* defines dual credit as, KCTCS dual credit is concurrent enrollment in high school and a KCTCS college with credit awarded by both. A high school student may earn both high school and college credit [dual credit] for the same course upon completion of course requirements. A secondary student must apply to a KCTCS college and be accepted, and the KCTCS colleges are responsible for the academic integrity of the courses for which postsecondary credit will be awarded. Dual credit will only be awarded for college-level coursework. Each college must ensure the quality, consistency, and rigor of courses accepted for dual credit. Course work must include the same course competencies and result in the same learning outcomes as the course taught at the KCTCS College (KCTCS, *Dual Credit Handbook*, 2012-2013).

### **Triangulation**

Researchers in the social sciences often use triangulation as a means to validate data through cross verification from multiple sources. The purpose of triangulation in this research is to enhance the credibility and richness of the study. O'Donoghue and Punch (2003) define triangulation as being a method of cross-checking data from multiple sources and Denzin (1978) explains the concept of triangulation as in which phenomena are studied from a variety of vantage points. Also, Denzin (1970) advanced the idea of triangulation past its typical association with research design. He distinguished four forms of triangulation:

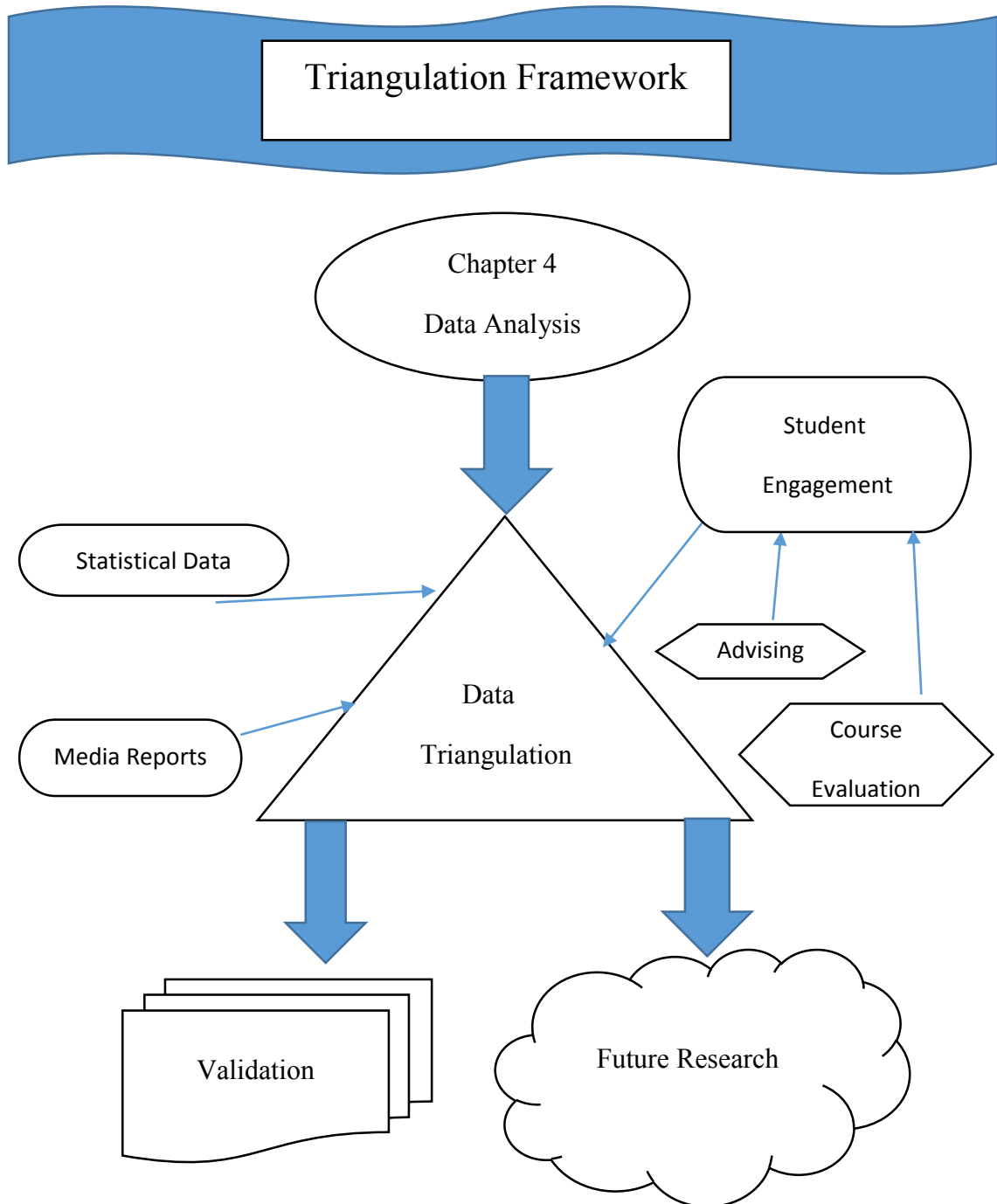
1. Data Triangulation: entails gathering data by several sampling strategies, slices of data are gathered at different times and social situations as well as a variety of people.
2. Investigator triangulation: the use of more than one researcher in the field to gather and interpret data.
3. Theoretical triangulation: the use of more than one theoretical position in interpreting data.
4. Methodological triangulation: the use of more than one method for gathering data.

This dissertation study incorporates information from the *Demographic Information Report* (DIR) of SKCTC's current dual crediting programming (Appendix E).

Triangulation "is the use of several methods of strategies to gather data with the purpose of increasing the credibility of findings or of obtaining a more substantive view of reality" (Lichtman, 2010, p. 246). The DIR provides an overview of program enrollment information and student performance for the fall semester of 2012 as well as enrollment information concerning program participation in the Fall of 2014. Using the fall 2014 semester allowed ample time for high school participating students to graduate and enroll in college. Information from the fall 2014 semester report reveals evidence of program growth and development. This report also incorporated information retrieved from media referencing, as well as student advising and course evaluation, thus demonstrating a triangulation approach (See Figure 3.1).

### **Limitations of the Study**

This study was limited to include only participating employees of Southeast Kentucky Community and Technical College and selected dual credit personnel from the local school districts for interviews. The statistical information of the study was restricted to the high school students from within the college service area of SKCTC that were the recipients of postsecondary credit as the result of dual enrollment with SKCTC. The study covers dual credit programming during the fall 2012 and fall 2014 semesters as they appear on the college class rosters. This study does not take into account students that may have acquired dual credit through another postsecondary institution or those that may have enrolled as an early college student and taking evening, weekend, or online courses that count for college credit only. The college going rates of students in this study were limited to those continuing their educational experience through SKCTC only.



*Figure 3.1:* Triangulation Framework for Dual Credit in Southeast Kentucky:

Accelerating Appalachian Success or a Mode to Regress

## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS

#### Introduction

This chapter provides an in-depth analysis of student perceptions in regional dual credit programming, as viewed by personnel that assist students--of rural Appalachia in eastern Kentucky--in accessing and participating in postsecondary education. The coding process, conducted of interview participants for this research, revealed consistencies generating a list of topics--connecting to the *Conceptual Framework* for this research (Chapter 1, p.11). The developing themes associated with these topics are revealed in this chapter, which include;

1. Course offerings
2. Inequities
3. Course Delivery
4. Policies and Procedures
5. Program Funding

Also, the interview analysis exposed emergent themes concerning perceptions of student success in relationship to the research area of dual credit programming. These connecting subtopics also warranted inclusion as research discovery.

1. Benefits
2. Barriers

This study revealed findings regarding perceptions of Southeast Kentucky Community and Technical Colleges' uniformity in programming and overall quality of college preparedness of high school students enrolled in the colleges' dual credit courses. The information amassed from analysis of the individual interviews revealed patterns of perceived educational success and consistencies in service factors for students being served. This input was helpful in developing a focus on what constitutes success in dual credit programming in southeast Kentucky.

### **Course Offerings**

There will always be a desire to increase educational opportunities that promote student intellectual growth and development. It would be reasonable to assume all educational institutions, secondary and postsecondary alike, are striving to find the resources to provide an ever-expanding curriculum. One aspect of this research was to examine the range of dual credit course offerings available in the Southeast Kentucky Community and Technical service area. In reviewing information obtained from the College Department of Institutional Effectiveness, a list of the courses--incorporated into SKCTC's dual credit programming--for the Fall of 2012 was assembled. The list included 20 high school dual credit course offerings that are general education, college core transfer courses, examples are courses in disciplines such as English, History, and Math. For the purpose of this research these courses will be referred to as the *Academic* group. There is one class on the list labeled the EX-196 Experiential Education. This is a



catch all title for dual credit enrollment in vocational/technical courses taught at any of the region's three Area Technology Centers (ATC's), of the KY Tech system. The EX-196 class will be referred to as the *Articulating* group. There are eight additional options available for dual credit enrollment, through the colleges' technical programs located on the Harlan campus; examples include courses in Health Sciences, Computerized Manufacturing and Machining, and Construction Technology. They are noted as the *Vocational* group. Course offerings are reviewed and revised annually, changeable each semester, based on resource availability and perceived student needs.

Participant Morgan provided insight of the regions course offering by stating: "I would say that every high school in our service area has dual credit courses going on at the high school every year. Every high school in our service region! Now some high schools are not as productive as others." The list of 20 academic course offerings discovered in reviewing information obtained from the college Department of Institutional Effectiveness may appear to be an adequate and manageable array, but they are not all inclusive for every student in the service area by any means. Additional review of the documents, prompted by interview responses, also revealed that each school district develops individual course selections, based on available resources and perceived student needs. The current dual credit programming through SKCTC does not incorporate online instruction courses. Nor do they arrange for students to attend classes on the college campus, as a standard practice. There may be an occasional exception, but that would be rare. Each district has individualized agreements with the college for providing dual credit courses. Currently, traditional academic courses are conducted at the high school, and this tactic is supported by most school districts, as participant Stacy reports:

“It’s very convenient for them [students]. They are right there in the high school where they are comfortable.” Two of the districts have elected to allow high school students to enroll in the dual crediting vocational courses on the Harlan campus where bus transportation is provided to and from the college. One school district has expanded course offerings using distance learning opportunities “online classes” through another community college. This appears to be a welcomed addition to the programming by the students in the high school that is incorporating Internet-based course offerings. Stacy elaborates on this school districts course offerings that include the online options:

[As far as] the traditional “Academic” college classes, we had some from Southeast [last semester]; we had one [class] from Southeast where the teacher came [to the high school], we had one where we supplied the teacher. The other courses were offered online through another Community College. The online courses were a package deal we got because we [participate in] their high school credit recovery [program] and it comes along with it [an array of additional dual credit course offerings] with no additional price except what the students pays [application/entry fee]. So, it is administered through that college in what they call E-School, and they take care of the college [student] contact. We have very little contact as [a course] administrator with this Community College because the E-School does all of that. I enrolled the students; they have a program where I could go in and enroll the student, and we could go ahead and send the money.

Participant Stacy provided clarity for the purpose of the credit recovery program:

It is for students in high school who have either failed a course, a course required for graduation, or they might not have been able to schedule it. Say they were in Band or Musettes every year, and they could not get something in so they took the course online from the E-School. Which they offer it all over the state now, any school can pay their fee and their students can be enrolled in their courses.

Dual credit course offerings are contingent upon each school district's choice for participation. Several districts offer dual courses along with the traditional AP classes. One district has temporarily suspended the use of AP classes, for a total commitment to dual credit providing all college transitioning courses. A few are yet to buy fully into the dual credit concept and conduct AP courses for the college “Academic” credits and endorse “Vocational” dual credits through the local Area Technology Centers (ATC’s). Other districts are providing both, the AP option and dual credit opportunities in academic and vocational pathways.

### **Delivery**

The research revealed the origins of dual credit courses at Southeast Kentucky Community and Technical College which date back to 1993 when the college was part of the University of Kentucky’s Community College network. The early dual crediting was reportedly sporadic at the beginning and then went dormant until resurfacing with a new level of intensity under the direction of the Kentucky Community and Technical College System. The current system of dual credit delivery at SKCTC came about as the result of implementing, what is referred to as “Explore College” that began in 2007. Being a true

work in progress, the program has been in a continuous state of modification. The majority of the interview participants agree that the SKCTC dual credit delivery system of transition courses is evolving into a well-structured means of easy college access.

Participant Morgan recounts the early stages of Explore College:

When we first started, we were doing certain things. Now the students that came for the technical end of it, we had our regular set-up that we had been doing for years that was not a problem [vocational/technical training]. But when we went out to the high schools and we went out to the area [ATC Centers] centers there was a big change because you've got two people now responsible for 800 to 1400 - 1600 students, and it started becoming more than what they could handle. So we wound up hiring somebody that deals with that.

The rapid growth associated with the "Explore College" dual credit classes, for the most part being conducted on the high school campus, increased the probability of scheduling conflict--this confusion needed to be addressed. Participant Frankie provided some clarity on the topic of course delivery:

Classes offered by college instructors will start and stop by the standard [college] semester format. Most of the high school courses [taught at the high school] will run for the year. Students receive an incomplete on the college transcript the first semester then the final grade is recorded at the end of the high school term. One school is on a trimester plan, but it's basically done the same way.

Another important aspect of SKCTC's dual credit programming delivery methods is the reduced levels of stress experienced by the secondary students. Having classes conducted

on the high school campus has a comforting appeal to students, as was expressed by Stacy:

I think it gives them a great opportunity to be exposed to the college process. They are able to be there with their teachers that they have known for years and they can get help if they need it, and also the teachers we have here and the professors here from Southeast have been very helpful to them [students], always there. Communication is good. So they get to know how to communicate with a professor, which I think is very good, very important. They learn how to ask questions at the appropriate time. It just makes them more comfortable with the college experience.

The overall sentiment of the participants interviewed for this study was that; having the dual credit courses conducted on the high school campus by college instructors working as a team with the dual credit qualifying high school teachers has a buffering effect lessening the shock and awe of traditional college enrollment in attending classes on the college campus. Early communication in a non-intimidating environment is an advantage in establishing student rapport.

Participant Pat reports on the importance of communications: “Students are aware of things and what they need to do to succeed in college.” Participants in this study indicated that students who are enrolled in a dual credit class on their high school campus are better acquainted with college personnel through positive interactions which could prove to be a deciding factor when contemplating a college education. Not every student enrolled in a dual credit course has established a full commitment to the pursuit of higher

education. Alternative reasons for dual credit enrollment may include a scheduling conflict, personal interest in a particular course, or just looking for a challenge.

Participant Morgan expresses the importance of dual credit courses and influence a college professor can have on a student:

I have seen students over and over that think they cannot go to college. Their moms and dads, they never went [to college], they never planned to go. But when we go to the high school, when the high school students come to us, in either fashion they learn very quickly that it's possible that "Hey, I can do this. Mom and dad didn't do it but I can do it, and there is no reason why I can't" and that is one of the big things that dual credit does for students. It allows them to understand that "Yes! I can."

Communication can take place without having a predetermined approach. The presence of a college instructor on the high school campus opens the door for educational inquiry. Participant, Jim demonstrates the importance of having someone at the high school with a dual credit connection:

Okay, one thing that was brought up in one of our meetings is they [students] develop a relationship with the teachers. For example, they know who I am, and I'm kind of the face of Southeast. I'm the face of Southeast at the High School. They know me, and it could be a kid that doesn't even have me as a teacher. But they still know who I am, and they will recognize me. And if they have any questions about college and stuff like that, they will come to me.

The process of transitioning to higher education is more than merely obtaining early college credits. Acclimating to the learning environment of higher education can be a formidable challenge. It should be noted that the delivery system of dual credit at SKCTC is still evolving with each passing semester. More and more classes are being offered, and new strategies are constantly being discussed for improvements. Participant Stacy brings it into perspective:

It helps those students who have an interest in trying to learn about careers and other traditional college credits, Algebra, English, and so forth. I think we are just trying to get our students a head start and, to be honest, you really have to [offer dual credit courses] if you want to compete with the other high schools because it is very common in Kentucky now. If you don't have a dual credit program, you are behind times. It's something you just really have to do if you are going to compete in today's student market, so to speak. Because your students would be at a great disadvantage if you didn't.

The more diverse course delivery becomes, the more enhanced the opportunity for a wide-ranging array of student participation, therefore, increasing enrollment.

## **Finance**

Funding for dual credit programming has been briefly discussed earlier in Chapter II. Money comes from sources such as, state appropriated Support Excellence in Education in Kentucky (SEEK) money, half tuition is required for courses taught by college faculty, and from a fifty dollar administrative fee for courses taught by high school faculty. However, in looking at the financial impacts on students or their parents

and how the local economy may factor in Morgan provided input concerning the regional economy and the issue of educational finance:

Now first off when we looked at any of the high schools around here there are 70 to 90% [students qualifying for] free and reduced lunches. Eighty-five percent of the students in Harlan County live at or below the poverty level. So, when you look at dual credit, before when a student came to us, either they came to us during the day on the vocational end and they got SEEK money to pay for their education or they went to the community college and they paid for the tuition. Now what we do is, it's the students who can't afford to come out with tuition. At junior and senior, level grant money is not available. Money is not available until you graduate high school and are 18 years old. So grant money is not available, that's out of the question. Eighteen, 16, and 17 year old high school students cannot get a Pell grant. So there is no way they can pay for their education. Ok so what we have done is this, we've got high school teachers that are going to teach our curriculum, they meet our college requirements, and the cost to us is minimal nearly nothing. So we said, "OK what we need is to come up with a way to allow those students to take those courses as close to free as possible." What we did was, we started off with a half tuition thing. We said, "Alright students that take these things [dual credit classes] only have to pay half tuition." Well the fact of the matter is, of those students who are paying half tuition; we were only getting the top students who could afford it. So what we went down to was a fee of \$50. A \$50 administrative fee, because it cost us nothing for the course, the course is provided by the high school. The high school



pays the teacher; the teacher has the credentials--they agree to meet the requirements of the high school and college curriculum at the same time. So that allows us to allow that student to do that for free. So what we did was said, "OK the cost is only administrative." We charge a \$50 administrative fee and a student can get 12 college credit hours in a year for \$50. You can't beat that and they can do that by going out and cutting grass in the summer.

One of the most important factors of dual credit program funding is the concept of reducing the financial need. High school teachers that choose to become a college adjunct faculty member is basically a voluntary process and without additional compensation. College instructors are not bound to mandatory dual credit involvement either. High school and college personnel contribute to the dual credit programming of the SKCTC service region with very little, if any, administrative pressure.

Participant Pat expresses her view of the benefits in reducing the financial burden of providing dual credit courses: "This saves money in more ways than one. The reduced or no charge rate for classes is absolutely wonderful. Dual credit is great news for taxpayers in general and a blessing for the student." Participant Tracy also touched on how lowering the financial cost associated with providing dual credit courses-- thus making them accessible to a wider range of pupils--can enhance participating student's success in postsecondary education:

It's going to be cheaper for the parents, because I think they just pay half instead of paying for two classes. If they take two classes it's like they just pay for one. So it is better for the parents, and it saves them money and time and you know it's

just win-win. The students are prepared and college ready, and they might as well use that junior and senior year to get what credits they can afford. Then, too, some of the dual credit classes don't cost anything. There are classes that you can take that you don't have to pay for that you still get college credit for. The more [college credits] the better, some student's graduate high school as a [college] sophomore.

The controlling of dual credit expenses is beneficial everywhere but, as discussed in Chapter I, it is essential in the rural Appalachian coalfields of eastern Kentucky if these economically deprived students are to succeed.

Just as was referenced in the first of this section, when high school teachers are not available to teach college courses, college faculty must teach these dual credit courses on high school campuses and can be costly to the students. Participant Jim, when commenting on factors that discourage students from participating in dual credit courses delivered a statement that echoed throughout the interviews:

I can tell you from a lot of experience in the high school [where I work] the number one thing can be money. My class as of right now, where I am a college employee going and teaching those classes, it's the only class they have to pay for. They are getting it at a discounted rate. They are paying half tuition. But, that is a big stumbling block for families in this economy and in this area. I have had students who just couldn't take my classes because of that; money is just that big of a factor.

The only exception to the concept of money being a major factor in student participation came from Morgan, “We charge a \$50 administrative fee and a student can get 12 college credit hours in a year for \$50. You can’t beat that and they can do that by going out and cutting grass in the summer.” Perhaps, having youth provide a little sweat equity into their future educational goals may in itself be an inspiration for achievement.

### **Inequities**

The Kentucky Department of Education (KDE), the Office of Career and Technical Education (OCTE), and Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS) worked collectively to come up with an agreement—an agreement which is posted in several places such as the KCTCS Dual Credit Handbook (2012 – 2013) and known as the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The MOU helps level the playing field in the dual credit arena by ensuring consistency among the 16 KCTCS colleges and their local partnering school districts. As discussed in chapter three, research validity is supported by reviewing associated documentation. This MOU agreement was introduced and became effective for course offerings beginning in the fall, of 2012. This is the semester that this research project has targeted; therefore, some of the inequities discussed in this section may be in the process of transition. Although, the agreement does state, “KCTCS colleges having agreements with local school districts for programs generally referred to as “early college” or “middle college” may continue these agreements under the terms of these agreements.

When addressing inconsistencies along the lines of student achievement and enrollment criteria, participant Tracy suggests accommodations are applicable pending student classifications, by stating:

Well now you know in the service area of this campus, any junior or senior, [meeting the enrollment criteria from either of the partnering school districts can enroll in dual credit courses]. However, I think one school only sent one [student] this year, and we were unable to come up with a schedule to fit that student, so he ended up going back to the high school. But any junior or senior going to high school [can enroll] and the thing about it is where there has been a lot of interest in our technical programs, it's not so much about their ACT scores or ComPASS scores. We have the ability to wave those scores, and I don't necessarily always agree with that. I think, us being a college, that is what separates us from the high school and we can't lower our standards so that everybody succeeds. So it's something that in my opinion needs to be worked on. We need to come up with something to accommodate all students but hold our students [accountable] where they need to be, as for being a college student.

It would be nearly impossible to meet the needs of each and every student with interest in dual credit. Standards and expectations must also remain high; however, each and every student deserves adequate consideration of their educational goals.

The issue of poor economic conditions in the research region, one of the concerns addressed earlier in prompting this investigation, is cause enough for concern in dual credit student inequality. Students' ability to participate in dual credit programming, in

this area of massive job loss, is limited by a lacking of financial resources, as participant Joy expressed concern:

Students do not have equal access to dual credit courses. Some classes they may not have to pay anything for and other classes they have to pay 50% of the cost. To low income students, this is a brick wall they can't get over. If they meet all the eligibility criteria for taking the class, they still would not be able to take the class because of the cost. As a high school student, they are not eligible for financial aid.

Participant Stacy made a statement that demonstrates the importance of a consistent set of standards in dual credit structuring to ensure equality for all students regardless of program location.

I think we are just trying to get our students a head start and to be honest you really have to if you want to compete with the other high schools because it is very common in Kentucky now. If you don't have a dual credit program, you are behind times. It's something you just really have to do if you are going to compete in today's student market so to speak. Cause your students would be at a great disadvantage if you didn't.

In addressing equality in dual credit programming throughout the SKCTC service area, participant Jim stated: "You could call me the liaison between the high school and the college". Jim's response spawned a follow-up question: "On that same line, there are 9 high school districts within our service region, are all 9 high schools involved in one

meeting or do you go to individual schools and discuss them separately?” participant Jim replied:

I am specifically for us [one of the high school districts]; that’s my job. So our meetings are specifically for [that school]. I know our new dean had a meeting with [another high school] and they want to kind of mirror [our schools’ plan]. They want us [dual credit personnel at our high school] to move in a little more aggressively and offer dual credit with them [another school district]. I’m pretty sure we have representatives on [other campuses] that meet with the [high schools closer to them]. I cannot speak on that 100%, but I am pretty sure we have people out there who deal with them. Personally I am not involved in that; I am only involved in [the one high school]. But, I know there are talks with other schools and similar meetings.

Apparently each school district operates as an independent agent within the overall system of dual credit programming at SKCTC. An inclusive means of communication across school districts is clearly not well established. The college has the charge of breaking down barriers that isolate the districts and establishing a comprehensive program of pooled resources and collective support. Participant Joy brings forth an interesting comment concerning dual credit programming being available to the general public:

Some students may be unaware of dual credit or dual enrollment programs. In the state of Kentucky, it is not required that the student or parent be notified of dual credit opportunities. It is the responsibility of the high school to advertise and

promote dual credit opportunities among qualified students. This should be changed! Each school district should provide general information about dual credit and dual credit programs including; enrollment eligibility, types of course eligible for participation, what are the decision making processes for granting academic credit, and an explanation of charges and procedures for paying costs not paid for by the school.

Southeast Kentucky Community and Technical College is the change agent with the capability of establishing a network of region-wide communication, a must, if equity in the region's educational opportunities is to be achievable. Independent agreements may be prone to separate the school districts; whereas, consortiums could be used as tools to unite cohorts with the resources to create a defined and clear vision for regional improvement.

### **Policy**

The political aspects of dual credit programming are a driving force in policy. Education has received the attention of many Kentucky lawmakers. A considerable number of state and federal monies are appropriated at the discretion of lawmakers, with accountability being vital in political longevity, policy must be well thought out and structured on performance-based standards. Interestingly, most all of the participants avoided any discussion concerning politics. However, participant Morgan did provide an overview of the politics of dual credit programming, in general, with the following:

Politics plays a role in everything we do. When you're talking about a school system, we are funded by the public. We have a mandate by the public to bring

education to the area, that's our job, that's what we're paid for, that's where the taxes go. Is it political, if it's not political then we're doing something wrong? When we look at dual credit programs, school boards are elected--*politics*. When you look at dual credit programs, college boards are appointed by the Governor--that sounds like politics. When you look at dual credit programs, principals are selected by site base councils who are elected by the teachers and parents of the school--*that* sounds like politics. So when a group of administrators sit down to discuss dual credit and its implications on our area, politics can't be left out of it. So that's where I'm going to leave that.

Participant Tracy further explains that the role of politics is more of an administrative concern. She indicated that politics may influence the directives, but at the instructional level it is the already established directives that are in focus:

Like I said, at the end of the day you have to realize we're an institution, we're a business and we have to make a profit. Politics plays a role in just about everything we do now and it's no different in dual enrollment. So, definitely it plays a role and I just have feeling that role is fixing to change here in the near future--to what, I don't know.

In moving from political ambition to oversight of the educational system policy currently in force, participant Jim echoed a few others in his closing statement with interesting comments about policy communication and directing directive execution:

One thing I noticed, you [interviewer] have a copy of the dual credit handbook. To be honest, I didn't know that existed until recently. One of the things that we



are dealing with is the policies that are set forth by KCTCS and trying to make sure we are aligned with those. Our current administration is going to hold them [dual credit staff and faculty members] to the current policy that's in the book. What we are trying to do is make them more aware of the system policies, and at last week's meeting they were all given a copy of the dual credit handbook from KCTCS so they can familiarize themselves a little bit more. And I'm not saying it was a major problem, or that they didn't do their job, because they did. We just want them aware of what the policies are. And [therefore] if we as an institution say we can't do that, that's not just because we want to say no, it's because it's not in the policy handbook. That's really the only thing that has come up. It's just making people more aware of what's already black and white in the handbook and let's make sure we are following that. To stay in line and to make sure we are okay with KCTCS--our accreditation, and all that--and that we are doing things the right way.

According to the participants, the policy is driven by politics. Politicians are guided by the powers of the affluent. The issue at hand is whether the political wheels that roll out educational reform across the Commonwealth have constructed a policy that has a tread structure suitable for the rugged travel conditions in the mountainous regions of rural southeastern Kentucky.

### **Student Benefits**

In order to determine perceptions regarding the ways in which students are most likely to benefit from dual credit programming, regarding student success in rural

Appalachia Kentucky, participant interview transcripts were revisited and patterns became visible. Themes of perceived benefits for students participating in the SKCTC dual credit program were revealed in two categories: *Academic*, general education courses taken for advancement in higher education and *Vocational/Technical*, courses taken for career exploration and/or workforce placement. Participants were not prompted to separate dual credit courses or students into these areas. Therefore, they were providing an opinion based on personal experience in outcomes associated with students participating in dual credit programming. As discussed earlier in this dissertation, with dual credit, a student may graduate from high school and enter college with a substantial amount of earned credits and often as a sophomore. It takes less time for them to receive a degree, certificate, or license and equates to a significant reduction in cost. However, it is important to have a well thought out plan. In my own courses, providing information for developing a business plan, the Director of the SKCTC-Kentucky Small Business Development Center generally ends presentations with the following statement, “People do not plan to fail; they just fail to plan”. The programming at SKCTC has incorporated strategies for Academic and Vocational/Technical pathways. Representative of most participants, Joy acknowledges how students may benefit:

Students who have dual enrollment in high school and college are typically juniors and seniors. They have already established their career pathway; they have taken the ACT and reached all the benchmarks to be college and career ready. Students who take dual credit classes are successful. Receiving a “C” or better, are more likely to continue their career pathway at the postsecondary level. The dual credit experience helps to ease the transition from high school to college and

enables them to get a significant head start with their education and career goals. They also receive skills that are necessary to be successful in college such as following a syllabus, meeting classroom and course requirements, conducting themselves appropriately, and using self-discipline.

Vocational/Technical students may receive dual crediting through articulation agreements, as defined in Chapter 1 in definition section. These high school students are attending classes at the Area Technology Centers (ATC's) using the KY Tech system enrollment criteria. They may not have achieved the necessary benchmark scores on the ACT exam for college enrollment, but they can still receive college credit through an agreement with the college and the regional ATC's. In the typical format in achieving dual credit through *Articulation*, students are enrolled in an *Explore College* course titled EX-196, receiving zero college credits. They must request to receive credit for the actual course titles when they return to the college as an adult, after high school graduation. Articulation of college credit is however an approved form of issuing dual credit for the actual course titles under the guidelines established by the KDE, OCTE, and KCTCS Memorandum of Understanding (Appendix B). If students have not reached the benchmarks on the ACT or other approved entrance exam; they may have to take developmental classes prior to the college program reentry. Participant Morgan contends that the dual credit program provides students an opportunity to experience their achievement potential, leaving them with career options instead of last resorts. The Dual credit experience can build the self-confidence that students need to break out of the molds that are so entrenched in resource extraction economically based regions. It is easy for students to fall into a pattern; it takes a holistic effort when charting a student's

direction in unfamiliar career pathways. Most participants made similar statements to Morgan's:

Parents of many of our students are not college graduates; my parents were not college graduates. Most everybody I grew up with, their parents were not college graduates. It's still the same way at the high school [today], only about 18% [of the people] of this county are college graduates. So if you look at that, their parents never had any idea of how to interface with a college. Well what dual credit does, it allows the parents to interface with both high school teachers and interface with college teachers. And, now the parents, the college, and the high school teachers together can encourage the student to move on. Whereas before they had their high school teachers to encourage them to move on but their parents only had connection at the high school level. The parents never connected with the college folks. So when the college teacher goes to the high school campus, and then follows up at night and goes to the high school report card day [parent/teacher conference], the parents meet the college professor and that helps them understand that their child is really college-ready--and it helps them to get behind them.

Another benefit of dual credit impacting student success comes from the ability explore career options. Participants acknowledged that not every high school junior or senior has made a total commitment to a career choice. After all, the SKCTC dual credit program is referred to as *Explore College*. Participant Frankie expressed delight with the exploration aspects of dual credit participation:

I've seen students take shop [trades] classes and come back as an adult and go into nursing. I've seen Nursing Assistant students come back for Criminal Justice. It just gives them the opportunity to explore the areas they may want to go into. They are not obligated at all [to continue a career path selected while in high school].

Participant Tracy sees positive benefits in the dual crediting opportunities associated with vocational/technical dual credit course offerings and shared their thoughts on how dual credit vocation/technical courses can help prepare students for the adulthood transition:

The High School students have been with kids their age the whole day. The ones that come out here, gives them the opportunity to take classes with some adults. And, I think it makes them mature faster. Sometimes the adults can share some of their life experience with them to hopefully keep the young folks from making the same mistakes they may have made. Definitely, their interactions with the adults as long as the adults are a positive role model, that's always a good thing. Like I said, it just makes them grow up faster and mature. The standards of the college are a bit more than what they're required to do in high school. So it challenges them. Expectations are raised and for the most part kids will arise to the challenge. If you challenge them they will rise to that because our standards have to be high since we're not a high school, we are a college. And if we want them to be successful, we have to treat them as such.

Educational experiences are not limited to the instructional content of the course.

Participants indicated that interactions of student diversity can have a profound effect on

student growth. Student-adult interaction can help relieve stress in generational gap issues for all students involved. Participant June believes students benefit from dual credit regardless of the category, academic core or vocational/technical, stating:

When they come in as a college student they have the upper hand because they have already got some college credit. So they wind up finishing college faster than their peers. Perhaps one of the most powerful benefits associated with the dual credit program at SKCTC is in the high school students gaining of self-confidence.

### **Perceived Barriers**

The overall consensus from all those interviewed was that dual credit is a very positive feature in promoting success for the students of this rural Appalachian service area. The negative aspects of the SKCTC dual credit programming were minimal. All of the participants who volunteered for this research indicated their commitment to help the high school students of this rural Appalachian region in achieving success in the pursuit of their goals, just as demonstrated in a comment made by participant Jim: “It’s for them; it’s getting the students prepared. That’s my whole reason for being there. That’s what keeps me motivated in the job I do. I’m trying to get these students prepared”.

Therefore in seeking to uncover perceived student barriers of dual credit programming in rural Appalachia Kentucky regarding student success, direct information was not readily forthcoming. I turned my focus to “Dual credit is for whom?” as I began searching for individuals or groups who were left out. This is an important consideration in discovering barriers regarding student success. The analysis of who is best served by

dual credit exposed hidden biases and potential barriers of those underserved by dual credit programming. It is important to revisit participant Morgan's concerns of economic issues:

Now first off when we looked at any of the high schools around here there are 70 to 90% free and reduced lunches. Eighty-five percent of the students in Harlan County live at or below the poverty level. So when you look at dual credit before when a student comes to us, they have two options: if they came to us during the day, on the vocational end, the College gets *Support Excellence in Education in Kentucky (SEEK)*--money to pay for their education--or they come to college [enrolling in general education classes] and they pay for the tuition. Students, again there are students who can't afford to come out with tuition; because at the junior and senior level grant money [Federal financial aid] is not available. Money is not available until you graduate high school and you are 18 years old. So grant money is not available, so that's out of the question. Eighteen, 16, and 17 year old high school students cannot get a Pell grant, so there is no way they can pay for their education on their own.

Simply throwing money into an economically uprooted area is not the answer by any means. However, knowing what the impact of educational attainment can have on improving impoverished conditions, consideration from state and federal officials in enhancing the regions educational opportunities is appropriate.

Another possible barrier was noticed in comments concerning the high school student enrollment process. There is an issue in student advising and orientation in the college process, as detected by the participants similar to this remark by participant June:

Basically, we go around to the high schools and enroll [students] into classes.

Someone from the college sets up the classes and you go out around, and have the students fill out the application and take payment for the class or make arrangements for tuition, if any.

June's response was followed up by discussion with the following exchange: As a prompt to expand on the subject of getting students started in the enrollment process, the question of "How are the enrollment meetings set up at the high school and who is present during the process of completing applications?" Participant June replied: "Arrangements are made where you go into a room at the high school and [high school staff] sends the [students] in that are interested in dual credit." It was indicated that students are responsible for making financial arrangements for class.

The economic conditions in this research region are bleak, as pointed out in the earlier chapters. In this time of such abrupt job loss and economic upheaval, it is important to address the unexpected financial despair of the once affluent student population.

Participant Frankie expressed reservations concerning the concept of a bias-free system.

Students have to meet college enrollment criteria to participate in dual credit, good ACT scores, and good grades in high school. That is great for the ones who want to find a way to go to college. Many people are out of work here in Harlan County and it is the ones that had the kind of jobs that could afford college for



their kids. Dual credit can keep the dream of college alive. I mean if they can get a year or so of college in high school, it is easier to get encouragement to go ahead and get the education for good employment as fast as you can, even if they have to move away.

Participant Jim's comments addressed earlier were concerning the financial barriers students are facing in this economically impoverished region. Jim also points out a few additional issues that may contribute to the barriers affecting dual credit participation and the following additional remarks were noteworthy:

I would say that sometimes meeting those test scores is an issue. The counselors do a wonderful job, but some students just fall through the cracks that didn't get the score. So that is another stumbling block....For some students, it's a time issue. The student may be an athlete who is practicing numerous hours a week and they just don't have the time to put into the homework or projects involved....So, money is the number one factor. If future economic conditions of the research region are to improve, today's youth will have the knowledge to be able to adapt to career opportunities, yet unseen.

## **Conclusion**

The literature review section of this dissertation establishes the truest benefit of dual credit is that programming can be tailored to the needs of each state, region, on down to the individual high school districts being served. Dual crediting in the rural Appalachian region of Southeastern Kentucky, under the guidance of SKCTC, is striving to find an answer to the barriers unique in this service area.

The analysis of the research findings have lead to the conclusion that for many students in the Southeast Kentucky Community and Technical College service area, dual credit programming does have a positive impact in terms of transitioning from high school to college, and increasing access and promoting successful participation in postsecondary education. Student involvement with this college experience develops self-confidence, stimulating a motivation to continue the pursuit of higher education. Through the dual credit experience, students gain a greater awareness and better understanding of a college education and specific career programs. The dual credit program experience contributes to students' ability to make better-informed decisions, in regards to postsecondary educational options. Data from this research indicates students from all levels of achievement can find success.

Interpretation of the information obtained from the participants interviewed for this study, concerning the status of dual crediting at SKCTC, portrays the program as a system in transition. In the interviews there was a perception and expectations were expressed that it is the mid-level academic achievers that stand to gain the most and that they tend to demonstrate the most in terms of improved performance and the likelihood of going on to college. The findings suggest that the elements of dual credit contributing to the success of students in southeast Kentucky needs to be understood in a broader context than a focus on education institutional factors. This was brought into perspective by Participant Tracy in a closing statement during the interview, "All in all, I am a big fan of dual credit. I just think there are some things we can do to serve better the students that want to take advantage of dual credit in college. Work to be done!" Given that the economic base for this region, *Coal*, has experienced a major setback, crippling the local

employment structure. The lack of diversity in the region's economic opportunities leaves the pursuit of education as a suitable crutch to maintain a positive outlook while the regional job markets attempt to heal.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

*The principal goal of education is to create individuals who are capable of doing new things, not simply of repeating what other generations have done.*

*Jean Piaget (1896-1980)*

*We must show that we can do as well as be; and to this end we must learn trades. When we can build as well as live in houses; when we can make as well as wear shoes; when we can produce as well as conserve wheat, corn and rye – then we shall become valuable to society..... The fact is, the means of living must precede education; or in other words, the education of the hands must precede that of the head.*

*Fredrick Douglass (1818-1895)*

This Chapter summarizes the focal characteristics of Southeast Kentucky Community and Technical Colleges' dual credit programming—based on interpretations of interview participants and the topics they chose to talk about. In addition, this chapter will include additional comments and conclusions about SKCTC's dual credit impact on the sustainability of the Appalachian region of Southeast Kentucky.

#### **Rationale for Dual Credit**

The overall description of dual credit programming within the service area of Southeast Kentucky Community and Technical College, in rural Appalachia of Kentucky, should come from a deduction of the multiple associated facets of this research. This study provides insight into the impact of dual credit programming in the rural Appalachian sector of eastern Kentucky. By looking at the experiences of SKCTC and partnering local school districts, during the Fall semesters of 2012 and 2014, the intent is

to provide an understanding of the programs extent of meeting the educational needs for this specific population. There is enthusiasm in the concept of student success being spurred by the opportunities forthcoming from dual crediting. The accord of individuals participating in this research describes dual credit program high student participation as being exciting, wonderful, challenging, and beneficial to all that enroll. However, the incorporation of triangulation techniques, to ensure research validly, has revealed the possibility and probability of student exclusions and programming inequities. As a contribution to the knowledge base on high school to college transitions, the goal is not in establishing a specific model for dual crediting. But in providing a perspective based on a set of circumstances that can provide insight for how this and similar programs may be improved.

### **Regional Dual Credit Overview**

According to the participants interviewed for this study, the overall viewpoint of the programming was very positive; however, the SKCTC dual credit program is in a state of transition. Response to prompts of programming, organization, and administrative oversight, resulted in comments such as by Joy, after a short hesitation and a smile stated, “Oh! OK. The Kentucky Department of Education and KCTCS signed an agreement in 2011”; June quickly responded with, “I don’t know that’s not my department”; Frankie also interjected a lack of knowledge in the overall structure of the colleges’ dual credit programming by stating, “All that is done by somebody else!” In this state of transition, it is important to note that no one mentioned that the colleges’ dual credit program coordinator chose to make a career change and has left the college. The change was not a radical decision; it was in fulfillment of obtaining a desired position

resulting from hard work and determination. The dual credit program director also announced retirement plans, effective midterm of the 2014-15 college school year. The College Chief Academic Officer chose to return to the classroom arena effective Spring Term 2015. The current SKCTC College President is at the helm for their second year. So, this is truly a time of transformation. However, this research provides evidence that the remaining programming members have pulled together to continue the colleges' commitment to student success; while allowing the administration time to select the best possible reconstruction measures.

There is ample research supporting the need for high schools and partnering colleges to gain a better understanding as to why students choose to enroll in dual credit courses (Bailey, Hughes, & Harp 2002, Andrews 2004, Simms 2010, Valdez 2012). One of the findings of this study confirms, if dual credit courses are available, high school students are eager to participate. The staff, faculty, and counselors of both the college and high school districts can promote further success by providing information regarding the perceptions of students that have previously enrolled in dual credit programming. The research of Burice (2012) suggests that students are not provided enough information by counselors to make an "educated decision about their course selections" (p. 86).

### **Collaboration**

Another finding is a lack of communication and interaction exist between the college and school districts as a whole. Each school district works independently with the college, creating an absence of consistency, reducing programming efficacy. Swanson (2008) suggest, "positive, successful completion of a college course, while technically

remaining a high school student, can change attitudes and reinforce retention rather than departure from college” (p. 361). The institution awarding college credits should not fault school districts solely for low percentages in dual credit participation; the college, responsible for providing equity in educational opportunities throughout their service region, is just as blameworthy. Tierney, Bailey, Constantine, Finkelstein, & Hurd (2009) recommend the use of professional development opportunities to bring teachers together in developing knowledge toward the goals of advanced courses. They advocated “helping teachers understand how their classes fit with a college preparatory sequence begins with asking them to participate in the planning of articulation of the curriculum” (p. 19).

Several school districts within the service area of this research have a large variety of courses available for dual crediting while others have been selective and limiting. Fall 2014 eliminated the articulated credits from the Area Technology Centers (ATC’s); these were the only dual credit courses available for one of the smaller high schools. There is research, such as Jaschik and Lederman (2015), suggesting that too many courses being available could be more of a barrier than a benefit. Their investigation revealed 56% of the community college presidents they surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that too many course choices are an obstacle to students’ degree completion. The survey also showed 43% of the college presidents agree or strongly agree that they are moving to limit student choices (p. 15). Perhaps the students within the reach of SKCTC would be better served by a more controlled and equally dispersed dual credit program. The creation of cohort groups would reduce turf barriers and ensures inclusiveness for students from smaller school districts. Today’s technology in distance learning can provide opportunities for educational equality across the service region.

## **Metaphoric Synopsis**

In summarizing the research, high school student participation in dual credit programming in rural southeastern Kentucky can be compared metaphorically to an outdoor concert.

Envision the regions dual credit participants as if they were in attendance at an outdoor concert. The college, as the stage for the program, had not been elevated enough for viewing beyond the first few rows. The school districts were segregated and standing in a prearranged order as the audience. Therefore program understanding, at best, was limited. The front row, well informed, sits eager to participate. The mid row participants experience difficulty in hearing the message. But even if they focused, the view of the process was still somewhat blurred. The back row overlooked, simply left out, and remained bewildered by the concept.

Metaphorically, Southeast Kentucky Community and Technical College can be compared to that of a, *flat surface*, outdoor concert arena. SKCTC is in the process of building a dual credit structure that will have an elevated stage. The newly hired Administrative Assistant in the Academic Affairs Office has the challenge of constructing a proactive and progressive dual credit arena. Creating a controlled environment that reduces unnecessary distractions and incorporating an amphitheater effect for visual and auditory clarity is part of the goal.

## **Regional Sustainability**

However, the sustainability of southeastern Kentucky is contingent upon the acceptance of change, and the letting go of, COAL, a resource extraction based economy.



A refocusing on education-- incorporating a well-structured high school dual crediting program that will abundantly develop the potential of the region's human resources-- inspiring and enabling youthful visionaries to seek new destiny is a necessity. The population of the region, due to the lack of economic diversity, is spiraling rapidly downward. Thus, rural Appalachia is experiencing brain drain, a fished out pond effect. Bringing all educational stakeholders together for the betterment of the whole will reduce the strain on each system and create a collective energy to advance forward. Eller (2008), points out:

Too often we have mistaken growth for development, change for progress.

Economic growth may indeed generate employment opportunities, but if those jobs provide low wages and few health benefits, they can reinforce conditions of dependence and powerlessness (p. 5).

Thus, the stakeholder discussion must include how best to attract strong business enterprises and develop a workforce that will meet the employment demand. Therefore, SKCTC, as one of the 16 colleges of the Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS), is committed to the system's mission statement, "In everything we do, our mission is to improve the quality of life and employability of the citizens of the Commonwealth by serving as the primary provider of: College and Workforce Readiness; Transfer Education; Workforce Education and Training.

In addition, financial support must be acquired to achieve these steps. A news release from the United States Department of Labor (2014) acknowledged SKCTC as part of a 6 KCTCS college consortium Hazard Community and Technical College

(HCTC), Big Sandy (BSTC), Jefferson (JCTC), Somerset (SCTC), Southeast Kentucky (SKCTC), and West Kentucky (WKCTC), receiving a \$10 million dollar grant for information technology (IT) job pathways in computer and medical fields. The funding is part of the Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) competitive grant program, which is co-administered by the Department of Labor and Department of Education. This consortium will develop five new degrees in the computer and medical fields that include eleven stackable certificates, all of which will be developed in concert with regional and national employers. The consortium will also implement training for low-skill individuals in IT job opportunities with strong job placement, high retention rates, and significant wage gains. With the political support and the finances, the region has established achievable goals.

The sustainability of Southeastern Kentucky is dependent on acquiring the knowledge to forge a new economic base and all stakeholders will have to provide support and guidance, enabling the region's educational entities in meeting the challenge. Many poor communities in rural Appalachia coal fields are now facing their greatest fear; the coal markets have plummeted. The bountiful supply of high-quality coal, which transformed this mountainous region from unproductive agrarian land into isolated and overpopulated industry based communities, was driven by the nation's need for coal (Eller, 2008). These communities should have been left rich. They have generated billions of dollars for investors and absentee landowners. However, due to corruption and abuse, local communities have had little say in the coal extraction process. They suffer from poverty and the lack of economic diversity (Portelli, 2010). Resource extraction communities, such as the rural Appalachia coal fields in Kentucky and lumber markets of

the Pacific Northwest, are not unlike other regions of America in that they have been upended by major shifts in the economy. The near collapse of major contenders in the American automotive industry – General Motors and the Chrysler Corporation – devastated well established and renowned communities in the North. Thousands of industrial jobs have disappeared entirely while others have been dispersed with no regard to national borders. The American economy is redefining and has gone global; Freidman (2007) stated,

What you're telling me is that no matter what your profession – doctor, lawyer, architect, or accountant – if you are an American, you better be good at the touchy-feely service stuff, because anything that can be digitized can be outsourced to either the smartest or cheapest producer or both (p. 19).

The eastern coal fields of rural Appalachia in Kentucky have been decimated by the rapid decline of the coal markets. Some residents refer to this economic plummet as a “War on Coal”, blaming the U. S. Government for the region’s economic plight. Regardless of the reason, governmental regulatory constraints, a new direction in the fuel industry, or a business management and labor realignment process, the entire region is in a state of decline. Who or whatever created the sudden change should not be the primary focus point. The ordinary residents of this region did not invoke the change that is currently taking place and certainly cannot reverse them alone. Howley and Howley contained within *Rural Education for the Twenty-First Century* edited by Schafft and Jackson (2010), state:

The legacy of a local economy based in the extraction of coal, oil, or timber has seemed to some authors to predispose these communities to develop rather stark class divisions, with the separation reinforced by ideologically. Often serving the interest of absentee owners, a cadre of managers, bankers, and attorneys form a local elite that controls the community's economic fate (p. 41).

All stakeholders from within this region must work together to endure the current hardships and create a positive outlook for any and all opportunities of improvement associated with change. Therefore, today's educational institutions must concentrate on educational opportunities, with dual credit programs promoting both academic and vocational advancement, providing visions of a bright and expedited future for the capacities of our regional youth is truly the resource that needs to be extracted. Today's trades incorporate the use of skills and knowledge that are the accompaniment of keeping up with technology. The education of the hands, now more than ever, has a direct correlation with the advancement of the mind. The future social and economic stability of the research region will come from a collective moving forward of all stakeholders with the optimism of pioneers.

### **Future Research**

The most important impact of this qualitative research was not in determining right or wrong or even a yes or no answer, but to reveal that there is movement and progress of a positive and productive direction in the dual crediting programming within the SKCTC service region. The world is ever-changing, and to declare an absolute answer to the complexities of today's world would most likely only prove to slow

progress. This research project explored the strengths and weaknesses in processes of dual crediting opportunities for rural Appalachian students in the eastern coal fields of Kentucky. Additional studies would be beneficial in guiding the strengths of the programming to enhance better student potential and finding ways to curtail the weaknesses in order to increase student productivity.

Recommendations regarding further steps, therefore, are paramount. A quantitative study of academic performance, comparing students GPA, ACT, and any other method of measure for achievement applicable, of students both with and without high school dual credit program participation. The study may also look at statewide comparisons for rural Appalachian students. Categories suggested for gathering research data include: Identify students by high school district; Home college campus identified; Advisors assigned; College and Career readiness reports; Student goals, career assessment, and course alignment; Program selection (declared or undecided); Method of course delivery (on campus, at high school, or online); Funding sources (scholarships, parent, or other); GPA after first year of college; Completion rates.

A qualitative study would also be needed to uncover the real reasons why students that qualify for dual credit participation shun the process? Such a study could investigate such reasons as: Fear of lowering GPA; Comfortable in high school; Content to let college wait; Tuition cost; Limited adult financial aid; Undecided about college or career; Time management issues; Transportation; Access to technology; Parental support.

### **Closing Reflection**

The support for student achievement in Southeast Kentucky is non-wavering. Those interviewed extended a willingness to provide further assistance if necessary for this study. For the future students to be served by the SKCTC dual credit programming I extend the following Haiku poem:

*To each one their role*

*Take the Appalachian stage*

*College awaits you*

*Roger Bowling*

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APPENDIX A

2011 High School Graduates College/Career Readiness Percentage-Harlan County

Appendix A

2011 High School Graduates College/Career Readiness Percentage

Harlan County

2011 HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES COLLEGE/CAREER READINESS PERCENTAGE  
Harlan County

UNDISCLOSED REPORT

This report indicates the number of graduates and percentage that have successfully met an indicator of readiness for college/career. The indicators of readiness include student performance on the ACT, completion of college placement tests or attainment of career academic/technical benchmarks.

Harlan County

School Code	District / School	Number of graduates (Includes only graduates matched to College/Career data)	Indicators of Readiness*			Non-Duplicated Total**	Percentage of students college and/or career ready without the bonus points	Bonus***	Accountability Score with Bonus
			Number of Students Meeting each indicator (Includes duplicates)						
			College Ready - Number of graduates meeting CPE System-wide Benchmarks on the ACT	College Ready- Number of graduates meeting college placement test benchmarks	Career Ready - Number of graduates meeting career ready benchmarks				
235025	Harlan County High School	238	29	1	0	30	13%	1.0	13
235	-- District Total --	238	29	1	0	30	13%	1.0	13
999	-- State Total --	41,784	14,021	1,036	1,142	15,746	38%	1710.5	42

\* The College Ready indicator includes graduates who met the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) Systemwide Benchmarks for Reading (20), English (18), and Mathematics (19) on any administration of the ACT. The College Placement Tests indicator includes students who passed a college placement test (Compass or KYOTE). The Career Ready indicator includes graduates who met benchmarks for Career Ready Academic (ASVAB or ACT WorkKeys) and Career Ready Technical (KOSSA or received an Industry-Recognized Career Certificate). Graduates that have met both college ready and career ready benchmarks are included in each respective column which could result in the same student being counted in multiple columns.

\*\*This total includes only individual graduates (non-duplicated). These graduates could have met both college ready and career ready benchmarks. This is not a total of the college ready and career ready columns.

\*\*\*Half point bonus for graduates meeting College Ready (ACT or COMPASS or KYOTE) AND Career Ready Technical (KOSSA or Industry Certificates).

APPENDIX B

KDE, OCTE, and KCTCS Memorandum of Understanding

## Appendix B

**KDE, OCTE, and KCTCS Memorandum of Understanding**

## Dual Credit

## Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

## Between the

KENTUCKY COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE SYSTEM

## And the

KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

## And the

KENTUCKY OFFICE OF CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

**I. Introduction and Purpose**

Pursuant to the *Kentucky Postsecondary Education Improvement Act of 1997* (House Bill 1), the Kentucky Community and Technical College System is charged with enhancing the relationship of credentials between secondary and postsecondary programs that permit secondary students to participate in opportunities such as dual credit. In order to offer a more seamless path of education and training for students in the Commonwealth of Kentucky, the Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS) enter into this Dual Credit Memorandum of Understanding with the Kentucky Department

of Education (KDE) and the Kentucky Education and Workforce Development Cabinet, Office of Career and Technical Education (OCTE). This agreement reflects national standards and best practices for dual credit as outlined by the National Alliance for Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP). This agreement is aligned according to regional standards set forth by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools-Commission on Colleges (SAC-COC) and statewide standards according to Kentucky Revised Statutes (KRS) and KCTCS Policy

This agreement is designed to benefit students by providing a seamless pathway to postsecondary education while reducing student expense and time to credential attainment. The ultimate purpose of dual credit is the completion of a postsecondary credential.

This agreement outlines the terms and conditions under which courses for dual credit will be offered by KCTCS colleges and at secondary schools under the leadership of KDE and OCTE and, more specifically, the terms and conditions through which opportunities will be provided for secondary students to take college-level courses and receive both college credit and high school credit.

## **II. Definition of Dual Credit**

For the purposes of this agreement, dual credit is defined as a college-level course of study offered to high school students. This definition is consistent



with Kentucky Revised Statute 164.002 and KCTCS Administrative Policy and Procedures 4.15.

KCTCS dual credit is concurrent enrollment in high school and a KCTCS college with credit awarded by both. A high school student may earn both high school and college credit (dual credit) for the same course upon completion of course requirements. A secondary student must apply to a KCTCS college and be accepted, and the KCTCS colleges are responsible for the academic integrity of the course for which postsecondary credit will be awarded.

Dual Credit will only be awarded for college-level coursework. Each college must ensure the quality, consistency, and rigor of courses accepted for dual credit. Coursework must be relevant to a credential offered at the local KCTCS College. Coursework must include the same course competencies and result in the same learning outcomes as the course taught at the KCTCS College.

### **III. Compliance with Accreditation Standards, Policies and Regulations**

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools – Commission on Colleges accredits each of the 16 KCTCS colleges. Dual credit courses offered pursuant to this agreement will comply with all appropriate SACS-COC criteria, Kentucky Revised Statutes, requisite KCTCS policies and procedures, and other regulations governing the provision of college credit opportunities to secondary students.

#### **IV. Elements of the Agreement**

This agreement specifies eligible courses, academic quality of dual credit courses, dual credit course approval, course requirements, student eligibility, faculty credentialing, and roles/responsibilities of KDE, OCTE, and KCTCS at the system and college level.

##### **A. Eligibility and Approval of Dual Credit Courses**

Courses accepted for dual credit toward undergraduate credential at KCTCS must be college-level coursework relevant to the credential and meet KCTCS college standards for content, quality, and rigor pursuant to the requirements of SACS-COC. Dual credit courses must be equivalent to the same courses offered at the local KCTCS College in course content, competencies, and learning outcomes as evidenced in the required syllabi components.

Eligible courses for dual credit under this agreement include courses for which all of the following criteria can be documented:

- Required courses or technical electives that apply to one of the programs of study offered at the local KCTCS college
- Courses that are specified in an agreement between the local KCTCS College and the partner secondary school and outlined in appendices to this MOU.

- Courses that are taught by college faculty or secondary school faculty who are approved by the KCTCS College having appropriate credentials to serve as college faculty for the purposes of SACS accreditation. (SACS 3.7.1)
- Courses in which KCTCS curricula are taught and for which student learning competencies and outcomes as well as course descriptions are aligned between the local KCTCS College and secondary school. (SACS 3.4.10)
- Courses for which syllabi are approved by the KCTCS College and provided to students enrolled in dual credit courses on the first or second day of the college course. (SACS 3.4.10; KCTCS Senate Rule 2.1 and 2.2)
- Courses for which formal mechanisms exist for the evaluation of faculty effectiveness and student success as approved by the KCTCS College. (SACS 3.7.2)

#### B. Dual Credit Course Requirements

- The course requirements for secondary students enrolled in dual credit courses at a secondary school will be equal to those of college students enrolled at the KCTCS College.
- Students will receive an official course syllabus by the first or second day of the college course. The syllabus will include

1. Course requirement information, including the official description, course prerequisites, course content, grading policy, attendance requirements, course completion requirements/performance standards, and other related course information.
2. Criteria to be used in evaluating the student's performance, a course grading system that includes specific expectations with relative weights, and the requirement that the grades described in the KCTCS *Catalog* will be used.

C. Dual Credit Delivery Methods

- Dual Credit courses may be delivered at the college site, at the local high school, another site not on the high school or college campus, in a virtual environment, or in a delivery method that utilizes a combination of these delivery methods.

D. Grading for Dual Credit Courses

- The KCTCS grading policy will apply to college courses offered for dual credit under this agreement. (KCTCS Senate Rule 3.0.1) All grades earned for college credit by the student in a dual credit course will be transcript by KCTCS.

E. Awarding of Dual Credit

- College credit will be awarded for courses taken for dual credit with a KCTCS college upon the student's completion of the course

requirements and will become part of the student's official college transcript. The award of college credit will be in compliance with appropriate accreditation standards for the KCTCS College.

- All KCTCS institutions will recognize credit awarded under this agreement as stated in KCTCS policy and according to accreditation requirements.
- College credit awarded pursuant to this agreement will be applied to KCTCS program requirements in an applicable postsecondary program that the KCTCS college is approved to offer.
- Each local KCTCS college will permit qualified dual credit students to enroll in a maximum of 12 credit hours per academic year. Exceptions above the 12 hour limit may be considered and approved by the Chief Academic Officer at the local KCTCS College based on the specific curriculum or program offered during the dual credit experience. In addition, exceptions may be allowed for dual credit students enrolled in Early or Middle Colleges.
- High school credit will also be awarded by the secondary school upon successful completion of the course. The award of high school credit will be in compliance with state standards.

F. Selection of Faculty to Teach Dual Credit Courses

- Secondary school faculty will be approved to teach dual credit courses by the local KCTCS College according to the faculty

credentialing criteria established by the SACS-COC Guidelines for Faculty Credentials and the local KCTCS college policy.

- Secondary school faculty will demonstrate, through appropriate documentation, compliance with KCTCS teaching qualifications.

Appropriate documentation will include:

1. Official college transcripts;
  2. A current vita, resume, or application showing teaching and work experience;
  3. Official documentation of relevant work experience; and
  4. Additional documentation sufficient for SACS-COC compliance.
- Secondary school faculty who are approved and teach dual credit courses will be paid by the secondary school.

#### G. Faculty Evaluation

- Faculty evaluation is an integral component of the assessment process for a college course. SACS-COC standards require that institutions regularly evaluate the effectiveness of each faculty member regardless of contractual or tenured status. Part of the faculty evaluation process should include student evaluation of faculty effectiveness. (KCTCS Administrative Policies and Procedures 2.5.1.5)

- a. *Faculty Evaluation*: The KCTCs College will handle faculty evaluations for dual credit teachers in a manner consistent with its guidelines for evaluation for adjunct faculty.
- b. *Student Evaluation of Faculty*: Student evaluations on all dual credit instructors will be conducted each semester for each course offered for dual credit in a manner consistent with the guidelines for the student evaluation for all KCTCS faculty/courses.

#### H. Student Eligibility

To enroll and obtain college credit in a dual credit course, a student must:

- Be a high school junior or senior. Exceptions may be considered for freshman and sophomore high school students if recommended by the secondary school faculty and approved by the Chief Academic Officer at the KCTCS College.
- Meet the requirements of the KCTCS Assessment and Placement policy.
- Complete the KCTCS application and a dual credit form to be enrolled as a KCTCS student in the course(s) in which the student wishes to receive dual credit
- Participate in a dual credit course pursuant to this MOU and specified as part of an agreement between the local KCTCS College and the partner secondary school.

- Satisfactorily complete the course with a “D” grade or higher. Credit is not awarded for failing grades and will not apply toward a credential in KCTCS.

#### I. Tuition and Other Charges

- Tuition and other charges for dual credit enrollment courses will be consistent with the tuition rates and policies of KCTCS.
- Students enrolled in a dual credit course on a KCTCS campus, when the course is supported by SEEK funding to the college, will be determined to have paid tuition.
- A 50% Dual Credit Tuition Waiver will be offered to students enrolled in dual credit career and technical education courses and/or dual credit general education courses in those cases for which all of the following apply:
  - a.* The courses offered for dual credit are taught at the partnering high school or taught at the partnering ATC/technical high school;
  - b.* The courses offered for dual credit are taught by a college faculty member; and
  - c.* All instructional costs are covered by the college.
- A 100% Dual credit Tuition Waiver will be offered to students enrolled in dual credit career and technical education courses and/or



dual credit general education courses in those cases which all of the following apply:

- a.* The courses offered for dual credit are taught at the partnering high school or taught at the partnering ATC/technical high school;
  - b.* The courses offered for dual credit are taught by a secondary school teacher; and
  - c.* All instructional costs are covered by the secondary school.
- Students receiving a 100% Dual Credit Tuition Wavier will be assessed a KCTCS charge for services equating to the administrative expense per semester (e. g., creating and maintaining student records) incurred by KCTCS in offering the dual credit course. The charge for service will be designated at the beginning of each fiscal year by the KCTCS President. This charge for service for each student receiving a Dual Credit Tuition Waiver shall be paid using one of the following methods:
  5. The student or parent or other individual pays the service charge.
  6. The college pays the service charge using a scholarship.
  7. A third party (e. g., OCTE, the high school district, or a private or other entity) pays the service charge.

8. Each KCTCS college in partnership with local school districts shall identify local scholarship funds to cover the administrative charge for dual credit students who demonstrate need for financial assistance to pay the administrative charge.

J. Student Admission to KCTCS Programs

Where applicable, secondary school students who successfully complete KCTCS dual credit courses will be given special consideration in program admissions when matriculating to a KCTCS program with special or selective admission requirements. (KCTCS Senate Rule 3.0)

K. Institutional Responsibilities

- KCTCS Responsibilities:

The local KCTCS College will be responsible for the following:

1. Ensuring that all dual credit courses are the same as courses offered on campus by the local KCTCS College.
2. Advertising and promoting dual credit opportunities among high school students, parents, and high school faculty.
3. Providing college applications and personnel to assist in the enrollment process and administering placement assessments.
4. Ensuring that each student knows that he or she is enrolling for credit in a KCTCS college course.

5. Registering students in the college course and maintaining academic records, including grades and transcripts, of courses completed.
  6. Assisting secondary school faculty in the development of the course syllabus.
  7. Conducting faculty evaluations for dual credit faculty in a manner consistent with college guidelines for evaluation of adjunct faculty and student evaluation of faculty.
  8. Establishing a formal strategy consistent with the goals of the college's enrollment management plan to recruit and retain students who receive dual credit pursuant to this MOU as degree-seeking students who matriculate to the college.
- Secondary School Responsibilities:

Secondary schools will be responsible for the following:

1. Using KCTCS course prefixes, numbers, and titles for all KCTCS dual credit courses.
2. Providing faculty credentials required by SACS-COC prior to the start of the term in which the course starts in time for faculty credential evaluation consistent with SACS-COC and local KCTCS college policy.
3. Advertising and promoting dual credit opportunities among high school students, parents, and high school faculty.

4. Delivering completed applications to the college's registrar or designated dual credit representative in a timely manner according to the timeframe designated by the local KCTCS College but no later than October 1 for the fall semester and March 1 for the spring semester.
  5. Providing information to students in reasonable detail in writing (i. e., a syllabus) by the first or second day of the college course about the nature of the course and expecting the course to correspond to its official description. Course requirement information will include course prerequisites, course content, grading policy, attendance requirements, course completion requirements/performance standards, and other related course information
  6. Submitting grades to the college's registrar or designated dual credit representative according to local KCTCS college deadlines, but not to exceed the month of December for the fall semester and June for the spring semester.
- Joint Responsibilities

KCTCS, KDE, and OCTE, including KCTCS colleges and all secondary school partners, will be responsible for the following:

- a. Course Alignment Process

1. When KCTCS seeks to change the learning outcomes for any of the programs and/or courses offered for dual credit pursuant to this MOU, KCTCS will notify KDE and OCTE of the proposed changes at the same time as the initiation of the KCTCS curriculum approval/course revision process.
  2. If it is determined that the proposed change will have an adverse effect on the award of college credit for dual credit courses offered pursuant to this MOU, then:
    - a) KCTCS will identify appropriate standards for content, quality, and rigor pursuant to the requirements of SACS-COC for the program and/or course revision.
    - b) KDE and OCTE will ensure that courses approved for dual credit will incorporate any and all changes that occur in the same courses at KCTCS.
- b. Advisement for Secondary Students and Parents*
1. The local KCTCS college and partner secondary school are each responsible to provide advising for students and parents regarding dual credit courses and the implications for the student's future collegiate enrollment and financial aid, This

advising includes career counseling and college program advising, and promoting matriculation to KCTCS.

c. Identification of Students Needing Financial Assistance

1. KCTCS, KDE, and OCTE shall collaborate in the development of a process to determine student eligibility for financial assistance

L. Early College/Middle College

KCTCS colleges having agreements with local school districts for programs generally referred to as “early colleges” or “middle colleges” may continue these agreements under the terms of these agreements.

M. Implementation

This agreement shall become effective upon signature of all parties and will be implemented for dual credit courses offered beginning Fall 2012.

N. Evaluation, Term, and Modification

This Memorandum of Understanding, as well as the accompanying local agreements, must be reviewed and evaluated annually. Any revision to this memorandum must be in writing and signed by all parties.

Any exceptions from the stated guidelines for student participation, credit hour load and accumulation, and enrollment criteria must be approved by the respective KCTCS college president and the KCTCS Chancellor.

## V. Signatures

The Parties signed below have seen and are authorized and agree to the terms and conditions stated in this Memorandum of Understanding:

(Signed)	10/6/11
_____	_____
Michael McCall, President Kentucky Community and Technical College	Date
(Signed)	10/3/11
_____	_____
Terry Holliday, Commissioner Kentucky Department of Education	Date
(Signed)	10/6/11
_____	_____
Joseph Meyer, Secretary Kentucky Education and Workforce Development Cabinet	

*Note:* This document was reproduced as presented in the KCTCS Dual Credit Handbook 2012-2013. (p. 20-28)

## APPENDIX C

Telephone Script: Description of Recruitment Procedures



## Appendix C

### Telephone Script

#### Description of Recruitment Procedures

Hello, my name is Roger Bowling, professor in the Industrial Technology division at Southeast Kentucky Community and Technical College, and I am a Doctoral candidate at Eastern Kentucky University. My dissertation project is titled: *Dual Credit in Southeast Kentucky: Accelerating Appalachian Success or a Mode to Regress*.

The reason for this call is to solicit your participation in this qualitative research, based on your work with high school students and the dual credit programming of SKCTC.

The purpose of this study is to examine student perceptions of dual credit opportunities in a rural Appalachian area and to analyze stimulus toward the pursuit of higher education. As a participant, you will be interviewed about your experiences associated with dual credit.

The focus of the questions will be on the nature of your work with high school students. Interviews will be audio taped and later transcribed by me personally. You will be given an opportunity to review my interpretation of the interview and to provide additional feedback.

You are assured full anonymity with no personal identifiers – your name, school name, school district will not be used in any written or oral reports of this research. The

audio tapes, transcriptions, researchers' notes and consent forms will be kept in a locked file cabinet in my home office, and will be destroyed three years after project completion.

The research questions guiding the study will focus on five core areas of dual credit courses: course offerings, delivery methods, inequities, financial factors, and policies. The interview questions for this study were developed as a guide to investigate these core concepts of dual credit. By identifying the particular strengths and weaknesses of local dual credit programs, all Appalachian school districts and postsecondary institutions will be able to design future dual credit programs that will better serve the needs of their students.

Your input is valued greatly!

Do you have any questions or concerns that I may need to address?

Can we start planning for our interview session?

APPENDIX D

Informed Consent Form

## Appendix D

### **Informed Consent Form**

Please read the following and determine whether you will participate in this study.

I am being asked by Roger Bowling, a doctoral student at Eastern Kentucky University in the Educational Leadership & Policy Studies program, to participate in a study to examine the perceptions of dual credit enrollment opportunities within the service area of Southeast Kentucky Community and Technical College and the potential impacts of such programing in rural Appalachia of Kentucky. The intent of this study has been explained to me and I understand that:

1. I will be one of approximately 12 people being interviewed for this project and that the interviews should conclude in approximately 1 hour.
2. I understand that the researcher will not identify me by name in any reports using information obtained from this interview and that my confidentiality in this study will remain secure.
3. If I feel uncomfortable in any way during the interview session, I have the right to decline to answer any question or to end the interview.
4. I understand that participation in this project is voluntary. I understand that I will not be paid for my participation. I may withdraw and discontinue participation at any time without penalty.

APPENDIX E

Demographic Information Report

## Appendix E

### **Demographic Information Report**

#### **High School Dual Credit Student Enrollment**

In analyzing the relationships between high school students and their participation in dual credit programming through SKCTC, this research has revealed three distinct groups in dual credit attainment. The first group (Group 1) are those enrolled in “academic core” traditional transfer courses, defining academic for the purpose of this study as high school students receiving credit for course work toward graduation requirements and core or free elective course credits that are placed on their official college transcript. Following the guidelines as established in the KCTCS Dual Credit Handbook, “the course enrollment requirements for secondary students will be equal to those of college students enrolled at the KCTCS College”. These students must fully meet the criteria of the KCTCS assessment and placement policy. The second groups (Group 2) of students are enrolled in area technology centers meeting the KY Tech system criteria for enrollment and high school guidelines for participation approval. They are enrolled by SKCTC receiving partial “exploratory” credit with the stipulation that full course credits will be awarded upon graduating high school and enrolling as an adult at SKCTC within a three-year timeframe. College enrollment criteria may be waived until official request of course transfer. Students, in this group classification, must have at least three credits in the program area, as an adult student, before a credit request for courses taken in high school will be processed. The Third group (Group 3) is comprised of high school students enrolled in technical “vocational” programs primarily

on the Harlan campus. These students are receiving high school elective course credits toward graduation and full credit for course work in a co-inhabitation type environment with adult students on the college campus without necessarily meeting comprehensive assessment and placement requirements. These classifications were constructed as an understanding in the review of Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS) Administrative Policies and Procedures article 4.15 Kentucky Community and Technical College System Enrollment of High School and Adult Education Students Policy. (Appendix F).

The Harlan campus finds itself in a unique category. As the 16 individual colleges of the Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS) were being created, the Harlan State KY TECH complex was absorbed by the newly formed Southeast Kentucky Community and Technical College. Potentially leaving the county without an Area Technology Center (ATC) for high school students, the Harlan campus [one of the five campuses that make up SKCTC] also continues to fulfill the role of an ATC for local high schools. The KY TECH system has ATC's statewide with three being a part of this research, in Bell, Knox, and Letcher Counties. With the Harlan campus playing a dual role, all high school students within the service region of SKCTC have access to "vocational" educational opportunities.

The Fall semester of 2012 and Fall 2014 were selected for a view of standard and uncomplicated statistical data for the region. The Fall 2012 semester was chosen for examination because of the necessary time allotment for high school juniors to graduate and enroll in college. The data of Fall 2014 provides an assessment in tracking program development.

The following information, using data derived from SKCTC PeopleSoft Data files furnished by the college's Department of Institutional Effectiveness, provides a snapshot of the SKCTC dual credit programming using data from the Fall 2012 semester: As the chart indicates, the largest percentage of dual credit student participation is in the Group 2 “Articulation” and Group 3 “Vocational” categories; thus, rendering a rate of Group 1 “Academic” credit courses tallying in at 31.6%. Plus, it should also be noted that several of the Traditional transfer courses in Group 1 (IT courses) are of a “Vocational” characteristic.

*Table AE.1 Southeast Kentucky Community and Technical College Fall 2012 Dual Credit Enrollment*

Category	Courses	Enrollment
Group 1	Academic and Core Electives Traditional dual credit courses Examples: ENG 101, HIS 109, MAT 150, IT 120, PHY 171, and PSY 110—CIT 162, IT 132, and IT 220 361	361
Group 2	Articulation - EX-196 Experiential Education Course enrolling Vocational –Technical students from the regions KY Tech Area Technology Centers (ATC’s) in Bell, Knox, and Letcher Counties 619	619
Group 3	Vocational –Technical courses SEEK Funded Harlan Campus	163
Total	Non-repetitive names per group	1143

*Note:* Students may be enrolled in multiple groups



The following information, gathered from SKCTC PeopleSoft Data files furnished by the College Department of Institutional Effectiveness, provides a snapshot of the SKCTC dual credit programming using data from the Fall 2014 semester:

1. Group 1 would be the base numbers for evaluating the effectiveness of the truly defined form of dual crediting. These students receive both high school and college credit, upon successful completion, for the same course. The actual number of students participating in Group 1 did not increase very much in the Fall 2014 semester. But an increase in the number of students in this group that are enrolling in more than one class became apparent in the data review.
2. Group 2, as of the Fall 2014 semester, has been deleted from the formal application and enrollment process of dual credit at SKCTC. College personnel advising students in course transfer procedures reported in phone conversations that SKCTC has a long-standing agreement with the KY Tech – ATC's for transfer credit using articulated credit. It is not necessary to have been enrolled in the EX 196, Experiential Education course in order to transfer course credits from the KY Tech System.
3. Group 3 is best defined as a category within Dual Enrollment. The high school students are enrolled and earning full credits for technical programs at SKCTC and the high school personnel transfer those credits to student transcripts as electives. With a

student enrollment reduction of nearly 10% in 2 years, this group appears to be in a state of decline. The drop in enrollment may be noteworthy enough to prompt an inquiry of the current programming.

*Table AE.2 Southeast Kentucky Community and Technical College Fall 2014 Dual Credit Enrollment*

Category	Courses	Enrollment
Group 1	Academic and Core Electives Traditional dual credit courses Examples: ENG 101, HIS 109, MAT 150, IT 120, PHY 171, and PSY 110—CIT 162, IT 120, IT 132, and IT 220	375
Group 2	Articulation - EX-196 Experiential Education Course enrolling Vocational –Technical students from the regions KY Tech Area Technology Centers (ATC’s) in Bell, Knox, and Letcher Counties	0
Group 3	Vocational –Technical courses SEEK Funded Harlan Campus	152
Total	Non-repetitive names per group	527

*Note:* Students may be enrolled in multiple groups

The total student headcount for SKCTC for the Fall 2012 Semester was 5,207 of that number 1143 were high school students enrolled by means of dual crediting,

accounting for 21.9 % of the total enrollment. The Fall semester of 2014 had a total enrollment of 3,830 and 527 of that number being high school - dual credit students. The overall college enrollment dropped by 26.4% and the high school enrollment proportion reduced to 13.7%. The decrease in dual credit enrollment came about as the result of college discontinuing the EX-196 articulating courses with the ATC's. The high school dual credit enrollment dropped from 1143 to 527, reducing participation by 53.8%. However, traditional [Group 1] dual credit enrollment actually increased slightly from 361 to 375 and the technical course enrollment of high school students on the Harlan campus [Group 3] varied from 163 in 2012 to 152 for 2014, demonstrating a continuing degree of dual credit program consistency.

The above data provides evidence of Southeast Kentucky Community and Technical College's commitment to inclusion for secondary students, using a varied approach to accommodate student needs, in the quest to increase educational attainment and advancement in southeast Kentucky.

### **Dual Credit Students who enrolled in College After Graduation**

The percentage of students, having been enrolled in SKCTC dual crediting, continuing their education on the postsecondary level at SKCTC, was viewed as a tool for rating student perception of the program. This section provides data retrieved from the SKCTC Department of Institutional Effectiveness (IE), the college PeopleSoft data system, Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) data banks, and information retrieved from the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) web-based resources. This information was then pulled together in order to comprehend program performance.

Fall 2012 was selected in order to allow ample time for high school juniors to complete high school requirements and make the college decision. The number of students participating in dual credit, 1143, and the number returning to enroll at SKCTC, as an adult, as of the Fall 2014 semester was 292, equating 25.5%. The number of dual credit participants, Fall 2012, was retrieved from the College Department of Institutional Effectiveness and adult enrollment was tracked through college PeopleSoft data system. It should be noted that only those students enrolling at SKCTC were accessed and documented in this report. The retention or continuation rate of 25.5% of the enrollment returning to SKCTC could be viewed as dual credit being a positive college feeder program. Although, a closer look was warranted. The following data, junior and senior high school enrollment within the SKCTC service region was assembled to provide additional insight in order to rationalize the numbers.

*Table AE.3: Kentucky Department of Education: The Superintendent's Annual Attendance (SAAR) Report 2012-2013*

School District	Junior	Senior	Total
Harlan County	283	259	542
Harlan Independent	60	54	114
Bell County	200	196	396
Middlesboro independent	113	94	207
Pineville Independent	40	36	76

*Table AE.3: (continued)*

School District	Junior	Senior	Total
Knox County	190	213	403
Barbourville Independent	43	39	82
Letcher County	213	229	442
Jenkins Independent	44	41	85
Total	1186	1161	2347

*Note:* Information retrieved from: [http://education.ky.gov/districts/enrol/Pages/Superintendent's-Annual-Attendance-Report \(SAAR\).aspx](http://education.ky.gov/districts/enrol/Pages/Superintendent's-Annual-Attendance-Report%20(SAAR).aspx)

A total headcount of 2347 juniors and seniors from the nine high school districts involved in this study with 1143 from the region enrolling in college courses revealed a student dual credit participation rate of 48%. This is an incredible number, yet only 292 returned to SKCTC as adult students. Further research is needed to achieve clarity in understanding the numbers. The following chart contains the total number of graduates listed by county in the service region on SKCTC. This report contains the latest data available to the general public at the time of conducting this research. This source contained college going percentages and the college of attendance breakdown. Each of the nine school districts listed in their perspective county of the research region is contained in the following chart:

*Table AE.4 Kentucky County Profiles 2014-2015 Southeast Kentucky Community and Technical College Service Region: Graduates 2011*

County	Districts	Graduates	College Going	%	SKCTC	%
<b>Bell</b>	Bell Co.	336	206	61.3	131	39/64
	Middlesboro Ind.					
	Pineville Ind.					
<b>Harlan</b>	Harlan Co.	308	197	64	152	49/77
	Harlan Ind.					
<b>Knox</b>	Knox Co.	341	194	56.9	37	11/19
	Barbourville Ind.					
<b>Letcher</b>	Letcher Co.	237	144	60.8	75	28/52
	Jenkins Ind.					
<b>Totals</b>		1222	741	60.8	395	32/53

*Note:* Information gathered from the Kentucky Center for Education and Workforce Statistics.

The following chart provides the regional graduate college-going rate for the 2011 school year, the latest year of readily retrievable data, having an overall college-going rate of 60.8 and the SKCTC retention rate of 32% for that year, is sufficient to provide clarity to the seemingly low student return rate of 25.8% to SKCTC for dual credit participants from the Fall semester of 2012. This data indicates that about half of

the college-going graduates from the region select SKCTC as their first step in the pursuite of higher education, in this example 53.3% [395 of the 741].

The average of 60.8% in 2011 for all students from within the region going on to college was equivalent to the state average of 60.8%, as shown in the following chart:

*Table AE.5 Southeast Kentucky Community and Technical College: College-Going Rate for Research Region vs. Kentucky State Average: Graduation Year 2011*

*Graduation Year*

SKCTC Service Region	Total
Bell County	61.3
Harlan County	64
Knox County	56.9
Letcher County	60.8
Region Average	60.8
State Average	60.8

*Note:* Information gathered from the Kentucky Center for Education and Workforce Statistics.

The overall student continuation rate of 32% to SKCTC for the 2011 school year and the 25.5% dual credit participant college retention rate for students that had enrolled in the Fall 2012 high school classes is enough to suggest a pattern. Dual credit

participation does not obligate the student to the college providing the courses. The 25.5% of dual credit participants of Fall 2012 returning to SKCTC could be viewed differently pending researcher interpretation; therefore, additional research concerning dual credited high school students and their return to SKCTC as an adult is warranted. Some students may have achieved their educational goals and entered the workforce. The low percentage of students continuing their education at SKCTC could be viewed as a missed opportunity in student recruitment for retention and completion [1143 participants 292 returning], or the selection of educational opportunities outside of the SKCTC service region, could be deemed as evidence of growth of confidence in student ambitions and the direct enrollment at a 4 year institution. Self-confidence coupled with course transferability could be the key to opening doors in career options once barred from underserved students.

The college-going rate of the Fall 2012 dual credit-enrolled students for each of the established groups would suggest a need for further research into; Groups 2, Articulated credit from Area Technology Centers, and Group 3, Vocational/Technical courses on the Harlan Campus. Group 2 had a total dual credit enrollment headcount of 618 in 2012. There were 32 duplicate names, students enrolled in more than 1 EX 196 Experiential Education course. Another 26 students of the list were enrolled in an experiential course and a Group 1 Academic Core class and were included in the Group 1 college-going rate. Therefore a total of 560 students were enrolled solely in the Group 2 category resulting in the following breakdown of high school students receiving articulated credits through the dual credit program and returning to SKCTC and enrolling as an adult.



*Table AE.6 Southeast Kentucky Community and Technical College Fall 2012: Group 2  
Articulated Credits from Area Technology Centers College Going  
Rate as of Fall 2014*

College Enrollment as of Fall 2014	Student Status	Percentage
Total enrollment non-repetitive names	560	
Not returning to SKCTC	429	77%
Returning to SKCTC Academic Enrollment	121	22%
Returning to SKCTC Vocational/Technical	10	2%

Group 3, Vocational/Technical SEEK funded enrollment on the Harlan Campus, is also deserving of a more detailed review. The students enrolled in the Medical Assistance and Health Sciences courses were added to the Group 1, Academic college-going rates because further inclusion in these programs would most likely require completion of general academic core classes as a prerequisite; thus, making it difficult to determine program continuation. The remaining 6 Vocational/Technical programs on the Harlan Campus that currently enroll high school students [Automotive Technology, Collision Repair Technology, Computerized Manufacturing and Machining, Construction Technology, Electrical Technology, and Welding Technology] had a total dual credit enrollment headcount of 104 students. Data derived from SKCTC PeopleSoft Data files furnished by the colleges Department of Institutional Effectiveness provides the following results:

*Table AE.7 Southeast Kentucky Community and Technical College Fall 2012: Group 3  
Harlan Campus Vocational/Technical*

Fall 2012 Group 3 Dual Credit Students Returning to SKCTC as of Fall 2014		
Total enrollment non-repetitive names	104	
Not returning to SKCTC	76	73%
Returning to SKCTC Academic Enrollment	13	13%
Returning to SKCTC Vocational/Technical	15	14%

These numbers can be difficult to analyze. The trades programs are true areas of discovery. Students may achieve their goals and satisfy their curiosity at the same time. Some chose not to pursue a career in these fields. Some go directly into the work world as competent workers. While others simply move on having gained a better understanding of mechanical concepts that they can apply in life throughout their future.

### **Dual Credit Media Reports**

The Kentucky Department of Education (KDE), Office of Career and Technical Education (OCTE), and Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS) established a Memorandum of Understanding that stipulates participating colleges and their partnering local school districts shall advertise and promote dual credit opportunities for high school students, parents, and high school faculty. The purpose of this study does not bring into question adherence to system policy. There is ample evidence, though, to

establish compliance. The concern is to what degree dual crediting may be promoted. A brochure and some generic information obtainable on the SKCTC website along with an occasional newspaper article is perhaps proof enough. However, two questions remain: is there a true awareness of the full potential of dual crediting in rural Appalachia; and is there consistency throughout the SKCTC service region?

The SKCTC student handbook section 2.35 Participation in College Orientation states: All first-time freshmen are required to enroll in GEN 100 or GEN 102 depending on placement scores. The 2014-15 edition of the KCTCS Catalog serves as a student guide to academic programs and provides the following description of required courses for all beginning students.

Introduction to College GEN 100 introduces new students to college life, support services provided by the college, techniques for academic success, and career exploration.

Foundations of Learning GEN 102, presents strategies which promote academic and personal success in college, including utilizing campus resources, learning and memory, self-management, critical reading, critical thinking, classroom skills, and career exploration.

Perhaps it is within reason, administrative over-ride, to waive the college orientation course for part-time high school enrollees. Even though, it would appear to be an appropriate first class for all high school dual credit students. After all, participating in dual credit is a strong indication of a desire to go to college. Plus, a formal orientation before an actual commitment may even improve student success. Each semester the

college conducts a brief, two hour, freshman orientation on the Cumberland, Harlan, Middlesboro, and Whitesburg Campuses. The purpose of orientation is to familiarize students with policies and procedures, providing important information about the college placement and registration, and to bring students to campus to see the facilities and learn about services that are available. There is an important note on the SKCTC website concerning Orientation: All new students are required to attend an orientation session before you can enroll (para 2). For dual crediting high school students this policy requirement, apparently, may also be placed in the waved category. This is an area worthy of additional research.

Media reports such as “Dual Credit Expanded”, on the front page of the July 26, 2014 edition of the Harlan Daily Enterprise (Sizemore 2014), depict dual credit as a positive and successful program for a local school district [Harlan Independent]. The article lists the current course offerings as follows: Humanities 120, English 101, and 102, History 108 and 109, Introduction to Computers, CIS 120, Computer Applications, College Algebra, College Trigonometry, and Physics I and II. The following quote provides further testimony to student success:

Some years we have more utilization than others. When we first started this five or six year ago we had several students who graduated with 18 hours of college credit. This past year, 20 percent of our seniors graduated with college credit. A good number of our students are taking those courses.

Utilizing the 2012-2013 school year for data, having 20 percent of the senior class achieving college credits from such a wide-ranging list of 12 courses is a good read

for a dual-credit enthusiast. However, there is always room for a more detailed investigation into any report. Student enrollment data retrieved from “The Kentucky Department of Education’s, 2012-13 Superintendents Annual Attendance Report” (SAAR) reveals this district to have had a senior enrollment of 54 students and the high school counselor verified 51 graduates for the 2013 class. Having only 10 or 11 students [20% of 51 being 10.2] receiving college credits from such a comprehensive selection of courses leaves an opening for thought. The following chart provides this student groups’ tally on their junior ACT performance:

*Table AE.8 Harlan Independent School District: ACT Scores*

*Junior Year 2011-1012*

School Year 2011-2012		Grade Level Tested =11			
Number of Students	School	54	State	44,526	
English	School	20.9	State	18.4	
Mathematics	School	19.8	State	18.8	
Reading	School	20.4	State	19	
Science	School	19.8	State	19.1	
Overall Composite	School	20.3	State	19	

*Note:* Data Retrieved from: Kentucky Department of Education: Kentucky School Report Card at <http://applications.education.ky.gov/SRC/>

Additionally, this school district achieved a 2012-2013 classification of “Distinguished” being in the 96 percentile in Kentucky and having a college and career readiness score of 56%. Therefore, better than half of the class, the average student, would qualify for dual credit enrollment. At first glance, those impressive numbers now seem somewhat troubling. Two significant questions arise: is dual credit an opportunity for the average student to explore college or is it a fast track for class superlatives’ already having a college plan.

An article in print (Bell) on August 29, 2014, Harlan Daily Enterprise, demonstrates a rather different approach to integrating college dual credit programming. Guidance counselors at Harlan County High School reported the addition of eight new courses for the current term, making a total of 18 dual credit “academic” courses. These classes is in addition to the dual credit courses offered to the high school students enrolling in the “vocational/technical” programs at the college’s Harlan Campus. The Officials of the school district praised the work being done through the collaboration of high school and college personnel in preparing more students for a fast-tracked education. This school district has placed emphasis on having sophomores ready to apply for dual credit classes, based on ACT testing during the eighth and tenth grades. They have been unique in dual credit delivery methods, with the article stipulating, “None of the classes are provided through the internet or via a video-conferencing or ITV systems”. All of the classes are conducted in a classroom setting by a faculty member either from the high school or the college.

Again, using the 2012-2013 school year as a readily available source of data, this school district had an identifiable dual credit enrollment of 242 non-repetitive names for

the fall of 2012. The SAAR report for this school year listed 283 juniors and 254 seniors for a total of 542, establishing a dual credit participation rate of 44.6%. This high school is less than ten years old, the result of a consolidation of the districts three prior high schools [Cumberland High School, Evarts High School, and James A. Cawood High School]. The social issues of uniting once rivals into a new order have been overcome, and now this school is progressing in leaps and bounds. Even though, the Kentucky Department of Education's School Report Card lists the school in the classification of "Needs Improvement", amazing things are taking place. Their college and career readiness rates have increased from 13% in 2010-2011 to 30.6% for 2011-2012, to 36.2% in 2012-2013. The ACT overall composite has risen from 17.3% in 2012-2013 to 18.2 for 2013-2014. This school is steadily improving, and with such a high percentage of participation it is within reason to attribute dual credit as a positive proponent of student success. The participation rate of 44.6% and a College/Career Readiness of 36.2% for the 2012 school year demonstrate inclusion of more than class superlatives.

### **Advising for Dual Credit Programs**

Academic advising is a vital part of the student learning process. Helping students in determining course selections is much more than merely finding a class to fulfill a program requirement. Course selection within itself is a teachable moment. Lowenstein (2014) states, "Students do not see their advisors to find out where they may obtain the learning they want; they see us in order to learn." The following table contains data obtained from the SKCTC Fall 2014 semester concerning high school *dual credit* student advising:

*Table AE.9 Southeast Kentucky Community and Technical College Fall 2014*

*Dual Credit Student Advising*

Category	Description		Total
Group 1	Academic Core and Electives - Traditional dual credit		370
	With advisor listed	49	13.2%
	With academic plan	49	13.2%
	With both	5	1.4%
Group 3	Vocational - Technical courses SEEK Funded Harlan Campus		152
	With advisor listed	0	0%
	With academic plan	152	100%
	With both	0	0%
Total	Non-repetitive names per group		522

*Note:* Students may be in multiple groups

Review of the 2014-15 KCTCS program catalog provided the following statement, under the subtopic of Academic Advising:

Academic advising is an essential element of the total educational experience and is available to every KCTCS student. Whether a student is seeking credentials exclusively from KCTCS or plans to use the education obtained at KCTCS to pursue a higher degree at another institution, academic advising is critical (p. 61).



The catalog also provides somewhat of a disclaimer to close the academic advising topic by stating, “Although academic advisors provide assistance, students are responsible for knowing institutional policies, procedures, requirements, and seeking out assistance when needed”. It is without question; high school dual credit students do have access to and are provided academic advising. However, not providing documentation of an assigned advisor could be an indication of not fully accepting dual credit students as a true college enrollment. Beck (1999) acknowledged “as a crucial initial condition affecting undecided students, established trust levels with advisers will have profound implications on future relationships; establishing trust with an adviser is of paramount importance for helping the undecided student” (p. 46).

### **Course Evaluations for Dual Credit Programs**

Researchers both proponents and skeptics, Cave, et, al (1997) and Wilson (1998) as examples, agree that student evaluations of faculty are administered at most colleges and universities across the United States and are the primary source of information used in evaluating teaching performance. SKCTC uses student feedback as a means to track instructional effectiveness; however, the data is not segregated to differentiate high school students from the adult enrollment. The dual credit student being taught by high school teachers up to this point has not been subject to the college evaluation process. Therefore, the limited high school student course evaluations available are ineffective in determining a perspective of dual credit satisfaction.

## Summary

The information contained in the Demographic Information Report provides evidence of success in regional dual credit programming. High school student participation rates and performance outcomes are steadily improving. However, this report also reveals areas for potential improvements. It would be within reason to conclude an overall rating of *Good* for the SKCTC sponsored dual credit programming in rural Appalachia of Southeastern Kentucky could be easily substantiated by the research findings of the DIR. Thus, establishing the question concerning education and the region's economic resurgence—is *Good* education enough or is a *Better than Good* education required in sustaining a quality way of life for the residents of resource extraction communities that experience an unexpected loss in market for their resources.

APPENDIX F

4.15 Kentucky Community and Technical College System Enrollment  
of High School and Adult Education Students Policy

## Appendix F

**4.15 Kentucky Community and Technical College System Enrollment of High School and Adult Education Students Policy**

KCTCS colleges are expected to enter into partnerships with comprehensive high schools, area technology centers, and adult education programs for the purpose of providing postsecondary educational opportunities to high school and adult education students. Guiding principles for all agreements include national standards, regional accreditation standards, Kentucky Revised Statute, and KCTCS policy. Agreements must meet the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges (SACS) accreditation requirements.

The following mechanisms may be used to award credit to high school or adult education students.

1. *Articulated Credit* – College credit awarded by the KCTCS College for successful completion of secondary courses. Articulated credit is awarded and transcript when the student enrolls in the KCTCS college and earns a minimum of three credits in an applicable postsecondary program. Students who do not complete three credit hours in an applicable postsecondary program at the KCTCS College within three years of the last course completed at the secondary institution may be required to take a special examination or to repeat the course if there has been significant change in related technology within the time period.

1. *Dual Credit* – Students earn high school and college credit for the same course simultaneously. These courses may be taught on the high school or college campus, or online. Students may be asked to pay a tuition/fee in order to enroll (this will vary according to school and district policy). KCTCS colleges are responsible for the academic integrity, quality, and rigor of dual credit courses being offered. In order to receive college credit, the high school student must apply, be accepted, meet placement benchmarks, and fulfill all requirements for the course.
  
1. *Dual Enrollment* – Concurrent enrollment in a KCTCS college and high school or adult education program with credit awarded by the KCTCS College. A student may be concurrently enrolled in a KCTCS college and high school or adult education program. Dual enrollment is distinguished from dual credit because the student earns credit only from the KCTCS College. Dual enrollment of high school students may occur when the college course has no high school equivalent or a dual credit opportunity is not available. Dual enrollment is appropriate for adult education students because adult education programs do not award credit.

Local colleges must have a policy regarding the enrollment of high school students or adult education students that is consistent with KCTCS student admission and academic policies.

<p>25-08; 4-17-02</p> <hr/>	<p>9-24-02; 5-10-07; 11-25-08; 5-11-10; 5-26-15</p> <hr/>	<p>9-24-02; 5-10-07; 11- 5-11-10; 5-26-15</p> <hr/>
<p>Date Approved by Revision President, KCTCS</p>	<p>Date(s) of Last Review <i>(Include all dates in chronological order)</i></p>	<p>Date(s) of Last <i>(Include all dates in chronological order)</i></p>
<p><u>(SIGNED)</u> Recommended by</p>	<p><u>5-26-15</u></p>	<p><u>(SIGNED)</u> <u>5-26-15</u> Date President, KCTCS Date</p>

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