

ABSTRACT

Increased interest in the benefits of dual enrollment and dual credit options, coupled with growing participation, indicate that high school students and their parents are seeking opportunities to engage in college-level academics. To successfully support a student's early college experience, the Eastern Washington University Running Start team engaged in action research with the purpose of refining the program philosophy and aligning policies and procedures with national academic advising concepts and standards. This research project showcases how action research positively impacted program practices and discusses the impact dual enrollment participation has on academic efficacy, persistence, and the secondary to postsecondary transition.

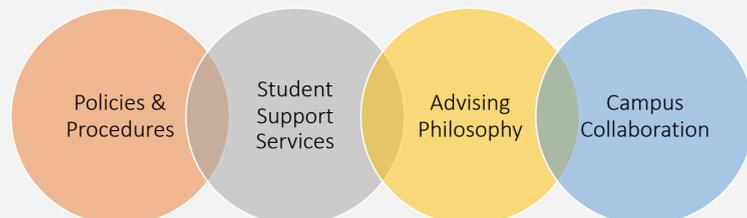
BACKGROUND

Dual Enrollment/Credit

- Students earn college and high school credit simultaneously (College: Concurrent Enrollment & Running Start and College-level: AP & IB)
- College Transition: i.e. rigor and early exposure to the academic and social aspects of college-life (Bailey & Karp, 2003)
- EWU Running Start: Enhanced Comprehensive Dual Enrollment Program that seeks to prepare students for the secondary-post secondary transition through individualized student support services (Bailey, Karp & Hughes, 2002).

RESEARCH PLAN

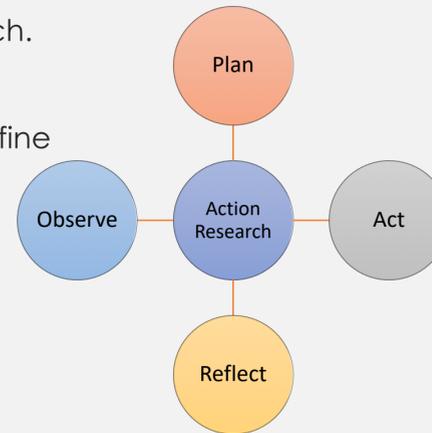
- Establish Defined Program Philosophy and Mission
- Align Practices with EWU Undergraduate & NACADA Advising Concepts
- Improve Program Functionality
- Improve Student Retention Strategies & Promote Matriculation
- Promote Collaboration with Campus Partners



METHODOLOGY

Action Research

- User-friendly and practical approach to conducting research.
- Less formal than other types of research.
- The purpose is to improve and refine actions, policies, and processes.
- The research project identifies a topic that is relevant to the researchers, who are the main consumers of the findings.
- Running Start team used action research to evaluate and define program process, assessing functionality and effectiveness.



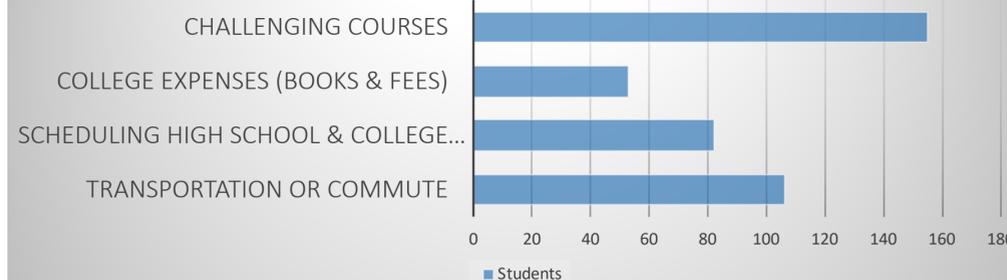
(Reason & McArdle, 2004)

OBSERVATION

Why Students Choose EWU Running Start

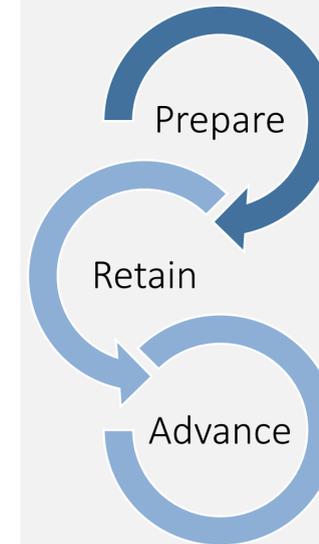


Student Concerns Upon Entering EWU Running Start



REFLECTION

Using survey data and program self-evaluation, the research team established a three phase program philosophy that includes a student-centered advising curriculum, a pedagogical approach, and defined learning outcomes.



- The prepare phase creates informative opportunities for students to gain a realistic understanding of the academic and social expectations associated with entering an early college experience.
- The retain phase focuses on helping students build self-efficacy as they progress through program participation. This includes reflective advising sessions focused on cultivating academic engagement.
- The advance phase focuses on assisting students as they transition from the role of high school student earning college credit, to that of a matriculated or transfer college student.

ACTION

As a result of the action research project, the Running Start team began to focus on introducing students to the social aspects of the early college experience. Astin (1984) theorized that minimal participation in campus life can limit persistence. As commuter students, Running Start participants have fewer opportunities to engage in typical student involvement activities. Now, EWU Running Start creates situations through campus workshops and social activities where students can engage with their learning community and gain opportunities to learn from shared experiences.

REFERENCES

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