

Concurrent Enrollment (CE) Instructors and the Fallout of the HLC CE Credentialing Clarification

April 10, 2025



Host: Jenny Parks, Vice
President, Policy and
Research, MHEC



Any resources available
will be posted on the
MHEC website post-event.



Engage with colleagues in
the chat.



Keep your questions in
the Q&A!



Please complete our
survey.

Guest Presenter



Mark Schneider, Ph.D.
*Assistant Vice President of K-14
Academic Initiatives & Support*
Ivy Tech Community College

**Concurrent Enrollment (CE) Instructors and the
Fallout of the Higher Learning Commission CE
Credentialing Clarification**

Mark Schneider, Ph.D.

Issue: CE Instructors and the HLC

- 2015, the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) revised credentialing standards for concurrent enrollment (CE) instructors.
- More than half of CE instructors under HLC accreditation, several thousand in total, were found to be outside this new credentialing standard; roughly half completed the coursework
- New standards were to come into effect in 2017
 - “Grace period” initially to 2022 (announced 2017), then 2023 (announced 2020), with a final extension to 2025 (announced 2022); completely new HLC policy in late 2023
- **Research arc seeks to understand why CE instructors did or did not complete the required additional coursework to maintain their status as a CE instructor beyond the credentialing deadlines through the theoretical framework of Principal-Agent Theory (PAT) and how that can impact future CE instructor credentialing policies.**

Literature Review

- Nearly non-existent
- "Glaring gap" with CE instructor research according to a recent CE Research Agenda paper (Taylor et al., 2022).
- Studies offered parallel situations
 - Studies over graduate students have been able to provide parallels to CE instructors needing additional coursework
 - Studies covering teachers and administrator buy-in of professional development options and requirements
- Duncheon and Relles (2020) – CE instructors struggle to balance the HEI and K12 spheres and respective responsibilities.

Research Questions – Paper I

- From the CE instructor's perspective, how has the leadership and administration of a high school offering concurrent enrollment programming affected the decisions of CE instructors regarding becoming fully credentialed to meet the HLC clarification standards?
- What are the common themes amongst CE instructors who completed the additional coursework needed to become fully credentialed?
- What are the common themes amongst CE instructors who did not complete the additional coursework needed to become fully credentialed?

Paper I

- Qualitative study with CE instructors presently instructing and who were impacted by the HLC decision in 2017

Profile of the participants (n=9).

Name	Coursework required	Age	2025 credentialing status	CE experience
“Cynthia”	18 credit hours	50-54	Not credentialed	12-15 years
“Deborah”	18 credit hours	35-39	Not credentialed	6-9 years
“Joseph”	18 credit hours	50-54	Not credentialed	6-9 years
“Kevin”	18 credit hours	40-44	Credentialed	9-12 years
“Pamala”	18 credit hours	60-64	Not credentialed	6-9 years
“Sandra”	3 credit hours	60-64	Credentialed	15-18 years
“Steven”	18 credit hours	45-49	Credentialed	6-9 years
“Tammy”	18 credit hours	40-44	Credentialed	12-15 years
“Timothy”	6 credit hours	50-54	Not credentialed	12-15 years

Schneider, M. & Snodgrass, L. L. (2023). Understanding the concurrent enrollment instructor credentialing cliff from the instructors’ perspective: A qualitative study utilizing principal-agent theory. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 47(10) 642-653. <https://doi.org/10.80/10668926.2023.2219650>

Research Questions – Paper II

- Why do CE high school administrators provide or not provide additional incentives beyond the regular teaching contract to CE instructors?
- From the high school administrator perspective, what are the benefits CE instructors receive teaching CE courses?
- Where do the findings from CE high school administrators in this study and findings from CE instructors in Schneider and Snodgrass (2023) converge and diverge on the HLC CE credentialing issue?

Paper II

- Qualitative study with CE high school administrators who presently lead CE programming, have done so since 2017, and had their CE program impacted by the HLC decision

Profile of the participants (n=16).

Name	Position	Public/Private	# of CE Instructors
“Edward”	Superintendent	Public	10-12
“Anthony”	Superintendent	Public	18-21
“Braden”	Superintendent	Public	10-12
“Caroline”	Asst. Superintendent	Public	10-12
“Mitchel”	Asst. Superintendent	Public	31-33
“Donna”	Principal	Public	7-10
“Nathan”	Principal	Public	10-12
“Julie”	Principal	Public	7-10
“Brody”	Principal	Public	10-12
“Christine”	Principal	Private	1-3
“Brian”	Principal	Public	7-10
“Luke”	Asst. Principal	Public	33-36
“Melissa”	Asst. Principal	Public	12-15
“Madelyn”	Asst. Principal	Public	12-15
“Nick”	Head of Guidance	Public	21-23
“Jones”	Head of Guidance	Private	7-10

Schneider, M. & Snodgrass, L. L. (in press). Understanding the community college concurrent enrollment instructor credentialing cliff from the high school administrators’ perspective: A qualitative study utilizing principal-agent theory. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*.

Paper I – Findings & Discussion

- Financial Incentives
 - Five CE instructors who did not receive a stipend as a CE instructor = 0% completed coursework
 - Three of four instructor who did complete coursework had a stipend or anticipated receiving one with a new district
- Time Required For Coursework And Participant Age
- Administrative Support
- CE Instructors' Identity As High School Teachers Over College Instructors
 - Nine of nine CE instructors, regardless of credentialing status, viewed themselves as high school teachers first
- Principal-Agent Theory

Paper II – Findings & Discussion

- Not Understanding the Reasoning For New Credentialing Standards
 - Viewed as heavy hand of high education, no K12 input
 - Protect lost tuition revenue view of some superintendents
- Teacher Shortage Concerns
- Teaching the “Motivated Student” Benefit
- Financial Incentives
 - 11 of 16 participants offered at least one financial incentive
 - Teacher union concerns most common reason why incentives were not offered

Limitations

- Studies are through the lens of one HEI institution with a defined geographic service area of one state
- Nine CE instructors of 130 eligible agree to participate
- Those with higher views of CE programming, higher education, etc. could have been more likely to self select for participation among the eligible population groups

Recommendations

- Stipends for CE Instructors due to credentialing requirements that go above regular teacher licensing
 - PAT – Needs to come from the school district as CE Instructors view their school district as the principal, not HEI
 - State agency or state appropriation
 - Revisit master's degree and teacher salary scale
- Local discussion on the perceived benefit on teaching the “motivated” student and how to quantify it
- Design local and state policies around the HEI being the secondary principal in the PAT relationship

Recommendations for future studies

- Third study of issue from the HEI perspective
- Quantitative follow-up
- Predictive model or instrument to identify possible future CE instructors