Research Brief

Credit Recovery

Question: What is the research on credit recovery programs?

Summary of Findings:

The challenge of dealing with at-risk and dropout students continues to perplex schools. One approach adopted by many schools are credit recovery programs, alternative programs allowing students to recover course credits from classes they have missed or failed.

There are numerous programs and approaches, and information about them is readily available online, but there was little research into credit recovery programs, their impact, or characteristics that make them effective. The most common, systematic data collected was from computer learning system companies, who market their programs to credit recovery programs. Such data focused on number of credits recovered, and to a much lesser extent on other variables that might be informative to credit recovery programs, such as attendance rates, dropout rate, graduation rate, college matriculation rate, engagement, or attitude toward school.

Credit Recovery programs were scheduled a variety of ways: during the school day, after school, twilight schools (evenings), or during the summer. Some programs met at schools within the district and others have their own locations, such as in shopping centers. Some only accept students in the 11th or 12th grade and others had programs for middle school students, high school students, and over aged students. Computer learning systems and Web-based online systems for delivering curriculum or augmenting direct teacher instruction were common. Some were used only onsite during regular program hours and others could be accessed anywhere/anytime. Some credit recovery programs only grant credit for regular courses or curriculum modules. Others grant credit for community service, life and work experience, travel study, passing exams, or correspondence. Some programs offer only one approach. Others offer multiple (The Washoe County (NV) School District Indian Education Program, for example, offers all the approaches previously mentioned).

Online Resources:
(**Note**: ERIC documents can be found by going to http://www.eric.ed.gov/ and entering the ERIC ID#)

Washoe County School District Indian Education Program
High School Credit Recovery Information
http://www.washoe.k12.nv.us/indianed/creditrecov.htm

The National Dropout Prevention Center/Network
Identifies model programs, including model credit recovery programs. Four of those programs follow
http://www.dropoutprevention.org/ndpcdefault.htm

Credit Recovery Program
The program is offered in 50 labs across the Aldine, Texas, Independent School District and serves 10,000 students per day. Almost 74% of the district's students are considered to be at risk. They have approximately 57,000 students with an ethnic makeup of 35.7% African American, 42.3% Hispanic, 15.7% white and 6.2% Asian/Pacific Islander. They use PLATO software in the labs, and can work from home, public libraries, and at their places of employment. After 3 years, the dropout rate at Aldine has declined and the graduation rate and TAAS scores have improved. In 2000, the students earned 701 half credits in the credit recovery program. Through the third term of the 2003-04 school year, they have earned more than 2,000 half credits.
http://www.dropoutprevention.org/scripts/search/progsearch.asp?action=display&refnum=578

Kids in New Directions (K.I.N.D.) Alternative Learning Program
There are four separate programs: K.I.N.D Middle School (grades 6-8), Lawrence Opportunity Program (grades 9-12), Senior Save Saturday (students who attend the traditional school full-time, but are short on credits), and Diploma Recovery Program (students 18 and older) operating simultaneously to meet the needs of each student. Services are provided for 500 students, many are special

education students, age 11 to 59. Students use the same textbooks and are exposed to the same coursework as in the traditional school, but individualized instruction, experiential methods, and enriching activities allow previously unsuccessful students to achieve. All of the programs use computer-assisted instruction. An extended schedule, 6 days a week from 7:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., helps students to attend school around barriers such as childcare, employment, and family situations. The staff meets on Friday as a Professional Learning Community. Recognized as an Exemplary Program by the Indiana Department of Education in 2003.
http://www.dropoutprevention.org/scripts/search/progsearch.asp?action=display&refnum=312

Alee Academy
Alee Academy: A Progressive Alternative Education Charter School, Lake County School District, in Southside Shopping Center, Umatilla, Florida, challenges students to fulfill their academic and personal potential. The purpose of Alee Academy is to provide at-risk students, adjudicated youth, and former dropout students the opportunity to develop vocational skills, gain employment, and earn a high school diploma through credit recovery and the GED Exit Option Program in a nontraditional learning environment. Instructional methods include direct teacher instruction, one-on-one tutoring, computer-assisted learning, field trips, individualized instruction, collaborative learning, and work site training. A martial arts curriculum provides an effective means for enhancing the motivational climate of the educational experience. Other unique programs are the sandwich shop, the ropes course, and the boat-building program. Through partnerships with local businesses, the students are aware of and utilize resources that exist beyond the school setting. Graduation rates and test scores have increased each year that Alee has been in existence. Crystal Star Awards of Excellence in Dropout Recovery, Intervention, and Prevention, 2002 winner
http://www.dropoutprevention.org/scripts/search/progsearch.asp?action=display&refnum=121

Miller Education Center
Miller Education Center is the "umbrella" name for the different options programs available to Hillsboro students in grades 7 - 12. Miller Ed. helps students who are not successful in a traditional school setting. The center offers four programs including a middle school, upper school, twilight school which provides credit recovery opportunities for students who are in credit deficient, and an outreach recovery program, which helps bring dropouts back to school. One reason students often succeed at Miller Ed. is due to its small student: faculty ratio of about 1: 20 in addition to a more casual, personal atmosphere.
http://www.dropoutprevention.org/scripts/search/progsearch.asp?action=display&refnum=410

The Racine Unified School District: Credit Recovery Program
The Lighted Schoolhouse, Credit Recovery Program will provide "At-Risk" high school students the opportunity to enroll in classes using PASS, a state approved curriculum, and Plato a computer based curriculum, as an alternative method to recover credit for failed classes. The program will operate at Park and Horlick high schools. The program begins 15 minutes after the regular school day ends. The program is a semi-independent instructional program that will supplement the regular secondary curriculum. Students must demonstrate competency by passing unit tests before they receive credit. Our goal is to have students graduate with their class or within one semester.
http://www.racine.k12.wi.us/default.asp?pid=402

Facilitate Credit Recovery and Dropout Prevention
PLATO Learning's instructional technology provides at-risk students with a unique learning experience. PLATO Learning's award-winning, interactive and engaging curriculum holds students' interest and teaches them the core skills for which they are held accountable. Credit recovery is most successful when students are engaged with rigorous one-to-one instruction that meets their individual needs and skill gaps. Most alternative education programs have neither the resources nor manpower to deliver personalized instruction. PLATO Learning presents educators with the resources they need to keep students engaged and active in the learning process.
http://www.plato.com/solutions.asp?ID=14

Credit Recovery Implementation Stories
With some of the strongest products in the industry, PLATO Learning has been able to impact achievement for over 10 million learners worldwide. Access our implementation stories to find best practices from other practitioners across markets and geographic areas and to review both qualitative and quantitative evidence of student success. We currently have 82 implementation stories in our library.
http://www.plato.com/research/implementations.asp?view=topic&filter=Credit%20Recovery

Research Brief

Pearson Digital Learning
Credit Recovery Success Stories
http://search.atomz.com/search/?sp-a=sp100286e8&sp-x=any&sp-p=all&sp-advanced=&sp-c=50&sp-m=1&sp-q=++Goal%3ACreditRecovery

In the Arena: Sharnell Jackson, Chief E-Learning Officer, Chicago Public Schools
News Staff - July 2006
Another Chicago Public Schools' project underway is Virtual High School, which has been instated at as many as 69 high schools, with more than 4,000 participating students. Students take supplemental coursework online, typically for credit recovery, advanced placement (AP) courses, or language courses otherwise unavailable. Participating teachers are highly trained, as are on-site mentors employed to help students be successful in the courses they take through Virtual High School. This program has undergone a recent upgrade, including inviting an outside evaluator to evaluate the program, identify areas of improvement and offer a strategy to increase students' passing rates from a standard 50 to 70 percent. The result of the evaluation called for intensive professional development (PD) for on-site mentors, noting that in order to be truly helpful, mentors should be engaged in the online course or the same environment that their students would be in. After implementing the recommended intensive professional development and scheduling coursework for students during their school day, the Virtual High School increased passing rates to a solid 83 percent in Fall 2005. "We had surveys and focus groups with our teachers and students," Jackson recalls, "and all that data was used to fine-tune the program. Now we know we're on the right track and we have to manage this program to ensure these students have success and have an advantage by completing these courses. We don't want to present a course to students and have them fail because we haven't given them adequate support."
http://www.centerdigitaled.com/arenastory.php?docid=100250

Credit Recovery at La Sierra High School, Riverside, Calif.
Out with the old and in with the new. At La Sierra, the mantra applies not only to replacing retention with intervention, but also to the learning environment. In the school's NovaNET labs--where students can recover credits when they're short or get extra help in basic math or English skills--brand new furniture and flat-screen monitors look sharp and motivate students. Last school year, about 450 of the school's 2,500 students used the NovaNET program for remediation, and about 150 needed it for credit recovery. It's also available for enrichment and for students to earn college credit. And the district now has an unlimited use contract for NovaNET, a Pearson product. Students can't always fit lab time into their school day, so La Sierra keeps daily afterschool lab hours.
http://www.districtadministration.com/page.cfm?id=517#54

http://www.principalspartnership.com