What Works Clearinghouse

ies INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION SCIENCES

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WWC Quick Review of the Report "A Model for Success: CART's Linked Learning Program Increases College Enrollment"[1]

What is this study about?

The study examined whether students who enrolled in courses at a high school that combined academics and technical education had higher college enrollment rates than students who did not.

Eleventh- and 12th-grade students from the Clovis and Fresno Unified School Districts in California were eligible to enroll in half-day classes at the Center for Advanced Research and Technology (CART). For this study, 12th-grade students who took one or more CART courses were matched with 12th-grade students from the same district during the same academic year who did not take a CART course.

The study collected data from the 2002–03 academic year through the 2008–09 academic year. It included about 2,600 students who enrolled in CART courses and the same number of students who did not.

The study analyzed student enrollment in community colleges and four-year universities. It assessed the effectiveness of CART by comparing outcomes of students who enrolled in CART courses with the outcomes of students who did not.

Features of the Center for Advanced Research and Technology (CART)

CART combines rigorous academics, demanding technical education, and real-world experience in an effort to prepare students for a range of paths after secondary school. These paths include entry-level jobs, industry certifications, and enrollment in a community college or four-year university.

CART education and business instructors teach courses that are organized into broad industry sectors, such as agriculture and renewable resources; arts, media and entertainment; biomedical and health sciences; and construction and building.

Students follow industry-themed pathways that integrate their academic coursework and technical training. The industry-themed pathways also function as small learning communities that encourage collaboration among students with similar career interests.

(continued)

[1] Forbes, J. (2011). *A model for success: CART's Linked Learning program increases college enrollment.* Clovis, CA: The Center for Advanced Research and Technology.

What did this study find?

The study found that students who took CART courses enrolled in community colleges and four-year universities at higher rates than students who did not.

However, the WWC does not consider these results to be conclusive, because the study did not establish that students who enrolled in CART courses were equivalent to students who did not, based on prior academic achievement. The reported differences might reflect differences in the types of students who enrolled in CART courses rather than the influence of CART courses on college enrollment.

WWC Rating

The research described in this report does not meet WWC evidence standards

Cautions: The study did not establish that students who enrolled in CART were similar to comparison students prior to enrolling in CART courses. In the first three years of the study, no measure of prior academic achievement was available. For participants in the four later academic years, the study attempted to establish equivalence on prior academic achievement using 10th-grade California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE) scores. However, some students were missing CAHSEE scores; for them, the study imputed values for the missing data. Analyses using imputed baseline data to establish equivalence cannot meet WWC standards.