

Dual Enrollment: An Offer You Can't Refuse?

By Dan Clay

As parents begin to consider educational options for the high school years, they often begin to ask about dual enrollment at a community college or university. On the surface, it appears that this is a tremendous opportunity. First, it's free. Second, it's possible to complete the same classes for both high school and college credit. And third, it holds out the promise of providing academic challenges and opportunities for those inclined to pursue them.

This sounds like an offer you can't refuse. However, at Providence Extension Program (PEP), we believe that you should not be so quick to judge. Read here for a look into dual enrollment and how the curriculum at PEP provides a stronger alternative. These are some points that you will want to carefully consider as you weigh options for educating your high-school student.

College dual enrollment will not provide a Christian education.

We say this at the risk of stating the obvious. Among Christian home educators, the number one reason for choosing to educate your child at home is to give them a Christian education. This will not be provided at a government-run, secular institution. Many of the instructors have an anti-Christian bias. Certainly, there is a time when it may be appropriate for your child to encounter such bias. However, we would argue that it would be better to continue to equip your child to interact Biblically with such a bias during the high school years.

College dual enrollment grades go on your child's college transcript.

This means that a poor grade earned in a dual enrollment course will remain on your child's college transcript, lower their grade point average, and make your child less competitive for college scholarships and graduate school admission, should he choose to pursue it.



“Consider this: what kind of ‘real world’ responsibility is an employer going to give a nineteen or twenty year old, even if he is a college graduate? And, at what cost?”

College dual enrollment will not facilitate significant involvement in your child's life and education or present opportunity for teachable moments.

Legally, the public college or university has no accountability to parents. Professors and administrators are not legally permitted to talk to you about your child's grades or coursework unless your child gives them written permission. Communicating with, helping, and providing immediate feedback to students are usually not the highest priorities of college professors and instructors, as many of them are at the university primarily to do research. Test grades may be the most personal form of communication a student has from a professor or instructor, and often they come weeks after the test was given.

College dual enrollment will not equip your child to live as a Christian and provide him with the tools to make biblically grounded decisions.

College dual enrollment often does not live up to the promise of providing academic challenge.

Community college and freshman/sophomore university classes often are not academically challenging to the well-prepared high school student.

College dual enrollment is not realistic preparation for life.

What if your child surpasses all expectations, completes two years of college while in high school, and graduates from college at nineteen or twenty? It's not far-fetched to imagine. Consider this: what kind of “real world” responsibility is an employer going to give a nineteen or twenty year old, even if he is a college graduate? And, at what cost? We would argue that the very desires that you had for your child when you set out to homeschool is the cost for this achievement. Now you may be saying, “Well, all of this sounds good, but what am I going to do about getting my child into college?”

Dual Enrollment: An Offer You Can't Refuse? continued...

PEP is a stronger alternative to dual enrollment that provides the college advantage for home-educated students. Consider:

The majority of PEP's graduates have had little difficulty getting into college.

Our vision is to fulfill the Great Commission by teaching secondary age students to think biblically, reason logically, communicate persuasively, and to think as free men. PEP's rigorous college preparatory curriculum gives solid preparation for being accepted into and succeeding at leading colleges and universities. Take a look at "Life After PEP" under 'College Testimonies' at www.pep1.org to see where our graduates have attended.

Many of PEP's graduates have received substantial scholarships at leading institutions.

The experience of our families has been that investing those last two years of secondary education in PEP has paid off, not only by students being better prepared for college than if they had dual-enrolled, but financially as well.

PEP's integrated core curriculum provides your child with the foundation to be prepared for life.

PEP features a Humanities Core curriculum that brings knowledge together across three disciplines with the Bible as the integrating point and foundation of all learning.

PEP provides a discipleship model of education.

We seek to unite scholarly discipline with Christian nurture. As Christians, we are interested in far more than the transmission of information. Our desire is to partner with parents to help students grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our tutors work closely with parents and students and are able to provide personal encouragement and accountability.

PEP follows the Classical model of education.

Not only are students given information, but they learn to answer the "why" and "how" questions. Our Humanities Core A and B classes focus on origins – in Scripture, history, and literature – the "what." Our Core C Humanities focuses on examination of worldview and assumptions – on learning what questions to ask to uncover underlying assumptions and most important of

all, what the underlying assumptions of the Christian faith are. Lastly, our Humanities Cores D, E, and F teach students to apply this knowledge to the history, literature, and thought of the Ancient, Medieval, and Modern periods. In other words, there is a progression of knowledge and competencies that is built year by year in a deliberate manner.

In contrast to the "advantage" that dual enrollment offers of obtaining college credit while in high school, we would suggest the following:

Continue a home-based education with the help of PEP.

Take PEP's Core Curriculum in the Eleventh and Twelfth Grades.

Because of PEP's unique Core Curriculum, your child will be in a strong position to compete for substantial scholarships at competitive schools.

College and university dual enrollment is an offer that you *should* refuse. For Christian families engaged in a home-based education, the drawbacks are far more serious and significant than the benefits. Your child will benefit spiritually, academically, and financially by refusing this offer and pursuing a home-based education through PEP.

Prepare for and take AP and CLEP tests.

It's quite possible to earn up to two years of college credit apart from attending the local college or university without having to endure the shortcomings of dual-enrollment.

Prepare well for the SAT and ACT.

Take these tests seriously. Take prep classes. Do practice tests. Taking college entrance examinations is a skill that can be learned. The time and money invested in this will be repaid many times over by reaping the rewards of acceptance into competitive colleges and more scholarship offers.

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