

Career Technical Education: Myths and Facts

Career Technical Education (CTE) is an educational strategy that equips learners with the academic and technical skills they need to be prepared for future careers. Despite a body of research proving myriad benefits of high-quality CTE, the field continues to be dogged by outdated perceptions. These perceptions stem from low-quality programs of years past. Today's CTE delivers **real options** for college and rewarding careers, helps learners **build real-world skills** and **enhances the high school and college experience**.

Myth: Only non-college bound students take CTE classes



Fact: CTE provides a seamless pathway to postsecondary education

- CTE students exceed expectations. In fact, nearly every state reports higher graduation rates for CTE concentrators compared to all students.¹
- The majority of CTE students go to college. **Seventy-eight percent of CTE concentrators enroll in postsecondary education full-time immediately after graduating.** Furthermore, 50 percent of CTE concentrators go on to earn a postsecondary credential or certificate.²
- CTE students have many opportunities to earn college credit in high school through dual and concurrent enrollment. In total, **over 600,000 dual enrollment credits are earned each year in CTE courses**, equaling approximately one-third of all credits earned in high school.³

Myth: CTE is jobs training



Fact: CTE empowers learners to explore multiple career options

- CTE programs of study start broad, cementing the core competencies and knowledge learners must know to be successful within a specific Career Cluster,[®] before providing career pathway and career-specific knowledge and skills.⁴
- CTE allows learners to enhance their education **with hands-on training, mentoring and internships** that build employability skills and expand their professional networks. As a result, learners get a unique advantage and get a leg up on their future careers.
- Students understand the real-world value CTE provides. In a recent national survey, **82 percent of CTE students said they were satisfied with their opportunities to explore different careers of interest**, compared to only 51 percent of non-CTE students.⁵
- And those who do go on to complete a two-year degree through a community or technical college are more likely than students at four-year schools to find their education relevant.⁶

A Program of Study

is a sequence of courses that links secondary and postsecondary education, integrates challenging academic and technical instruction and leads to an industry-recognized credential of value.

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Myth: CTE serves only 'disadvantaged' students



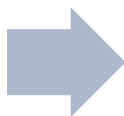
Fact: CTE is for all learners

- CTE has become a standard part of the high school experience. **Eighty-eight percent of high school students take some form of CTE**, making it the norm for just about everyone.⁷
- Contrary to common belief, 33 percent of students in the highest socioeconomic status (SES) quartile took three or more CTE credits, as well as 44 percent of students in the second highest SES quartile.⁸
- Parents of CTE students are more satisfied with the quality of their children's classes, the quality of their teachers and their ability to learn real-world skills compared to parents whose children are not involved in CTE.⁹
- American adults were more likely to agree that two-year public colleges – where CTE is primarily taught at the postsecondary level – prepare learners for success than other types of institutions.¹¹

91%

of parents of CTE students were satisfied with the way CTE helps their students get a leg up on their future careers¹⁰

Myth: CTE doesn't build academic skills



Fact: CTE blends academic and technical skills to enhance the learning experience

- In CTE programs, technical coursework reinforces core academics, enabling learners to strengthen their academic studies with real-world learning.
- In one study, high school students taught using an integrated Math-in-CTE curriculum demonstrated higher math proficiency and higher performance on college placement tests than students receiving a standard CTE curriculum did.¹²
- Additionally, states like **Maine** and **Vermont** are laying the foundation to integrate CTE into competency-based pathways, expanding opportunities for learners to build CTE into their graduation plans.¹³

¹ Represents data from the 2016-17 school year. Retrieved from <https://perkins.ed.gov/pims/DataExplorer/Performance>

² U.S. Department of Education. (2014). National Assessment of Career and Technical Education. Retrieved from http://s3.amazonaws.com/PCRN/docs/NACTE_FinalReport2014.pdf

³ U.S. Department of Education. (2013). *Dual Credit and Exam-Based Courses in U.S. Public High Schools: 2010-11*. Retrieved from <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2013/2013001.pdf>

⁴ Advance CTE. "Programs of Study." Retrieved from <https://careertech.org/programs-study>

⁵ Advance CTE. (2017). *The Value and Promise of Career Technical Education: Results from a National Survey of Parents and Students*. Retrieved from <https://careertech.org/resource/value-and-promise-of-cte-results-from-a-national-survey>

⁶ Gallup & Strada Education Network. (2018). *From College to Life: Relevance and the Value of Higher Education*. Retrieved from <https://stradaeducation.gallup.com/reports/232583/from-college-to-life-part-2.aspx>

⁷ National Center for Education Statistics. (2013). Table H176. Retrieved from <https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/ctes/tables/h176.asp>

⁸ National Research Center for Career and Technical Education. (2012). *A Typology for Understanding the Career and Technical Education Credit-Taking Experience of High School Students*. Retrieved from http://www.nrccte.org/sites/default/files/publication-files/nrccte_cte_typology.pdf

⁹ Advance CTE. (2017). *The Value and Promise of Career Technical Education: Results from a National Survey of Parents and Students*. Retrieved from <https://careertech.org/resource/value-and-promise-of-cte-results-from-a-national-survey>

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ New America. "In-Depth: Varying Degrees." Retrieved from <https://www.newamerica.org/in-depth/varying-degrees/explore-data/>

¹² National Research Center for Career and Technical Education. (2012). *Research Snapshot: Math-in-CTE Study*. Retrieved from http://www.nrccte.org/sites/default/files/publication-files/math_in_cte.pdf

¹³ Achieve and Advance CTE. (2015). *Building A Strong Relationships Between Competency-based Pathways and Career Technical Education*. Retrieved from <https://cte.careertech.org/sites/default/files/CTE-CompetencyBasedPathways.pdf>

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