

CTE RESEARCH BRIEF

A mixed method study entitled Career and Technical Education Pathway Programs, Academic Performance, and the Transition to College and Career conducted by the National Research Center for Career and Technical Education published in May 2007 examined the relationship between student participation in CTE transition programs, transition to college, and performance and retention in postsecondary education and employment. The selected CTE transition programs aimed to provide students with curriculum extending from the secondary to the postsecondary level.

Findings of this study are of interest to CTE teachers, parents and students and include several key areas of academic achievement, preparation for transition from high school to college and/or careers including academic-work skills transfer, clearer career goal and a plan to achieve them.

1. For example under academic achievement CTE students scored significantly higher than their matched non-CTE counterparts on the Reading for Information subtest of the ACT WorkKeys.
2. In addition, CTE students were more likely to have engaged in contextual learning, participated in internships, had a mentor during high school, taken an industry certification exam, and participated in dual credit programs (credit towards college courses).
3. Furthermore, study findings showed that in regard to mathematics, the CTE students progressed significantly further than did the non-CTE-participants.
4. In reference to career paths - CTE students were significantly more likely than non-CTE students to report that high school had provided them with information on college programs and courses that follow high school career paths. To this end CTE students were also significantly more likely than non-CTE students to report having a clear career goal and a plan to achieve their academic goals.
5. Related to academic-work place skill transfer --When asked about a series of skills, CTE students were significantly more likely than their non-CTE counterparts to report that they had developed problem-solving, communication, time management and critical thinking skills that better enabled them to complete research and projects.
6. With respect to continuing their education after high school CTE students were as likely as their matched non-CTE counterparts to enroll in college in the fall following graduation from high school and pursue a career area they had studied in high school.

These findings reveal that CTE programs are preparing their student for transition to college and or career opportunities by equipping students with academic-work preparation skills needed to make a successful transition from high school to college or the job. For a complete look at the study or the executive summary see our link off of our website or go directly to the National Research Center for Career and Technical Education.