

Key Messages on Skills-BUILDER and Non-Completion Success in CTE

CTE practitioners identified the following messages as key take-aways from Peter Bahr and Kathy Booth's keynote on "The Ones that Got Away" at the Spring 2014 CCCAOE Conference.

Risks that need to be addressed:

- The completion agenda doesn't take into account the utility of short-term skills-builder training, which may be an appropriate course of study in some CTE fields, particularly for students with work experience
- Existing funding formulas for educational plans may penalize skills-builder students who create short-term plans, because they are not considered comprehensive educational plans
- Skills-builder students may not be able to enroll because they haven't completed the matriculation process
- Repeatability regulations may prevent students from re-taking classes that have been updated to reflect new skills that are required in the job market, such as software classes
- Students may not be getting credentials they have earned because they have to petition for them

Measuring success:

- The Chancellor's Office needs to document the success of students who take less than 18 units of credit and noncredit CTE
- In order to measure success for missions beyond transfer and associate's degrees, we need additional metrics for CTE such as locally-issued certificates, wage gain, and job retention
- When measuring wage gain, we should capture outcomes for short-term skills-builders who take 6 or more units
- We should document the impact of CTE on the local economy, whether or not students complete community college credentials—employers may be particularly helpful in telling the story of CTE
- Some student successes won't be captured by examining wage data alone, including professions that aren't captured in the unemployment insurance wage database, students who use coursework to keep jobs, and students who are not able to work
- We need to know whether students felt they met their goals

Data concerns:

- Colleges need to ensure they are reporting locally-issued certificates to the Chancellor's Office, as well as examining outcomes for students who get these credentials
- College data that has been reported to MIS may be incorrect, so CTE directors need to examine program outcomes in the LaunchBoard and improve how information is coded and uploaded

- CTE practitioners need to use available data for decision-making and to build a strategic case for their programs
- There needs to be sufficient bandwidth on college campuses to collect data on low-unit CTE students so that they are included in MIS system reporting
- Skills-builders need to be included in the LaunchBoard
- Financial aid is not designed to support skills-building, so students may report other goals in their applications
- We need to identify appropriate milestones for student progress within a semester and make this information immediately available to practitioners, so it can be used to support positive outcomes within the term

Additional data that needs to be collected:

- The CTE Outcomes Survey provides information that is key to understanding the success of CTE students more comprehensively, so the state should consider underwriting the survey for all colleges
- Enable students to identify short-term as well as long-term educational goals in their applications
- Capture information on outcomes for participants in contract education, perhaps by allowing these students to use “challenge by exam” to get credit
- Gather information on outcomes for entrepreneurs who take noncredit courses
- Determine why students who don’t succeed are failing classes and dropping out, so we can better support our equity mission