

High School Career and Technical Education: Relationships with Postsecondary Trajectories and Future Labor Outcomes

By Monica Mean
University of Maryland, Baltimore County

Abstract

Using the High School Longitudinal Study of 2009, this paper examined the relationship between the number of CTE units taken in high school and the pathways students take after high school, and three years after high school, whether the student is employed, how many hours per week they work, and what their annual income is for students who are not attending college at the time. In addition, this paper examined interaction effects by subgroup, community college attendance, and CTE concentrator status, as well as analyses using concentrator status in 12 CTE career clusters. Using regression analyses and propensity score matching, results from the study indicate that students who take more CTE credits in high school have a higher likelihood of attending 2-year colleges and a decreased likelihood of attending 4-year colleges. This is especially the case for African-American and Native American students. Students who take more CTE credits in high school are also more likely to be working full-time three years after high school and for those working at least 30 hours per week, earn higher wages. There does not appear to be an association between CTE credits in high school and number of hours worked per week three years after high school. By and large, CTE concentrator status did not appear to moderate the relationship between the number of CTE credits and the various outcomes. When examining differences among career clusters, however, the manufacturing, architecture, agriculture, and transportation career clusters appear to be the most positively associated with labor outcomes three years after high school. Policy implications and contributions to the literature in the CTE field are discussed.