

Nontraditional Careers in CTE

Definition and Importance of Nontraditional Careers: Defined by the US Department of Labor as those where one gender comprises less than 25% of the workforce. It highlights the need to expose students to these options to broaden their career horizons and break down gender stereotypes.

Strategies for Increasing Nontraditional Enrollment in CTE Programs:

- **Targeted Marketing:** Creating marketing materials showcasing diverse genders, races, and abilities in nontraditional roles.
 - Examples from secondary – [Sunnyside Unified District](#)
 - Examples from postsecondary – [Pima Community College](#) and Yavapai Community College [Commercial #1](#) and [Commercial #2](#)
- **Outreach to Specific Groups:** Deliberately targeting groups like male athletes for sports medicine programs or showcasing females in film and television programs.
- **Professional Branding:** Investing in professional-looking flyers, brochures, and online presence to attract students.
- **Student Ambassadors:** Enlisting nontraditional students as program ambassadors to share their experiences and inspire others.
- **Counselor Training:** Providing [guidance and professional development](#) to career counselors to equip them in advocating for nontraditional career paths.
- **Addressing Retention Challenges:** Acknowledges the challenge of retaining nontraditional students and suggests strategies like
 - **Early Concentration Discussions:** Encouraging nontraditional students to concentrate in their chosen CTE program early on.
 - **Connecting Learning to Career Goals:** Helping students identify their "why" and tailoring learning experiences to their aspirations.
 - **Flexible Communication:** Moving beyond formal office meetings and engaging in conversations about careers within classrooms or common areas.

Key Facts and Ideas:

- CTE enrollment suffers when students fail to consider programs outside of gender norms.
- [Federal CTE Perkins](#) funding requires states to set targets for nontraditional enrollment and completion.
- Resources like [Project C.H.A.N.G.E.'s](#) "Recruitment & Retention of Nontraditional Students" workshop can support educators and counselors.

Important Quotes:

- "Students often have preconceived notions of what is common for each gender to choose as an occupation, but few jobs have requirements that effectively limit employment to only men or women."
- "The purpose of identifying non-traditional options is to foster interest in, and access to, these careers with the goal of opening up these professions to the under-represented gender without stereotyping or unjust restraints."
- "Identifying a WHY for the student early in the programming will also help retention to concentrate. They have a goal and the instructor can help them customize or personalize the learning by working on projects aligned with their goals."

Final Recommendations:

- Implement a comprehensive strategy incorporating the outlined marketing, outreach, and retention techniques.
- Actively engage with resources like [Project C.H.A.N.G.E.](#) and leverage partnerships with organizations focused on nontraditional career development.
- Continuously [analyze enrollment data](#) to measure the effectiveness of implemented strategies and make data-informed adjustments.