



## NONTRADITIONAL BEST PRACTICE

Some schools find it very much easier than others to recruit nontraditional students and see them through to completion. We would like to talk to teachers and administrators working with programs that have high nontraditional completion rates to see if they have recommendations that can help others. We will be contacting people in the New Year based on our evaluation of last year's graduation rates. If you think your program is an example worth studying or if you have advice to offer others, please get in touch with us.

## COMPLETER FOLLOW-UP

CTE administrators should now all have received passwords, via the SSWS dropbox, to view results of the 2010 Completer Follow-Up Survey. If you are an administrator and have not collected your passwords from the dropbox, please call or email to have them resent.

## EMPLOYMENT NEEDS DATA

New occupational employment projections are available for Virginia's LWIAs from the Virginia Employment Commission. Administrators can use these data to prepare new courses, complete local plans, and prepare plans of study. Excel files are available on the [Trailblazers website](#).

We can help you use the projections for program planning. Call or email us. [Trailblazers@virginia.edu](mailto:Trailblazers@virginia.edu) 434-982-5582

## WORKPLACE READINESS SKILLS

CTE has a new list of 21 workplace readiness skills that must be taught in every course. The resources you need to implement this change in the curriculum are online at Virginia's CTE Resource Center website. To view these, click on Verso, then a program area, then a specific course. You will see the skills list and instructional resources for each skill.

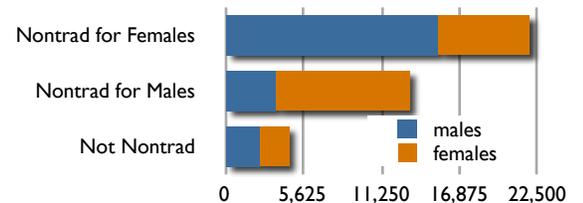
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## Recruiting and Retaining Nontraditional CTE Students Looking For Best Practice In Virginia

In 2010, 39,703 students graduated from high school having completed career and technical education programs. In that year, 95 percent of career and technical education students finished a program and graduated. This is well above the state graduation rate of 80 percent. Seventy-three percent of CTE graduates continued into postsecondary, the majority in four-colleges and most of the remainder in community colleges. This is a great achievement for CTE educators across the state.

CTE Program Completers, SY 2009-10

In addition to moving students through programs and on to graduation, CTE is required by federal Perkins regulations to continually improve the participation and completion rates of students in programs that are nontraditional for their gender. CTE has made progress in this area as well. In 2010, 54 percent of CTE completers were males and 46 percent were females. Students completing programs officially designated *nontraditional for females* were 70 percent male and 30 percent female. Students completing programs officially designated *nontraditional for males* were 27 percent male and 73 percent female. Students completing programs *not designated nontraditional for either gender* were 52 percent male and 48 percent female.



These statewide numbers conceal a huge variation in the percentages of male and female students completing individual programs across the state. For example, Agricultural Business and Technical Design & Illustration (both nontraditional for females) range from 100% female to 100% male. Inversely, Hospitality & Recreation Management and Work & Family Management (nontraditional for males) also range from 100% female to 100% male. There are obviously large differences across the state in the way programs attract and retain nontraditional students.

Beginning in the New Year, we at Trailblazers will be getting in touch with teachers and administrators at some of the schools who graduated significant numbers of nontraditional program completers last year. We want to learn more about how this was done and to see if there are lessons that other schools could learn about how to attract nontraditional students to CTE programs and retain them so that they become completers.

## Career and Technical Education is on target to assist with this serious and growing problem Youth Unemployment

CTE's technically-focused programs, with their high graduation rates, are ideally suited to help address the current, serious youth unemployment problem. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, nationwide, "the share of young people [age 16-24] who were employed in July 2010 was 48.9 percent, the lowest July rate on record for the series, which began in

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## Youth Unemployment (continued)

1948.” We had an unemployment rate of 19 percent in the the youth labor force (that is people 16-24 who are working or looking for work), also the highest rate since 1948. This is twice the unemployment rate for the entire labor force.

Manpower Inc, a global employment firm with a broad interest in employment issues, reminds us that tackling high levels of global youth unemployment is essential to preventing a “lost generation of talent which will harm economic growth and exacerbate social problems.” According to Manpower’s president, David Arkless, “One of the biggest challenges in tackling high youth unemployment is bridging the gap between the skills employers are looking for and what students are actually being equipped with for the workplace by educational programs.” A 2009 OECD report on vocational and educational training attributed the often unsatisfactory student preparation to the difficulty of accurately forecasting the skills that will be in demand in the future. This is a problem that CTE administrators and program planners are acutely aware of.

According to Manpower's fifth annual talent shortage survey, skilled trades are the hardest positions to fill globally. Employers usually have plenty of applicants for these jobs, but even in these difficult economic times have trouble finding applicants with adequate skills. An August 2010 Manpower paper titled "Strategic Migration—A Short-term Solution to the Skilled Trades Shortage" argued that one solution to this skills mismatch is to promote positive attitudes toward skilled trades work among the young as viable career options to pursuing university degrees. "Young people are increasingly shying away from skilled trades work but the stakeholders who rely on skilled labor need to emphasize the appeal of the work," says Arkless. "We need to bring honor back to the skilled trades so students and parents can see it is a potentially lucrative career path with the possibility of owning your own business."

Arkless continues, “The velocity of change in the world of work means it is increasingly difficult to predict where the demand for skills will be in the future, but Manpower advises young people to keep pace with change by continually upskilling, developing "soft" skills such as intellectual curiosity, empathy and strong communication skills, embracing lifelong learning and taking a pro-active approach to their own career development.”

Virginia’s career and technical educators strive to do exactly what Arkless recommends. Administrators remove subject areas when they are no longer in demand and introduce new programs that are needed in the workforce. Program content is evaluated and continually updated. And just this year, an extensive revision has been made of the workplace readiness skills component of each CTE course. Twenty one skills, including the soft skills that Arkless emphasizes, are taught and individually evaluated in each course, and a new statewide workplace readiness skills assessment is in the works for spring 2011. This may help explain why CTE completers have a high rate of continuing to postsecondary, and why CTE students in the labor force report such a low unemployment rate. Only 6 percent of 2009 completers reported themselves as unemployed in spring 2010, far less than the nationwide youth unemployment rate of 19 percent.

### The top 10 jobs that employers are having difficulty filling

United States	Worldwide
1. Skilled Trades	1. Skilled Trades
2. Sales Representatives	2. Sales Representatives
3. Nurses	3. Technicians
4. Technicians	4. Engineers
5. Drivers	5. Accounting & Finance Staff
6. Restaurant & Hotel Staff	6. Production Operators
7. Management/Executives	7. Secretaries & Office Support Staff
8. Engineers	8. Management/Executives
9. Mechanics	9. Drivers
10. Customer Service	10. Laborers

Source: 2010 Talent Shortage Survey, Manpower

Source: Manpower. Press Release, Dec. 3. 2010. <http://www.manpower.com/investors/releasedetail.cfm?releaseid=534809>

Manpower "Strategic Migration—A Short-term Solution to the Skilled Trades Shortage." August 2010.

Manpower. “Supply/Demand. 2010 Talent Shortage Survey Results.” May 2010.

US Bureau of Labor Statistics. “Employment and Unemployment Among Youth Summary Summer 2010.” Economic News Release, August 27, 2010. <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/youth.nr0.htm>