

K12-Community College

CTE Pathway Crosswalk Enrollment Tool

What is the issue?

Presently, the manner and systems whereby graduating high school students can determine how to continue their CTE pathway studies at the community college level is, with some exceptions, marginal at best. They, their parents and their counselors are poorly informed of the options available.

What does this tool do?

The K12-Community College CTE Crosswalk Enrollment Tool identifies all the CTE pathways in the Orange County high schools and aligns them to their possible pathway matches in Orange County's ten community colleges.

Who is developing this tool?

The very first iteration of the crosswalk was developed in 2016 by the Centers of Excellence, the data technical assistance providers for the California Community College 'Doing What Matters' framework.

At the request of the Community College Chancellor's Office and Kathy Booth of WestEd, this effort was revitalized starting in January 2017. The OC Pathways and Orange County Dept. of Education, under the leadership of Amy Kaufman, Executive Director for OC Pathway accepted this challenge and tasked Steven Glycer, Consultant for Workforce Development to lead this effort. The OC Pathways and OCDE provided the funding for this phase of the project. Both the California Department of Education and the California Community College Chancellor's Office are informed and supportive of this initiative. Since the basic crosswalk is now complete, the project is ready to enter Phase III, implementation. It is hoped that the deans of Orange County select this proposal from be among those submitted for Strong Workforce Round 2 regional funding.

How is the alignment done?

In K12, CTE pathways are organized into 15 industry sectors such as Business & Finance or Marketing, Sales and Service. These are further broken down into 58 specific pathways such as Child Development, Animal Science or Game Design and Integration. All CTE courses in a sequence at a school site are assigned into a specific pathway. Each of these pathways is assigned a code number. For example, the Game Design pathway is assigned Code 114.

In the community colleges, they organize their CTE programs by TOP codes. TOP stands for Taxonomy of Programs. These are six digit codes. The first two digits are like the 15 industry sectors in K12. They are broad, such as Information Technology or Health. The next four digits are similar to the K12 pathway codes. So for example, in TOP code 06 – Media and Communications, the four digit TOP code 0602 is Journalism, 0604 is Radio and Television, etc.

Are these exact matches?

No. We believe that career development in the K12 world is foundational. This is where students are beginning to explore what they want to do with their lives. But knowing exactly what that will finally be occurs later in their education career.

It is in the college world that students dive deeper into careers. So the foundational high school pathway may have a variety of possible college pathways to branch into. Thus this crosswalk was designed to go from the specific to the broad. For example a student in the K12 pathway 196 – Biotechnology might consider continuing their career development into TOP Code 0403 –

Biotechnology and Biomedical Tech or TOP Code 0934, Electronics (Biomedical Instrument) or TOP Code 1201 – Health Occupations, General.

How did you decide what matched what?

All of the K12 pathway codes have a program descriptor. This is a short one, two or three paragraph description of what this pathway covers and prepares a student for. In the TOP Codes, the descriptors are not as extensive but do provide a good enough description to allow us to perform a match.

How might this tool be used?

For K12 districts to receive federal Perkins funding, all districts must identify and report their CTE programs by pathway codes. This is very useful, as all CTE courses must be placed into state standardized buckets.

To measure the success of CTE programs, a system is now included in all student information systems that identify when a student completes two courses in a pathway sequence. This is an important technical advancement, as it can be used to auto-generate a message to the student, his/her parents, counselor and pathway teacher.

How this message is delivered, is it paper or electronic, is it sent out via text message, is it available on a smart phone, home computer, etc. is all in development. In Orange County, all districts use the Aeries Student Information System. Discussions have been held with Aeries about collaborating in using the Crosswalk tool with their system. Aeries sees such collaboration as a significant enhancement to their service and has agreed to engage in its development.

How will the community college part of the tool be enhanced?

As a student, parent or counselor is informed of the possible opportunities for further education, what will be shared with them has a broad range of possibilities. But almost all want to know the answers to these eight key questions.

1. What are my career options?
2. What are the paths to those options?
3. Where are these programs located in OC?
4. What will I need to take?
5. How long will it take?
6. How much will it cost?
7. How much financial aid can I get?
8. Will my credits transfer?

We have also been in discussions with a developer of a smart phone app called “Here to Career”. This is a joint effort of the Young Invincibles organization and the Foundation for the Community Colleges. The app was designed to give answers to some of these key questions, but delivered in a way that today’s millennials respond to, social media. We see that their work can be closely connected to the Crosswalk alert system combining the strengths of both efforts.

Beyond this, we are confident that other strategies and collaborations will develop. There are other data and strategic planning tools beyond Here to Career in which the CTE Pathway Crosswalk tool might well integrate into. These might include such tools as MyPath, MyBestBets, California College Guidance Systems, etc.

And finally there is a tight alignment with the state and national Guided Pathways movement. These include the newly funded \$150M Guided Pathways initiative of the Chancellor’s Office as well as the national effort of the AACC.