

# National Research Center for Career and Technical Education

**Programs of Study Seminar**  
**March 9, 2010**



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# Introducing our four NRCCTE projects on Programs of Study



## Mature Programs of Study: A Longitudinal Analysis

Revisits 19 calls for states to facilitate the formation of partnerships between secondary and postsecondary education to ease program of study (POS) A POS must include rigorous academic and CTE content organized in a coordinated progression of courses that align secondary with postsecondary education in a single career field and lead to a postsecondary degree or industry certification. This project is one of three Center studies that seek to learn more about how to organize POS to meet the needs of students, parents, schools, and communities.

and postsecondary partners in each of three mature POS. Interviews and focus groups are being conducted with program stakeholders (administrators, teachers, parents, and students) and quantitative data are used to analyze the long-term outcomes of a year period for two cohorts of students transitioning from secondary to postsecondary levels in the POS. Analysis will employ multiple methods to identify the key factors contributing to successful student outcomes.

### Site Selection

POS appear new language for the field, but the basic concepts underlying them have been part of education reform for some time. Consequently, there are many schools or districts that were operating POS well prior to the visit to other different states (e.g., Tech Prep).

From a broad request of sites recommended by CTE state directors, ACT staff researchers, and others involved in POS-related CTE efforts (e.g., the League of Innovation's College and Career Teachers Network) and considered for participation in the study. Center researchers

Selected Mature Programs of Study Sites	
MASSACHUSETTS "New College"	CONNECTICUT "Innovation Network"
MISSOURI "Northwest College"	LOUISIANA "Antenna Technology Learning Hub"

RESEARCH DESIGN OF STUDY SELECTION	
• Statewide	• In-state
• High school	• Postsecondary
• Career-oriented	• Technical
• Long-term	• Short-term
• High school	• Postsecondary



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## A Longitudinal Study of the South Carolina Personal Pathways to Success Initiative

Revisits 19 calls for states to facilitate the formation of partnerships between secondary and postsecondary education to ease program of study (POS). A POS must include rigorous academic and CTE content organized in a coordinated progression of courses that align secondary with postsecondary education in a particular career field and lead to a postsecondary degree or industry certification. This project is one of three Center studies that seek to learn more about how to organize POS to meet the needs of students, parents, schools, and communities, and the impact of POS on student outcomes.

identified eight sites for initial scoring site visits. The three assemblies chosen for this study (all had been in existence for several years and had evidence of students moving from a secondary CTE program into postsecondary CTE programs in a particular career field) had the most developed POS. The other two sites had developed POS but partnerships were in the early stages and had recently adopted the POS language. The following are the features of the site and the POS selected for longitudinal study:

South Carolina Education and Economic Development Act (SEEDA), enacted in 2005, is intended to improve student achievement and preparation for postsecondary education and high skill, high wage jobs through three on-career assessment and evaluation of students and the creation of a credit bank system for high school students. CTE content is one of the core requirements of the state's diploma award elements needed to support and sustain the maintenance of POS. There is no career assessment for high school students. The organization of high school courses and credit bank fees were developed per school, as evidenced by a school's course catalog and high school diploma.

South Carolina is currently under the state's first POS initiative. The Center research team sought to select a school from different regions of the state that varied in community resources and the level

of facility of implementation of the state policy. Eight carefully chosen high schools from three regions of the state were selected for this study. These schools were carefully selected from three of the state's divisions in order to maximize and represent a diverse mix of community resources, level of POS implementation, track one and two implementation options. These eight schools from each of the three divisions of the state are being followed during the study period.

Center researchers made only one observation of each site to understand the status of the school. Because follow-up for the project began in early 2009, observations occurred before any implementation.

The study employs mixed methods through the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data from study participants primarily at the secondary level. Indicators of program implementation, including implementation, program outcomes, and student outcomes, are collected through a series of data collection instruments. The study's mixed methods approach will help measure the impact of POS on student outcomes, teachers, schools, and POS.

What is a school that can serve as a model for the development of career pathways and POS? All South Carolina high schools are required to implement career education, either through High School Technical Program (HSTP) as a state model



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## Rigorous Tests of Student Outcomes in CTE Programs of Study

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## Technical Assistance Academy: Green-Focused Programs of Study

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Current Project

## Mature Programs of Study: A Longitudinal Analysis

**Corinne Alfeld**, Academy for Educational Development, Principal Investigator

[www.nrccte.org](http://www.nrccte.org)

Current Project



## A Longitudinal Study of the South Carolina Personal Pathways to Success Initiative

**Cathy Hammond**, National Dropout Prevention Center,  
Clemson University

**Sam Drew and Jay Smink**, co-Principal Investigators

[www.nrccte.org](http://www.nrccte.org)

**NRC** CTE  
National Research  
Center for Career and  
Technical Education

Current Project

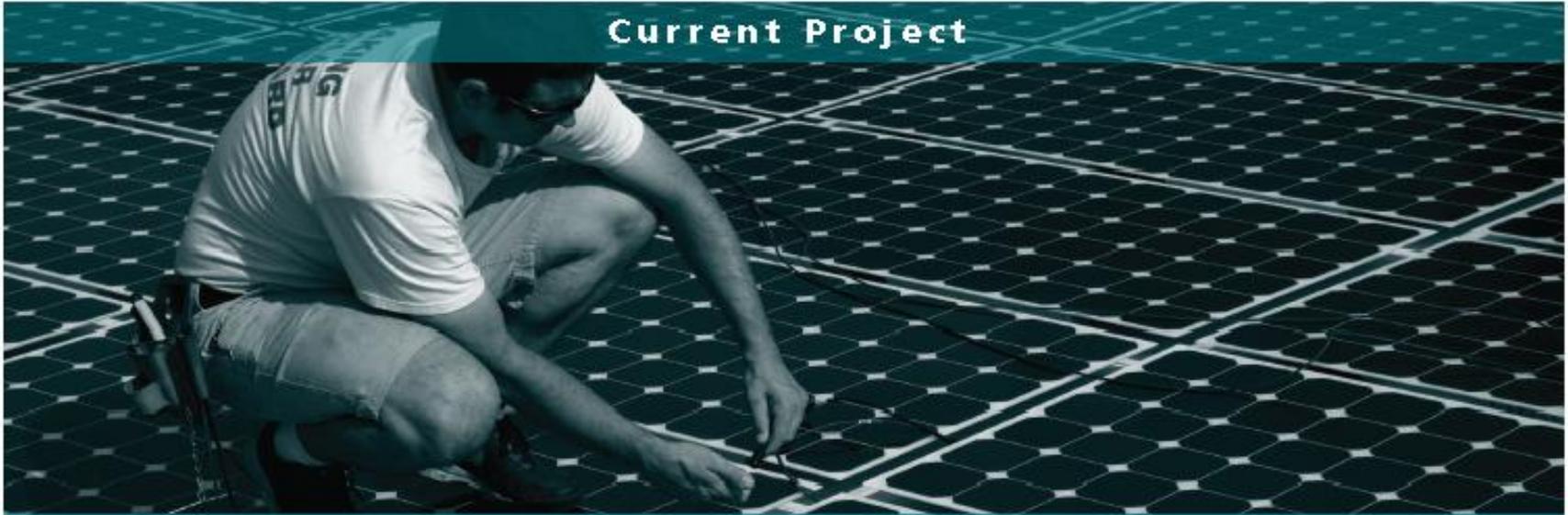


**Rigorous Tests of Student  
Outcomes in CTE Programs of Study**

**Kirsten Sundell, NRCCTE, Co-Principal Investigator**  
**Marisa Castellano, NRCCTE, Co-Principal Investigator**

[www.nrccte.org](http://www.nrccte.org)

Current Project



## Technical Assistance Academy: Green-Focused Programs of Study

**Ivan Charner**, Academy for Educational Development,  
Project Director

[www.nrccte.org](http://www.nrccte.org)

# Perkins IV – Programs of Study

- State approved programs, which may be adopted by local education agencies and postsecondary institutions to be offered as an option to students when planning for and completing future coursework, for career and technical content areas.

# Perkins IV – Programs of Study

- Incorporate secondary education and postsecondary education elements and include:
- coherent and rigorous content aligned with challenging academic standards and relevant career and technical content;
- in a coordinated, non-duplicative progression of courses that align secondary education with postsecondary education
- . . . to adequately prepare students to succeed in postsecondary education;

# Perkins IV – Programs of Study

- May include the opportunity for secondary education students to participate in dual or concurrent enrollment programs or other ways to acquire postsecondary education credits;
- Lead to an industry-recognized credential or certificate at the postsecondary level, or an associate or baccalaureate degree.

# Evolving Components of POS

- Legislation and Policies
- Partnerships among Education, Business, and Other Community Stakeholders
- Sustainable Leadership and Shared Planning
- Rigorous Academic and Technical Standards Aligned with Curriculum and Assessments
- Aligned Secondary and Postsecondary Education Elements
- Credit Transfer Agreements
- Accountability and Evaluation Criteria
- Guidance, Counseling and Advisement
- Professional development
- Innovative Teaching and Learning Strategies

# PROGRAM OF STUDY DESIGN FRAMEWORK

*"A program of study is a comprehensive, structured approach for delivering academic and career and technical education to prepare students for postsecondary education and career success."* - Operational definition

Legislation and Policies

## SECONDARY LEVEL

College and Career Readiness Standards

Guidance and Counseling

Course Sequences

Credit Transfer Agreements

Course Sequences

Career Advisement

Teaching and Learning Strategies

Technical Skills Assessments

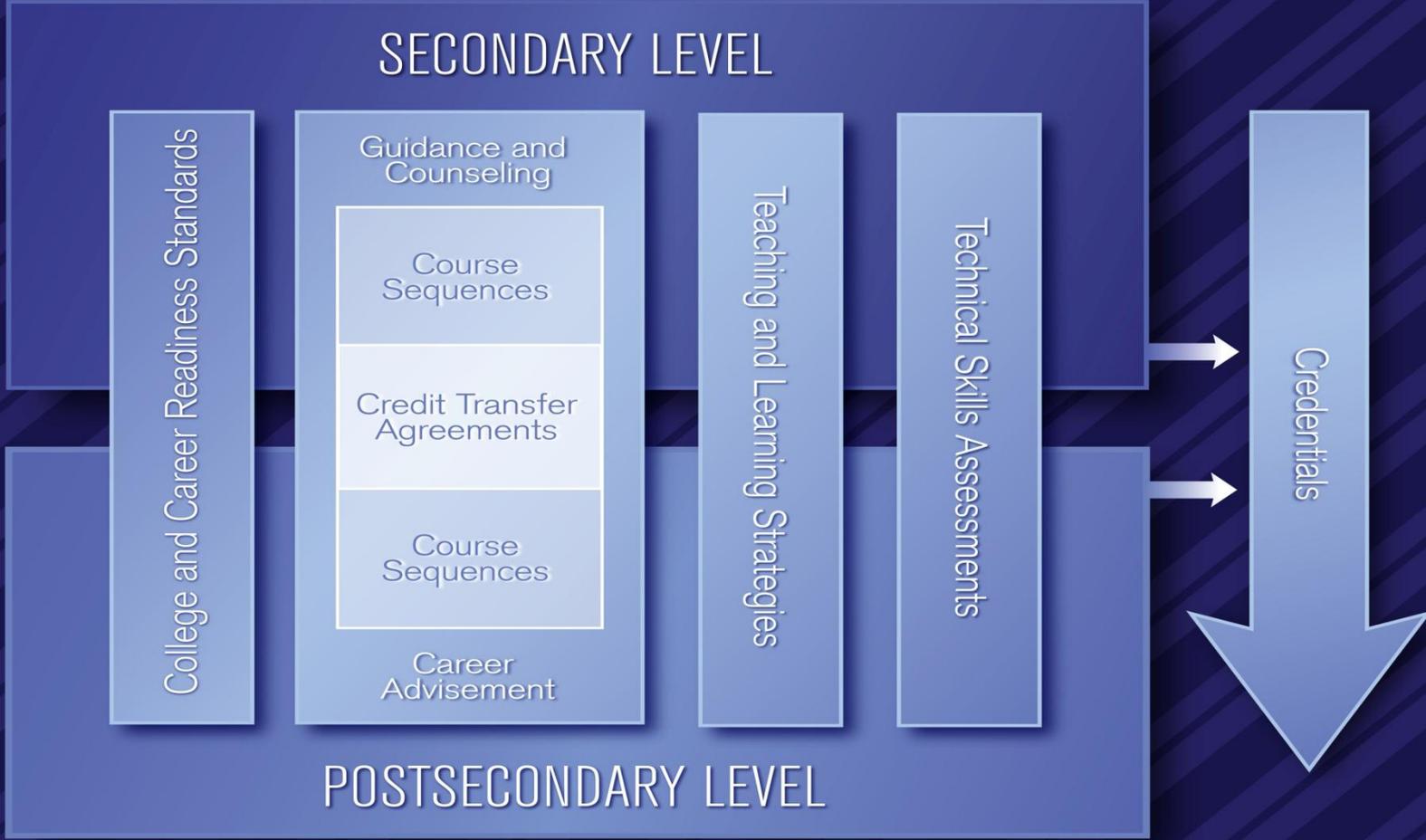
Credentials

Accountability and Evaluation Systems

## POSTSECONDARY LEVEL

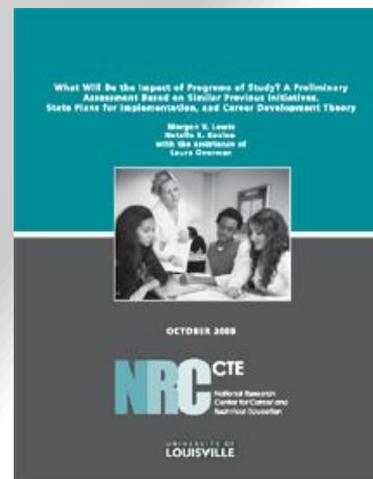
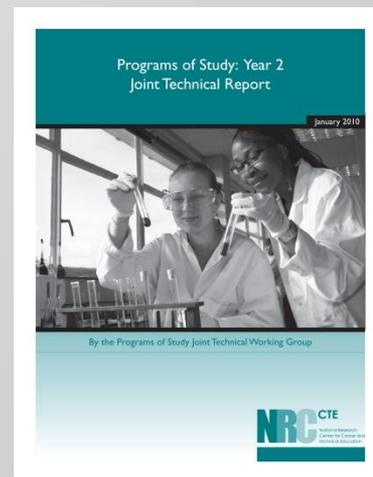
Professional Development

Partnerships



# NRCCTE Reports:

- Programs of Study Joint Technical Working Group. (2010, January). *Programs of study: Year 2 joint technical report.*
- Lewis, M. V., & Kosine, N. R. (with Overman, L.). (2008, October). *What will be the impact of programs of study? A preliminary assessment based on similar previous initiatives, state plans for implementation, and career development theory.*



# Questions

- **How did the state or district decide which POS to develop?**
- **From a more conceptual perspective, are POS seen in the context of occupational/workforce development or as an alternative college preparation pathway?**

# Questions

- What do you see as the driving force behind the design?
- How have districts or states defined the “end game?” For example, the legislation mentions industry-recognized credentials or certificates and traditional college degrees. How targeted or general is the POS goal?
- What role does business and industry play in this process?

# Questions

- **What does a POS look like to the high school partner?**
- **What does a POS look like to the postsecondary partner?**

# Questions

## *Evaluation*

- **First, how are POS students being identified and what kind of measures are being used to assess the impact of POS (e.g., grades, credit acquisition)?**
- **Second, how would you assess the level of support for POS, both within the schools and colleges as well as in the community, among parents, and in the business community?**

# Questions

- **If we are expecting teachers to behave in different ways (e.g., deliver their curricula consistent with a POS approach), we might assume that we need to provide professional development. What kinds of professional development are your schools, districts, and colleges providing?**

# Thank you for joining us.

For additional information on the Center's research and technical assistance activities related to Programs of Study, including related research reports, podcasts, videos, and webinars, please visit our website:

[www.nrccte.org](http://www.nrccte.org)

A video of this seminar and an archived version of the webinar will be placed on the website. To receive a notice of their availability, please subscribe to our mailing list by emailing [nrccte@louisville.edu](mailto:nrccte@louisville.edu).