



SUCCESS STORY

# Using YouScience to boost CTE enrollment

The Southern Oregon Education Service District (SOESD) serves 13 school districts across three counties. In little over a year, it used YouScience Discovery to drive enrollment in its career and technical education (CTE) programs up to 160%.



# Discovering education-to-career gaps

SOESD wanted to ensure that its CTE programs had full enrollment, while aligning the programs and classes offered with actual local economic data and job needs. At any given time, participation in its CTE programs was only around 60%.

The district researched in-demand jobs in Oregon. It then compared its findings with the career pathways and programs offered by the region's high schools to discover any gaps.

"We wanted to know if there were programs that we should be building up to meet wage demands in southern Oregon," said Karla Clark, CC4A/STEAM project manager, SOESD.

"We looked at the various parts of our CTE programs to find all the ways we could provide exposure and opportunities for students to learn the skills that prepare them for their career paths?" Clark said.

Data showed that the top jobs in the area were in the advanced manufacturing, IT, healthcare, construction, and transportation industries. They also found a strong need for truck drivers.

Area schools offered CTE programs that covered transportation in depth, such as driving, diesel tech, and transportation tech. Advanced manufacturing skills were also in high demand and widely supported by the region's high schools. But, despite the high number of jobs in healthcare and construction, the district had limited CTE programs for them.

"We knew we had a bunch of advanced manufacturing programs at high schools, but we were missing critical pathway programs for fields like healthcare and construction, Clark said.

Based on the findings, SOESD wanted to create opportunities in regional high schools for students interested in healthcare and construction. It needed a way to gauge student interest to know which CTE programs to offer to match the community's economic needs.

## SOESD at a glance

- **Southern Oregon Education Service District (SOESD)**  
Serves 13 school districts, 3,500 teachers, and 52,000 students for Oregon's Jackson, Josephine, and Klamath counties—a 10,600 square-mile area
- **Henley High School, Klamath Falls, OR**  
Grades 9–12  
Students enrolled: 600–700
- **Henley Middle School, Klamath Falls, Or**  
Grades 7–8  
Students enrolled: 350+

## Challenges

- Increasing enrollment in schools' CTE programs
- Getting schools to participate in ODE's CTE pilot program

## Solution

- YouScience Discovery

## Results

- CTE enrollments increased nearly 160% in little over a year
- Schools participating in the pilot program grew from 25 to 180

# Filling the gaps with aptitude-based career guidance

The Oregon Department of Education (ODE) launched a pilot program using the YouScience Discovery aptitude-based career guidance assessment. The pilot made funds available to schools and was initially rolled out to 25 middle

schools across five regions in the state. By fall of the next year, the total number of participating schools reached 180.

SOESD used the pilot in its schools to help drive enrollment and close gaps in its CTE programs. It tested YouScience Discovery and other technology programs in seven schools across three counties.

“We were already starting to deploy tools in our region to find out how to provide additional career awareness and exploration,” Clark said. “YouScience just seemed to fit with what we were doing and gave us something we could expand on.”

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— Karla Clark, CC4A/STEAM project manager, Southern Oregon Education Service District (SOESD)

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YouScience Discovery uses brain-game like exercises to uncover aptitudes and matching best-fit careers and education pathways, including CTE classes.

Before deploying Discovery for students, Clark insisted that administrators and educators take it themselves. That helped educators understand what YouScience Discovery has to offer and share the benefits with students.

“I insisted on educators taking the assessment themselves, Clark said. “Knowing how you felt before and after and knowing what you experienced, how would it be best to implement this? By taking it, they’re able to answer those questions for students.”

After administrators and educators took the assessment, the results highlighted their talents, skills, and interests, provided them with descriptions about those areas, and listed potential career possibilities that fit those attributes. Then, they were ready to share Discovery with schools and students.

## CTE enrollments up across the board

Schools participating in SOESD’s program saw success with Discovery. Particularly Henley High School and Henley Middle School, located in Klamath Falls, Oregon. The high school’s CTE enrollment was down in all grades due to the COVID pandemic, and administrators wanted to increase the number of students participating in CTE.

Adam Randall, CTE coordinator for Henley High School, decided to meet with eighth graders to recruit them for his school’s programs when they became freshmen the following year. He used YouScience Discovery to help them plot their paths forward during their high school years.

“We met individually with each student and we can say ‘here’s what you’re good at and here’s what you’re interested in,’” said Randall. “So when the counselors come in, they can say ‘here are all the entry-level freshman classes you should sign up for and in this order, based on your aptitudes and interests.’”

Before COVID, some classes were at almost full capacity, while others hovered around 30–40%. Now, after Randall’s efforts with middle schoolers, most of the high school’s entry-level classes are close to capacity. Some reached nearly 200% enrollment — up to a 160% increase.

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**200% enrollment in some CTE classes with YouScience Discovery.**

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Discovery also helps Henley’s high school students discover more about themselves while introducing them to potential careers. Seniors spend the first two days taking the aptitude assessment. They spend the next two days meeting individually with educators to discuss their results.



“We’re actually running this high-quality senior seminar class that helps get them on a path to that job or that career,” Randall said. “Now they know what the next step is, whether it’s confirming what their next step was going to be, or first time in their lives, actually thinking about it. It’s been really powerful for us to use YouScience to do that.”

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— Adam Randall, CTE Coordinator, Henley High School

The senior seminars also give students the opportunity to explore their aptitudes in different areas, even some that they may not have considered before.

“I’d say that for 50% of our seniors, this is a huge sigh of relief. It’s what they’ve always wanted to do

someday, whether they wanted to go to college or trade school or directly into the job force,” Randall said. “YouScience confirmed that I’m on the right path for that.

“For the other 50%, it was ‘wow, I had no clue I was good in these areas. I had no clue that that was even an option.’”

Discovering new options for careers spans all students and helps create equity in career goals and even in CTE classes.

“One of the things that excites me most is that your aptitude is not determined by the color of your skin, gender, sexuality, or any other demographic that may be used to differentiate you as a person,” Clark said. “Your YouScience assessment shows that you actually have an aptitude for much more. And I think that’s a confidence builder for students.”

With CTE program enrollments up 160%, SOESD plans to continue using YouScience Discovery with all their current schools and expand to any that didn’t take advantage of ODE’s pilot program last year.

