



TEAM Observation Considerations Career and Technical Education

Career and Technical Education (CTE) does more than simply prepare students for careers—it provides students an opportunity to develop specific academic, intellectual, technical, and workplace skills necessary to succeed in career and in life. Observing a CTE classroom provides the opportunity to gather evidence of instructional practice in a setting where student work may look or sound different than a traditional classroom setting.

Research indicates that CTE students:

- Are most attracted to CTE's potential to provide learners with real-world skills that will help them succeed in college and a career.
- Are more confident in future postsecondary degree completion.
- Find CTE a key element in finding and preparing for a career about which they are passionate.

Strong instructional practice leads to improved student outcomes, and CTE classes are no exception. In a CTE classroom, an observer might see students immersed in industry standard content and technology where they solve industry-based problems, interact with industry professionals, or use/produce industry specific texts. In these classrooms, an observer will find intentionally designed programs of study paired with postsecondary and career readiness options. These options may be through Career and Technical Student Organizations, work-based learning and industry credential opportunities, early access to post-secondary credit opportunities, and integrated literacy instruction focused on industry-specific informational and technical texts.

Through the collaborative process of observation, feedback, and support, every teacher can identify areas to improve student learning, and every observer can support a rigorous vision of excellent instruction throughout a school. While this document focuses on CTE-specific connections, the approach to using the TEAM rubric remains the same for any content area.

In this document, you will find information on:

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Observer Considerations: Pre-Conference

The educator’s lesson plan should serve as the foundation for the pre-conference. Using the planning and environment rubrics to guide pre-conference questions helps focus the conversation on student outcomes and provides evidence for instructional practice. Educators should be encouraged to discuss the plan’s components and how that plan supports successful student outcomes. Observers should consider the pre-conference the first stage of collecting evidence of instructional practice.

Possible Pre-Conference Question on Instructional Practice	Planning or Environment Rubric Connection	Instructional Rubric Connection
How do you plan for CTE instruction that addresses the individualized needs of the student while challenging the group? On what data do you base your decisions?	Instructional Plans	Standards and Objectives Motivating Students Presenting Instructional Content Lesson Structure and Pacing Activities and Materials Grouping Students Teacher Content Knowledge Teacher Knowledge of Students
In a CTE classroom, student work is often performance- or project-based. In what ways have you planned for students to demonstrate skills like analysis, drawing conclusions, and interpreting information? How do you use professional-level standards when assessing student progress?	Student Work Assessment	Motivating Students Presenting Instructional Content Activities and Materials Questioning Academic Feedback Teacher Content Knowledge Thinking Problem Solving
What are some techniques you use to establish the environment of your CTE classes? How do you ensure student safety along with equipment safety while students are growing in their skillset?	Expectations Managing Student Behavior Environment Respectful Culture	Motivating Students Lesson Structure and Pacing Questioning Academic Feedback Grouping Students Teacher Content Knowledge Teacher Knowledge of Students

Teacher Considerations: Pre-Conference

During a pre-conference, CTE teachers should be prepared to share the lesson alignment to professional and state standards, the reasoning behind the plans for instruction, larger goals of the instructional plans, considerations for IEP goals, and how student success will be measured.

Considerations for Lesson Plans	Rubric Connections
Alignment and Rigor of Content and Standards	Instructional Plans Assessment Standards and Objectives Teacher Content Knowledge Teacher Knowledge of Students
Instructional Plan	Student Work Lesson Structure and Pacing Questioning Activities and Materials Teacher Content Knowledge Assessment
Instructional Technique	Managing Student Behavior Environment Expectations Motivating Students Presenting Instructional Content Grouping Academic Feedback Presenting Instructional Content Teacher Knowledge of Students
Differentiation/Access Points	Teacher Content Knowledge Teacher Knowledge of Students Questioning Grouping Academic Feedback Expectations Respectful Culture
Student Engagement	Student Work Lesson Structure and Pacing Questioning Teacher Knowledge of Students Thinking Problem Solving

Observer Considerations: Evidence Collection

Evidence for practice performance levels may come from pre-conference conversations, classroom observation, or conversations with the teacher after the observation but prior to the post-conference. In all cases, the observer should seek to understand the teacher's approach to instruction and, more importantly, the students' responses to the instructional practices implemented during instruction. Observers should gather evidence on how the learning lift is managed between the teacher and the students.

Indicator	Possible Evidence
Instructional Plans	Pre-conference notes should provide evidence on how the instruction leverages knowledge acquisition, skill attainment, and/or product development. Notes should reflect how skillfully the teacher articulates each student's knowledge/skill set as they enter the lesson and the unique support planned for each learner. Observers should note how frequently the teacher indicates opportunities for students to reflect and provide/be provided feedback for skill improvement as compared to industry expectations.
Student Work	Pre-conference notes should capture the planned student work, which in CTE classes may be project-based, therefore at multiple stages of completion, or students may be working on completely different projects. Notes should reflect methods planned to support students as they draw conclusions about how accurately they are applying techniques/strategies/skills to meet the desired learning goals. Evidence should reflect how effectively the teacher has planned and aligned the student work to state and professional standards.
Assessment	Pre-conference notes should capture how students are asked to demonstrate mastery of the standard(s). Capture evidence on how skillfully the teacher includes low- or high-tech assessments, cross-disciplinary products, or self-assessments against a professional standard.
Expectations	Observers should seek evidence of opportunities for every student to have successful engagement with both the content and classmates. Seek evidence from grouping in the way the teacher provides support and guides students toward success. Note how effectively students independently manage themselves in the instructional space based on expectations shared by the teacher. Note how aware students are of professional expectations, and how successfully they are progressing toward those expectations.
Managing Student Behavior	Seek information on how students monitor themselves, space, equipment, and safety norms. Note how effectively the teacher interacts with students to ensure progress. Seek evidence of self-directedness through the task and self-monitoring of behavior.
Environment	Seek evidence indicating that students know how to use their space for individual and group work. Capture evidence on student-to-student

	engagement and how students support one another's attempts at progression. Capture evidence of how well students understand the rules of the classroom or workspace and abide by them.
Respectful Culture	Seek evidence on student interactions. Look for the frequency of accurate and useful student-to-student feedback and the level of student-to-student support in all aspects of the activity. Note when students aid or critically support classmates. Note the depth of teacher engagement with various members of the classroom.
Standards and Objectives	Capture evidence of how well students connect the assigned task to broader ideas. Seek evidence of connections between disciplines, enhanced insight, or synthesis of ideas from students. Note how effectively the teacher integrates multiple standards in the daily plan.
Motivating Students	Capture evidence of how often students engage, especially outside of their comfort zone. Seek evidence for how effectively the teacher supports students to see relevance to other parts of their lives, including personal responsibility, creative thinking, and/or decision-making. Capture evidence on how the teacher and/or classmates reinforce and reward individual effort. Capture evidence that indicates the level of student independence and/or interdependence as they engage with their projects and tasks.
Presenting Instructional Content	Note places in the lesson where students can engage in authentic situations to solve problems or face challenges that require a team approach. Note where success is achieved through creative thinking, problem solving, and teamwork. Note how effectively students engage with the teacher during direct instruction and how modeling is used to support student learning. Seek evidence of individual student engagement with the lesson or task.
Lesson Structure and Pacing	Seek evidence for student and teacher awareness of time needed vs. time spent in transitions such as grouping and regrouping for activities and distribution/return of class supplies/equipment. Seek evidence that students are encouraged to assess their own skill set, reflect, and make timely adjustments to ensure successful completion of the objective. Note when CTE students are working with individualized or self-determined timelines for completion.
Activities and Materials	Look for evidence that the tasks are aligned to the rigor of state and professional standards. Seek evidence that students are given multiple ways/opportunities to demonstrate progress toward skill mastery. Seek evidence that students are interacting and providing feedback/support to each other that leads to group improvement. Capture data on the appropriateness of the technology/equipment being used to meet the requirements of the task/project.
Questioning	Capture question and answer sessions between teacher and students for evidence of the question types used. Capture evidence of teacher wait time and purposeful application of student knowledge to answer questions. Capture the types of questions students ask as an indicator of how deeply they understand the topic. Note how the teacher encourages wait time. Note how students ask each other questions through classroom conversation. Seek evidence that students authentically connect to the topic through discussion.

Academic Feedback	Capture evidence of the corrections and adjustments provided by the teacher as well as interactions in which students are supporting each other's improvement. Capture evidence of how the teacher encourages students to provide each other feedback. Capture frequency of feedback, types of feedback, and repetitiveness of the feedback shared. Note if the instructor provides more or different feedback to different teams or individuals. Seek evidence that the feedback aligns to the rigor of the standards. Note when feedback is motivational only.
Grouping Students	Note the composition of the student groups and their applicability to ensuring group and/or individual success. Seek evidence that all students have a role in the group and that the expectations of all roles are met. Note how students engage with each other and if the team members work in tandem to meet the goal of the day's activity. Note how efficiently conflicts are resolved among teammates. Note how effectively whole group time is used to support student progress to the standards.
Teacher Content Knowledge	Capture evidence of how effectively the teacher is adjusting the pace of the lesson to reflect the learners' needs. Seek evidence that the teacher provides opportunities for students to apply insight and use more complex logic to address problems. Note how the teacher challenges the learners but provides support to encourage the learner to risk take, propose solutions, and possibly be incorrect.
Teacher Knowledge of Students	Seek information on how the CCTE teacher supports students not only with academic needs but also social-emotional needs. Seek evidence that the teacher designs lessons that enhance creativity, acceleration, depth, and complexity for each student in the classroom. Note the techniques used by the teacher (and their effectiveness) to ensure each student remains highly engaged.
Thinking	Capture evidence of how successfully students self-analyze their progress and areas of improvement. Seek evidence that students are exploring different ways to accomplish a task for better results. Look for evidence of how effectively a teacher helps students generate alternate strategies to achieve success. Capture evidence around the students' abilities to understand why they might choose one strategy over another to complete their task(s). Seek evidence of how well students can connect the activities of the day to broader concepts. Capture evidence of the specific types of thinking taught by the teacher to promote a deeper understanding of concepts and content.
Problem Solving	Seek evidence of how well a teacher provides students the opportunity to engage in several types of problem solving, which might include students self-identifying non-solutions along with solutions. Note how effectively the teacher supports or allows time for students to use abstract reasoning or encourages drawing conclusions based on evidence.

Observer Considerations: Preparing for the Post-Conference and Using the Performance Level Guide

After the observation, observers should ask clarifying questions as needed **prior** to the post-conference. This opportunity for questions might happen immediately after the observation or occur later after reviewing evidence notes. Questions might include:

- How were the groups created for this lesson, and how often do they change?
- How do you engage students in determining mastery of their own learning?
- What types of individualized support do you include in your classes? How do you determine what strategies to use when?
- How did you select the projects/tasks for the students? How do you involve them in that selection process?
- How do professional standards influence your classroom decisions?

Observers should **always** analyze student work after every lesson in any classroom. For a CTE class, this work might involve reviewing pictures or videos of students in action. Consider:

- Do the activities in which students were engaged assess the standards presented?
- To what extent does the student work provide evidence of individual mastery of the lesson's objectives?
- To what extent does the student work require thinking and/or problem solving?
- How does the educator use the data from student work to inform future lessons?
- How does the teacher capture data on the progression of each student?

Observers should use the Performance Level Guide and appropriate general educator rubric to support alignment of evidence (coding) to scores. Each Performance Level has nuanced differences as described below. This guide helps identify the expertise in implementing the practice. Note that both consistency and impact are considered when determining Performance level.

Performance Level Guide

1	Significantly Below Expectations: A teacher at this level has limited knowledge of the instructional skills, knowledge, and responsibilities described in the rubric and struggles to implement them. The teacher has little to no impact on student outcomes .
2	Below Expectations: A teacher at this level demonstrates some knowledge of the instructional skills, knowledge, and responsibilities described in the rubric but implements them Inconsistently . The teacher’s impact on student outcomes is below expectations .
3	At Expectations: A teacher at this level understands and implements most of the instructional skills, knowledge, and responsibilities described in the rubric. The teacher’s impact on student outcomes meets all expectations .
4	Above Expectations: A teacher at this level comprehends the instructional skills, knowledge, and responsibilities described in the rubric and implements them skillfully and consistently . The teacher makes a strong impact on student outcomes .
5	Significantly Above Expectations: A teacher at this level exemplifies the instructional skills, knowledge, and responsibilities described in the rubric and implements them adeptly and without fail . The teacher meets ambitious teaching and learning goals and makes a significant Impact on student outcomes . Performance at this level should be considered a model of exemplary teaching .

After evidence gathered throughout the observation process has been coded and scored, the observer will **design the post-conference**. This conference should focus on three things:

- Identified areas of reinforcement and refinement.
- Resources for the teacher to use as they hone their refinement area practice.
- A follow-up plan for the leader to support teacher progress and success.

More detailed support for post-conferences may be found in the [Teacher Evaluation Handbook](#).

With additional questions, please contact TEAM.Questions@tn.gov.