



Definition: Career-Technical Education

Developed by the California Industrial and Technology Education Association Foundation

Career-Technical Education is organized educational programs offering sequences of courses directly related to preparing individuals for employment in current or emerging occupations requiring other than a baccalaureate or advanced degree.

These work force preparation programs include subjects in industrial and technology education, business education, agriculture, medical occupations, home economics, and some others. They provide a variety of instructional strategies including competency-based applied learning that contributes to an individual's occupational-specific skills, higher-order reasoning, problem solving skills, and academic knowledge necessary for economic independence as a productive and contributing member of society and prepare participants for both postsecondary education and employment.

The essential test of whether or not a course of study is Career-Technical Education is found in whether or not the course provides entry-level preparation for a career that is essentially technical in nature, and that does not require a postsecondary or advanced degree.

Adopted by CITEA Foundation, June 10, 2006

Commentary and clarifications on page two...





Basis and Context in California

“The job of K-12 education in California must be to insure that all our students graduate with the ability to fulfill their potential, whether that takes them to higher education or directly to their careers.”

(Jack O’Connell, 2004, from the CTE Frameworks, page i)

CITEA Foundation notes that state law requires that the K-12 education system prepare all students for jobs AND for further education. Since there is an extensive academic curriculum in place for preparing students for postsecondary education, CTE shall not and must not be burdened with the academic preparation of students. Exemplary CTE courses and programs will not **teach** academics where they are not an essential part of the body of Technical Education skills and knowledge being learned, rather, CTE will **utilize and reinforce** academics wherever possible without weakening the career preparation goals of the program or course.

Significance

Estimates from both the California Department of Education (CDE) and the California Legislative Analyst’s Office (LAO) indicate that well over two-thirds of the State of California’s student population will proceed directly into the workplace without completing any postsecondary program of study. State law requires that the schools prepare all students for careers. The task of CTE is to insure that every student is prepared for a career when they leave the high school (with or without graduation), so they can become engaged, productive, contributing members of society. Research has shown repeatedly that CTE programs help college bound students as well as those not going to college.

Application of the Definition

- CTE involves the development of both knowledge and skills in the use of materials and processes to create or maintain material products for human consumption
- CTE provides instruction in a sequence of courses that prepare students for careers that can start after high school
- CTE must lead to entry level technical career options after high school
- CTE must lead to identifiable employment opportunities.

Components of Career Technical Education

K-12 Career Technical Education has two principle components:

1. Exploratory and Foundation studies, called “Technology Core” that are taught in grades 6 through 9, and
2. Career-specific studies, that are taught in grades 10-12.

The exploratory and foundations components of CTE have been historically called “Industrial Arts” (now called “Technology Education”. The career-specific studies are largely vocational in intent and design.

In California, the disciplines included within Career Technical Education are at this time (6/06):

- 1) Agriculture Education
- 2) Business & Marketing
- 3) Health Careers Education
- 4) Home Economics
- 5) Industrial & Technology Education

(Calif. Dept of Education, Career Technical Education Unit website, June 2006)

These disciplines match very closely the list of disciplines listed by the US Department of Education.

Instruction in Career Technical Education

Teachers must be able to design and assess curriculum, design, develop, and maintain appropriate shop facilities, interact with professionals in the teaching community and with their own school administration, and maintain working relations with local area professionals in local industries related to the technical field of instruction. Thus, generally, teachers in CTE should have earned the bachelor’s degree, hold appropriate state certification for the field, and have extensive education and /or experience in the appropriate industry sector.

Related Documents

Definition Of Terms & The Structure of CTE (currently under development by the CITEA Foundation, July, 2006)

