



SY25 - Rigor and Red Flags

In CTE courses, students should be building valuable skills such as communication, collaboration, computational thinking, industry skills, and innovation. Students should be engaged in a rigorous and empowered learning environment, using resources effectively, and working through iterative processes.

Quality CTE instruction is not a string of activities tied together under a theme. Rather, it is a set of learning experiences and tasks that guide students in inquiry toward answering a driving question the students selected related to a topic, solving a problem, and meeting the challenge.

FCPS CTE has rubrics and categories that align to the content and skills of our courses but also align with needs of employers.: ***Responsible Citizen, Skilled Professional, Knowledgeable Professional, Problem Solver, Computational Thinker, Professional Communicator***

This document is meant to provide guides and guardrails for CTE instruction in FCPS

Good CTE instruction:

- Lesson starters and closures are used on a regular basis to formalize the learning process.
- Engagement and discussion with entry events and instruction with checkpoints & formative assessments that guide and personalize the learning.
- Encourages innovation - Students are allowed to make some choices about the products to be created, but they are guided by the teacher and depending on age level and experience. Creative thinking is encouraged and valued.
- Assignments include processes for students to use feedback to consider additions and changes that lead to high-quality products.
- Direct instruction provides ‘just-in-time’ learning in context with a project or assignment.
- Project Based Learning is used to allow students to master the material by completing the project.
- Students often refer to lessons or projects weeks or months later because they can clearly connect their learning to real-world situations, which spur students to think and inquire.
- Student choice is evident in both the learning and application process.
- Student feedback is provided by peers and teachers throughout their learning experience.
- Rubrics are used to assess student career readiness

Red Flags:

- The teacher is not using updated materials that are aligned with the course essential curriculum.
- Teacher is not preparing students for the industry certifications related to their pathway
- Teacher attempts to instruct from behind a desk.
- Students walk in and “always get started on their project”
- Using textbooks as the primary means of teaching
- Project is done independently – one student, one project with little or no collaboration
- Students do not know why they are doing the assignment
- Lecture that last the entire class period
- The final product of a project all appear the same
- The bell rings and students walk out of the room without any lesson closure or checkpoint.
- Overuse of plugged activities, where students are “always on the computer.”