

Lessons Learned

□ Every stakeholder needs to have a very clear idea of exactly what their contribution to the project will be, and how it fits into the big picture.

□ Plan, plan, plan! Projects like this are best when they are completely planned well in advance.

□ The “guest lecturer” model of delivering content is most effective for groups which are not pure cohorts.

□ Students need more instruction on, and practice using, using online collaborative tools. □

Students need instruction giving them strategies for working effectively in groups.

Students will include details they feel are important, even when not directed to do so.

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Common Core and CTE: Making it Work



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Common Core and CTE

Common Core and CTE are a natural fit. The real-world application of learning through performance tasks on Common Core assessments is very much akin to the hands-on learning and projects students

Planning projects needs to be done well in advance.



are already familiar with through CTE classes.

Looking forward, perhaps one of the biggest obsta-

cles students and schools face with the implementation of Common Core is the habit of compartmentalization of learning. Students are accustomed to learning something in one class, then promptly forgetting about it when they enter their next class. Students, generally speaking, are not in the habit of transferring knowledge they gain in one class to their other classes.

CTE classes require students to take knowledge gained throughout their educational experience and apply it in real-world applications. If CTE classes make the connections between subjects *explicit*, the CTE model may be the key to solving the problem of compartmentalized learning by pushing students to incorporate learning from multiple subjects as they consider solutions to real-world problems.

Common Core Standards

Common Core Standards are a move toward engaging students in learning that will be meaningful and leave them college-and career-ready when they leave the public K-12 system.

The emphasis in these standards (the standards that have been made available so far, anyhow) is on literacy. This type of literacy is not just the ability to read and write, but the ability to transfer skills and concepts from one subject to the next, where students are able to construct meaning for themselves. This is a type of *life* literacy, wherein students leave school with foundational knowledge and skills that will allow them to successfully adapt to the needs of their world.

The CTE Fit

Since a common CTE focus is on applied learning, CTE classes are uniquely positioned to become leaders in the world of Common Core learning.

By developing cross-curricular projects that require students to *explicitly* gain knowledge in multiple subjects and combine that knowledge to create a solution to a complex problem, CTE classes can



One major component of Common Core: proficiency in technology use

lead the way in preparing students (and teachers) for the types of learning students will be expected to demonstrate on Common Core assessments.

As CTE teachers begin to gain comfort and expertise in these types of projects, so, too, do the students. CTE teachers who are involved in creating and implementing cross-curricular performance-task-type projects put themselves at the forefront of this new approach to testing student knowledge. The students who benefit from these projects gain valuable insight about what it takes to create a solution to a real-world multifaceted problem. Both teachers and students who have been through this experience become valuable resources to the rest of the school, as they are the ones with direct knowledge of how these projects work.

The process of creating cross-curricular projects for students is similar in some regards to the projects the students are going to be asked to do in Common Core: they are outside of what is comfortable and familiar, and they involve incorporating information from a variety of sources.

We expect our students to rise to the challenges we set for them; it is now up to us as educators to jump in and take the lead and rise to the challenge that Common Core has set for all of us.

The best way to get started is to get an idea... and start!