



CTE Language Planning Framework

Clarifying Communication Expectations in Technical Tasks

A Multilingual Lens

Communication in CTE operates across interconnected levels. Intentional clarity at each level strengthens student performance. This framework helps educators identify and plan for the communication expectations embedded within rigorous technical tasks.

Discourse Level Extended explanation, justification, reporting, problem solving	Sentence Level Explaining, comparing, describing cause and effect, giving directions	Word Level Technical vocabulary, precision terms, safety language
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1. The Technical Task

- What is the task students are expected to complete?
- What technical knowledge or skill is being assessed?
- What must students demonstrate to show mastery?

2. Communication Embedded in the Task

- Beyond completing the task, what must students explain, justify, describe, compare, troubleshoot, or report in order to demonstrate understanding?
- Where are students expected to communicate in writing, speech, or interaction?

3. Three Levels of Language

Mountaintop Lens: Start with discourse, then clarify sentence and word-level expectations.

Discourse Level

Discourse level communication reflects how students organize and present their thinking across an entire task or extended explanation.

- What extended communication is required for students to demonstrate mastery?
- Examples may include: Explaining a process from start to finish Reporting out on completed work Troubleshooting reasoning Justifying choices during critique or evaluation
- Where are students expected to communicate at this level in certification, internship, or workplace contexts?

Sentence Level

The patterns students use to explain, compare, and justify.

- What sentence types must students produce to communicate clearly?
- Examples may include: Explaining steps in a process, describing cause and effect, comparing tools or materials, giving precise instructions, justifying decisions, etc
- Have these sentence patterns been modeled and practiced explicitly?

Word Level

Technical and cross-curricular language required for clarity and precision.

- What technical vocabulary, safety terms, or precision language must students understand and use accurately?
- Are there multiple meaning words or discipline specific terms that require explicit clarification?

4. Making Expectations Explicit

- How will communication expectations be modeled during instruction?
- When will students be regularly expected to explain, justify, and communicate their thinking in interaction with others?
- What structures will support meaningful interaction and rehearsal of professional language?

INSTRUCTIONAL INSIGHT

Before teaching a task, script what a strong student explanation would sound like. Notice the vocabulary, sentence patterns, and reasoning embedded in that model.

5. Access and Clarity Check

- Which students may struggle if communication expectations remain implicit?**
Clarity at the discourse, sentence, and word levels increases access to rigorous tasks.
- How can explicit communication expectations strengthen performance for multilingual learners and other students developing academic language?**
Making language visible supports confidence, participation, and precision.

Programs that clarify communication expectations across tasks strengthen consistency, rigor, and student confidence.