

## **CAREER-TECHNICAL ASSESSMENT PROGRAM (C-TAP)**

**Information extracted from Chapter 1 of the *Career-Technical Assessment Program, Teacher Guidebook* Published by WestEd (Permission granted by Kim O’Neill, WestEd)**

WestEd, Assessment and Standards Development Services developed the C-TAP program. The C-TAP program combines three different and complementary performance-based assessments to provide a relatively comprehensive view of student achievement. C-TAP components include portfolio, project, and written scenario assessments, each designed to assess student performance with respect to key standards. These standards include career preparation standards, which are common to all career-technical programs and represent general workplace readiness skills, and industry-specific content standards (e.g., core and career cluster standards) that identify the specific career-technical knowledge and skills to be learned in each career-technical program. The C-TAP assessments also measure student performance with respect to the core academic skills (e.g., reading, mathematics) required for success in specific career-technical fields. All three types of standards are assessed in an integrated format within each C-TAP assessment.

Among their additional benefits, the three C-TAP assessments share these characteristics:

- are meaningful to students and teachers.
- promote self-evaluation and reflection.
- are consistent with academic and career standards.

- provide information useful in making instructional decisions and in evaluating a student's knowledge and accomplishments.
- are directly related to behavior in the workplace.
- focus on what students can do, rather than on what they cannot do.
- accommodate a variety of learning styles.
- assess a wide range of complex tasks.
- are open-ended.
- require students to take a more active, responsible role in their education.

### **Portfolio: Definition and Purpose**

The C-TAP portfolio is a collection of student work that showcases the important career-technical and academic knowledge and skills learned by the student. The C-TAP portfolio is a cumulative assessment, requiring students to produce work over an extended period of time. It helps prepare students for the world of work in three complementary ways:

- Students have the opportunity to master important skills that are meaningful to employers and colleges.
- Students can showcase their best works to potential employers and colleges that request portfolios.
- Students plan and document their accomplishments, as well as identify areas for further improvement.

The C-TAP portfolio has four to five sections, each containing one or more entries:

- **Portfolio Presentation:** In this component, students ready their portfolios for outside reviewers. It includes a title page, table of contents, and a letter of introduction.

- **Career Development Package:** In this component, students develop lifelong, job-searching skills. Whether competing for a job or an educational opportunity, students need to present themselves in the best light. The required pieces of this package are: a letter of recommendation, a resume, and an application for college or employment.
- **Work Samples:** This component is a hands-on example of the students' work, linked directly to required Challenge Standards. Students are required to collect a work sample for each key standard\*\* covered in the course. As the year progresses, students select three or four work samples as examples of their “best” work for the portfolio. Each work sample is accompanied by a written summary. Overall, this section of the portfolio should represent substantial effort on the part of the student and show broad content coverage. Key features that should be shown are as follows: proficiency in the key standards, the ability to reflect and self-evaluate, and effective written communication. \*\* The teacher at the beginning of the course identifies key standards.
- **Writing Sample:** In this component, students demonstrate their ability to conduct research, organize information, and communicate effectively in writing. Students may write about a topic related to their career-technical field or a topic of interest to them. The writing sample: demonstrates understanding of the content area; requires an outline, first draft, and revision; includes a research component and bibliography; and communicates effectively.

Examples of scoring guides for the portfolios from the Teachers Guide follow:

**C-TAP PORTFOLIO SCORING GUIDE  
PART 1: DIMENSIONAL SCORES**

DIMENSIONS	SCORE LEVELS				Score
	1	2	3	4	
<p><b>Content Knowledge</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge of major ideas and concepts in career-technical standards</li> <li>• Coverage of required career-technical standards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shows little or no knowledge of major ideas and concepts related to career-technical standards</li> <li>• Work samples fail to cover the content of required career-technical standards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shows gaps in knowledge of major ideas and concepts related to career-technical standards</li> <li>• Work samples cover some of the content of required career-technical standards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shows adequate (satisfies requirements) knowledge of major ideas and concepts related to career-technical standards</li> <li>• Work samples adequately cover the content of all required career-technical standards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shows superior knowledge of major ideas and concepts related to career-technical standards</li> <li>• Work samples do an excellent job of covering the content of all required career-technical standards</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Application of Content Knowledge and Skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Application of knowledge and skills in career technical standards</li> </ul> <p>See: Work Samples</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates little or no ability to apply content knowledge and skills related to career-technical standards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates some ability to apply content knowledge and skills related to career-technical standards, but with evident weaknesses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates adequate ability to apply content knowledge and skills related to career-technical standards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates superior ability to apply content knowledge and skills related to career-technical standards</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Career Preparation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Career planning</li> <li>• Knowledge of qualities important to an employer</li> </ul> <p>See: Letter of Introduction, Career Development Package, Work Samples</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shows little or no ability to plan and develop a career</li> <li>• Description of own interests, experience, or skills is absent, irrelevant or contrary to employer expectations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shows some ability to plan and develop a career; may exhibit major weakness(es)</li> <li>• Provides some description of own interests, experience, or skills; description may be vague or sketchy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shows adequate ability to plan and develop a career</li> <li>• Provides adequate description of own interests, experience, and skills relevant to employer expectations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shows superior ability to plan and develop a career</li> <li>• Provides excellent description of own interests, experience and skills relevant to employer expectations</li> </ul>	

**C-TAP PORTFOLIO SCORING GUIDE  
PART 1: DIMENSIONAL SCORES (Continued)**

DIMENSIONS	SCORE LEVELS				Score
	1	2	3	4	
<p><b>Self-Evaluation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluation of own skills and quality of work</li> </ul> <p>See: Letter of Introduction, Career Development Package, Work Samples</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides incomplete or no evaluation of own skills and quality of work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides vague or sketchy evaluation of own skills and quality of work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides adequate evaluation of own skills and quality of work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides superior evaluation of own skills and quality of work.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Written Communication</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attention to audience</li> <li>• Use of own ideas</li> <li>• Overall presentation (organization, neatness, completeness)</li> <li>• Language mechanics, sentence structure, and vocabulary</li> </ul> <p>See: all Portfolio Entries</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presents ideas with no awareness of outside reviewer</li> <li>• Many ideas are not the student's own</li> <li>• Overall presentation makes much of the work difficult to understand</li> <li>• Problems with writing style or language mechanics interfere with communication of ideas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presents ideas with little awareness of outside reviewer</li> <li>• Some ideas are not the student's own</li> <li>• Overall presentation makes some of the work difficult to understand</li> <li>• Problems with writing style or language mechanics sometimes interfere with communication of ideas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presents ideas with awareness of outside reviewer</li> <li>• Most ideas are the student's own</li> <li>• Overall presentation makes most of the work easy to understand</li> <li>• Communication of ideas is effective; exhibits only minor language errors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presents ideas clearly with consistent awareness of outside reviewer.</li> <li>• Uses own ideas throughout the portfolio</li> <li>• Overall presentation enhances the work and makes it easy to understand</li> <li>• Communication of ideas is effective; exhibits only minor language errors</li> </ul>	

## C-TAP Portfolio Scoring Guide Part II: Overall (Holistic Score)

Limited	Basic	Proficient	Advanced
Shows little or no content knowledge and application of content knowledge and skills related to the career-technical standard(s); shows little or no ability to prepare for a career; self-evaluation skills are weak; fails to present work effectively.	Shows gaps in content knowledge and/or application of content knowledge and skills related to the career-technical standard(s); shows some ability to prepare for a career, but major weakness(es) may be evident; demonstrates vague or sketchy self-evaluation skills; overall presentation makes some of the work difficult to understand.	Shows adequate* content knowledge and application of knowledge and skills related to the career-technical standard(s); shows adequate ability to prepare for a career; demonstrates adequate self-evaluation skills; overall presentation is organized, making most of the work easy to understand.	Shows superior content knowledge and application of knowledge and skills related to the career-technical standard(s); shows superior ability to prepare for a career; demonstrates superior self-evaluation skills; overall presentation is well-organized and effective, making all of the work easy to understand.

\*adequate = satisfies requirements

Based on your examination of the portfolio entries and the dimensional scores, please review the overall (holistic) score levels described above, and give the portfolio a final, overall score. Please provide a justification for the overall score.

Overall Score: \_\_\_\_\_

Justification: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Student Name and /or ID Number: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_ Evaluator: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Project: Definition and Purpose**

The C-TAP project is a “hands-on” cumulative assessment that requires students to plan, develop, and evaluate a product or event related to their career interests. The project gives students an opportunity to demonstrate important career-technical knowledge and skills, as well as their ability to design and create a product or event over time. Projects often take several weeks or months, or even longer to complete.

The C-TAP project has four parts:

- ❑ Project Plan: An outline of the process a student will go through to develop and complete the project.
- ❑ Evidence of Progress: A minimum of three pieces of evidence showing the student’s progress towards developing the final product.
- ❑ Final Product: An actual product or documentation of a product or event that is the result of the student’s work.
- ❑ Oral Presentation: An oral presentation in which the student describes the project, explains the standards-related knowledge and skills used in the project, evaluates his or her work, and explains what was learned from the project experience.

## **Written Scenario: Definition and Purpose**

The C-TAP written scenario is an on-demand assessment that requires students to respond in writing to a “real-life” problem or situation from their career-technical area. Students must read the scenario, think about possible solutions, organize their thoughts, and propose a solution in writing. The written scenario assessment shows a student’s ability to interpret information, apply knowledge, think critically, and explain ideas clearly.

The C-TAP written scenario is administered in a single class period. Students may be given one or more rehearsal scenarios to prepare for the actual assessment.

## **C-TAP Guidebooks**

There are several guidebooks available for help in implementing the C-TAP assessments:

*Teacher Guidebook:* This *Teacher Guidebook* is divided into four major parts. Part I begins with a “Note to Educators” and an “Introduction to the Career-Technical Assessment Program (C-TAP).” It then addresses general issues related to implementation of the C-TAP assessments, such as logistics, motivation, support, planning, and checking student progress. Parts II, III, and IV contain specific guidelines for implementing each of the three C-TAP assessments (portfolio, project, and written scenario), beginning with the C-TAP portfolio.

*Student Guidebook:* After an introductory section about C-TAP, the *Student Guidebook* contains three parts, each of which describes the specific requirements for an individual C-TAP assessment (portfolio, project, or written scenario). Students are told how to complete each component of the assessment, given samples of student work pertaining to the assessment, and advised on the assessment evaluation criteria.

*Guides to Evaluating Student Work:* In addition to the guidebooks described above, C-TAP offers various guides that present student work completed for the C-TAP assessments (portfolio, project, and written scenario). The student work in each guide has been scored (by dimensions and overall), and includes annotations made by the scorers explaining their reasoning.

If you have questions about C-TAP, please contact:

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Assessment and Standards Development Services  
730 Harrison Street  
San Francisco, CA 94107-1242  
415.565.3000  
[www.WestEd.org](http://www.WestEd.org)

For more information about ordering any of the C-TAP documents, contact Danny Torres at 415.615.3144 or [dtorres@wested.org](mailto:dtorres@wested.org). The information needed to order the guidebooks is provided below.

C-TAP Teacher Guidebook (CTAP-99-01) \$10.00

C-TAP Student Guidebook (CTAP-99-02) \$6.00

It is also possible to order a set of one teacher guidebook and 30 student guidebooks (CTAP-99-03 for \$150.00).

