CBE IN VIRGINIA

According to the 1978-79 Virginia State Plan for Vocational Education, all vocational education programs taught in state-accredited secondary or postsecondary schools must be competency-based. This means that instruction is based on the skills, areas of knowledge, and behaviors (competencies) required of people who fill specific roles or jobs.

DEFINING THE CHARACTERISTICS OF CBE

Competency-based education (CBE) has certain characteristics that differentiate it from traditional instruction.

a. **The competencies included in a program's instruction are role-relevant.** This means that instruction is designed to prepare students to fill successfully those roles required of them as workers, consumers, family members, citizens of the community, and members of a technological society.

b. **CBE is based on research.** In order for instruction to be role-relevant, the competencies included in a vocational program must be based on authoritative research into the work people actually perform on their jobs and in other roles. Competencies identified in national research must be validated at the state and local levels.

c. **CBE is task-oriented, not time-oriented.** In a competency-based program, it is the mastery of a skill, knowledge, or behavior that is important, not the time it takes for a student to learn. The emphasis is on individual pace of learning, and most programs are designed so that students progress from task to task as they demonstrate mastery, not according to an arbitrary schedule.

d. **CBE requires instruction in all domains of learning.** Students must master competencies related to hands-on skills (the psychomotor domain), knowledge areas (the cognitive domain), and behaviors and attitudes (the affective domain) in order to complete a vocational program. This insistence on instruction in all domains of learning is what differentiates education from occupational training, and it recognizes the importance of the development of the total person in the educational process.
To ensure the consistent quality of competency-based Vocational programs in Virginia, the Department of Education has identified the following standards for program implementation.

Standard I. ROLE-RELEVANT COMPETENCIES ARE IDENTIFIED AND STATED.

Requires:  
a. A validated task/competency list for each Vocational program.

b. A performance objective for each validated task/competency.

Standard II. COMPETENCIES ARE SPECIFIED TO STUDENTS PRIOR TO INSTRUCTION.

Requires:  
A system for providing task/competency information to students prior to instruction.

Teachers must tell their students what the competency consists of and how the student's performance will be evaluated. Evaluation information of importance to the student would include:

a. The conditions for evaluation--what tools, materials, supplies, equipment, references, etc., will be provided or allowed; whether the performance is actual or simulated; and where the demonstration will take place.

b. The performance--what the student must actually do--the skill, the knowledge, or the behavior that must be demonstrated.

c. The standard--how well the student must perform.

d. The instrument of evaluation--written test, checklist for instructor or training sponsor observation, manufacturer's directions, or other evaluation material.

Standard III. CRITERION REFERENCED MEASURES ARE USED TO MEASURE ACHIEVEMENT OF COMPETENCIES.
Requires: a. A criterion-referenced measure for each validated task/competency.

b. A testing and evaluation procedure that tests the performance objective and is criterion-based.

Standard IV. A SYSTEM EXISTS FOR DOCUMENTING THE COMPETENCIES ACHIEVED BY EACH STUDENT.

Requires: a. A system that has task/competency records/profiles for student achievement in each vocational program, course, or unit.

b. Task/competency records/profiles should be a part of the students' official school records. This documentation of achievement is important to the student who moves to another school, embarks on a postsecondary education or apprenticeship program, or enters employment.