

# Ideas for Engaging Students in Career and Technical Education (Regardless of Modality)

*Flexibility, inclusivity and relevancy are key to driving engagement in career and technical education (CTE). By using the tips highlighted in this resource, school and district leaders can equip teachers to engage every student in CTE—regardless of instructional modality.*

## Guide instruction with an evidence-based framework.

In many cases, those who teach CTE do not have a “traditional” pedagogical background. They come from a variety of industries, and their expertise drives instruction. To ensure CTE instructors are supported in their roles, K-12 leaders can implement Universal Design for Learning (UDL)—an evidence-based framework that establishes a common language for teaching and learning, without sacrificing the rigor of an effective curriculum.

**Related resource:**

[The UDL Guidelines \(via CAST\)](#) 

## Recognize what’s already working.

Taking a moment to pause and reflect on the strategies that are working well is crucial to driving student engagement—and an invaluable practice for CTE teachers. In addition to building self-efficacy and confidence, CTE teachers can use their findings to enhance activities and bolster their instructional approach.

**Related resource: [Case Study]**

[Bringing Together Different Perspectives to Support Intentional, Inclusive Teaching \(via CAST\)](#) 

## Personalize instruction, provide flexibility.

As with other subjects, there is no “one-size-fits-all” approach to teaching CTE. Students differ markedly in the ways they are engaged and motivated, which requires personalization. With a flexible framework (like UDL) in place, teachers are equipped to deliver instruction that is inclusive and accessible in any environment—whether remote, hybrid or in-person.

**Related resource:**

[Distance Learning Lesson Plans](#) (via ACTE) 

## Emphasize application.

Helping students build employability skills is at the center of CTE. Developing expert learners aligns with career readiness and workforce skills. To provide relevant learning opportunities, CTE teachers should highlight the utility and purpose of what’s being taught—and design inclusive activities that foster creativity, invite self-reflection and allow for active participation.

**Related resource:**

[How UDL Leads to Personalized Learning](#) (via eSchool News) 

## Prioritize accessibility.

Engagement is dependent upon students’ ability to comprehend the information that is being presented. To make CTE instruction accessible, teachers must take the unique needs of each learner into account and provide multiple options for approaching content. Similarly, to ensure all students have an opportunity to demonstrate mastery, CTE teachers can deliver authentic, flexible assessments.

**Related resource:**

[National Center on Accessible Educational Materials](#) (AEM Center at CAST) 

## Address systemic barriers, increase representation.

To foster learning environments that are truly inclusive, it is important that students and teachers are represented in the curriculum. With this in mind, CAST launched the UDL Rising to Equity initiative—a community-driven effort that ensures the UDL Guidelines recognize and respond to the needs of all learners.

[Learn more about UDL Rising to Equity](#) →

## Leverage proven resources.

When CTE teachers have a mix of evidence-based strategies, tools and training at their disposal, they are equipped to adapt and strengthen instruction—and spur student engagement.

**The most engaging CTE classes are those where learning can happen without limits. Discover how CAST supports flexible, inclusive K-12 career exploration and development:**

[Workforce & Career Education at CAST](#) →

