Dr. Lakshmi Mahadevan: Engaging students in the classroom and effectively utilizing instructional time is key to helping all students attaining college and career readiness skills. Following are some essential engagement strategies.

*Open class with informal questions:*

“Did you have a good day?” – Instructor

“Yes” - Class

“Did you have a good time at school?” – Instructor

*Explain the learning objects of class:*

“So I’ll go over appearance, and I’ll also go over responsibility, attitude, integrity, accountability, teamwork, and you will play dress up and do some mock interviews.

*Incorporate realia especially when calling on students to participate.*

“And then we will look at how important it is to look at labels, and to compare labels as to how many calories are in it, how many preservatives are in it. The ingredients itself, what’s in there? (Addressing a student) Can you take the milk and tell me how many servings are in the milk?” – Instructor

*Allow students to provide input by deliberately leaving out content on your PowerPoint, for example.*

Teacher – “What needs to be added to this list?” “It’s not just about being early, but being prepared. What else? Be flexible, especially when working on a team right? You have had to be flexible today. What else? Listen to directions.”

*Recognize and reinforce student participation:*

“It makes perfect sense, what (the student) just said, we wouldn’t want our raw meat to drip down on our… say our cheese”.

*Focus on your students’ needs and use non-verbal expressions to customize instruction:*

Teacher: “I had a group of students that were coming in for the first day and I start teaching them and then I look at them. Look at those students faces, and you can see they feel like… (Makes a bewildered expression)...ok you realize that I am over the top, and you have to figure out how to bring it down to their level and have them understand. So I have had a few mistakes, and I learned how to focus on the participants. How do I say something to make them understand? So, that actually helped me change my plan and be careful to not go over the top again. You don’t want them to feel overwhelmed with too much information or say words ‘I don’t know!’ So you have to think about that. Of course, there are several participants who have
different education backgrounds. Some of them very low, and some of them very high. So the focus is on for the people who have low education backgrounds. I tell people who have the higher level education, you can help them! If you know all that, then great help them! So that helped me think about my lesson plans. Think about that.

Incorporate activities that are specific to specific jobs:

Teacher: “So for today we are going to be making hamburgers. I got this menu off ... again, we are working off the group home menus, so this is something that you would be serving and actually using in your job.”

Ask questions that incorporate connections to previous knowledge

“What do we have to be careful with if we are cooking ground beef?” – Teacher

“Make sure its cooked” – Student

“Why do we have to make sure its cooked? Why is it so important? So if you are cooking a steak versus ground beef, what is the difference? We have gone over this before.” “Is it because the steak is tough?” “Not the toughness, that’s not what I am looking for. So when you cook a steak, you know you can eat it when it is medium rare, right? Something like that where it’s still got some blood on the inside. Hamburgers, can you eat them when there is blood? No. Why? Think about the cut of meat and what the difference is between them. So when you have the ground beef....”

Close class with a preview video:

(Video playing in the background)Teacher: “This one [video] is to help prepare for our next class on ethics. Ok, we’ll talk more about it. Remember what happened today, him exercising when he didn’t want to, and mike being happy even though he didn’t get the recognition that he should have gotten. Thank you very much, I will see you Wednesday.”

Dr. Lakshmi Mahadevan: We also advise that you recommend to IEP or ARD committees that they seek the help of your Center for Independent Living (CIL), especially when dealing with students with significant disabilities. CIL’s are staffed by independent living facilitators, who provide both individualized and group training, focused on post-secondary independent living. These classes can be delivered in conjunction with the regular class curriculum, and involves student’s being transported to the CIL.

CIL Facilitator: “What I do around here in the BVCIL most of the time is one-on-one and classes. So, one-on-one I provide independent living training, like money management, students need to learn money skills, learning accounting with money, recognizing risks, banking accounts, all of that. Cooking, learning how to cook the food, or how to find community resources like a fire station, police station. Also, trauma training. I don’t do that one, trauma training, but other
staff do that. For me, most of the time I teach ASL ...sign language, American Sign Language. Also other classes I teach, arts and crafts, I love arts and crafts, it’s so much fun. A lot of people enjoy doing arts and crafts and also graph work. It’s good for socializing and participation. A lot of people feel comfortable with other people in the classroom because they are all different. They have respect for each other and they actually enjoy it. I actually enjoy teaching them. It is very easy explain step by step so they can understand. A few times they ask for help, and that’s why I am here. I help people to learn to do it so that way in the future they can do it themselves.”

Dr. Lakshmi Mahadevan: We hope that this webcast has given you some ideas on how you can supplement the transitional skills of your students. You can continue your learning on instructional strategies in CTE classrooms by taking one of our online courses or checking out the resources from our library.