# How Active Lessons Build Real-World Skills

The following is an excerpt from our ebook,
*Transforming Learning: A Personalized Approach to Competency-Based Education.*
We invite you to download the entire book by clicking here.

One of the key goals in moving to competency-based education is providing learners with the opportunities to engage in lessons that teach active, real-world skills. And, when transitioning to CBE, it's important that educators go above and beyond simply repackaging old lessons.

Competency-based learning is inherently student-centered, so new assignments should include authentic, real-life experiences. Within this personalized learning ecosystem, students should have the opportunity to demonstrate skills and knowledge mastery on a regular basis. And, research has shown that when assignments include inquiry and project-based learning that emphasize real-world application, students are more motivated, and more successful over the long-term.

So, whether writing assignments for your K-12 students to support their career and college prep, or if you're a higher ed educator with a focus on preparing students for ever-evolving industry, active, engaging lessons are vital to success.

## The Crucial Advantage of Real-World Skills

" In competency-based education, assessments are tied to fundamental concepts and learning outcomes, not a passing or failing grade. When an outcome is missed, a holistic rubric helps pinpoint where a student is experiencing difficulty, allowing educators to adjust their strategies accordingly. In addition, it allows for more than one attempt to achieve mastery—there's no such thing as failure. "

**AJ Dellicicchi**
Chief Technology Officer, Motivis Learning

One way to design active, engaging lessons is to rely on the principles of Understanding by Design, or UbD, an educational design philosophy originally presented by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe, which encourages users to design with the end in mind.

Some of the most successful and innovative companies use these principles to encourage people to make observations that lead to people-centered designs.

| TRADITIONAL EDUCATION | VS | COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION |
|---|---|---|
| time-based | | outcome-based |
| passive learning | | active learning |
| fragmented curriculum | | integrated curriculum |
| isolation | | collaboration |
| textbook-driven | | research-driven |
| teacher-centered | | student-centered |
| print | | multimedia |
| facts & memorization | | high-order thinking |

Begin by reverse engineering and unpacking standards so that unit and lesson designs are focused on measurable outcomes.

- Clearly identify outcomes and explain the evidence required for students to demonstrate content mastery.
- Build a learning plan that details the learning process and, ultimately, how students will demonstrate their learning and understanding.
- Build meaningful assignments that are reflective of real world learning.
- Incorporate student voice into your lessons plans, a critical element to learner success.
- When framing the goals of design and innovation, be sure to include research and factual evidence.

Perhaps one of the most important themes of design thinking is empathy, and genuine thoughtfulness about how others experience your product, service, or teaching. As we move towards blended and agile learning environments, learner experience in our world of education will become an extremely valuable part of assignments, lessons, and units.