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Postsecondary Transitional Curriculum for Students

With Learning Disabilities

by

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A Project Paper

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Abstract

This project focuses on the transitional needs of high school students with learning disabilities who are approaching high school graduation. The years in high school can become very predictable and regimented. Students usually know exactly what to expect as their day is prescribed by bells and set schedules. Once students leave high school they are forced to face the uncertainty of adult life. This transition is challenging for any young person. However, for a student with learning disabilities this pivotal move can be less than successful. A review of the current research shows that these students fall significantly behind their peers in the area of postsecondary employment, education, and independent living. These students often lack the proper life and vocational skills necessary to navigate the labyrinth of adult life. The focus of this project is the creation of transitional curriculum specifically designed with the learning needs of this student population in mind. The areas addressed are Self-Advocacy and Employment. Designed to be implemented in the Resource Specialist Program setting, the goal of this curriculum is to better support and equip these students.

Keywords: "High school transition for students with learning disabilities," "Postsecondary employment", Self-Advocacy", "Transition Curriculum"

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CHAPTER

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Chapter 1- Definition of Problem

Mention high school graduation and feelings of joy, exuberance and pride run through a student's mind. This time of transition from high school to adulthood can be exciting, exhilarating but somewhat frightening as well. College acceptance letters have been received, summer jobs lined up, and travel plans have been made. For graduating high school seniors the future can either be bright and full of anticipation or a time of fear and uncertainty. Often high school students become very comfortable with the predictability of the day in and day out, bell driven routine which starts promptly at 7:30 am and ends at 2:30 pm. With graduation comes the vastness of the real world filled with all its ambiguity, uncertainty and competition. Unfortunately, many students with learning disabilities (LD) lack the proper life and vocational skills necessary to navigate the labyrinth of adult life.

With the current unemployment rate in the U.S at 8.3%, (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012), competition for employment has greatly increased. Now, more than ever, students need to be sufficiently prepared as they leave high school and enter the adult world. While this transition may come easily to some, students with disabilities find themselves at a disadvantage. Knowing that no two students are exactly alike, and that each individual has unique learning needs, according to Choate (2004) students with LD share the following characteristics. They have a reduced rate of knowledge and skill acquisition along with poor retention capabilities. Along with attention difficulties, students with LD have difficulty discriminating important aspects of instruction. They may have expressive and/or receptive language difficulties and decreased self-help skills and adaptability. Students with LD have motivation and task-

persistence problems as well as social skill and problem solving weaknesses (Choate, 2004, p.12). When compared with their peers, students with LD continue to struggle with finding jobs, succeeding in postsecondary education, living independently, accessing transportation and healthcare (Johnson, 2003). This chapter introduces the reader to the Purpose of the Project as well as a Preview of the Current Literature on the state of postsecondary outcomes for students with LD. Likewise, the reader will find a review of the Methodology and the Significance of this Project followed by a list of Definition of Key Terms.

Purpose

The purpose of this project is to address the following questions:

1. In what ways can high school students with learning disabilities benefit from transitional curriculum that is designed specifically for their learning needs?

2. How can this new knowledge and skill base be translated into real life scenarios?

   a. What products can be developed through the implementation of this curriculum that students can take with them as they leave the high school environment?

This project will include the creation of two units of transition curriculum that can be used *in conjunction with* and not in place of, the standard based academic curriculum these students are currently receiving. By creating transition curriculum that focuses in on vocational skills, as well as life skills, the goal of this project is to better equip and prepare these students as they make their way to post school life.

Preview of Literature

Background

    The individualized education program.

    Often, the focal point for high school special education programs is simply to assist students in completing the A-G standard course requirements and attaining a diploma. While this is admirable, students with disabilities need and are legally afforded more direction. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA),1997 (Pub. Law 105-17, 1997), set forth specific requirements mandating that students with disabilities are to have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) drawn up once a year. The IEP is a collaborative document created by teachers, parents, student and any other necessary participant, (i.e. school psychologist, speech pathologist, workability counselor…), and is to include the following; a statement of the student's disability, the extent to which the disability affects the student's progress in the general curriculum; the student's current level of performance, measurable annual goals, services and supports to be provided, as well as accommodations or modifications to be provided by school personnel, (IDEA P.L. 105-17, 1997; Rosenberg, O'Shea & O'Shea, 2006) All members of the IEP team meet at least once a year to discuss the elements of the IEP and make appropriate updates and changes. The IEP must be current and in effect at the beginning of each school year. (Rosenberg, O'Shea & O'Shea, 2006)

    The individualized transition plan.

    A vital part of that IEP is the Individualized Transition Plan (ITP). Initiated no later than age 16, this document acts as a road map of sorts, as it is designed to help the student make the transition from high school to adulthood less daunting. ITP's are required to contain specific measurable goals, action steps and clear responsibility designation to ensure student success

(National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities). A strong ITP should address

employment, education/training, life skills, housing, and community involvement. It should also

integrate various agencies such as the Department of Rehabilitation, Workability, Regional

Center, Social Security Administration, Employment Development, County of Mental health,

and Department of Public Services (Mandlawitz, 2007). The goals on an ITP should be flexible

in nature; ones that can be continuously modified and updated. This should result in a process

oriented rather than an outcome oriented document (Dupoux, 2008). While the creation of a

strong ITP is advantageous, is it enough to carry a student through the transitional process?

Proposal.

With the adoption of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) in 2001, a strong emphasis

has been placed on preparing students, "to achieve at high standards and to pass high school

level academic assessments." (Williams-Diehm & Benz, 2008, p. 4) Additionally, school

districts are held accountable for the "adequate yearly progress" (AYP) of all students, including

students with disabilities. As a result, a greater focus has been made by school personnel to equip

students with LD to pass state standardized tests in core academic subject areas (Bock, 2004).

Rigorous general education academic curriculum places added demands and strain on students

with LD when their cognitive level, background knowledge base, processing speed and

reasoning skills may prevent them from accessing the standard based curriculum. This highly

energized focus leaves little room for any alternative curriculum such as transition or vocational

education (Williams- Diehm & Benz, 2008; Bouck, 2004). I propose that high school students

with LD will benefit not only from the standard based academic curriculum, but *also* from the

knowledge and skills effectively taught through a transition curriculum designed specifically

with their learning needs in mind. I also contend that transition curriculum is the necessary, yet missing component to a holistic and complete high school education for students with LD.

Challenges

Research shows that students with LD continue to lag behind their general education peers in graduation rate, postsecondary employment and postsecondary education enrollment (Blackorby, Wagner, 1996; Williams-Diehm, & Benz, M. 2008). Unfortunately, the dropout rate for students with disabilities is approximately twice that of general education students (Blackorby & Edgar, 1991; Thurow, Sinclair & Johnson, 2002).   Likewise, in 2010 the unemployment rate for persons without disabilities was at 9.4%, while the unemployment rate for persons with disabilities was at 14.8% (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistic, June, 2010). With respect to the enrollment rate for postsecondary education, students with disabilities enrolled at a rate of 19% compared to 40% for students without disabilities. More specifically, with respect to 4 year colleges the findings were more drastic: only 6% as compared to 28%. (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996) Finally, "Students are more likely to drop out of school if they do not see the connection between what they are doing in high school and what they will do after exiting school" (Chambers, Rabren & Dunn, 2009, p. 50). What are the missing factors in the preparation of this student population that bring about such results? Are there supports that we are not offering them that perpetuate the mentioned disparities?   What can be done to avert such drastic inequalities? One suggestion is to better prepare and support our Special Education teachers.

Better Prepare and Support Special Education Teachers

Research reveals that Special Education teachers themselves have admitted to feeling inadequately equipped and supported to offer their students the proper transitional services needed for success (Park, 2008). Problems such as lack of resources and training, role confusion, and lack of flexibility have been cited (Park, 2008). The skill of self-determination is considered as a best practice within the transition process. "Self determination is a concept reflecting the belief that all individuals have the right to direct their own lives" (Johnson, 2003, p. 2). In a study where faculty members at institutions of higher education were surveyed, it was found that within teacher preparation programs, the skill of teaching self-determination had not been included in the instruction of prospective special education teachers (Thoma, Baker, Saddler, 2002). While the skill of self-determination is important, it is just one of several best practices and interventions currently being used to support students with LD.

Interventions, Best Practices and Successful Programs

The U.S. Department of Education and the Division on Career Development and Transition (DCDT) created a list of best practices for which secondary special education teachers should be responsible (U.S. Department of Education National Institute of Education, 2000). Deemed the, "Taxonomy for Transition Programming" the five major categories cited are (a) Student –focused planning, (b) Student development, (c) Interagency Collaboration, (d) Family involvement, and (e) Program structure and policies (Kohler, 1996). To ensure success, a well structured ITP will address these specific areas. Along with the use of effective transition strategies and best practices is the implementation of successful programs throughout the nation. "Career Connection" in Iowa (Nietupski, 2008), and Workability 1 in California (CA Depart. Of

Ed; Workability) are two examples of programs working together with students, families and

staff to train, equip and prepare high school students for post school life.

Preview of Methodology

In 2008 I was hired to jump start a transition program designed for non-diploma bound

students with moderate disabilities. I was given a skeletal curriculum and the directive to work

closely with Workability staff. Our goal was to prepare these students to enter the work place

and to develop their social and life skills. In the two years that I ran that program I learned a lot

and realized the value of such a program. Now that I work exclusively with diploma bound

students with LD, my desire is to create transition curriculum specifically designed for their

needs.

Transitional curriculum addresses postsecondary education, employment and life skills

(Bouck, 2004). The focus of this project is the creation of transition curriculum that can be used

to supplement academic content area curriculum. The primary focus is on the domains of

postsecondary employment and communication (self advocacy / self determination). The overall

unit design for this project is called "Understanding by Design" (UbD), and uses a backward

design method of planning where the final summative assessments are decided upon first and

lessons are planed and designed with the end in sight (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). Using The

Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) model of lesson planning, (Echevarria, Vogt

& Short, 2009), I will write two units of Transition Curriculum that can be used in the Resource

Specialist Program (RSP) classroom. These lessons can be easily delivered while students attend

their Study Skills class. This curriculum is not meant to replace the A-G academic courses, thus

placing students on a "vocational tract," but instead is to be used in conjunction with and compliment to the standard-based curriculum.

Significance of Project

Unlike students with moderate to severe disabilities who have been placed on a non-diploma bound track, students with mild LD do not qualify for continued funded services post high school graduation (Bouck, 2004). While institutions of higher learning will provide students with the assessed necessary accommodations, once out of high school students with LD no longer receive state funded help in job training, job coaching, and aid in applying for employment or independent living arrangements. Therefore the question remains; what can we, as educational specialists, do to better prepare our high school students with mild LD to make this milestone transition? With students who have been designated as having LD making up 50% of all students receiving special educational services, (Bouck, 2004), it stands to reason that a curriculum designed to aid in the transition process is paramount. Currently at the site at which I work, other than services provided by Workability 1 and the functional curriculum provided to non diploma bound students with moderate to severe disabilities, there is no systematic, purposeful transitional curriculum being offered to students with learning disabilities.

Summary

Previous research has documented that youth in special education drop out of school at a higher rate than their peers in general education (Blackorby, Edgar & Kortering, 1991; Blackorby & Wagner, 1996, Thurlow, Sinclair & Johnson 2002). For those who do remain in school and make it to graduation, life beyond high school can be very challenging. The need to

provide strong transitional services to students with learning disabilities who are entering the adult world is vital. This project focuses on the following questions:

1. In what ways can high school students with learning disabilities benefit from transitional curriculum that is designed specifically for their learning needs?

2. How can this new knowledge and skill base be translated into real life scenarios?

    a. What products can be developed through the implementation of this curriculum that students can take with them as they leave the high school environment?

The following chapter will provide a synthesis of peer reviewed literature surrounding the complex aspects of post high school transition made by students with learning disabilities.

Definition of Terms

Authentic Assessment:

As opposed to true/false, multiple choice tests, authentic assessments demonstrate students' knowledge, skills, and understanding through real-world tasks that require students to apply their learning and demonstrate specific skills or competencies (Cohen & Spenciner, 2007). In this project this would be exemplified by an actual job application, reference sheet, resume or mock job interview performance.

Functional Curriculum:

A curriculum that focuses on vocational and independent living skills; with an emphasis on communication and social skills (Bouck & Flanagan, 2010). Functional curriculum is typically designed for non diploma bound students with moderate to severe disabilities.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 1997 (IDEA) P.L 105-17

Expanded on the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (P.L. 94-142). IDEA

added a number of provisions intended to, "improve outcomes for students with disabilities.

IDEA requires that students with disabilities be included in state and district- wide assessments,

that students IEP's address the issue of access to the general education curricula, and that states

establish performance goals and indicators for students with disabilities" (Rosenberg, O'Seha &

O'Shea, 2006, p.37).

Individuals with Disabilities Improvement Education Act, 2004 (IDEIA) P.L 108-446:

"IDEIA, authorized in 2004, is considered the most important legislation supporting children and

youth with disabilities" (Rosenberg, O'Seha & O'Shea, 2006, p 41). IDEIA strengthens the role

of parents, emphasizes the defining of "highly qualified" for special education teachers, solidifies

paraprofessional qualifications… in addition, provides alternative methods for identifying

students with learning disabilities (Choate, 2004; Rosenberg, O'Seha & O'Shea, 2006). IDEIA

provides a framework upon which students with special needs are being educated today.

Individual Educational Program (IEP):

"A written individualized education program that must be prepared for each handicapped child.

The plan must state present levels of educational performance, long and short term goals,

services to be provided, plans for initiating and evaluating services, written statement of needed

transition services, including responsibilities of each public agency. Parents are to participate in

IEP process" (Public Law 94-12). General education as well as special education teachers are

expected to participate in the evaluation and assessment of student performance. Curriculum is to

be differentiated, accommodated and/or modified to ensure proper access. All of this information

is to be specified in the students IEP and carried out in a timely manner (Choate, 2004).

Individual Transitional Plan (ITP):

This is a required portion of a student's IEP that addresses the transition from high school to

postsecondary life. According to IDEA 1997 transition services to be addressed are,

"Coordinated set of activities (a) designed to promote movement from school to post-school

activities, including postsecondary education, vocational training, integrated employment,

continuing and adult education, independent living or community participation; (b) is based on

students' needs and taking into account preferences and interests…" (Public Law 105-17, Sec.

300.29, 1997). Beginning no later than age 16 the ITP is required to contain appropriate

measurable goals, action steps and clear responsibility designation (National Dissemination

Center for Children with Disabilities, 2010).

Learning Disability (LD): Specific Learning Disability (SLD)

Characteristics:

Reduced rate of knowledge and/or skill acquisition as well as poor retention. Difficulty

discerning important portions of instruction, attention difficulties, impulse control, problems in

task persistence and stamina, expressive and/or receptive language difficulties, problem solving

and social skill deficits, difficulty in adapting, decreased self-help skills, atypical or

inappropriate affect (Choate,2004, p.11).

Eligibility basis:

Discrepancy mode**:** Students identified as having learning disabilities have average to above intellectual ability; however on achievement measures do not perform at levels proportionate to their assessed intellectual capability. This difference between a students' IQ test scores and their achievement test scores are referred to as discrepancies (Rosenberg, O'Shea & O'Shea, 2006, p. 6).

Response to Intervention mode**:** All students are provided with multi- tiered, effective instruction / teaching interventions in the general education environment. As these interventions increase in intensity, all student progress is monitored. Those students who, after continuous monitoring, fail to make progress and do not respond to the interventions, may be identified as having learning disabilities and may qualify for special educational services. (Rosenberg, O'Shea & O'Shea, 2006, p. 6) However it should be noted that, "Data from an RTI process cannot be used as the sole determinant of eligibility for special education. Rather, data from an RTI process may be used as one component of the evaluation." (Mandlawitz, 2007, p.80)

Resource Specialist Program (RSP):

Resource Specialist Program (RSP) is a program designed for students requiring 49% or less special education support in order to successfully access the educational curriculum. Primary areas of remediation are: math, reading and written language. Students enrolled in this type of program are diploma bound. (Vista Unified School, n.d.)

Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) Lesson Planning:

The Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) was developed to make content material comprehensible to English Language Learners and can easily be incorporated into the Special Education classroom. These lesson plans include both content and language objectives and a variety of strategies to aid in building background knowledge, vocabulary development and content and language acquisition (Echevarría, Vogt, & Short, 2010).

Study Skills Class:

In Special Education, this is a class designed to offer support for students who take their core academic classes in the general education environment. Study Skills curriculum usually offers lessons in areas such as Cornell note taking, test taking and organizational skills.

Transition Curriculum:

With a direction towards adult outcomes, Transitional Curriculum is made up of academic, career and community based instruction and activities (Kholer & Field, 2003). Transition Curriculum will usually address the following domains: Education, Career, Independent Living, Communication (Self advocacy/Self Determination), Transportation, and Recreation/Leisure (Park, 2008). This is curriculum that focuses on postsecondary education, employment and/or life skills. It typically targets students with mild learning disabilities who plan on and have the ability to go to college.

Chapter 2- Review of Literature

This purpose of this chapter is to review the current body of peer reviewed literature on the variables surrounding the postsecondary transition process made by students with learning disabilities. First addressed will be the unique challenges these students face in the areas of employment, postsecondary education and independent living. Next addressed will be the need to better prepare Special Education teachers to help students meet those challenges, and finally an examination of the best practices currently in place designed to empower and equip this specific portion of the student population. Following is an analysis of researched articles that addresses each of these topics and a synthesis of their findings.

At the forefront of the reviewed literature are the numerical data that unequivocally demonstrate that students with disabilities are employed, attend postsecondary education, and have attained independent living status at a far less degree than that of their peers without disabilities. Another area of similarity in the research is the agreement for the need to better equip these students with the skills of self-determination, self advocacy and goal planning. One final factor of commonality in the literature is the near absence of differentiation in the severity and /or type of disability mentioned within the articles. It is as if the term, "students with disabilities," is used as an umbrella or all encompassing term to include both students with mild-moderate as well as students with moderate-severe disabilities. However, one area of distinction among the articles is that of students who fall on the Autism Spectrum. There are a plethora of articles written on and about students who have this specific disability.

Change is never easy; but it is always necessary. This holds true for children, teens and adults alike. Making the transition from the daily structured life of high school to the unpredictable life of adulthood can be daunting to say the least. While this life change may be

easy for some, students with learning disabilities can find themselves at a disadvantage. The

transition out of high school can be particularly difficult for youth with disabilities who

encounter various challenges negotiating even their current daily schedule.

Challenges

Challenges in the classroom

Students with LD face unique challenges inside the classroom. Students who

qualify for special educational services learn at a slower rate, have difficulty in retention,

and have difficulty in discerning which aspects of instruction are really important

(Choate, 2004). Often these students come to the classroom with limited background

knowledge and/or skill base. It is not unusual for these students to have short attention

spans and therefore difficulties in staying on task. Their inability to remain focused often

translates into higher rates of behavior problems than the general student population at

large (Swanson & Deshler, 2003). As a result of these challenges, students with LD

struggle to maintain at the same pace as their general education peers, thus producing a

large achievement gap (Deshler, 2006). "In short, the majority of adolescents with LD

are ill prepared to succeed in high school and beyond" (Swanson & Deshler, 2003, p.

124).

High drop-out and unemployment rate

Students with disabilities face a unique set of challenges as they make their transition

from the predictability of high school to the ambiguity of adult life. According to the U.S.

Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2010 the unemployment rate for persons without disabilities was at

9.4%, while the unemployment rate for persons with disabilities was at 14.8% (U.S. Bureau of

Labor Statistic, June, 2010). Unfortunately, the dropout rate for students with disabilities is approximately twice that of general education students (Blackorby & Edgar, 1991; Thurow, Sinclair & Johnson, 2002; Thoma, Baker, Saddler, 2002). Continued academic course failure, high credit deficiency due to truancy, lower grade point average and the inability to pass high-stakes tests are just some of the variables cited as reasons for dropping out. (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; Swanson & Deshler, 2003). The outcomes of these tests can be very important for students with LD. In many states they determine whether a student will graduate from high school with a standard diploma or a certificate of completion. Students who have tried and not passed or who see little chance of passing these tests may decide to drop out of school (Thurow, Sinclair & Johnson, 2002). For those students with learning disabilities who do stay in school and graduate find themselves leaving high school ill prepared and ill equipped to face the daily challenges of adult life (Blackorby & Edgar, 1991). In the 1996 National Longitudinal Transition Study (NLTS) of Special Education Students data indicated that youth with disabilities continued to lag behind their general education peers in the areas of employment, wages, postsecondary education and residential independence in their first five years after high school graduation (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996).

Postsecondary outcomes

In an effort to more closely examine the post secondary outcomes of students with and without disabilities a study was conducted by Williams-Diehm and Benz (2008). This research study focused on four major outcome areas: post-secondary education, employment, independent living and leisure. The target population included students graduating from one mid-sized school district from a southern state in May of 2005. These students graduated with a regular high school diploma from both the traditional high school as well as one alternative campus.

The findings of this study support what has previously mentioned in all other studies; high school graduates with disabilities are experiencing poorer postsecondary outcomes than their peers without disabilities (Blackorby & Wagner 1996; Chambers, Rabren, Dunn, 2009). Despite both groups earning a regular diploma, almost half (47%) of graduates with disabilities were unemployed while a third (32%) of graduates without disabilities were unemployed. Likewise over half (54%) of students with disabilities were not attending postsecondary education as compared 26% of their counterparts (Williams-Diehm, Benz, 2008).

In 2001 the National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS-2) reexamined the postsecondary school enrollment rate of youth with and with disabilities. The study found new results with respect to postsecondary education enrollment. Overall, students with disabilities enrolled at a rate of 19% compared to 40% for students without disabilities. More specifically, with respect to 4-year colleges the findings were more drastic: only 6% as compared to 28%. However, on a positive note, there was one very significant difference. The rate of enrollment in two year community colleges for students with LD was similar to that of their general education peers (Wagner, Newman, Cameto, Garza & Levine, 2005). There is no question that portion of the student population is at a disadvantage. So what can be done to better prepare these students for this pivotal transition? The first step is to better prepare and support Special Education teachers on the transitional needs of their students.

Better Prepare and Support Special Education Teachers

It has been said that the best the defense is a good offense. This holds true not only in professional sports and in the military, but in education as well. If we as educators want to defend our students from the post secondary obstacles that continue to plague them, then it

requires that we better equip and prepare our teachers. "Creating an infrastructure that can routinely recruit and prepare teachers effectively and can support successful teaching at scale is the arena in which the United States has lagged the most" (Darling-Hammond, 2010, p. 197). Therefore, investing in teacher training can only improve the post-school outcomes of students with special needs.

In a qualitative study conducted at the University of Manitoba, Canada, six high school Special Education teachers were recruited to participate in the assessment of the transitional services currently available as well as their ability to carry them out (Park, 2008). In this study a distinction was made as to the students' level of disability severity for which these teachers were responsible. Three of the six teachers taught students with mild to moderate disabilities, the other three taught students with moderate to severe disabilities. Once interviewed the author found that several themes emerged. While all the teachers agreed on what was needed to provide successful transitional services, (i.e. student and family involvement, interagency collaboration, functional and comprehensive instruction…), they also cited several barriers to successfully carrying these services out. Through interviews the teachers defined their role as that of a coordinator or manager. Their duties include; (a) coordinating transition services and arranging meetings, (b) informing families on the transition process, (c) developing the skills that students require for adult life and, (d) supporting students and families in finding and applying for adult services. However, one teacher expressed her frustration on how the lack of flexibility in her schedule impedes her ability to do an effective job. Another teacher, whose students have severe disabilities, expressed his frustration over the confusion as to whose role it really is to find postsecondary placement for his students. Is this a role of the Special Education teacher or that of a government social worker? It was found that many teachers take on the role of a transition

coordinator without having any official designation as such. Likewise, it was found that the lack

of resources available to teachers serves as a barrier to effective transition planning. According

to the author, "The government needs either to train professional transition coordinators or

provide adequate support, resources, and training for teachers to effectively coordinate transition

services" (Park, 2008, p. 108). While all teachers cited a variety of barriers, they all shared one

common factor; *the implementation of transitional curriculum*.

The Need to Teach Self Determination

Teaching the skill of self-determination is vitally important while planning the transition

process. Self determination can be defined as, "Acting as the primary causal agent in one's life

free to make choices and decisions about one's quality of life, free from undue influence or

interference" (Thoma, Baker, & Saddler, 2002, p. 82). Several obstacles have been found to have

impeded the acquisition of this skill. One such barrier has been special education teachers

themselves. As Thoma, et.al. (2002) found, while having good intentions, teachers engaged in

behaviors that hindered the development of self-determination. For example, while holding an

IEP, teachers have been found to pose questions that students were not ready to answer, interrupt

students or use prompts when asking a question to ensure a preconceived answer. Additionally,

teachers wait until the end of the IEP before giving students the opportunity to express their

ideas. One hypothesis held by the authors is, "… that teacher education programs do not include

instruction on strategies that help support self-determination throughout the transition from

school to adult life" (Thoma, et al. 2002, p. 83). So to test this hypothesis the authors surveyed

21 faculty members at institutions of higher education in the state of Nevada. They then used the

information they gathered and created a college level course on transition planning that infuses

best-practice recommendations from teacher preparation literature. Their goal was to ensure that,

"special education teachers obtain the skills, knowledge, and dispositions necessary to support

the development of self-determination skills in their students" (Thoma et.al, 2002, p. 82).

Through a 20 item survey which included both, multiple choice, Likert-scale questions as well as

open ended questions, the authors found that 54% of those surveyed responded that they do offer

instruction in teaching self-determination skill development in their programs. However, the

skills of decision making and self-advocacy were the component skills most likely to be taught,

(18 out of 21), with the skill of problem solving was the least likely to be taught, (13 out of 21).

The course, "Career Development for Students with Disabilities in Transition," is a required

course for credentialing in the field of special education in the state of Nevada. This major

themes of their course include; self-determination skill development, transition assessment,

postsecondary education, career/vocation development, independent/community living options,

recreation / leisure, friends and relationship with others, transition IEP meetings, parent/family

involvement, assistive technology supports, and funding and finances (Thoma, et.al, 2002)**.** This

course stresses the importance of listening to students and enabling them to become the directors

of their postsecondary life.

Whether one participates in a rigorous teacher credentialing program or not, plainly it is

imperative that teachers need to be properly prepared and supported to engage in such a high

stakes practice as coordinating postsecondary transitions. "Yet teachers' access to knowledge

about effective teaching is much more haphazard in the United States than in any other

industrialized country. Preparation programs range from excellent to extremely weak…"

(Darling-Hammond, p.207). While Darling-Hammond argues for a stronger federal role in the

regulation of this arena, currently they are many good teaching programs set in place. So what

are these programs and what are they doing right? What are the effective interventions and best

practices in which teachers need to be trained?

Interventions, Best Practices and Successful Programs:

Taxonomy for Transitions

The Division on Career Development and Transition (DCDT) in conjunction with the

U.S. Department of Education put out a fact sheet summarizing the best practices for which

secondary special educators should be responsible (U.S. Department of Education National

Institute of Education, 2000). In it, the DCDT cites five major categories in what was deemed the

Taxonomy for Transition Programming by Dr. P. Kohler of the University of Illinois (1996).

These five categories are; (a) Student-focused Planning, (b) Student Development, (c)

Interagency Collaboration, (d) Family Involvement, and (e) Program Structure and Policies.

According to Kohler, "*Student Focus Planning*," involves IEP development, student

participation and planning strategies. "*Student Development*," includes life skills instruction,

career and vocational curricula, structured work experience, assessment and support services.

"*Interagency Collaboration*" requires collaborative framework as well as collaborative service

delivery. "*Family Involvement*" should consist of family training, involvement and

empowerment. Finally, "*Program Structure*," should have a philosophy, policy, planning,

evaluation, allocation and human resource development (Kohler, 1996). This Taxonomy forms a

foundation for transition related skill development. The above framework, if followed, would

provide a comprehensive postsecondary transition for any student with disabilities ranging from

mild to severe.

The process of preparing and grooming a student to make this paramount transition needs to begin long before June of their graduating year. As mentioned, the ITP is the driving force behind this process. Started as early as 14, but no later than 16, every ITP should have measurable goals that begin to lead a student down the path of preparedness. Whether these goals include resume building, job application completion or the effective use of public transportation, "A student's life in the last year of high school should not look much different from the first year after high school. That is, employment … transportation, should all be in place during the last year of high school" (Thoma et.al 2002, p. 82).

Successful Programs

"Career Connection"

With that being the goal, there are many successful programs throughout the nation that are effective in connecting high school students with disabilities to possible post high school employment. One such program is called, "Career Connection," in the state of Iowa. Funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, this program reaches into the local high schools and works with students who fall in the middle range of the severity continuum or students who have moderate special needs. During their senior year in high school these students are offered a variety of services that start with career interest assessments, job shadowing, internships and eventual employment that comes with 60 days of student support (Nietupski, 2008). This program was designed on the premise that students with disabilities benefit from extra training and support in order to find success in the workplace. Multifaceted in nature, this program takes a systematic approach in matching student to internship placement. Starting with student, teacher, and parent interviews; career interest inventories; goal planning; and progressing on to

job shadowing and eventual internship and job placement, "Career Connections" has been

effective in supplying this portion of the student population with the guidance and support

needed to find success after high school (Nietupski, 2008).

"Bridges…from School to Work"

Another such program is called, "Bridges from School to Work" (Bridges). Funded by

the Marriot foundation for People with Disabilities, Bridges works with special education

students during the last year of high school ("Bridges from school," 2012).They offer a three

phase program which includes: a) the prevocational orientation, b) prevocational preparation

and, c) internship placement and support. During the orientation phase students and families are

introduced to the Bridges program and students engage in vocational goal setting activities. Next,

in the preparation stage, students receive career guidance counseling, job search training as well

as job preparation. Finally, the last phase consists of actual job specific skill training, work

performance assessment and the development of employee- employer relationship. Finally, the

internship component consists of paid employment at local businesses where on- the-job training

is offered. The "Bridges from School to Work" program currently operates in seven different

locations: Atlanta; Chicago; Fairfax County, Virginia; Los Angeles; Montgomery County,

Maryland, San Francisco, and Washington D.C. According to their website, "Bridges matches

the workforce development needs of local employers with the skills and interests of motivated

young people, to the benefit of both" ("Bridges from school," 2012). In an evaluative study,

Fabian, Lent & Willis (1998) examined the implications of this program. By analyzing a 5-year

database of 2,258 students with disabilities they found that, "completion of a highly structured,

school based internship, such as the Bridges Program, is associated with favorable post-school

employment outcomes" (Fabian, et,al 1998, p. 314).

"Workability 1"

Likewise here in the state of California we have what is called Workability 1 (WA1). The nationally recognized WA1 program is funded by a grant by the California Department of Education and provides comprehensive pre-employment skills training, aid in job and post secondary education placement for high school students in special education. Their work is extremely valuable for students who are making the transition from high school to work and post secondary education or training. The WA1 seeks out and works with employers in the community who will give students with disabilities a chance to work while subsidizing their salary (California Department of Education, 2012). Additionally, WA1 staff work with students starting in 9th grade and stay with them until their senior year. Services such as career interest surveys, resume building, work permits, workshops on interview skills and job application completion are provided. "WA1 provides secondary students with an understanding of job seeking and job keeping skills. The employability of students improves through occupational class training and on-the-job subsidized or unsubsidized work experience" (California Department of Education, 2012, para. 6). With respect to post secondary education, WA1 aids students with FASA completion, Cal Grant submission, preferred class registration at the local community colleges and finally a visitation to these schools which includes a trip to the Disabled Persons Service Office as well. The above three programs are excellent examples of working within the *Student Development* level of Kohler's Taxonomy for Transition mentioned above. However, the additional and necessary component to that level is transitional curriculum.

Transitional Curriculum

While NCLB has placed a strong focus on preparing students with LD to pass high stake tests, research indicates that, "a successful transition requires the development of a student's abilities through education and other experiences, specific supports that enhance or facilitate those abilities, and opportunities through which one can apply those abilities.…" (Kholer, & Field, 2003). According to Kholer and Field, (2003), transition-focused education consists of academic, career, and extracurricular instruction and activities delivered through a variety of instructional approaches. Research indicates that parents of students with LD revealed their preference for a curriculum designed to prepare all students to be independent and contributing members of society (Dupoux, 2008). Curriculum specifically designed for students with LD should address postsecondary education, employment, independent living as well as life skills such as self-advocacy and self-determination (Bouck, 2004). Likewise, curriculum designed to meet the needs of students with LD should be infused with a variety of strategies that facilitate access to the content material. According to Udvari-Solner, Villa & Thousand, (2002) reading material needs to be at an appropriate reading level; hands-on activities need to be included and role playing should be actively infused. Instructional techniques should include peer tutoring as well as partner and group learning that promote student-to–student dialogue. Additionally, pacing needs to be at a proper rate to ensure proper content and vocabulary acquisition. Likewise, there needs to be a wide use of visuals and models to aid in comprehension (Echevarría, Vogt & Short, 2010). The goal of this project is to design transition curriculum that can uniquely meet the needs of students with LD and offer them the support needed to be successful during and after their high school.

Summary

The practice of creating and implementing a strong transitional plan for a student is paramount to their postsecondary success. Regardless of their chosen path, we as special educators need to be prepared to offer our students the array of services legally afforded them. It is imperative that we work in conjunction with various agencies to provide our students and families with as many vital options as possible. Throughout their high school career students need to be offered the opportunities to develop the skills of self-advocacy /self-determination. Likewise, family and school staff needs to stay connected so as to promote strong communication. Finally, a students' Individual Transition Plan needs to be created with purpose and vision. Not only should this be the driving force of the IEP, it should remain fluid and designed to be process oriented and not outcome oriented. Adding to this body of research will be the creation of effective and dynamic transition curriculum specifically designed with the needs of students with LD in mind. This curriculum is written such that it can be implemented in the classroom once a week during a two hour block Study Skills class and then can be revisited as the week progresses.

Chapter 3-Methodolgy

Students with LD who are making the transition from high school to post school life continue to lag behind their general education peers in the rate of postsecondary education, employment as well as post secondary rate of independent living (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996). One way to even the playing field and better equip this portion of the student population is to incorporate the use of transitional curriculum into their weekly menu of standard base academic curriculum (Bouck & Flanagan, 2010). At the time of this project, all transition related services at my site were being provided by two full time and one part time Workability staff members. These three people have been given the responsibility of meeting the transitional needs of close to three hundred students with disabilities ranging from mild to severe. While there was a program called "Transitions," (which I ran for two years), it was designed for students with moderate disabilities who were non-diploma bound. After assessing the need on campus, this project was created. The focus of this project was to create two units of transitional curriculum in the domains of employment and communication that can be used by students with LD. This chapter will feature the details of the project's setting, audience, design, and procedures.

Description of the setting

This project was designed to be carried out at a comprehensive high school in a suburb of San Diego, California. It had a total enrollment of 2,942 students. The ethnic makeup of the school was 50% Hispanic or Latino, 39% White not Hispanic, 4% Black or African American, 3% Asian and less than 1% identify as American Indian, Pacific Islander, Filipino, or Other. Furthermore, 15% of the students were classified as English Language Learners, with a majority speaking Spanish as their primary language. Also, negatively impacted by the economic climate,

42% of the students qualified as socioeconomically disadvantaged. Additionally, over 300

students were receiving special education services, approximately 10% of the student population.

At the time the senior class was made up of 715 students, 67 of which were designated as

Students with Disabilities (California Department of Ed, 2011).

Prospective Audience

This project was intended for use at the high school level in the RSP setting. The target

student population included learners ages 16-18; grades 11-12 who qualify for special

educational services. This curriculum was designed to be easily infused into the Study Skills

classroom. At the time of this project, students enrolled in Study Skills met four times a week;

one of which was for a two hour block period. These lesson plans were designed to be delivered

once a week during the two hour block period; then allowing class time during the remainder of

the week to complete the given project or product.

Design for Project

Unit Design

The focus of this project the development of a nine week (2 unit), transitional curriculum

that can be used at the secondary level for students with LD. The overall unit design chosen for

this project was developed by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe (2005), called "Understanding by

Design" (UbD). UbD is backward design unit planning system where the unit is planned with

end in sight. UbD is goal and result directed and designed backward accordingly. By using this

type of unit design, the aimless coverage of content and the simplistic use of busy work were

avoided (Wiggins & McTighe, 2001). Using the UbD template, I established the *Specific Goals*

for learning that were to be targeted. It should be noted that the state of California does not have

state standards for transitional curriculum. Therefore standards were taken from the National

Alliance for Secondary Education and Transition (NASET, 2010). Next, using these targeted

goals, I developed an *Enduring Understanding* that gave meaning to the content and helped the

students make sense of the lessons and activities. Next, I framed *Essential Questions* used to

guide student inquiry and focus. Based on the desired understanding and driving question, I

listed K*ey Knowledge and Skills* students were to acquire as a result of this unit. Finally, I

developed *Authentic Assessments* that were used to measure student understanding through real-

world tasks. These tasks required students to apply their learning and demonstrate specific skills

such as fill out a job application, perform well in a mock job interview and effectively role play

self advocacy skills.

Lesson Design

The Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) Model is a research-based

instructional model that infuses effective instructional best practices into each of its lesson's

plans (Echevarría et al., 2010). SIOP has proven successful in addressing the academic and

linguistic needs of English Language Learners. According to the SIOP Model each lesson should

include the following: clear content and language objectives; a building upon prior background

knowledge; offer comprehensible input, infuse a wide variety of instructional strategies, allow

for guided practice, an application of new knowledge and use a variety of authentic assessments

to gage student learning. Strongly emphasized is the use of visual aids, demonstrations,

vocabulary previews, graphic organizers, cooperative (group) learning, and peer tutoring   Many

of the features of the SIOP Model are effective for students with LD. Using interventions such as

allowing extra time for student to process information, (slowing teacher's rate of speech), using

frequent repetition and ensuring that assessments are scaffolded to properly measure student

mastery are recommended (Echevarría et al., 2010, p.18-19; 199-206).

Procedures

The transitional process is typically divided into several different domains such as

postsecondary education, employment, communication, and independent living (Bouck, 2004).

For the purpose of this project the two domains of "Employment and Communication" were

chosen as areas of focus. Using the content standards set by the National Alliance for Secondary

Education and Transition (2010), I formulated the units of study in the following fashion. First, a

"Big Idea" was develop to encapsulate and anchor the essence of the units. Secondly, I

developed "Essential Questions" and "Enduring Understandings" used to direct and focus

student learning to the key content issues. Next, I directed my attention to both the formative and

summative assessments to be created. Finally, I established the "Content and Language

objectives" as well as the various "Performance Tasks and "Student Activities" that would be

included in the lessons throughout the two units.

The first unit on Communication focused on the development of Self Advocacy / Self-

Determination skills and included the following lessons: <u>Who Am I?:</u> Identifying one's

disability; Strengths / Struggles; <u>Where Do I Belong?</u>: Building a community, identifying my

support system; <u>What Do I Need?:</u> Learning the IEP, identifying accommodations/ modifications

and expressing my needs; <u>Where Am I Going?:</u> Setting long and short term goals. The Big Idea

for this unit: <u>"I Have a Voice"</u>. The second unit on Employment included the following lessons:

<u>Career Investigation</u>: examining key job components <u>The Job Hunt</u>: the online search; <u>The Job</u>

<u>Application</u> successfully completing job application plus follow up skills; <u>Preparing for the</u>

Interview Process: mock interview, personal grooming, follow up. The Big Idea for this unit: "<u>A</u>

<u>Good Job = My Independence</u>"

Summary

The development of transition curriculum in this project was designed to better equip and

support students with LD as they approach adulthood. This curriculum was created with the

unique needs of this population in mind and was developed to supplement and compliment their

academic content area curriculum. Using UbD, the units were designed purposefully and with

intentionality. Likewise, using the SIOP model, each lesson was designed to maximize both

language and content acquisition. The goal of this project was to answer the following questions:

In what ways can high school students with learning disabilities benefit from transitional

curriculum that is designed specifically for their learning needs? How can this new knowledge

and skill base be translated into real life scenarios? What products can be developed through the

implementation of this curriculum that students can take with them as they leave the high school

environment? The answers to these specific questions will be addressed in the next chapter via

unit and lesson plans.

Chapter Four: Curriculum

A review of the current research on the postsecondary outcomes of students with learning disabilities reveals that this portion of the student population is in need of extra support in the area of transition. The current narrow focus of helping students with learning disabilities complete the A-G standard course requirements needed for a diploma, coupled with the heavy emphasis on Standardized Test performance has left a void in these students' education. The purpose of the following curriculum is to begin to fill that void. This chapter includes a review of the research questions and two sample units of Transitional Curriculum specifically designed with the needs of students with LD in mind.

Review of the Research Questions

The focus of this project is to create transition curriculum that can be used in conjunction with and as a supplement to the standard based academic curriculum these students are currently receiving. The purpose of this project is to address the following questions:

1) In what ways can high school students with learning disabilities benefit from transitional curriculum that is designed specifically for their learning needs?

2) How can this new knowledge and skill base be translated into real life scenarios?

   a). What products can be developed through the implementation of this curriculum that students can take with them as they leave the high school environment?

Following are two units of Transition Curriculum. The first unit of study is in the area of Self-Advocacy and the second unit is in the area of Employment. Both units are preceded by comprehensive unit plans and followed by four lesson plans each. All teacher material is written

in Times New Roman, however all student reading material, including PowerPoint presentations, are written in Arial font. Since these eight lessons were designed to be delivered during the two hour Study Skills block period, the overarching timeframe for these two units is approximately two months. This plan offers students a one week time allowance to complete the lessons without encroaching upon their other academic workload. By creating curriculum that focuses on life skills as well as vocational skills, the goal is to better equip and support these students as they move on from high school and make their way into the adult world.

Curriculum

Unit 1: Self-Advocacy

Understanding by Design: Rancho Buena Vista High School

Designer Name(s): RBV **Date:** April, 2012

Subject Area: RSP Transitions **Grade Level(s): 11-12**

Unit Title/Focus: Self- Advocacy

Estimated Amount of Instructional Time: One month

Stage 1 – Desired Results

State Content and Skill Standards:

3**.**1 Youth acquire the skills, behaviors, and attitudes that enable them to learn and grow in self-knowledge, social interaction, and physical and emotional health

- o 3.1.5 Youth interact with peers and have a sense of belonging
- o 3.1.7 Youth have significant positive relationships with mentors, positive role models, and other nurturing adults

3**.**2 Youth understand the relationship between their individual strengths and desires and their future goals, and have the skills to act on that understanding

- o 3.2.2 Youth develop individual strengths.
- o 3.2.3 Youth demonstrate the ability to set goals and develop a plan.
- o 3.2.4 Youth participate in varied activities that encourage the development of self-determination and self-advocacy skills

Enduring Understandings:	*Essential Questions*
Students will understand that… - ➢ They have a disability and yet it does not define them - ➢ They have a disability and have rights to protect them - ➢ They have a say in their future	- ➢ Who Am I? - ➢ Where Do I Belong? - ➢ What Do I Need? - ➢ Where am I Going?

Big Idea(s)

I HAVE A VOICE

What students will know:	*What students will be able to do:*
➤ How to access their understanding of self-awareness ➤ How to examine their strengths and weaknesses both inside and outside the classroom setting ➤ How to identify the members of their Circle of Support ➤ How to identify appropriate personal and academic information to share with educational professionals ➤ How to distinguish between long term and short term goals	➤ Students will define Self-Awareness ➤ Students will describe their struggles and strengths both in and outside of school ➤ Students will describe times when they felt lonely as well as when they felt welcomed in a group setting ➤ Students will write a one-page letter summarizing their academic and social needs to their general education teachers. ➤ Students will define both long term and sort term goals ➤ Students will list the action steps needed to achieve their goals

Stage 2 - Assessment Evidence

Performance Tasks:	*Other Evidence:*
➤ "Who I Am" Poster ➤ Paragraph describing "My Support System" ➤ Completion of IEP summary letter ➤ Completion of Goal Planning Worksheet ➤ One Long term and one Short term goal	➤ Self Awareness quiz ➤ "Strengths and Struggles worksheet" ➤ "Man in the Mirror" analysis ➤ Quick writes ➤ Post group activity evaluations ➤ Completion of "Belonging" Graphic Organizer

Stage 3 - Learning Plan

Learning Activities:

Lesson #1 Who Am I?

➤ Teacher presents the "Who Am I?" PowerPoint presentation
➤ Students complete their "Strengths and Struggles worksheet
➤ Students complete "Quiz on Me"
➤ Teacher introduces "Man in the Mirror" Audio or youtube video and distributes lyrics
➤ Students listen and perform self analysis (directions on worksheet)
➤ Students create a Self Reflective Poster

Lesson #2 Where Do I Belong?

- ➤ Teacher starts with presenting "Where Do I Belong?" Power Point Presentation
- ➤ During the power point students write their responses and share with others
- ➤ Using the "Blue Dot" instruction, teacher introduces and guides the "Blue Dot" game.
- ➤ Students participate in group activity and write their responses after each section of the activity
- ➤ Students compete the "Belonging" Worksheet
- ➤ Students use that worksheet to construct paragraph describing their "Circle of Support"

Lesson #3 What Do I Need?

- ➤ Begin with the 8- or 16-box teacher quiz
- ➤ Each student is provided with a copy of the IEP Summary Letter Organizer and a copy   of their IEP and/or IEP summary. *Note: this must done ahead of time*
- ➤ Guide students through the organizer, providing examples for each topic.
- ➤ Students convert their organizer into a proper letter.
- ➤ Letters should include a date, a greeting, relevant information, and a salutation.
- ➤ Students edit their letters, then re-write neatly or word process.
- ➤ Return the letter to the case manager, who will pair the letter with an IEP summary and distribute to teachers.

Lesson #4 Where am I Going?

- ➤ Teacher shows PowerPoint Presentation and students will take notes
- ➤ Students work in partners on the Goal Planning worksheet to develop ideas for goals
- ➤ Teacher guides class through each step of effective goal planning
- ➤ Students work independently to develop their 2 personal goals, actions steps, obstacles and solutions
- ➤ Students make any necessary revisions until 2 well structured goals are developed
- ➤ *At the end of the lesson* teacher passes out "Failing Forward" reading by J. Maxwell
- ➤ Class reads as a whole
- ➤ Students mark the three Principles that have the greatest impact on them
- ➤ Write these on their "Guided Notes" sheet and provide a final reflection on the reading.

Subject Area: **Who Am I?**	**Unit/Topic:** Self Advocacy / Self Determination

Content Standard:

3**.**1 Youth acquire the skills, behaviors, and attitudes that enable them to learn and grow in self-knowledge, social interaction, and physical and emotional health

3**.**2 Youth understand the relationship between their individual strengths and desires and their future goals, and have the skills to act on that understanding.

  ➢ 3.2.2 Youth develop individual strengths.

Content Objective:	**Language Objective:**
➢ Students will access their understanding of self-awareness ➢ Students will examine their strengths and weaknesses both inside and outside the classroom setting ➢ Students will identify at least one personal change they might need to make ➢ Students will go from "**Who Am I?** → **Who I Am.**"	➢ Students will define Self-Awareness ➢ Students will be able to describe their struggles and strengths both in and outside of school ➢ Students will make an oral presentation before the class

Key Vocabulary:	**Materials**: (See Appendix A)
➢ Self-Awareness ➢ Learning Disability	➢ "Who Am I?" PowerPoint ➢ "Quiz on Me'" quiz ➢ "Strengths and Struggles" worksheet ➢ Man in the Mirror by Michael Jackson (audio or video) ➢ http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TxVoo0iUVDA ➢ Lyrics of "Man in the Mirror" ➢ Poster board

Big Idea:

By the end of this lesson students should be able to define self-awareness; recognize personal changes they may need to make and identify their strengths as well as the struggles they experience in the mainstream classroom and beyond

Assessment and Performance Levels:	**Accommodations for Special Needs Students**:
➢ "Self Awareness quiz ➢ "Strengths and Struggles worksheet" ➢ "Man in the Mirror" analysis ➢ "Who I Am"	➢ Peer to peer sharing ➢ Options for final assessment project ➢ Model of final assessment ➢ Use of visuals ➢ Pacing will be at a slower rate…for comprehension and processing ➢ Ample time for responses…to compensate for slower processing

Prerequisite Learning (link to previous learning and prior knowledge):

- ➢ All students have some sense of what self-awareness is
- ➢ All students have spent time in mainstream classes (even if only P.E)

Lesson Sequence

Direct Instruction (Modeling, interactive, sharing):

- ➢ Teacher presents the "Who Am I?" PowerPoint presentation.
- ➢ Students list facts about cartoon characters; share with others
- ➢ Students list facts about themselves: analyze
- ➢ Teacher distributes the "Quiz on Me" Allow time for completion

Guided Learning (whole class, teams, partners, independent):

- ➢ Teacher distributes "Strengths and Struggles" worksheet
- ➢ Teacher and students break apart and brainstorm the word "self-awareness" on the board; "self" = "me" "Awareness" = "to know something about…"; "to be informed about..."
- ➢ Formulate an acceptable meaning for "self-awareness" and write it on the board… students write it on their Strengths and Struggles worksheet
- ➢ Students complete their "Strengths and Struggles worksheet
- ➢ Teacher introduces "Man in the Mirror" Audio or youtube video and distributes lyrics (song will be played twice)
- ➢ Students are to just listen to the song at first
- ➢ Students listen a second time and perform self analysis

Independent Practice (meaningful, linked to standard):

- ➢ Students will create a poster that describes them in a reflective fashion.
  - o Students will go from **"Who Am I? → Who I Am."**

Teacher:	Class:	Date:
Weilhammer, Adele	**RSP Transition**	**April, 2012**

Subject Area: **Where Do I Belong?**	**Unit/Topic:** Self Advocacy / Self Determination

Content Standard:

3**.**1 Youth acquire the skills, behaviors, and attitudes that enable them to learn and grow in self-knowledge, social interaction, and physical and emotional health.

> 3.1.5 Youth interact with peers and have a sense of belonging

> 3.1.7 Youth have significant positive relationships with mentors, positive role models, and other nurturing adults

Content Objective:	**Language Objective**:
➢ Students will be able to identify who is a part of their Circle of Support ➢ Students will analyze behaviors that promote exclusion	➢ Students will be able to describe times when they felt lonely as well as when they felt welcomed in a group setting ➢ Students will write a paragraph describing the members of their support system

Key Vocabulary:	**Materials**: (Appendix B)
➢ Belonging ➢ Support	➢ "Where Do I Belong?" PowerPoint ➢ "Blue Dot Activity Teacher Instructions ➢ "Blue Dot Activity" Response Sheet ➢ "Belonging" worksheet

Big Idea:

By the end of this lesson students will be able to recognize behaviors that discourage "belonging"; recognize who is a part of their support system and realize their sense of belonging

Assessment and Performance Levels:	**Accommodations for Special Needs Students**:
➢ Quick writes ➢ Post group activity evaluations ➢ Completion of "Belonging" Graphic Organizer ➢ Paragraph describing "My Support System	➢ Think Pair Share ➢ Kinesthetic Group Activity ➢ Use of visuals

Prerequisite Learning (link to previous learning and prior knowledge):

Students just completed the "Who Am I?" lesson plan and have identified their strengths and struggles as well as their likes and dislikes.

Lesson Sequence

Direct Instruction (Modeling, interactive, sharing):

- ➢ Teacher starts with presenting "Where Do I Belong?" Power Point
    - o During the power point students write their responses and share with others

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Guided Learning (whole class, teams, partners, independent):

- ➢ Using the "Blue Dot" instruction, teacher introduces and guides the "Blue Dot game.
    - o Students participate in group activity
    - o Students write their responses after each section of the activity

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Independent Practice (meaningful, linked to standard):

- ➢ Students compete the "Belonging" Worksheet
- ➢ Students use that worksheet to construct paragraph describing their "Circle of Support"

Teacher:	Class:	Date:
Adele Weilhammer	RSP Transition	April, 2012

Subject Area: What Do I Need?	Unit/Topic: Self Advocacy/Self Determination

Content Standard:

3.2 Youth understand the relationship between their individual strengths and desires and their future goals, and have the skills to act on that understanding**.**

> 3.2.4 Youth participate in varied activities that encourage the development of self-determination and self-advocacy skills

Content Objective:	Language Objective:
> Students will identify appropriate personal and academic information to share with educational professionals.	> Students will write a one-page letter summarizing this information.

Key Vocabulary:	Materials: (See Appendix C)
> Individualized Education Program (IEP) > Disability > Accommodation > Modification > Salutation	> 8 or 16 box Teacher quiz PowerPoint > Teacher Quiz questions > IEP Summary Letter Organizer > Individual Student IEP summaries and/or IEPs > Sample Student Letters o Example 1 has cues/prompts

Assessment and Performance Levels:	Accommodations for Special Needs Students
> Completed Guided Outline > Completion of IEP summary letter	> Use of visuals > One on one instructional guidance > Guided outline for IEP Summary Letter > Sample letters provided

Big Idea

By the end of this lesson students will be able to identify parts of their IEP, verbalize their personal disability, express what they need for success in the mainstream classroom, identify the accommodations and/or modifications listed on their IEP

Prerequisite Learning (link to previous learning and prior knowledge):

Students have completed lessons on self identity as well as having a sense of belonging. They have identified their strengths and struggles and have identified those who are a part of their support circle.

Direct Instruction (Modeling, interactive, sharing):

  ➢ Begin with the 8- or 16-box teacher quiz. Read the Teacher questions aloud and challenge students to guess your responses. Each time a student guesses correctly, remove a box.
    o The moral of this lesson is that you cannot see the "whole picture" unless you have a lot of different information about a person.
    o Explain that students will be sharing a wide range of information about themselves with teachers, including important information about their disabilities
  ➢ Provide each student with a copy of the IEP Summary Letter Organizer.
  ➢ Provide each student with a copy of his or her IEP and/or IEP summary. *Note: this must done ahead of time*
  ➢ Guide students through the organizer, providing examples for each topic.
  ➢ Note: Two Example letters are provided for clarity. Example #1 has writing cues that refer back to the IEP Summary Letter Organizer. Example # 2 is in letter format w/o cues
  ➢ Individual students may require explicit instruction on disabilities.

Guided Learning (whole class, teams, partners, independent):

  ➢ Instructional assistant and teacher should circulate, providing guidance as students complete the organizer.
  ➢ Students support one another as appropriate, with consideration to confidentiality.
  ➢ Students should present organizer to the teacher for approval and feedback before writing their letter.

Independent Practice (meaningful, linked to standard):

  ➢ Students should convert their organizer into a proper letter.
  ➢ Letters should include a date, a greeting, relevant information, and a salutation.
  ➢ Students should edit their letters, then re-write neatly or word process.
  ➢ Return the letter to the case manager, who will pair the letter with an IEP summary and distribute to teachers.

Subject Area: Where Am I Going?	**Unit/Topic:** Self Advocacy/Self Determination

Content Standard:

3.2 Youth understand the relationship between their individual strengths and desires and their future goals, and have the skills to act on that understanding**.**

    3.2.3 Youth demonstrate the ability to set goals and develop a plan.

Content Objective:	**Language Objective:**
➢ Students will distinguish between long term and short term goals ➢ Students will be able to develop 2 well written goals	➢ Students will be able define both long term and sort term goals ➢ Students will list the action steps needed to achieve their goals

Key Vocabulary:	**Materials:** (See Appendix D)
➢ Long term goal ➢ Short term goal ➢ Action Step ➢ Obstacle	➢ Where Am I Going? PowerPoint ➢ Goal Planning guided notes ➢ Goal planning worksheet ➢ Falling Forward By John Maxwell

Big Idea:

By the end of this lesson students will be able to create a well written and thought out long and short term goal

Assessment and Performance Levels:	**Accommodations for Special Needs Students**:
➢ Completion of Guided Notes+ reflection on class reading ➢ Completion of Goal Planning Worksheet ➢ One Long term and one Short term goal	➢ Think Pair Share ➢ Use of visuals ➢ Use of guided notes ➢ Use of graphic organizers ➢ Scaffolding

Prerequisite Learning (link to previous learning and prior knowledge):

Students have completed lessons on self assessment, belonging ad self advocacy. This is the final lesson in this unit

Lesson Sequence

Direct Instruction (Modeling, interactive, sharing):

➢ Teacher passes out Goal Planning Guided Notes
➢ Teacher shows PowerPoint
➢ Students will take notes during the PowerPoint

Guided Learning (whole class, teams, partners, independent):

➢ Teacher passes out Goal Planning worksheet
➢ Students work with partners at first to develop ideas for goals
➢ As a class teacher guides class through each step of effective goal planning

Independent Practice (meaningful, linked to standard):

➢ Students work independently to develop their 2 personal goals, actions steps, obstacles and solutions
➢ Teacher checks for understanding
➢ Students make any necessary revisions until 2 well structured goals are developed
➢ *At the end of the lesson* teacher passes out "Failing Forward" reading by J. Maxwell
  ➢ Class reads as a whole
  ➢ Students mark the three Principles that have the greatest impact on them
  ➢ Write these on their "Guided Notes" sheet and provide a final reflection on the reading.

Unit #2: Employment

Understanding by Design: Rancho Buena Vista High School

Designer Name(s): RBV   **Date: April, 2012**

Subject Area: RSP Transitions   **Grade Level(s): 11-12**

Unit Title/Focus: **Employment**

Estimated Amount of Instructional Time: One month

Stage 1 – Desired Results

State Content and Skill Standards:

- ➢ 2.1 Youth participate in career awareness, exploration, and preparatory activities in school- and community-based settings.
  - o 2.1.1 Schools and community partners offer courses, programs, and activities that broaden and deepen youths' knowledge of careers and allow for more informed postsecondary education and career choices.
  - o 2.1.2 Career preparatory courses, programs, and activities incorporate contextual teaching and learning
- ➢ 2.4 Schools and community partners provide career preparatory activities that lead to youths' acquisition of employability and technical skills, knowledge, and behaviors.
  - o 2.4.1 Youth have multiple opportunities to develop traditional job preparation skills through job-readiness curricula and training
  - o 2.4.2 Youth complete career assessments to identify school and postschool preferences, interests, skills, and abilities
  - o 2.4.3 Youth exhibit understanding of career expectations, workplace culture, and the changing nature of work and educational requirements
  - o 2.4.4 Youth demonstrate that they understand how personal skills and characteristics (e.g., positive attitude, self-discipline, honesty, time management, etc.) affect their employability
  - o 2.4.5 Youth demonstrate appropriate job-seeking behaviors

Enduring Understandings:	*Essential Questions:*
Students will understand that… - ➢ Their ability to find a good job is directly related to increasing their independence	- ➢ How can I find and apply for a good job? - ➢ How can I prepare to enter the working world?

Big Idea(s)

A Good Job = My Independence

What students will know:	*What students will be able to do:*
➢ How to investigate a career of their choice and examine the vital components of a chosen career ➢ How to explore three different employment websites and conduct a job search ➢ How to identify key components of and proper style for a job application. ➢ How to construct a personal information fact sheet ➢ How to identify and apply effective interview behaviors. ➢ How to answer common interview questions	➢ Write a 1-2 page report on a selected career and create a poster describing their chosen career ➢ Make an oral presentation on their chosen career ➢ Write up a mini synopsis of four different available job opportunities in their area. ➢ Explain the key components of a job application ➢ Correctly complete a sample job application. ➢ Participate in and evaluate mock interviews utilizing an understanding of audience, knowledge and language.

Stage 2 - Assessment Evidence

Performance Tasks:	*Other Evidence:*
➢ Written report on career; assessed on accuracy and completion of all required components ➢ Documentation of employment website visitations (name, date, time) ➢ Completion of their synopsis of four different job opportunities. ➢ Completion of an actual job application; assessed on accuracy, completeness, and neatness. ➢ Performance in mock interviews evaluated based on observable behaviors presented in the lesson.	➢ Career poster; assessed on accuracy, completion of all required components and aesthetics along with oral presentation ➢ Completion of their personal "Cheat Sheet"

Stage 3 - Learning Plan

Learning Activities:

Lesson #1 Career Investigation

- ➢ Teacher needs to reserve school's computer lab &/or time in the library for the implementation of this lesson plan
- ➢ Teacher accesses The Occupational Outlook Handbook from The U.S. Department of Labor; Bureau of Labor Statistics at http://www.bls.gov/ooh/
- ➢ Students log on to website and take time to become familiar with the website Students chose a career to investigate;
- ➢ Students can visit additional websites found at the bottom of website page
- ➢ Students complete their "Career Investigation Graphic Organizer**"**
- ➢ Students type up the results of their research into a 1-2 page report
- ➢ Students create a poster that highlights their career choice
- ➢ Students orally present their poster before the class at a later designated date

Lesson #2 The Job Hunt:

- ➢ Lesson should take place in computer lab.
- ➢ Teacher opens with PowerPoint Presentation
- ➢ Teacher passes out Job Hunt Worksheet and goes over assignment requirements with class
- ➢ Students log on to computers and begin their searches;
- ➢ Students should be allowed to work with partners or in small groups
- ➢ Each student completes their individual Job Hunt Worksheet listing four job postings and citing websites

Lesson #3 The Job Application:

- ➢ Teacher opens leading a class discussion, brainstorming: -What is a job application? What is the purpose of a job application? What are the different pieces of a job application? Teacher passes out Job Application Handout for student reference

- ➢ Teacher passes out sample job application: "Gamestop"
- ➢ On the, Docu-Cam the teacher will model the completion of the sample application and students will follow along completing their application simultaneously
- ➢ Teacher passes out a second sample application, "Legoland" and students are to complete it independently (with as much information as they have available).
- ➢ Teachers pass out the "Cheat Sheet" Requirements and guides students through the directions
- ➢ Over the week students complete the Cheat Sheet and turn it in.

<u>Lesson #4 The Job Interview:</u>

- ➢ Teacher places students in small groups of no more than four
- ➢ Before presentation teacher will pass out Group Discussion Questions (1/2 sheets)
- ➢ Teacher presents "Job Interview" PowerPoint and allows for group time to answer questions, (see slide #3) Teacher leads class discussion, then continues PPT
- ➢ After PPT teacher passes out "Preparing for a Job Interview" handout and summarizes the key interview skills that make for an effective interview
- ➢ Teacher passes out Job Interview Questions (Student Handout)
    - o Using the Teacher Copy as a guide, as a whole class, take time to go over each question, allowing for each student to fill in their own personal answers
- ➢ With teacher as interviewer, perform a mock interview. Use your instructional assistant to play the interviewee or select a student with a thick skin. Have students and teacher critique general skills area, and then go over interview questions providing guidance for effective responses.
- ➢ Students pair up and do mock interviews using questions provided earlier.
- ➢ Interviewer shares feedback with interviewee then they switch roles and repeat
- ➢ Students should receive verbal or written feedback from their partner on the content and quality of their mock interview.
- ➢ Optional: If available, teacher can arrange to use the school's video equip to video tape student interviews using volunteer teachers or Workability staff members. Allow students to perform a self-critique

Teacher: Weilhammer, Adele   **Class: RSP Transitions**   Date: **April, 2012**

Subject Area: **Career Investigation**	**Unit/Topic: Employment**

Content Standard:
2.4 Schools and community partners provide career preparatory activities that lead to youths' acquisition of employability and technical skills, knowledge, and behaviors.
2.4.2 Youth complete career assessments to identify school and postschool preferences, interests, skills, and abilities
2.4.3 Youth exhibit understanding of career expectations, workplace culture, and the changing nature of work and educational requirements

Content Objective:	**Language Objective**
➢ Students will investigate a career of their choice ➢ Students will examine the vital components of a chosen career	➢ Students will write a 1-2 page report on a selected career ➢ Student will create a poster describing their chosen career ➢ Students will make an oral presentation on their chosen career

Key Vocabulary:	**Materials:** (See Appendix E)

➢ Occupation
➢ Median Pay
➢ Certification
➢ Qualifications
➢ Job Outlook
	Note: Prior to this lesson the school's computer lab needs to be reserved ahead of time for this lesson to take place
	
	1. Teacher needs to become familiar with navigating The Occupational Outlook Handbook website at http://www.bls.gov/ooh/
	2. Librarian might be asked to pull books on career
	    ➢ Career Investigation Report handout
	    ➢ Information Graphic Organizer
	    ➢ Resource Graphic Organizer

Big Idea:
By the end of this lesson students will be exposed to an occupational website and be able to identify a career of their choice and research its required education, skill, salary.

Assessment and Performance Levels:	Accommodations for Special Needs Students:
➢ Written report on career; assessed on accuracy and completion of all required components ➢ Career poster; assessed on accuracy, completion of all required components and aesthetics ➢ Oral presentation	➢ Use of computer lab ➢ Teacher modeling ➢ Use of graphic organizers

Prerequisite Learning (link to previous learning and prior knowledge):

Students have just finished a unit on "Self-Advocacy" where they have engaged in numerous self reflective activities. They have identified their strengths/struggles; likes and dislikes and have created both long and short term goals. This is the first lesson in a new unit on "Employment"

Lesson Sequence

Direct Instruction (Modeling, interactive, sharing):

➢ Teacher needs to reserve school's computer lab &/or time in the library for the implementation of this lesson plan.
➢ Teacher passes out "Career Investigation Report" handout and explains the assignment requirements
➢ Teacher needs to access The Occupational Outlook Handbook from The U.S. Department of Labor; Bureau of Labor Statistics at http://www.bls.gov/ooh/
   o This needs to be projected up on a screen in the computer lab. If necessary, this lesson can be introduced in the classroom and then moved to a computer lab.
➢ Teacher modeling: Teacher makes a selection from the left menu titled "Occupation Groups" and follows prompts that lead to a particular career choice. Teacher goes over each blue highlighted section and shows how the information can be easily infused into students' research paper. **Hint**: by clicking on the "Printer friendly" button in the upper right hand corner, information is displayed in a neat and orderly fashion; very student friendly.

Guided Learning (whole class, teams, partners, independent):

➢ Students log on to website take time to become familiar with the website (allow time or students to browse and explore)
➢ Students chose a career to investigate; gather the necessary information and begin to fill in Graphic organizer
➢ Teacher and Instructional Assistant roam and offer assistance
➢ Students can visit additional websites found at the bottom of website page

Independent Practice (meaningful, linked to standard):

➢ Students complete their "Career Investigation Graphic Organizer"
➢ Students type up the results of their research into a 1-2 page report
➢ Students create a poster that highlights their career choice
➢ Students orally present their poster before the class at a later designated date

Subject Area: **The Job Hunt**	Unit/Topic: Employment
Content Standard: 2.4 Schools and community partners provide career preparatory activities that lead to youths' acquisition of employability and technical skills, knowledge, and behaviors. 2.4.5 Youth demonstrate appropriate job-seeking behaviors.	

Content Objective:	Language Objective:
➢ Students will explore three different employment websites and conduct a job search	➢ Student will write up a mini synopsis of four different available job opportunities in their area.

Key Vocabulary:	Materials: (See Appendix F)
➢ Employment website ➢ Job opportunity ➢ Job posting	Note: The school's computer lab needs to be reserved ahead of time for this lesson to take place 1. Teacher and Instructional Assistant need to become familiar with navigating employment websites 2. The Job Hunt PowerPoint 3. The Job Hunt Worksheet

Big Idea:
By the end of this lesson students will be able to effectively go on to three different employment websites and find possible job opportunities for which they would like to someday apply

Assessment and Performance Levels:	Accommodations for Special Needs Students:
4. Students will be assessed on their documentation of website visitations (name, date, time) 5. Students will be assessed on the completion	➢ Teacher modeling ➢ Partner work ➢ Use of graphic organizers

of their synopsis of four different job opportunities.	➢ Frequent checks for understanding ➢ Appropriate pacing / work completed at independent pacing

Prerequisite Learning (link to previous learning and prior knowledge):

Prior to this lesson students have gone through the process of investigating a career of choice; looking at all the vital components. In addition, students have been working with vocational counselors from Workability and have been building their resumes.

Lesson Sequence

Direct Instruction (Modeling, interactive, sharing):

Lesson should take place in computer lab.

- ➢ Prior to this lesson, both teacher and Instructional Assistant need to become familiar with navigating employment websites
- ➢ Teacher opens with PowerPoint Presentation
- ➢ Teacher passes out Job Hunt Worksheet and goes over assignment requirements with class.
- ➢ *Recommended*: teacher prepares ahead of time an actual search to present to class and walks them through step by step.

Guided Learning (whole class, teams, partners, independent):

- ➢ Students log on to computers and begin their searches; allowing for time to explore and navigate
- ➢ Teacher and Instructional Assistant roam to offer support
- ➢ Students should be allowed to work with partners or in small groups

Independent Practice (meaningful, linked to standard):

- ➢ Each student completes their individual Worksheet listing four job postings and citing websites

Teacher: **Weilhammer , Adele**   Class : **RSP Transitions**   **Date: April, 2012**

Subject Area: The Job Application	**Unit/Topic:** Employment

Content Standard:	

2.1 Youth participate in career awareness, exploration, and preparatory activities in school- and community-based settings.

        2.1.1 Schools and community partners offer courses, programs, and activities that broaden and deepen youths' knowledge of careers and allow for more informed postsecondary education and career choices.

        2.1.2 Career preparatory courses, programs, and activities incorporate contextual teaching and learning.

2.4 Schools and community partners provide career preparatory activities that lead to youths' acquisition of employability and technical skills, knowledge, and behaviors.

        2.4.5 Youth demonstrate appropriate job-seeking behaviors

Content Objective:	**Language Objective:**
➢ Students will identify key components of and proper style for a job application. ➢ Students will construct a personal information "Cheat Sheet"	➢ Students will explain the key components of a job application ➢ Students will complete a sample job application.

Key Vocabulary:	**Materials:** (See Appendix G)

➢ Wages   ➢ Availability
 ➢ Seasonal   ➢ Position
 ➢ Temporary   ➢ Accommodation
 ➢ Criminal past   ➢ N/A-not applicable
    (misdemeanor,
    felony,
    conviction)
	➢ Job applications from "Gamestop" and "Legoland"
	    o Teacher Model and Student Practice- "Gamestop"
	    o Independent-Legoland
	 ➢ Job Application Handout (Vocab + Tips)
	 ➢ "Cheat Sheet" Requirements

Big Idea:

By the end of this lesson students will be able to complete a basic job application as well as construct a personal fact or "cheat sheet" for use during the application process

Assessment and Performance Levels:	Accommodations for Special Needs Students:
➢ Completion of an actual job application; assessed on accuracy, completeness, and neatness. ➢ Completion of their personal "Cheat Sheet"	➢ Modeling ➢ Use of visuals ➢ Scaffolding ➢ Peer sharing/support ➢ Group collaboration

Prerequisite Learning (link to previous learning and prior knowledge)

Students have just completed employment lessons on "Career Interest" and "Job Searching"

Lesson Sequence

Direct Instruction (Modeling, interactive, sharing)

➢ Teacher opens leading a class discussion, brainstorming:
   o -What is a job application?
   o -What is the purpose of a job application? ***Evaluation tool, narrows the pool of applicants***
   o -What are the different pieces of a job application? ***Personal information, Education, Work experience, Availability, Conditions of employment***

➢ Teacher passes out sample job application: "Gamestop"
➢ On the, Docu-Cam the teacher will model the completion of the sample application and students will follow along completing their application simultaneously
➢ The teacher should explain each section of the application as s/he completes it and highlight the main headings

    Personal Data: (for contact)Be sure to bring ID, SSN, home address, contact for references or previous employers

    Placement Information or Availability: As a new employee, students should be prepared to work weekends ;Generally request minimum wage for salary

    Employment History or Work Experience: Contact information for previous employers (or use sample employer address) Description of responsibilities Make sure to have an appropriate email address

    Education: Know RBVHS address; Area of specialty (Any ROP classes, languages, etc.)

    References: A list of those people who can be contacted to give a positive report on you. Personal reference (teacher, family friend, coach, youth pastor) Be sue to get permission first; Employment reference (Ex-boss, Workability counselor)

<u>Conditions for employment</u> (Common questions) Disclose criminal record

          a.   Consent to drug test

*Note: You must have a 2.0 to qualify for a work permit. You must have a work permit to work.

Guided Learning (whole class, teams, partners, independent)

- ➢ Teacher passes out a second sample application (Legoland) and students are to complete it independently (with as much information as they have available).
- ➢ Students should fill this out in pencil so corrections are easily made
  - You may consider having students complete all fields, using fake information as necessary, to check for understanding.

- ➢ Teachers pass out the "Cheat Sheet" Requirements and guides students them through the directions

Independent Practice (meaningful, linked to standard): 5 minutes

- ➢ Over the week students complete the Cheat Sheet and turn it in
- ➢ Once turned in, if possible, teacher can laminate and given back to students for personal use: note SS# should not be on The Cheat Sheet.

Teacher **Weilhammer, Adele**   **Class:** **RSP Transitions**   **Date:** **April, 2012**

Subject Area: **The Job Interview**	Unit/Topic: Employment

Content Standard:

2.4 Schools and community partners provide career preparatory activities that lead to youths' acquisition of employability and technical skills, knowledge, and behaviors.

> 2.4.1 Youth have multiple opportunities to develop traditional job preparation skills through job-readiness curricula and training
>
> 2.4.4 Youth demonstrate that they understand how personal skills and characteristics (e.g., positive attitude, self-discipline, honesty, time management, etc.) affect their employability
>
> 2.4.5 Youth demonstrate appropriate job-seeking behaviors

Content Objective:	**Language Objective**:
> Students will identify and apply effective interview behaviors. > Students will be prepared to answer common interview questions	> Students will participate in and evaluate mock interviews utilizing an understanding of audience, knowledge and language.

Key Vocabulary:	**Materials:** (See Appendix H)
> Interview > Hygiene > Skills > Confidence > Qualifications > First and last > Characteristics impressions	> The Job Interview PowerPoint > Job Interview Discussion Questions (for use during PPT) > Preparing for a Job Interview (Handout) > Job Interview Questions (Student Handout) > Job Interview Questions (Teacher Copy)

Big Idea

By the end of this lesson, students will demonstrate an understanding of positive interview language and behaviors.

Assessment and Performance Levels:	Accommodations for Special Needs Students:
➤ Performance in mock interviews will be evaluated based on observable behaviors presented in the lesson.	➤ Use of visuals ➤ Group and partner work ➤ Teacher modeling ➤ Frequent checks for understanding for all students…to guarantee comprehension ➤ Frequent summarizing for all students…to provide scaffolding and comprehension

Prerequisite Learning (link to previous learning and prior knowledge):

This is the final lesson in this unit. Prior to this lesson students have completed employment lessons on Career Investigation, Job Hunting and Job Application.

Lesson Sequence

Direct Instruction (Modeling, interactive, sharing):

➤ Teacher places students in small groups of no more than four
➤ Before presentation teacher will pass out Group Discussion Questions (1/2 sheets)
➤ Teacher presents "Job Interview" PowerPoint and allow for group time to answer the following questions, (see slide #3)
   1. What is an interview?
   2. Why is an interview so important?
   3. How do you get an interview?
   4. What do you think are some skills and knowledge needed to prepare for an interview?
   **Before going on to slide #4… teacher leads class discussion on group questions, then continues PPT

➤ After PPT teacher passes out "Preparing for a Job Interview" handout and summarizes the key interview skills that make for an effective interview. They are: **First Impressions**, **Body Language**, **Answering Questions**, **Asking Questions, Ending the Interview,** and **Planning Ahead for the Interview Day**.

Guided Learning (whole class, teams, partners, independent):

➤ Teacher passes out Job Interview Questions (Student Handout)
   o Using the Teacher Copy as a guide, as a whole class, take time to go over each question, allowing for each student to fill in their own personal answers
➤ Perform a mock interview; with teacher as interviewer. Use your instructional assistant to play the interviewee or select a student with a thick skin. Have students and teacher

critique general skills area, and then go over interview questions providing guidance for effective responses.

Independent Practice (meaningful, linked to standard):

➢ Students pair up and do mock interviews using questions provided earlier.
➢ Interviewer shares feedback with interviewee then they switch roles and repeat
➢ Teachers and assistants feel free to circulate, ask questions and if you are daring, participate and model.
➢ Students should receive verbal or written feedback from their partner on the content and quality of their mock interview.

Optional: If available, teacher can arrange to use the school's video equip to video tape student interviews using volunteer teachers or Workability staff members. Allow students to perform a self-critique

Chapter 5-Project Recommendations

Students with learning disabilities are afforded the legal right to have a Transition Plan embedded into their Individual Education Program (IDEA, 2004). While this document sets forth goals and objectives for the student, it is not enough to provide ample support to successfully carry them through the post high school transitional process. The curriculum designed for this project was done so with the intent of providing well structured and focused guidance for high school students who will be making their way into the real adult world of work and postsecondary life.

Lessons Learned

Three major lessons were learned while creating this project. First, I realized just how desperate the need is for quality transitional curriculum at my site. Second, I discovered how enormous of a job it would be to fully address all the transitional needs of this student population. Finally, I was surprised to find that the desire to implement this type of curriculum was actually met with some resistance among my colleagues.

I found it intriguing to see how my awareness of student need was heightened as I worked on creating this project. As I systematically worked on each lesson plan I began to initiate casual conversations with my students about the various areas of my curriculum focus. I was alarmed to find that not only were my students unable to tell me what their disability was, several didn't know they had one. Likewise, when asked if they knew what accommodations were included in their IEP, many students thought the IEP was just, "that meeting everyone has once a year." With respect to long term goals, if they existed, they were extremely inflated and

unrealistic. I learned that self awareness, self advocacy, goal planning… are all areas of focus that are desperately needed.

I was surprised to discover just how arduous a task writing curriculum was. I was continually faced with trying to decide what I wanted to include in each lesson. Working backwards and having the end in sight was a great help. Knowing ahead of time what I wanted my students to produce in order to demonstrate understanding, worked wonderfully and set parameters for me. However, what I didn't foresee was how the variety of disabilities would be reflected in each lesson plan. For example, for the student with great social skills, going through the lesson plan on *Belonging,* would be a breeze. On the other hand, for the student who is on the Autism spectrum, this lesson might be painful. Additionally, neatly filling out a job application would not be a struggle for that same meticulous student with Autism, but would prove to be a nightmare for the student who has Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder for whom poor penmanship is a symptom. The needs of this student population are extremely varied and complex. Not only does a variety of disabilities exist, so does a level of severity within each disability. I learned that writing for this population comes with great responsibility.

It was at a recent Special Education department meeting that the need for more transitional curriculum was brought up. I was surprised to see that it was met with some resistance. Several of the teachers felt that students' needs were better served in Study Skills by working on their mainstream homework. They expressed that the need to focus on mastering the mainstream academic core curriculum outweighed the need to focus on transitional skills. While I tried to refrain from voicing my opinion too strongly, I realized that timing was a factor. Our district was just about to enter into the timeframe in which we would be administering the California Standardized Tests. The district had been placing a lot of pressure on school

administration to improve student performance… in turn this pressure had been placed on teachers. Nonetheless, should each high school serve as a microcosm of society at large, then it stands to reason that the opinions of my colleagues line up with the current social sentiment and educational climate.

Project Implementation Plans

The use of this Transitional Curriculum directly lines up Best Practices recommended by field experts. One of the unique qualities of this project is that it takes curriculum that could have simply been purchased and it enriches it with strategies and accommodations to tailor fit it to the needs of students with LD. It would be my hope that we could take this sample curriculum and effectively infuse it into our Study Skills repertoire. I would like to see it used as a supplement to the students' academic core curriculum and to their academic based skills curriculum (i.e. note taking, test taking skills…). The unit on Self-Advocacy can easily be used at the middle school level as well as the high school level. The unit on Employment can easily be taught twice (11th and 12th grade) to ensure skill mastery.

Limitations of Project

One of the largest limitations in the creation of this project was in the designing of the "Job Application" lesson plan. In writing this lesson I was frustrated by the fact that I was only able to offer my students practice in completing paper or hard copies of local job applications. While this is an important skill to master, more and more businesses are turning to online applications that are filled out at an onsite kiosk. Stores like Home Depot, Target, Albertsons and Wal-Mart as just a few that have made the transition to electronic applications. The school district for which I currently work does not own software that has tutorials with which students can practice applying online. In looking at retail companies that offer Special Education

Resources, I have found that the software available contains online inter-active activities where students assess their knowledge and learn important job search, survival, and life skills. However, none specifically state that their software offers actual hands on training for the online application process. On a positive note however, I was able to locate simulated online kiosk application software from the National Institute of Corrections. After providing a small descriptive paragraph including name, postion and intent of useage, I was able to order a free copy! Upon receipt, the next step will be to work with a team, evaluate it and perhaps get district approval.

Further Research/Suggestions

The creation of this project is just the tip of the iceberg. I only addressed two of the six domains of transitions. Postsecondary Education, Transportation, Independent Living and Recreation/Leisure remain opportunities for transitional curriculum. It would my hope that a team could be assembled to continue the work started here and write effective curriculum for the remaining domains. Additionally, I believe there is a need for further research in the area of transitional success for students with LD. As stated, this Transitional Curriculum Project is just that- a project and not experimental research. The next step is to empirically evaluate the impact of this Transitional Curriculum on student postsecondary success. Several aspects need to be addressed. First the research needs to be narrowed and focused on this portion of the student population. While there is ample research on postsecondary outcomes of, "Students with Disabilities," the continuum is too large. In order to evaluate the effectiveness of this type of curriculum, students with LD need to be the target sample. Another area of research would be to obtain the "perceived readiness" of those students who were given the opportunity to experience this curriculum one to two years post high school. Finally, teacher perspective needs to be taken

into consideration as well. How important is this type of curriculum to educators? Where does it weigh in vis-à-vis academic skill based curriculum? Again, this dual unit project is just the tip of an enormous iceberg and has the potential to open many doors of opportunity.

Conclusion

Students with learning disabilities continue to struggle academically while in high school and fall behind their peers after high school in the areas of employment, education and independent living. The purpose of this project was too begin to even the playing field by creating transitional curriculum that can support and prepare these young people as they make their way from the security of high school to the ambiguity of adult life. This project can be the spring board to new and additional curriculum that will serve to provide a more holistic and equitable education for students with learning disabilities.

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