

**HOW CAN I PROVIDE BETTER TRANSITION SERVICE TO STUDENTS WITH
INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES CONCERNING POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION
AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR INDEPENDENT LIFE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL**

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Abstract

Research Question: How can I provide better transition services to students with intellectual disabilities concerning employment and postsecondary education as an opportunity for independent life after high school?

This action research project examines the instructional reflections of an instructor of employability and workforce readiness skill sets offered in a collaborative teaching environment of a transitional education program sponsored by a local secondary school system, a local vocational rehabilitation agency and a research Institute of an urban research higher educational institute in their region. The research provides a review of Postsecondary Education Programs (PSE) that have been established across the nation and within the state of Tennessee to develop an understanding of PSEs in how they operate, what is needed to develop a successful PSE, and the issues associated with maintaining a PSE transition program as a base of opportunity for young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The research examines in a reflective manner the issues of time management, administrative leadership associated with PSEs, how to develop an effective partnership, what services need to be provided to participants, how to get community buy-in and most importantly how to remain successful. This research also identifies some key intervening variables associated with a collaborative endeavor that can help others seeking to formulate a PSE in their local area. However, the most important element provided in this action research is the effect that a PSE program can have on the future goals of high school graduates with intellectual and developmental disabilities seeking to gain a sense of independence and employability readiness for their future.

Research Question

How can I provide better transition services to students with intellectual disabilities concerning employment and postsecondary education as an opportunity for independent life after high school?

Context and Rationale

Who I Am As a Professional

I hold a Bachelor of Professional Studies in Urban Advocacy with a minor in Sociology, a Masters of Arts in Liberal Studies with a graduate certificate as a Certified Nonprofit Professional. I am also certified as a Job Coach and Job Developer for the Tennessee Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and certificate from the Tennessee Department of Education for Work-Based Learning.

As a professional, I have had the privilege of serving as an advocate for youth and young adults for the past twenty-seven years in both secondary and postsecondary educational systems. My professional career began when I became a certified law enforcement officer. Through twenty-two years of service; I was very fortunate to become the University's prevention and awareness education officer, coordinator, investigator and eventually lieutenant. During this same period opportunities were availed that allowed for partnership with different nonprofit and educational organizations initiatives that allowed for me to interact with secondary students. During my tenure I became associated with the division of student affairs where I served as an administrative advisor to the Black Student Association. Also, during my tenure I was fortunate to serve on the executive board of several nonprofit organizations. One organization was the Memphis Center for Urban Partnership (MCUP) where I served as the Founding Director of the

Each One Reach Three Mentoring Family (EORT) and as vice president of the board of directors. The EORT program was a three time recipient of the TDOE Best Model Dropout Prevention Program a partnership with the MCS Center for Safe and Drug Free Schools.

After retiring from my position in law enforcement, I joined an initiative that focused on providing interventive support to youth incarcerated in the juvenile detention center in Shelby County, by serving as the chair of the board of directors. After the state closed juvenile detention centers, I turned my focus to directing a workforce readiness training program for a nonprofit organization which led me to my current position of service as the operations director for the University of Memphis Institute on Disability (UMID). UMID is a research based program that uses applied research based on the Systems Approach to Placement (SAP) to assist clients in developing a comprehensive individual placement plan that leads to continued education or direct employment.

It is under this entity that as the operations director that I administer two pilot research programs College Campus Transition Program (CCTP) and Tiger Learning Independence Fostering Education and Employment (TigerLIFE). Both programs are pilot research programs with the mission of developing best practices in the delivery of Postsecondary Education Programming (PSE) provided for young adults with intellectual disabilities. However, it is in the CCTP classroom where I serve as part of an instructional team where as a certified Work-Base Learning and Job Coach/Developer, I help the students develop their individual plan for employment or postsecondary opportunities. CCTP is a collaborative research project between the Department of Rehabilitation Services, Memphis City Schools' Department of Exceptional Children and Health Services and The University of Memphis' College of Education Health and

Human Sciences' Department of Special Education and Institute on Disability. I serve as the co-principal investigator and as the coordinator of the state agencies partnership. The classroom is located on the campus of the University of Memphis in the Academic Learning Center.

Context and Setting of My Work

My research will be conducted in the academic classroom of CCTP. CCTP is a collaborative transition class for students exiting high school with individual education plans that included employment and post-secondary education goals. It is a collaborative co-teaching environment where the special education teacher works with a paraprofessional and the job developer/job coach in the classroom to prepare students for transition after high school. The classroom of fourteen students is a mixture of genders and is predominately African American. CCTP is currently providing services to fourteen students that have all completed their initial K-12 IEP and have completed their high school graduation receiving a transition certificate. The students are divided into two separate core groups; CCTP I, all are students who are in the first phase of their individualized plan for placement in postsecondary education or direct employment and CCTP II who are all in the second phase of their individualized plan for placement in postsecondary education or direct employment.

CCTP is a newly initiated program it is my responsibility to facilitate all areas of the program including developing the leadership roles and responsibilities associated with each partnering agency. This means that I must work with the vocational rehabilitation counseling professionals to assure that all necessary forms are administered to officially enroll each student as approved support clients of the department of rehabilitation services. I must work with

Memphis City Schools Special Education supervisors to assure that each student has physically enrolled at the representing high school.

How my research question relates to my work context

As the director of a program for special education students in transition from high school to community employment or post-secondary opportunities, I believe that my mastering of the best collaborative environment and fostering of a curriculum that encompasses the best in employability skills, independent living skills and workforce readiness training will serve as the best way that I, as the director can help to lower the percentages of students with intellectual disabilities who don't transition successfully after high school.

Students with disabilities, particularly students with intellectual disabilities are far less likely to successfully transition from high school to post-secondary education or employment. This problem identifies with higher percentages of students with disabilities from lower-socio economic backgrounds (Grigal, 2006; Hart, 2011; Valentine, 2009). My experiences over the past year as the director of CCTP, confirms this problem with heightened consequences for students of impoverished communities where these students who are now reaching the emancipated age and faced with the loss of supplemental incomes that many times ends with entry into young adulthood.

Professional Knowledge

Why this topic is worthwhile for special education and transition teachers

In 1984, the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) published a report that postulated the most critical role facing special education was to provide transition services that emphasized the elements needed for students with intellectual disabilities to move from school to work.

There were six recommendations for development cited in the report: occupational awareness, exploration, and basic work experience; in-depth career/vocational assessment; instruction in job related academic skills; instruction in job related interpersonal skills; support services to other disciplines involved in vocational programming; and post-school placement and follow-up (Will, 1984). Although, these crucial recommendations were made by the OSERS, it took over sixteen years for the nation's legislative body to enact laws that would mandate state secondary officials and local education authorities implement transition services at the secondary school level for students with intellectual disabilities.

In 1990, Congress enacted legislation to replace the Education for All Handicap Students Act, with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The language included in IDEA marked the first time educational systems across the nation would be mandated to provide special education students a transition plan in their (IEP), which outlined a specific path for life planning past high school for independent living with a postsecondary option, if requested by the student. With these new mandates many postsecondary and secondary institutions began to develop partnerships for implementation of the recommendations of OSERS and the furthering of enacted legislation to secure a place for transition planning for students that receive special education services because of their disabilities.

In a journal report of the National Research Center for Career and Technical Education at the University of Louisville, it was postulated that legislative actions that support advocacy for students with disabilities like (section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disability Act of 1990, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990), with revisions made in 1997, 2000, and 2004, students with disabilities enrollment in higher education has increased dramatically (Valentine, J.C., Hirschy, A.S., Bremer, C.D., Novillo, W., Castellano, M., & Banister, A., 2009). The report emphasized that during the period of 1987 – 2003, higher education enrollment of students with disabilities increased from 15.2% to 32%. The statistical increase signifies that students with disabilities are taking advantage of opportunities to join the ranks of college students at post-secondary institutions.

Moreover, the report acknowledged that of all high school drop-outs students with a disability dropped out of high school at a rate that is double that of their peers without a disability. Another point revealed in the report was that less than half of all students with disabilities enrolled in secondary education ended up on the rolls of post secondary institutions. The report also revealed that students with disabilities from families living in poverty are less likely to attend a post-secondary institution than their financially able peers (Valentine, et al, 2009).

The Institute for Community Inclusion published research that outlined the matrix of three transition program models used at post-secondary institutions (PSE) that have emerged over the past two decades in response to the need for providing services for students with intellectual disabilities. They are the mixed/hybrid model that allows students with disabilities to participate in college level academic classes alongside students without a disability in a dual enrollment type class for credit or non-credit. This model allows students with disabilities at the secondary level to participate in exclusive classroom academics at the postsecondary level with their cohort disabled peers. The academic experience is geared toward life skills and independent living skills while students are still enrolled in the secondary education system. The substantially separate model is operated on a college campus but students attend academic classes of a transition nature only with other students with disabilities and attend activities that are simulated like that of their peers without disabilities constructed mainly in an exclusive atmosphere. The inclusive individual support model students receive individualized services from an educational coach or tutor and independent technology services in a college based program that is supplemented through defined career enhancement. The individual support services are implemented in a comprehensive program that is based on an individualized strategy designed with a student centered focus which is meant to develop the students' career aspirations (Hart, Grigal, Sax, Martinez, &Will, 2006).

Hart, et.al (2006), also reported that 74% of these programs support students who are taking advantage of dual enrollment opportunities; 33% of programs support adult students; 36% of the parents

of students with a disability wanted to send their children to programs at 4 year institutions, while 22% of the parents wanted to send their children to programs at community colleges. The research postulated the findings of a survey conducted that revealed barriers found when reviewing PSE programs were “attitudes and low-expectations”, coupled with the following barriers (ranked in most significant order): funding, including financial-aid for students with intellectual disabilities who lack high school diplomas; transportation; and entrance requirements, including “ability to benefit” tests.

In a matched cohort study conducted as part of the research of 40 students with intellectual disabilities and other disabilities, 20 with PSE experience and 20 without PSE support revealed that the students with PSE experiences were more likely to gain competitive employment, needed less individual supports, and earned higher wages when compared to their counterparts without PSE experiences. The survey also presented that students in PSE programs held higher levels of self-esteem and social networking skills which included more relationships with students without disabilities than their peers without a PSE experience. Information from another survey referenced in the report about PSE programs and their benefits for students with intellectual disabilities, 13 PSE programs for persons with intellectual disabilities all located in the same state revealed the following data: of 163 participants, 78% of participants received employment based training activity; 36% enrolled in dual college course academic programs with over 50% participating in after hour campus-based activities; 100% of participants were connected to adult agency services or community rehabilitation programs after exiting the program; 79% were eligible for social security benefits; 84% were placed in summer jobs; 65% exited the program with paid employment (Hart, D., Mele-McCarthy, J., Pasternack, R.H., Zimbrich, K., & Parker, D. R., 2004) (Hart, et al, 2006).

State and National Best Practices for PSEs

The research of PSE mentioned in the previous paragraph outlines the importance of developing programs that allow students with intellectual disabilities to gain access to college level education that

will support their intellectual and independent living growth. However, advocates of PSE programs are encouraged by the experts to develop a strategic campaign that outlines three major elements that will bring the public agenda of students with intellectual disabilities, and lack of college opportunities to the attention of the general community. The three elements of this proactive campaign should focus on awareness about the issue, policies at the national level that mandates the importance of the issue and the ability to advocate for the capacity of PSE programs being a natural component of the higher educational agenda. In the area of public awareness develop a multimedia campaign which outlines the positive benefits of PSE programs for students with intellectual disabilities that are targeted toward families, secondary school officials with the authority and ability to allocate funding to implement PSE programs and solicitation of higher education institutions to join in partnership to provide research and support to make the PSE program effective for students with disabilities (Hart et al, 2004) (Hart, et al, 2006).

In the area of policy seek support from the US Department of Education to direct literature to state education agencies of their ability to use IDEA funds to support students with intellectual disabilities in PSE programs to enhance their participation at the postsecondary level. Advocates should encourage legislative action which promotes and provides direct support for students with disabilities to receive direct funding for participation in PSE programs at the college level. In the area of capacity-building aid in the facilitation of developed research opportunities with the intention of fostering partnerships between secondary and postsecondary faculty members promoting data driven successes of PSE programs and their benefits to students with disabilities (Hart et al, 2004) (Hart, et al, 2006).

PSE based transition programs have made great strides over the past decade with many postsecondary institutions initiating transition programs in collaboration with secondary school districts across the nation. These great strides were given an extra boost with the enactment of The Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008, which added provisions that allowed for students with intellectual disabilities to receive federal-student aid to attend college without the passage of a prerequisite entrance

test. In October 2010, U.S. Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, announced that the Department of Education's Office of Postsecondary Education would strengthen efforts to promote transition programs for students with intellectual disabilities to gain access into higher education with an incentive program that awarded over ten million dollars in grants to support transition programs geared toward providing postsecondary opportunities for students with disabilities. Currently, (in the area of PSE's) there are over 200 programs across the nation that is currently offering services for students with learning disabilities (Jones, Weir, & Hart, 2011).

Since the beginning of the 21st Century, as of 2010, over 250 institutions of higher education have initiated programs that provide postsecondary educational opportunities for students with intellectual disabilities. These programs are attracting students with intellectual disabilities that did not hold the normal or traditional high school degree. Instead many of these students hold what is termed in many secondary school districts, a special education degree or IEP certification. The students that attend these newly initiated programs are gaining diverse educational learning experiences, collegiate social experiences with peers without a disability, independent living exposure within on campus housing and valuable work-based learning experiences with the purpose of leading to future employment opportunities. These newly initiated programs are receiving widespread support through many different financial resources with the intention of providing new hope for continued education for students with intellectual disabilities that two-three decades ago were not available to students with intellectual disabilities to facilitate intellectual growth in their future as independent young adults (Martinez, D.C. and Queener, J, 2010).

Experts in the area of PSE offered as a successful model program "Baltimore Transition Connection" (BTC), a program launched in Baltimore, Maryland where the program's participants received full support from their local educational authority, the program was introduced to the entire Baltimore community, and the implementation team had representation from all community service

providers like: the local workforce investment network, vocational rehabilitation staff, disability advocacy organizational representatives, parents of students with intellectual disabilities and representatives from three higher education institutions Baltimore City Community College (BCCC), Coppin State University (CSU) and John Hopkins University (JHU). The BTC initiated their first pilot PSE class in 1999, at BCCC, with a class of 10 students with intellectual disabilities and other disabilities, the next year the second class of students was implemented at CSU, enrolling 10 more students and the third year another program was implemented at JHU, for yet another 10 students. The students in the programs received classroom instruction in many different areas of the community. Job or career focus learning was provided in real time at community businesses. Academic courses were delivered at the participating higher educational institutions, and students received IEP support at the hosting higher educational institutions.

The BTC programs according to the researchers are still in progress and the programs have served 60 students. Data released by the BTC program emphasized the following: 97% of students that completed the 2 year program were fully connected to adult services in the community; 77% had audited or complete a college based academic class for credit; 89% learned to use the public transportation system independently; 50% were maintaining activities at the local YMCA or still using their college campus recreation facilities on a weekly bases; 66% were maintain continuous contact with their communities One Stop Career Center for gaining access to employment; and 77% of the students were placed in paid or volunteer based employment. The greatest outcome for the BTC PSE program is that two years after exiting the program 77% of the exiting participants are currently employed in the community with a paying job (Grigal, M., Dwyre, A., & Davis, H., 2006).

The BTC reviewers concluded that the community facilitated what they deemed as a very successful approach for implementing a total community based transition program for the Baltimore, Maryland community. The reviewers also offered a listing of strategic recommendation for the

replication of what they considered elements of a successful transition program for communities to adopt. The recommendations included: the convening of an interdisciplinary committee that is representative of all major advocates (local school system personnel, students and their parents, college or university personnel, local and state rehabilitation personnel, local and state developmental disabilities personnel, adult services providers, employers and representatives from the local One-Stop Career Centers; committee must have a shared vision of the type of services that will be provided and have a full commitment to bring the plan into full reality; must conduct a full scope of research about transition programs and the resources that will need to implement their strategic plan; should have a full understanding that there will be a need for interagency buy-in at the top administrative level of each partnering organization; make sure that everyone involved has an understanding of policies and procedures at the secondary and postsecondary level which will affect student participation in the program; should be aware of the need for cross training of staff associated with the PSE in the areas of teaching, job development, marketing, time management, scheduling, travel training, and counseling in an effort to be prepared for the participants need in all environments; must be committed to establish institutionalization of the program for continued success; should remain mindful of the needs of the student on a college campus and any impacts that occur in the community that can come from demographic and socioeconomic status of student participants; must advocate confidence that the programs evaluation components will produce useful data that will inform the committee of the successful benefits of the program on students; should make sure that students and parents understand the importance of the collegiate level training and academic process associated with entering the college environment; should facilitate the advocacy for secondary systems beginning promotion of PSE programs as early as age fourteen, with continued dialog with students and parents until the student reaches the age of entrance into a PSE program. The researchers concluded these are the most important factors undertaken and completed by the BTC, which resulted in a PSE program that has remained successful in

delivering a truly student centered transition program for students in the city of Baltimore (Grigal, M., Dwyre, A., & Davis, H., 2006).

The importance of the roles, responsibilities and implementation of successful college-based transition programs for students with intellectual disabilities is one of the most important initiatives facing postsecondary and secondary educators of students with intellectual disabilities. According to research mentioned in this review the intellectual and social growth needs of students with intellectual disabilities are enhanced by the opportunity to learn in an atmosphere influenced by the social environment associated with the college setting. The ability to access PSE programs is something that many students with intellectual disabilities are now finding more opportunities to gain experiences as programs across the nation are being specifically designed for students with intellectual disabilities to access and achieve (Valentine, et al, 2009).

There is an increasing growth of programs that are providing postsecondary educational opportunities for students with intellectual disabilities. PSE programs are now located in all geographical regions of the US. The choices associated with PSE programs are as diverse as the regions that house the programs. In an effort to provide a closer look at some of the 250 plus programs this review will give highlight to several PSE programs from across the US, starting with Next-Step, in the southern region of the country located at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee. The Next-Step Program cites a mission of providing transformative learning experience for students with intellectual disabilities through a program that integrates intellectual disabled students into an all inclusive environment that promotes their overall independence. The Next-Step program is a two year certificate program that covers four semesters.

In the first semester curriculum students are introduced to independent living in a ninety minute class of instruction that all students must take each of the four semesters before receiving their certification. In the first semester students receive courses in assistive technology, study skills, and health

and active living. The second semester the courses afford for students are personal finances one and food preparation safety. The third semester students are offered personal finances two and caring for personal needs. The final semester students receive course work in selecting and managing a household. Next-Step program at Vanderbilt costs each student \$7,500, per semester and it also provides a work-base learning component that can lead to private sector employment.

The Horizon School, also in the southern region based at The University of Alabama at Birmingham, offers a transitional non-degree program for individuals with intellectual disabilities and other mild disabilities with a curriculum that helps the student become capable of independent living while also providing certificate and general education and high school diplomas. The Horizon core curriculum is extensive and diverse. The Horizon School offers four categories of academics for students to choose from in the areas of personal, social, and career independence and a fourth section of courses entitled self-determination. Under the four categories the school offers in the first year the following courses are offered for the Horizon students to choose from: Life Skills 101-102, Nutrition/Shopping 101-102, Cooking 101-102, Apartment Health and Safety 101-102, Money Management 010-102, Transportation/Field Education 101-102, Wellness 101-102, Fitness and Wellness 101-102, Social Skills 101-102, Conflict Management 101-102, Residential Seminars and Residential Activities, Career Orientation 101-102, Career Exploration 101-102, Computer Lab 101-102, Learning Psychology 101-102, Creative Writing and Art.

During the second and third year the course numbers change from one hundred level classes to two hundred level classes in the second year and three hundred level classes in the third year. The program spans three full calendar years and it is an on-campus living program that provides an inclusive atmosphere for the student. The program however, has a cost associated with completion of about \$30,000 dollars a year. The high cost actually covers all living expense that is disbursed on a monthly

base where the student is taught how to manage the funds to pay monthly living expenses. The program has a great financial incentive of a partial scholarships based on need to student applicants.

On the west coast, students with disabilities have the option of attending the Pathways Extension Program housed on the campus of the University of California at Los Angeles. The west coast program is like its southern counterpart; Horizon, Pathways is also an on-campus program that has an almost identical mission of providing an inclusive atmosphere that is geared toward preparing the student for independent life with a career identity component. The Pathway program is a two year certificate program that provides a described curriculum almost identical to that of the Horizon school with each semester's core of classes designed around independent living, enhanced academic skills, increased social skills, self-advocacy, self-enrichment and healthy living. While in the Pathway program, students are given the opportunity to audit classes alongside nondisabled peers, they are required to take classes from the general education catalogue, along with classes that prepare the students for work opportunities after completion of the program. Pathways, however, will cost the student about \$50,000 per calendar year.

Another PSE program that is offered in the northwestern region is at Shepherds College. The Shepherds College program is much different than the rest of its counterparts, in that the Shepherds program is a college that is exclusively geared toward students with intellectual disabilities. However, the program does cite that many of the staff members, mentors, and training staff are persons without disabilities the program itself is exclusively for students with disabilities. It is a vocational based program offering Culinary Arts and Horticulture vocational training with the basic course aligned with functional academic skills, language arts, math skills, computer skills, career skills, independent living, financial management skills, social/emotional skills, daily living skills, and most important to the college spiritual life skills.

Moreover, the program offers all of the essential life independence resources offered by other programs with a truly extensive career training component. However, the program doesn't offer the

inclusion setting that most experts recommend as essential to social growth for students with intellectual disabilities. Shepherds College is an on-campus living program that although exclusive the program provides plenty of exposure for students in an inclusive atmosphere with many transitional field trips to neighboring Chicago, Illinois. It costs about \$33,000 dollars annually for each attending student. The program also offers a need based scholarship to students that cannot meet the financial costs. The Shepherds program is a religious based private institution for students with disabilities.

Located in the southeastern region of the country is Clemson Life, a PSE for students with intellectual disabilities on the campus of Clemson University. Clemson Life is a two year program with a third year option for assistance with job placement. It is a certificate program that gives students the option of living on or off campus. The programs core curriculum are just like most other PSE programs in that they offer the same type of enhancement academics as other programs reviewed about PSE. The program's academic semester includes course work like; Life – math skills, literature skills, personal fitness skills, communication skills, career skills, computer skills, leisure skills, job orientation and job development skills. All Clemson Life students are required to take at least one class per semester from the general education catalogue of a leisure skills class. It will cost each student about \$15,500 per semester for on-campus living and about \$11,000 per semester for off-campus attendance. The program's participants also receive full student benefits for all on-campus activities and sporting events. Students have full access to all intramural programs and on campus athletic facilities.

The Elmhurst College PSE entitled the Elmhurst Learning and Success Academy is a four year certificate program for students with intellectual disabilities. The program is also structure in the same format as other PSE programs featured in the review with the course structure stretching over a four year process of academic enrichment and basic life skills design. Students taking part in the program will receive course work consisting of the following: (career preparation skills, independent living skills, Math/Science technology, communication/English and writing skills, social issues, and internships and

field job training assistantships). The program does not have on campus living for participants in its traditional on-campus housing; however, the program does enjoy compatible living arrangements that are located only one block from the main campus at Elmhurst. The cost associated with attending the Elmhurst Learning and Success Academy is about \$30,000 dollars a year or about \$800.00 per semester hour.

PSE Inclusion – Importance of Theoretical Understanding of Implementation

Secondary and Postsecondary teachers assigned to facilitating transition at the postsecondary level should maintain a practitioner understanding of the theoretical framework that outlines the importance of Inclusion in enhancing the educational attainment of all students, but, particularly students with disabilities starts with an understanding of the road to justice that advocates of students with disabilities have endured throughout the history of public education in the United States. Advocates of students with disabilities over the decades have gained many triumphs in the pursuit of educational equity for their students with the guided assistance of the courts and enacted laws which are the pillars of Inclusion for public education of students with disabilities. Over the decades with decisions of the Supreme Court which outlawed segregation; congressional enactments Vocational Rehabilitation Act, better known as section 504, which was strengthened by the Education for All Handicapped Children Act have helped to shape what is now known as Inclusion in public education. Through these federal support channels public education implement key policies surrounding terms associated with laws; free and appropriate public education, individualized education program, and most important the seed for inclusion least restrictive environment (Friend, M. P. & Bursuck, W. D., 2012) (<http://www.greatschools.org/special-education/legal-rights/868-section-504.gs>). Moreover, the enactment of the Americans with Disabilities Act and Individuals with Disabilities Education Acts (IDEA) of 1990 and 1997 guided the education community to understand that comprehensive development classrooms were not the best environment for educating students with disabilities.

Continued legislation like updates to IDEA and the enactment of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), have actually served as a force to push public school systems to embrace and develop a more inclusionary practice in educating students with disabilities. The sound foundation of Inclusion helps to identify that all students with assistance are able to learn and that public education must adhere and provide the opportunity for students with disabilities to receive equal education (Karagiannis, A., Stainback, S., & Stainback, W., 1996) (Friend, M. P. & Bursuck, W. D., 2012) (Turnbull, A. Turnbull, R & Wehmeyer, M, 2010).

Through support from research, advocates and many educational experts who conclude that inclusionary practices are better environments for providing the best environment for academic enrichment of student with disabilities. In the 1990's, research published after a completed study of the Ravenswood Project, concluded that both students with disabilities and their nondisabled counterparts experienced academic enhancement in that there were no decreases in the academic aptitude of non-disable students and increases in academic attainment of students with disabilities. Results like the aforementioned from an inclusionary study of students in a high school setting, helped to foster the benefits of PSE Inclusion for students with intellectual disabilities at postsecondary institutions (Lombardi, T. P., Nuzzo, D. L., Kennedy, K. D., & Foshay, J., 1994). However, evidence of benefits from inclusionary practices is not an end all for implementation of Inclusion at the postsecondary levels of public education. Educational leaders at the postsecondary level must also accept and gain understanding of the critical elements associated with Inclusion. Acknowledgement of the elements is just the precursor to the development and institutionalization of Inclusion by postsecondary education systems. Acceptance of the formalized pedagogy associated with Inclusion must be adhered to by implementers of PSE programs for inclusionary components critical for implementation can produce success (Vaughn, S., Schumm, J.S., Klingner, J. & Saumell, L., 1995).

Implementation of Inclusion is a process that takes considerable planning and cooperation at all levels associated with the process but especially for programs being instituted at the postsecondary level of public education. An important element is that there must be a true level of acceptance by senior administrators that Inclusion is in the best interest of their community and their higher education environment. This acceptance must be affirmed and translated to faculty, staff, students and parents of PSE program students. Once acceptance is established a comprehensive plan must be developed to establish the level of Inclusion for the student participants in the following areas; the academic subjects and core instructors involved in the program, how the PSE program will affect students and parents that will be involved, and how it will affect the whole campus community. In order for there to be an assurance all of the aforementioned stakeholders must be involved in the whole process starting with the drafting of comprehensive PSE planning. After everyone has contributed the implementation team must be committed to translate that the campus community is undergoing an addition that is in everyone's best interest. One of the most crucial stakeholders to implementation success is the academic and counseling staff associate with the PSE program. PSE program staff must be assured that they have real support from higher education administrators. They must believe that resources like training and professional development will be made available to everyone involved in the plans implementation which will address mandates by IDEA as it relates to transition that the program is being implemented by highly qualified instructors (Mastropieri, M.A. & Scruggs, T.E., 2001).

Developing a theoretical repertoire of information, policies, mandates and practices that are aligned with Inclusion is something that is very important to the implementation of programs associated with my academic and professional pursuit as a director of a postsecondary (PSE) Inclusion program. PSE programs are being implemented all across the nation on higher educational campuses. In the current position that (consider deleting) I hold in higher education, it is my duty to research and implement a PSE at the University of Memphis that exemplifies the best in PSE programming for students with intellectual disabilities. Just like inclusionary programs at the secondary level PSE

programs must also adhere to all the critical elements associated with the implementation of successful inclusion for college based programs to be effective for students with intellectual disabilities. Gaining a sound foundation in how Inclusion is designed and executed fosters a better opportunity for effectiveness in the leadership of Inclusion at the higher educational institution. Inclusion is a perspective that allows all educational systems to adapt to a collaborative approach to providing the least restrictive environment for educating students with disabilities. The development of a comprehensive plan that partners all of the resources available to public educational systems allows for the true inclusion of students with disabilities to receive the best available education that the public can provide. Ensuring that the development of inclusion programs coincide with the current laws and expectations of the public agenda allows for an environment that produces success through inclusive education in public systems of secondary and postsecondary educational systems.

Summary

In reviewing the few programs featured in this review it has truly allowed for the understanding of the types of PSE programs being offered across the nation. It is without a doubt that PSE programs are opening up doors of opportunity for students with intellectual disabilities to gain the experience and benefits offered in a college environment. Cost associated with the featured PSE programs vary from state to state with the higher end programs being offered at private higher educational institutions. Most of the programs do offer needs based scholarship to help economically disadvantaged youth gain access to the benefits of PSE programs. All of the PSE programs reviewed offered a vocational and career component to their curriculum delivery of academic course work. The programs are mainly student centered with a goal of helping to build self advocacy within the student population while also enhancing the students to live independently. Whether living on campus or off campus student participants are encouraged and received many opportunities to be included in the regular college classroom with their

peers without a disability allowing for the great social exchange associated with college life. The information presented in this review will help not only the University of Memphis' partnership with Memphis City Schools and other agencies and organizations seeking to develop a PSE in the Memphis area for students with intellectual disabilities, but can be used as a tool of reference for any partnership seeking to develop an understanding about the roles, responsibilities and importance of implementing a PSE in their community.

Action Plan

Hart (2009), respected researcher in the field of postsecondary transition concludes that the development of an individualized employment and education plan is the most valuable tool to predicting success for students with disabilities succeeding after high school. The main goal I wish to accomplish is associated with my management skills and time management. I want to maintain an effective use of my time with students, so that no time is spent idle when delivering services. Time is very limited with the CCTP-2 students in that they arrive on many occasions late due to public transportation problems. My time with students is sometimes not optimal when the students are not delivered to school on time or worse when administrative duties associated with facilitating the program causes interruption in my delivery of services to the cohort. Secondly, I wish to learn and gain an understanding of how individual students learn to maximize the time we have together. A final goal of my action plan is to use what I have learned of best practices in employability and workforce readiness to efficiently use the time I have with students. I want to do this by using the curriculum and effective supplemental materials to enhance each student's understanding and attainment of the skills associated with postsecondary education programs to facilitate their full understanding of what a teacher will need to become successful in their pursuit of independence and employment.

Week One

Monday- CCTP-2 (cohort 2), arrived on campus one hour later than they were scheduled. Once they were in the classroom we immediately began the morning with the distribution of classroom rules and policies that will govern their interaction while participating in the CCTP cohort-2 program for the semester. Students were given vocabulary definitions of words associated with the College Campus Transition Program CCTP, the Memphis City Schools Code of Conduct that also transferred with the students attending the program. Students were asked to read along with me both the code of conduct and CCTP rules. All students were prompted to make sure they had a clear understanding of classroom expectations and operations. By the time I finished the explanation of rules students were allowed to exit for their lunch break. The lunch break took about an hour leaving only one hour for follow-up on classroom rules and program guidelines. The cohort was given a verbal quiz about the rules to assure that (consider deleting) they had gained an understanding of the classroom rules.

Tuesday – Cohort-2 arrived on campus thirty minutes later than their scheduled time. However, the schedule for the day was centered on the facilitation of meetings with the cohort's DRS counselor completion of needed forms and signatures to cover the students participation in the program including signatures of the student's Individual Plan for Employment, and the releasing of each student's medical and psychological evaluation as prescribed by the department of rehabilitation services associated with the students agreement to allow the Institute on Disability to serve as their Community Rehabilitation Provider (CRP). The process ended up consuming the entire day.

Wednesday – Cohort-2 arrived on time to campus. The cohort was truly ready to begin their education and employment training. Students were assigned the task of developing their

individual career choice plan based on the three job training programs that they would rotate through during the internship phase of their individual plan of employment. The first internship for the cohort was associated with office assistants in the College of Education Institute on Disability's administrative offices. Students were given a guided tour of the office area and introduced to all personnel. Personnel described their role of responsibility associated with their assignment within the Institute. Once this process was completed the cohorts were then provided training in the following office functions. Using the office copying machine, students were guided in how to turn on and off the copier, how to feed documents into the copier, how to copy double sided documents. Students were then asked to complete a specific copying job that allowed for practice and mastery of using the office copier machine. Visual observation was used to assess that each student became proficient in completing the task. After the training process was completed the cohort was asked questions to see if they had a clear understanding of the process. Students were then allowed to go to lunch. After the lunch period students were given a packet of information that they had to complete copying for the purpose of demonstrating that they were proficient in operation the office copying machine. After their copying task practice was completed students were given instructions on how they did in the completion of the process.

Thursday – Cohort 2 was one hour late arriving to the campus. Students were given instructions on (consider concerning) how to file documents in the storage file cabinets in the UMID office. The instruction included a process of understanding how to alphabetize files and how alphabetizing was crucial to completing the task of filing correctly. Students were given a listing of the alphabet and a series of lettering that displayed how each letter in the name on a file was important to the process of filing folders. After the verbal instructions were completed

students were given a visual demonstration of the process. In the visual process students were given a listing of names in categories associated with the alphabet showing how names in the A category that started with last names and how the second, third, fourth, and even fifth letter could determine where the file would be filed under the letter A category in the file drawer. To assess if the students were retaining the information each student was given a series of names on cards and asked to place them in alpha order based on the letters associated with the name. After the lunch period students returned and were given a written assessment to show their progression of knowledge in understanding the filing process. The assessment was scored and three of students were given 100% proficiency scores however, two of the cohort students received scores below 80% and thereby were given refresher training in the process.

Friday – Cohort -2 students are not schedule to attend class on Fridays which allowed me time to complete administrative duties associated with facilitating the program. It was on this day each week I wrote reflections in my journal of how I believed I did or did not use my time with students effectively. I also used this time to write reflections of each student’s progress or non-progression in grasping task and skills associated with training during the week. It is also during this time that I met with the classroom teacher and paraprofessional to reflect on the actual goals and objectives associated with the defined lesson plan to assure that I master the delivery of the employability components of the work-base learning policies associated with each student’s community based instruction curriculum.

Week Two

Monday – Cohort-2 students arrived on campus on time. Students were given an overall assessment rating for the filing task. The two students who didn’t reach proficiency were given the opportunity to redo their filing skills assessment over_ again (consider deleting over again—

period after assessment and begin new sentence with after) after they were finished both students reached a proficiency level of 95%. This allowed the full cohort to move forward with the next task associated with the training process. The task assessment students were given a set of twenty-five files consisting of various names students were asked to place the files in alphabetical order for filing. This process took more time than was originally allocated for the task. After all students were completed with the task a visual review of each students work was completed. Unfortunately, none of the students reached 90% proficiency. This was puzzling but, to make sure that the students were given better instructions I went through each stack with the students individually reminding the students how the alpha process for filing was conducted each student seemed to gain a better understanding of the alpha filling process. After the students returned from lunch each given a new completely different stack of twenty-five files to place in alpha order for filing. The students took their time in the process making sure that they followed instructions the way they were given in the demonstration process of my one-on-one re-demonstration. However, time didn't allow for completion before the students to leave for the day.

Tuesday- Students arrived on time for class. Students were told to pick up where they left off on the process of alphabetizing their files. After completion it was refreshing when after reviewing their work all students reached 100% proficiency in completion of the task. After the alpha task was completed students were then asked to compile their groups of files in alpha order for filing the files in the file cabinet. The task was demonstrated for the students as a process that was identical to their individual tasks each student was told to sort their files in piles that were associated with the alphabet then they were assigned a series of letters to complete the alpha filing for their respective letters. All students completed the task with 100% proficiency.

Students then placed the files in the file cabinet without any mistakes. This completed the filing training component of their office assistant curriculum. Students were then introduced to the shredding process. Students received a demonstration of how the shredding machine operated. Each student was given the opportunity to shred documents. A visual observation of each student was conducted to assure that they were mastering the task of shredding documents. Once this was completed each student was then shown five documents they were asked to pull from each file assigned to them for the purpose of shredding. After lunch each student was asked to pull the documents from twenty different files for the purpose of shredding. The students were successful in the identification of the documents needed for the shredding process. Students then were allowed to shred their documents. The task was completed with 100% proficiency by the full cohort. As a reward for the completion of the skills task students were rewarded with chips and sodas purchased in the UC for a treat for successful work. I explained to the students that in the workforce a manager will sometimes reward workers for the completion of a work task.

Wednesday – Students arrived to campus one and half hours late due to their bus breaking down and a replacement bus having to be sent by MATA. Nevertheless, student were told when they arrived that they would be assessed on their retention of knowledge associated with the task of filing, sorting, pulling documents from a file, shredding and refilling of files. Each student was given a total of twenty-five files they were given a copy of the five documents that needed to be pulled from the file for shredding. Each student was instructed that once they pulled documents for shredding, they would have to bring those files to a graduate assistant for approval to shred the documents. Once that task was completed each student was assigned the task of refilling the files they were given. When that task was completed they were told they had to be assessed on their job by their assigned graduate assistant to assure that they had refilled

each file correctly. The process took the entire time before and after lunch but once completed the students was given proficiency scores for the entire process. One student received a perfect score of 100% proficiency, two students received proficiency scores of 95% and the remaining two students received scores of 85%. The students were told their scores and those who didn't reach perfect proficiency were given full explanations concerning their mistakes so they could gain a better mastery of the skill of office assistant filing duties.

Thursday – students arrived on time for class. Students were introduced to a new task which was associated with communication. Students were given a written script on how to answer the telephone in the office of the Institute on Disability. Students were verbally taught how to say the script and to phonetically pronounce each word on the script. After several practice runs on how to pronounce each word in the script, students were given a chance to practice the script for the students to gain a level of comfort on answering the phone for the UMID office. Students spent the rest of the morning practicing their script. After lunch each student was given the task of actually answering the phone when they were called by graduate assistants. This process seemed quite challenging for all students. In an effort not to overwhelm the students they were given the script to take home and told to practice the script by calling each other and answering each other as if they were in the office answering the UMID office phone.

Friday – Cohort -2 students are not schedule to attend class on Fridays which allows time for me to complete administrative duties associated with facilitating the program. It is on this day each week that I use the time to write reflections in my journal of how I believe I did or did not use my time with students effectively. I also wrote reflections of each student's progression or non progression in grasping tasks and skills associated with training during the week. It is also during this time that I meet with the classroom teacher and paraprofessional to

reflect on the actual goals and objectives associated with the defined lesson plan to assure that I am mastering the delivery of the employability components of the work-base learning policies associated with each student's community based instruction curriculum and individual plan for employment.

Week Three

Monday – Students didn't attend school this day due to a scheduled teacher administration day.

Tuesday – Cohort -2 arrived on campus on time. Students were asked how the practice on the phone answering script went over the extended break. Most responded that they believe they were ready to try out their communication skills. All students were given an opportunity to answer the office phone using their script. After several continuous attempts it became obvious that students who had better reading skills were able to make the transition to memory and were very successful in communicating the script on the phone when answering however, students with lower reading level skills were still having a problem completing the phone answering tasks. Students were given additional one-on-one tutoring on the phone answering communication skills and allowed to resume the process after lunch. After a full day of practicing three of the students were almost totally proficient in mastering the phone communications skills task, while two of the students seemed to truly have problems with the phone communications skills assessment.

Wednesday – Students arrived on time. Cohorts 1 & 2 were scheduled for a community-based instruction field trip to observe communication workers in downtown area hotels. Students received tours of the reservation areas in the Westin, Peabody and Marriott hotels where they observed reservation agents answering the telephone and taking reservations.

Students were not allowed to answer calls, but they were allowed to sit next to reservation agents as they answered calls and took reservations for callers. After the work-based learning experience students were taken to lunch at a downtown eatery. After lunch students were asked to write about their trip experience in their journals and if they could use their experience to help them with their skills associated with phone communication.

Thursday – Students arrived forty-five minutes late to campus. The day was a transition day in which the second phase of employment training was explained to students. Students were told that their next training would focus on working in the food service industry. Students were shown a video about working in the food service industry. Once the video was over students were taken on a community-based instruction field trip to tour the Kemmons Wilson School of Hospitality Management, the Fogelman Executive Center and the Holiday Inn on the University campus. After the tour students were taken to lunch in the Tiger Den where they were given the experience of eating in the all you can eat buffet areas. After lunch students were greeted by Tiger den manager and several employees who would facilitate their job shadowing which help them understand the tasks that they would be taught about the different jobs in the Tiger Den. While employees demonstrated the different job tasks I recorded all of the tasks on my I-Pad so that we could use the videos to facilitate training in the classroom.

Friday – Cohort -2 students are not schedule to attend class on Fridays which allows time for me to complete administrative duties associated with facilitating the program. It is on this day each week that I use the time to write reflections in my journal of how I believe I did or did not use my time with students effectively. I also use this time to write reflections of each student's progression or non progression in grasping tasks and skills associated with training during the week. It is also during this time that I meet with the classroom teacher and

paraprofessional to reflect on the actual goals and objectives associated with the defined lesson plan to assure that I am mastering the delivery of the employability components of the work-base learning policies associated with each student's community based instruction curriculum and individual plan for employment.

Week Four

Monday – Students arrived on campus on time. Immediately once they arrived we immediately began the process of reviewing the videos of the following job shadowing tasks that would be completed during the internship in the Tiger Den. The jobs that the cohorts would experience during their internship in the Tiger Den which included; table wiping and napkin holder refilling, trash removal, Hobart dish washing, item stocking, sweeping and mopping floors and cook assistant. After reviewing the videos students were given the opportunity to choose three different task areas they wanted the opportunity to job shadow and gain a mastery of the skills associated with the different job tasks. An interesting note about the students' choices for job shadowing experiences was that the three male students chose to gain experience in the Hobart dish washing, trash removal and sweeping and mopping floors, while the two female students chose to gain experience in table wiping and napkin refilling and item stocking. And, only one of the male students showed an interest in the area of cook assistant.

Tuesday – Students arrived on time to campus. Immediately upon arrival students were accompanied to the Ned R. McWherter Library, where they were given a guided tour of the library by library staff who had been assigned to give them tours of the different areas where they would receive job shadowing training. The areas included the collections department's book collection area, where students would receive training in book shelving, book receiving, book collection, packing and receiving of new books, packing and mailing of book loan requests

and in the Dean's office as an office assistant. As students were receiving the tour a video was made of each of the job tasks being demonstrated so that students could review the videos for the purpose of selecting the job tasks that they wished to learn for their internships. After lunch students were shown the videos and asked to decide which job tasks they wished to learn during their internship experience. Four of the students chose to complete their internship experience in the collect department, only one student chose to intern in the office of the Dean.

Wednesday – Students arrived on campus on time. Students were told that they would be taking a CBI to the Benjamin Hooks Public Library. Once they arrived at the library they received guided tours of the many different areas of the library. They received training in how to use the library and were allowed to shadow employees in the collection department. Students were then taken through the process of acquiring a public library card. After receiving their cards students were encouraged to check a book to read about something that interested them. After touring the public library we treated students to Cici's Pizzas all you can eat restaurant where we discussed the tours of both libraries. Students were assigned the task of writing in their journals about the library tours and if they believed they would consider applying for a job in the library. While at Cici's, we went over what would be the schedule once students returned from their fall break. I explained to students that I would not return until the Wednesday, after the fall break because I was scheduled to attend the 2nd Annual Tennessee Conference on Exceptional Children, in Nashville, TN.

Thursday – Both cohort 1 & 2 and teachers were out for the MCS fall break.

Friday – Both cohort 1 & 2 and teachers were out for MCS fall break.

Week Five

Monday – Cohort -2 students out due to the University's fall break.

Tuesday – Cohort -2 students out due to University’s fall break.

Wednesday - Students arrived on campus on time. Students were told that we would spend the next two weeks learning how to prepare a resume, how to write a cover letter and how to fully complete a job application. Students were given three examples of resumes. They were instructed on what each area represented starting with the heading and why it was important to include their name, address, contact numbers, and email address. Then students were given some action words to choose from that described their attributes as workers. Then students were asked questions about jobs they had experience doing. All had never had a formal job so they were asked to describe some of the jobs they had done around the house. After each student explained the types of jobs they had done around the house in their neighborhood, they were asked to describe things that they had done in the community. After these descriptions were written down one by one I met with each student to help them turn their household chores and community involvement into work experiences. Then each student was asked to write down their educational experiences from middle school to high school and all extra curricula activities that they had participate in while they were in school. I then gave each student the name and address. Each student was then given the name and address by myself, their teacher and the paraprofessional to use as references on their resume. Once each student had completed gathering the different information associated with their resume they were teamed up with graduate assistants to complete the structuring of their individual resume on the computer. This activity was continued after the lunch period. However, no one had completed the task by the end of the day so students were told we would complete and print resumes the next day.

Thursday – Students arrived on time to campus. We continued the resume writing task with each student answering questions about the process and assisting students in typing their

resumes on their lap top computers. Once each student's resume was completed they were saved on their flash drives and then printed. Students were told after lunch we would begin the process of constructing a cover letter to accompany their resumes. After lunch students were given three examples of cover letters and received a power point presentation on constructing a cover letter. Once students understood the process of constructing a cover letter each student was aided by support staff to help them complete their cover letters. Once cover letters were completed they were also saved and printed for each student. Students were told that when they returned on Monday they would receive instructions on fully completing a job application.

Friday – Cohort -2 students were not schedule to attend class on Fridays which allows time for me to complete administrative duties associated with facilitating the program. It is on this day each week that I use the time to write reflections in my journal of how I believe I did or did not use my time with students effectively. I also use this time to write reflections of each student's progression or non progression in grasping tasks and skills associated with training during the week. It is also during this time that I meet with the classroom teacher and paraprofessional to reflect on the actual goals and objectives associated with the defined lesson plan to assure that I am mastering the delivery of the employability components of the work-base learning policies associated with each student's community based instruction curriculum and individual plan for employment.

Week Six -

Monday - Students arrived on time to campus. After arrival students were presented a power point presentation on how to fill out a job application by using their resumes to obtain the information needed to fill out the application. Students were then showed by use of the mass media board in the classroom how to write the application information on their trail application.

Students were told that writing legibly was one of the most important points to completing an application. Then students were then told of the importance of completely filling out the application. We were able to get one practice application completed before lunch time and after lunch each student's application was reviewed and they were told what was right and wrong about their application. Students were told that over the next three days the process would be repeated until they became proficient in filling out a job application.

Tuesday – Students were one hour late arriving do to MATA being late picking them up for transportation to campus. Once on campus students were reminded of the mistakes made on their previously filled out application. Students were given two more blank applications to fill out this process was complete before and after lunch. Students were once again assessed on things that were right and wrong on their filled out applications and told that they would repeat the process again the next day. Although students were getting the hang of filling out the application completely legibility was lacking on at least three of the five students application. However, two of the students were assessed as completing the application with 90% proficiency and were told that they would not have to repeat the exercise on the following days.

Wednesday – Students did not arrive on campus at all due to a mix up in the arrangements made for their transportation by MATA staff.

Thursday - Students arrived to campus on time. The application process was continued for thereof the cohort -2 students the other two students were allowed to remain in the main classroom to assist cohort – 1 and the teacher with developing career exploration goals. The remaining two students were once again assisted in developing a legible application before and after lunch. However, the student's applications were assessed by staff as still not legible. The students were instructed to concentrate on writing slower and on how to take their time in filling

out the application both students seemed to become more frustrated with the process so they were allowed to end the application process with applications that were assessed as only reaching 70% of proficiency.

Friday – Cohort -2 students are not schedule to attend class on Friday's which allows time for me to complete administrative duties associated with facilitating the program. It is on this day each week that I use the time to write reflections in my journal of how I believe I did or did not use my time with students effectively. I also use this time to write reflections of each student's progression or non progression in grasping tasks and skills associated with training during the week. Also during this time that I met with the classroom teacher and paraprofessional to reflect on the actual goals and objectives associated with the defined lesson plan to assure that I am mastering the delivery of the employability components of the work-base learning policies associated with each student's community based instruction curriculum and individual plan for employment.

Data Collection

Data was collected systematically to document my teaching, actions, and the impact of my teaching job development services on the participants in my class associated with the CCTP program. Data was also collected to document the actions of the participants involved in my action plan. (Consider a sentence listing data collection tools)

Data Used to Document my Actions, Thoughts, and Feelings

Research Journal: During the six weeks, I documented my actions, thoughts, and feelings through a research journal. The journal was an informal way for me to reflect upon the things that acquired during my sessions with the participants. In the journal I recorded the daily activities that transpired, how the activity was carried out, how I felt about the activity, whether the activity was affective or not, and any other pertinent actions that warranted recording. Daily activities with the participants were recorded as a way for me to effectively document if I was maintaining good timing, delivering the needs of each participants individual plan for employment and to reflect on if students were not progressing ways for me to re-tool the lesson so that they would receive the instructions being delivered.

Instructional plans: All instructional plans guided by the student's individualized plan for employment was agreed upon by the student's department of rehabilitation counselor and guidelines administered by the CCTP, as it related to job coaching and job development. Each student's plans were aligned with their individual choices for job shadowing and internship placements once they completed their workforce readiness and employability training. This training was routine in the areas of learning workforce readiness, what to do in the work environment as it related to office skills, communication skills, and associated academic language associated with the work environment. Employability skills related to understanding how to search for a job, understanding how to read want ads, developing a cover letter, developing a resume, and filling out a complete job application.

Weekly reflections: As stated in the action plan weekly I would participate in a service providers meeting with the classroom teacher, the teaching assistant and myself would reflect on what went right or wrong during the week in areas where participants were not progressing and any areas that needed improving to assure that participants were receiving the services that they

had requested in their individual plan for employment. The scope of this meeting was to allow me to prescribe needed interventions in the delivery of the academic components which allowed for optimum achievement of employability goals.

Observations: During my daily observations it was apparent that the participants were truly paying attention in their academic courses which led to continued progress when they would come to me for employability and workforce readiness skills training. Individually the participants were able to give me feedback on areas where they felt they needed a little extra time with me one-on-one to help them grasp a particular skill set. Although, none of the students received 100% proficiency in all areas, all students maintained at least an 80% proficiency in all areas leading them to being able to complete their employability and workforce readiness skills sets in plenty enough time to begin their individual job shadowing and internship placements. At the end of the employability and workforce readiness skills set training, participant one completed their training with a 100% proficiency in office assistant skills, 95% proficiency in office communication skills, 90% proficiency in cover letter writing skills, 95% proficiency in resume building skills, and 100% proficiency in application completion skills. Participant two completed their training with a 100% proficiency in office assistant skills, 95% proficiency in office communication skills, 90% proficiency in cover letter writing skills, 95% proficiency in resume building skills, and 90% proficiency in application completion skills. Participant three completed their training with a 100% proficiency in office assistant skills, 95% proficiency in office communication skills, 90% proficiency in cover letter writing skills, 95% proficiency in resume building skills, and 90% proficiency in application completion skills. . Participant four completed their training with an 80% proficiency in office assistant skills, 75% proficiency in office communication skills, 85% proficiency in cover letter writing skills, 80% proficiency in

resume building skills, and 90% proficiency in application completion skills. . Participant five completed their training with a 95% proficiency in office assistant skills, 90% proficiency in office communication skills, 90% proficiency in cover letter writing skills, 95% proficiency in resume building skills, and 95% proficiency in application completion skills.

Used Assessment tools: In an effort to measure changes in the achievement and knowledge increased by participants, the academic instructional teacher administered prior to participants coming to me for employability and workforce readiness training a pre Kaufman Test of educational Attainment (KTEA-II) and a pre Life Center Career Education (LCCE knowledge battery) so that we could see any observable changes in the academic and career knowledge base of participants after their participation in the CCTP employability and workforce readiness skills set training. At the end of the training program the academic teacher administered a post test of both assessment tools the following scores were recorded by the participants on the two post assessments. Participant one – pre KTEA-II; reading 3, writing 2.5, and math 2.5; post KTEA-II reading 3, writing 3, and math 2.5. Participant two – pre KTEA-II; reading 3, writing 3, and math 3; post KTEA-II reading 3.5, writing 3, and math 3. Participant three – pre KTEA-II; reading 4, writing 3.5, and math 3; post KTEA-II reading 4, writing 4, and math 3. Participant four – pre KTEA-II; reading 2, writing 1, and math 2; post KTEA-II reading 2, writing 2, and math 2. Participant five – pre KTEA-II; reading 3.5, writing 4, and math 2; post KTEA-II reading 4, writing 4, and math 3.5. The academic teacher also conducted a pre and post knowledge battery using the LCCE the following were the results of the participants; Participant one – pre LCCE; daily living 73, personal social 76, occupational 55, post LCCE; daily living 81, personal social 89, and occupational 68. Participant two – pre LCCE; daily living 78, personal social 71, occupational 55, post LCCE; daily living 79, personal social 84,

and occupational 79. Participant three – pre LCCE; daily living 70, personal social 79, occupational 60, post LCCE; daily living 77, personal social 85, and occupational 67. Participant four – pre LCCE; daily living 75, personal social 57, occupational 50, post LCCE; daily living 83, personal social 69, and occupational 70. Participant five – pre LCCE; daily living 70, personal social 74, occupational 50, post LCCE; daily living 83, personal social 79, and occupational 70.

Analyzing the DATA

When analyzing the reflective data recorded in my daily journal I realized a trend emerged on the dates that students were late arriving on campus. On those dates I noticed that my ability to truly provide the in depth focus on skills was not as smooth as it was on days when participants arrived on time. Another trend that I recognized was that on days when students were on time I was able to provide more one-on-one assistance to the participants when they were not progressing in the area of focus on that day. Another reflection that was a repeating trend in my journal was that although I made an effort to minimize interruptions in my time spent with the participants, Mondays and Wednesdays seem to always have interruptions due to the fact that I also served as the administrator of the program. However, overall when reviewing my reflections I believe that I was able to maintain an efficient use of my time as it related to providing services to the participants and I believe that the students truly benefitted from the services.

In relationship to my delivery of employability and workforce readiness skills training my journal reflections revealed that the delivery of services were enhanced by the fact that students were able to leave the academic classroom and come to the UMID office, where I was able to hold collective meetings with the participants then allowing them to go into their own

individual offices to complete tasks after group sessions. This afforded a better environment for individual one-on-one sessions which allowed me to focus on each participant's individual needs as it related to their progression in the areas of employability and workforce readiness skill set attainment. It is also my belief that the participants being able to work in an individual office helped each of them truly understand the elements of being in a work setting that support their self-esteem and their understanding of the workforce environment. When observing the participants in the office settings, each participant felt comfortable discussing their weaknesses and accepting constructive criticism that they were able to except and adopt the suggestions to aid them in reaching the level of progression needed to progress toward successful attainment of the skill sets.

In assessing the pre and post-test assessments it is with great relief to see that each of the participants made some form of gain in many of the areas associated with both assessment batteries. Of particular note, two students made substantial gains in their academic assessments. Moreover, all students made significant gains in their occupational battery. These gains gave sound affirmation to the understanding that the training provided helped to the participants which correlated with their improved knowledge base about employment and independent living skills which is the overarching goal of the College Campus Transition Program.

Intervening Variables

MATA Plus Transportation Services: There is no doubt that the most intervening variable associated with this action research project was the inability of the city's public transportation system being able to deliver the participants to campus on an on-time basis. The participants were literally late to campus at least once a week, sometimes twice in a week and on one occasion not being transported at all to the campus. This variable not only interrupted the

time management plan but, also added to the lowering of the participants self-esteem in that when they were late they were very disappointed and one the occasion that they weren't pick-up at all the students truly felt less than, in that they had to depend upon the MATA plus system to provide them transportation to an opportunity they believe they truly needed.

Fall Break and Exceptional Children Conference: Although, both of these events were already planned and placed on the participants schedules it still kept the participants from receiving valuable time with me and their academic instructors which they believe made them not receive all they could have received during the missed time. Nevertheless, the break and the conference did provide needed professional development time for both teachers and me the programs job coach mentor and director.

Conclusion

Reflection on the data associated with this action research revealed three things which became themes as it relates to providing transitional services for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities post high school. First is that a program like CCTP is most definitely needed in this county to help the hundreds of students who exit high school without a clue to what they will do with the rest of their life. The CCTP program allowed young adult students the opportunity to attend classes on a college campus just like their graduating high school peers without a doubt gave a serious boost to the participant's self-esteem levels. The opportunities also allowed for the first time a comprehensive partnership to be developed between the city's school district special education departments, the local rehabilitation agency and the areas premiere urban research higher education institution. Most particularly the opportunity has allowed students in their graduate and undergraduate educational programs to participate in grounded research that allows them to practice the theoretical framework associated with their

academic disciplines. This action research has also helped the University's Institute on Disability create lasting partnerships that will enable the Institute and the Special Education department to maintain shared connections with the city's department of Exceptional Children that will foster further support of collaborative research. But, most importantly it has allowed an opportunity to be instituted that will benefit more individuals to gain access to a postsecondary institution that may otherwise never get the chance to go to college.

Another great finding that this action research has provided is that it has served as a true pilot for the development of a comprehensive transition program that will be inaugurated in the spring semester entitled, "Tiger LIFE – Learning Independence Fostering Employment and Education", the CCTP pilot program gave the Institute valuable insight to issues and concerns of the community and helped to provide the practice needed to make sure that the Institute was ready and equipped to successful launch a more inclusive program for the main campus. Although, CCTP, will continue in the future providing services for students from the local school district at no cost to participants because of the partnership between the Institute, MCS/SCS and the local rehabilitation agency, students who complete the CCTP program will soon have an opportunity to register for Tiger LIFE which enhance even more their abilities to become successfully independent and employable.

Next Step

The next step for this action research is important for this community information associated with this research should be disseminated to all areas associated with providing services for transitional youth and young adults seeking an opportunity to gain employability and workforce readiness skills to become independent after high school. Also, in the area of future research a study should be conducted that measures how successful a program like this could be

for high school graduates that are not members of the special education community. With dropout rates still remaining a serious issue in a city like Memphis. It is the opinion of this researcher that a program like CCTP can and will benefit high school dropouts and even students who are not academically ready for a four or two year college curriculum. However, it is important to note that as many across the nation seek to develop PSE programming for students with intellectual or developmental disabilities it is most important that they keep the programs person center and acknowledge that partnerships between systems can make the difference. The Institutes introduction of Tiger LIFE has truly benefited from CCTP's pilot and many in this community will benefit from the low cost share that the Institute has been able to assign for attendance in the Tiger LIFE program which will be cost that is 50% lower than the program offered at Vanderbilt, 25% lower than the program offered at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville, which are all cheaper than programs cited in this research. So overall I feel pretty good that in the state of Tennessee, PSEs are a true best but for the participants dollars and they don't have to leave the state to gain an opportunity.

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