

Transition Portfolio

By:

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MASTER OF EDUCATION

In

Special Education

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## Synopsis

### **Vision Statement**

My personal vision is to treat all students and staff with equity and respect. I will provide a positive learning environment for all students whether it is in a school setting or a community setting. I will focus on creating positive outcomes for students from culturally and linguistic diverse (CLD) backgrounds and ensure these students have access to culturally responsive transition planning support.

### **Career Goals**

My current career goals include graduating with my Master's degree from Utah State University, participating in research in the areas of equity in transition services for students from CLD backgrounds, and improving my skills as an instructional coach. My long-term career goals include getting a PhD and working with pre-service teachers in pursuit of their teaching license. Future research topics of interest are culturally responsive transition curriculum and instructional coaching.

### **Summary of Career Activities**

I have worked in special education for 9 years. My current job is with Utah Virtual Academy. As a teacher in this capacity, I worked with transition-age students. My teaching responsibilities included teaching math and reading classes, administering transition assessments, creating Individual Education Plan (IEP) present level statements and goals based on the transition assessments, and completing community-based training involving discovery activities and public transportation training. As an instructional facilitator at Utah Virtual Academy, I am involved in personnel training on a variety of topics including transition-related trainings.

Research Literature Review

Teaching Culturally Responsive Self-determination Skills to English Language Learners  
Receiving Special Education Services for Mild-Moderate Disabilities

By:

Sarah Atkinson

A Literature Review

In partial fulfillment of a degree of

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## Introduction

Teaching self-determination skills to individuals with disabilities has been shown to be successful in helping them become more actively involved in their own future (Algozzine et al., 2001). Self-determination has been defined by Field and Hoffman (1994) as “the ability to define and achieve goals based on the foundation of knowing and valuing oneself” (p. 164). However, students receiving special education services who are from culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) backgrounds have continued to struggle to get the necessary training in self-determination skills that are culturally responsive (Shogren, 2012). Wolf and Duran (2013) defined cultural and linguistic diversity in the U.S. as “individuals whose primary language is not English and/or who are not European American” (p. 5). In this literature review, I focused on the Hispanic/Latino culture and community.

It is important to note that self-determination has been a culturally-bound concept from its inception. Self-determination skills are those valued by the majority culture but not necessarily valued by individuals with CLD backgrounds who live in the U.S. (Greene, 2014; Rueda et al., 2005; Trainor, 2002). According to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act [IDEA] of 2004 (P.L. 108-446), independent living skill was one of the three areas of focus for transition planning for students with disabilities. Independent living skills have been defined by Morgan and Riesen (2016) as skills “necessary to participate meaningfully in residential and community environments” (p. 200). Independent living is an example of a self-determination skill valued by the majority culture, but that conflicts with some CLD cultures. Rueda et al. (2005) stated that independent living was viewed as an undesirable option for students in Hispanic and

Latino communities because there was more emphasis placed on interdependency within the family setting. According to Delgado-Gaitan (2004), interdependency has been practiced and valued as a strength in the Latino community instead of a weakness.

Delgado-Gaitan has defined interdependency as the concept that “allows individuals to give and receive help” (p 10). In Latino communities, interdependency has not meant that an individual from that community has not been a responsible member of the family and community. Successful practicing of interdependency has meant that all members of the family and community have had a built-in support system.

Some parents from CLD backgrounds have had a history of negative experiences in working with special education staff in the transition planning process. According to several studies (Delgado-Gaitan, 2004; Greene, 2014; Trainor, 2002), parents have felt ignored and disrespected as they have tried to advocate for their children. This has led to strained working relationships for many parents and school personnel. There have been a number of studies (Greene, 2014; Shogren, 2012; Gil-Kashiwabara et al., 2012; Rodriquez & Cavendish, 2012; Salas, 2004) that have indicated what parents wanted and desired to see when working with school personnel in the transition planning process. In these five studies, the authors stated that parents in Hispanic/Latino communities wanted respect for family cultures and beliefs, inclusion in the decision-making process for educational goals for their students, and information about how special education programs and other school programs worked.

According to Greene (2014), the best way for school personnel to build a relationship of trust with parents of the students from CLD backgrounds is to respect the students’ cultural background, parents’ decisions for their students, and the strong family-

first focus that is a part of their communities. Rueda et al. (2005) also identified a similar cultural model for professionals to use when working with Latino/a students and families. Sixteen Latina mothers of students with developmental disabilities wanted professionals to teach their students basic life skills, respect the importance of the family support provided to the students, respect the mother's role in any decisions that needed to be made, have access to information, and to help their students learn skills that would enable the students to keep themselves safe in community settings.

The rationale for my research is to determine whether or not teaching culturally responsive self-determination skills that have been identified by parents would have a positive effect on student involvement in the IEP and transition planning process. Since there are documented studies conducted on what is lacking in self-determination skills for students from CLD backgrounds, my study will take the current research one step further by identifying specific culturally responsive self-determination skills and teaching these skills to students from CLD backgrounds.

### **Literature Review**

To conduct my research, I used EBSCOhost, Sage Journals, Google Scholar, ERIC, PsychINFO, JSTOR, reference sections from relevant articles, and a book chapter recommended by committee members. I searched for literature that focused on the importance of teaching self-determination skills to students who qualified and received special education services for mild/moderate disabilities. I also examined studies that focused on the importance of teaching self-determination skills to students who qualified and were receiving special education services who had also been identified as English Language Learners (ELL). In my literature search, I used search terms that included *self-*



*determination, Hispanic, Latino, English Language Learners, special education students, bilingual, culturally diverse, and student-led IEP.*

Based on my searches, I found 14 articles related to self-determination and/or English Language Learners (ELLs). However, of the 14 articles, only eight articles specifically focused on the combination of self-determination and CLD. For my literature review, I eliminated all articles that were related to self-determination only except for one landmark article that laid the groundwork and showed that teaching self-determination skills was effective. For my other three articles, I selected the articles I felt best aligned with my research topic of teaching culturally responsive self-determination skills to students who received special education services for mild-moderate disabilities and were also identified as ELLs.

The first study (Algozzine et al., 2001) conducted a narrative review of education research on self-determination. They identified 51 articles that focused on the effects of interventions put in place that promoted teaching self-determination skills to students with disabilities. The second study I chose was completed by Rodriquez and Cavendish (2012). This study focused on the differences between family environments and self-determination based on the experiences of Anglo, Latino, and female students who were identified as having a disability. The third study I reviewed was a study completed by Shogren (2012). This study focused on what perceptions Hispanic mothers had on self-determination skills. My last article I examined was a study done by Gil-Kashiwabara et al. (2012). This study focused on the type of expectations Latina and Anglo girls and their parents had for life after high school.

Algozzine et al. (2001) conducted a review of educational research that focused on the effects of interventions that promoted self-determination skills for individuals with disabilities. In this article, self-determination was the independent variable. In order to conduct their research, they used both electronic and printed resources to identify articles that fit their criteria. They used ERIC, EBSCOhost, and a number of other databases. They used 29 search terms and paired them to narrow their search results. They also used the reference sections from the previously identified, position papers, chapters, and books that all addressed the issues of self-determination. Algozzine et al. identified approximately 200 individuals who were knowledgeable about self-determination to review all the identified research.

Two individuals reviewed each potential research source (Algozzine et al., 2001). They reviewed the abstracts, method, and results sections and looked for any reference to self-determination that was applicable to the inclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria included articles from the years 1972-2002. Subjects had to be identified as having a disability and be between the ages of 3 years to adulthood. Data-based interventions had to be used, participants had to be taught a new skill, and self-determination had to be the dependent variable.

The findings in Algozzine et al. (2001) for the group design studies showed that there was a moderate effect from the self-determination interventions. The single-subject design studies also showed gains from the self-determination interventions. The weakest set of single-subject studies focused on teaching teachers how to provide choice options to students in their school settings.

The conclusion of this narrative review of education research was that the most common self-determination skills taught were choice-making for individuals with more severe intellectual disabilities and self-advocacy for individuals with learning disabilities and mild intellectual disabilities (Algozzine et al. 2001). Algozzine et al. also found that the single-subject design studies focused on teaching one skill to students while the group studies focused more on multiple skills. They found that self-determination skills were being taught in a variety of ways including large group, individual, and behavioral instruction.

Algozzine et al. (2001) recommended that further research be conducted with a more diverse group of individuals and disabilities. They also recommended that more research needed to be implemented to determine what self-determination skills had social validity. Recommendations were made for further studies on how self-determination interventions could be utilized to teach students with disabilities who have also been identified as ELLs. Since this study laid the groundwork on the effectiveness of teaching self-determination skills, it was important to examine more recent research on self-determination to determine if their findings were still accurate. Since Algozzine et al. made the recommendation of determining how self-determination interventions could be utilized with students with disabilities who have also been identified as ELLs, the next study that I reviewed examined the relationships between family environments and self-determination among Anglo, Latino, and female students with disabilities.

In the study by Rodriguez and Cavendish (2012), researchers examined how gender and ethnicity played a part in the relationship between family environments and the levels of self-determination skills students with disabilities had. The participants

consisted of 157 Latino and Anglo students who had disabilities. These students attended six different high schools located in the same school district. This school district was located in the southeast United States. Each student self-reported whether they were of Latino descent or Anglo descent. The dependent variable was the potential way in which family environments' support of self-determination may have differed depending on if a student was of Latino ethnicity and whether they were male or female.

The measures that were used to determine the level of self-determination and the family environment were the *Arc Self-Determination Scale* (SDS) and the *Family Environment Scale* (FES; Rodriguez & Cavendish, 2012). The SDS had 72 questions found in four subdomains. The subdomains covered the topics of autonomy, self-regulation, psychological empowerment, and self-realization. The FES had 90 true-false questions.

The students were identified through the district's special education database. Research team members gave the parents' permission forms to fill out before any assent forms were given to students. Once the research team received parent permission for the students to participate in the study, the SDS and FES were administered in small groups of students in the school's media center or a classroom. Each session took about 2 hours. All surveys were identified by student id number instead of the students' names.

The findings from this study were that the Latino students scored higher than the Anglo students on the SDS (Rodriguez & Cavendish, 2012). It was also found that the female students overall scored higher than the male students on the SDS. Also, Latina and Anglo students' self-determination scores were significantly higher than their male counterparts. For family environments, male students perceived a more cohesive family

unit than female students. However, the family environment was a better indicator for the levels of self-determination for female students than for male students across the board. A finding that I found particularly interesting was that for Latino students, a home environment that was perceived as more controlling led to higher scores of self-determination for male students, but not necessarily for female students.

This study led me to wonder what type of self-determination skills might be important to these students and families. The next study I reviewed examined Hispanic mothers' perspectives on self-determination and what they expected their students to know as they planned for post-high school life.

The research done by Shogren (2012) investigated the perspectives of Hispanic mothers on self-determination. The participants in this study consisted of seven Hispanic mothers whose children had severe disabilities. Each of the mothers were active participants in their children's lives. They also were well educated and had a fairly good understanding of the school system. They were all actively involved in their community helping in areas such as parent support groups, advocating on policy changes at the state level, and mentoring other Hispanic families on the IEP process. Their students' ages ranged from 14-21 years. The independent variable in this study was self-determination and the dependent variable was the Hispanic mothers' perspectives.

The experimental design that was used to investigate the effects was a phenomenological qualitative design (Shogren, 2012). This design was used in order for the researcher to gather important descriptions of the experiences these mothers had with the concept of self-determination as their students went through the transition process. In order to find Hispanic mothers who wanted to participate in this study, the researcher

contacted local parent-to-parent organization and asked for recommendations. The author gave this organization information about the study to give to two mothers whom they felt would be good candidates. The two mothers were then asked to contact the author if they wanted to participate. The two mothers contacted the author and agreed to participate in the study. After these two mothers agreed to participate, the author asked for further recommendations. This is how the other five mothers in the study were identified.

Each Hispanic mother was given a survey of five open-ended questions. Open-ended questions were used in this survey so that the author could get unanticipated and authentic answers from each of the mothers (Shogren, 2012). The author met with each mother in a setting they felt most comfortable either in their homes or at a community location. Each interview was approximately 2-3 hours in length and were audio-taped for later transcribing.

The findings revealed several themes. First, although these mothers agreed that self-determination skills were important, they did not seem to be able to make a connection between the ones that were being taught and promoted in the students' schools with the cultural and family values (Shogren, 2012). Shogren also found that these mothers had a difficult time translating what the school was saying to their students. Another finding was that these mothers did not feel like they had any sort of a true partnership with the school personnel. The mothers did not feel comfortable addressing what they felt was important because they did not feel that their view would be respected. These mothers also felt that the schools were putting a lot of emphasis on their students being independent rather than including the students' culture into the transition process.

Shogren (2012) concluded her study with considerations she felt would be important for future practices. These considerations were (a) making sure that both sides understood each other, (b) respecting family values of students, and (c) making sure that any self-determination instruction was individualized per student. These conclusions made me wonder if other studies had come up with the same items for teaching considerations. Even though the students in this study had severe disabilities and my research questions were geared more toward mild-moderate disabilities, I still felt the findings in this study were applicable based on the common thread between the studies I had reviewed so far. This led me to my last study I reviewed.

Gil-Kashiwabara and colleagues (2012) examined the expectations and experiences that Latina and Anglo girls and their parents had for post-high school life. The independent variable in this study was the relationship between culture and goals and expectations of Latina and Anglo girls who received special education services. The dependent variable was the importance of specific transition planning activities.

The participants in this study were found in two urban high schools in the Western United States (Gil-Kashiwabara et al. 2012). This study was conducted in conjunction with a larger study that examined more gender-related issues with regards to transition planning. Approximately 290 surveys were mailed to Latina females within the two chosen school districts and 230 surveys were mailed to random female students identified as Anglo. Surveys were also sent to parents of these students. Out of all the surveys mailed out, a total of 211 surveys were returned. This included all student and parent surveys. The disabilities that were represented in this study were learning, other health impaired, emotional/behavioral, hearing, visual, mobility, cognitive, and other.

There were no significant differences between the Latina and Anglo girls in terms of disabilities represented.

The measure that Gil-Kashiwabara et al. (2012) used were two versions of the *Young Adult Transition Expectations and Experiences* (YATEE). There was a parent version and a student version. Each survey included 91 questions. These questions focused on the different types of transition activities that were available to them and if these activities had actually occurred. These surveys were available in both English and Spanish. The results of the survey indicated that health insurance and having access to a good doctor were the most important areas for transition goals. The study also found that Latina girls and their parents were more likely to hold spirituality, taking care of family members, and appearance in higher regard than other transition related items. One finding in this study that I found particularly interesting is that Latina girls emphasized how important it was for them to live with their families after they finished high school. I found this finding interesting because living at home was a common thread in all of the studies I reviewed. Another finding that was of importance was the parents of Latina girls wanted them to attend college and earn a degree.

Conclusions for this study were that both Anglo and Latina girls and their parents were concerned about health insurance and medical needs. Parents felt that these issues were largely unmet by the school (Gil-Kashiwabara et al. 2012). This was of particular interest to me because I had never thought of including how students would be accessing health care or doctors after they left high school. Another conclusion was that Latina and Anglo girls with disabilities needed to have access to work-related experiences. Latina girls and parents also concluded that having more individuals from their cultural



community, including spiritual leaders, involved in the transition process would be beneficial for the student.

Based on these four studies, further research must be conducted to show if teaching culturally responsive self-determination skills to students from CLD backgrounds will enhance and contribute to better post-school outcomes for these students.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of the next study in this sequence should be to determine whether students who are from CLD backgrounds and who have been identified as ELLs will have better post-school outcomes if they are taught self-determination skills that are culturally responsive to their cultural and linguistic needs. This study should also examine whether or not teaching these skills helps students take a more active role in their IEP and transition planning process.

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Transition Assessment Report

## Transition Assessment Report

Mary, 9<sup>th</sup> grade (Name has been changed)

Sarah Atkinson

O\*Net Interest Profiler

CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION: THIS REPORT SHOULD BE MADE  
AVAILABLE TO AUTHORIZED PERSONS ONLY

**Description of the Assessment**

I used the O\*Net Interest Profiler for my transition assessment. The purpose of the O\*Net Interest Profiler is to determine the areas of employment interest for students. This type of assessment is a useful tool to use for students who are receiving special education services for mild/moderate disabilities such as specific learning disability (SLD), Other Health Impaired (OHI), etc. The O\*Net Interest Profiler gives detailed information about current employment options along with definitions of the type of employment, skills individuals need in order to be successful, and potential employment earnings.

The O\*Net Interest Profiler assessment provides information about students' interests in employment areas of realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising, and conventional. Realistic employment opportunities are characterized by work that involves practical, hands-on type employment. Investigative employment opportunities are characterized by work that involves ideas and thinking processes. Artistic employment opportunities are characterized by work that involves creativity. Employment opportunities in this category could include acting, art, clothing design, etc. Social employment opportunities are characterized by work that involves working with

other people. Employment opportunities in this category could include teaching, social work, and medicine. Enterprising employment opportunities are characterized by creating business ideas, marketing, and lobbying. Conventional employment opportunities are characterized by work that involves procedures and routines.

The rationale for using the O\*Net Interest Profiler is because it gives students and professionals a solid starting point to determine students' employment preferences. The O\*Net Interest Profiler gives students an opportunity to research different employment opportunities within the students' highest scoring areas. The O\*Net Interest Profiler could also be used hand-in-hand with other discovery activities such as job shadowing and informational interviews.

### **Administration of the Assessment**

I administered the O\*Net Interest Profiler on January 29, 2018. The individuals who were present during the administration of the O\*Net Interest Profiler were Mary's mother, myself, and my university supervisor. Her mother was there to observe the process, but did not interrupt as Mary was taking the assessment. My university supervisor was there to observe me working with Mary. Before I had Mary take the O\*Net Interest Profiler assessment, I asked Mary if she would like to read the questions on her own or if she would like me to read them to her. Mary asked if I would read the questions to her. After I read each question and read the different response options, she chose her response and marked it on the computer.

The assessment took approximately 30 minutes to complete. After the assessment was complete, I asked Mary if she would like to look at some of the employment opportunities based on her highest score. She said she would like that, but after looking

at one or two, she said she would like to take a break and look at more on a different day. The assessment was administered in a public library in the main lobby area. People were periodically walking past where we were sitting, but Mary was able to maintain her focus on the assessment.

### **Results**

Based on Mary's responses to the O\*Net Interest Profiler, her highest category was artistic with a score of 34. Mary's second highest category was enterprising with a score of 20. Mary's third highest category was social with a score of 19. Mary's lowest scoring category was conventional with a score of 4. Mary was attentive and well-behaved during the assessment. She paid attention to each question I asked her. If she did not understand the question or statement I read to her, she asked for clarification. She was polite to all individuals who were there and interacted with each one when they engaged her in conversation.

In previous conversations with Mary, she had indicated that she loved sewing. She told me that she had already made several articles of clothing based off of patterns she had created. She indicated to me that she really wanted to become a seamstress and design clothing for other women. Based on the results of Mary's Interest Profiler assessment, her results fell in line with her employment preferences. Her employment preferences were included in the results of the interest profiler because being a seamstress or clothing designer falls under the artistic category.

### **Discovery Activities**

As part of the discovery process for Mary, I conducted a family interview, a teacher interview, employment research, and employer interviews. In each of these

activities, Mary's preferences were documented. I also documented areas of strengths and areas of weaknesses. In the following subsections, I will outline the information I gathered.

### **Family Interview**

I completed the family interview on 1-25-2018. The family interview was conducted in Mary's home. Along with myself and Mary, her mother, father, and little sister were present. I spent an hour asking questions of each family member present about Mary's strengths and weaknesses. Her family members indicated that Mary is very strict in her daily schedule. Her daily routine is very regimented. She gets up at the same time every morning, gets ready for school, goes to school, comes home, completes homework if any has been assigned, and is able to spend the rest of her day relaxing. She goes to bed at the same time every night.

During free time, Mary loves to sew, play the violin, and watch tv. She also loves to babysit. Her favorite subjects in school are any subjects that do not require reading. She loves to spend time with her family. Based on information from her father, she loves to spend time with her cousins. She also loves spending time with friends.

Based on information from her mother and father, Mary is very compassionate. Some of the strengths that her mother, father, and little sister all stated was that Mary is very consistent. Even though she does not necessarily like to follow directions, she is very compliant and does what she is asked to do. An area of concern for her parents was her struggle in reading. Her parents also indicated that an area of concern is that Mary is not very confident in herself or her ability to be successful.

### **Teacher Interview**



I had the opportunity to interview Mary's reading tutor. Mary was not present at this interview. I asked questions about Mary's strengths and weaknesses. Mary's reading tutor indicated that Mary's strengths were persistence and determination in improving her reading skills. Her reading tutor also indicated that Mary was very creative. Mary's reading tutor indicated that one of the biggest struggles she saw in Mary was with her reading. Mary's reading tutor indicated that Mary was currently reading on a 4th-5th grade level.

### **Employment Research and Employment Interviews**

After determining Mary's three highest areas of employment interest based on the O\*Net Interest Profiler, we used the O\*Net website to look at different employment opportunities. We identified at least 20 different employment interests between the three categories. Her employment interests included, but were not limited to, the following: seamstress, shoemaker, camera operator, fashion designer, photographer, boutique owner/worker, graphic designer, interior designer, multimedia artist and animator, ranch manager and nanny. After these employment interests were identified, we looked up different businesses that fit with each of the employment interests. We identified at least 5 businesses for each employment interest through use of the internet and personal connections. Three of the businesses she wanted to visit were Pritchett's Bridal in Orem, UT, Veronica's Bridal in Spanish Fork, UT, and Ella Bella Boutique in Spanish Fork, UT. There were other businesses that we visited, but these were the businesses that she identified as the ones she liked the most.

After we identified each of the businesses Mary wanted to visit, we scheduled times to go to each of the businesses to get a general feeling of the business. At some of

the businesses we visited, Mary and I were able to ask employees/owners about what they do and how they like their businesses. These were all informal interviews and did not go past a couple of questions each. The businesses/employees Mary identified as ones she wanted to conduct a formal employer interview with were Pritchett's Bridal and Veronica Michaels. She was mostly interested in their seamstress department and wanted to talk to seamstresses and owners to get more information on the requirements to work as a seamstress.

I made arrangements for Mary to interview the head seamstress at Pritchett's Bridal, a seamstress at Veronica Michael's, and the owner of Veronica Michael's. Before the interviews, I met with Mary, and we identified at least 16 questions we could use during the interviews. The goal for the interviews was for Mary to mostly observe me during the first interview, but she could ask questions that she had prepared if she felt comfortable. For the second interview, Mary was to take a more active part in the interview, by asking at least half of the questions. Mary was then expected to complete the third interview on her own, but with me present.

During the first interview with the head seamstress at Pritchett's Bridal, Mary was able to ask a couple of questions. During the second interview with one of the seamstresses at Veronica Michael's, Mary asked more than half the questions. She was able to watch the seamstress work on a wedding gown that was being altered. During the final interview with the owner of Veronica Michael's, Mary conducted the interview on her own. I was present during the interview, but Mary was the one asking the questions. During this interview, Mary was able to watch the owner work with a bride-to-be during a dress fitting.

**Present Level Statement**

Based on the O\*Net Interest Profiler administered on 1-29-2018, Mary scored a 34 in artistic, 20 in enterprising, 19 in social, 14 in investigative, 8 in realistic, and 4 in conventional. Based on these scores, Mary is most interested in employment areas that deal with the artistic side of things including clothing design, music, and art. Based on information from Mary, she is planning on being employed as a seamstress. In order to be employed as a seamstress, Mary plans on taking sewing classes during high school. After high school, she is planning on attending college and taking sewing classes that are offered. Based on a family interview completed on 1-25-2018, Mary's parents indicated that Mary loves to play the violin and sew. They also stated that Mary enjoys spending time with friends and family. Based on information from Mary's parents during the family interview, Mary is very consistent in her daily routines and schedule. They indicated that she struggles most with feeling confident in herself in social situations, especially in letting adults know she when needs help. She also struggles with reading. Based on a teacher interview completed in April 2018, her reading tutor stated that Mary is reading on a 4-5 grade level. In order to be successful in college and as a seamstress, Mary needs continued services in reading.

**Measurable Post-Secondary Goals**

Goal #1: Within one year after graduation, Mary will apply to a college as measured by a completed college application.

Goal #2: Within one year after graduation, Mary will apply for employment as a seamstress as measured by a completed job application.

I chose these goals because they focus on her desire to go to college and become employed as a seamstress.

### **Annual Goals**

When given a 5-6 grade reading passage, Mary will read the passage fluently with 95% accuracy in 3/3 trials as measured by the special education teacher and curriculum-based assessments.

The reason I chose this goal is because as a seamstress, Mary will need to be able to read patterns and other materials in order to be successful. This goal also relates to the measurable post-secondary goals because it addresses a skill that she will need in order to be successful in college and as a seamstress.

### **Summary**

In summary, the process of administering the O\*Net Interest Profiler, conducting a student interview, a family interview, a teacher interview, and employer interviews all played an important part in determining Mary's preferences for future employment. Completing these different activities were beneficial in determining that all aspects of Mary's preferences were addressed. It was also important to gather all this information to determine what her strengths and weaknesses were and to determine what measurable post-secondary goals and annual goals were appropriate for Mary to enable her to reach her employment and education goals.

Personnel Preparation Report

## Personnel Preparation Report

Instructor: Sarah Atkinson

Date of training: 10/30/18

### **Participants**

Six middle school teachers and the English language arts (ELA) instructional facilitator were invited to the training. There were two training times available for participants to choose from to enable more individuals the opportunity to attend the training. Two teachers and the ELA instructional facilitator were able to attend the training. As an instructional coach/facilitator at Utah Virtual Academy (UTVA), I work with middle school teachers to discuss their class instruction and IEP-related questions. In my interaction with teachers during coaching sessions and IEP meetings, I have had multiple questions about what transition skills would be most beneficial for middle school students. I invited the middle school teachers to participate in this training so that they could receive an improved picture of what transition skills would be the best fit for their students. I invited the ELA instructional coach/facilitator to participate in this training because she also works with middle school teachers. I wanted her to have some resources she could use if she received questions from the middle school teachers with regards to transition-related items.

The middle school teachers that I invited are all licensed educators. Their routes to getting licensed have not all been the traditional 4-year degree route. Both of the teachers who attended my training received their special education license through the Alternate Route to Licensure program through the Utah State Board of Education. One of these teachers has a background in elementary education. The other has a bachelor's

degree in another area other than education. The transition-related trainings they have received in the past have been from UTVA's transition coordinator. There were no credentials or CEUs offered for this training.

### **Training Topic and Content of Training Session**

The name of the training was *What Every 13-15-Year-old Needs to Know: Transition Skills for Post-Secondary Success*. The content in this training focused on specific transition skills needed by students in grades 6-8. The learning objectives for this training were that the participants would be able to list at least five transition skills specific to students in grades 6-8 and explain how these skills could be taught and progress measured in a virtual setting. In the training, I referenced the study completed by Nielsen (2013). This study examined parent and educator preferences of transition skills needed for students in grade 6-12. Because this study was done with parents and educators whose students attended a conventional public school, I wanted to present this material to teachers who taught in a virtual environment to get their ideas about how we could adapt the skills from Nielsen's study to a virtual education setting.

The training took place in a Zoom room in which all participants were able to see each other and communicate freely throughout the training. Activities in the training had teachers responding to questions, giving examples of transition skills, and completing a pre- and post-assessment. Teachers responded to questions in a Google form and over the mic. During specific in-training activities, teachers were asked to give examples which were recorded on a PowerPoint slide.

### **Need for Training**

At UTVA, we make sure that every student receiving special education services, grades 6-12, have a transition plan in their IEP. This training was provided to help give the middle school teachers some additional resources to help them learn more about the unique needs of middle school students. Additionally, the training was designed to address questions from parents about the transition-related skills. This training was meant to increase knowledge about what free resources were available to assist teachers with their students' parents as questions and concerns arose. It was also designed to help teachers generate ideas for teaching middle school transition skills in a virtual setting.

### **Measurement of Effects of Training**

I used a Google survey for my pre- and post-assessment. I asked questions specific to transition-related items such as examples of activities related to the three main areas of transition: education, employment, and independent living. I used the pre-assessment to determine what teachers already knew and the post-assessment to determine whether my training was effective. In the pre-assessment, participants scored 25%-58% on questions asked. On the post-assessment, participants scored 92%-100% on questions asked.

As part of the assessment, I asked teachers to let me know what was the most useful part of the training. In their responses, they indicated that the resources I shared and the case study from Nielson (2013) were the most useful parts of the training. This training was not given to change any transition policy or procedure at UTVA, therefore it did not have any effect on UTVA transition policies or procedures.

### **Summary**



My training accomplished my learning objectives. Teachers were able to name at least five of the unique transition skills for middle school students and identify how these skills could be taught and measured in a virtual setting. One of the items I liked about my training was that I was able to have open communication with the participants. They shared valuable ideas that could then be shared with other teachers in the virtual education setting at UTVA and in other virtual schools.

A couple of items I would change about my training are the ways I set up the activities and the types of questions I asked in my pre- and post-assessments. During the training activities, I would provide multiple ways for participants to respond to questions. For my post assessment, I would do a mixture of ways to respond. The information in the pre- and post-assessments would cover the same topics, but the questions in the pre- and post-assessments would be different.

My recommendations for trainings on this topic in the future are to have more in-depth discussions on how to utilize and engage students in transition-related activities in a virtual education setting. Specifically, I would like to see more trainings on how we can engage middle school students schooled in a virtual environment out in the community so they can demonstrate learned transition skills.

References

Nielsen, J. (2013). *Starting early: Perceptions of parents and teachers on 6<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade transition timeline for students with high-incidence disabilities.*

Unpublished master's thesis, Utah State University, Logan, UT.

Interagency Collaboration Report

### Interagency Collaboration Report

Interagency Collaborators: Sarah Atkinson (virtual school in Utah), Scott Taylor (Vocational Rehabilitation), Maddy Pope (Easter Seals Good Will: Peer Connections), and Callie Peters (parent-name has been changed)

Dates of Collaborative Activities: 11-5-2018, 11-12-2018, & 11-19-2018

#### **Professional Participants**

Sarah Atkinson, Scott Taylor, Maddy Pope, and Callie Peters participated in collaboration to meet the career exploration needs of Jessie Peters (name has been changed). I have worked with Jessie as his math and ELA teacher for 2 years. I also conducted career exploration activities with Jessie during spring semester 2018. Jessie is a 10<sup>th</sup> grade student at an online charter school in Utah. He receives special education services in math, reading, and writing. He also receives counseling as a related service through his Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Through career exploration activities that took place during spring semester 2018, Jessie indicated he was interested in employment in a field that included animals or in the automotive industry.

#### **Collaboration Activities**

In April 2018, after Jessie's mother signed a release of student information form, I met with Scott Taylor at Vocational Rehabilitation (VR). Through this collaborative conversation, Scott and I determined that Jessie would benefit from working with a Community Rehabilitation Provider (CRP). Scott referred Jessie to the Easter Seals Good Will-Peer Connections program. Through continued collaboration with Jessie's mother, Callie and with Maddy Pope from the Peer Connections program, I was able to

participate in part of the training experience with Jessie at the Loveland Living Planet Aquarium in Draper, Utah.

Before I contacted Maddy Pope at Peer Connections, I observed Jessie at the aquarium to get a feel for how he interacted with patrons. This informal observation took place on November 5, 2018. After my informal observation and after receiving the necessary release signatures, Maddy and I were able to meet and discuss Jessie's strengths and weaknesses in a collaborative setting. An area of concern for Maddy was that Jessie was struggling to follow through with his goals each week. Maddy wanted my input on what strategies would be useful to help Jessie with his goals. I suggested we record Jessie using video during his shift at the aquarium. We would then have him watch the recordings and reflect on skills he did well and skills in which he needed improvements.

I was able to record video of him for about 7-10 min throughout his shift on November 12, 2018. Maddy observed Jessie as he watched the recordings that I had taken of him while he was working. He watched the videos and identified the following strengths: (a) he got down to eye-level with children he interacted with, (b) he was able to help a patron locate an iguana, and (c) he interacted with both children and adults alike, making eye contact as he spoke with them. Jessie's identified area of improvement was learning and sharing new details about the artifact (tarantula) with the patrons at the aquarium.

After Jessie left, Maddy and I discussed the video observation results. We discussed Jessie's identified strengths and area of improvement. Maddy said that interacting with patrons had been a relative weakness for Jessie in past sessions at the

aquarium. Per the video recordings, interacting with patrons was a strength for Jessie during this work session at the aquarium. Maddy and I wondered if, by knowing I was at the aquarium, Jessie was on his best behavior. Maddy and I decided that I would come the following week without Jessie knowing I was coming to observe. We wanted to see if Jessie could retain his progress. At the end of my observation on 11-19-2018, Maddy and I determined that Jessie had retained most of his progress, but he still struggled with taking feedback in an appropriate manner. Maddy and I collaborated on how helping Jessie take feedback in an appropriate manner.

### **Collaboration Outcomes**

The collaboration with Scott, Maddy, and Carrie has taught me the importance of bringing in multiple agencies. One of the most important lessons I have learned from this experience is that collaboration between agencies can have powerful effects on student outcomes. Without collaboration between Scott and Maddy, Jessie would not have had the opportunity to work at the aquarium. Without the collaboration between Maddy and me, Maddy would not have been able to video Jessie. Maddy and I felt that having Jessie watch himself interact with patrons was a powerful way for him to learn how he appeared to others.

Another lesson I have learned from these collaboration activities is that constant communication between agencies allows for better communication between agencies involved. It can lead to the best outcomes for students.