

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ORDERING TRANSITION ASSESSMENT

Guidance: Transition assessment is not a kit. It is a collection of data from a variety of sources, over time, that describes a journey to help a student with a disability to discover his/her strengths, needs, preferences and interests. The purpose of the data collection of information on the student is to make decisions for transition planning. This information may come from traditional formal and informal transition assessments tools, existing student data collected for all students, experiences such as family outings, job shadowing, courses in Career and Technology Education, Special Education Work-Based Learning or extra-curricular activities at school such as sports and clubs.

Rule of Thumb:

Step One: What do you already have?

1. Don't reinvent the wheel.

- Does general education conduct vocational assessment such as ACT Discover, NAVIANCE, ASVAB or the KUDER? If so obtain a copy of the report or a summary of the results and review the results with the student. Have the student identify preferences and interests and match it to the report findings.
- Most districts utilize Differentiated Instruction. If it is implemented correctly using the research-based model, one of the main steps is student assessment, such as learning styles, multiple intelligence, study skills, etc. Collect this information. It is invaluable in the discovery of strengths and needs. Why do we in special education always keep looking for a kit or to duplicate what is already done? 😊
- Many secondary general education courses, such as English and Social Studies, have students research and report on (1) a career choice and/or (2) postsecondary education choices. In both scenarios the students research preferences, prerequisite skills or entry requirements, and what is needed to obtain the job or enter the postsecondary institution of their choice. At the next faculty meeting or by going to a subject-level department meeting, talk to faculty about pre/post-tests that are given and course assignments that may add additional information to the transition assessment portfolio.

2. Commercial Transition Assessment:

- There are many assessment instruments. You purchase instruments based on the "Transition Information Needs".
- Identifying information needs:
 - i. For example, if the student plans to go to college and study to be a teacher or trade school to be a welder, what do you need to know about the student's strengths, needs, preferences and interests to design a high school program and transition services to facilitate the student's postsecondary goals?

- ii. How did the student perform on the STAAR, ACT/SAT? Will the student likely be required to take the TSI? If so, conduct the online practice TSI, ACCUPLACER, or COMPASS as a transition assessment.
 - iii. What about a study skills assessment or time management? What are the barriers to facilitating the post-school goal that can become part of the IEP?
- Possible Transition Assessment Tools:
 - i. Transition Planning Inventory (Pro-Ed)
 - ii. Enderle-Severson Transition Rating Scale (ESTR)
 - iii. Casey Life Skills
 - iv. JIST Works: America's Career Publisher (www.jist.com)
 - 1. Transition-to-Work Inventory
 - 2. Job Survival and Success Scale
 - v. Brigance Employability Skills Inventory
 - vi. Person-Centered Thinking Transition Assessment
 - vii. Mitchell-Panter Life Plan Transition Assessment
 - viii. Quality of Life Questionnaire
 - ix. There are many and those listed are just a few. Use the Transition Assessment Matrix Example to create a list of the transition assessment tools you have in your district or on your campus. What are the gaps? What else do you need to gather or purchase?

Step Two: Do you collect meaningful input from students and parents?

1. Student/Parent Input

- a. Most special education software contains student and parent questionnaires or surveys. CAUTION: there is no "one size fits all".
- b. Districts that use the same software or district-developed transition assessment form to obtain student and parent input may risk (1) not asking a sufficient number or depth of questions because the form is so generic, (2) insulting parents of students with mild disabilities with toileting questions, or (3) distressing parents of students with profound disabilities by asking questions about college expectations. Do not use "one size fits all" tools!
- c. Ensure there is a mechanism to obtain information from both the student and the parent. If the parent does not return the form, follow up with a phone call and conduct a phone interview, using that same survey tool, to obtain the information.
- d. If the student is unable to provide input, see the next item, item #4

2. Students with Significant and Multiple Disabilities

- a. To obtain information when the student is unable to provide information, utilize three options:
 1. Ensure meaningful parent input is obtained. Use person-centered thinking assessment tools. Obtain data from others who know the student, such as past teachers, other family members who support him and his parents, etc.
 2. Collect data such as task analysis to determine student strengths, needs, preferences and interests. Teach teachers to analyze the data collection to determine if the student prefers quiet work areas or work areas with sound, indoors or outdoors, sitting or standing, fast paced or slow paced, the levels of support required, etc.
 3. For students with more profound disabilities, remember that behavior is communication. Can you tell from body language whether he prefers orange versus green jello? Attends longer when his wheelchair is in a group? What data collection tools do you have that collects data at this level of detail and sensitivity?

- b. Assessment Instruments for individuals with significant disabilities
 1. Reading-Free Vocational Interest Inventory (RF-VII)
 2. Enderle-Severson Transition Rating Scale (ESTR)
 3. The Enderle-Severson Transition Rating Scale website:
 - <http://www.estr.net/>
 - Cost: Cost is usually \$20 for a package of 10. Given the # of students in high school LIFE Skills or significant involvement with AU or multiple disabilities, this is a low budget request.
 - Order: You want the ESTR-III form and parent form; the ESTR- yellow form and yellow parent form (Severe/multiple); and the ESTR-J-P Spanish Version
 - Online Reports: The online report is \$20 for 10 online reports. This is very reasonable, as few students fall into this category.

- c. Person-Centered Planning/Thinking Transition Assessments
 - Person-centered planning (PCP) and the Person-Centered Thinking Transition Assessment (PCTA) are excellent ways to walk parents through the journey of thinking about life after public school. It is not unusual for parents to say “I don’t know” or “I don’t want to think about this”. It is a heavy burden and frightening if the future of your child follows a path you cannot see and do not know where it is going.
 - The design of PCP is to create an activity where participation is the opposite of the IEP meeting and has only 1 or 2 school district people (one to facilitate the meeting and one to take notes or 1 who fills both roles) and the participation is more heavily weighted on the family and friend side. PCTA consist of the trained district facilitator, the parents, and the student.

- Both the PCP and PCTA create a problem-solving think tank to identify characteristics, important to/important for, and other information that describes student. Most parents understand that someday “school” and all the services and supports of public school will disappear but most don’t understand the massive implications. Making decisions in crisis, in the black hole of “no services” after public school, is not the time to solve problems.
- PCP/PCTA can be used to help solve issues that currently exist or plan for the future. Sometimes in the literature it is referred to as Futures Planning (not to be confused with the Texas Autism Supplement requirement).

d. PCTA

- The Person-Centered Thinking Transition Assessment from the Institute for Person-Centered Thinking (Texas A&M and University of Texas) combines the traditional person-centered planning model with the practicality of a smaller group than the PCP and has a focus on describing the student that can be used to make planning decisions for now and in the future.
- The person-centered student description provides information about how behavior communicates the information needed to support the student, how to motivate the student through what is important to him and not just for him, as well as collecting other information that can be used to help plan a more meaningful future, i.e. the Transition Services Plan.

e. PCP Models

- Making Action Plans (MAPS); Forest and Lusthaus.
- Group Action Planning (GAP); Turnbull & Turnbull.
- Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope (PATH); Pierpoint, O’Brien, and Forest.

f. Independent Living:

- Independent living transition assessment is not designated for a specific group of students, but is based upon, “if appropriate”.
- For students who may be served in functional instruction classes, don’t forget, for this group of students there are assessments, such as the adaptive behavior assessments, that are given by the appraisal staff. Don’t reinvent the wheel. Do not simply review the paragraph on the FIE for the adaptive behavior results. You need more detail. Pull the administration protocol to obtain specific details AND look at the report information on adaptive behavior results. Review and analyze the protocol through “transition eyes”.
- Independent Living Behavior Checklist
- Task Analysis in the LIFE Skills classroom is part of the data

collection of functional instruction, as well as community-based instruction (CBI) and community-based vocational instruction (CBVI).

3. Other Sources of Information

- Grades
- 4 or 6-Year Plan
- Transcript
- Discipline Referrals
- Etc.

4. Ordering Transition Assessments

- Make a list of the existing assessment information available from general and special education sources.
- Make a list of the areas where there are no data collection or few data collection tools, your transition assessment tool gaps.
- Now, review the research or contact your local Education Service Center (ESC) Transition Specialist to obtain information on appropriate transition assessments that address your gaps for transition assessment tools.
- Create a list of transition assessments that need to be ordered. Give one copy to the Director for Special Education and keep one copy for yourself.
- If the assessments were unable to be ordered during the school year, give your “wish list” before you leave in June for the summer.
 - i. Why? Because budgets must be spent at the end of the year and Special Education Directors would rather have a list of meaningful items to order then going through the catalog to see what they think “might” be useful.
 - ii. Timing is everything! Follow-up in June and remind them of your wish list as they are trying to balance the end of the fiscal year budget for special education. Resend your list if needed.