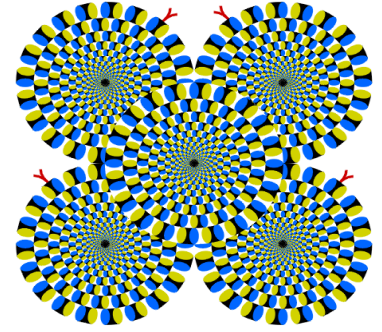


Transition Wheel



Topic: Transition Assessment

Description/Definition

Transition assessment is the “ongoing process of collecting data on the individual’s needs, preferences, and interests as they relate to the demands of current and future working, educational, living, personal, and social environments.” (Sitlington, Neubert, & Leconte, 1997; IDEA Partnership & NSTTAC)

Relevance

“Assessment data serve as the common thread in the transition process and form the basis for defining goals and services to be included in the Individualized Education Program (IEP).” (Sitlington, Neubert, & Leconte, 1997; IDEA Partnership & NSTTAC)

History/Legal Basis

Public education in the United States has a long history of assessment that includes (a) academic assessments, such as the National Assessment of Educational Progress and assessments required under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 to determine adequate yearly progress and (b) assessments linked to career awareness and exploration in the school-based learning component of the School to Work Act of 1994. Assessment has also evolved in special education law, with The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 now requiring “appropriate measurable postsecondary goals based on age appropriate transition assessments related to training, education, employment, and, where appropriate, independent living skills.” (34 CFR, §300.320(b)(1))

Definitions

Assessment: “the process of collecting data for the purpose of making decisions.” (Salvia & Ysseldyke, 2004, p. 5)

Formal assessments: Standardized assessments that compare the results of an individual student’s results to those of similar students (norm-referenced assessment) or to established standards or criteria (criterion-referenced assessment). Formal assessments have strict guidelines for administration and interpretation, and test publishers may require that teachers and others meet certain educational or training requirements in order to administer them.

Informal assessments: Assessments that are not standardized and may include observations, recreation or work-based assessments, inventories, rating scales, and interviews. Informal assessments may be published or developed by the teacher, counselor, or other test administrator.

Overview

There are a number of frameworks or approaches that can be used to develop a transition assessment process for students. Questions that can guide the development of an appropriate transition assessment approach include:

- What should be assessed?
- Are students and parents actively involved in the transition assessment process?
- Is a useful framework for individual transition assessment in place or does one need to be developed?
- Are all appropriate personnel (school and other agency) involved in the process?
- Do we have access to appropriate assessment resources?
- What is recommended practice for transition assessment? (Adapted from Sitlington & Clark, 2007)

Multiple sources of information, such as interviews, record reviews, observations, and formal or informal assessments, will be collected and reviewed in the transition assessment process in order to generate measurable postsecondary and annual goals based on the match between (a) a student's interests, preferences, values, strengths, abilities, and other characteristics and (b) appropriate career, education, training, independent living and/or other life options.

Students with limited exposure to work settings, life experiences, and role models may have greater difficulty setting transition goals, so initial goals may include awareness and exploration activities. Person-centered and/or self-directed planning processes that focus on the student's assets (rather than deficits) and incorporate the values of self-determination and informed choice are often used in career and educational decision making. Person-centered processes involve family members and others who know the student well, while self-directed planning processes empower students to take a lead role in the decision-making process.

Transition goals should be based on the student's chronological age and should be broadened as the student becomes more self-aware and better informed about education, career, employment, and independent living options. Ongoing, flexible transition activities should allow students to explore multiple options in a variety of settings.

An excellent overview of the transition assessment process is provided in the National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center's *Age Appropriate Transition Assessment Toolkit* (available at <http://www.nsttac.org/content/age-appropriate-transition-assessment-toolkit>) as well as in the Division of Career Development and Transition's (DCDT's) *Fact Sheet on Age Appropriate Transition Assessment* (available at <http://nsttac.appstate.edu/sites/default/files/assets/pdf/AgeAppropriateTransitionAssessment.pdf>).

Evidence-based Practice

The evidence base for transition assessment is limited and consists primarily of data on characteristics of published, formal assessments such as reliability, validity, descriptors of youth in norm or test groups, and accommodations. Ethical practices are defined by the *Code of Fair Testing Practices in Education* (<http://www.apa.org/science/fairtestcode.html>) and codes of ethics for professional groups.

Sitlington and Clark (2007) identified eight assessment areas that are minimum requirements for academic and functional transition assessment under IDEA 2004:

- Interests
- Preferences (based on informed choice in interest areas)

- Cognitive development and academic achievement performance
 - Adaptive behaviors (home, community, and employment)
 - Interpersonal relationship skills (positive social behaviors)
 - Emotional development and mental health
 - Employability and vocational skills
 - Community participation (outside activities, mobility, health care, etc.)
- (Adapted from Sitlington & Clark, 2007)

Teachers, counselors, and others who administer assessments will find that administrative practices vary due to differences in state and local guidelines; availability, cost, validity, and appropriateness of the assessments used; testing environments and resources available; student accommodations and modifications needed; purposes of the assessments; and personal preferences. Teachers and others who conduct assessments often start with the assessments and processes that are in place when they begin working with students and then develop their own assessment procedures by making refinements over time.

Transition assessments can be categorized in a number of ways including:

- Attributes tested
 - Academic performance or achievement
 - Cognitive abilities
 - Social, emotional, interpersonal behaviors
 - Vocational interests and values
 - Job aptitudes and skills
 - Work behaviors
 - Physical and functional capacities
- Formal or informal assessment
- Format
 - Pencil and paper
 - Computer/on-line/video/audio interfaces
 - Observation of performance
 - Record review (including previous assessment results)
 - Interview
 - Situational assessment

Selecting transition assessments can be daunting, and a number of organizations have published selection information that may be helpful:

- National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth, *Chapter 3 of Career Planning Begins with Assessment*:
http://www.ncwd-youth.info/assets/guides/assessment/AssessGuide_Chapter3.pdf
- National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center, *Age Appropriate Transition Guide*:
http://www.nsttac.org/products_and_resources/tag.aspx
- National Career Development Association, Chapter 3 of *A Counselor's Guide to Career Assessment Instruments*, Fifth Edition, available for purchase at:
http://associationdatabase.com/aws/NCDA/pt/sd/product/22/_PARENT/layout_store/false

A listing of commercially available assessments suitable for transition planning will soon be available at www.sharedwork.org (site is being reorganized).

Examples of a few formal assessments used in Florida for the purposes of transition assessment:

- Transition Planning Inventory: <http://www.proedinc.com/customer/productView.aspx?ID=875>

- Brigance Life Skills, Employability Skills Inventories:
<http://www.curriculumassociates.com/products/BriganceOverview.asp>
- Life Centered Career Education (LCCE):
http://www.cec.sped.org/Content/NavigationMenu/ProfessionalDevelopment/ProfessionalTraining/LCC E/LCCE_what.htm
- Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT), <http://fcats.fldoe.org/hsaphome.asp>
- College entrance assessments (PSAT, SAT, ACT, CPT):
<http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/psat/about.html>
<http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/sat/about.html>
<http://www.act.org/aap/>
<http://www.fldoe.org/asp/fcelpt/>
- Other norm-referenced assessments

Examples of a few informal transition assessments used in Florida

- Interest inventories
 - Career Cruiser Interest Inventory: <http://www.myfloridaeducation.com/workforce/publicat.htm>
 - Choices Interest Inventory: www.FACTS.org
- Career inventories
 - Career Games: <http://www.careergames.com/self.html>
 - GetTech: <http://www.gettech.org/>
- Questionnaires, surveys, interviews, checklists
 - Enderle-Severson Transition Rating Scales (ESTR)
- Situational assessments or observations
 - Job shadowing
 - Paid or unpaid work experience
- Self-determination assessments
- Curriculum-based or teacher-developed assessments

Examples of a few career planning processes used in Florida for students with disabilities:

- *SIMPLY Careers!*
<http://info.fldoe.org/docshare/dsweb/Get/Document-1415/SIMPLYatt.pdf>
- Mazemaster
<http://www.mazemaster.on.ca/selfassessment/index.htm>
- Career Plan
<http://www.mappingyourfuture.org/PlanYourCareer/>

Transition Assessment of Students with Significant Disabilities

A person-centered planning process that includes record reviews, observations, interviews (particularly with parents), and formal and/or informal assessments may be used with students with significant disabilities to the extent possible. The type of disability and its impact will determine whether students can use an assessment “out of the box,” with accommodations or modifications, or whether another assessment is a better match. Publisher and administrative guidelines should be followed closely in determining the appropriateness of assessments, with or without accommodations, for each student’s use.

Students with significant disabilities may need functional assessments of motor skills, communications skills, problem-solving abilities, self-care, social interactions, and other career-related skills and abilities. Situational assessments for career, educational, and independent living placements may also be indicated. Some students with significant disabilities may benefit from in-depth vocational evaluations conducted by certified vocational

evaluators or rehabilitation counselors. Other students may need to be assessed by psychologists, assistive technology specialists, speech therapists, occupational therapists, or other professionals.

An example of an effective transition assessment process for students with significant disabilities can be found at http://www.rockingham.k12.va.us/RCPS_sped/transition/portfolio-SD.htm. Functional skills assessment forms, transition portfolio, and other resources are provided and may be adapted for use in Florida schools.

Formal transition assessments that may be appropriate for students with significant disabilities include:

- **Transition Planning Inventory** – a transition planning tool that collects descriptions from the student, parent/advocate, and/or school representative of the student’s knowledge, behavior, and skill in the areas of employment, further education/training, daily living, leisure activities, community participation, health, self-determination, communication, and interpersonal relationships (PRO-ED, Inc., n.d.)
<http://www.proedinc.com/customer/productView.aspx?ID=875>
- **ChoiceMaker Self-Determination Curriculum** – helps students to choose, express, and take action toward career, education, and personal goals
<http://viewer.zmags.com/publication/157e2067#/157e2067/94>
- **Discovery** – a process for getting to know a student by observing him or her in various settings resulting in a Vocational Profile <http://ruralinstitute.umt.edu/transition/Discovery.asp>
- **Job Observation and Behavior Scale (JOBS)** – a self-assessment of work-related job duties, behaviors, and daily living activities
<https://www.stoeltingco.com/stoelting/productlist13c.aspx?catid=2218&home=Psychological>
- **Supports Intensity Scale (SIS)** – interview process for assessing support needs of students with intellectual disabilities
<http://www.siswebsite.org/>
- **Brigance Life Skills/Employability Skills Inventories** – inventories of basic skills, functional life skills, and employability skills from birth through secondary levels
<http://www.curriculumassociates.com/products/BriganceOverview.asp>
- **Life Centered Career Education (LCCE)** – assessments and curriculum focused on daily living skills, personal social skills, and occupational guidance and preparation
http://www.cec.sped.org/Content/NavigationMenu/ProfessionalDevelopment/ProfessionalTraining/LCCCE/LCCE_what.htm
- **Florida Alternate Assessment** – alternate assessment to the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) for students with disabilities who are working toward a Special Diploma
<http://www.fldoe.org/ese/pdf/faarm.pdf>
- **COPSystem Picture Inventory of Careers(COPS-PIC)** – nonverbal assessment of occupational interest using pictures
<http://www.edits.net/component/content/article/40/225-cops-pic.html>
- **Digital Pictorial Inventory of Careers** – computer-based assessment of career interests using “live action” videos
http://www.talentassessment.com/programs_pic.php
- **Reading Free Vocational Interest Inventory** – nonreading assessment of vocational interests using pictures
http://www.talentassessment.com/programs_pic.php
- **Talent Assessment Program** – assesses functional vocational aptitudes through hands-on tools and tasks (no reading required) http://www.talentassessment.com/programs_tap.php

Informal transition assessments may be adapted or modified for students with significant disabilities to the extent possible. The Enderle-Severson Transition Rating Scale has a version of its informal scale for students with significant or multiple disabilities, which is available at <http://www.estr.net/publications.cfm>.

Resources for transition assessment of students with significant disabilities include:

- Vocational Evaluation and Career Assessment Professionals (VECAP)
<http://www.vecap.org>
- 30th Institute on Vocational Rehabilitation Issues: A New Paradigm for Vocational Evaluation: Empowering the VR Consumer through Vocational Information
<http://iriforum.org/download/IRI30.pdf>
- Functional Assessment of Students with Severe Disabilities
http://goliath.ecnext.com/coms2/gi_0199-6180761/Functional-assessment-of-students-with.html
- ERIC Digest: Promoting the Self-Determination of Students with Severe Disabilities
<http://www.eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ED470522.pdf>

Final Thoughts

- Use transition assessment results to open doors to career and educational opportunities for students.
- Base transition decisions on information from multiple sources—never on the results of one assessment.
- Follow publisher guidelines for administering published assessments, both formal and informal.
- Before administering a new assessment to students, first observe an experienced teacher or other test administrator and then practice administering the assessment under his or her supervision. This is especially true for formal assessments but is also beneficial for informal ones.
- If assistance is needed in the transition assessment process, contact organizations that may provide assessment services to transitioning students in Florida, such as:
 - Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
<http://www.rehabworks.org/>
 - Florida Division of Blind Services
<http://dbs.myflorida.com/>
 - Florida Alliance for Assistive Services and Technology, Inc.
<http://www.faast.org/>
 - Florida Agency for Health Care Administration
<http://www.fdhc.state.fl.us/>
 - Florida Independent Living Council, Inc.
<http://www.flailc.org/>

Web Resources

Employment and Disability Institute, Cornell University School of Industrial and Labor Relations. (2009).

Course 1: Introduction to Person-Centered Planning.

<http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/edi/pcp/course01.html>

Course resources include readings, activities, quizzes, and links designed to facilitate and enhance awareness and appreciation of person-centered planning.

National Center on Secondary Education and Transition

<http://www.ncset.org>

Resources include information on person-centered planning, self-determination, transition planning, and more.

National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth

<http://ncwd-youth.info>

Resources include a Quick Reference Guide on Assessment and *Career Planning Begins with Assessment: A Guide for Professionals Serving Youth with Educational & Career Development Challenges, Revised Edition.*

National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center

<http://www.nsttac.org>

Resources include the *Age Appropriate Transition Assessment Guide* and *Fact Sheet on Age Appropriate Transition Assessment* (with DCDT).

Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education. (n.d.). *Toolkit on Teaching and Assessing Students with Disabilities*.

<http://www.osepideasthatwork.org/toolkit/index.asp>

Resources include information on including students with disabilities in academic assessments, alternate assessments, Universal Design for assessments, and an accommodations manual.

Print Resources

Clark, G. M., Patton, J. R., & Moulton, L. R. (2000). *Informal assessments for transition planning*. Austin, TX: PRO-ED, Inc. Order on-line at <http://www.proedinc.com>

Miller, R. J., Lombard, R. C., & Corbet, S. A. (2007). *Transition assessment: Planning transition and IEP development for youth with mild to moderate disabilities*. Boston: Pearson Education, Inc. On-line catalog at <http://www.ablongman.com>

Sitlington, P. L., Neubert, D. A., Begun, W. H., Lombard, R. C., & Leconte, P. J. (2007). *Assess for success: A practitioner's handbook on transition assessment*. (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press. Order on-line at <http://www.corwinpress.com>

Whitfield, E. A., Feller, R. W., & Wood, C. (2009). *A counselor's guide to career assessment instruments*. (5th ed.). Broken Arrow, OK: National Career Development Association. Order on-line at http://associationdatabase.com/aws/NCDA/pt/sp/Home_Page

References

PRO-ED, Inc. (n.d.) *The Transition Planning Inventory* and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004. Austin, TX: Author. Available at <http://www.proedinc.com/ProdImages/TPI%20and%20IDEA.pdf>

Salvia, J., & Ysseldyke, J. (2004). *Assessment in special and inclusive education*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

IDEA Partnership and the National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center. (2008). *Secondary Transition Glossary*. Alexandria, VA: National Association of State Directors of Special Education and Charlotte, NC: University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

Available at:

http://www.ideapartnership.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1485&Itemid=148

Sitlington, P. L., & Clark, G. M. (2007). The transition assessment process and IDEIA 2004. *Assessment for Effective Intervention*, 32(3), 133–142.

Sitlington, P. L., Neubert, D. A., & Leconte, P. J. (1997, Spring). Transition assessment: The position of the division of career development and transition. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals*, 20, 69–79. Available at <http://www.dcdt.org/docs/position-sit-1997.pdf>