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College of Education



Workforce Education and Development

Working With Vocational Students from Special Populations:

A reference book for administrators and instructors

A compilation of research materials and stories
submitted by professional vocational educators.

Project Editor:
Marybeth Morrison

Technical Editor:
Frank Elliott

Table of Contents

Forward	4
Contributing Authors	5
Introduction	6
Terminology	8
Education	8
Documents & Services	8
Disability Categories	9
Agencies & Legal Terms	10
Matt's Story	11
Legislation	12
IEP's	14
Lisa's Story	15
Transition	17
Transition to Post-Secondary Training	18
Fred's Story	20
Specific Categories of Special Needs	22
AD/HD	22
LD	22
Autism	23
Tourette Syndrome	23
Students who are Homeless	24
Mike's Story	27
Instructional Strategies & Philosophies	29
Inclusion	29
Learning Styles	29
Discipline	30
Legal Issues with Discipline	31
Education of Special Needs in the UAE	32
Extra-Curricular Activities	35
Work Issues	37
Social Security Income Benefits	37
Employer Issues & Services	37
Exemplary Programs	39
Programs	39
Female Specific Programs	40
Appendix	42

Forward:

This book was compiled by vocational educators currently teaching in the State of Pennsylvania. They came from three different sections of the 413 Vocational Special Populations class that is a program requirement in fulfillment of the Instructional II Certificate requirements from the Pennsylvania State University, Workforce Education and Development Program. As a class assignment, they were instructed to bring in materials to submit for a resource book that they believed would be useful for vocational administrators and educators across the state to use for issues and information concerning special populations.

As the course progressed for each class, discussion concerning the sections and the lay-out of the book ensued. It was finally decided that there should be an introduction, which you will find beautifully written in the next section by Gerald Wilson. Gerald is a Police Services Instructor from J. P. McCaskey High School. The following sections were also included: terminology, legislation, IEP's, transition, specific categories of special needs, instructional strategies and philosophies, discipline, extra-curricular activities, work issues and exemplary programs and an appendix which contains tools and a map of Pennsylvania Intermediate Units.

Interspersed between the sections are tools that can be used in the classroom, or in preparing instruction, and stories that were submitted by the vocational instructors who were part of these three classes. All but one of these stories are success stories. The last is a story about what education for students from special populations is like in the United Arab Emirates. This narrative gives us a look at what it is like to deliver this type of education in another county. Since we are rapidly becoming a global community, it is important to understand how things are done elsewhere.

This is not an exhaustive book on the subject of special populations. It is, however, a quick and handy reference tool to be used with other materials to assist vocational educators and administrators to better service and understand special populations.

Very special thanks go to all of the students and the hard work they put into their submissions for this book, to Dr. Richard Walter for allowing us, and encouraging us, to publish it, and to Frank Elliott, our Professional Development Team leader, for a lot of hours of formatting and reformatting the final product.

Marybeth Morrison, Instructor
Special Needs Technical Assistant
Workforce Education and Development
Penn State University

Workforce Education & Development
The Pennsylvania State University

Authors: The following students of the 413 Vocational Special Needs Class contributed to this book.

Fall 1999, Mt. Joy

Sam Betancourt
Terry Boonie
Joan Farwell
Joyette Freeman
Curt Gibble
Don King
Roy Klinger
Maggie Kramer
Kirk Longnecker
Matt Mann
Dale Miller
Jessica Peak
Wes Rineer
Jim Smith
Elizabeth Stinger
Craig Turnbaugh
Gerald Wilson

Spring 2000 Chambersburg

Veronica Evans
Dennis Green
Kaye Hamilton
Carol Ritz
Jill Sipes
Joel Sollenberger
Al Yoder

Spring 2000, University Park

Khalid Al-Ali
Nasser Al-Hamli
Sean Allewalt
Rashed Al-Zhami
Rashid Amir
Deb Andrews
Michelle Becker
Tammy Brawand
Nancy Bridge
Margaret Burger
Adam Davis
Mark Deiter
Kristy Donahay
Vicki Fritts
Trevor Fronk
Tom Gaydosh
Timothy Gilbert
Garret Graff
Khalil Hassan
Harvey Heiserman
Cheryl Hoffman
Eric Krock
Greg Martin
John Moeller
Saqr Mohammed
Othman Mubarak
Mark Piccone
Steve Rivera
Kent Rob
Ken Sagan
Anthony Saullo
Lynn Scarton
Shervon Thompson
Doug Tubbs

Introduction:

The vocational teacher has been placed into the unique environment where he or she views the student with special needs in a special sort of light. Here this student shines above everyone's expectations. Because of the project oriented setting in our programs and classrooms, these students focus becomes apparent and their goals become more pronounced. In this role the vocational teacher is a classroom manager, a developer, and someone who has released a hidden talent.

The students who once stood back and let others speak and express their wants and desires now have a chance to display their true multi-dimensional selves. Students with special needs unveil a new perspective of themselves, allowing their parents, counselors and teachers to finally see what was missing for most of their educational experience. Through vocational education the cocoon has been shed and the unfurling of productive, insightful wings can be noticed after many unsuccessful attempts to fly. All of this has been brought forth with the discovery of the students' interest and the developing of their talents.

As vocational and technical instructors the task of personal molding is foremost. The very nature of making students competent is, in fact, a self-perpetuating goal. The experiences the teacher desires to teach students, whether through demonstration, practice, or lecture come only after the student has exposed themselves to the instructor. This opening up is something earned by the teacher. Sometimes it occurs rapidly and sometimes after much trial and error, but there is no doubt that something magical seems to happen. All of a sudden, this student who didn't seem to care about anything is a stellar performer in the vocational lab. The instructor amazes all the other instructors with the news of the students' hidden talents. Why this shouldn't be a surprise to professional vocational educators at all resides in the notion that we teach in different styles for different learners. Why wouldn't students with different styles react in different ways? In this case, students are reacting creatively. We have spent twelve or more years trying to get the students to produce intellectually, with compositions or by solving complex mathematical equations. We finally discover that the student has creative abilities.

These things do not happen by themselves. The mere exposure to the vocational environment does not produce a room full of furniture, a painted fender, or a precision tool. The vocational instructor who personally places him or herself into the life of the students makes all of the difference in the world. The teacher who took the time to make things finally work for this struggling mind or disabled body found a way to make the life ahead of this student finally have a meaning. The student adores this change and

can not wait for the next assignment. all of this occurs because the instructor stopped what he or she was doing, paused and said to him or herself, “How am I going to make this work for this particular student?” This personal intervention made this student experience the same rewards other students have, maybe for the first time. The extra effort on the teachers’ part has gone further than all of the special adaptations and support sessions could ever be dreamed of doing.

This is all the result of acquiring the knowledge, running through all of the interference, throwing a block or two when necessary, and finally wanting to be successful with all students. This special formula that vocational students and their teachers have is rooted in a caring relationship. It is guided with changes the teacher makes as he/she teaches and is terminated with the knowledge of success for this student.

All students need something. Most need instruction. Some need coaching, and then there are those who need all of the above and a pat on the back too. The vocational teacher, because of the amount of time he/she spends with students, the hands-on approach to problem solving and the feeling of satisfaction after a task is completed, imprints permanently and positively with the student. The teacher can liken this student’s successful completion of a project with ones of his or her own. Remembering the feeling of satisfaction that comes when looking over a garden after a successful weeding, or when the special kit or project was finally built, the teacher relates directly to what the student has accomplished and a bond is formed.

We can, as vocational instructors, strengthen our understanding of students with special needs. We can overcome our biases or closed mindedness by entertaining new concepts or relying on old wisdom. There should never be a question as to how much of an investment a teacher should commit to one child. The benefits reaped far outweigh the inconveniences. Teachers should arm themselves with the legal knowledge and the individual schools resources to maximize the chances for their students.

We can use the time we have in our work areas to make it easier for all to learn, not forgetting that all do not learn equally as well. Students walk by us in the hallway everyday. Some are headed on the right path and some are headed for trouble. We can prepare places in the future for those that will pass us by. We should always remember to pause, hesitate, contemplate, and maybe make that little change that will guide that particular student in the direction of success.

With special thanks to Gerald Wilson for this section.

Terminology:

There is no area of education that has more abbreviations or acronyms than special education. The variety of terms that are used to refer to various disability categories, the terms for the process of identification and services, as well as what this type of education is called varies from place to place. It can leave those in special education, as well as those in general education, confused and unsure of what is being discussed. The following is a glossary of special education terminology, both new and old, to assist with understanding the multitude of terms.

Education:

ESE – Exceptional Student Education

SPLED – Special Education

ESSN – Education for Students with Special Needs

All three of these terms are defined as specially designed instruction that is to be implemented to meet the needs of the individual and to be delivered in the least restrictive environment in order for the child to receive a free and appropriate public education.

Documents and Services:

IEP – Individualized Education Program: often incorrectly called an individualized education plan. This is the document that is written that lays out the levels at which a student is currently working and the types of modifications and services that the student must have in order to be successful. The IEP is a legally binding document.

CER – Comprehensive Evaluative Report: Usually prepared by the school psychologist, this report often contains a variety of information on the child including; intelligence tests scores, achievement test scores, teacher interviews, parent interviews and observations from the classroom. This is the document that is used to write the IEP.

IWRP – Individualized Written Rehabilitation Plan: Often done by persons at agencies such as the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, this plan outlines the vocational rehabilitation goals, services and timelines for an individual.

IFSP – Individualized Family Service Plan; often prepared for families of young children, this plan is written for the family and outlines the goals, objectives and timelines for working with a child with a disability in a family setting.

ITP – Individualized Transition Program; transition is a process that covers the life-span of the individual. Transition programming is mandated through the Individuals with Disabilities Act. It includes the preparation of a plan to assist the student to move from school to work or post-secondary training and, in some cases, may also include independent living skills.

NORA – Notice of Recommended Assignment; this is the document that is sent out to the parents after the IEP meeting to inform them of where their child is to be placed to receive their educational services. The parents must sign this to indicate agreement to the placement.

IVEP – Individualized Vocational Education Program; a program that is individually designed to meet the specific training needs of an individual student in preparation for developing prerequisite skills for a particular job.

MDE – Multi-Disciplinary Evaluation; A written report that is prepared by a variety of individuals. This can include speech, hearing, vision, school psychologist, classroom teacher and other specialists who may be called in to evaluate a specific student.

MDT – Multi-Disciplinary Team; The team that is made up of the specialists, listed above, who prepare the multi-disciplinary evaluation.

Due Process- A legal proceeding that can be undertaken by either the parents or guardians of the child, or the school district. This action will lead to a state appointed arbitrator hearing both sides of the disagreement concerning placement or services and ruling either in favor of the parents or the school district.

Disability Categories:

SLD – Specific Learning Disability: Sometimes referred to as *LD* - Learning Disabilities. Learning disabilities denotes an impairment in either auditory or visual processing, that is not due to a visual or hearing impairment, and that is evidenced in either the ability to understand or use spoken or written language. It is sometimes referred to as a perceptual disability, dyslexia, minimal brain dysfunction or developmental aphasia.

MR – Mental Retardation, this term usually appears with a level to denote severity such as Mild MR, Moderate MR, or SPMR (Severely and Profoundly Mentally Retarded). Older terms referred to EMR, Educable Mentally Retarded, and TMR, Trainable Mentally Retarded. Down's Syndrome is often listed in this category and was formerly referred to as mongoloidism. The federal definition of mental retardation includes sub-average general intellectual functioning that is two or more standard deviations below the normal IQ of around 100 and found concurrent with deficits in social behavior.

BD – Behavior Disorders. Also referred to as *SED* – Socially and Emotionally Disturbed or Severely Emotionally Disturbed, *CD* – Conduct Disordered, *ED*, Emotionally Disturbed and sometimes even *EH* – Emotionally Handicapped. To be classified as having this exceptionality a student must exhibit behavior that adversely affects their education, the behavior must occur over a long period of time and be experienced to a marked degree. The inability to learn can not be explained by intellectual or sensory deficits.

MH – Multiply Handicapped or *VE* – Varying Exceptionalities; Impairments that exist concurrently and that cause severe educational problems. Students who are multiply disabled usually can not be placed in a classroom according to a single disability.

ADD – Attention Deficit Disorder; a disorder that causes an individual to be unable to concentrate on one stimuli or to over attend to one stimuli.

ADHD – Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder; the same as attention deficit except this also includes hyperactivity along with distractiveness.

DD – Developmental Disorders or *PDD* – Pervasive Developmental Disorders; term often used with Autism, a condition that makes it difficult for those individuals to interact with others. It is often found concurrently with mental retardation. It is considered pervasive because it affects every aspect of the individuals life.

ESL – English as a Second Language; usually applies to non-native speakers.

LEP – Limited English Proficiency; may speak some English.

OCD – Obsessive Compulsive Disorder; a disorder usually classified as an emotional disorder. OCD will manifest itself in such a way that the obsessive behavior (sometimes hand rubbing or tapping ones pencil) interferes with learning.

Other broad categories of disabilities are Physical Impairments – PI and Health Impairments – HI

Physical Impairments can include:

Spina Bifida, CP – Cerebral Palsy, MS – Multiple Sclerosis, MD – Muscular Dystrophy, TBI – Traumatic Brain Injury, Arthritis, and Spinal Cord Injuries

Health Impairments can include:

Epilepsy, Diabetes, Asthma, Cystic Fibrosis, Hemophilia, Allergies and AIDS

Other Impairments: Visual, Hearing and Speech

Agencies and Legal Terms:

FAPE – Free and Appropriate Public Education; right guaranteed individuals with disabilities from age 3 – 21 years of age under federal law.

LRE – Least Restrictive Environment; how services are to be delivered to individuals with disabilities. They are to be educated in the least restrictive environment in which they can learn.

LEA – Lead Educational Administrator; usually the building principal, this is the person who is ultimately responsible for ensuring services are delivered in a particular school to students with disabilities.

SEA – State Educational Agency; this is usually used when referring to the state department of special education services.

OVR – Office of Vocational Rehabilitation; federal agency that is funded through state and federal dollars to deliver programs and services to individuals with disabilities from school age through adulthood in order to help them become employed, become retrained, or gain independent living.

MH/MR – Mental Health/Mental Retardation; agency that delivers services to individuals who meet the qualifications, set forth by the federal government, for mental health and mental retardation related issues.

SDA – Service Delivery Area; the geographic area that is designated to human service agencies and educational institutions in which they are to deliver their services.

IU – Intermediate Unit; an educational service unit that provides training and other services to schools with regard to students with special needs within their geographic SDA.

References for this section

Exceptional Student Education Online,
www.geocities.com/EnchantedForest/Cottage/3700/terms.html
Sarkees-Wircenski, M. & Scott, J. (1994). *Vocational Special Needs*,
Homewood, IL, American Technical Publishers.

Special thanks for their contributions to this section to: Matt Mann and Craig Turnbaugh, 413 Mt. Joy class, Fall, 1999 and to Anthony Saullo, Kent Robb, Cheryl Hoffman, Lynn Scarton, & Timothy Gilbert, 413 University Park class, Spring, 2000

Matt's Story

I had the opportunity to work with a young man during the 1998-1999 school year. His name was Matt and he was autistic. He was always below grade level in academic areas and there was no exception when he joined the career and technical center in 1997. He started in Culinary with half a day at the CTC and half a day at his home school. The following year he joined Painting and Interior, finishing as a full-day senior.

Matt enjoyed the vocational setting a lot more than the academic setting and his enthusiasm showed through in his work. His mother told me that his academic attitude changed noticeably when he went to a full day at the CTC. He was always eager to do a job and continue at that job until time ran out. Quite often, I had to tell him that it was time for lunch or time to go home.

He currently works at a cabinetry company locally. This started as a cooperative education placement but changed the day after graduation to a regular job. In fact, Matt made the effort to let his employer know the day after he graduated that he could now work full time. This is something Matt would not have done when he first started with me.

On top of this, Matt's whole social attitude changed as time went on. In the beginning of the year, Matt would not speak unless spoken to, would not look anyone in the eye, nor would he interact socially.

Right now, in addition to his job, Matt has his drivers permit and should have his driver's license soon. He lives at home but is looking for an apartment. He hopes to live independently within the next year. This is an amazing breakthrough for Matt. Even his parents were not sure of his potential for employment and his ability to live by himself. Matt's accomplishments were a milestone and continue to help him to succeed in his job and socially.

Special thanks to Sam Betancourt for his submission of this story

Legislation:

Federal law is very specific that students with disabilities have the right to a free and appropriate public education to be delivered in the least restrictive environment. Administrators and educators need to be well versed in the law and how it is applicable to the job that they do. Some of the laws that pertain to the education of this population include: The Individuals With Disabilities Act '97 (IDEA '97) The Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the School-to-Work Act.

The following is a list of references that can be used to gain a better understanding of the laws and how they apply to the classroom teacher and to the school administrator.

Websites:

The first site is The National Parent Network on Disabilities. It can be found at <http://www.npnd.org/> This site has a variety of information including a section for IDEA '97 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and it tracks current legislation.

The second site is the Disabilities, Rights, Education and Defense Fund. This site can be found at www.dredf.org from there you can access a document that covers IDEA '97 with a focus on what has changed from each authorization. This can be accessed directly by going to www.dredf.org/idea10.html This site also tracks legislation.

The third site is that of NICHCY, The National Information Center for Children and Youth With Disabilities. They are located at <http://nichcy.org> From this there is also a direct link to the Office of Special Education Program's (OSEP). They have an IDEA '97 training package which can be found by going to <http://nichcy.org/Trainpkg/trainpkg.htm> The inspirational slides that are in this package are worth looking at. NICHCY is a very active organization and updates their web-site frequently. There is a great deal of useful information located at this site from which teachers and administrators can benefit.

The fourth web-site that is loaded with information is that of the US Department of Education. This site has information on all federal educational legislation as well as grants, publications and services and....current job openings! It is located at www.ed.gov/ This site is searchable and has a wealth of information on a variety of topics.

A direct link to information on the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998 that gives an overview of this legislation can be found at <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OVAE/VocEd/InfoBoard/2pgperk.html>

Another very useful site is the National School-to-Work site which can be found at www.stw.ed.gov

To read an article on what research says about School-to-Work go to the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory web-site at www.ncrel.org. This site is devoted to applying research and technology to learning. To go directly to the article type in www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/stw_esys/.

Books

Some books that give excellent overviews of legislation and other information on working with individuals with special needs include: Exceptional Learners: Introduction to Special Education by Hallahan and Kauffman, Vocational Special Needs by Sarkees-Wircenski and Scott, and Special Education: A Practical Approach for Teachers by Ysseldyke and Algozzine.

Other Resources

In 1998 the Pennsylvania Department of Education published a document that takes Chapter 14: Special Education Services and Programs from the State Board of Education and outlines it alongside of Chapter 342: Special Education Services and Programs from the Department of Education. This resource shows how the state and federal regulations dovetail and can be implemented together.

References for this section

www.dredf.org/idea10.html

www.npnd.org/

<http://nichcy.org>

<http://nichcy.org/Trainpkg/trainpkg.htm>

www.ed.gov/

<http://www.ed.gov/offices/OVAE/VocEd/InfoBoard/2pgperk.html>

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www.ncrel.org

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Ysseldyke, J. E. & Algozzine, B. (1995). Special Education: A Practical Approach for Teachers. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Special thanks for their contributions to this section go to:

Adam Davis and Kent Terry, 413 University Park Class, Spring, 2000

Joan Farwell, Terri Boonie & Kirk Longnecker, 413 Mt. Joy Class, Fall, 2000

Alan Yoder, 413 Franklin County Class, Spring, 2000

IEP's:

The Individual Education Program is the legally prescriptive plan that contains the goals and objectives that are to be implemented for the individual student for whom the program is written. Present levels of performance, annual goals and short-term goals should all be a part of this document as should evaluation criterion and schedules. All education and related services must be included in this document. It should be comprehensive, specific, sequential, realistic, appropriate, understandable and mutually developed. There is specific, legal, protocol that must be followed for its development including:

- 1) Once eligibility is determined, an IEP must be developed within 30 calendar days. It must be developed BEFORE actual placement of the student and no services can be provided prior to its development. It must be reviewed annually but can be reviewed more frequently.
- 2) The committee that develops the program MUST be composed of at least the following people. A) the school administrator or his/her designee (this person must be present) B) the student's classroom teacher or potential classroom teacher C) the parent, legal guardian, or surrogate parent (parent must be invited to participate and the meeting should be held at a mutually agreeable time, but the parent does not have to participate if they choose not to) D) student (student should participate when appropriate)
- 3) Transition services must be addressed if the student will be 14 years of age during the period for which the IEP is being written. At this point the student MUST be invited and adult service agencies MUST be invited.
- 4) Under the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technology Education Act of 1990, the IEP MUST be developed cooperatively by special education and vocational education if the student is to be enrolled in an occupational preparation program. This is also supported in IDEA.

Information for this section was taken from LD Online, <http://www.ldonline.org>

This site has a wealth of information for educators and family members on the subject of learning disabilities. The site includes legal information, first-hand stories and on-line access to experts in this field.

There has been a surge of interest in the issue of self-advocacy and self-determination for students with disabilities in the last few years. Because of this, there are teachers in some of our districts that are advocating for students to run their own IEP meetings. Two individuals in Pennsylvania that do a terrific job of empowering their students to do this are Terri Linder, of the State College School District and Marjorie Eckman, of the Pittsburgh School District. NICHY puts out a publication that is very helpful in outlining how to assist students to run their own IEP meetings. It can be found at www.nichcy.org/pubs/stuguide/ta2.htm

This guide includes information on how to work with students to assist them to run their own meetings, a sample worksheet to use with students to help them to prepare, suggestions on how to write the IEP, a sample IEP invitation that the student can use, and appendixes that address legal issues and give additional resources for this type of information.

Resources for this section include:

Web-sites

<http://www.nichcy.org>

<http://www.iepresources.com>

(this site is a product for sale site....we are NOT advocating the products but listing it as a resource for anyone interested in looking at products that can be purchased. It includes books on a wide variety of subjects as well as videos and programs)

<http://www.ldonline.org>

http://www.ldonline.org/ld_indepth/iep/iep_process.html

Special thanks for their contributions to this section go to:

Rashid Alzahmi, Rashid Amir, and Nasser Al-hamli, 413 University Park Class, Spring, 2000

Lisa's Story

Many of us ask ourselves, on a daily, and sometimes even an hourly basis, "Why do I keep doing this?" There is only one reason that I can come up with every time I ask myself that question. I do it for those students in whom I see that my efforts make a difference. The following is a story about one such student.

Lisa came into my classroom in her eleventh grade year. She had been diagnosed with bipolar disorder and also suffered from panic attacks. Her father died many years ago and she lived with her chronically ill mother and another disabled relative. She was absent almost half of her tenth grade year in her home school and had difficulty dealing with authority figures. She was in danger of dropping out of school. The majority of her days were spent at home, in bed. As a last resort she was placed in a program for emotional support within the vocational school in which I teach.

Initially Lisa was placed in the Culinary Arts program on a half day basis and was given emotional support for the remainder of the school day. Culinary did not work for her so she transferred into my program; Health Occupations. A behavior modification contract was started along with small group, one on one instruction, and competency based instruction. Lisa was also encouraged to become involved in the school's student organization, Vocational Industrial Clubs of America (VICA). During her eleventh grade year Lisa missed a total of 18 days of school, the majority of which were during the first semester. As the year progressed she became more interested in her schoolwork and began to focus on entering a career in the Health Care field. She began to excel academically to where she ended the year with a "B" average and had completed academic courses in Geometry and Statistics.

Lisa's senior year was one of incredible personal growth. She took Anatomy and Physiology and maintained a solid "A" average. She became an officer in the school's VICA chapter and went on to compete at the state level in a First Aid and CPR competition. She was accepted into a Medical Arts school for Professional Massage Therapy, and received our school's highest honor at graduation, the Principal's Award.

Currently, Lisa is a top student in her class in Professional Massage Therapy. She has a job prospect in Alaska, and will be moving there upon graduation.

Not every student we teach will be as successful as Lisa. But, for those who are, it makes what we do worthwhile.

Special thanks to Maggie Kramer for her submission of this story.

Transition:

In all IDEA legislation, and particularly the 1997 IDEA legislation, transition services received special emphasis. IDEA '97 defines transition as: “a coordinated set of activities for a student designed within an outcome-oriented process, which promotes movement from school to post-secondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation.” The legislation stresses that it is to be based on the individual student’s needs, interests and preferences.

The Pennsylvania Standards also address the subject of transition. Section 342.37 set on July 1, 1990 states: “Transition is an outcome-oriented process that is long-range in nature. Transition involves a partnership of consumers, school-age services and programs, post-school services and programs, and local communities that result in higher education, employment, independent living and community participation.” It goes on to describe transition as a bridge between school programs and adult life.

In the 1990 IDEA legislation, transition services were to be started no later than age 16 and before that time if the IEP team felt that it was appropriate. Stressing the importance of the need for transition, the 1997 IDEA legislation stated that at age 14 a statement of transition service needs must be included in the IEP and updated annually. This means that each year the transition statement must be revisited while planning the curriculum for the coming school year as well as the needed transition services.

The Pennsylvania State standards refer to transition as a partnership. In this legislation, each district must name an individual who is to be responsible for transition planning for that district. Often, this individual will be a chair, or co-chair of a transition team. This team will consist of service providers from a given community that will meet to discuss the services that they provide to specific types of individuals within that geographic area as well as to address any transition needs that individuals within the community may have. These service providers usually include OVR, MH/MR, Blind and Visual Services and should have, representatives from the new Workforce Investment Boards. These boards have replaced organizations such as JTPA (Job Training Partnership Act) personnel, and employment office personnel as the Workforce Investment Act promoted the formation of One-Stop Career Centers to service all types of employment needs in a given area. They often will also include individuals from Children and Youth Services, Intermediate Units, Probation and Parole, the Association for Retarded Citizens (ARC), and many other agencies based on the location and availability of services in the school district. Many times these transition teams will put together a publication of all of the agencies and services that are available within a community and distribute them to those who are involved with delivering services as well as to those who receive services.

An excellent example of this is one that has been compiled by Lancaster County. To find out if your school district has such a publication, contact either your director of special education services for your school district, your transition coordinator or your local intermediate unit.

All through the federal legislation the statement is made that transition services are to be student centered. Many educators may be unsure of how to assist a student to articulate their interests and desires and also design appropriate programming that will fit the present level of functioning of the student. A successful model that is used for this process is outlined in an article by Morningstar, Klienhammer-Tramill & Latin in Focus on Exceptional Children. In this article the authors outline how to develop a student centered transition program including how to prepare for services to be delivered after graduation.

Transition to post-secondary training:

If the transition outcome for the student is post-secondary education there is a variety of resources that are available to assist educators, parents, and students to move through this process. Some of these resources are books and some of them are internet based.

It is very important for educators and students, as well as parents of students who are going on to college, to understand that there is a difference in the type of services that they may receive in the post-secondary arena. While in secondary school students are covered under IDEA legislation which speaks to education as an entitlement. Post-secondary education is not an entitlement. Services for students who have left secondary school fall under the Americans With Disabilities Act. This act addresses the issue of reasonable accommodations.

Students will need to have current documentation of their disability in order to receive services from a post-secondary institution. The acceptable documentation is usually a current psychological report, not older than three years, that must be submitted to the office of student services at the student's chosen college. After documentation has been received the student may be eligible for accommodations such as: longer time for tests and assignments, note-takers or the use of a tape recorder to record lectures, and in some cases, course substitutions. Students with disabilities in a post-secondary setting are expected to do the same amount of work for a course as a non-disabled student. Because of this it is very important that students who have a transition plan that includes post-secondary attendance as an outcome be enrolled in college level academic classes at their secondary school with minimal accommodations. They must also be able to articulate what their disability is, how it affects them academically, and what supports they need in the classroom in order to be successful because in post-secondary, students must self-disclose in order to receive services.

Some excellent resources for students with disabilities who plan to attend a post-secondary school include:

Books:

- 1) College Guide for Students with Disabilities: This book lists over 600 colleges as well as the services they provide, a timetable for planning, information about the admission process, scholarship information and information on curriculum.
- 2) Colleges with Programs for Students With Learning Disabilities or ADD: This book lists over 1000 two and four year colleges that provide services for those with learning disabilities or attention deficit disorder. It lists the contact person with phone number, for the college or university that is profiled that provides services for students with disabilities, the type of assistance that is available at each school listed and it also includes a variety of other resources.
- 3) College and Career Success for Students with Learning Disabilities: This book takes students through the process of making the decision to attend a college or technical school, how to judge a school, the advantages of community colleges, the importance of understanding and articulating what the students disability is, accommodations, financial aid, admission procedures and preparing to leave home.

Web-sites:

www.ldresources.com

Mentioned in a previous section, the value of this web-site can not be overstated. It was mentioned by many of the students who took this course in their research.

www.collegexpress.com

Once in the web-site there is a section that addresses students with disabilities as well as other links to sites that address this issue.

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Special thanks for their contributions to this section go to:

Jim Smith, Don King, Jessica Peak, and Joyette Freeman, 413 Mt. Joy Class, Fall, 1999 and Deb Andrews, Harvey Heiserman, Khalil Hassan, and Garret Graff, 413 University Park Class, Spring, 2000.

Fred's Story

A few years ago, I had a student called Fred in my Automotive Technology program. He had been receiving services from special education for a number of years and was identified as having trouble with both English and Math. Very early on this student required tutoring, and remedial assistance as well as tutoring, for Social Studies and Science. Otherwise Fred was very well rounded and required no assistance with social or health areas.

When Fred was eleven his family moved and this created some changes for him. However, instead of having a negative affect on him, he started to thrive in his new environment. He appeared to try and leave his deficiencies behind him and he attempted to move on with his life in his new school. His Science, Social Studies and Math skills all showed improvement.. Even though he had improved, he still needed assistance math. Fred could write organized essays without assistance, but made excessive grammatical and spelling errors. His reading comprehension was low and peer helpers were assigned to assist him with note taking and note reviewing for his classes. To do this he copied his notes over, which improved his penmanship. This skill came in handy for writing up bills and orders for collision repair.

Despite Fred's deficiency with the written word he was very good with oral expression. He could speak with good word usage and carried on conversations with adults and peers without difficulty. This strength added to his employability skills.

I used the information that I received in Fred's IEP, along with information that I gathered when the IEP conference was held prior to Fred's entrance into my program, to start to develop his program of instruction. He needed one that would allow him to function with little or no assistance in the collision repair program. The first step was to familiarize him with the industry and with the program itself. He had already developed a strong interest in collision repair because he was experimenting with repairs on his own vehicle at home. Capitalizing on that interest, and using the students' own car, I began to show him the procedures that also were given in the text book for the class. I then gave him the textbook the June prior to entering my program so that he

could familiarize himself with it. I explained both to him and to his parent that the course was based on the textbook and that he could work ahead in it if he wanted to do so. Giving the student the material at this time was a test to see how much interest and initiative he had toward the program, as well as an accommodation for his reading deficiency. This gave him time to familiarize himself with the terminology without having to struggle with as many new concepts at the beginning of the school year. I latter learned that not only had he studied the material, he obtained a part-time job at a body shop for the summer, which continued after school resumed in the fall.

At the beginning of the year I did an assessment to evaluate what the student had learned over the summer. I found that he had a very sound knowledge base of vehicle care such as washing, detailing, buffing, polishing, and analyzing imperfections in a paint's surface.

After this assessment I sat down with Fred to help him set goals for what he wanted to accomplish through the program and beyond. After reviewing the career areas of the program he chose to pursue a career as a collision repair body technician, which gave him opportunities in almost all aspects of collision repair.

Fred excelled in metal straightening, body filling, movable panel replacement and adjustment, and fixed panel replacement and adjustment. He took a strong interest in structural repairs and frame alignment and realized that this area of collision repair involved more math and understanding of collision theory. He took this as a challenge and changed his career path to frame repair. He worked additional hours before and after school which helped him to improve both his measuring and pulling techniques.

Soon after changing his career goal he made another career change. Fred decided to pursue further education at a technical college half way across the country. The college was introduced to him by a representative of the school who came to visit my program. I encouraged him to consider it because I thought it would be beneficial to him to advance the training that he started.

The last that I heard from him, he had a job with BMW, who was paying for the remainder of his schooling. His starting wage was \$15 per hour and BMW also paid his moving expenses to his new location.

Special thanks to Roy Klinger for his submission of this story.

Specific Categories of Special Needs:

The two most prevalent types of disabilities in the public school system are learning disabilities (LD) and attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), also sometimes referred to as attention deficit disorder (ADD).

ADHD/ADD:

One ADHD web-site, www.concentric.nte/~skiplac/addcause.html, lists the prevalence rate at 3-5% of the total population. Some other startling facts from this site: 35 – 60% of individuals with ADHD will have problems with aggressiveness and will have problems with abiding by the law. This site also says that as many as 25% will exhibit antisocial tendencies as adults.

Students with ADHD will have problems sustaining their attention because they are highly distractible. Everything seems of equal importance. Students may also exhibit periods of hyper-attention, where they will become so focussed on an activity they may even forget to stop and eat meals.

Students with this disorder often have poor impulse control, engage in excessive activity, and have difficulty following rules; which puts them at a higher risk of engaging in illegal activities particularly if they have also been diagnosed with a conduct disorder.

It was thought at one time that children with ADHD would outgrow their disorder but this is a myth. In fact, many adults are now being diagnosed with this disability and take medication to help them with concentration. The most commonly prescribed medications are Ritalin, Dexedrine, and Cylert.

LD:

As many as 2.4 million children in the United States today have been diagnosed with a learning disability and each year approximately 120,000 additional students are identified. (taken from www.rit.edu/~easi/ak12/data/glossld.html)

According to PL 94-142, learning disabilities occur as a deficit in understanding or using language, spoken or written. This can manifest itself in difficulty listening, thinking, speaking, reading, writing, spelling or doing mathematical calculations. It includes dyslexia and developmental aphasia. It does not include disabilities that occur due to visual deficits, hearing deficits, mental retardation, emotional disturbance, or environmental or cultural differences.

According to the Curry School of Education in Virginia, 80% of students with learning disabilities receive the majority of their instruction in the general educational setting. There are a variety of strategies that can be used to assist students with learning disabilities to become successful in this type of a setting. Decoding, sequencing, summarizing and inferring from material that has been read are all areas where the student with learning disabilities may experience frustration and difficulty when reading, and reading is a very large part of any general educational curriculum.

To compensate for this, strategies such as, using direct instruction, the use of story frames, summarizing one paragraph at a time, and a technique called RIDER, that breaks material down one sentence at a time, are all tactics that can be helpful.

One of the most common complaints that educators have concerning both students with LD and students with ADHD concerns their lack of self-control. These students need to be taught how to use self-assessment, self-evaluation, self-recording, self-reinforcement and how to set goals. These are all areas of behavior that children without disabilities learn from their environment, but areas in which the child with a disability may need to be directly instructed.

Autism:

A disability category that is not as prevalent, but which sometimes is found in students who attend Career and Technical schools is known as Autism or Autism Spectrum Disorder.

According to Pennsylvania's initiative on serving students with this disability, the disorder was added to the Pennsylvania definition for students eligible for receiving services in 1990. Since then Pennsylvania went from having 252 children identified in 1990 to 2,243 identified in the 1998-1999 school year. This is an 800% increase and the number is still growing.

Autism is the third most common developmental disability effecting 15 out of every 10,000 individuals. Children with autism display problems with social interaction including facial expressions, voice intonation and making eye contact. They are often oblivious to others around them or will invade others personal space.

Children with autism may engage in perseveration; repetitive motions or play such as hand flapping, spinning, lining up objects, or opening or closing things. They may be easily upset by change in routine, have difficulty with transitions and a strong desire to maintain sameness. They may engage in rocking, teeth grinding or jaw clenching.

Individuals with autism may be non-sensitive to pain, have difficulty with, or have no, spoken language and usually have problems with conversational speech. They often are echolalic, repeating what others say to them.

Autism can be found concurrently with varying levels of mental retardation. As a result, students with autism frequently are educated in life-skills programs where the focus is on daily living and vocational programming. However, some higher functioning children are placed in the general education curriculum.

Tourette Syndrome:

This disorder is a neurological disorder that manifests itself in involuntary body movements and uncontrollable vocalizations. The body movements can include such things as eye blinking, nose twitching, facial grimacing, shoulder shrugging, and arm or leg jerking. The vocalizations can include hissing, snorting, barking, clucking, or more explicit outbursts. These

individuals will sometimes also engage in echolalia or palilalia (repeating the words of others). This is the disorder that is often associated with the use of uncontrollable obscenities.

Some individuals with this disorder can manage to control their tics or vocalizations throughout the school day but this often results in explosive tics and vocalizations once the student returns home. This must take an almost Herculean effort on the part of the child.

Often students with Tourettes are given medication to assist with the control of the tics. Haldol, Pimozide and Clonidine are the most frequently used. All of these drugs have side effects that can manifest themselves as irritability or drowsiness.

Although Tourettes can often be found concurrently with learning disabilities, one of the biggest problems that students with this disorder face is social. Teachers can assist students with Tourettes by promoting positive self-esteem and acceptance.

Students who are homeless:

According to the Pennsylvania Census of 1996 it is estimated that Pennsylvania has 30,000 children who are homeless. While only 7% of that figure includes students in secondary school, the long-term effects of being homeless while a pre-school or elementary school student may still be evident in the secondary setting.

Assistance is provided, under the Steward B. McKinney Homeless Assistant Act of 1987, for these students. This act provides funding for schools for the education of those that are homeless or those at-risk of becoming homeless. It provides protection against discrimination by school districts for the delivery of education, requires that the districts provide transportation to students (who may be living in temporary shelters but wish to continue to attend their home school), provides funding for school activities, supplies for homework, and sets forth specific criteria for what homelessness is and what children can be assisted by the act.

There are many issues that effect children who are homeless. Often their physical needs for food and shelter go unmet or are not adequately met. They may experience emotional issues such as depression and low self-worth. They are some times forced to change schools when they relocate from one place to the next and they often have difficulty, particularly in a state as rural as Pennsylvania, with transportation to and from places. The issue with transportation can be especially painful when a child wishes to participate in extra-curricular school activities that the school district may not provide transportation for, such as summer sports practice or band practice.

Teachers who have students in their classroom that are homeless can assist them to adjust by providing a stable, respectful and consistent environment. Stability at school is something that children who are homeless desperately need because of the instability in their home life. Respectfulness may

simply mean not calling attention to the fact that the student is homeless. This means if supplies need to be purchased by the students for class, that those being given to a homeless student are distributed without the rest of the class knowing that the student is not able to pay.

Making parents feel welcome in the classroom is also important. This can sometimes be difficult as the parents may have memories of negative experiences when they attended school.

Having students who are compassionate and respectful serve as mentors to the student who is homeless is also an effective strategy. Often students who are homeless are ostracized for their appearance, hygiene, or clothing. Anything that a teacher can employ to integrate the student who is homeless into the classroom is a benefit. Teachers need to be understanding of the conditions that the student who is homeless encounters with regard to homework. Shelters can be crowded and may have no quiet place, and no materials available, for completing homework.

Teachers need to work closely with school support people such as guidance to monitor students academic and behavioral progress. Students who are homeless may have parents who have drug and alcohol problems. These problems can affect the child's behavior and grades. They may have difficulty expressing emotions and may need to be directly taught appropriate ways of coping with emotional issues.

Since students who are homeless have little or no possessions of their own teachers should avoid removing possessions as a form of discipline. It is better to teach all the students how to act responsibly and then expect that behavior from them and have clear action and consequence rules for the classroom that don't involve forgoing equipment or materials.

The more consistent, supportive, and engaging an environment that a teacher establishes in his or her classroom, the less likelihood that there will be discipline problems with any of their students. Students will also be more motivated to achieve in this type of structured classroom.

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Special thanks for their contributions to this section go to:

Margaret Burger, Steve Rivera, Ken Sagan, Kent Terry, Mark Deiter, Tammy Brawand, Sean Allewalt, Greg Martin, Othman Mubarak, Shervon Thompson, and Rashed Alzahmi, 413 University Park class and Carol Ritz and Dennis Green, 413, Chambersburg class.

Mike's Story

Mike came to my class knowing only failure and resentment for himself and the school system. His home life was a wreck. Mike had suffered through his parent's ugly divorce. Neither parent really cared about him. He had become angry at the world.

Mike had been kicked out of school in the 10th grade. He had been in numerous fights. He became a heavy drinker and abused drugs. In the 11th grade he entered vocational school and started to get his life back together.

When he entered my plumbing course in 12th grade he had extremely low self esteem. He told me that he knew he had really screwed up his life. He also said that he felt my class was his last chance to get his act together.

We talked about what he wanted to achieve in my class. His main goal was to get a good job in the plumbing trade after graduation. I told Mike that we would need to work on his short-term goals first and that he should set achievable goals for himself in my class. I told him that if his goals were too far off or unachievable, he would be just setting himself up for failure.

At first, we set up daily goals for Mike. As he reached these goals his confidence grew. Later, we set weekly goals. His confidence flourished. He was doing something now that he felt earlier that he could not do.

Now we set higher goals. In my program I teach the first year level of a four year apprentice program using the Wheels of Learning curriculum from the Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC). If a student gets through Level I with a B average or better, he is accepted into the second year apprentice program with an ABC employer. When the employer hires one of these students they guarantee that student raises in pay as they work through the rest of the three-year apprentice program. Mike would need to go to night school two days a week for three years while working for the employer. At the end of the apprentice program Mike would become a Journeyman Plumber. This would be a great accomplishment, like a Super Bowl of goals for Mike. Mike decided to go for it. He was poised for success.

In the spring, just a few years ago, Mike went out to work on co-op. He was hired by a mechanical company. He came through my Level I plumbing course with an "A" average. His starting salary was \$12 an hour. At the end of the school year he was hired full time by the mechanical company and was enrolled in the Wheels of Learning Program through them.

A year ago Mike came walking and smiling into my plumbing lab. His head was held high. He had the aura of a man who had achieved his goals. As we talked, he told me that he was doing great at work. He was entering his last year of the apprentice program and expected to have his Journeyman's license by the end of the year. He was now making scale wages, which for a three-year apprentice was \$19 per hour.

We talked for over an hour and the more we talked the more amazed I was. I could hardly believe that this was the same student who walked into my class a few years ago. He had made it. He was on his way to achieving his goals in life.

Special thanks to Curt Gible for his submission of this story.

Instructional Strategies and Philosophies:

Inclusion

Since the passage of PL 94-142 the Education of All Handicapped Act, and all the subsequent IDEA legislation, there has been more of a focus on including students with disabilities in the regular classroom and curriculum. Nowhere is inclusion more apparent than in the vocational school where the average percentage of students with disabilities is approximately 25 - 27%. This compares to 11 – 13% in the non-vocational school.

The more successful inclusionary settings utilize instructional practices that are effective with a broad range of learners. This is something that is done regularly in applied vocational settings where instructors adapt their teaching to a wide variety of student levels and teach to multiple modalities. For inclusion to be effective there needs to be an appropriate level of personal support for the student, accommodations and curriculum modifications to allow students to actively and successfully participate in class, and the use of any necessary instructional and assistive technology to assist with modification and participation in the curriculum. There also needs to be a shared commitment by all of the individuals within the educational system. This includes creating a supportive environment for parents to be partners in the process and having the student actively participate in their educational planning.

Learning Styles

Much research has been done in the last couple of decades on learning styles. Auditory, Visual, and Kinesthetic are the words often used to describe students who prefer to hear, see, or touch things to learn. Many individuals with disabilities have deficits in auditory or visual modalities and prefer to learn through being directly involved and engaged in the curriculum. They learn best through what they do and what they can touch or handle. It is often why they end up in vocational education. They are active learners. There are a variety of resources out there for developing instruction for, and using a technique called, Active Learning and they are listed in the reference section that follows.

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www.cyberschool.net/

Special thanks for their contributions to this section go to:
Saqr A. Mohamed, Doug Tubbs, Nancy Bridge, Tom Gaydosh, and Eric Krock, 413 University Park class

Discipline:

Classroom management and discipline go hand in hand and there is no topic today that is probably on the mind of educators more often than behavior in the classroom. With school shootings being prominent in the news, the subject has generated a lot of discussion.

A model by Levin and Shanken-Kaye called The Self-Control Classroom model has been making the rounds in in-service training. This model is founded on the premise that concentrating on an internal locus of control, where the student learns to manage their behavior, is the most effective method to obtain and maintain appropriate behavior. They state that teachers should encourage students to be accountable, to strive to achieve, to have integrity and to recognize their duty to others. Through a model of adult-youth interaction that centers around a trusting, caring and respectful relationship students are taught these values.

Teachers should develop an atmosphere in the classroom that encourages learning readiness and opens students to effective quality instruction. The philosophy behind this model for both the student and the teacher is that the only person that an individual can control and change is themselves. They state that teachers cannot force a student to behave, teachers can only influence a change; to change a student's behavior the teacher must change his/her behavior because it is the only thing which he/she can control. This will only increase the likelihood of the student adopting more desirable behavior.

Although this sounds simple, it is really a complex task with a multitude of variables that can influence the outcome. Levin and Shanken-Kaye have a model that they developed. Vera Daniels has another model. Hers focuses on teachers developing and using diagnostic skills, reflective thinking, and choosing appropriate strategies.

Many local intermediate units and districts develop their own discipline management strategies and models. Lincoln Intermediate Unit has a levels system that involves classroom management strategies, individual behavior management plans and formal behavior and safety technique plans.

Teachers should develop their classroom management plans with their students. The plan should have no more than five or six rules and it should be stated in a positive manner. Once the rules have been developed they should be posted in the classroom. It is important that the students understand the rules. If the teacher is using respect yourself and others as a rule, then the students need to know and understand what respect means and how the rule will be enforced.

Several strategies can be used to modify behavior before it escalates. Using non-verbal communication, such as facial expressions, head positioning

and hand gestures can be effective to redirect students from negative behavior. Standing near the student or redirecting them physically or verbally to the task they should be working on can be an effective tool to alter student behavior. Students should also be positively reinforced for staying on task through either verbal or written praise. If a student is working on a task and they are frustrated by it, than the teacher should modify the task so that the student can recompose themselves and meet with some success. If the behavior has escalated to where the student has become disruptive, than they should be removed to another area and encouraged to regain self-control so that they can return to the classroom area.

Legal issues with discipline

Changes in the amendments to IDEA in 1997 brought some changes in the authority of school personnel to use placement in an alternative educational setting for students with IEP's. Under the current legislation, administrators may remove a student through suspension, to an appropriate interim educational setting or to another setting for not more than 10 school days subsequent to what is set forth in the school policy for non-disabled students. The change in this law concerns weapons or drug and alcohol violations. Administrators who have a student with an IEP that brings a weapon to school or to a school function, or who consumes or who knowingly possesses, uses, sells or solicits drugs or alcohol, can remove that student for up to 45 days subsequent to what is set forth in the school policy for non-disabled students. If the child has been found to be a danger to himself or others a hearing officer may also remove the child from the setting for up to 45 days.

The school must also develop and implement a behavioral plan if one has not been done. If there is one in place then the IEP team must meet to review and modify it to address the students' behavior.

To track Special Needs laws and their changes go to: www.fcsn.org
References for this section include:

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Special thanks for this section go to: Dale Miller, 413 Mt. Joy class, Joel Sollenberger and Jill Sipes, 413 Chambersburg class and Trevor Fronk, 413 University Park Class.

The Education of Students with Special Needs in the United Arab Emirates

In 1979 the Sharjah City of Humanitarian Services (SCHS) established their mission in Sharjah City. SCHS is a branch of the Arab Family Organization in the Gulf region. Sharjah City is the third largest city in population in the United Arab Emirates. The ruler of the city is His Highness Dr. Sheikh Sultan Bin Mohammed Al-Qassimi, one of the supreme members of the council. His idea is that all people are equals. This includes those individuals with disabilities.

If compared, past and present, there is a contrast between the repression, inattention and lack of knowledge of the past, and the immense achievement we notice and sense today. The word “future” seems more dazzling today. The future is guaranteed enough to break the barriers of fear and dread of an unknown tomorrow. Now we can look forward to a bright tomorrow that carries hope and goodness for all.

Providing education, care, training and rehabilitation to children and adults with special needs, regardless of the level of disability, within the limits that each particular persons disability allows, is now possible. SCHS also provides job opportunities for people with special needs. In addition, SCHS provides families with guidance and counseling. They educate the public on disability issues and on ways to prevent those disabilities, that can now be prevented, from occurring in future generations.

Human services provide the Sharjah City services for more than 750 individuals with disabilities for people of all ages and nationalities. The city has a non-rejection policy that is based on the ability of the person to benefit from the services available. In addition, it provides social, cultural and educational facilities for those with disabilities and also for the rest of society in general.

Special Education training programs are offered by different institutes and departments as well as vocational rehabilitation workshops. Various educational awareness campaigns were published in many medias. Social services, and many other services are offered through well-established relationships between the City and the different branches of society, like local departments, schools, hospitals, and national organizations.

Al-Amal institute for the hearing impaired is an obvious example. This was established at the same time as the City. It provides educational services to more than ninety students with various levels of hearing impairment. Al-Amal kindergarten for the hearing impaired is a major section of the institute. This was established in 1983 and accepts children from the ages of two, using the same methods as the Institute to teach language and speech for children who have total deafness or with a severe limitation of hearing. There are about forty children in the kindergarten. In the evening, more than thirty students with various speech difficulties are taught at the speech therapy department. Most of these students attend regular governmental schools during the day.

The School for the Mentally Handicapped was established in 1984. It currently provides services for more than 150 children with various levels of mental disabilities and of varying ages. They are divided into groups according to their level of disability and age. Each child is provided with an individual learning plan. A special program for children with Autism has been adopted to meet their needs. Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy Departments provide services to all children enrolled in this school who have physical difficulties as well as outpatients who require such therapy.

The Vocational Rehabilitation Department activities was started in 1989 with the opening of a carpentry workshop as well as a tailoring and an arts and crafts workshop to train students with hearing, mental and physical difficulties to learn a vocational skill. Doing this will help them to achieve financial independence and reinforce their confidence and self esteem.

The Employment and Follow-up Department was made as an extension of its role of securing employment, to assist those with disabilities. The City has taken up the responsibility of helping those who have been rehabilitated to acquire suitable employment. More than 40 young men and women have been employed in both the public and private sectors through this department.

The Center of Early Intervention was established in 1992. It provides services to children between birth and age six and also to their families. The aim is to prevent disability and reduce its negative effects. It also trains staff to work with children with special needs.

The SCHS's branch in Khor Fakkan was established in 1985 to provide children with disabilities in the East Region with care, education and training. Currently the branch serves more than 70 persons with disabilities. Facilities include a hearing and mental training section, physiotherapy, and speech therapy.

The City attaches great importance to public forums for their role in educating society, nurturing their trust, and their financial and moral support. To this end, the City has established an Information Department which keeps a continuous communication with the local and Arab press, and publishes a monthly magazine, Al-Manal. It also supervises a weekly TV program broadcast by Sharjah TV since 1990. This program concentrates on disability awareness and public education.

The City provides thorough and continuous training programs for all its employees, as well as the training of new employees to qualify them to work with children with disabilities effectively. It also provides training programs for special teachers from other Gulf countries. Four such programs were carried out during the past two years. One was a seminar entitled Rehabilitation and Employment of the Handicapped.

The City has gained the trust and cooperation of various local, regional and international organizations. It has gained the backing of the Arab Committee for the Support of Orientation programs for those working with individuals with disabilities, as well as membership in the Arab Union for Organizations working to care for the hearing impaired. They have membership in the International Union for the Deaf and membership in the International League for the Mentally Handicapped, and the International Union for the Blind. It also hopes to become a member of the International Society of Special Arts, which is based in the United States.

Special thanks to Khlaïd Al-Ali for submission of this story.

Extra-Curricular Activities:

Students with disabilities participation in extra-curricular activities is often low. However, many organizations and camps actively recruit and offer programs for individuals with specific disabilities. Penn State Geisinger offers a camp for students with diabetes and Hershey Medical Center also offers camps for students with disabilities. In Forest Hills, NY, Summit Camp targets youth with attention deficit disorder or learning disabilities. They have a sports camp, arts camp, adventure camp and a post-season mini-camp that children can choose from.

On the secondary level, SKILLSUSA-VICA has always included students with disabilities and even has a skills competition that allows students with disabilities to compete in their career and technical program area with other students who have disabilities. In the sea of red jackets that are the trademark of this programs uniform, the students with disabilities are virtually unidentifiable from those who have no disabilities. SKILLSUSA-VICA also fosters this feeling of community through its Professional Development Program (PDP), their member initiation ceremony and their emphasis on the development of leadership skills in all their members.

The US Department of Education has recognized ten vocational student organizations as being vital components of Career and Technical Education Programs. One such program the Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA), focuses on character development, creative and critical thinking, interpersonal communication and vocational preparation. Skills in these areas are often very difficult for students with disabilities to attain.

The FCCLA also has a “Leaders at Work” program that specializes in food services, an area in which a large number of students with disabilities are often enrolled. This program offers students the opportunity to develop skills in management and entrepreneurship.

The Boy Scouts of America, in their cub scout, boy scout, and explorer programs have always included youth with special needs. The highest rank in scouting is the Eagle Scout Rank, which only 2-3% of all scouts reach. Among this rank are individuals with disabilities. The editor of this book personally knows of two individuals with disabilities in the Centre County area who have attained this rank. Sometimes modifications are made to the requirements, just like in the classroom or the workplace but the award, even with modifications is an incredible amount of work.

Scouting programs teach leadership skills, citizenship skills, communication skills, teamwork skills, and organizational skills. These are all skills that students with disabilities need, as well as those without disabilities, to be successful adults.

The explorer program focuses on particular careers and can give individuals with disabilities the opportunity to learn about and gain exposure to areas in which they may be employable. This program varies from area to area

based on the posts of careers that are being offered.

Probably one of the most recognized programs for individuals with disabilities is Special Olympics. A Yale University study on Special Olympics found that it has a direct positive effect on the participants in the area of their self-image and their ability to function in a social setting. These athletes perform better at school, at work and at home.

Founded to bring individuals with mental retardation into the public eye to reduce the stigma and increase those individuals quality of life, Special Olympics in Pennsylvania, which started in May of 1970, has continued to grow. This year over 2000 Pennsylvania athletes competed.

References in this section include:

www.fcsn.org

www.summitcamp.com

www.paso.org

www.fcclainc.org

www.ffa.org

www.deca.org

www.bsa.scouting.org

www.skillsusa.org

SKILLSUSA-VICA (1997). A Management Guide for Running a local SKILLSUSA Championships (2nd. Edition). Leesburg, VA: Author.

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SKILLSUSA-VICA (1999). Leadership Handbook (18th. edition). Leesburg, VA: Author

SKILLSUSA-VICA (1995). Professional Development Program:Instructor's Guide. Leesburg, VA: Author.

Vaughn, P. (1999). Handbook for Advisors of Vocational Student Organizations. Georgia: The American Association for Vocational Instructional Materials.

Special thanks for their contributions to this section go to:

Wed Rineer, 413 Mt. Joy Class and Mark Piccone, Kristy Donahay, Vicki Fritts, Michelle Becker and John Moeller, 413 University Park Class.

Work Issues:

Social Security Income Benefits

Career and Technical Educators need to become familiar with the issues concerning assisting individuals with disabilities to become employable. One large issue revolves around Social Security Income (SSI) benefits.

Many parents fear the loss of these benefits for their child with disabilities. So much so, that they may hinder attempts to get them jobs. These parents may not understand the payment system, or may be afraid that their child will exceed the allowable sixty-five dollars per month in earnings before SSI starts to count the earnings against the benefit dollars. After the first sixty-five dollars earned, SSI only takes into account one half of the Substantial Gains Activity (income earned from work) that the individual makes. The SSI payment may decrease but the individual will always be at least sixty-five dollars ahead of their non-working earnings.

Another issue with those receiving SSI benefits is Medicaid. Many individuals on SSI also qualify for Medicaid and fear that once they begin working they will lose their health benefits. Should an individual earn above the allowable five hundred to seven hundred dollars per month they could still qualify for Medicaid under other eligibility requirements.

Often the parents and the student fail to consider the other gains from working. Those gains that are not tangible such as self-esteem, confidence, independence, and the satisfaction of being a contributing member to the community and society.

With the proposed changes to SSI, those to allow retired workers to earn much more without penalty, maybe individuals with disabilities will be the next group to be allowed to work without the penalty of losing benefits. As our demand for workers continues to rise we will continue to look at other labor pools. Those pools should include an increase in jobs for individuals with disabilities.

Employer issues and services:

Employers might consider hiring individuals with disabilities if they had a better understanding of disabilities and of their responsibility in working with such individuals. Reasonable accommodations, something that is mandated under the Americans with Disabilities Act, is often a scary thing to small business owners. Telling them that reasonable accommodations can mean such things as: access ramps or lowering desks, eliminating or reassigning certain job functions to create a job that a person with a disability could perform, making part-time or modified work schedules to accommodate fatigue that might be a part of the disability or to allow a person to have a permanent shift so that they can arrange their transportation, altering when or how a particular job function is done, reassigning them within the company if there is a change in their condition, acquisition or modification of equipment or devices (often reimbursable) adjusting or modifying pre-employment test formats, training

materials and policies, and providing qualified readers or interpreters could assist students with disabilities to gain access to potential jobs.

Some of the things that employers can do are very simple. Using respectful language, putting the person first and then the disability, not referring to the person as being a “victim of, suffering from, or afflicted with” which connote negativity and imply helplessness. The use of the word disease should be avoided unless the person has something that is a disease. It is also important that the employer emphasizes the persons abilities and refers to them in a positive manner.

In a 1987 study conducted by Louis Harris and Associates, top industry leaders in both small and large companies overwhelmingly rated employees with disabilities as good or excellent in their job performance. In addition, eight out of ten supervisors felt that managing employees with disabilities was no harder than their employees without disabilities.

In addition to these benefits, employers may be able to receive financial incentives for hiring individuals with disabilities. The Workforce Investment Act, On-the-Job Training, the Disabled Access Credit, the Architectural and Transportation Barrier Removal Deduction, and the Targeted Jobs Tax Credit are all initiatives that employers should explore.

References for this section include:

www.ssa.gov/work/sgafact.htm

http://newfederalism.urban.org/html/anf_a10.html

Social Security Administration (1999). Red Book on Work Incentives. (SSA Pub. No. 64-030). Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office.

www.stw.ed.gov/factsht/bull0696.htm

www.dssc.org/nta/html/emptool.htm

www.dssc.org/nta/html/emptool.htm

Special thanks for their contributions to this section go to:

Veronica Evans and Kaye Hamilton, 413 Chambersburg class.

Exemplary Programs:

There are a multitude of wonderful programs that exist for students with disabilities. Space does not allow for all of them to be named here. However, here are some highlights that were contributed for this publication.

These schools, listed from www.fape.org, are seen as best practice sites.

1. Park Elementary School in Cross Plains, WI. This school has a model program for including children who are deaf or hard of hearing. It utilizes co-teaching in the regular classroom with interpreters.
2. Morris Schott Middle School, Mattawa, WA. This school has a vocational program that was started for students from special education. The program was expanded to include regular education students. Located in a high unemployment area, the schools curriculum includes the creation and operation of student businesses.
3. Freedom Area School District, Freedom, PA. Freedom developed a program that cut the drop out rate to zero for their students with disabilities. It is now providing this same program to students without disabilities. The PA Department of Ed, Clarion University, and the school district are now offering to replicate this program throughout the Commonwealth.
4. State College Area High School, State College, PA. State College offers the LifeLink program, a program designed to assist students with disabilities with transition to independent life. Students from this classroom are very involved in the design and the operation of the program, which includes weekend stays at their own apartment along with a independent living coach. Their involvement in the design and operation, and the applied living skills they practice at the apartment, helps increase their independent living and critical thinking skills. Terri Lindner, the teacher of this program was also Disney's teacher of the year for 2000.
5. Circle of Nations Residential Elementary School, Wahpeton, ND. This school is the nation's only off-reservation boarding school. It is a therapeutic demonstration model for American Indian elementary children. It has a comprehensive inclusion program that services their special education population which encompasses about sixty percent of their total school population.
6. Lexington School for the Deaf, Queens, NY. Lexington is the only school in the US that is licensed to provide Instrumental Enrichment education and training to teachers and other educators. Instrumental Enrichment is an intensive mediated learning process that bridges academic learning and subject matter with development of cognitive skills and strategies for problem solving.

7. Nishuane School, Montclair, NJ. This is an early childhood school for the Gifted and Talented and is based on the belief that all children have gifts and talents. It has been recognized as a STAR school by the NJ Department of Education. This school also includes students with special needs in their enrichment education programs.
8. Pearl Harbor Kai Elementary School Place, Honolulu, HI. A school comprised of transient military families, this school has a multi-aged Permanent School Family Program that strives to promote stability through focusing on character development, environmental issues, and community service. The school has full inclusion for K-2 and operates a special program that brings diverse groups together two times each month for the activities in the Permanent School Family Program. All of the school's students have portfolios.
9. Howard High School of Technology, Wilmington, DE. This school operates a Quest for Quality program that has 9th grade students create a vision statement and then help design their own educational program to match this statement. The school helps all students see the importance of linking academic and occupational skill development. This school has a high graduation rate for students with disabilities.
10. Tolleson Elementary School, Tolleson, AZ. This school is participating in an IEP process that helps the students be the lead participants in their educational programming. In conjunction with InterAct Arizona, an organization that is involved in a lot of system change initiatives with special populations, the school helps the students develop a better understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses and enables them to become better self-advocates.

Other initiatives that are out there include the National Network Partnership Schools Program. This program was instrumental in the formation of the Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed at-risk, which targets poor and minority families with children who are considered at-risk of dropping out. It is operated through a partnership between Johns Hopkins University and Howard University.

Female specific programs

Females make-up a much smaller percentage of the population of students with special needs, a ratio frequently quoted at 1:4, and are often overlooked when designing programming. A one-size fits all method doesn't necessarily work for both males and females. One specific program that has proved successful with females who are incarcerated or are receiving special education services is located in Minnesota. Minnesota corrections law requires

the Department of Corrections to work together with other professionals to service females who are incarcerated in juvenile facilities. According to the Minnesota statute (MN Laws, 1994, 636-15-7) professionals working with students affected by this law must understand female adolescent development and use this knowledge to develop programs that are comprehensive, offer a safe and nurturing environment and form strong positive relationships with the children being served through the programming.

Because of this law, a program called UNITE was established to serve the unique needs of females with behavior disorders. Started in September of 1998, the program is still in its infancy so data is currently being collected on its efficacy.

References for this section include:

www.fape.org/practices/work_effectively.html

Ryan, C. A. & Lindgren, S. L. (1999). How to Work Effectively with Girls: Promising practices in gender-specific interventions. (ON-LINE)

www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/index.html

www.parentsoup.com

Special thanks for their contributions to this section go to:

Elizabeth Stinger, 413 class, Mt. Joy and Shervon Thompson, 413 class, University Park

The following tool is an example of a graduate follow-up survey.

Graduation Follow-Up Survey

Name_____

Address_____ State____ ZIP_____

Phone_____

Educational Background:

1. What year did you leave school?_____ Did you graduate? Yes
No
2. What was your technical program area in school?_____
3. Have you attended any of the following. Circle all that apply.

Technical or Training School Community College

College/University Graduate School Military
4. List any agencies that you have been involved with since leaving high school.
Ex. OVR, MHMR, PIC
5. What classes in public school do you feel helped prepare you for adult life?
6. What classes do you think would have helped prepare you that you didn't have?

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Family/Individual Information

1. Who are you currently living with? (circle answer)
Parents support me With parents but I pay rent With others but pay my share
Living on my own and paying own way
2. Are you married? ____ Yes ____ No
3. Are you a parent or step-parent? ____ Yes ____ No
4. What do you use for transportation? Circle one
Own Car Public Transportation
Rely on others to drive me places

Work Information

1. Are you currently employed? ____ Yes ____ No
2. If you are employed, are you employed ____ Full-time ____ Part-time
3. Are you employed in the trade area you studied at Vo-tech?
____ Yes ____ No
4. How long have you been employed at this job? _____
4. How many jobs have you had since leaving school? _____
5. What are your current earnings? Circle one

minimum wage to \$8.00 per hour

\$8.01 - \$10.00 per hour

Over \$10.00 per hour

Salaried employee

This is an example of a tool used for charting student progress.

Weekly Reporting Form for Student Progress

Student Name:_____ Grade:_____ Home
School:_____

Prog/Subj Area:_____ AM_____ PM_____ Support
Teacher:_____

___ Is doing well in my program/subject area

___ Has failed an exam this week

___ Has not turned in assigned work this week

___ Is currently failing in my program/subject area,
current grade is ___

___ Has missed school ___ days this week

___ Is having disciplinary problems in my class

___ I request an observation

___ Needs assistance in studying for an up-coming exam –
test will be on_____
(date)

___ Needs assistance with weekly assignments*

*Please send them to the support staff to work on with the student

___ Needs assistance while working in the classroom

Comments:

Signature

Date

The following is a training agreement that can be used for placing students in volunteer work.

Volunteer Career Experience Agreement Contract

Name _____ School _____ School
Phone _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone _____ DOB _____ Age _____ Grade _____

Student Agreement & Assignment(s) 1. _____ 2. _____

As the student trainee of the Volunteer Career Experience Program, I:

1. Understand that this placement is not an employment situation, but an experience that is part of my planned education program.
2. Understand that the employer is not obliged to provide me with an employment situation at the conclusion of this exploration.
3. Understand that because an employer/employee relationship does not exist, I am not entitled to wages, workman's compensation, or insurance benefits.
4. Understand that observations will be sufficiently brief.
5. Will give notice to my employer, in advance, of any time I may need to be absent or late coming to work or to leave work early.
6. Will continually attempt to improve my performance on the job and in school.
7. Will accept directions, criticism and counseling of the mentor, coordinator or other trainers.
8. Will practice good hygiene and grooming.
9. Understand that not following these rules may result in the loss of the privilege or participation in the Volunteer Career Experience Program.
10. Understand an evaluation will be completed twice during each grading period.

Parent/Guardian Agreement

As the parents/guardians of _____, we:

1. Request and give complete permission for the placement of our child in the volunteer Career Experience Program.
2. Understand that this placement is not an employment situation but an experience which is part of my student's planned educational program.

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3. Understand that because an employer/employee relationship does not exist, my student is not entitled to wages, compensation or insurance benefits.
4. Understand that the employer is not obliged to provide my student with an employment situation at the conclusion of this training period.
5. Understand that observations will be sufficiently brief.
6. Agree that in case of injury, either from the job or by transportation, we absolve and release all persons and employers from any obligations and/or liabilities.

Mentor Agreement

As training agent working in conjunction with the Volunteer Career Experience Program, we:

1. Agree to supervise the student in cooperation with other staff.
2. Understand that the training will be for the benefit of the student, and that we will not derive and immediate advantage from the activity of the student, and that, on occasion, operation may actually be impeded.
3. Understand that the student trainee does not displace regular workers.
4. Understand that the student trainee is not necessarily entitled to a job at the conclusion of the training period.
5. Understand that an employer/employee relationship does not exist; therefore, the students trainee is not entitled to wages, workman's compensation or insurance benefits.
6. Agree to complete an evaluation for each student twice each marking period.

Signature: student trainee

Date

Signature: parent/guardian

Date

Signature: mentor

Date

Signature: Volunteer Career Experience Coord.

Date

Signature: Administrator

Date

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Evaluation Form for Volunteer Career Experience

Student_____ Date_____

Employer_____ Starting Date_____

Ending Date_____

Please use the following rating scale for each area: Use N/A if not applicable.

5=Excellent 4=Above Average 3=Average 2=Need to Improve
1=Unsatisfactory

Students work habits

COMMENTS

1. Quality of work _____
2. Quantity of work _____
3. Neatness of work area _____
4. Ability to work unsupervised _____
5. Progress towards training
competencies _____

Students personal qualities

1. Willingness to learn _____
2. Self confidence _____
3. Independent responsibility _____
4. Acceptance of constructive
criticism _____
5. Response to mentor evaluation _____

Student relationships

1. Peer _____
2. Management _____
3. Mentor _____

Student appearance

1. General _____
2. Appropriate clothing _____
3. Hygiene _____

Documentation is critical. The following is a list of suggestions to follow when recording any contact with students, parents, other teachers, or agencies.

Important Steps for Documenting Contacts and Other Events for Vocational Teachers of Students With Special Needs.

1. Keep documentation of all contacts made with parents, other staff, outside agencies; noting names, dates and times as well as substance.
2. Put all requests concerning the student in writing. Be sure to keep signed and dated copies in your files.
3. Keep all correspondence received from the school, parents, or outside agencies with the envelopes (if mailed) attached to them. Keep them in their original state. DO NOT write on them, highlight portions, or change them in any way. Make any notes on separate paper or make photocopies.
4. Always work within the school system to gain what's most appropriate for the student. **According to IDEA, Appropriate is the legal standard that must be satisfied.** Always refer to what the child needs or requires in order to benefit from the educational program. School districts are NOT required to provide what is "best", "ideal", or "optimal" or to maximize potential.
5. Know your program outcomes and discuss what the student can accomplish with adaptations in your program.
6. Design the students program based on REALISTIC outcomes especially employability in the geographic area where he/she resides.
