

TRANSITIONS

***Integrating Essential
Elements of Person-Centered
Transition Planning Practices
Into the Development of the
Individualized Education
Program With All Students
with Disabilities***

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CORNELL



Executive Summary

This is the second of two white papers that have been developed to help policy-makers, educators, human service agencies, students and their families examine the benefits of applying person-centered planning as a tool to facilitate transition planning and the development of the transition components in the Individualized Education Program (IEP) with high school students who have disabilities. These documents represent the work that was conducted through nine DDPC grant-funded demonstration sites between 1998 and 2001. The project, Transition Technical Assistance and Support Program (T-TASP), was developed to support school and community agency systems meet the federal and state mandates to involve students in his or her own educational process.

The first paper, *Infusing a Person-Centered Approach into Transition Planning for Students with Developmental Disabilities* (2000), identified the barriers present within and between systems of support for youth as they transition from school to post-secondary endeavors and explored opportunities to integrate person-centered processes within these systems. This second paper takes a deeper look at the strategies, methods and approaches that proved effective in supporting and/or sustaining person-centered student involvement in the development and implementation of the IEP.

One of the intended outcomes of these papers is to reaffirm the efforts and energy of the people who committed three years to learn, develop and/or implement high quality transition services and supports as a component of the IEP that increase the likelihood of success for youth with disabilities. Members joined the project community through public high schools, the Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES), independent living centers and community-based organizations. Everyone within the project community holds a core belief that student-driven, or person-centered transition planning is a critical factor leading to the post-secondary success of the young adults who participated in the pilot project as students facing transition from school to community living, learning and earning. While this paper provides information that supports the efficacy for using a person-centered approach to developing an IEP based on the accomplishments within the various project communities, as well as providing strategies and recommendations for integrating this approach within existing systems, it also serves as a reflection of how early we are on the journey that leaves no child behind.



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Acknowledgements

The TRANSITIONS Series is produced by Cornell University's Employment and Disability Institute. This information series focuses on supporting the continued development and evolution of the educational paradigm in the United States. Specifically the ways in which we prepare youth with disabilities for successful adult living, learning and earning.

In 1998 Cornell University's Employment and Disability Institute began a three-year initiative to explore strategies and utility and effectiveness of person-centered transition planning with the sponsorship of the New York State Developmental Disabilities Planning Council. The purpose of the Transition Technical Assistance and Support Project (T-TASP) was to provide training and technical assistance to nine demonstration sites across New York in support of person-centered transition planning processes for students who have been identified as having a disability. This paper is the second of two documents that are intended to address strategies and make recommendations based upon project findings and best practices in the field that promote and lead to the integration of person-centered planning approaches into current educational and transition planning policy and procedure for students with disabilities.

We are grateful to the people who contributed to the development of this second document. Members and associates of the nine demonstration sites, including students and family members served as a valuable resource for the development of much of the content of this paper. We appreciate the guidance provided us by the New York State Developmental Disabilities Planning Council in establishing a framework for the paper and to the New York State Education Department, Office of Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities (VESID) for mentoring us through various interpretations of federal and state regulations surrounding transition policies. Finally, we would like to call specific attention to those who played a critical role in shaping the direction of this paper:

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We hope that this is just the beginning of a dialogue on how person-centered planning approaches can be best utilized to create a more comprehensive and effective individual education program planning process for all students.



Format Used For The Paper

This second and final paper is charged with looking at the strategies, methods and approaches that have been, can be or must be effectively implemented in order to promote and sustain student-directed transition planning processes. It will serve to delve deeper into the connection between the development of the IEP, transition planning and person-centered practices and to make recommendations for future application. The paper represents a synthesis of the individual and combined experiences of the nine demonstration sites over the three-year project period.

The paper is broken into five sections. Section I sets the stage for the paper with a brief introduction to the theory of social role valorization and the accomplishments of person-centered work. Section II looks at transition planning, the role it plays in the development of post-school outcomes and the importance of using strength-based person-centered planning in the development of transition goals. Section III links person-centered practices to the coordinated set of activities embedded in the Individualized Education Program and provides a framework to keep the planning process moving progressively forward. Section IV discusses the elements of “seamless” transition and offers suggestions for avoiding common transition pitfalls. Section V summarizes findings from the T-TASP project community, provides recommendations and concludes the paper.

For the purposes of continuity, a summary brief of the first paper, *Infusing a Person-Centered Approach into Transition Planning for Students with Developmental Disabilities*, (2000) highlighting the main points connecting person-centered planning to the development and implementation of the individualized education program, (IEP), can be reviewed as an attachment to this document.



Introduction

During the period of 1998 - 2000 each of the nine demonstration project sites within the Transition Technical Assistance and Support Program (T-TASP) community received training and support in learning and using an array of person-centered planning approaches to plan for and to provide transition services and supports to students who have been identified as having a developmental disability and to their families. The demonstration sites were comprised of public high schools, Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES), independent living centers, transition coordination sites and community rehabilitation agencies.

The intent of the project was to build capacity within the demonstration project sites to develop and implement transition-planning processes that incorporated person-centered approaches within them. A secondary focus for the project was to promote systems change by identifying mechanisms, strategies and opportunities beyond the project period through which partnerships and collaborations could be formed to insure the continuation of services and supports that foster meaningful and active transition planning processes with students as they move toward adulthood.

T-TASP further postulated four key premises as the framework for the design and delivery of transition services and supports throughout the grant cycle.

1. In reference to federal and state legislation that transition services are designed as an outcome-oriented process that takes into account the student's preferences and interests, (8NYCRR200.1(rr); 34 CFR 3000.18). Toward that end an array of person-centered planning approaches must be used when assisting the student in identifying his or her post-school outcomes.
2. In accordance with section 614 of IDEA, the formal planning process must reflect the student's (and family) interests, skills, needs, preferences and abilities and facilitate the involvement and progress of the student in the general curriculum.
3. Varied new and traditional resources and supports must be sought, created and utilized to ensure the involvement and progress of the student in the general curriculum, including the use of related services to support and maximize the student's opportunity for success and achievement in the general education classroom.
4. All students, regardless of their level or type of disability have the right to
 - a. a free appropriate public education
 - b. determine his or her own future
 - c. live, work and play in the real world
 - d. hold valued citizen membership roles and be contributing members of communities

Project Participants

The T-TASP project community was comprised of nine distinct demonstration sites each of which identified a primary target goal to be addressed within the project. The nine sites and the primary target goals are:

1. Brooklyn Center for Independent Living, (BCID), Brooklyn, NY ~ target: 25 students
2. Chemung County Chapter, NYSARC, Elmira, NY ~ target: 25 students
3. Eastern Suffolk BOCES, Port Jefferson, NY ~ target: 25 students
4. Footings, Inc., Monroe, NY ~ target: addressing systems issues
5. Independent Living, Inc., Newburgh, NY~ target: 60 students and their families
6. Job Path/Vera Institute, Manhattan, NY~ target: 40 students each year
7. Johnson City Central Schools, Johnson City, NY~ target: systems change
8. Monroe #1 and Monroe #2 BOCES, Rochester, NY~ target: 26 students/families
9. St. Lawrence-Lewis BOCES, Canton, NY~ target: 25 students and system impact

Section I: An Introduction to Theory of Social Role Valorization and the Accomplishments of Person-Centered Work

Social Role Valorization

Throughout history the design and provision of human services for people who live with disabilities is fraught with attempts to protect, cure and/or overcome the conditions or symptoms that are defined as “disabling.” So much focus is placed on the condition and its subsequent cure that is all encompassing for the person who harbors the disability and for those who are in the business of creating and administering service programs. It quite literally becomes life defining for people and has led to the global expectation and acceptance of an assumption that people who live with disabilities need highly specialized services and supports so distinct and foreign that they must be administered out of the mainstream of community life.

Wolf Wolfensberger, (1998), articulated a concept for examining societal perceptions of people who are considered to be disabled in the context of service constructs that are developed in an effort to support them. Wolfensberger’s theory depicts the correlation between the value one holds in the eyes of society as the determining factor for one’s ultimate treatment by the very same society. Therefore, if a person is deemed “less valuable” by a culture or society, (due to circumstances such as disability, class or social status, ethnicity, etc), then it is psychologically acceptable to treat that person in ways that reflect the perception, i.e. low quality housing options, poor schooling or no education at all, low paying/low status employment, no employment, etc. Consequently,

people can be (and are) perpetually marginalized to the outskirts of society, and beyond. This, according to Wolfensberger, is rational, acceptable and justifiable behavior from the perspective of those who are on the “inside” of the society.

If we are to build communities that are genuinely inclusive of all people, then this marginalizing behavior must stop. One of the ways to stop the practice is to recognize where our actions either help or hinder the acceptance of people into societies. Wolfensberger argues that a person who is perceived to have devalued characteristics and conditions requires that extreme effort must be directed to supporting that person in acquiring and experiencing socially valued roles. His theory of **social role valorization** would serve as the springboard to person-centered planning.

The Five Accomplishments – Person Centered Work Principles

History has shown that designers and providers of educational and human services have tremendous influence over the activities that affect the day-to-day experiences and future prospects of the people, families and communities that rely on them, (O’Brien, 1989). Their policies and practices influence critical life-defining experiences including:

- ✓ Where a person lives, learns, earns and plays
- ✓ What activities fill the person’s days
- ✓ Who the person gets to know and who gets to know the person
- ✓ Where and how the person belongs in the community

The fundamental question that should be on the minds of any person in the position of designing or delivering services and supports on behalf of people who are requesting them is “*What are we working toward?*” Are we invested in perpetuating the myths and stigmata that are currently assigned to persons who hold the label(s) of various disabilities or are we committed to achieving outcomes that are designed to enhance the quality of life of people who are living with disabilities and to enrich our local communities? To what extent do people who rely upon educational and human services experience the following:

Community presence: *the sharing of the ordinary places that define community life.* What community settings does the person use regularly (daily, weekly, occasionally)? To which of these places does the person go alone? As part of a group of two or three? As part of a larger group? Does the person have any significant problem using any of these places? What other community settings would it be in the person’s best interest to use, or to use more independently? What would it take to increase the number of community settings the person uses completely? (Consider changes in the person’s skills, changes in available assistance, negotiating changes in the setting or changes in service patterns).

Choice: *the experience of autonomy both in small, everyday matters (e.g., what to eat or what to wear) and in large, life-defining matters (e.g., with whom to live or what sort of work to do).* What decisions are made regularly by the person? What decisions

are made for the person by others? For which of these could decision making be transferred to the person himself or herself? What are the person's strongest interests and preferences that create their uniqueness? What would it take to increase the number, variety, and importance of the decisions the person makes? What would it take to increase other's knowledge of the person's interests and preferences?

Competence: *the opportunity to perform functional and meaningful activities with whatever level or type of assistance is required.* What skills could the person develop that would offer the most opportunity for increased presence, choice, respect and participation? What strategies for instruction and assistance have been most effective for the person? Are there more efficient strategies than instruction, such as environmental modification or provision of additional personal assistance? Are there any health-related threats to the person's continuing development? How can these be managed effectively with minimal disruption of good quality life experiences? What would it take to increase the person's competence in more valued activities?

Respect: *having a valued place among a network of people and valued roles in community life.* What are the valued community roles the person occupies and what percentage of time is spent in each? What community roles offer the person the best opportunity to express individual gifts and talents? What would it take to increase the amount of time the person spends in a valued community role? What images and ideas about a desirable future are available to the person? Does the person display any characteristics that reinforce stereotyped perceptions of people with severe disabilities? (Consider the images projected by activities, schedules, expectations, and the way the person is spoken to and about). What would it take to decrease the stigma the person experiences?

Community participation: *the experience of being part of a growing network of personal relationships that include close friends.* With whom does the person spend the most time on a daily and weekly basis? How many of these people are other clients/students in the same program? How many of these people are program staff? How many are people with apparent disabilities? Are there other important people in the person's social network with whom the person spends time occasionally? Who are the person's friends and allies? Who knows the person intimately? Who will act as an advocate for his or her interests? What would it take to provide better support for the person's present network of relationships? What would it take to develop more friends or allies? What would it take to increase the number of non-disabled people, including age-peers, who know and spend time with the person as an individual?

Simply put, the underlying values of community-based supports foster opportunities and experiences that allow people to:

- ⊗ Be Somebody!
- ⊗ Go Places!
- ⊗ Have Respect!
- ⊗ Share in Relationships!
- ⊗ Have Choices!

Otherwise known as *The Five Accomplishments*, (O'Brien, J. & O'Brien, C. 1989).



Functional Assessment Model

Embedded in the functional assessment model are two methods for conducting assessment activities. ***Situational assessments*** provide the student the opportunity to experience the actual tasks and activities associated with real work environments within the school environment and may incorporate simulations of community environments. ***Community-based assessments*** provide the same opportunity but use community work sites that are found within the local labor market, preferably within the geographic location in which the student has determined s/he wants to work.

Any business can be a potential site for situational assessments and can offer an array of experiential options to students. The information gathered from the situational assessment is collected within the student profile and used for subsequent transition planning.

Adapted from: Moon, M.S., Inge, K.J., Wehman, P., Brooke, V., & Barcus, M. (1990). Helping persons with severe disabilities get and keep employment: Supported employment issues and outcomes. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

Typical assessment categories include, (but are not limited to):

<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Strength2. Endurance3. Orienting4. Physical mobility5. Independent work rate6. Appearance7. Communication8. Social interactions9. Attention to task/perseverance10. Independent sequencing of job duties11. Initiative/motivation12. Flexibility/ability to adapt to change13. Reinforcement needs14. Level of support needed	<ol style="list-style-type: none">15. Discrimination skills16. Time management17. Functional reading18. Functional math19. Money skills20. Mobility/street crossing21. Mobility/using public transportation22. Receiving and giving feedback23. Asking for assistance24. Tolerance for stress25. Physical support needs26. Personal safety skills27. Behavioral communication28. Leisure interests/skills
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A Quick Look at Standards-Based Educational Reform

Standards-based reform is the process through which a change in the educational system is facilitated through the establishment of content or performance outcomes that serve as exemplars of high-quality outcomes of the education process. The intent behind the establishment of such standards and the subsequent development of the curricula is to facilitate the student toward the attainment of the standards. What generally follows is the development of tests to measure the gap that does or does not exist between the student and his or her acquisition of the outcomes identified within the standard, (Wehmeyer, 2002).

There are at least three different models in which standards can be applied or utilized:

1. systemic reform- determine what the content standard needs to be in order to a) define the curriculum and then b) to define what a student should learn in relation to this...a shoot first ask questions later approach and almost always includes high stakes testing.
2. professional reform- focuses on the reformation of standards with the intent of enhancing the professionalism and competency of the teachers and professional staff...this is to guide how to implement assessment, curriculum and instructional practices with students.
3. reform network model- pays attention to the contextual variables associated with learning, including involvement of families, community commitment to support education, and the culture and climate of the school...the school as seen as a unique organization and standards are used to provide direction while leaving room for individualization.

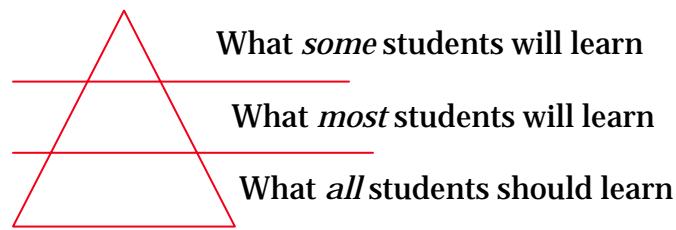
Focusing for a moment on the second example of reform, identified as the *professional* model of reform, Wehman (2001) noted examples of the qualities of professional standards of curriculum that have been recommended in support of inclusive education. The qualities are:

- Authentic and meaningful: connecting to student lives
- Student-centered: based on the student's interests, preferences, concerns and capacities
- Experiential: incorporating activities that are related to authentic, naturally occurring, real-world experiences
- Foster collaboration and positive relationships among students: allow students to develop problem-solving skills, social skills and communication skills from socially valued roles and positions
- Value partial participation: valuing the contributions of all students, even if some students are capable of only carrying out portions of skills or activities independently
- Chronologically and developmentally appropriate: age-appropriate materials and goals that are complementary to the students' cognitive, affective, physical and communicative abilities over time
- Future-oriented: focusing on life beyond the classroom in the areas of living, learning, earning and loving
- Focused on self-determination: bases on student-driven, student-centered practices

It is important to overlay the professional model with some critical components that are designed to ensure student access to the general curriculum. These components include

1. Taking into account the students unique interests, preferences, support and learning needs and incorporates membership from people in the student's life who know and who have a stake in the student's progress and success,
2. The application of materials and curriculum that are part and parcel of the whole school community and which serve to sustain high quality standards and measures,
3. Customizing the instructional activities to meet the student's goals and objectives while simultaneously responding to his or her unique learning style,
4. Access to additional support, service and/or program modifications to ensure that students can progress in the curriculum and,
5. A focus on the personal outcomes identified within the post-school outcome statements to be used as a measure of the programs effectiveness.

Assuming that access to the general curriculum has been attained there will most likely be a need to incorporate modifications in the teaching of the curriculum. These adaptations or modifications should be made by initially evaluating the curriculum against the identified learning objectives for the entire class and then identifying the specific learning objectives for the student. A planning form developed by Schumm, Vaughn and Leavell, (1994) provides an excellent framework for identifying the materials/resources; instructional strategies/adaptations; and evaluation/products needed for each level of student within a "planning pyramid" (pp 608-615).



Modifications, adaptation and/or accommodations may then be selected and tailored to the student based upon the student's specific strengths, interests and needs. This allows teachers to set different goals and objectives for the student while allowing the student to participate in the same academic activity with her or his classmates (Wehmeyer, 2002).

Finally, educational learning standards must be open enough to allow the inclusion of career planning and development for *all* students. It is through the opening of the standards via professional education reform and an acceptance of both traditional and alternative (i.e. performance-based) outcome measures that a high level of inclusive learning can take place.

Broadening Curriculum Standards Increases the Likelihood for Success for All Students

Educators are faced with the challenge of helping students who have disabilities identify long-term adult outcomes and then assessing progress made toward achieving the stated outcomes, all the while struggling to find the connection between this and the general education curriculum/learning standards. Transition assessment, if done as IDEA intended and explicitly expressed, with an emphasis on career planning and development and coupled with person-centered approaches may serve as the fulcrum upon which the balance between meeting the learning standards of general education and the development of individualized educational programs might be made. The learning standards within the core curriculum however, must be expanded in order to include all of the school's students. The development of alternate assessment formats was established in order to facilitate this process.

If the purpose of any good assessment is to look at the student's growth in knowledge, understanding and ability to apply that knowledge within specifically identified educational goals, (rather than teaching students how to pass a test), then including students with disabilities in the general curriculum does not mean that there is a need to lower the learning standards. In fact, it quite optimistically looks at raising the academic "bar" for *all* students. This so-called bar raising would require a move away from the high stakes testing educational reform toward a different approach to educational reform. The professional model of educational reform (Wehmeyer, 2002) is an alternative approach that guides the learning process across a series of quality standards within broadly defined frameworks that are closely aligned with the fundamental values of person-centered practices and which when combined may increase the likelihood of creating successful, inclusive classrooms.



Providing Modifications, Adaptations and/or Accommodations within the General Education Curriculum

Adaptations to teaching within the general education curriculum to students with cognitive disabilities need to be a considerate, expected and accepted part of the teaching process. When developing adaptations and modifications it is important to frame the adaptations, modifications and accommodations within the context of developing useful and essential skills all the while preserving the dignity and positive reputation of the student for whom the adaptation is being made. Does the adaptation allow the student to use the same materials that the other students are using? Does it build upon an existing skill exhibited by the student? Does it introduce and/or reinforce the learning of a new and relevant skill? Does the adaptation allow the student to work with an increased level of independence or does it rely primarily on the efforts of someone other than the student? Will the adaptation be effective across environments? Is the adaptation easy for the student to learn and use?

There are at least four ways that access to the general curriculum standards can be achieved. Through demonstrating the actual explicit standard without any modification; through utilizing an alternate response format to demonstrate acquisition of the standard; through the determination of the critical function of the standard so that modifications can be made to meet the same outcome intended within the original standard and; through critical access skills (Kearns, 2001) in which the student works on very basic skills that are embedded in the standards-based activities. Determining which approach will increase the likelihood of success for any given student relies on knowing and understanding each student from a person-centered or student-driven perspective.

The key to accessing general curriculum standards for any student regardless of ability level is to design activities that provide the instructional foundation upon which real life can be built (Kearns, 2001). Instruction has to have value and meaning for the student in order for learning to take place. This means creatively incorporating the goals and objectives stated in the student's IEP to align as closely as possible to the instructional activities occurring within the general education classroom during those times when a student may not be able to do these activities, even with adaptations so that the learning has value and meaning and can be applied in present and future settings. It means developing academic content that supports the same outcome standard (i.e. career development) for all students.



The Link to the New York State Learning Standards

Career education programs typically found in general education have the potential for being synonymous with the transition programs typically found in special education if

the instructional methods are customized to each and every student in the school. This requires a commitment to building a learning environment that is inclusive of all students, with and without disabilities in a collaborative approach to the education process.

The main goal of cooperative learning, as described in the Next S.T.E.P. guidebook (1997), is to create an environment in which students who have divergent learning abilities work along side one another to achieve group goals. Groups are structured in ways that support active participation of all members and to accommodate the personalities and learning style preferences of the students.

Elements embedded in inclusive classrooms include: *peer tutoring, focus on areas of interest, complementary group composition, meaningful content of assignment, and a focus on student abilities and gifts.* Meaningful tasks and activities can and should be successfully developed and implemented to support inclusive learning environments for all students.

The following table was developed to show one example of how educational activities can be developed and effectively implemented with a group of diverse learners. The exercises consisted of a series of activities that were conducted during a professional development seminar for professional education staff that were interested in learning more about person-centered transition planning. Each activity included a set of instructions and the appropriate tools to complete the activity. For example, the exercise called “interview” required members to work in dyads and use a structured format for extracting information related to each other’s preferences, abilities and interests. The partners then took turns introducing one another to the larger learning community highlighting the positive characteristics and traits represented by the person.

Each activity the group engaged in throughout the seminar was correlated to one or more of the New York State learning standards. Each activity could easily be conducted as a classroom activity. All of the activities convert to assessment tools effective in gathering information that reflects the individual interests, skills, abilities and support needs of each participant.

Example: Professional Development Exercises and New York State Learning Standards

Exercise	Related Skill	Standard Detail	Performance Indicator
<i>Profile</i> <i>Activities:</i> Interview	ELA4 Language for Social Interaction	Reading and Writing written communication using written messages	Use a variety of print and electronic forms for social communication with peers and adults
Interview	CDOS 3a Universal Foundation Skills	Basic Skills	Use a combination of techniques read or listen to complex info. and analyze what is heard/read. Convey info confidently & coherently in written or oral form
Interview & Placemat	ELA4 Language for Social Interaction	Listening & Speaking oral communication in formal/informal settings. Adapt presentations to different audiences based upon age, gender, cultural differences	Engage in conversation & discuss academic, technical & community subjects.
Morning Ritual	ELA 4 Language for Social Interaction	Listening and Speaking S/A	S/A
Placemat	Arts 1 Create, Perform Participate in the Arts	Visual Arts-make works of art that explore varied subject matter, topics, themes & metaphors	Create a collection of art work to explore perceptions ideas and viewpoints
Positive Reputation	ELA 1 Language for Information & Understanding	Speaking & Writing acquire & transmit info & apply from one context to another, present info comprehensively & clearly	Use a variety or organizational patterns i.e. chronological, logical, cause & effect, and contract & comparison
Community Connection	CDOS 1 Career Development	Learn about the connection between personal interests and community work places	Analyze skills and abilities between interests and community options
That 70's	Social Studies 1 U.S. History	Speaking & Writing Convey major turning points in the history of the U.S. human service system and its impact in N.Y. State	Use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate awareness and understanding of major themes and their causes in the service delivery field.



Summary: “Funding For What Works”

On January 8, 2002, President George W. Bush signed into law H.R.1, the *No Child Left Behind Act* (www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/esea). The intent of the law is to raise the standard for academic achievement for all students and to improve public schools. Schools across the nation are now being asked to use annual statewide assessments and show the progress that is being made toward narrowing the achievement gap and schools across the nation have responded through widespread education reform.

The law reflects four key components of education reform: accountability and testing, flexibility and local control, funding for what works, and expanded parent options (Committee on Education and the Workforce, 2002). Schools are required to “raise the bar” slowly but surely and to provide measurable objectives for all children and for specific groups. Many schools have risen to the challenge by adopting practices of education reform that lead to high stakes testing and narrowly defined education standards. This threatens to deepen the achievement gap that already exists between students who are classified as disabled and/or students who economically disadvantaged and their non-disabled or more affluent peers. Traditional segregated learning environments continue to be utilized as “least restrictive” in light of the increased demands on students to achieve higher academic test scores.

Standard-based reform is certainly one option that has proven effective in raising the academic scores of students, but it is potentially limited in its ability to increase the likelihood of success for students beyond the walls of the elementary and secondary educational settings. Professional-based reform focuses on improving the academic and skill-based performance of all students in relationship to their post-school aspirations while concentrating on building on the skills of the teaching professionals. Professional and reform network models of reform may assist in building a stronger national workforce by building upon the skills, interests and potential of each and every student.

It is important to know what a student is interested in and hopes to achieve in life. Varied and creative approaches to assessing the student’s interests and needs are critical to building a solid educational and experiential foundation upon which students can make educated and informed decisions, build competency and meet high standards of achievement. Studies must be undertaken and research must be conducted that focuses on the effects of including all students in school curriculum and experiences that integrate person-centered principles while meeting high academic learning standards. Educational learning standards must be broad enough to allow every child into the mainstream of learning, earning and living so that every child has the same opportunity to enter adulthood as contributing citizens within the communities of our nation.



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