Promoting Postsecondary Education Equity: Students with IDD—College to Careers

Kathleen Mercier, Ed.D., BCSE
Program Specialist
Antelope Valley Union High School District

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My Leadership Legacy…Finding my WHY…

- https://prezi.com/s-xncti139f-/my-leadership-legacy/

Believing Leads to Achieving!

Promoting Education Equity to Increase Success in Employment:

Seeing students for their ability first and supporting their development as contributing members into a diverse society

What will we accomplish today?

1. Validation through voices

2. Key Findings from Research

3. Ready for ACTION!

-Rules of Engagement

-Background of Study Components

    -Focus on TC Standards 1 & 2 (Academic Access & Career Development)

Rules of Engagement

- Interact with one another

- Open minded –think BIG!!

- Willingness to share views & ideas

- Get Excited! Let's make the room next door ask us, "What was so incredible?"

- On-going networking & building awareness

- Access to Resources—sharing knowledge & materials

Finding our WHY…

- Education Equity
  - Students with intellectual disabilities are not offered equal access to college experiences (Grigal, Hart, & Weir, 2013; Kardos, 2011)

- Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)
  - Age-appropriate mentors & models
  - Sheltered workshops-OUT; Competitive Employment-IN

- 21st Century Citizens
  - Academic Access
    - Necessary skills to compete in work world
  - Vocational Training
  - Connection to the community as effective citizens
  - Transition to adulthood
  - Gainful employment

Need for Research Supported by Law:

1975 Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA)

1990 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

2004 Reauthorization for Improvement of Act (IDEIA)

2008 ADA Amendment Act (ADAAA)

2008 Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA)

2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this ethnographic study was to investigate and examine the lived experiences of seven students with intellectual disabilities (ID) participating in two post-secondary education (PSE) settings in Southern California, that were aligned to the Think College Standards-Based Conceptual Framework for Inclusive Higher Education.

Research Question

What were the lived experiences of students with ID participating in PSE programs in Southern California that were aligned to the Think College Standards-Based Conceptual Framework for Inclusive Higher Education?

Abstract

As a result of inclusive higher education, experiences of students with ID in PSE programs focused on developing life skills beyond the classroom, impacting the culture of the college and community, increased acceptance amongst nondisabled peers, and created parallel adult development that led to fulfilling adult lives and deepened relationships.

Literature Review

- Deeper understanding of the law and its impact on students with ID in PSE

- 40 Years of development in PSE for Students with ID
  - 70's-Primarily Socialization
  - 80's-Decline in support due to lack of documentation of support
  - 90's-Increase in programs (13 in Maryland), but lack of data on outcomes
  - 4 models (mixed, separate, inclusive, dual-enrollment)

- 2000's
  - 2004-Need for transition preparation & collaboration with PSE
  - Increase due to American's with Disabilities Act Amendment Act (ADAAA) 2008
  - HEOA 2008 outlined components necessary for PSE
    - Comprehensive Transition Programs (CTP)

Think College!

University of Massachusetts Boston, Institute for Community Inclusion
- First coordinating center for resources & networking
- #1 Goal: develop set of common standards for PSE for CTPs (8 Standards)
- 2010 Grant
  - Transition to Post-Secondary Settings for Students with ID (TPSID)
- 2014-Over 9 million dollars were allocated for 27 colleges in U.S.

Seminal Studies

- Increasing PSE opportunity & use of CTP best practices (Landmark, Ju & Zhang, 2010)

- Change in perception of what students with disabilities can contribute to society (Farnham, 2011)

- **Access to PSE will effect long term success in employment (Fekete, 2013)**

- 21% of SWD gainfully employed vs 59% of SWOD (Kessler Foundation, 2010)

- Barriers: limited programs, time, students, & funding

- Gap in the research
  - student's voice & experience
  - Impact on employment outcomes
  - Faculty attitudes and perceptions

Grigal, Hart, & Weir, 2011; Fekete, 2013; Farnham, 2011; Furgang, 2013; Hartz, 2014; Platt, 2013; Prohn, 2014, Thoma et al., 2011

Presentation of Data

- Intentions of researcher
  - Student's voice first
    - Wider perspective from those who surround the student
    - Enrichment of the students' experience and story
  - Examine, understand and describe the lived experiences
  - Interpret the data, search for themes, share the stories
  - NOT an evaluation of the Think College Standards
    - Uncovering the meaning of the experiences as they relate to the 8 TC Framework
    - Reflection through triangulation of interviews, observations, and artifacts
  - 13 Themes emerged
  - 8 TC Standards

Connection of Theme to Standard

Themes

1. Opened new opportunities

2. Was meaningful

3. Created independence

4. Created determination & self-advocacy

5. Provided vocational skills for adulthood

6. Increased socialization & depended relationships

7. Created a connection to community

8. Was similar to other college students

9. Was challenging

10. Was a confidence builder

11. Was learning to work with others

12. Was motivating

13. Was beneficial for all/others

Standards (TC Framework)

1. **Academic access**

2. **Career development**

3. Campus membership

4. Self-determination

5. Alignment with college systems & practices

6. Coordination & collaboration

7. Sustainability

8. On-going evaluation

Validate their voices…

- Celebrate the good work we're doing, but never settle for "it's good enough"

- Inspire one another to push the boundaries of "typical"

- Expect acceptance –not "tolerance"

- See Ability—See Opportunity

Standard 1: Academic Access

Experiences related to academic access in PSE

-Created new opportunities and independence

-Sometimes challenging

-Built confidence

-Learned to work with others

"It makes me feel like I've actually accomplished it and I feel good inside. Like I can do it on my own. I can prove to my parents and to the staff that I can be independent once I graduate the program." -Student with ID

Standard 1: Parent Voice

"I never thought that I would get to see the day of my kids going to college. I feel like they're trailblazers…" –parent of student with ID

"Our graduates…all their situations are different, but they are changed human beings when they leave us." –staff member

Standard 2: Career Development

Experience related to career development

-Created new opportunities for vocational development

-Encouraged a sense of determination and self-advocacy

-Developed their vocational skills for adulthood

-Continued to build their confidence

Standard 2: Student Voice

"It's just another student. Things have to be done a little differently, and it's very similar to my viewpoint, where we're going to get to the same place, we just might have to take a different route." -Student with ID

Standard 2: Staff Voice

"I consider myself a lifelong learner. Why shouldn't people with intellectual disabilities have those same opportunities? Including using education to help get a better job, earn more money, using education as a way to achieve more, better oneself, or just have a fuller life." – Pathway Director

Standard 2: Student Voice

"Sometimes it does affect me because--When I get turned down too many times, I think that some people don't have need of a job at all. Because they might think that you're not capable of it. I'm capable because I'm hardworking, and I get the job done. I never quit." –Student with ID

Findings Viewed Through the TC Lens

New opportunities

  -academia alongside NDP, access campus resources, adult learning

Independence and teamwork

  -opportunities to learn independent skills, live, work, and socialize

Self-determination, self-advocacy and vocational skills

  -prove to self and others, maintain successful employment

Confidence to expect more of themselves

  -motivated them to push the boundaries of their own expectations

Conclusion

Students' experiences in PSE contributed to the community rather than relied on it

- Equipped them with the ability to care for themselves (Farnham, 2011)

- Competitive employment-sustained jobs in the community

- Navigating conflict effectively in unfamiliar environments (Grigal et al., 2012)

Conclusion

Students' experiences in PSE extended career development beyond the internships and into adulthood

- Valuable skill sets learned (Newman et al., 2009)

- More variety for job opportunities due to increased vocational skills (Hartz, 2014)

- Will affect the unemployment rates for persons with disabilities (Kessler Foundation, 2010)

Moving forward…implications for ACTION!

- New & Meaningful Opportunities
  - Create more options for coursework
  - Define meaningful experiences
  - Professional development
  - Innovative classroom environments
  - Relationships with stakeholders

- Independence, Determination, Self-Advocacy & Teamwork
  - Layers of intervention in and out of PSE
  - Opportunities for additional internships to showcase ability

- Community Acceptance & Inclusion
  - Promote awareness of disability-ability
  - Inclusive opportunities for community members to learn to communicate effectively

More implications for ACTION…

- Similar College Student Experience—Increased Personal Expectations
  – Review current course offerings
  – Increase involvement in the courses
  – Develop assessment tools to determine progress and needs
  – Fundraising options
  – K-12 settings include training on navigating social environments

- Benefit for Others
  – Inclusive coursework, innovative way to contribute to the learning environments
  – Increase inclusive vocational experiences to showcase skills
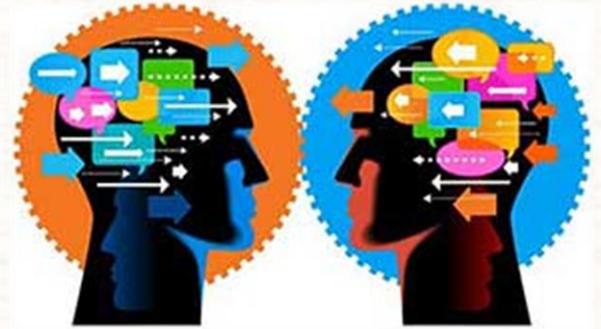
Let's create an ACTION plan!

- Split into groups according to the role you feel you MOST CLOSELY have DIRECT IMPACT

- Parents/Families of Students with IDD

- Student with IDD

- K-8 Programs of Students with IDD

- Secondary Programs of Students with IDD (Ages 14-18 years)

- Teachers of Students with IDD (Ages 14-18 years)

- Secondary Programs of Students with IDD (Ages 18-22 years)

- Teachers of Students with IDD (Ages 18-22 years)

- PSE Programs (with or without opportunities for Students with IDD)

ACTION! Think with the END in mind…Employment!

- Quickly introduce yourselves

- Review the handout in your group
  - Take a few minutes to review quietly first, then review aloud as a group

- Discuss/Reflect on what steps your individual group may already be implementing (YEA!)

- Discuss/Reflect on what steps are still needed within your group/organization/role

- Fill in remaining bullet points with HOW YOUR OWN ORGANIZATION/ROLE WILL FULFILL THE STEPS NECESSARY

- Create a visual representation of your groups reflection/memory/next-steps on the poster paper provided

- Share-out with group when prompted by facilitator

Thank you for participating!

If you have questions or would like to chat, I'm available after the presentation.

kmercier@avhsd.org

Intelligent Lives Kickstart
Intelligent Lives Preview