

# Evaluating the Impact of Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities

## Using Quasi-Experimental Design: Challenges and Possibilities

Does one year of participation in the Think College Transition (TCT) Model lead to higher levels of job-seeking skills, career readiness, and self-determination for 18-22 year old students with intellectual disabilities and autism compared to comparison students receiving the business as usual condition?

Background

Youth with intellectual disabilities and autism (ID/A) are less likely than students with other disabilities to go to college and get a job.

Although these youth may benefit from inclusive concurrent enrollment (ICE) programs, which provide transition services on college campuses instead of in high schools, little is known about the impact of these programs on students.

Using quantitative methods to measure impact raises methodological issues when working with youth aged 18-22 with ID/A.

This poster explores potential solutions to issues facing evaluators of programs serving this population, using the experiences of a current evaluation of the Think College Transition (TCT) Model in Massachusetts.

The TCT model is an inclusive comprehensive college based transition model where 18-22 year old transition students are fully included on campus in all aspects of a college experience (including classes, work experience, person-centered planning, and support services).

PLAN

SUPPORT

WORK

LEARN

HELD TOGETHER BY SYSTEMS

DRIVEN BY COLLABORATION

FOUNDATIONS

Think College Transition Model

Sample Challenges:

- Students with ID/A make up small % of all students with disabilities
- Small districts have few eligible students

Possibilities:

- Design for large number of districts
- Communicate with districts early and often!

91 students - 21 Districts

Recruitment and Retention Challenges:

- Vulnerable population: protected by staff and families
- Transitional nature of transition programs

Possibilities:

- Buy-in has a cascading effect; communicate study merits effectively; face-to-face meetings may be most successful
- Provide incentives:
  - Districts: PD for transition staff immediately (intervention) or in the following year (comparison)
  - Students: gift card
- Develop accessible consent forms

Interested School Admins

Involved Students

Encourage

Empower

Motivated Teachers

Informed Families

Share

1. What the evaluation research study is trying to find out.

In this study, we will compare two different transition experiences to find out what are the best ways to support young people with disabilities to:

- Participate in college courses
- Identify a job that the student is interested in
- Prepare for a job that the student is interested in
- Have skills to make decisions about college courses and jobs

3. How long it takes to participate in the study. When you will participate.

In this study you will be asked to:

- Meet with the researcher one time during the 2015-2016 school year
- Meet with the researcher three times during the 2016-2017 school year (fall, winter, spring)
- Meet with the researcher three times during the 2017-2018 school year (fall, winter, spring; if you want to continue participating in the study)
- Meet with the researcher 6 months after you leave transition services.
- Schedule the meetings for days and times that are convenient for you.
- Meet with the researcher for one hour each time.

6. What will I get for helping?

You will receive a \$20 gift card for your participation in each data collection time period.

Instrumentation Validation Challenge:

- Few validity or reliability studies using surveys with students with ID/A; except the Self-Determination Inventory (Shogren et al., 2015) (<http://self-determination.org>)
- ID/A students have diverse communicative and cognitive abilities

Possibilities:

- Pilot surveys: use “think aloud” interviews to learn how students process questions, interpret words, and derive responses; revise accordingly
- Simplify text, use large font, reduce response options, use visuals as anchors
- Collect data in person to support survey comprehension
- Conduct factor analyses to determine validity and reliability with your sample.

Comprehension Level

Low Not low

% of students in sample\*

\*Cohorts 1 & 2 only

State Exams Result

Did not pass Passed

% of students in sample\*

\*Cohorts 1 & 2 only

Career Maturity Inventory (CMI): Pick the sentence that best describes you.

I keep changing my mind about what job I want.

I have picked what job I want.

Student Career Construction Inventory (SCCI): How much thinking or planning have students done regarding their future career

4. Talking about what career I want with teachers and advisors

☐ I haven't thought about this yet

☐ I am thinking about this

☒ I am doing this

☐ I have done this

Fidelity of Implementation (Foi) Challenges:

- Measuring Foi when intervention is complex and personalized
- Multiple stakeholders with differing levels of understanding of, and investment in, intervention
- Contamination of intervention to comparison students

Possibilities:

- Make implementation goals transparent to all stakeholders. Create a digestible visual describing intervention and goals.
- Measure what (if any) aspects of the intervention the comparison students are exposed to.
- Do not include both intervention and comparison students from the same district; staff work with all students.

	Activity	Goal(s)	Data Source
TA	FOUNDATIONS: District and institute of higher education (IHE) staff receive coaching	Each staff member receives coaching	Attendance logs
Partnerships	SYSTEMS: Agreement between district and IHE staff to collaborate on dual enrollment program COLLABORATION: Establish and operate an interagency team to facilitate communication about TCT model across agencies	Written agreement for TCT implementation plan exists 4 annual meetings	Written document Meeting attendance logs and meeting notes
Student Activities	PLAN: Person-centered planning meeting SUPPORT: Career services WORK: Work experience LEARN: Course selection	1 annual meeting Attend 1 annual event Currently working First choice	Written updated action plan at end of meeting Student schedule Student schedule Student schedule

Conclusions

Research design needs to account for:

- Low-incidence population
- Personalization of intervention
- Personalization of data collection
- Diversity of communicative and cognitive abilities
- Importance of buy-in from multiple stakeholders
- Validation of instruments for the population

Quasi-experimental designs and RCTs provide valuable information about the impact of interventions that may contribute to positive post-transition outcomes, and addressing the methodological challenges is worth it!

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Reference: Shogren, K., Wehmeyer, M., Little, T., Pratt, A., Palmer, S., and Seo, H. (2015). Preliminary validity and reliability scores on the self-determination inventory. *Career Development and Transition for Exceptional Individuals*, 40(2), 92-103.

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