Best Practices: Providing Choice Making Opportunities

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Picture symbols utilized are from n2y SymbolStix software
Choice-Making Reasons
Numerous studies have shown that the application of components of self-determination (e.g., self-management, **choice making**) positively impacts outcomes like social behavior and academic learning. 

*(Fowler, Konrad, Walker, Test, & Wood, 2007; Wood et al., 2005).*
Choice Making & Self-Determination

...The criterion of ultimate functioning [for students with significant disabilities] includes teaching students to direct their lives. Experts also emphasize the importance of teaching skills like self-management, goal setting, and choice making (i.e., Collins, 2007; Ryndak & Alper, 2003).

Components of self-determination. Wehmeyer (2005) defined self-determination as intentional behaviors or choices that allow an individual to be the “primary causal agent in one’s life and to maintain or improve one’s quality of life”.

Key self-determination skills include:
- decision making
- choice making,
- self-management,
- self-advocacy,
- self-awareness,
- goal setting, and
- problem solving.

Choice Making & Self-Determination

- Self-Determination skills
- Student-Led IEPs
- Goal Setting/Goal Attainment

For detailed information on ASPIRE and Self-Determination, please visit: [www.gaspdg.org](http://www.gaspdg.org)

For detailed information on SDLMI and Self-Determination, please visit: [https://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Special-Education-Services/Pages/Self-Determination.aspx](https://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Special-Education-Services/Pages/Self-Determination.aspx)
Choice Making & Student-Led IEPs

Student-Led IEPs allow students to practice self-determination through:

- Choice Making
- Communication
- Goal Setting
- Evaluating their own strengths & needs
- Decision Making

Student-Led IEP materials may be downloaded from SLDS>TRL>SWD>ELA>Writing
Choice Making & Behavior Management

Providing choices
- helps students feel more in control
- assists with communicative intent
- supports more “on task” behaviors
- provides built-in reinforcement (First/Then)
- allows student interests to motivate learning
- reduces inappropriate behaviors
Choice-Making Basics
Learning to Make a Choice

- **Item/Blank Choice**
  - Use motivating item for one choice/blank area for other choice
- **Want/No**
  - More basic than “Yes/No” for making a choice
Making a Choice for Preferences

- **Choice items rotate on “Lazy Susan”**
  - Place items so students select by touching/picking up choice
- **Place choices in containers/bowls**
  - Defined spaces assist in choice making
Making a Choice for Preferences

- **Choices for Required Activities**
  - Allow students to make choices of sequence of required activities

- **Choices for Daily Living Skills**
  - Choice making must be portable to all environments
Making a Choice for Correct Answers

- **Answer Choice has tactile component**
  - Start with tactile component on correct answer; gradually reduce to picture/text

- **Answer Choice is color-coded**
  - Correct answer is color-coded; gradually reduce to no color-coding
Methods Used to Make a Choice

- **Variety of Methods**
  - Point to choice
  - Bingo marker or Stamper
  - Stickers
  - Use of AAC devices
  - Writing Utensils
  - Making marks
Choice-Making Examples
Providing choices based upon:

- Cognitive needs
- Sensory needs
- Physical needs
Providing choices based upon:

- Communication needs
Choice-Making: Writing

Writing choices

- select from printed word bank then copy text
- select from pre-printed text then glue to complete text
- Select from pictures/symbols with text; attach to blank to complete writing
Instruction & Assessment

- Repeated practice with materials for both instructional activity & formative/summative assessment
Choice-Making: Assessment

Assessment Response Templates

- Use during instruction & assessment
- Teach how to make choice through repeated practice
- Located on SLDS>TRL
Choice-Making: Random Choices

- **Purchased:**
  - All-Turn-It Spinners
  - Randomizer

- **Do-It-Yourself:**
  - Plastic plate spinners
  - CD cover spinners

Leisure Choice Spinner: Connie Ekenwa, Gwinnett County Public Schools
References & Resources

https://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Special-Education-Services/Pages/Self-Determination.aspx
For detailed information on SDLMI and Self-Determination

For detailed information on the ASPIRE program (Active Student Participation Inspires Real Engagement)

https://sites.ed.gov/idea/statute-chapter-33/subchapter-ii/1412/a/16
Federal IDEA information (2019)

Armstrong, Thomas (2018) “8 Ways to Boost Student Engagement by Giving Students Choices”

https://autismclassroomresources.com/choices-improve-behavior/
Reeve, Christine (2017) “How to Give Choices and Improve the Most Challenging Behaviors”
References


“Evidence-Based Practices for Students With Severe Disabilities”. Browder, Diane; Wood, Leah; Thompson, Julie; Ribuffo, Cecelia. August 2014. CEEDAR Document No. IC-3


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