Preparing Students with Communication Disabilities for Life After School

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Students with complex communication needs require the implementation of tools and strategies to support their effective transition from school to adulthood. These tools and strategies should make possible for students to participate fully in community-based activities and other aspects of adult life.

This session will provide participants with information regarding post-school options for students with complex communication needs and how teachers, parents, and others can support these options while they are still in the K-12 system.
Please introduce yourself. Describe / Say your:

Name
Position
Your hopes for this session (i.e., why you came to this session).
During the course of history, persons with disabilities have been looked upon as less worthy, with low productivity. They were represented as an object of other persons' care and charity, always a burden for the society. Attitudes towards disability and the relationship of society versus disability have changed through history.
Placement in self-contained classrooms -- children with disabilities are removed from the school population without disabilities for all academic subjects. Students with disabilities also have little contact with students without disabilities during lunch, etc.
There are still many special schools and self-contained classrooms in the Georgia.
So, in this segregated environment, how do we prepare students with communication disabilities for life after school?
See people for what they can do
Don’t totally ignore challenges, but focus on abilities
Strengths-based approaches are opposites of deficit or readiness models.
Deficit or readiness models focus on what people can’t do. These models often wrongly deny people access to education, employment, and community living opportunities.

Strengths-Based Approaches to Seeing Students with Communication Disabilities
There is a young woman in her 30s. She can’t walk, talk clearly, write, drive, as well as independently get in/out of bed, do personal hygiene, take care of a dog, shop for groceries, feed herself some things, pour a drink...

What do you think of her life?

Using just this information, what do you think she is capable of doing?

Story of a Person with Disabilities
There is a young woman in her 30s. She lives in her own house. She has a career and is a talented technical writer. She is always out and about and has a lot of friends. She enjoys going to restaurants. She a giant dog named Charlie. She loves to camp, play soccer, to ski, and recently went zip-lining.

What do you think about her life?

Would she be someone that you would choose to spend time with?

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Another Story
Finding out the strengths and abilities of students who have significant disabilities will lead to creating supports promoting independence and productivity.
Team Approach

- Student
- Secondary Education Personnel
- Employment Services
- Community Living Services
- Post-Secondary Education Institutions
- Family
Competitive employment
Post-Secondary education
Community living

Post-School Outcomes
Emphasizing Inclusion
Thousands of individuals with significant disabilities find customized employment a successful way to gain meaningful work, real wages, and a means to contribute to the workplace. Customized employment uses the practice of Discovery to uncover an individual’s strengths, interests, task contributions, and conditions of employment to create meaningful work and a customized fit. Rather than looking to work opportunities driven by the market, customized employment practices create employment that fulfills both the applicant with disabilities and the employer’s needs.
Job carving occurs when individuals analyze duties performed in given jobs and identify specific tasks within those existing positions individuals can accomplish. Jobs carved for individuals may be formed either by modifying one existing job or by blending tasks from multiple jobs to form new positions. In whatever manner the process is completed, job carving is a means of focusing on individuals’ abilities, skills, and talents they bring to potential employers.
Job creation occurs when employers’ unmet needs are matched with the skills of job seekers. Creating new jobs can be through the process of job carving or by creating totally new job descriptions. In the latter case, individuals’ unique assists are marketed to businesses.
Resource ownership gives employment opportunities to those who possess equipment beneficial to employers. Resource ownership plays a great role in developing positive customized employment experiences. Job seekers may own equipment, machinery, or other items which are needed by employers -- adding to their employers’ businesses and profitability. Through proposals and agreements, individuals bring their resources to workplaces as part of their employment and conditions of hire. Employers get the double benefits of having productive employees and new resources to improve their businesses.
Self-Employment and micro-enterprises are two business alternatives representing appealing alternatives for many job seekers with disabilities. As viable Customized Employment choices for individuals with disabilities, self-employment and micro-enterprises involves business planning, designing support strategies, and promoting successful business ventures. These employment choices give job seekers and their supporters a number of possibilities for developing flexible and innovative strategies regarding work.
Sheltered workshops
Day programs
Work adjustment

Stay Away From...
The Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA) (PL 110-315) was enacted on August 14, 2008, reauthorizing the Higher Education Act (HEA) of 1965. This law contains a number of important new provisions that will improve access to postsecondary education for students with intellectual disabilities. Of particular note are several provisions that address financial aid and create a new model demonstration program and coordinating center for students with intellectual disabilities.
Vocational / Technical School
Community College
College
Inclusive Post-Secondary Education (for people with intellectual disabilities)

Types of Options
A school may not discriminate on the basis of disability. It must insure that the programs it offers, including extracurricular activities, are accessible to students with disabilities. Postsecondary schools can do this in a number of ways: by providing architectural access, providing aids and services necessary for effective communication, and by modifying policies, practices and procedures.

Accommodations
Dual enrollment may be adapted as a method to provide students with disabilities ages 18-21 years who continue to receive education and transition services from their public school system under IDEA 2004 an opportunity to participate in a wide range of college activities that relate to their goals outlined in their transition and individual education plans (IEP).
For people with intellectual disabilities
Students receive individualized services in college courses, certificate programs, and/or degree programs, for audit or credit.
The individual student's vision and career goals drive services.
The focus is on establishing a student-identified career goal.
The Georgia Inclusive Post-Secondary Education Consortium seeks to create opportunities for students who have historically not had access to post-secondary educational opportunities.
Through supported living arrangements individuals, even those with significant disabilities, are able to live in their own homes, control their lives and become part of their communities.
Sometimes, when we think about transitioning students with significant disabilities, we, along with family members, may only consider group homes and day programs for individuals. In reality, given the right planning, students with communication disabilities can be actively participating in inclusive communities.

Combating the Segregation Cycle
THE MEDICAL MODEL OF DISABILITY

Impairments and chronic illness often pose real difficulties but they are not the main problems.

Traditional View:
- Disability is caused by physical, sensory, mental impairment.
- The individual is impaired and is the problem.
- Focus of the medical profession is 'cure' and alleviate the effect of impairment.

The Individual Problem:
- Problems are caused by various factors such as physical, sensory, mental impairment.
- The individual is the focus, and problems arise from these impairments.
DISABILITY SERVICES
"LABELLING"

LABEL:
CP - CEREBRAL PALSY
ID - INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY
SB - SPINA BIFIDA
ABI - ACQUIRED BRAIN INJURY
PD - PHYSICAL DISABILITY
THE SOCIAL MODEL OF DISABILITY

SOCIETY

BARRIERS

BARRIERS

BARRIERS

BARRIERS

BARRIERS

ENVIRONMENT

INACCESSIBLE

BUILDINGS

LANGUAGE

SERVICES

COMMUNICATION

ATTITUDES

PREJUDICE

STEREOTYPING

DISCRIMINATION

ORGANISATIONS

INFLEXIBLE

PROCEDURES

PRACTICES
## Systems Centered vs. Person Centered

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>System Centered</th>
<th>Person Centered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focuses on deficits and labels</td>
<td>Focuses on capacities, gifts, strengths, &amp; dreams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plans usually include ‘placement’ in a program</td>
<td>Plans support a rich and active community life based on the individual’s gifts &amp; interests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inflexible, offering a limited number of program options</td>
<td>Flexible, finding new possibilities unique to each person</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# System Centered vs. Person Centered

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>System Centered</th>
<th>Person Centered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Puts the professional in control</td>
<td>Supports individuals in making decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distances people by emphasizing differences</td>
<td>Brings people together by discovering common experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budgets are structured to maintain investments in programs, building and property</td>
<td>Budgets structured to provide individualized packages to support people</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What am I communicating to you?

- At this time
- When this happens
- We think it means
- We need to do this

What do we need to do next?

Helen Sanderson Associates
Supporting the self-determination of individuals enables these individuals to become self-reliant, and successful at the things important to them. Fostering self-determination in childhood assists students as they transition into adulthood.
For those just beginning to understand or investigate AAC, low-tech options may be very attractive to try and explore with people who have difficulty communicating verbally.

Low-Tech devices are...

- Easy-to-learn
- Inexpensive
- Makeable with common items

Low-Technology AAC
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>I don’t know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>![Thumb Up]</td>
<td>![Thumb Down]</td>
<td>![Question Mark]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I’ll staple that for you</th>
<th>How many copies do you need?</th>
<th>I’ll show you where to find it.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>![Stapler]</td>
<td>![Copy Machine]</td>
<td>![Magnifying Glass]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do they need to be filed?</th>
<th>Break Time!</th>
<th>I’m leaving for the day.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>![File Cabinet]</td>
<td>![Coffee Cup]</td>
<td>![Door Open]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Could you answer the phone for me?

I’d like something out of the cabinet.

Paul takes care of that.
Multiple picture pages and/or photographs can be bounded together to form communication books.

People with little or no control of their hands may be able to use a laser pointer attached to their heads to select messages.
There’s been a lot of buzz about the iPad’s potential as an augmentative, alternative communication device since Apple introduced the revolutionary, tablet-sized machine.
Some examples of high-tech devices are:
- Dedicated Synthesized Speech Generating Systems
- Dedicated Recorded Speech Systems
- Hybrid Systems
- Computer-Based Systems
While high-tech AAC devices are often expensive and require evaluations, they offer an extraordinary level of independence to people.
This is a list of resources people can access funding for augmentative communication.

- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) / School System
- Medicaid
- Medicare
- TriCare
- Private Insurance
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Community
- Loans
- Trusts/Foundations
Discussion