SDLMI Teacher's Guide Supplement: Implementing the SDLMI to Enhance Transition Planning

- The purpose of transition planning is to prepare students to move from school to adult life. The experience of transitioning from school to adult roles and responsibilities can be a time of excitement and uncertainty for many students.

- Researchers have found that the SDLMI is effective for supporting students to set and go after transition-related goals and enhance overall self-determination, enabling students to act as causal agents (i.e., people that make their goals happen).

- As mandated under the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA, 2004), students aged 16 and older with disabilities receiving special education services engage in individualized transition planning.

- Key domains that are addressed during transition planning, as described in IDEA (2004), include preparing for:
    o Vocational education and integrated, competitive employment
    o Post-secondary education and continuing and adult education
    o Community living and participation
    o Adult services and supports

- Students can take a meaningful role in their future by setting and working toward transition-related goals with the SDLMI.

- This supplement provides instructional strategies and examples tailored to the transition planning process. Keep in mind you may still wish to modify activities/materials based on the unique strengths and needs of your students or class.

- For a full example of a student working through the phases of the SDLMI in service of a transition-related goal, see Jordan's Case Study on pp. 40-43 in the SDLMI Teacher's Guide.

Introduction

As described in the SDLMI Teacher's Guide, the SDLMI is a three-phase process that teachers use to enable students to set a goal (Phase 1), create an action plan to achieve that goal (Phase 2), and adjust their goal or plan (Phase 3).

There are **4 Student Questions per phase** (12 questions total) that lead students through a problem-solving sequence to address the problem posed (Phase 1: *What is my goal?,* Phase 2: *What is my plan?,* Phase 3: *What have I learned?)*

Teacher Objectives correspond to each Student Question and serve as a guide for what teachers are supporting students to achieve as they work through the questions.

Teachers use **Educational Supports** to provide instruction on specific skills to meet the Teacher Objectives and support students in answering the Student Questions.

This supplement provides more detailed information on how teachers can implement the SDLMI to enhance transition planning as they work to meet Teacher Objectives and provide Educational Supports to enable all students to answer the 12 Student Questions and make progress on their goals. Teachers and students can use the SDLMI repeatedly over semesters and years to continue to work and set toward multiple goals, having more opportunities to practice and build self-determination.
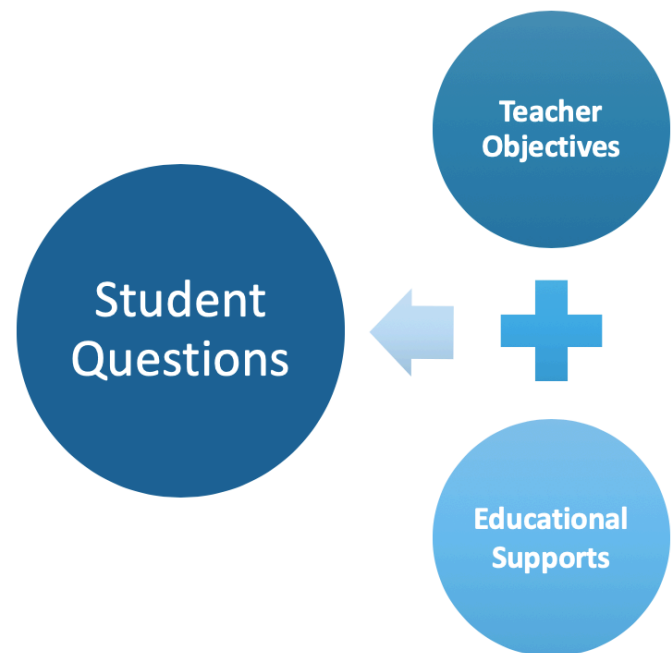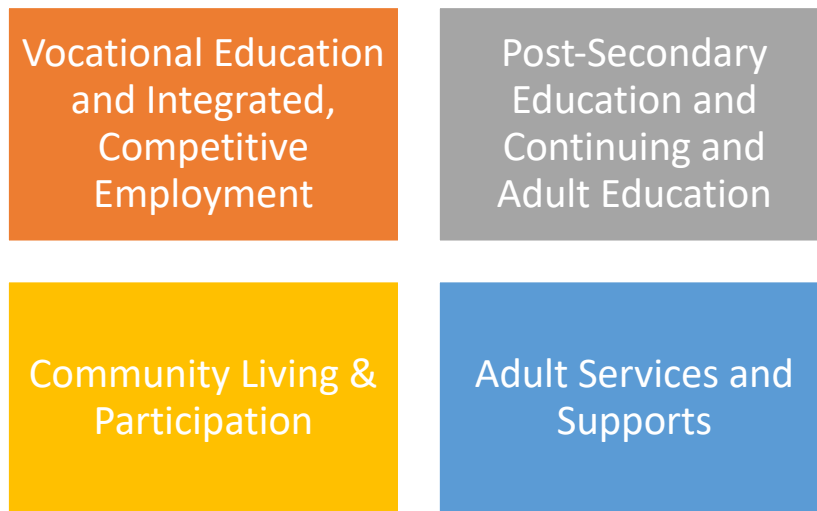
Phase 1: Set a Goal

Student Problem to Solve:
What is my goal?

Student Question 1: What do I want to learn or improve on?

If a student already has a transition plan in place, it may be helpful to review the student's transition goals as you begin using the SDLMI. Then, the student can identify a goal from their transition plan to further explore through the SDLMI or pick a new goal to work on that will help them prepare for their future. It may be helpful to present the student with key transition domains to select from.

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Student Question 2: What do I know about it now?

Once the student selects a goal area, whether for an existing transition-related goal or for a new goal, they can consider what they know about it now. It may be helpful to create a chart for general information, experiences, and wishes.

Goal area: post-secondary education – attend local community college after high school

General Information	Personal Experiences	Wishes
• There's a community college close to my house (10 minutes)	• My older sister is in college... I know you have to do an application	• I want to get there on my own • Not sure what I want to study…

Student Question 3: What must change for me to learn what I don't know?

The student can indicate the activities/areas they need to learn based on their chart in Question 2.

Goal area: post-secondary education – attend local community college after high school

General Information	Personal Experiences	Wishes
• There's a community college close to my house (10 minutes)	• My older sister is in college... I know you have to do an (application)	• I want to get there on my own • Not sure what I want to study…

"I need to find out more about how to apply"

Student Question 4: What can I do to make this happen?

This can be a valuable time to support the student with goal-setting instruction. If they are using a goal based on their transition plan, encourage them to choose a manageable part of that goal to focus on for the current semester. If they are setting a completely new goal, encourage them to consider what's the most important next step to achieve what they want in their goal area.

Goal: "I want to find out what goes in the application for community college and what I need to do to prepare."

Phase 2: Take Action

Student Problem to Solve:
What is my plan?

Student Question 5: What can I do to learn what I don't know?

If students are working with classmates, encourage them to brainstorm in groups based on the types of goals they are working on. If a student needs support, ask guiding questions such as:
- How do you usually find out information you don't know?
- Are there any people that could be involved or provide support?

Student Question 6: What could keep me from taking action?

Encourage the student to imagine themselves taking the steps they decided upon in Student Question 5. It may be helpful to talk through the scenario with a teacher or a classmate. Then, review. What was hard? What got in the way?

- Not sure where to start
- Worried my friends will think I can't do it and laugh at me
- Not understanding college application stuff

Student Question 7: What can I do to remove these barriers?

Return to the barriers identified in Student Question 6. Then, support the student to brainstorm ideas to remove barriers. If any students identify the same or similar barriers, they can work together.

- Not sure where to start

Potential Solutions: go see guidance counselor, talk to sister, look it up online

- Worried my friends will think I can't do it and laugh at me*

Potential Solutions: tell one friend that I trust, keep my goal to myself for now

*The student may need support with this barrier. Awareness instruction (see Educational Supports on p. 23 in the SDLMI Teacher's Guide) may be useful. For example, initiate a conversation with the student about their concern, with a focus on positive self-image and self-confidence. You can support the student to practice how they will explain their goal to friends, and how they can respond if someone does laugh at them (e.g., "This goal is really important to me, and it makes me feel badly when you make fun of it.").

- Not understanding college application stuff

Potential Solutions: ask for help when I need it, look at application with my sister

Student Question 8: When will I take action?

Individualize this question using the student's preferred schedule method (e.g., daily/weekly/monthly, paper/digital) and support them to choose a desired start date.

Then, support the student to select a method for tracking their progress (self-monitoring). They can consider tracking their progress on a calendar (e.g., with a daily checkmark or X to record if they took action using their plan) or on a designated self-monitoring sheet (which might include a box for each day beginning with their start date, where they can record if they took action using their plan and how it went), such as the example on the following page. On this example, the student writes their goal and the date below each day of the week. Then, they can check (or color in) the yes or no box to indicate whether they made progress toward their goal.

SELF-MONITORING

Goal: _____

	Monday _____	Tuesday _____	Wednesday _____	Thursday _____	Friday _____
YES *I met my goal today!*					
NO *I did not meet my goal today.*					

Phase 3: Adjust Goal or Plan

Student Problem to Solve:
What have I learned?

Student Question 9: What actions have I taken?

Encourage the student to return to their self-monitoring data and compile the progress they have made. For instance, if the student recorded data on a self-monitoring sheet like the example, they can count how many days they did implement their plan versus how many days they did not. This is also a good time to introduce a lesson on graphing – show the student how to create a bar graph of their progress, such as the one below. Highlight their self-monitoring and self-evaluation strategies as skills they can use as they transition to adulthood.

Goal Progress
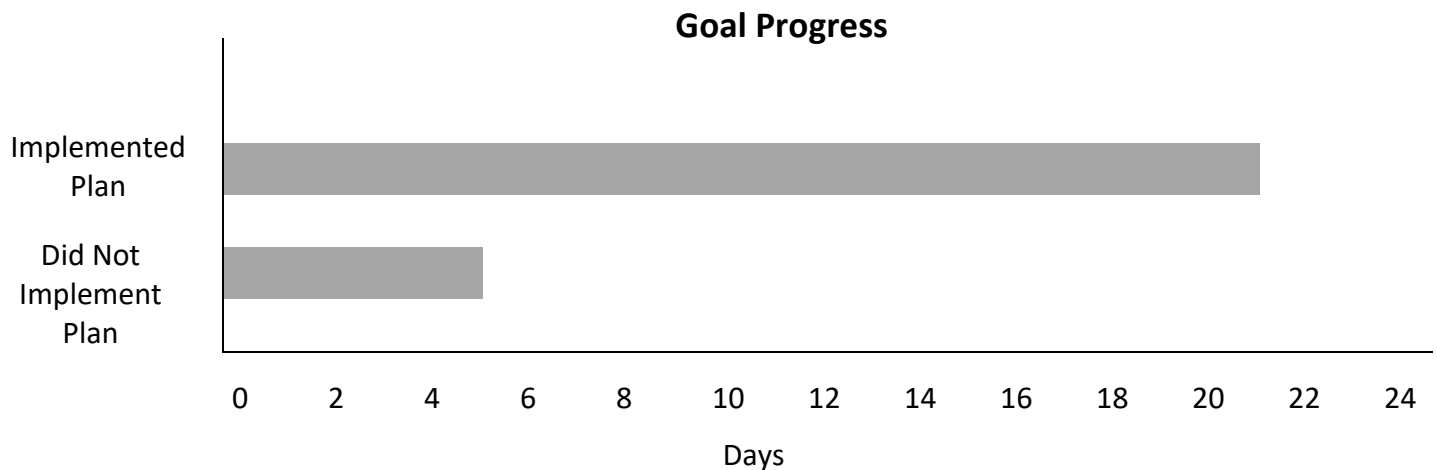
Student Question 10: What barriers have been removed?

Support the student to return to their list from Student Question 6 and consider if they feel they have addressed these barriers successfully.

- Not sure where to start
- Worried my friends will think I can't do it and laugh at me
- Not understanding college application stuff

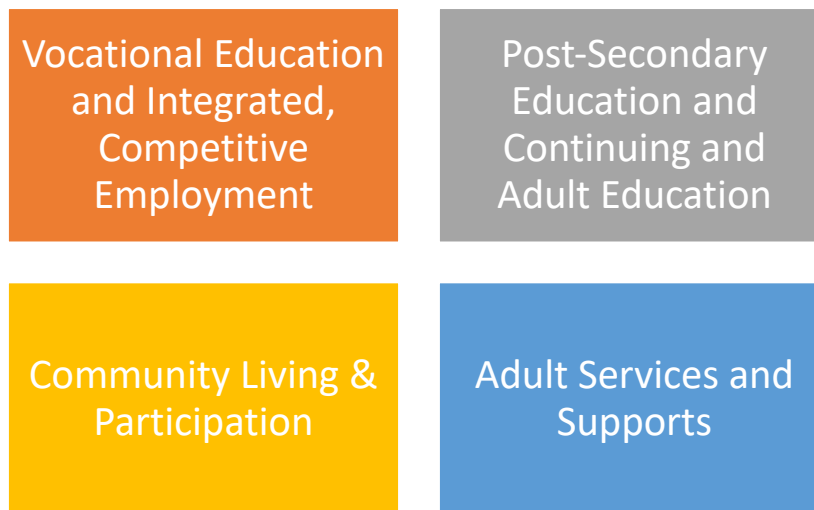## Student Question 11: What has changed about what I don't know?

Encourage the student to add to the chart from Student Question 3.

General Information	Personal Experiences	Wishes
• There's a community college close to my house (10 minutes) • Applications for a September start are due in May • I need recommendation letters from 2 teachers • I have to pass all my classes and graduate high school • I need to write an application essay	• My older sister is in college... I know you have to do an application • I researched the community college online and talked to someone in the enrollment office	• I want to get there on my own • Not sure what I want to study… • I want to do a campus visit • I want to look at the course catalog to get ideas for classes to take and what to study

Engage in a conversation with the student to decide whether they want their goal should remain the same or change and if their action plan is adequate given their revised or retained goal. This information will inform their decisions in Student Question 12, as they decide if they know what they want to know and prepare to work through the phases again and practice using self-determined actions.

Student Question 12: Do I know what I want to know?

Support the student to return to Student Question 1. Did they learn about or improve in their chosen area? As the student shares what has changed about what they don't know, ask them to consider their new knowledge in the bigger picture of their transition plan. How does their progress move them closer to what they want for their future?

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Did I finish my goal? How do I feel about the results?
Again, frame this question in the bigger picture of transitioning from school to adult life as the student decides what they will do next. Explain that the SDLMI is cyclical in nature, meaning students will work through the process repeatedly, sometimes on the same goal and also when they are ready to move on to a new goal. The student will decide on their next steps with the SDLMI based on how they feel about their progress toward their goal. Support the student as they prepare to restart the SDLMI at Phase 1, either starting a new goal, revising the goal, or establishing that they will continue to work on the same goal but revise their action plan. The ultimate goal is for the student to continue to engage in the goal setting process to go after the future of their dreams.

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Conclusion

As described in the Teacher's Guide, the SDLMI is a teaching model designed to be individualized based on student and class needs. As such, the process looks different for every student!

As students work through the process repeatedly and enhance the skills associated will self-determination, they will learn and use it in new and different ways.

Over time, students will continue to strengthen their self-determined actions as teachers enhance their practices. These two factors align to produce improved student outcomes! We encourage you to utilize this resource along with the SDLMI Teacher's Guide, corresponding supplements (supporting students with complex communication needs, whole-class implementation), and mini-lesson plans to continue supporting students to set and work toward goals.