

DOCUMENTING STUDENT GROWTH IN INCLUSIVE DUAL ENROLLMENT EXPERIENCES

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INTRODUCTION

When transition-age students participate in an inclusive dual enrollment college program, they have built-in opportunities to increase and improve numerous foundation skills. These changes in personal growth are often noted by family, friends, and support personnel, but they are rarely quantified.

The Inclusive Dual Enrollment (IDE) Student Evaluation Tool has been developed to help staff document student progress on the numerous skills learned while on a college campus. It provides evidence of student growth over time when taking part in a full college experience.

The education coach is the primary support person for each student. The coach accompanies the student to class, provides accommodations to coursework, teaches the student how to navigate the campus, assists the student with money skills in the dining commons or the bookstore, and offers other supports to benefit the student. These supports also fade over time, in an effort to increase student independence.

As such, the education coach is the person best suited to evaluate student skill progression using the IDE Student Evaluation Tool.

Data from the tool can be used for several purposes:

- To develop individualized Individual Educational Program goals and objectives that reflect inclusive postsecondary education participation.
- To provide specific information for student progress reports.
- To demonstrate accountability of support personnel (education coach, district staff, program staff).
- To promote and communicate changes in independence and positive outcomes for students.
- To inform program changes as needed.

This tool can also be customized to measure skills specific to an individual student.

AREAS OF SKILL MEASUREMENT

The IDE Student Evaluation Tool is focused on seven skill areas that inclusive dually enrolled students are engaged in and which can show growth. These include campus navigation and travel, time management and organization, classroom and campus, self-advocacy and self-awareness, social skills and communication, vocational skills and internships, and life skills.

CAMPUS NAVIGATION AND TRAVEL



Getting around a college campus can be daunting for a student upon first arrival:

“Where is my class? Where can I eat? Where are the restrooms? How long will it take for me to get from one building to another?”

These questions and more are on the mind of the student. It is a large part of an education coach’s job in the beginning weeks of school to help the student find the answers and develop the confidence to maneuver from place to place.

Some students live in communities with public transportation, and are learning how to access it to attend college independently. It is important that the education coach make observations about the student’s performance and skill development in the area of travel to promote long-term independence, to understand what the student needs to learn, to know when to assist the student, and to realize when the student no longer requires help.

A Note to Transition Specialists

By using the Inclusive Dual Enrollment Student Evaluation Tool (IDE), information about student growth can be collected by the education coach working with your student. The data can be used to inform the IEP team in a variety of useful ways, including:

- Noting progress in specific transition skills which can be described within the Current Performance Level section of the IEP.
- Developing goals/objectives to address skill areas that are noted to be weak.
- Looking for patterns in student levels of assistance/frequency of assistance to provide a basis for the development of specific accommodations that will be most beneficial to the student.
- Reviewing the student data can provide an overview of which skill areas the student is showing progress and what areas need to be addressed for improvement. Consider:
 - » Is a particular skill too difficult for this student?
 - » Is there sufficient opportunity to address the skill?

- » What are some strategies the education coach can be provided to support the student in learning the skill?
- » Is it time for the education coach to begin fading support to the student?

Monitoring a student's development in transition skill areas produces tangible evidence of growth and improvement to both share and celebrate with the IEP team.

Example: Skill to be evaluated: "Joins peers at lunch or free time" Score: 2

A student, Julie, is evaluated by the Inclusive Dual Enrollment Student Evaluation Tool (IDE) during Fall semester and consistently required a verbal prompt from the education coach to join her peers at lunch. Being able to independently initiate such an activity is important to Julie's growth and independence, so you decide to develop an IEP goal to address this skill. You work with the education coach to set up an instructional strategy to initially support Julie (e.g. modeling, pre-planning, scripting) and then work to fade support as Julie develops the ability to approach her peers and join in a group on her own.

TIME MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATION

As each semester begins, the education coach and student need to develop systems for promoting time management and organization. Together, they can determine what type of planning tool is a match for the student so it will be used regularly and effectively.

Does the student prefer an agenda book? A calendar? An electronic calendar with reminders? The education coach needs to assist students with choosing a tool that will help them to manage their day. It is important to encourage consistent use of the tool to promote student success with independence in getting places on time, completing assignments when due, remembering supplies, and other important scheduling habits.



CLASSROOM AND CAMPUS

As the student acclimates to the college environment and expectations, the education coach may initially need to provide extra support to the student with reminders about basic matters such as being fully prepared for class, remembering to carry an ID card, deciphering a syllabus, and engaging in class. The education coach may engage the student in role-playing activities to practice greeting people, asking questions in class, or seeking information from the professor. Over time, the education coach needs to recognize when the student is taking ownership of classroom and campus related skills and fade support.



SELF-ADVOCACY AND SELF-AWARENESS

Developing self-advocacy and self-awareness is an important part of the college experience for all students. The education coach serves as a facilitator in assisting students with finding their voice and learning how to speak up for themselves by providing initial instruction and support. This can be done through the creation of written scripts that the student can read when speaking to new or unfamiliar people. Role playing and modeling of how to request help, how to express needs or wants, how to make a request in the cafeteria, and other similar situations are other ways to support students. The goal of such support is to instill confidence in the student for increasing independent self-expression.



SOCIAL SKILLS AND COMMUNICATION

One of the most crucial skills that any student must learn and use is that of effective communication. Knowing how to reach significant people to either deliver or acquire important information (“I feel sick and will be absent,” “What is the homework?”, “Where do you want to meet for lunch?”, etc.) is critical for increasing responsibility, growth, and independence.



Work with the student to use technology (smartphone, iPad, computer) to input phone numbers and email addresses of friends, family, staff, and college connections. Practice daily checks of their college email account with the goal of having the student build it into his/her daily routine, thus allowing you to fade back from prompting or cues. Encourage texting as a means to connect with friends socially on campus, setting up places and time for face-to-face meetings and activity engagement.

Colleges are full of opportunities for both novel and traditional social activities and clubs that

students can join. Encourage the student to be open to checking into things that are of interest to him/her. Initially, you may need to provide support by accompanying the student to these new events and facilitating connections with others in the group. Fading back as soon as possible once the student is comfortable in the setting is important so that the student is seen as an independent person.

VOCATIONAL SKILLS AND INTERNSHIPS

Preparing the student for competitive employment is one of the overarching goals of most inclusive higher education programs. Your role as education coach shifts into the position of job coach once the student is provided an on-campus work internship. Initially, you may be responsible for serving as intermediary between the workplace supervisor and the student, learning the tasks of the job so you can teach them to the student.



As the student gains skill and efficiency with the work, your role as job coach shifts again into the role of supervisor. The goal is to help the student reach independence at the worksite. Helpful ways to facilitate this includes fading of verbal and gestural cues as skills increase or use of a written or pictorial list of job tasks that a student can follow to remind him or her what needs to be done.

Taking time each week to discuss work expectations with the student, as well as problem solving, is important for giving the student ownership of his/her performance. Using tools such as the Work-Based Learning Plan provides useful feedback to the student, and pinpoints areas of strength and areas that require more practice. Role-playing social expectations in the workplace is another tool to use for improvement of employment skills.

LIFE SKILLS

College is a place where many important, useful, and necessary life skills and life-long skills are learned.



On any given day, a student is confronted with the need to dress for the occasion or the weather; implement good personal hygiene; make a meal or buy a meal, choosing foods that may or may not be good for them; use money for food, snacks, or supplies; participate in age appropriate social activities; do laundry; clean up after themselves; get or send mail; use social media; and many other daily living activities.

As education coach, you are in a unique position to observe your student's skills in all these areas. You can have conversations with him/her about what clothing fits a situation; you can practice money skills in advance of making purchases; and you can work together to set up a budget.

Communicate with your district teacher about setting up some instructional strategies for teaching functional skills to your students. Identifying and remediating skill need areas is critical to the advancement of the student's independence and success, both in college and life beyond.

Checking in:

Educational Coaches: Are you documenting college students' progress:

- Traveling to and from and around college
- Using time management and organizational skills
- Engaging in college classes
- Using self-advocacy and self-awareness skills
- Generalizing social and communication skills campus-wide
- Working successfully on or off campus
- Applies life skills in college activities

Transition and IEP teams: Are you using data from student progress at college to:

- Note progress in the Current Performance Level section of the IEP
- Consistently update goals and objectives
- Monitor and adjust students' level of assistance
- Regularly assess students' use of college accommodations
- Develop new goals and objectives
- Create a fading plan with timelines



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