NATIONAL GATEWAY TO SELF-DETERMINATION

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Issue 2:
Self-Determination and Employment

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A National Gateway to Self-Determination

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Research to Practice in Self-Determination Series

Introduction

Peope who are self-determined make things happen in their own lives. They know what they want and how to get it. They choose and set goals, then work to reach them. They advocate on their own behalf, and are involved in solving problems and making decisions about their lives.

The purpose of this series, Research to Practice in Self-Determination, is to describe key issues in the field of developmental disabilities that can be enhanced by considering efforts to promote self-determination. Each issue is prepared with a social-ecological framework in mind. This framework calls for strategies for intervention and support to take into account both the capacities of the person and the demands of the environment. Interventions to promote self-determination should focus on enhancing personal capacity, improving opportunity, and modifying the environment. A series of seven issues will be produced, each focusing on a specific topic: self-advocacy, health, employment, community services, aging, family support, and siblings. The format for these issues will include definitions, a brief review of the literature, promising practices, applied examples, and targeted recommendations for scaling-up efforts. This series is intended for use by people with developmental disabilities, family members, professionals, state and federal agencies, and academic programs. By collaborating with and enabling each of these entities, the goal of full inclusion for people with developmental disabilities can be realized.

Suzanne enjoys her job in a hospital setting.

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Self-Determination and Employment

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The findings of Congress [Section 2 (29 U.S.C. 701)] from the 1992 Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act (and in subsequent reauthorizations) stated:

1. millions of Americans have one or more physical or mental disability and the number of Americans with disabilities is increasing;
2. individuals with disabilities constitute one of the most disadvantaged groups in society;
3. disability is a natural part of the human experience and in no way diminishes the right of individuals to:
   a. live independently;
   b. *enjoy self-determination*;
   c. *make choices*;
   d. contribute to society;
   e. pursue meaningful careers; and
   f. enjoy full inclusion and integration in the economic, political, social, cultural and educational mainstream of American society;

and (later in the section):

6. the goals of the nation properly include the goal of providing individuals with disabilities the tools necessary to:
   a. *make informed choices and decisions*; and
   b. achieve equality of opportunity, full inclusion and integration into society, employment, independent living and economic and social self-sufficiency, for such individuals (italics added).

That language became the cornerstone for all federal disability policy, appearing in the preamble to all federal Acts focused on disability issues, including the most recent reauthorization of the Developmental Disabilities Act. A focus on promoting self-determination and choice as a means to greater employment is not new. The 1998 amendments to the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program Act further strengthened and emphasized the centrality of informed choice in the rehabilitation process and there is a national trend toward vocational and employment supports that are delivered in a more person-focused, consumer-driven manner.

What is Self-Determination?

Self-determination derives from both philosophical roots (i.e. determinism) and psychological or behavioral outcomes (Wehmeyer, Abery, Mithaug, & Stancliffe, 2003), each of which is broadly situated within theories of human agency. For the purpose of this brief, we take a human agentic perspective on self-determination, which views people as active contributors to, or "authors" of their behavior. As such, self-determination is a construct that encompasses choosing and setting goals, being involved in making life decisions, self-advocating, and working to reach goals. Importantly, enhanced self-determination contributes to attainment of more positive outcomes, such as employment, education, community living, and an enhanced quality of life (Wehmeyer et al., 2003).

The National Gateway to Self-Determination project strongly suggests that efforts to promote self-determination be situated in the context of a social-ecological model. This model allows consideration for activities that promote self-determination to include strategies that address the person in an environmental context. Thus efforts directed at promoting self-determination can target change in environmental opportunities such as interpersonal, family, organization (school, work), community, and policy context, as well as services and supports for the person. A focus on promoting self-determination can also be found in the DD Act, which defines Self-Determined Actions as actions:

> "in which an individual with developmental disabilities, with assistance: has the ability and opportunity to make choices and decisions; has the ability and opportunity to exercise control over services, supports, and other assistance; has the authority to control resources and obtain needed services; has the opportunity to participate in and contribute to their communities; has the support, including financial, to advocate, develop leadership skills, become trained as a self-advocate, and participate in coalitions and policy-making."

Choices about employment options achieve more positive outcomes.

Is Self-Determination Important for Employment?

There are several indicators to suggest that the answer to this question is 'yes.' First, as mentioned previously, promoting choice and self-determination is mandated by federal disability policy and legislation, including, importantly, the Vocational Rehabilitation Act, which sets policy for employment supports in the nation. Second, people with disabilities have been unequivocal in their demands for enhanced self-determination (see www.aucd/org/ngsd for a video of self-advocates' voices about the importance of employment and self-determination). Third, there is compelling evidence from the special education literature that enhanced self-determination leads to more positive adult outcomes, including more positive employment outcomes. Finally, there is a growing body of evidence in the field of vocational rehabilitation that, in particular, enhancing choice opportunities leads to better VR-related

continued on page 4

Self-Determination and Employment
continued from page 3

outcomes. Studies have shown that people who are involved with and make choices about their employment options achieve more positive outcomes.

It appears, then, that there are more than just compliance-related reasons to focus on promoting self-determination in the context of employment. The articles in this Research to Practice in Self-Determination Issue on Employment provide information about innovative supports, important federal and national initiatives, and personal stories pertaining to the role of promoting self-determination as a means to employment and the importance of employment to enhanced self-determination. It is our hope that this will heighten awareness of the construct among advocates, policy makers, and professionals in employment supports.

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My Story: Self-Advocacy and Work

Cindy Bentley

I came into this world with a lot of problems. I was given 24 hours to live. My mother was using illegal drugs and drank lots of alcohol. My mom went to prison and I went to the foster home where the foster mom burned me all over. The doctor thought I might not survive.

I was an unhappy child. My mom had left me and that made me very sad. I didn't think anyone loved me at all. I was sent to an institution. I cried a lot and I was angry, I felt I couldn't trust anyone, and I had no toys to play with. They always said that I was the problem. No one listened to me at all and I didn't care about anything.

Then I met Chris Zeigler. We were about the same age, we both liked sports, and she helped me train for track. Our friendship built slowly. I had to learn to trust her. She also had to learn to trust me. I had to figure out what she wanted from me and what I wanted from her. What I gathered from Chris was that she wanted me to be the best person I could be. She wanted to help me be less angry and more happy and cheerful. And that's what changed my life. I started to believe in myself, I started taking better care of myself. I felt better. I was smiling more and I started helping other people with sports, showing them that they could run or play basketball or softball. This helped them feel better about themselves. This helped their self-esteem and mine, too! What it took for me was a lot of determination, a lot of hard work, and a lot of running, to realize I had something to give, and that's probably what saved my life. If I would not have met Chris, I think that I would still be angry, upset, unhappy, and think of myself as nothing.

That experience carried me out of the institution and into the community in 1984. I decided that I should stay in Special Olympics so I could continue to work on myself and to continue to run. I called Karen Harley at our Special Olympics office to find out about a new team. I am honored to say that

> The first tip that I would give to a person with an intellectual disability is to believe in yourself.

I have been with my team for over 20 years, participating in Track and Field, Basketball, Softball, Bocce, Volleyball, Tennis, Soccer, and Snowshoeing. I am still training in all but Track and Field, and still believing in myself. I have a lot of friends in Special Olympics, but most of all I have a family: my Special Olympics teammates and coaches. Off the field it has taught me how to manage my time, and work with all different kinds of people, including my co-workers and my job coach. It has also taught me the values of honesty and fairness, and how to work out conflicts with coworkers, consumers, and other professionals like myself.

Tips

The first tip that I would give to a person with an intellectual disability is to believe in yourself. Do as much as you can for yourself. For example, pick out your own clothes, fix your own breakfast, set up your own transportation if you can. Show people that you can get yourself up in the morning, that you want to work, and you don't just want to go to a sheltered workshop but would like a real job in the community. Show people that you can be responsible.

Tell people about your dreams! For example, maybe your dream job would be to work in a coffee shop or a hospital or a school. I always tell people: if you want a job, a good first step is to volunteer to show people that you can get yourself to the job, do the tasks, and that you are responsible. That's how I got all of my jobs.

For young people transitioning out of high school, if you have the ability to speak for yourself, tell your teacher and your guidance counselor and your IEP instructor and your parents that you would like to explore working in the community. Ask your parents to take you on job shadows while you are still in high school. This will help you choose an area to volunteer in. If you desire, you should also ask about college.

What Drives Me

I like getting up the morning and thanking God for waking me up for another day on this earth. I like getting ready for my job. I like coming to work every day for a purpose: to help people with intellectual disabilities and people without. I know that people believe in me, and they ask for my help, not my boss's help. They value my opinion about advocacy. I truly think I am now treated as a valued professional. That makes me feel good and makes me want to come to work to do the best job I can, and I do my job with confidence and dignity.

I enjoy what I'm doing. I am the Advocate Specialist, so I want to make sure that I come to work in a good mood and leave my problems at the door. I need to be at my best to help all kinds of people I advocate for who need my advice. People that call on the phone need my help to find the right resources.

I tell my consumers to be themselves and believe in themselves; to do their best, to speak up, ask for what they need; to be good self-advocates and to help other self-advocates. For myself, I need to ask for what I need on my job, and to also be a good advocate, a team player, and listen to other people. I may not agree with every person, but I am a professional and I have to listen to all sides of a story and not judge.

Tips for Working with a Job Coach

What I think a job coach's responsibility should be is to be there for the moral support, but not to do the job for us. The job coach can listen, give ideas, pointers, and advice, but should only step in if the person is having difficulty. The person that was hired for the job needs to be the one to do the job. I also think it is very important for co-workers to get to know the job coach, and to communicate with both the job coach and the boss. If there are problems on the job, they can nip it in the bud.

Most companies will want you to do your job thoroughly, which doesn't mean perfectly. Most companies will require that you come in on time and not socialize too often or take too many breaks. A job coach can help you manage your time better, so you are taking breaks at appropriate times, not when your boss is talking to you or in the middle of a big project.

A job coach should never make you do something that you do not want to do. Always be honest with your job coach, and expect that they will be honest with you. A job coach needs to know when you need them there and when you don't, and it is your responsibility to let them know when you feel you need help. Sometimes we may not want to hear the advice that the job coach is giving, but it is important that the job coach teach us the right way. We have to be able to accept criticism along with praises. The job coach can't always tell you you are doing things right. Sometimes they will need to help you improve.

Sometimes, you might feel that your job coach isn't doing his or her job, but are afraid to tell anyone because you don't want the job coach to get in trouble. But I learned the hard way, the sooner you let someone know, the sooner it will get better. This is why it is important to keep your relationship with your job coach professional. It is ok to go to professional functions like company picnics, but to go to things outside of work as friends will complicate your working relationship.

I like coming to work every day for a purpose: to help people with intellectual disabilities and people without.

Cindy Bentley is an Advocate Specialist with People First of Wisconsin. She is interested in helping people to get a job or whatever they need.

Cindy Bentley

What it took for me was a lot of determination, a lot of hard work, and a lot of running, to realize I had something to give.

Self-Determination in Employment Services

Michael West

Central to self-determination is the ability to exercise choice and control in one's life (Cook & Jonniker, 2002). For people with disabilities, self-determination is critical to work success and satisfaction (Mueser, Becker & Wolfe, 2001). This article will describe two areas in which the right to choose is at risk for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities—the right to choose to work in the community, and the right to choose one's own service provider – and ways in which choice can be increased in those areas.

The Right to Choose to Work in the Community

Evidence over the past three decades has consistently found that people with intellectual and developmental disabilities can be successfully employed in competitive, integrated jobs given the necessary training, accommodations, and support. Moreover, evidence indicates that the majority of people with disabilities and their families prefer community employment as opposed to segregated services (Migliori, Mank, Grossi, & Rogan, 2007). However, it is also clear that segregation is the model of choice of the majority of community rehabilitation programs (CRPs) that serve people with disabilities (Inge et al., 2009).

The reasons for the current status are many and long-standing. First, many states have policies and funding processes that discourage community-based employment (Hall, Butterworth, Winsor, Gilmore, and Metzel, 2007; Novak, Rogan, Mank, and Dileo, 2003). In addition, CRPs may face internal opposition from their staff who feel that their jobs are threatened (Brooks-Lane et al., 2005; Migliore et al., 2007). Some families may also be concerned about safety, loss of disability benefits, or exploitation of their family member (Brooks-Lane et al., 2005; Butterworth, Fesko, & Ma, 2000; Migliore et al., 2008).

Whatever the reasons, most states and their CRPs have not offered community employment to meet the demand of their customers. When service access is limited in this manner, the right of consumers to choose working in the community is severely limited. In recent years, several states have recognized this and have developed an Employment First Initiative. Employment First states have committed themselves and their community rehabilitation providers to establishing community-based employment as the first option for individuals receiving employment services (State Employment Leadership Network, 2010). The steps they are taking include the following:

- State funding agencies are modifying their policies to establish community-based employment as the expected outcome for all individuals receiving funded services;
- Policy definitions of "employment" are being modified to exclude group employment options and positions paying less than the Federal minimum wage or less than others performing comparable jobs;
- Training and technical assistance are being provided to CRP leaders and staff to increase their skills, capabilities, and motivation;
- Some states have revised their monitoring systems to be able to track movement from segregated to integrated employment;
- CRP funding is being adjusted to provide incentives for moving people from segregated to integrated services, and to limit the time period that an individual remains in segregated services;
- Interagency agreements are being written to promote community-based employment for adults and youth with disabilities, and to ensure consistency across funding sources; and
- Marketing materials are being developed and distributed to families, customers, CRPs, and other constituencies to advertise the benefits of community employment.

Maurice is successful at his job at the car wash.

Table 1. Quality Indicators for Selecting an Employment Service Provider	
Indicator 1: Presence of descriptors that adequately describe the program • What is the program model and approach to helping the consumer choose, get, and keep a job? • What kind of support is provided after job placement? Is job site training provided and for how long? • Percent of consumers who receive SSI or SSDI and have a Benefits Plan completed	**Indicator 4: Likely level of hours, pay and benefits** • Percent of job placements that include employer paid health insurance, sick leave, and paid vacation • Average hours of work each week • Average wage per hour
Indicator 2: Information on the kinds of jobs consumers get • Percent of job placements that are unskilled or entry level jobs • Percent of jobs in housekeeping, janitorial, or food service or other unskilled or semi-skilled areas • Percent of job placements that are professional or skilled	**Indicator 5: Likelihood of getting and retaining a job and how long it will take to get the job** • Percent of consumers who complete an assessment and are never placed • Average weeks consumers wait for first job placement • Average number of weeks consumers work after placement
Indicator 3: Stability and support level of the coaching staff • Average months/years of job coaching experience for employment specialists • Percent of employment specialists who have completed at least one week of formal training in job coaching or job placement	**Indicator 6: Satisfaction level of consumers who have used the provider's services** • Percent of consumers satisfied with their job • Percent of jobs that match the consumer's goal • Satisfaction level of consumers who have completed the program
Reprinted with permission from O'Brien, Revell, & West, 2003	

As of this writing, there are 18 Employment First states: California, Connecticut, District of Columbia, Hawaii, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, New Mexico, Nevada, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Texas, Virginia, and Washington. These states are leading the way in promoting the right of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to choose to work in the community.

The Right to Informed Choice of Service Providers

In most areas, there are multiple CRP options for people with developmental disabilities to access employment services from which to choose. It is important that the choice be made by the person with the disability, and that the choice is based on objective information. Without such information, people with disabilities will be forced to have choices made for them, or to make choices without the knowledge they need to make the best choice.

In 1998, the state of Oklahoma initiated its KEYS to Employment program to facilitate recruitment of individuals with mental illness to state Vocational Rehabilitation services, and to promote self-determination. One component of the Oklahoma KEYS project was the development and piloting of the Vendor Performance Report Card (O'Brien, Revell, & West, 2003). The elements of the Report Card are listed in Table 1. CRPs were required to report this information to funding agencies, which could then be provided to prospective customers.

Of course, not all state and local service delivery systems would agree to implement a report card system. However, the items that are included in the Report Card can be used to survey CRPs to assist customers to make informed choices.

Summary

While self-determination is increasingly recognized as an essential element in the lives of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, in the employment arena, they are often at the mercy of service systems unable or unwilling to comply with their choices. This article has described two strategies, the Employment First Initiatives and the Vendor Performance Report Card, that have the promise of making their choices reality.

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continued on page 8

SD in Employment...
continued from page 7

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The Arc and Walmart Foundation School-to-Community Transition Project

Lynell Tucker and Tonia Ferguson

The Arc of the United States (The Arc) is one of the largest community based nonprofits that promotes and protects the human rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities throughout their lifetimes. Together with a network of over 700 state and local chapters, as well as individual members, The Arc supports full inclusion and participation in communities, and influences public policy. In July 2009, The Arc received a $3 million grant from the Walmart Foundation to support efforts to improve the quality of transition planning and transition related outcomes for youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities. As part of The Arc's Department of National Initiatives, the Arc and Walmart Foundation's three year School-to-Community Transition Initiative is working to identify, expand, and replicate innovative and best practices in transition services nationwide.

With the assistance of a Steering Committee and Expert Advisory Panel composed of young adults with developmental disabilities, parents, family members, professionals, and academics, The Arc sought out programs, services, and projects that result in better transition outcomes, specifically: greater inclusion and involvement of youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities in independent living; employment; postsecondary education or vocational training; and community, social, and civic affairs. All fifty projects of the initiative include elements of inter-agency collaboration and self-determination.

Initiative Overview

There are millions of people with intellectual and related developmental disabilities in the United States. At any given point in time, hundreds of thousands of these individuals are school-age youth in grades 7-12 who are receiving special education services and are preparing to transition from school to adult life.

As adults with disabilities, they will enter a world that is significantly more inclusive than experienced by earlier generations, yet still far from perfect. While in the mid-20th century many adults and children with intellectual and developmental disabilities had few options other than institutions, today there are a range of community living options. Also, in the past, many adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities were assumed to be unemployable. Today, there are a range of vocational, rehabilitative, and employment options.

In the past, people with intellectual and developmental disabilities were precluded from receiving an education. Today, children and youth are guaranteed a free and appropriate public primary and secondary education and adults have opportunities to participate in vocational training and postsecondary education

of varying types. Individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities also now may participate in a broad range of community, religious, social, leisure, volunteer, and other activities.

In short, many more opportunities are now available to youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities as they enter adult life, at least theoretically. The reality is that postsecondary education, employment, and community living is nowhere near as accessible to youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities as they are to youth with other types of disabilities, or to the general youth population, entering adult life.

The transition from school to adult life is a key point in the life of youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities that impacts the extent to which each individual will succeed in being included in larger society. Transition is a significant time from a legal and public policy perspective as well. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), 42 USC § 12101 et seq., guarantees students with disabilities access to a free, accessible, public education, the primary purpose of which is to "prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living."

A review of the available research by an expert panel convened by The Arc suggests that there are a constellation of factors that are associated with more positive transition outcomes (Lakin & Turnbull, 2005). These include:

- expanded, collaborative, dynamic partnerships in the transition process, including school, family, and community resources
- increasing self-determination and self-advocacy by students in the transition process
- a more person-centered transition planning process that is strength-based and focuses on student interests and preferences
- increased parent and family involvement in all stages of transition design, planning and implementation
- assuring students access to the general educational curriculum during their school years
- increasing relevance of school curricular experience to post-school goals, including community-based work experience
- increasing the graduation rate for students with disabilities
- seamless transfer of educational services and supports from the school to the post-school setting
- increasing the quality of the workforce involved in the education and support of youth with disabilities

Through state and local chapters, The Arc is promoting approaches to transition that include opportunities for employment, postsecondary education, and independent community living. In addition to providing direct services and supports for individuals, the School-to-Community Transition Initiative includes a research component that explores the issues individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families face during transition.

> Transition is a significant time from a legal and public policy perspective.

The ultimate goal of the School-to-Community Transition Initiative is to assure that youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities achieve the outcomes they desire in the course of transitioning to adult life, including:

- independent living
- employment
- postsecondary education or vocational training
- involvement in community, social, and civic affairs

To reach this goal, the Initiative is comprised of three intermediate goals: (1) improved transition planning, (2) improved pre-graduation transition preparation, and (3) improved post-school transition services and supports. A key aspect of these intermediate goals is an increase in person-centered planning as well as an increase in student self-determination and self-advocacy in the transition process.

As the Initiative enters its second full year, it is anticipated that the results will reflect increased post-school satisfaction and achievements, increased participation in transition planning, and more positive educational and employment outcomes. Sites across the nation are already reporting that young adults are assuming new, active adult roles in decision-making and planning for their futures and an overall improved public awareness of issues facing youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities as they seek access to postsecondary education, lifelong learning, and employment.

We invite you to learn more about the School-to-Community Transition Initiative at www.thearc.org.

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Self-Determination and Transition to Employment

David W. Test, Audrey Bartholomew, and Jennifer Cease-Cook

In 2005, a revised definition of self-determination was proposed stating, "self-determined behavior refers to volitional actions that enable one to act as the primary causal agent in one's life and to maintain or improved one's quality of life" (Wehmeyer, 2005, p. 117). In the literature, the concept of self-determination has been broken down into a number of teachable components including but not limited to (a) choice making, (b) decision making, (c) problem solving, (d) goal setting and attainment, (e) self-advocacy, and (f) self-management.

While the construct and components of self-determination are all interwoven into all facets of a student's transition process, from selecting post-school goals in education, employment, and independent living, to IEP development and implementation, the purpose of this article is to describe the role of self-determination in preparing students with disabilities for employment. This topic is supported by the results of Wehmeyer and Schwartz (1997) who found that students in the high self-determination group as measured by the Arc's Self-Determination Scale were more likely to be employed than their peers in the low self-determination group. Research has demonstrated that enhancing self-determination skills involves teaching knowledge and skills related to components of self-determined behavior (Devlin, 2008). As a result, this article will describe how the self-determination components of goal setting and self-management can be used to prepare students with disabilities for employment.

One component of self-determination is goal setting. Goal setting is not only critical in promoting self-determination, but important for success at school and in the community. Goal setting has been defined as "creating a target or plan for what one wants to accomplish or achieve" (Sands & Doll, 2000). By learning these skills, students are able to set and attain goals, identify personal alternatives in the decision making process, and self-regulate their learning (Wehmeyer, Palmer, Agran, Mithaug, & Martin, 2000). Research involving goal setting interventions has demonstrated a positive impact on academic and employment performance of students with disabilities (Devlin, 2008; Page-Voth & Graham, 1999; Schunk, 1985; Troia & Graham, 2002). One goal setting intervention is called the Self-Determined Career Development Model (SDCDM; Wehmeyer et al., 2003).

Self-Determined Career Development Model

The Self-Determined Career Development Model (SDCDM) is based on the Self-Determined Learning Model of Instruction (SDLMI; Wehmeyer, Palmer, Agran, Mitaug, & Martin, 2000) which was developed as a model for educators to use to empower students to self-direct their instructional process and enhance self-determination. The SDLMI is implemented in three-phases that enable students to select goals, take action, and identify problems. The SDLMI has been used to promote academic and behavioral goal setting and attainment for students with learning disabilities and mild intellectual disabilities (Wehmeyer, Palmer, Agran, Mithaug, & Martin, 2000), moderate intellectual disabilities (Agran, Blanchard, & Wehmeyer, 2000) and severe disabilities (Gilberts, Agran, Hughes, & Wehmeyer, 2001).

Wehmeyer et al. (2003) modified the SDLMI to focus specifically on career and employment goals using a similar self-directed problem solving process and called it the Self-Determined Career Development Model (SDCDM). While the SDCDM also has three phases, it emphasizes career and employment outcomes. The first phase is "What are my career and job goals?" In this phase, participants identify job preferences, strengths, and needs related to their career goals, and prioritize their options. To do this, participants answer questions such as, "What must change for me to get the job or career I want?" Finally, participants develop career-related goals. The SDCDM uses an eight-step goal setting instructional process: (a) identifying a goal, (b) writing a goal, (c) ensuring that the goal is specific and measurable, (d) identifying objectives to measure goal progress, (e) setting a start date, (f) taking ownership of the goal, (g) expressing goals in a positive manner, and (h) ensuring that the goal is attainable. Instruction for phase one can take 4-5 weeks.

> Helping individuals with disabilities enhance their self-determination skills through strategies such as goal setting and self-management are feasible and practical in any job setting.

The second phase is "What is my plan?" In this phase, a measure of goal attainment is developed. Participants identify alternatives for reaching career/employment goals. They discuss barriers and how to make an action plan to remove those barriers.

The third phase is "What have I achieved?" In this phase, participants work through questions that promote

self-evaluation of their progress toward their goal and modify their action plan if needed.

Teachers can begin the goal-setting process by talking with students in a small or large group about something that they want to do. For example, a teacher can discuss with students that they will be setting individual goals related to their career and employment. Students can then determine what they will individually need to work on and what supports are needed for them to complete their goals.

The Self-Determined Career Development Model has been used with a variety of students to set career and employment goals, develop action plans, implement plans, and adjust goals if needed. For example, in the first pilot study, the SDCDM was used to enable Vocational Rehabilitation counselors to support five adults with disabilities. Results showed the model increased the adults' capacity to set goals and solve problem related to getting a job (Wehmeyer et al., 2003).

Next, Benitez, Lattimore, and Wehmeyer (2005) used the SDCDM with five students with emotional and behavioral disorders. Participants all set employment goals and worked through the model to plan, implement, and attain their goals. For example, in this study all of Ron's work experiences were with friends and family, including his current job at his father's security company. In Phase 1, he developed a goal to work in law enforcement. He indicated that a barrier to achieving this goal was that he did not have a lot of experience "searching for a job and needed to know more about getting jobs." His goal was to learn how to gather career information to prepare him for his future employment searches. All the participants in this study reported that they achieved their targeted goals and they were satisfied with the model.

Students in the high self-determination group were more likely to be employed than their peers in the low self-determination group.

Finally, Devlin (2008) used the Self-Determined Career Development Model with students with moderate intellectual disabilities in a competitive work setting. The work placements were custodial positions. As a result, all four employees learned to set goals related to their current jobs, implement, and make progress toward these goals.

Self-Management

Another way to provide self-determination training while on the job is through self-management instruction (Lancioni & O'Reilly, 2001; Storey, 2007). Self-management is teaching an individual to personally apply behavior change strategies that result in the behavior being changed (Cooper, Heron, & Heward, 2007). Self-management is an umbrella term that includes a variety of procedures including antecedent cues such as auditory and picture prompts, and consequence procedures such as self-monitoring, self-recording, self-evaluation, self-recruited feedback, and self-reinforcement (Storey, 2007). Self-management has been identified as an evidence-based practice to teach job specific skills by the National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center. The evidence base for this practice included studies involving self-delivered reinforcement, self-instruction, and self-monitoring.

For example, Christian and Poling (1997) taught two young women with intellectual disabilities to self-monitor their work productivity while at work at a restaurant. The women were taught to use a timer to time themselves completing a task and keep track of their work in a notebook. Both women were able to improve the rate at which they worked and maintained their work rates over time.

Often, self-management techniques are combined to provide individuals with a package that improves work skills through a variety of strategies. For example, a self-management package that included goal-setting, self-monitoring, and self-evaluation was used to teach adults with disabilities to improve the amount of work they were able to complete in a given time (Grossi & Heward 1998). Individuals in this study were first shown the competitive standard for their task (e.g., scrubbing pots, racking dishes) and were helped to identify a goal based on that standard. The adults were taught how to use a timer and/or stop watch and also how to fill out their self-monitoring sheet by circling the number of items they were able to finish on a self-monitoring form. Finally, participants were taught how to evaluate their performance based on the competitive standard and how to adjust based on the outcome. As a result of the self-management package, all four adults were able to improve their work productivity.

Self-determination instruction on the jobsite is essential to facilitate independence.

Another way to help individuals with disabilities self-manage their work behaviors is by providing auditory prompts. For example, auditory prompts have been delivered through the use of a cassette recorder to improve the accuracy of completing work tasks (i.e. cleaning a bathroom; Mitchell, Collins, & Gassaway, 2000). More recently, Laarhoven, Johnson, Laarhoven-Myers, Grider, and Grider (2009) used a video iPod to deliver video prompts to a young man with developmental disabilities. The young man was able to view video of his work tasks being completed on an iPod

continued on page 12

Transition...
continued from page 11

that was clipped to his belt. He was able to improve the accuracy of his completed tasks and at the end of the study both he and his family shared enthusiasm for using the iPod for future tasks.

Conclusion

Helping individuals with disabilities enhance their self-determination skills through strategies such as goal setting and self-management are feasible and practical in any job setting. Whether it is providing guidance prior to job attainment with the SDCDM or helping individuals assume responsibility for their performance on the job through auditory prompts, self-determination instruction can be delivered at any stage of employment. Self-determination instruction on the jobsite is essential to facilitate independence and can easily be delivered by following research-based, multi-step models like the SDCDM or by implementing something as simple as teaching individuals to use a checklist to improve their work performance. These self-determination strategies and others like them can be used to help individuals with disabilities become the "causal agents" in their lives.

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Discovering Personal Genius: Self-Employment for Transition-Age Youth

Cary Griffin and Dave Hammis

The Challenge

In the United States few transition-age youth graduate from special education with paid jobs; the jobs they do enter remain part-time, low-wage, and very low status; and the predominant careers involve fast-food, entry-level retail, cleaning, and other dead-end service occupations (Griffin, Hammis, Geary, 2007). It's time to re-think work. Self-employment, a major Customized Employment option, is one way of creating employment where none seems to exist previously.

The Process

Small business ownership is the fastest growing employment option in the United States today (Schramm, 2010). Self-employment is also a rehabilitative option under the Rehabilitation and the Workforce Investment Acts (WIA). Both systems can help a person with a disability to purchase business equipment and/or assistive technology, training, and the supports necessary to run their business (e.g., legal, marketing, accounting). The Social Security Administration (SSA) is also actively promoting the use of business ownership to stimulate employment of individuals with disabilities, through the Plan for Achieving Self Support (PASS). A PASS is one of the few financial options providing actual operating cash to businesses, and is a critical compliment to Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and/or WIA resources (Griffin & Hammis, 2003). Schools are not restricted from exploring small business ownership, and indeed can blend funding with the systems above to create a smooth transition from school to entrepreneurship.

Discovering Personal Genius and The Vocational Themes

Customized Employment (CE) is a vocational process that builds upon the foundation of Supported Employment, but that also recognizes self-employment as satisfying an individual's ideal conditions of employment. In other words, the individual is not compared to others; there are no norm-referenced test scores to determine employment suitability. CE involves a functional, real-time assessment of an individual's skills and talents, based on the assumption that everyone is "work ready"; the development of best-match scenarios between work environment, supports, interests, and work tasks; and, in the case of self-employment, matching skills, interests, and customers in the marketplace. Crucial to the CE process are vocational team members that understand the proper steps of Discovering Personal Genius (DPG) (assessment), interest-based negotiation, job analysis, systematic instruction, job carving, and job creation.

> With a little planning, family support, and resources, small business creates opportunity when none may have appeared obvious.

Discovering Personal Genius, or simply Discovery, is a process that is generally conducted in the home, community, and school, and records information about the person, their family and friends, social connections, the skills they have and the tasks they do, best support strategies, interests, concerns, and experiences. Usually a simple but diverse series of community and school activities are engaged in and documented to highlight the individual's potential contributions, large and small. From the profile that emerges, a career plan, sometimes including self-employment, is discerned.

The development of Vocational Themes evolved over the past decade of implementing Customized Employment in numerous sites across the US and Canada (Griffin & Keeton, 2010). The process of identifying themes is a natural outcome of the DPG strategy. Too often in the past, employment development hinged on rapid-fire discernment of an individual's interests and then divining a few job ideas. Most of us only know of a few jobs, and we tend to think in job descriptions, instead of discerning the tasks and skills a person has or is likely to learn through structured teaching using systematic instruction. Because so few employment staff know how to teach complex tasks effectively and how to engage the natural worksite trainer in the process, we job develop only to our own competence level and experience. This is why we have stereotypical jobs as the rule: grocery bagging, rolling silverware, janitorial, and microenterprises of equal blandness including the production of greeting cards and paper shredding. Now, there is nothing wrong with any of these employment options. The critical question to ask is: Do these jobs lead to a better job through the development of skills and talents? Unfortunately, they often do not.

Because so many folks with disabilities only get one or two chances at community employment, the process used to identify potential employment must be rigorous. DPG is designed to generate no fewer than 3 overarching vocational themes. The themes are not job descriptions. They are large umbrella topics that represent an accumulation of many jobs, environments, skills/task sets, and interests. By thinking through the theme a bit, supported by DPG evidence of current skills, tasks that can potentially

continued on page 14

Personal Genius...
continued from page 13

be taught/learned, interests, and work environments that make sense emerge in a broad and rich palette of opportunity. By slowing down the process just a bit, engaging a team for ideas, and exploring the community using informational interviews and work try-outs (Griffin, Hammis & Geary, 2007), creative options, including business ownership, emerge.

Someone who helps their parents grow flowers in the family garden demonstrates that they know how to water the flowers, prune back dead leaves, and hoe weeds. This might mean, although additional Discovery is warranted, that there is an Agricultural Theme. This is not a flower or a plant theme; that would be far too narrow. The same skills used in flower gardening are used across many types of agriculture (and within other themes too). The flower garden, after all, is likely the only place the opportunity to learn and perform these tasks has occurred. In fact, DPG challenges us to consider that this might not be an interest of the person at all. Perhaps this is just one of the only activities accessible to the individual. Still, the skills they have (watering, weeding, trimming) are relevant in many work environments and should not be dismissed. The DPG process helps determine where both interests and skills lie.

If Agriculture is indeed determined to be a theme through various DPG activities (e.g. a positive work try-out on a weeding team at the Botanical Gardens; a brief experience trimming trees with the local Parks Department), then a "List of Twenty" is developed. This list compiles places "where the career makes sense," such as local companies where people who also have agriculture-related skills and interests work. This provides a multitude of options for job development, or the creation of internships and apprenticeships. It also provides a quick scan of the marketplace and may reveal a market opening ready for exploitation through an individual's own business. Developing the List of Twenty can be difficult, especially in smaller towns. This difficulty mandates creativity and exploration of one's community, especially since the work options must be accessible to the individual and be non-redundant in nature. A general rule is no more than two similar businesses on a List of Twenty.

Certainly no one will come close to visiting all businesses on the list either. Generally it's recommended to formally visit a couple from each List using informational interviews, or get insights into a few via connections to folks who work in these companies, or through leveraging the social and economic capital of schools staff, Board of Education, student's family, or the school supply chain.

Because all people have complex lives and are adaptable to varied situations, it is recommended that at least three Vocational Themes be identified before moving into job development or small business creation. Three themes allows for mixing and matching. For example, taking the Agricultural Theme and combining it with a Mathematical Theme replete with such skills as being able to calculate a ball player's batting average, being able to add numbers on a desk calculator, and being able to read digital and analog scales may yield some interesting businesses to explore. Any business engaged in agriculture deals with mathematics on some level. They are buying and selling, they are weighing, they are bagging, they are projecting, they are taking measured samples, they are selling by the dozen, the gross or the hundredweight, etc. The point is that until these companies are explored the actual existing or potentially created jobs or complimentary businesses are unknown. Perhaps there are opportunities at the local ketchup factory where trucks roll across the scales full, then empty to determine the value of the tomatoes they brought in, perhaps bagging and weighing seeds at the local plant nursery, or measuring out how much fertilizer is mixed with water in a 500 gallon tank.

Referral to Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and WIA is one of the steps along the way, and can happen either at the beginning of the career exploration process or later as development occurs. It is recommended that both VR Counselors and Workforce Center staff have a meaningful role in the development and generation of business ideas because they are experts in understanding the local market and the support strategies people often need. Do not use these systems solely as funding sources or an opportunity to benefit from years of experience and a breadth of support is lost.


Cary Griffin

VR policies on self-employment vary from state to state, but the Rehabilitation Act does indeed consider business ownership a reasonable outcome of services. Counselors can use their general case services funding for self-employment and they can use their supported employment allocations as well. VR can pay for such things as business classes, business plan development, marketing services, business/job coaching, work experience, vehicle repairs, capital equipment, tools, and other necessities of a small business. Workforce Investment programs such as One-Stop Centers have less experience with both disability and self-employment, but the US Department of Labor, their funder and administrative unit in the Government, is clear that business ownership is a reasonable outcome of services (Griffin & Hammis, 2004).

Skill building and business training is also available through the VR and the WIA systems, as well as through many Small Business Administration (SBA) programs. The list is long, but the SBA funds, or supports in-part, such programs as the Small Business Development Centers (SBDC), Women's Entrepreneurship programs, the Tribal Business Information Centers (TBIC), the Senior Corps of Retired Executives, community kitchens where space to produce food products is available at low cost, business incubators that provide mentoring, production space, and office equipment to start-up enterprises at low cost, and numerous special projects (SBA, 2004).

Business training often involves a multi-week commitment, attending a series of classes once or twice a week.

Those attending are interested in starting an enterprise or expanding an existing one. This setting, a good inclusive setting for many people, can lead to profitable business relationships. Sometimes, however, it appears that these classes are used to screen people out if they cannot grasp the academics involved. The issue in self-employment is support, so if someone cannot read or write and produce a business plan, if they have someone else working with them who can perform these tasks, then funding should continue based on the business idea, not on the person's perceived limitations. Small business ownership for individuals with significant disabilities is based on the principle of partial participation (Brown, et al., 1987). Simply stated, a person who performs part of a task still has value and can contribute in a work setting. This concept is the foundation of outsourcing in business, where tasks are carved out for other sub-contractors to perform, and of the rehabilitation concept of Job Carving where emphasis is focused on the contribution of the individual in a worksite and not upon the tasks they cannot perform or do not enjoy (Griffin, Hammis & Geary, 2007).

Financial and benefits analysis is another key aspect in any vocational planning. During Discovery it is critical to add a financial analysis to the process. When developing a business or working with an ongoing small business, there are a series of critical factors that need to be accounted for by small business owners with disabilities who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and/or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits. SSI and SSDI have different policies and laws regarding self-employment than are used for wage employment. In some cases, significant monetary gains occur as a result of small business earnings and resource exclusions. In other cases, substantial losses occur if not planned for. Preparing a small business benefits analysis is a very important initial step. (More information and on-line classes can be found at www.griffinhammis.com and www.cbtac.org).


Dave Hammis

Further, both Medicare and Medicaid present opportunities for small business owners in health care coverage and long-term living supports, or can have critical impacts if SSI and/or SSDI are lost due to poor benefits planning. Self-employment allows for wealth accumulation in the SSI and Medicaid systems through a work incentive called Property Essential to Self Support (PESS). This policy allows a small business owner with SSI and/or Medicaid to have unlimited cash funds in a business account and unlimited business resources and property. Such opportunities do not exist in regular wage employment. A single person receiving SSI is required to have less than $2,000 in cash resources if employed in a wage job. PESS neutralizes that resource limit and allows the individual to accumulate wealth in the business account that can be harvested later for personal and business purchases.

Testing feasibility and refinement of the business idea is often confusing. One of the simplest methods of testing ideas is to draw up a brief survey and ask people at the local mall, on the street, or via telephone a few short questions about the idea. James, for instance, established a retail urban-wear clothing shop. To test his business idea, he surveyed shoppers asking them:

1. Are you interested in purchasing the latest in urban wear?
2. Would you shop here for those items if such a store existed?
3. What items would you be most interested in?

Another option for testing the idea is to do a competitive analysis. That is, survey the community or do internet searches for similar businesses to identify other possible competitors, visit some of them, and discern their unique market niche. Planning a similar business then involves differentiating the enterprise from the others. The role of testing is to meld the owner's interests with those of the marketplace to find a match. Then, marketing and sales approaches are refined to attract customers and motivate them to buy.

Perhaps the most efficient and functional method of testing business ideas is to simply sell a few. Wash cars for a few weekends; sell your jams and jellies at a couple county fairs. If customers seem pleased, perhaps a business is born.

The Business Plan

Writing the business plan derives from all the steps above and puts the information in a logical sequence. The plan is essential in acquiring funding through most systems, and banks or loan funds will certainly require a comprehensive plan as well. Business plan templates are available from numerous sources including your local VR office, www.sba.gov, and the local SBDC. Before writing the plan, check with the funder to ask which format they prefer or require. Briefly, most plans will ask the prospective owner to elaborate on the following:

Product/Service. A precise statement describing the Product or Service is written, followed by an examination of the Market Environment and Location. This statement includes information regarding the market and reasons why the business will succeed. This section also includes a short assessment of the person's situation and support strategies, their talents, the availability of SSA Work Incentives, and their love for making the product or delivering their service, and a discussion of why this business makes sense for them.

The 3 Cs. First the business' potential customers are examined:

- Who are they?
- Where do they live?
- Why would they buy this product/service?
- Are they one-time buyers or will they want/need more?
- Is price a consideration for them?
- What quality of product/service do they expect?
- What level of customer service will they require?

The competition evaluation is similar:

- Who is the competition?
- Will it be easy for another competitor to enter the market with a similar idea?

continued on page 16

Personal Genius...
continued from page 15

- Will the business compete on price, quality, or both?
- Is there a plan to turn competitors into partners or suppliers of needed parts/services?
- What makes this business's product/service better or different than that of the competition?

The capabilities of the business are summed up by posing a series of questions emanating from the Customer/Competitor analysis:

- How many customers can potentially be reached?
- What is the potential for repeat customers?
- Will competitors supply the business with raw materials or component parts? Can they be supplied with finished items or sub-assembly work?
- How will the business grow into other markets such as opening other retail outlets, securing contracts from wholesale buyers, creating an internet presence?

Marketing mix. This portion of the plan expands on the information collected about customers, competitors, and capabilities. Based on this information, the target market is clarified.

Pricing is determined not simply by the labor and materials used in producing the product. The price also includes burden costs such as salary and benefits, rent, legal fees, business licensing, insurance, shipping and handling, tooling and equipment, communications, advertising, depreciation, and other fixed and variable costs. There is also a psychological aspect to pricing. Some customers seek bargains, and at other times they insist on high priced name brands. Knowing the market helps determine the price.

Distribution and promotion refers to where and how customers get the product, and the methods used to attract customers (i.e. networking, advertising, sales, marketing). Distribution planning includes determining the boundaries of the sales territory, reserving shelf space, form of delivery, and the planned approach for reaching the customer. Promotion refers to the method used to advertise and market the business and its goods or services.

Operations concerns the production of the product or service and using the appropriate processes and support strategies. Listing the tools and equipment necessary for production is an essential component here.

Contingency plans are also necessary in the Operations section. If a supplier is unable to deliver, alternative suppliers should be known. If the business is seasonal, perhaps a tourist related service, a plan for bad weather should be outlined so that the business does not falter.

The financial plan is perhaps the most critically developed and managed portion of the plan. Here the Benefits Analysis is merged with available funding, and the long term (two to five years, generally) estimation of income and expenses. Typically the business develops an operating budget, a cash flow projection, a break-even analysis that illustrates when sales income exceeds expenses, and a PASS if applicable.

> Too often in the past, employment development hinged on rapid-fire discernment of an individual's interests and then divining a few job ideas.

Conclusion

This brief article is meant to offer small business ownership as another option for transition-age youth. Waiting until graduation to start a small enterprise is neither necessary nor advised. Many adolescents babysit, wash cars, or have interests that can translate into good after-school, weekend, and summer businesses. Waiting until graduation to plan a career results in poverty and isolation for many graduates. With a little planning, family support, and school/community resources, small business creates opportunity when none may have appeared obvious.

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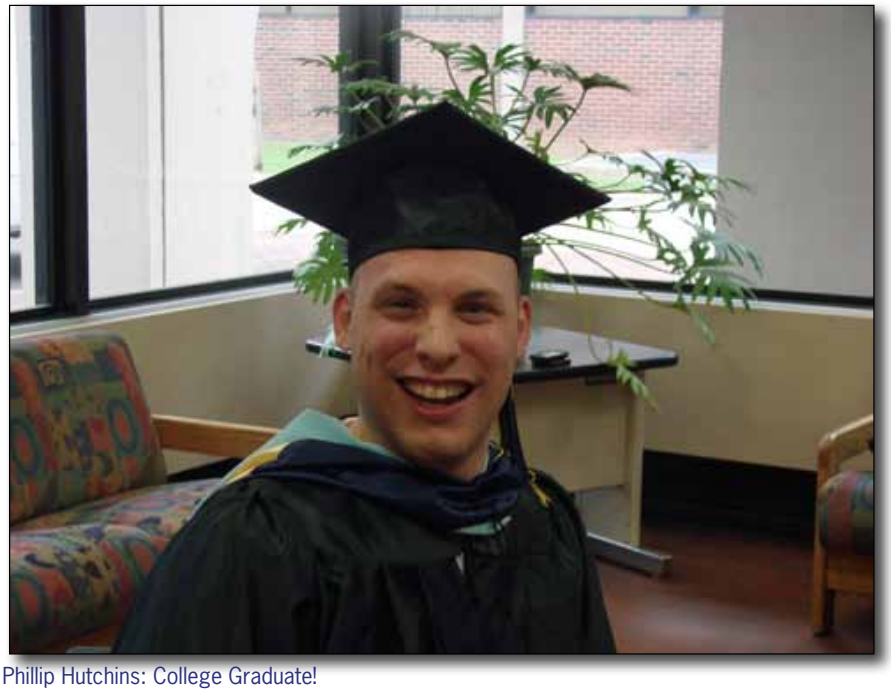
Getting to Work: How a College Program Promotes Career Development and Self-Determination

Rick Blumberg, Phil Hutchins, Rebecca Daley, and Jerry G. Petroff

The Career and Community Studies (CCS) program at the College of New Jersey has completed its sixth year of supporting students with intellectual and developmental disabilities in a four-year, university-based certificate program. The second author of this article is a recent graduate. In this article, we will briefly describe the CCS program, paying particular attention to its career development components. Our intent is to discuss how a postsecondary education program may enhance the self-determination of young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities by facilitating supportive peer mentor relationships and providing person-centered career development activities and supports.

The CCS program was designed to approximate our typical undergraduate programs. From the beginning, we decided that the program would be grounded in a curriculum of liberal learning. We believe, based on our many years of teaching undergraduate students, that liberal learning is an important influence in the development of all young people. It was our intent to develop a curriculum that reflected a "philosophy of education that empowers individuals with broad knowledge and transferable skills, and a strong sense of value, ethics, and civic engagement" (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2006). Students participating in the CCS program take a series of core courses within the program, and then choose from the typical undergraduate offerings courses that reflect their interests and post-college goals.



Phillip Hutchins: College Graduate!

> We believe that liberal learning is an important influence in the development of all young people.

The CCS program relies upon peer mentors to facilitate academic, social, and vocational supports. It has been suggested that when students receive instruction from peers, they demonstrate improved acquisition of academic and social skills (Prater, Bruhl & Serna, 1998). Peer mentor relationships provide both instrumental and emotional support. Instrumental support involves information about how to do something as well as assistance in doing a task. Emotional support may include modeling, teaching problem solving strategies, and suggesting ways to express and manage difficult feelings (Hagner, 2000; Kram & Isabella, 1985).

The first year of a student's participation in the CCS program involves a series of transition assessments that help us to assist students in planning their college program and envisioning post-college goals. We discovered early in the development of the program that most incoming freshman had very little knowledge of their disability, had engaged in few career development experiences while in high school, and as a result had very limited information upon which to develop meaningful goals for their post-college adult lives.

continued on page 18

Getting to Work...
continued from page 17

During the freshman year, all students participate in a person-centered planning process, Personal Futures Planning, to develop a holistic vision for their college program. Because our students entered college with limited career awareness and few meaningful vocational experiences, we decided to adopt the career development stage framework articulated by Brolin (1997) in designing the career coursework and related experiences. These stages include career awareness, career exploration, career preparation, and career assimilation.

> A postsecondary education program enhances self-determination by facilitating peer mentor relationships and providing person-centered career development activities and supports.

We approach Career Awareness during freshman year through self-assessment and knowledge development activities. Through Career Exploration coursework, students are exposed to content that addresses: why people work and the benefits of employment; the types of careers people engage in; and work expectations including education, training, and skill requirements. Through self-assessments, students begin to identify their abilities, interests, and preferences.

Career exploration begins in the student's sophomore year with job shadowing, followed by a series of brief on-campus work experiences in occupational clusters, including administrative/office, retail, information technology, hospitality/recreation, and food service. Students choose experiences within these clusters based upon their individual interests and preferences. The work experiences are task analyzed, so that job coaching is effectively provided by peer mentors and students receive feedback on their performance/progress. It should be noted that these on-campus work experiences mirror current student employment opportunities for typically admitted undergraduate students.

Career Preparation is conducted during the junior year with 1 to 2 on-campus work experiences in jobs that reflect the student's emerging career goals and represent a good match between the individual's abilities, skills, and lifestyle preferences. Career coursework focuses on resume development, interview skills, and an exploration of available community based internships/employment opportunities.

Career Assimilation is accomplished in the student's senior year through an intensive (12-15 hrs per week) internship or paid employment experience. Workplace support is provided by peer-mentors who assist students in learning and performing work responsibilities. Data is collected by mentors and reviewed with students to assist them to specifically evaluate their performance on the job and the match between their individual preferences, work requirements, and the work environment.

> I knew for me to reach my goal I had to be the one that wanted to work hard.

We believe that a person-centered, peer-supported college program that provides choices among a broad variety of learning opportunities may enhance the development of self-determination and important career related skills. Phil Hutchins recently graduated from the Career and Community Studies Program at the College of New Jersey. His story describes how he thought and felt about his college experiences, his goals, and the outcomes he achieved.

Phil's Story

My name is Phillip Hutchins and I am 27 years old. I was born with Cerebral Palsy. I currently live in Milford, New Jersey with my loving parents. My story will show how much they played a role in how I became the self-determined person I am today. I just graduated from the College of New Jersey after completing the Career and

Phil Hutchins and the 2010 College of New Jersey Career and Community Studies Program Graduating Class.

Community Studies Program. As I tell my story you will know what college did for me.

In my mind, self-determination has to start with you believing in yourself. You have to set your own goals and you have to be the one that wants to achieve the goal you set for yourself. When I was a little boy, my parents tried to tell me that I had to do things to help me get better from the Cerebral Palsy. I did not want to do them at all. Then one day the light went on for me. I was going to graduate high school and because of that I made a goal for myself. That goal was that I wanted to walk without my walker to get my diploma. That is where self-determination kicked in for me because I knew for me to reach my goal I had to be the one that wanted to work hard and it could not be my parents telling me to do it-it had to be me. The best thing is I worked hard and I did walk without my walker to get my diploma.

The reason I mention that story first is because that self-determination helped me when I started college. My first goal in college was to do well in the classroom. I knew if I did, it would help me with my dream job. In my four years of college I believe I achieved that goal. Being in college has motivated me to do even more with my life.

> If you have self-determination it gets you a long way in life.

In college I decided to make my career path a two-part career and being in college has helped me with both parts. The first job that I want is to be a motivational speaker because I want to go around the world and tell people that as long as they believe in themselves they will achieve any goal they want.

College helped me with both parts of my career path. For motivational speaking, I made business cards and brochures to hand out. They helped me make letters to send out to schools, and helped me set up speaking engagements. My goal when I am not speaking is to work in an office setting and how college helped me is they put me in an office every semester as an internship. I worked at the TCNJ Admissions Office on campus for a whole year. I also worked at the Special Olympics office for one summer. I worked at the Cancer Society office for one semester. The last job I had was at the NJ State Disability Services office that I just ended.

After all the internships I have had the best advice I can give you so you can get a job and keep it is you need to speak up when you need something. The big thing is in any job you get you need to meet a few co-workers that you can trust.

A big part of the CCS program was the mentors we had in the program. They were a big help to me when it came to the classroom work because they would meet me in the labs and help me with all my homework that needed to get done. They were also a big help to me when it came to my public speaking career because they were the ones that helped me get everything done for my speaking career.

I want to leave you with a few final thoughts. As you can see, if you have self-determination it gets you a long way in life. I know college may not be for everyone, but if you decide to go to college it can help you in so many ways with your career path. The last thing I want to leave you with is that if you remember early in this article I said that my parents were the ones that had to push me to do the best I can and now that I have achieved a lot of goals in my life I have them to thank. The reason I say this is because if there is someone in your life that loves you and they are trying to give you advice to reach your goals that you want in life, just know they are doing it out of love. Again though, remember that the number one way that you will reach any goal you want in life is if you believe in yourself first.

Phil is very humble in speaking about his many accomplishments while in college. As a sophomore, Phil was invited to become a Bonner Scholar. The Bonner Society conducts a variety of significant community service learning activities each academic year. Phil has conducted many successful speaking engagements for school districts, professional conferences, and the "Dare to Dream" conference series sponsored by the New Jersey Department of Education.

We are continually evaluating and seeking to improve our college program. Our priority is to support the dreams and aspirations of our students. We believe that all young people require support in the transition to adult roles and responsibilities. College programs provide another choice for young adults with Intellectual Disabilities and their families to consider as they plan for transition and develop a vision for meaningful careers, interdependent living, and satisfying lifestyles and relationships.

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Phil Hutchins is a recent graduate of the Career and Community Studies Program at the College of New Jersey and is a motivational speaker on topics of self-determination and self-advocacy.

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Self-Determination and Technology as a Road to Employment

Steven E. Stock and Daniel K. Davies

For many of us, our work represents a large part of who we are. It is, or can be, a significant aspect of our lives in terms of promoting self-esteem, a sense of accomplishment, personal relationships, economic opportunity, and overall quality of life. Given these potentially high stakes, research has demonstrated the importance of applying the concepts of self-determination in the employment process for providing improved outcomes for those of us with developmental disabilities. Specifically, "research shows individuals with high self-determination are: twice as likely to be employed as those with low levels of self-determination, more likely to earn higher salary, and more likely to gain job benefits (e.g., vacation, sick leave, and insurance)" (Wehmeyer & Schwartz, 1997).

This article briefly explores examples of how assistive technologies that support tenets of self-determination can be of help along the road to employment. It has been pointed out that "…technology provides a promising means to enable people with [intellectual] and other developmental disabilities to become, in essence, their own support…" (Davies, Stock & Wehmeyer, 2002). Thus, the very nature of many assistive technologies involves the promotion and practice of self-determination. Assistive technologies can be useful to support self-determination on a number of activities in the employment arena, including assessment, applying and interviewing, during on-the-job training, and beyond. Information about specific systems mentioned can be found at http://www.ablelinktech.com.

Assessment

Technologies are available for use early on in the employment process to help people learn about and choose potential jobs or careers. These may include the comprehensive *Magellan* career assessment program; the language free, video based *Envision Your Career* system; or *Job Quest*, a forced choice, software based career interest inventory. Systems of this type are designed to increase participation and self-determination in the process of evaluating and choosing among career options, as opposed to other approaches that are more administrator-directed. A vivid example of the power of the self-determined technology approach was observed during a research study conducted on the *Job Quest* system (Stock, Davies, Wehmeyer & Secor, 2003). A transition-age student who did not talk completed the *Job Quest* assessment independently by viewing video clips of job tasks being performed and then choosing his favorites. Automatically generated results showed that the student's greatest interest was in office work. Upon viewing the results, the student's teacher literally slapped her forehead while exclaiming, "Office work, I should have thought of that! For the past four years he has gone to his mother's office after school every day for two hours while he waits for her to get out of work, but I never thought of a work placement there. Whenever I administered an interest inventory before he just agreed with everything." This research also validated the self-directed interface of the tool, with an average of just over one prompt needed per student to complete the assessment.

Smartphones and handheld devices can provide support for greater independence and community inclusion.

Resume Development

Along with career selection, self-determination and technology can also be used to enhance resume development. The concept of a "visual resume" is gaining in popularity as a way to stand out from the crowd. Visual resumes are usually done to supplement a traditional resume and are promoted as a way to allow the prospective employer to get to know the applicant

better on a personal level. They can be created as a short video or as a PowerPoint file, the latter of which for instance would allow a prospective employee to demonstrate self-direction by selecting the pictures and audio commentary that he or she feels best exemplifies desired strengths and personality traits. Visual resumes can be saved using PowerPoint's Slide Show settings and then distributed along with traditional resumes via email attachments, printouts, or even common inexpensive flash drives.

Communication

Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) systems are also a form of technology that can support self-determination in virtually all stages on the road to employment. Such systems provide the opportunity for job seekers to speak for themselves during application, interview, training, and co-worker socialization processes, as well as during day-to-day job performance. When considering AAC devices, consider the situational communication demands (e.g., difficulty of AAC use in very loud work environments or high frequency of unpredictable communication needs) and training, preparation, and maintenance issues for both the user and co-workers.

Transportation

Transportation remains an area that can be a barrier to community based employment. Common transportation supports—such as staff transportation via an agency vehicle or use of paratransit services—can also be limited in terms of availability, and tend to be limited in terms of promoting opportunities for self-determination. However, emerging Global Positioning System (GPS) technologies have shown promise as an additional resource in the transportation toolbox. Some newer mainstream GPS devices, such as the Garmin *Nuvi*, can provide the ability to "remember" frequently taken routes and begin providing audio prompts once a familiar route is detected. While the turn-by-turn directions would not be of use to public transit riders, these systems may benefit users by informing them when they have reached their destination. Some newer units may also provide support for the much slower speeds involved in foot travel, but this would need to be confirmed with respective product manufacturers.

Even with these advances, the interfaces for programming and using mainstream GPS units can be challenging. While specialized GPS navigation support hardware has for some time been available for users with significant vision impairments (*StreetTalk, Sendero, Trekker, Mobile Geo*), a research-based GPS system (Davies, Stock, Holloway & Wehmeyer, 2010) called *WayFinder* has recently been released that is designed specifically for use on public transit systems and for foot navigation. This system, which operates on GPS-enabled smart phone devices, allows for specific routes with personalized directions to be programmed into the system so that they can be played back by an end user while traveling. For instance, while traveling on a city bus route that has been programmed into the system, *WayFinder* provides travel support using custom audio prompts (e.g., "this is not your stop, John; please stay on the bus," or "the next bus stop is where you get off for work; it is time to ring the bell now") and digital picture cues (e.g., a picture of the local bowling alley along with an audio cue that, "you are now going near the bowling alley, so you are about half way to work"). The *WayFinder* system also includes an option for tracking the location of the user in real time while traveling. In fact, a Google search for "personal tracking system" will produce a long list of products designed to allow personal location tracking as a resource for reassurance and personal safety during community travel. It is recommended, however, that use of any of these GPS devices be preceded by careful, individualized assessment, and training to assure that they are appropriate, useful, and safe supports for each potential user.

Using the Wayfinder Navigational device.

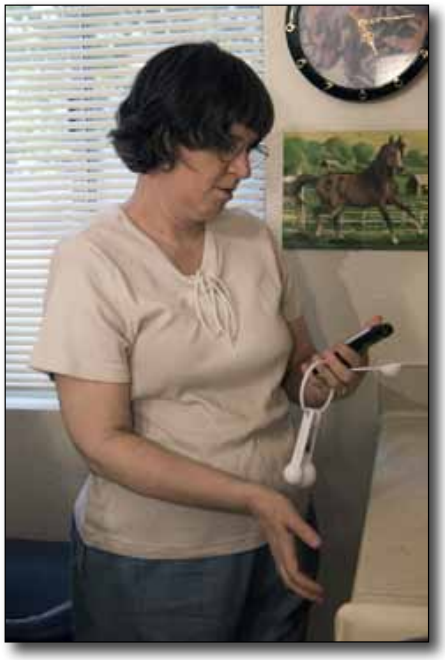
Assistive technologies can be useful to support self-determination on a number of activities in the employment arena.

continued on page 22

Technology...
continued from page 21

Job Training and Performance

A final area where technologies may be used to promote self-determination in employment is in on-the-job training and maintenance of job skills. Researchers have completed numerous research projects demonstrating the potential of video based training to support independent job performance. Similarly, a growing body of work has demonstrated the efficacy of step-by-step multimedia prompting technologies. These studies have demonstrated significant improvements in independence and self direction in a wide range of work and other activities. Various features and applications running on mainstream devices such as smart phones, voice recorders, and video iPods have been used in studies and in practice to support independent on-the-job task performance. Additionally, a variety of products are available that are specifically designed to provide customized step-by-step instructions on task performance using auditory and/or visual prompts. For example, the *StepPad* is a very affordable device that provides a total of 72 seconds of recording time for creating step-by-step audio cues that can support self-directed task performance. *iPrompt* is a picture and audio based prompting software system designed for use on the iPad. Other titles of dedicated prompting software/hardware systems include *PEAT, The Jogger, Pocket Endeavor*, and *Visual Assistant*, each with their own set of features and options. An example of the potential of these systems to promote independence and self-determination in the work setting is portrayed in a vignette that occurred during an efficacy study on a prototype version of the *Visual Assistant* system (Davies, Stock & Wehmeyer, 2002). A transition-age student had been placed in a job at a local Target store, where she had a total of eight tasks she had to perform daily in the store's warehouse. Transition job coaches reported that the young woman was in danger of losing her job. Through training she had learned how to correctly perform each of the eight tasks, but was having difficulties remembering to do all eight tasks. So job coaches used the prompting system to create step-by-step task instructions to remind the student to perform each of the required work tasks. After using the system for three weeks, a performance review was held with the student's work supervisor and transition staff. At the performance review meeting, the student was able to recite word for word each of the eight task instructions that had been entered into the prompting system. Her work performance improved enough as a result of using the system to remember job tasks that instead of losing her job, the meeting resulted in the young woman receiving a raise!



Using a visual prompting system to cook.

Another category of prompting technologies involves time-based prompting. Again, many mainstream tools are available that can play audio reminders at scheduled times to cue people about appointments, meetings, daily work schedules, and other time-based events. Increasingly, these PDA and smart phone devices are replacing the once-ubiquitous paper based versions of daily planners. Like many of the systems described previously, users with special needs may need assistance in setting up the scheduled prompts in these systems but will then be able to use the technology to support independent time management on the job. Other individuals may need more simplified multimedia scheduling systems, such as the *VoiceCue, Picture Planner*, or *Schedule Assistant*.

In summary, while the field of cognitive support technologies is largely still in its research stage, there is a growing body of evidence that points towards its potential to support self-determination in important life areas such as employment. While no single class of interventions or support strategies will ever be able to meet all needs related to opportunities for self direction in the pursuit of successful employment, these and other cognitive support technologies represent a growing place in the collective supports toolbox.

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The Alliance for Full Participation and the Influence of Self-Determination

Karen Flippo

"The Alliance for Full Participation is important because it is an organization trying to show to society that this country is not just for a certain group of people. Everyone belongs, no matter who you are or what the type of supports you need and want."

~ Liz Weintraub

The Alliance for Full Participation (AFP) is a formal partnership of 14 leading developmental disabilities organizations with a common vision—to create a better and more fulfilling quality of life for people with developmental disabilities. Formally established in 2004, the Alliance engages in a series of policy and practice activities to further inclusion across our towns and cities. Since the time of its formation, the leaders, believing in "nothing about us, without us," have ensured that people with developmental disabilities are at the core of all of the AFP work, serving as governing members of state teams, working on state and local policy development, and engaging in state team activities. As members of the Board of Directors, self-advocates are leading Board meetings, are involved in financial management and budgeting decisions, speak on AFP webinars, and help establish the direction of the national work. Currently, Julie Petty, a self-advocate, serves as the Vice President of the AFP Board of Directors and 3 additional self-advocates are being proposed for election to the Board.

While some may associate the AFP with its most heralded event thus far, the 2005 National Summit and the upcoming 2.0 Summit to be held in November 2011 in Washington DC at the Gaylord National Harbor, the AFP is in reality a loose network of coalitions, collaborations, and state teams that are aligned under the AFP mission: "To dream, plan, work, mobilize, and organize with people with developmental disabilities, their families, and supporting communities and organizations to make the promise of inclusion, integration, productivity, independence, and quality of life a reality in policy and practice."

The 2005 Alliance for Full Participation National Summit was a rousing success!

The AFP and Employment

Coming off their successful 2005 National Summit, the AFP Board of Directors discussed a new course of action in late 2006. Noting that the unemployment rate of individuals with disabilities remained alarmingly high, particularly for those with intellectual disabilities, the Board decided to set a new course of action aimed to improving employment. The Board recognized that changes in the numbers and quality of employment outcomes takes place in local communities, thereby requiring attention to building and supporting local coalitions. Although state teams were involved in the 2005 Alliance work, their primary activity was on sending individuals to the National Summit. With the new initiative, time and effort would be needed to build teams and support their employment advocacy prior to the next Summit. The

continued on page 24

The Alliance...
continued from page 23

intention is to use the next national event for showcasing the achievements of individual state teams, highlight exemplary practices and policies such as Employment First, and encourage networking and sharing of successes and challenges.

With these broad goals in mind, the Board established its definition of employment, led by self-advocate representatives. The AFP definition of employment is clear and based on the value that individuals, regardless of the severity and complexity of their disability, have the right to work along with others in the general workforce. This definition was unanimously approved by the AFP Board of Directors and is guided by the principles of self-determination.

AFP's Definition of Employment

"Individuals with developmental disabilities want to work in integrated settings along with their non-disabled colleagues. They want to be afforded the same wages, benefits, and opportunities to advance in their careers, and contribute to society, and move out of poverty. To obtain equal access to employment, education must make transition from school to work a priority rather than an add-on, and adult service providers must work to remove barriers and support individuals in real jobs for real pay."

- Education settings will assist in raising employment expectations by providing information, supports, and job experiences to all students.
- In all instances the individual will be the focus of the employment process. Discovering interests, experiences, and skills are important facets of the job search. Customization, choice, and individualized and natural supports help ensure job satisfaction and retention. Career development will be a consideration throughout the job process.
- Employment will be in regular, competitive, and inclusive employment settings. Frequent and ongoing interactions and the development of relationships are expected. Compensation will be at least minimum wage, up to the prevailing wage for the work performed. Wages and benefits will be comparable to coworkers performing similar tasks.

Measurement for Results

AFP not only wants to talk about employment it wants to do something about it. To this end, the AFP needed to establish numerical goals. In 2007, just prior to the Great Recession, the employment rate for individuals with developmental disabilities was at 22%. The AFP issued its national challenge to double the rate to 44% by 2015. Understanding that employment is a community responsibility, the AFP announced the new campaign with the tag line, "Real Jobs – It's Everybody's Business."

States use a variety of data sources to benchmark and track the movement of individuals in integrated and segregated settings and the allocations that go along with the services and supports. Without a large research staff or resources to collect and analyze data, the AFP reached out to its Professional Advisory Council to help sort out how it could measure the AFP challenge. This Council, consisting of 10 expert researchers and practitioners, devised a Scorecard tool to help state teams establish a numerical baseline (e.g., number of individuals with developmental disabilities currently in integrated employment) and rate seven indicators that correspond to exemplary employment and policy practices within the state. These are:

1. having measurable annual performance goals with clear benchmarks with respect to expanding the number of individuals in competitive integrated employment as a percentage of people served in day services
2. having an Employment First policy
3. collecting and publishing data on employment outcomes, collected on a regular basis and shared in summary form with stakeholders
4. developing strategies for achieving employment outcomes that are managed at multiple levels (state, county/region and local levels)
5. supporting and encouraging innovation in employment
6. having resources for transition-age students and individuals waiting for services and their families to encourage them to choose employment over other service options
7. advancing economic self-sufficiency activities such as asset development.

With the definition, the Scorecard, and the challenge established, the work shifted to marketing the AFP message and recruiting and organizing state teams. AFP recognized that numerous

The AFP Summit will include Exhibits.

coalitions, initiatives, and organizations are involved in promoting employment and it did not want to duplicate existing efforts of these groups. For this reason, the AFP encouraged individuals and organizations in states to join with other existing coalitions such as APSE chapters, self-advocacy organizations, Medicaid Infrastructure Grant projects, DD Networks, and State Employment Leadership Networks to promote the employment challenge of doubling the employment rate of individuals with intellectual disabilities by 2015.

State Teams

Currently, 48 state teams are in various stages of operation. Several of them have been meeting continuously since 2005. Others began organizing once the employment challenge was announced. AFP requires that all state teams encourage active involvement of

State teams play important roles at the AFP Summit.

self-advocates. As a result, several state teams are led or co-led by self-advocates and all include self-advocates as members. Many state teams use committee structures to accomplish their work and self-advocates are serving as committee chairs as well. At the national and local level, the AFP recognizes the importance of providing supports, when needed, to self-advocates in fulfilling their leadership responsibilities. The employment story is their story and self-advocates must be seen as leading this effort in their Statehouses, City Halls, and Chambers of Commerce.

State team priorities vary, as demonstrated by their Scorecards, which are posted on the Alliance for Full Participation web site, www.allianceforfullparticipation.org. The majority of state teams are working on drafting or implementing Employment First policies and working with state agency leaders, legislative staff, and their Governors' offices to make this happen. One state team, through their self-advocate leader, successfully advocated for a state resolution endorsing the AFP employment challenge. In addition, substantial effort is taking place to improve transition practices through Project Search demonstrations, Memoranda of Understanding between Departments of Rehabilitation and the Department of Education, and educating students and families about inclusive postsecondary options. The Indiana state team is using a public relations campaign titled, "100 Jobs," and posting photos and vignettes on the AFP website of individuals who are successfully employed, hoping to attract the attention of employers about the capacities of individuals with intellectual disabilities. Every team's composition, goals, and activities are different and correspond to the state's political, social, and economic environment and its affects upon employment of individuals with intellectual disabilities. However, even with the recession, not one state team ceased operating nor was their advocacy work diminished. The goal is too important. "If not now, when? If not us, who?"

AFP is now nearing the midpoint of the employment challenge. The November Summit is intended to motivate and inspire the participants who understand that changes in employment practices must happen immediately. With Medicaid cuts looming, and a slow economic recovery predicated, people with intellectual disabilities, their families, and allies, need to exercise their collective strength in calling for redirection of funding and other resources to support inclusive employment. In the words of AFP member Eric Treat, "People with disabilities are not asking for a handout. We are asking for the chance to prove ourselves. We want to step up to the plate. Having a job makes us feel like a part of the community. Being a tax payer makes us feel like real citizens."

The Gaylord National, site of the 2011 AFP Su mmit.

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ALLIANCE FOR FULL PARTICIPATION
REAL JOBS—IT'S EVERYONE'S BUSINESS

Girls at Work: Self-Directed Customized Employment Planning

Wendy Parent & Shea Tanis

The importance of self-determination for achieving improved post-school outcomes has been clearly documented. Studies show that youth with disabilities who demonstrate greater self-determination experience improved employment outcomes including number of hours, wages, benefits, and retention than their peers who are considered to be less self-determined (Wehmeyer et al., 2011). For young women with disabilities, the struggles for employment after leaving high school can be even more difficult as the impact of gender- and disability-related stereotypes influence opportunities to gain self-determination and vocational opportunities. Even before young women with disabilities hit the job market, they have already been disproportionately placed in more segregated and less academic settings with fewer vocational courses while in special education. As a result, the outcomes for these women is substantially poorer than for their male counterparts; employment rates for women with disabilities are reported to be 20 to 30 percent lower than for women without disabilities or men with or without disabilities (Balcazar, 2008; Doren & Benz, 2001; O'Day & Foley, 2008). In addition, transition planning often falls short of preparing these young women to leave school and achieve better employment outcomes. A lack of role models and mentors, different goals for transition among participants, a lack of match between aspirations and training, low expectations and high fears, and low self-perception have been cited as important factors unique to this population that need to be considered during the transition planning process (Hogansen, Gil-Kashiwabara, Geenen, Powers, & Powers, 2008).

Girls at Work was designed to address this need by offering a computerized, student driven, transition-oriented curriculum to assist with preparing young women to be actively involved in planning their transition and directing their future employment paths. Developed with on-going input from young women with disabilities and school personnel, Girls at Work engages students to navigate through a variety of activities and resources that enable them to identify their interests and passions, explore employment options, lead their employment team meetings, and develop an action plan leading to their desired employment goal. The web-based curriculum does this through the integration of methods and strategies related to self-determination, gender awareness, and supported and customized employment (Wehmeyer, Parent, Lattimore, Obremski, Poston, & Rousso, 2009). Girls at Work provides an accessible and motivating format for completing an eight step goal-oriented problem solving process focusing on postsecondary education or employment. For each step, the following questions are addressed:

Jenny operates her own business as an artist.

Step 1: What are my interests and passions that might lead me to a job or career that I enjoy?
Step 2: What do I know about the job or career that I am interested in now?
Step 3: What are some job opportunities that I can explore?
Step 4: What is my road map to explore potential jobs?
Step 5: What is my employment niche or college goal?
Step 6: What customized employment options will get me where I want to be?
Step 7: What supports are available to overcome potential barriers to achieving my goal?
Step 8: What is my action plan to achieve my goal?

The steps are achieved through completion of an individualized combination of five different elements embedded within each step including: a) user's guides – graphic organizers of tasks to be completed, b) tools for activities – activity forms and resources for the students to download, c) employment links – related to videos, web sites, and corresponding worksheets, d) profiles – profiles and interviews with women working in non-traditional careers, and e) general resources and supports - additional resources that may aid in the completion of the activities. A consistent theme throughout the course is the learning and application of problem solving techniques involving a repetitive, easy-to-remember process called "Think, Plan, Do, and Review."

Preliminary findings from multiple pilot testing phases has yielded promising results. Ninety young women with developmental disabilities who were enrolled in 9th through 12th grade and 18 to 21 programs in 23 high schools around Kansas participated in curriculum testing during the five years of the project. Of the 54 young women with developmental disabilities who graduated and whose post-school outcome was known, 44 or 81% were employed or enrolled in postsecondary programs while the remaining 10 were pursuing

employment (4), attending a sheltered workshop or mental health day program (4), or unemployed (2). Results indicate significant changes in quality of life and opportunities for self- determination as reported by the young women with disabilities, and in choice and decision-making and goal planning by their teachers following participation in Girls at Work. Teaching practices were reported to significantly change in the areas of helping students explore vocational interests, reviewing and modifying vocational tests for gender bias, and maintaining zero tolerance for sexual harassment by school personnel who participated in the project. Of the 32 young women who completed satisfaction ratings, the majority of them reported that they liked the Girls at Work course and learned a lot, particularly in the areas of learning about themselves and deciding what they wanted to do.

What does the future hold? Plans to conduct a field test of the final Girls at Work curriculum are in place for the 2011/2012 school year in multiple classrooms in Kansas. In addition, a second project is being implemented that is designed to expand Girls at Work to be gender neutral and cognitively accessible while maintaining the theoretical foundation of self-determination, gender awareness, and supported and customized employment. Participants involved in the development and pilot testing of Girls at Work continue to provide feedback and updates, including school personnel using the curriculum and young women communicating their accomplishments through Facebook.

Meet Jenny – a Girls at Work participant, artist, high school graduate, and small business owner. While in school, Jenny, her mother, and teacher explored employment around her "happy" art and worked with vocational rehabilitation, her case manager, and the Small Business Development Center to initiate her business while in school with paraprofessional support and training and expanded upon after graduation with job coach assistance. Jenny's art can now be found on cards, t-shirts, magnets, calendars, hats, coffee cups, notes, bags, and on canvas. She is visible on her website (http://www.jennyludesigns.com) and at professional conferences and local arts and craft fairs boasting sales

Jenny sells her artwork on cards, t-shirts, magnets, calendars, hats and more through her website and at conferences.

nationally and internationally. Jenny has become a role model for other young women as a guest speaker and teacher at Girls at Work events. She is reaching out to help others interested in starting their own business and has expanded her presentations to school and adult service personnel so that they can become enlightened and offer support to a larger network of youth regarding employment and small business ownership. Her mom states, "Girls at Work is the perfect tool for parents to take their children farther than they thought possible."

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Family Influence on Self-Determination and Employment

Judith Gross, Grace Francis, & Wendy Parent

Families play an important role in fostering self-determination, a contributing factor to achieving meaningful and lasting employment for their sons and daughters who have a disability (Wolfe & Hall, 2011). This article describes (a) the key to competitive employment outcomes for persons with disabilities, (b) how to bridge the gap between "real" and "ideal" employment expectations, and (c) strategies for encouraging self-determination skills in young adults that lead to successful employment.

Key to Competitive Employment Outcomes

High expectations are essential for laying a foundation that drives attitudes, services, and supports leading to integrated competitive employment outcomes for youth with disabilities as they transition from school to work. It is important for family members to maintain the expectation that their son or daughter can and will work. Family expectations play an important role in how youth perceive their own abilities and job prospects and can negatively or positively influence their career choices and employment outcomes (Lindstrom, Doren, Metheny, Johnson, and Zane, 2007). Similarly, the same high expectation of employment following school needs to be held by youth with disabilities and families are a major influence on the development of this belief. For instance, if family members expect their son or daughter to work and contribute to the home, then they will come to hold this expectation for themselves (Schunk & Meece, 2005). Assigning household chores is useful for youth to build a sense of responsibility and self-efficacy regarding their ability to work. In addition, discussions regarding what their son or daughter would like to do after graduating from high school and turning those dreams into employment goals that guide the education and transition process can have a powerful impact on the outcomes that are achieved (Lindstrom et al., 2007).

Family expectations are associated not only with the likelihood of gaining employment after graduation, but also with the type of employment their son or daughter will pursue and obtain. Kraemer and Blacher (2001) reported that the majority of parents (63.5%) with children who experience intellectual and developmental disabilities desired employment for their children, and *ideally*, 71.2% of parents wanted their child's employment to be in an independent or supported work environment. However, when asked about their *realistic* employment expectations, 59.6% of parents anticipated that their children would likely work in a segregated environment, such as a day activity center or sheltered workshop. All too often a lack of services and supports and professional attitudes that individuals can't work influences families to settle for less than their high expectations for integrated competitive employment and as a result, their son or daughter leaves school only to attend a sheltered workshop or day program.

> "We understand that we must be the lead in her plan and not just rely on school information. We must also be intentional in helping her to learn to advocate for herself."

A Family Emplyment Awareness Training meeting.

Bridging the Gap Between "Real" and "Ideal" Expectations

In Kansas, Family Employment Awareness Training (FEAT) is helping families and young adults with disabilities turn their ideal expectations into a reality. FEAT was created through a partnership among the Beach Center on Disability at the University of Kansas, Kansas Health Policy Authority (Kansas state Medicaid agency), and Families Together, Inc. (Kansas Parent Training and Information Center) with the purpose of increasing the expectations and awareness of families and individuals with disabilities regarding the possibilities for employment and the knowledge and advocacy skills to obtain meaningful and satisfying work in their community.

FEAT is a two-day training that shares examples of successful integrated competitive employment for individuals with disabilities along with information on the Kansas employment–related service and support resources. Designed for family members and any of the young adult's circle of support team, trainings include content presentations,

brainstorming activities, information gathering and networking with local area community representatives, as well as a youth session that runs parallel with guest speakers and a focus on employment-related topics of interest. The culmination is the development of a plan for employment that includes next steps and helpful resources to accomplish those steps. An additional component is follow-up technical assistance as needed to assist families and their son or daughter with implementing those plans and requesting the services and supports needed for permanent integrated competitive employment outcomes.

Anonymous employment perception surveys are administered before and after the training. Pre-FEAT perception surveys consistently held a theme of low expectations, including general discouragement for post-school employment possibilities and outcomes. Participants expressed concerns regarding employment opportunities for individuals that required extensive supports, including individuals with developmental disabilities or mental health challenges. Participants also reported perceptions of limited meaningful employment opportunities that would support a living wage for their son or daughter.

In contrast, post-FEAT employment perception surveys reported markedly higher expectations, including an overwhelmingly positive outlook on post-school employment for persons with disabilities. One encouraged participant noted that they learned about existing supports that lead to meaningful employment and how to advocate for them. Another family member also mentioned the importance of advocating for her child, and discussed plans to teach her child to self-advocate. Yet another parent said that FEAT increased their expectations of their son's capabilities and prompted them to think creatively for future career possibilities for him.

Person-Centered planning techniques are important to the FEAT process.

Strategies for Encouraging Self-Determination Skills

Families are influential in promoting self-determination skills that lead to integrated competitive employment. Several strategies can assist them with achieving this goal. First, person centered planning techniques (e.g. MAPS, PATH, GAP) are useful to identify individual interests, strengths, and support needs through the bringing together of people invested in their son or daughter's future who leads and/or actively participates in their own meeting. Second, the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) provides a means for establishing a post-school employment goal and the annual steps for conducting critical activities for accomplishing it. Third, career exploration, job shadowing, and work experiences offer opportunities for youth to learn about jobs and interests to be able to make choices and decisions contributing to the transition and employment process.

> "[I have] much more of a brighter outlook. When I first came here, I thought I had exhausted all the avenues available, but now have a much wider base to draw support from."

Family members that maintain high employment expectations and promote self-determination skills can improve employment outcomes for their son or daughter. Training programs such as FEAT can inform families about the employment opportunities and resources that are possible and available for young adults with disabilities. In addition, families can build their network of support and information sources to assist them with navigating the systems as they put their plan in action to enable their son or daughter to obtain employment upon graduation from high school.

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Self-Determination in the Employment First Movement

Laura A. Owens

Self-determined behavior is defined as "...a combination of skills, knowledge, and beliefs that enable a person to engage in goal-directed, self-regulated, autonomous behavior. An understanding of one's strengths and limitations, together with a belief of oneself as capable and effective are essential to self-determination" (Field, Martin, Miller, Ward, & Wehmeyer, 1998, p. 2). Self-determined individuals "…know how to choose – they know what they want and how to get it. From an awareness of personal needs, self-determined individuals choose goals, then doggedly pursue them. This involves asserting an individual's presence, making his/her needs known, evaluating the process toward meeting goals, adjusting performance, and creating unique approaches to solve problems." (Martin & Marshal,1995, p. 147). Simply put, self-determination is acting upon your life rather than being acted upon. It is critical that young adults with disabilities act upon their life during and after high school in order to lead successful, self-determined lives.

Simply put, self-determination is acting upon your life rather than being acted upon.

There are two concepts that individuals with disabilities often hear with regard to self-determination and employment: readiness and realistic. The view that someone must be "ready" before they can work is a misnomer. Most employees hired are not ready for the job, but become ready by doing the job. Employers typically hire new employees with a probationary period of anywhere from three to six months. During this time new employees learn the job duties, including productivity and quality requirements, connect with co-workers, and learn the culture of the workplace. On occasion, employers may extend an employee's probationary period if the performance is close to expectation but not quite there. No one is "job ready" for any job. While someone may have the skills or experience to work, employees become ready by working. Self-determination is a critical component during a new employee's probationary period. This is the time for a new employee to ask questions, request accommodations, and develop relationships with co-workers who can provide support and guidance on the job. Mary, a young woman who has multiple disabilities and lived in an institution for many years, moved to a group home and wanted to work. Because of the severity of her disability and what were perceived by some as a lack of work related skills, people deemed her "not ready" to work. When Mary was given a chance to work in the community, her first job, she learned the skills needed for that particular business. With her job coach, Mary increased her productivity during her probationary period and learned duties beyond those she was hired to do. Mary completed her probationary period and has worked for the past eighteen years.

Realistic is another concept that can impact self-determination and employment. Self-determination means that individuals with disabilities determine their own employment goals, identify the supports they need, and choose who can help them reach their goals. It is important that the individual be an active participant and decision maker throughout all aspects of the employment process – from the job search to on the job career advancement. Dan, a young man with a physical and learning disability, had been employed over the years in multiple dish washing positions. Over a two year period, he had either been fired or quit six different jobs where the principle task was dish washing. When Dan was asked what he wanted to do, he stated that he wanted to talk on the phone and ask people questions (the employment consultant guessed that he was looking to be a telemarketer). Unfortunately, some of the people around him commented that it was not realistic for Dan to work as a telemarketer due to his physical and learning disability. Dan explained that he did not enjoy dish washing and wanted to try something different. He worked with an employment consultant who assisted him in finding a job with a local market research company. While Dan required some accommodations to perform some of the job duties (e.g., headset for the phone, voice input computer software, revised information sheet), he worked hard to be successful. He memorized the phone scripts and information, and practiced entering data on his computer on his own time. Dan completed his probationary period and was successful for fourteen years on his job until he

It is important that the individual be an active participant and decision maker throughout all aspects of the employment process.

moved to another state. Individuals who exhibit self-determination are typically more successful on their jobs and careers than those who do not.

Employment First defines employment as regular employment in the workforce .

Employment First policies and practices clearly align with the concept of self-determination. Employment First defines employment as regular employment in the workforce - on the payroll of a company (unless self-employed) at minimum- or prevailing-wages and benefits; where integration and interaction with co-workers and customers without disabilities is assured. Employment helps individuals with disbilities reach the "American Dream"--to lead self-determined lives. Employment provides individuals the resources to meet their basic human needs. People meet friends and spouses because of their employment. Most importantaly, employment is what adults are expected to do – regardless of disability.

Both Employment First and self-determination focus on raising expectations. The values of Employment First policies and practices incorporate self-determination. Employment First practices consider that all citizens, including individuals with significant disabilities, should have the right to enjoy their lives as much as other citizens do. The underlying meaning is that working is fundamental to adulthood, quality of life issues, and earning the means to exercise our freedoms and choices as citizens. Self-determination and Employment First practices address the poverty of disability – the lack of freedom experienced by many citizens with disabilities.

Employment First policies and practices require that we confront the enormous disparity between the dreams of individuals with disabilities and the expenditures on their behalf. It is clear that if individuals with disabilities remain dependent upon the current service system, they will continue to be poor with limited choices.

Self-determination and Employment First practices are about making choices and learning from those choices. As John O'Brien notes, choice is a slippery slope. Sometimes choices offered continue the patterns of segregation, disconnection, and dependency. True informed choice includes experiencing life – succeeding and failing – in an array of environments. From these experiences, individuals can begin communicating their beliefs and values to others as well as develop their skills and abilities.

All citizens, including individuals with significant disabilities, should have the right to enjoy their lives as much as other citizens do.

Employment First and self-determination are about opportunity – because skills and interests without opportunity are meaningless. For individuals with disabilities, integrated employment is a means for rehabilitation and to provide feedback to their experiences. For Employment First to progress, self-determination must be promoted. Individuals with disabilities must be provided with an array of opportunities to experience, communicate their preferences, interests, likes and dislikes, learn from their successes and failures, and maintain high expectations. The future of Employment First relies on self-determined individuals with disabilities.

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A National Gateway to Self-Determination

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