Age Appropriate Transition Assessment Guide

NSTTAC

Contents

What is transition assessment?

The Division on Career Development and Transition (DCDT) of the Council for Exceptional Children defines transition assessment as an "…ongoing process of collecting data on the individual's needs, preferences, and interests as they relate to the demands of current and future working, educational, living, and personal and social environments. Assessment data serve as the common thread in the transition process and form the basis for defining goals and services to be included in the Individualized Education Program (IEP)" (p. 70-71). Federal law requires "appropriate measurable postsecondary goals based upon age appropriate transition assessments related to training, education, employment, and, where appropriate, independent living skills" (§300.320[b][1]). Types of transition assessments include: behavioral assessment information, aptitude tests, interest and work values inventories, intelligence tests and achievement tests, personality or preference tests, career maturity or readiness tests, self-determination assessments, work-related temperament scales, and transition planning inventories.

Most states suggest using some combination of the following types of transition assessments: paper and pencil tests, structured student and family interviews, observational community or work-based assessments (situational) and curriculum-based assessments. These assessments or procedures come in two general formats – formal and informal.

Formal assessments are standardized instruments that have been tested and have data to show that reliability and validity measures support their use. Generally, these instruments also have independent reviews in texts (e.g., *A Counselor's Guide to*

Career Assessment Instruments – 4th Edition) or on-line at http://www.unl.edu/buros/. Examples of formal assessments include the Self-Directed Search (Forms E, R, and Explorer), Career Interest Inventory (Levels One and Two), Campbell Interest and Skill Survey, Wonderlic Basic Skills Test, and Differential Aptitude Test.

In contrast, informal assessments generally lack formal reliability and validity measures. These assessments require more subjectivity to complete and should be given more than once and by more than one person to strengthen their validity. Examples of paper/pencil informal assessments include the Enderle-Severson Transition Rating Scale (ESTR), Transition Planning Inventory, and Life Centered Career Education (LCCE) Performance and Knowledge Battery. Other examples of informal assessments include situational or observational learning styles assessments, curriculum-based assessment from courses, observational reports, situational assessments, structured interviews, personal-future planning activities, and functional skill inventories.

The transition assessment process can be viewed within a framework. One such framework is offered by Sitlington, Neubert, Begun, Lombard, and LeConte (1996). Their framework incorporates a variety of methods for assessing the student and potential environment. Analyses of results help educators make decisions about how to match a student with his or her potential environment. The purpose of the framework is to identify postschool options that match the students' interests, preferences, and needs.

Educators may implement the transition assessment process with the the Assess, Plan, Instruct, and Evaluate (APIE) model for transition assessment.. In the first step (assess), educators assess the students' interests, preferences, and needs related to his/her postschool outcomes using both formal and/or informal assessments. The second step (plan) involves interpreting the results from these assessments and incorporating them into the students' transition plan. In the third step (instruct), students learn the skills they will need to reach their postschool goals. In the last step (evaluate), evaluate whether progress has been made toward achieving the transition activities and IEP goals and objectives.

Rojewski (2002) outlines another useful framework inclusive of three levels of transition assessment. Level one is for most students and might include a review of existing information (e.g., intelligence and achievement data from the student's most current Psychological Report), student interview, interest assessment, personality or preference assessment, and, if indicated (e.g., a student shows promise in a given aptitude), aptitude testing. A level two assessment targets students having difficulty making a career choice or clarifying their interests, preparing for adult living, or contemplating leaving school as a dropout. The level two would expand to include assessments targeting information as to one's work-related behaviors, general career maturity, and job readiness. A level three assessment would be reserved for students needing additional assistance with identifying long term career goals, when earlier transition assessments were inconclusive, or for those with more significant disabilities. This level

generally takes several days and is conducted by a vocational assessment specialist (Sarkees-Wircenski & Scott, 1995).

Clark, G. M. (1996). Transition planning assessment for secondary-level students with learning disabilities. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, *29*, 79-92.

Kapes, J.T., & Whitfield, E.A. (2002). *A guide to career assessment instruments* (4th Edition). Tulsa, OK: National Career Development Association.

Neubert, D. A. (2003). The role of assessment in the transition to adult life process for students with disabilities. *Exceptionality*, *11*, 63-75.

Rojewski, J. (2002). Career assessment for adolescents with mild disabilities: Critical concerns for transition planning. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals, 25*, 73-95.

Sarkees-Wircenski, M. & Scott, J.L. (1995). *Vocational special needs* (3rd Edition). Homewood, IL: American Technical.

Sitlington, P. L., Neubert, D. A., & LeConte, P. J. (1997). Transition assessment: The position of the Division on Career Development and Transition. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals*, *20*, 69-79.

Test, D. W., Aspel, N. P., & Everson, J. M. (2006). *Transition methods for youth with disabilities*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.

Thoma, C. A., Held, M. F., & Saddler, S. (2002). Transition assessment practices in Nevada and Arizona: Are they tied to best practices? *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 17,* 242-250.

Why conduct transition assessments?

Transition assessments may be undertaken for several reasons. These reasons include: to develop IEP goals and objectives for the transition component of the IEP, to make instructional programming decisions, and to include information in the present level of performance related to a student's interests, preferences, and needs. In addition, transition assessment is an excellent way to learn about individual students, especially their strengths outside of academics and their career ambitions (Kortering, Sitlington, & Braziel, 2004).

The results of transition assessments should be used in making recommendations for instructional strategies, accommodations in instruction, and environments to meet the student's strengths and needs. The results also should help students make a connection between their individual academic program and their post-school ambitions.

Clark, G. M. (1996). Transition planning assessment for secondary-level students with learning disabilities. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, *29*, 79-92.

Kortering, L., Sitlington, P. & Braziel, P. (2004). The use of vocational assessment and planning as a strategic intervention to help keep youths with emotional or behavioral disorders in school. In *Transition of Students with Emotional or Behavior Disorders: Current approaches for positive outcomes*. (Ed. Doug Cheney). Arlington, VA: Council for Children with Behavior Disorders and Division on Career Development and Transition.

Sitlington, P. L., Neubert, D. A., & LeConte, P. J. (1997). Transition assessment: The position of the Division on Career Development and Transition. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals*, *20*, 69-79.

How do I select instruments and methods?

First, become familiar with the different types of transition assessments and their characteristics. Again, it is recommended that you use multiple evaluations and do them on an ongoing basis.

Second, select assessment instruments and methods that assist in answering the following questions with the student:

- Who am I?
- What do I want in life, now and in the future?
- What are some of life's demands that I can meet now?
- What are the main barriers to getting what I want from school and my community?
- What are my options in the school and community for preparing me for what I want, now and in the future?

Third, select instruments and methods that is appropriate for your students. Key considerations include the nature of their disability, their post-school ambitions, and community opportunities. For example, students with more involved disabilities would be best served by a person centered planning approach. The nature of their disability may preclude the relevancy of most standardized assessments, notable exceptions include interest inventories that do not require reading (e.g., Beck's Reading Free Interest Inventory, Wide Range Interest and Opinion Test – Revised) and other instruments that require minimal reading levels (Career Decision Making System, Self-Directed Search Form E). Similarly, some students may need special accommodations during the assessment.

By selecting instruments and methods that answer these questions, you will be able to select informative and useful transition assessment tools.

Clark, G. M. (1996). Transition planning assessment for secondary-level students with learning disabilities. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, *29*, 79-92.

How do I conduct an age appropriate transition assessment?

Transition assessments will vary depending on the actual instrument(s) and procedures being used and various student characteristics. However, Sitlington, Neubert, and Leconte (1997) suggest that the following guidelines may be followed when selecting methods to be used in the process.

1. "Assessment methods must incorporate assistive technology or accommodations that will allow an individual to demonstrate his or her abilities and potential.
2. Assessment methods must occur in environments that resemble actual vocational training, employment, independent living, or community environments.
3. Assessment methods must produce outcomes that contribute to ongoing development, planning, and implementation of "next steps" in the individual's transition process.
4. Assessment methods must be varied and include a sequence of activities that sample an individual's behavior and skills over time.
5. Assessment data must be verified by more than one method and by more than one person.
6. Assessment data must be synthesized and interpreted to individuals with disabilities, their families, and transition team members.
7. Assessment data and the results of the assessment process must be documented in a format that can be used to facilitate transition planning (p. 75)."

Finally, selected methods should be appropriate for the learning characteristics of the individual, including cultural and linguistic differences.

Rojewski, J. (2002). Career assessment for adolescents with mild disabilities: Critical concerns for transition planning. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals, 25*, 73-95.

Sitlington, P. L., Neubert, D. A., & Leconte, P. J. (1997). Transition assessment: The position of the Division on Career Development and Transition. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals*, *20*, 69-79.

Sample Instruments

Informal Transition Assessment Methods

"*Interviews and questionnaires*

Interviews and questionnaires can be conducted with a variety of individuals for the purpose of gathering information to be used to determine a student's needs,

preferences, and interests relative to anticipated post-school outcomes. In other words, what is currently known about a student, and her family, that can be used to help develop post-school outcomes and to plan a course-of-study that will help the student reach her goals?... An important part of this data collection process involves gathering information about a student and her family's current and future resources. For example, if a student's future education choice is to enroll in postsecondary education, it is helpful to know as soon as possible what financial resources a family might have or need. (Another) example might involve current and future transportation needs to get to work or to various activities/places in the community. Finally, families can often provide current and future resources in terms of employment options for their daughter or for other students in a high school program" (Test, Aspel, & Everson, 2006, pp. 74). Examples include:

- <u>Employment related questions questionnaire</u>
- *<u>Dream Sheet</u>*

"Direct observation

Direct observation student performance should be conducted within the natural or school employment, postsecondary, or community setting (Sitlington, Neubert, & Leconte, 1997). Sometimes called "situational assessment" (Sitlington, Neubert, Begun, Lomard, & Lecconte, 2007; Sitlington & Clark, 2001), direct observations are often done by an "expert" in the environment such as a job coach, co-worker, recreation specialist, and/or general/vocational educator. However, in keeping with a self-determined philosophy, students should be taught to record their own (performance) data. Direct observation data typically includes task analytic data of steps in completing a task, work behaviors (e.g., on-task, following directions, getting along with co-workers), and affective information (e.g., is student happy, excited, frustrated, or bored?). For example, if (you are) observing at a worksite, and a student quickly and accurately completes her tasks, interacts well with co-workers, and appears happy, this could provide evidence that this type of job is one that the student likes. However, after visiting a community residential setting a student appears withdrawn, this may be an indication that the particular situation may not be suitable (for her)" (Test, Aspel, & Everson, 2006, pp. 74). Examples include:

> *<u>Example of Task Analysis 1</u>*

> *<u>Example of Task Analysis 2</u>*

"Environmental or Situational Analysis

Environmental analysis, sometimes referred to as ecological assessment involves carefully examining environments where activities normally occur. For example, a student may express an interest in attending karate classes at the local YMCA. In this case an environmental analysis might be conducted to look at transportation needs and the expectations at the YMCA for attending (e.g., being a member, using the locker

room, taking a shower). In a second example, if a student expressed interest in a specific type of job, an environmental job analysis could be conducted comparing requirements of the job to the student's skills (Griffin & Sherron, 1996). A critical part of a job analysis should be to identify types of accommodations that could be provided to help a student perform the necessary functions of a particular job (e.g., job restructuring, modifying equipment, acquiring an adaptive device, re-organizing the work space, hiring a personal assistant) (Griffin & Sherron, 1996)" (Test, Aspel, & Everson, 2006, pp. 74). Perhaps the best source for on the job accommodations is the Job Accommodation Network (www.jan.org)

Curriculum-based assessments (CBA)

"CBAs are typically designed by educators to gather information about a student's performance in a specific curriculum (McLoughlin & Lewis, 2005)…(and) to develop instructional plans for a specific student. To gather (these) data…an educator might use task analyses, work sample analyses, portfolio assessments, and/or criterion-referenced tests" (Test, Aspel, & Everson, 2006, pp. 78). Examples include:

Example of Data Sheet 1

Example of Data Sheet 2

Formal Transition Assessment Methods

Adaptive Behavior Assessment information

Adaptive behavior assessment helps determine the type and amount of special assistance that people with disabilities may need. This assistance might be in the form of home-based support services for infants and children and their families, special education and vocational training for young people, and supported work or special living arrangements such as personal care attendants, group homes, or nursing homes for adults.

Each test relies on a respondent such as a parent, teacher, or care-provider to provide information about an individual being assessed. With some tests respondents are interviewed; with other tests respondents fill out a response booklet directly. Examples include:

- The Scales of Independent Behavior - Revised (SIB-R)
- The Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales
- AAMR Adaptive Behavior Scales (ABS)
- The Inventory for Client and Agency Planning (ICAP)

General and Specific Aptitude Tests

An aptitude test is a measure of a specific skill or ability. There are two types of aptitude tests: multi-aptitude test batteries and single tests measuring specific aptitudes. Multi-aptitude test batteries contain measures of a wide range of aptitudes and combinations of aptitudes and provide valuable information that can be used in career decision making. Single aptitude tests are used when a specific aptitude needs to be measured, such as manual dexterity, clerical ability, artistic ability, or musical ability. Examples include:

- Differential Aptitude Test (DAT)
- Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB)
- Inventory of Work-Relevant Abilities (IWRA)
- OASIS-III Aptitude Survey
- ONET Ability Profiler
- Wiesen Test of Mechanical Aptitude
- Bennett's Mechanical Comprehension Test

Interest and Work Values Inventories

Strong (1943) was one of the original vocational theorists to stress the importance of gathering data concerning individuals' likes and dislikes for a variety of activities, objects, and types of persons commonly encountered. Interest inventories provide the opportunity for individuals to compare their interest with those of individuals in specific

occupational groups or selected peer groups. Fouad (1999) states that regardless of which specific measure is used interest inventories appear to be generalizable across time. Examples of Interest Inventories include:

- Career Interest Inventory – Levels One and Two
- The Strong Interest Inventory
- Self-Directed Search Form R, E, and Career Explorer
- The Harrington/O'Shea System for Career Decision-Making
- Wide Range Interest-Opinion Test Revised (WRIOT-R)

Intelligence Tests

Intelligence tests involve a single test or test battery to assess a person's cognitive performance. Because populations experience IQ gains over time, IQ tests must be constantly re-standardized so that subjects are not scored against inaccurate norms. Using obsolete IQ norms can cause problems especially when comparing scores between different groups and populations. Examples include:

- The Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale, Form L-M (SBL-M)
- The Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children-IVI (WISC-IV)
- The Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Adults – III (WAIS-III)
- The Wechsler Abbreviated Scale of Intelligence™ (WASI™)
- Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test (K-BIT)
- Kaufman Adolescent & Adult Intelligence Test (KAIT)

Achievement Tests

Achievement tests measure learning of general or specific academic skills. Achievement tests provide results that can be linked to most occupational requirements while helping to identify potential areas needing remediation (such as vocabulary). They are usually either general survey batteries covering several subject areas or single-subject tests. They can be criterion-referenced, norm-referenced, or both. Achievement tests are usually identified by grade level. It is important to establish the specific purpose for giving an achievement test to decide what type to use. Examples include:

- Stanford Achievement Test (STAT)
- Wide Range Achievement Test-Revision 3 (WRAT 3)
- Basic Achievement Skills Inventory (BASI)
- Basic Achievement Individual Screener (BASIS)
- Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement, Second Edition
- Peabody Individual Achievement Test-Revised-Normative Update (PIAT-R/NU)
- Woodcock Johnson III
- Adult Basic Learning Examination (ABLE)

Personality or Preference Tests

Personality inventories measure individual differences in social traits, motivational drives and needs, attitudes, and adjustment. .Personality measures offer a means of evaluating support for, or opposition to a, career under consideration. The score alone should not be viewed as a predictor of success or failure but rather should be compared with other data, including abilities and interests. Examples include:

- Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire (16PF, Fifth Edition)
- Personal Career Development Profile (PCDP) and PC/DP Plus
- Myers-Briggs Type Indicator® (MBTI®) Instrument
- Student Styles Questionnaire (SSQ)

Career Maturity or Employability Tests

Career maturity inventories are designed to measure developmental stages or tasks on a continuum. The degree of an individual's career maturity is determined by the individual's location on the developmental continuum. Examples include:

- Career Maturity Inventory (CMI)
- Career Thought Inventory (CTI)
- Career Beliefs Inventory (CBI)
- Career Development Inventory (CDI)
- Career Decision Scale (CDS)

Self-Determination Assessments

Self-determination assessments provide information as to one's readiness to make decisions related to their postsecondary ambitions. Such assessments provide data to help a student identify their relative strengths and limitations related to self-determination and factors that may be promoting or inhibiting this outcome. Examples include:

- The Arc's Self-Determination Scale – Adolescent Version
- Self Determination Assessment Battery
- Choice Maker Self-Determination Assessment

Work-related temperament scales

These tools assess work-related temperament and can help develop individual transition components of the IEP for students with disabilities. An example is:

- The Work Adjustment Inventory (WAI)

Transition planning inventories

Transition planning inventories involve a process which identifies transition strengths and needs. These areas encompass various aspects of adult living, including

employment, postsecondary schooling and training, independent living, interpersonal relationships, and community living. Examples include:

- Transition Planning Inventory
- Transition to Work Inventory (TWI)
- www.caseylifeskills.org

Sources Used:

Griffin, C., & Sherron, P. (1996). Finding jobs for young people with disabilities. In P. Wehman (Ed.), *Life beyond the classroom: Transition strategies for young people with disabilities* (2nd ed., pp. 163-187). Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes.

McLoughlin, J. A., & Lewis, R. B. (2005). *Assessing students with special needs* (6th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill Prentice Hall.

Osborn, D. S., & Zunker, V. G. (2006). *Using assessment results for career development.* California: Thomson Publishing.

Sitlington, P.L, Neubert, D.A., Begun, W.H., Lombard, R.C., & Lecconte, P.J. (2007). *Assess for success: A practitioner's handbook on transition assessment* (2nd Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Sitlington, P. L., & Clark, G. M. (2001). Career/vocational assessment: A critical component of transition planning. *Assessment for Effective Intervention*, *26*(4), 5-22.

Sitlington, P. L., Neubert, D. A., & Leconte, P. J. (1997). Transition assessment: The position of the Division on Career Development and Transition. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals, 20,* 69-79.

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Osborn, D. S., & Zunker, V. G. (2006). *Using assessment results for career development.* Thousand, Oaks, CA: Thomson Publishing.

Informative links to Podcasts and other sources of information about age appropriate transition assessment

Podcasts:

http://www.opi.state.mt.us/streamer/SpecEd/NewIEPprocess.html - The IEP Process for Secondary Transition using an outcome-oriented process is a podcast of Ed O'Leary

http://itcnew.idahotc.com/pages/pastwebinars.htm#feb15-06 - This is a podcast of a presentation by Gary Clark and Jacque Hyatt on "Using Assessment Information for Planning Transition Services."

Websites:

http://www.seattleu.edu/ccts/func_eval/index.asp - A Guide To Functional Vocational Evaluation developed in Washington State (October 2004). by: The Center for Change in Transition Services, a Washington State Needs Project funded by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction in collaboration with Seattle University.

http://www.ncwd-youth.info/resources_&_Publications/assessment.html - Career Planning Begins with Assessment: A Guide for Professionals Serving Youth with Educational and Career Development Challenges. his guide serves as a resource for multiple audiences within the workforce development system. Youth service practitioners will find information on selecting career-related assessments, determining when to refer youth for additional assessment, and additional issues such as accommodations, legal issues, and ethical considerations. Administrators and policymakers will find information on developing practical and effective policies, collaboration among programs, and interagency assessment systems.

http://www.khake.com/page51.html - The Vocational Information Center; Career and College Planning Resources. This page provides links for students and guidance counselors including resources to self-assessments, career planning, career development and college planning.

http://www.onetcenter.org/guides.html#tests and other assessments helping you make better career decisions - Testing and Assessment Consumer Guides by the Occupational Information Network (O*Net) resource Center.

http://transitioncoalition.org/transition/module_home.php - Assessing Students with Disabilities : Transition Planning for the IEP is a website developed by Gary Clark at the University of Kansas.

http://www.ode.state.or.us/gradelevel/hs/transition/newsletters/2004/ttvol02issue03.pdf – Produced in November 2003 by the Oregon Department of Education and Transition, this issue of the Transition Toolbox newsletter focuses on Vocational Transition Assessment-its purpose, types, and uses, and the role of professionals in the vocational assessment process and resources for vocational assessment.

http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/download/pdf/TK_TransAssessment.pdf - Produced by the Colorado Department of Education, Special Education Services Unit. This site offers a brief document explaining Transition Assessment.

Presentations

http://www.ncset.org/teleconferences/transcripts/2005_10.asp - A Transcript of NCSET teleconference call held on October 25, 2005, with associated PowerPoint. Presented by Joe Timmons, (Project Coordinator) and Mary Podmostko, (Senior Project Associate) from the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability/Youth and titled 'Career Planning Begins with Assessment'

http://sharedwork.org/documents/CATheOngoingJourney1.ppt - PowerPoint developed by Pamela LeConte, the George Washington University and Lecestor Johnson at the 2006 PA Community on Transition Conference.