




**IARP** INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF  
REHABILITATION PROFESSIONALS

Building Blocks of Transition Services:  
Vocational Evaluations of  
Special Education Students  
10/26/2018  
Charlotte, NC

**IARP- Vocational Rehabilitation  
Transition Services (VRTS)**

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**Disclaimer**

This information was developed for a  
presentation in October 2018.

The information contained within this  
presentation, Power Point slides, and  
handouts should not be considered the sole  
source of information on this topic, nor the  
sole source or complete information that the  
presenters utilizes in providing services or  
opinions.




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### Overview of Presentation

- Roles and referral sources
- Differences between evaluating adults and students
- Student disability evaluation factors
- Standardized testing
- Informal Assessments
- Report Writing
- Case Studies
- Marketing Services



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### Objectives

- Upon completion of this presentation participants will understand the role of the rehabilitation professional and a vocational evaluation in the IEP process.
- Upon completion of the presentation participants will have an understanding of the special populations and accommodations that are required to perform vocational evaluations on transition-aged students receiving SPED services.
- Upon completion of the presentation participants will have a better understanding of the tools necessary to work with transition-aged students receiving SPED services.



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### Theoretical Assumption\*

- A good, comprehensive transition assessment leads to,
  - Good, comprehensive transition planning
- One does not usually exist in the absence of the other
- \*Research Compilation for: The Transition Planning Inventory and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004, PRO-ED, INC.

Need to understand strengths, limitations, and reason behind limitations for interventions and good transition planning



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### Age Appropriate Assessments

IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) states that the students IEP (Individualized Education Program) must include:

- appropriate, measurable postsecondary goals based on age-appropriate transition assessments related to training, education, employment, and independent living
- transition services (including courses of study) needed to assist the student in reaching their goals



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### Age Appropriate Assessments

"Help students learn about themselves so as to better prepare them for taking an active role in their career development." (Zunker and Osborn, 2006)

Age Appropriate Assessments can be:

- formal
- informal



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### Independent Educational Evaluations (IEE)

An IEE is an evaluation conducted by a qualified examiner who is not employed by the public agency responsible for the education of the student.

IEE may be obtained by parents at their own expense or at public expense:

- if deemed needed by the team
- if school doesn't have personnel or resources to conduct the evaluation
- if court ordered

Parents of a student with a disability have a right to obtain an IEE, and the results of the IEE must be considered (but not necessarily accepted).



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### Roles and Referral Sources

1. School referral for an Independent Evaluation (IE)
2. School and Parent agreed IE
3. School Consultation
4. State VR
5. Parent Independent Evaluation
6. Court Order
7. Due Process Ruling
8. Attorney/Advocate
9. Protected and Advocacy Systems



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### Difference Between Evaluating Students vs Adults

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More Rewarding</li> <li>• No benefits or issues related to poor performance</li> <li>• Student benefits from demonstrating strong skills</li> <li>• Work with parents, guardians and schools; all want student to succeed</li> <li>• Try to do well and impress</li> <li>• School data is different/ maturity</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wide variety of ability levels/non-competitive</li> <li>• Generally no data for estimating physical tolerances</li> <li>• Generally no work experience, TSA not needed</li> <li>• Limited understanding of purpose of testing</li> <li>• Decreased endurance for testing</li> <li>• Unrealistic expectations/dream crushers</li> </ul> |
|---|---|



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### Student Disability Evaluation Factors

Physical Abilities- neuromuscular disabilities with limited/no dexterity, developmental vs. acquired disabilities

Communication/Executive Functioning- Communication difficulties, ASD

Specific Learning Disabilities- reading, writing, math

Mental Illness- ED, behavior, and social skills impairments.



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### Student Evaluation Considerations

- Reading Levels- you need to know and consider to choose appropriate tests.
- Norms- Does the norm group include high school students?
- Competitively employed norms- if used understand and explain how it applies to the student.
- School accommodations impact on timed assessments
- Developmental Stages/Maturity



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### Student Evaluation Considerations

- No work history- chores, extracurriculars, clubs?
- Basic Work Skills- communication, social cognition, emotional regulation, frustration tolerance, cooperation, tolerance, fatigue, initiative, problem solving, asks questions, work pace, etc.
- Expected vs. Unexpected Behaviors- compared to a work environment, classroom, independent living, etc.
- School testing data difficult to understand and/or generalize
  - Grades
  - Star score of 248



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### Common School Tools

- Self-reported interests become outcomes
- Surveys- tons
- Casey Life Skills- independent living
- Curriculum- Transition to Life, Brigance
- Parent Input- parent surveys, Vineland (behaviors)

#### Functional Evaluation?

- Work checklist- do they follow?
- Observe the student in class- on/off task behaviors



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## Standardized Testing

Interest assessments- high focus of transition, make sure appropriate tests are used, forced choice needed?

- COPS/COPES
- SDS
- Pictorial

Academic Abilities- is this in school records? Is it recent enough?

Cognitive Abilities- is this info already in school records?

Aptitudes- typically not addressed by schools, consider the students level, norms, etc.

Dexterity/Work Samples/Situational Assessments- TPAL, what else do you need to know, be creative, parent input



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## NTACT

See handout on formal assessment method options for Age Appropriate Transition Assessments, and additional information is available at [transitionta.org](http://transitionta.org).



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## Review of:

- Information Assessment
- Informal Assessment
- On-Site Vocational Assessment
- Functional Assessment
- On-the-Job Evaluation
- Work Trial
- Work Try-Outs
- Situational Assessment
- Observation and Record of Behavior



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## Non-standardized evaluations

- Evaluate behaviors that standardized testing can't
- Measure work behaviors in a more real environment
- Provide feedback of performance
- Can obtain input from supervisors and outsiders
- Learn how the individual best learns/performs
- Assess motivation and specific interest
- Write more complete and specific vocational goals and transition plans
- Assess ability to apply learned skills and behaviors in alternate settings



## Standardized Testing vs. On-Site Vocational Evaluation

- Individualized, Unique to the individual
- Unique to the site and environment
- Takes more time
- Usually not standardized
- Extends vocational evaluation
- Norm based vs. criterion reference
- Information obtained from others



## "What can they REALLY do?" What supports are needed?

Assessment of specific skills and behaviors as they relate to an individual's function in natural, ecological work settings or simulated work environments.




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### Observations of:

- Behaviors in real world environment or simulations of work situations/tasks
- Ability to handle environmental distractions (e.g., noise, visual stimuli, proximity to others)
- Ability to re-group and return to work tasks after interruptions or distractions
- Ability to handle change
- Sustained physical and cognitive endurance
- Ability to follow verbal and written instructions



### Functional Assessment

- "Functional Assessment" term used in all disciplines: medical, pharmaceutical, engineering, computers
- Vocational Functional Assessment not "Functional Behavior Assessment" as defined by IDEA
- Assessment that measures level of function and ability to perform and complete a real function or work tasks over a period of time
- Identify functional obstacles to goal achievement, residual job skills,
- The functional use of a skill in real world environment
- Numerous functional assessment tools in print
- Sources of functional assessment will vary form individual to individual; Several sources may be used



### Functional/Situational Evaluations

- Functional or Situational Evaluations are evaluations in ecological/natural true environment
- Observations of behavior in real world environment with real world stimuli
- Used for recommendations for work environments/ structures/supports




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## Job Tryout

Temporary job placement or internship designed to provide real work experience with the benefits of:

- assessing participant's work, social, and personal skills in actual work environment
- obtaining data useful for making job placement recommendations



## Work Trial Evaluations

- Each evaluation is individual to that student
- More specific than "functional assessment"
- Need description of work duties & work expectations
- Evaluation of tasks & behaviors over a period of time
- Actually performing work (volunteer or paid)
- Evaluation form completed by work supervisor/employer, student & vocational evaluator/teacher/job coach
- Comparison made between evaluation scores
- Students more accepting of feedback/evaluation from employer
- Duration of 1 day to 3 weeks or more
- Evaluations forms for each day or week time period with ongoing feedback to student
- Look for trends
- New goals may be written ongoing as student masters tasks/ behaviors or as tasks/behaviors are determined to be too difficult for student



## Situational Assessment

Systematic observation of evaluating work-related behaviors in controlled or semi-controlled work environment

Any type of tasks or situations may be used

Systematically vary demands in order to evaluate work related behaviors



## On-Site Considerations

- Job duties
- Skills required
- Schedule/Routine of job
- Pace/Production requirements of job
- Expected behavior characteristics
- Compensation



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## Components of Job/Task Analysis

### Physical

sitting, standing, walking  
reaching, handling  
lifting, carrying  
bending, stooping, crawling,  
climbing

### Behavioral

working alone vs. with other  
judgment/decision making  
routine vs. variety  
instruction/supervision  
working under stress

### Environmental

indoor/outdoor  
dust/fumes/odors  
moving machinery  
heat/cold  
noise/vibration  
ergonomics

### Cognitive

reasoning/problem solving  
mathematics  
language: written/expressive  
auditory  
visual/spatial



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## Analysis of Work Readiness/ Preparedness for Work

- Grooming
- Proper clothing and supplies/tools for work and for work day
- Time management
- Transportation/Ability to travel to work site
- Understanding of work environment and expectations
- Use of established check list



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## Sample Measurements

- Remembers day to day work information
- Able to read work instructions
- Follows dress code
- Follows work break schedule
- Refrains from talking to co-workers
- Does not use cell phone while working
- Does not use computer for personal use during work



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## Yes/no ratings or 0% 25% 50% 75% 100%

Arrives to work on time/returns from breaks on time:  
Keeps headphone off while working:  
Writes down verbal instructions:  
Follows procedures step by step in manual:  
Sets timer and takes computer breaks every 30 minutes:  
Refrains from calling females, "honey", "darling" etc:  
Does not engage in personal/social conversations while working:  
Demonstrates appropriate greetings/departures:  
Accepts feedback:  
Refrains from swearing:



WORK TRIAL EVALUATION

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Work Site: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Evaluator: \_\_\_\_\_

Rating Scale: 1 to 3  
N/A = NOT APPLICABLE; Skill not observed or required.

1. INCONSISTENT: needs improvement.  
2. ACCEPTABLE: performance is within vocationally based standards.  
3. ABOVE AVERAGE.

		low	high
<b>ADDITIONAL COMPREHENSION</b>			
1. Is able to understand information from verbal directions, conversations, assignments and projects.	N/A	1	2 3
2. Ability to obtain information from telephone calls.	N/A	1	2 3
<b>ORAL EXPRESSION</b>			
3. Ability to provide clear information to claimants on steps they need to do to process their claim.	N/A	1	2 3
4. Ability control and direct interviews.	N/A	1	2 3
5. Accurately explains rights to claimants.	N/A	1	2 3
6. Ability to communicate at the claimants level.	N/A	1	2 3
7. Ability to present training information in clear, precise and organized manner.	N/A	1	2 3

### % Rating Scale

Completes activity/task correctly without cues 25%

Completes activity/task correctly without cues 50%

Completes activity/task correctly without cues 75%

Completes activity correctly without cues 100%



### Rating Scale 1 to 5

N/A Not Assessed or Skill Not Applicable

1. Unacceptable: Inability to meet minimal expectations of job responsibilities

2. Marginal: Inconsistent ability to meet minimal job expectations; needs continual improvement

3. Acceptable: Performance is generally adequate with periodic lapses in quality

4. Competitive: Meets standards within vocational setting

5. Exceeds Expectations



### Do's and Don'ts for Report Writing

Explain everything- readers are not familiar with vocational terminology

Use of Grade Equivalencies- school records may not include in addition to standard scores

Consider the reader- parents, student, etc.

Maturity/Developmental Level




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## Case Studies

**School Referral-** 19-year-old student with Downs Syndrome. School and parent disagree on Transition Goal for postsecondary education and therefore transition program placement.

**Parent Referral-** 17-year-old senior with Autism unclear on his post high school plans.



## Case Studies Mary

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•19, Average IQ, 5<sup>th</sup> year student</li> <li>•In school transition program</li> <li>•LD math and writing</li> <li>•Depression, anxiety, extreme shyness</li> <li>•Shyness interferes with functioning</li> <li>•Shyness not addressed in IEP</li> <li>•Coop Voc Eval inconsistent with school records</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•1 semester "work trial" ½ day 5 days a week</li> <li>•Performing routine duties daily, no specific goals, not based on employment demands or learning of specific job skills, limited review of goals</li> <li>•Parent limited assessment funds: interview and WT site visit only</li> <li>•Findings: inappropriate vocational voc eval, work trial placement &amp; IEP</li> <li>•Recommended in-depth voc eval and new IEP outcomes; school agreement with recommendations</li> </ul> |
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## Case Studies Holly

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•19, 5<sup>th</sup> year, in school transition program</li> <li>•DD with low IQ, low math, writing, and reading levels</li> <li>•Extreme physical limitations for strength, coordination, endurance</li> <li>•No vocational evaluation</li> <li>•School placed in day care work for 3 semesters</li> <li>•Helped set up lunch, clean up, helped children with coats and papers</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Parents removed student from school and placed in private therapeutic day school</li> <li>•Paid for private independent evaluations</li> <li>•Voc recommendations: most standardized voc tests not appropriate, obtain physical abilities data, &amp; in depth environment voc evaluation</li> <li>•School did not accept private evaluation recommendations and parent requests</li> <li>•Due process; expert witness (role change)</li> <li>•Ruling in parents favor: private placement and payment of all independent evaluations</li> </ul> |
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### Marketing Services

1. Transition Fairs
2. State VR Offices
3. Pediatricians
4. Adolescence Neuropsychologists
5. Attorney Groups
6. School Advocates
7. Schools
8. State Protection & Advocacy Systems
9. Juvenile Justice Systems
10. Presentations



### Questions???



### Resources

[www.wrightslaw.com](http://www.wrightslaw.com)  
[www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov)  
[idea.ed.gov](http://idea.ed.gov)  
[www.transitionta.org](http://www.transitionta.org)  
[www.equipforequality.org](http://www.equipforequality.org)  
[www.specialeducationadvisor.com](http://www.specialeducationadvisor.com)  
[www.copaa.org](http://www.copaa.org)  
[www.achieve.org](http://www.achieve.org)  
 Local State Board of Education  
 Google ©




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## Resources

[www.achieve.org/resources](http://www.achieve.org/resources)  
[www.mattcohenandassociates.com/resources/sites.ed.gov/idea/files/postsecondary-transition-guide-may-2017.pdf](http://www.mattcohenandassociates.com/resources/sites.ed.gov/idea/files/postsecondary-transition-guide-may-2017.pdf)  
[www.transitionta.org/resources](http://www.transitionta.org/resources)  
[www.transitionta.org/evaluationtoolkit](http://www.transitionta.org/evaluationtoolkit)  
 VEWA Journal Special Issue: Transition Assessment, Volume 41, Number 2, October, 2017

**Look for IARP's VRTS Special Edition Journal- Coming Soon!**



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