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PROJECT 10 TOPICAL BRIEFS are published on a bi-monthly basis. Each issue focuses on a specific topic or theme, highlighting current and upcoming information and events related to secondary transition. This month the Topical Brief is focused on *A Source of Inspiration and Ahas: Summaries of Select Transition-Related Research Articles and Literature.*



Professional educators and other relevant stakeholders that directly or indirectly support secondary transition for students with disabilities benefit greatly from relevant research, recent trends or updated data in the field to support effective practices. Research and academic literature may often support or enhance a known practice or belief, or it may challenge pre-existing knowledge as a result of new data, a varied experimental design and/or a new hypothesis or question. This edition of the Project 10 Topical Brief explores sources of research or academic literature to support professional development and knowledge on diverse secondary transition topics and promotes promising practices and beliefs that lead to positive post-school outcomes for students.

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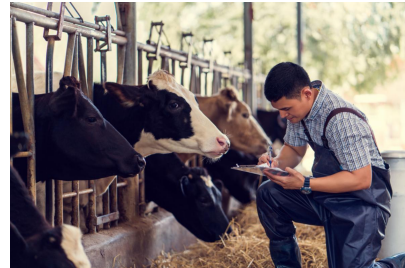
Topics

- Understanding Internships for Transition-Age Students with

Disabilities

- The Lived Experience of People with Intellectual Disabilities in Postsecondary or Higher Education
- Regional Winter Institute Recap

Understanding Internships for Transition-Age Students with Disabilities



Students with disabilities typically have little to no work experience prior to exiting high school, often due to biases regarding work abilities, perceived barriers and work capacity. The U.S. department of Labor reports employment gaps between students with and without disabilities are significant, and widen over the span of adulthood. Recent federal laws have supported and strengthened the concept that students with disabilities need to be prepared during secondary education to be career ready. One type of work-based learning experience (WBLE) that positively impacts work-readiness for students with disabilities is internships. During internships, students are formally introduced to the demands of work while maintaining a connection between work experiences and school-based learning. Internships can be paid or unpaid, and are formal, temporary work experiences that allow a student to understand work expectations, work culture and work/peer relationships. Internships can be an essential component of a career and technical education program, a part of WBLE experience(s) and/or an employment goal as part of transition services.

The following chart was extracted from the article and illustrates the definition and timeline of various WBLEs.

Description and Timeline for Work-Based Learning Activities:

Activities	Definition	Year in School
Job shadowing	Student observes an established employee to learn job tasks, culture, and work environment.	9th grade
Service learning	Student volunteers in the community or social programs. Service learning corresponds with the student's transition goals and plan.	10th to 12th grades

Job sampling	Student engages in applied work in community businesses. The work does not benefit the employer but allows the students to learn potential job tasks, required soft skills, and work environment.	10th grade to postsecondary
Apprenticeships	Student engages in formal work experiences that prepare individuals for a highly skilled trade.	12th grade to postsecondary
Internships (paid or unpaid)	Student engages in a formal, temporary work experience that provides students with an opportunity to learn about work culture, job requirements, and interpersonal interactions in the workplace.	12th grade to postsecondary
Paid employment	Student engages in paid employment that occurs during the day, after school, or during summer break.	10th grade to postsecondary

This article provides secondary educators with information about how to develop and facilitate unpaid and paid internships for students with disabilities that align with requirements established by the Fair Labor Standards Act. Included are resources, a case study, step-by-step guidance and recommendations for best practices to support considerations and requirements of developing a paid versus unpaid internship.

Article Source Information:

Riesen, Tim, Audrey A. Trainor, Rachel Elizabeth Traxler, Lilly B. Padia, and Corban Remund. "Understanding Internships for Transition-Age Students with Disabilities." *TEACHING Exceptional Children*, Vol. 54, No. 4, pgs. 286-294 (2021) Retrieved March 1, 2023, from <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/00400599211018835>.

The Lived Experience of People with Intellectual Disabilities in Postsecondary or Higher Education

This article is an investigative research study using a qualitative method and interview methods to explore how individuals with intellectual disabilities think about their experiences in postsecondary and higher education. This particular qualitative method allows participants in the study to express the meaning of the experience in their own words while also allowing the researcher to guide



the reflection of the participants. Researchers reported that 17 of the participants attended [college/university] full-time and 10 of the participants attended part-time.

The research questions posed were:

1. How do people with intellectual disability experience postsecondary and higher education?
2. How do people with intellectual disability describe their experience?
3. How to people with intellectual disability interpret their experience?
4. What meanings do people with intellectual disability give to their response?

After full interview transcription and analysis, the researcher identified one overarching theme, three main themes, and up to four supporting sub-themes for each main theme. The description and alignment of themes from the study are depicted in the following chart:

Living an Authentic Life

Learning	Relationships	Perspectives and Realities
Impact of learning, such as an appreciation for learning	Friendships, such as making new friends with individuals with disabilities and individuals without disabilities	Individual perceptions, such as learning to manage anxiety and wanting more variety in course availability
Supplementary skills, such as reading and money management	Family, such as support given in meaningful ways	Views of others (mostly family members) showed appreciation for the participant's growing independence; families were proud and supportive of their relative
Independence, such as traveling on one's own and being perceived by one's family as an adult	Service staff, such as recognition that the support that staff provided was necessary for their higher learning experiences	College compared to services, appreciation for the inclusivity of the college experience and recognizing the value of education for one's future
Opportunities, such as making one's own choices and studying for a specific career	Postsecondary or higher education staff, such as travel training and tutoring	

The themes and subthemes above (as a result of the participant interviews) resulted in various conclusions and implications as it relates to people with disabilities living authentic lives. Included in the researcher's narrative were qualitative findings such as:

- Wanting and having normal experiences ("normalization") are essential to a high quality of life for people with intellectual disabilities
- Going to postsecondary education is a positive experience and reflects the transformational power of learning, enhanced education, independence, confidence, self-esteem and meaningful inclusion
- Building and maintaining relationships with family and friends (with support at times) are important for people with intellectual disabilities, as this is associated with a high-quality life
- Education and educational opportunities are as much about personal achievement as it is with the *opportunity* to learn

In closing, a quote extracted from the research summarizes ongoing challenges in perceptions and programming regarding postsecondary educational opportunities for students with (intellectual) disabilities:

"Outcomes tend to be associated with employment and earning prospects rather than the experience of having an opportunity to learn. Education providers may need to revisit traditional views of the outcomes of education and seek the views of people with disabilities themselves when designing and developing programmes."

Article Source Information:

Corby, Deirdre, Laurence Taggart and Wendy Cousins. "The lived experience of people with intellectual disabilities in post-secondary or higher education." *Journal of Intellectual Disabilities*, Vol. 24, Issue 3, pgs. 339-357 (September 2020) Retrieved March 1, 2023 from <https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.usf.edu/10.1177/1744629518805603>

Regional Winter Institute Recap

Project 10 wants to thank all the attendees, participants and guest presenters at the annual Regional Winter Institute held virtually on Thursday, February 23, 2023. Relevant



statewide transition-related and/or agency information was shared in the morning, whereas the afternoon regional breakout sessions were smaller and more discussion-oriented. The regional afternoon sessions offered a deeper dive of tailored transition information, data discussion and collaboration opportunities.

To access the PowerPoint (PPT) presentations presented in the morning at the institute, please visit Project 10's "What's New" tab from the website using this link: <http://project10.info/DPage.php?ID=188#NS107>.

The following agency/project information can be found:

- Project 10 Overview PPT
- Bureau of School Improvement PPT
- Vocational Rehabilitation PPT - Including "Supplanting vs Supplementing

at the Local Level" and "Sample Mapping Tool"

- Agency for Persons with Disabilities PPT



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Project 10: Transition Education Network

Assists Florida school districts and relevant stakeholders in building capacity to provide secondary transition services to students with disabilities in order to improve their academic success and post-school outcomes.

Project 10: Transition Education Network

University of South Florida St. Petersburg

Questions or comments?

Email us at project10@stpete.usf.edu.

www.project10.info

Project 10 | University of South Florida St. Petersburg (USFSP), 140 7th Avenue South, SVB
108,
Saint Petersburg, FL 33701

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