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## **SELF-ADVOCACY INSTRUCTION: Helping Students Transition and Navigate Their Futures**

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**Anthony K. Van Reusen, Ph.D.  
Professor & Chair  
Department of Special Education  
Cal. State Univ. - Bakersfield**

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### **WSSA 2009 Symposium Agenda**

- Self-advocacy defined & the link between intrinsic motivation, self-determination and learning
  - 15 ways to enhance student motivation, self-determination and self-advocacy in-and-out of school: important practices for parents and teachers
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## Agenda continued...

- Teaching for transition: what should teachers teach?
- Transition education and K-12 schools: recommended practices
- Parent and family roles and responsibilities
- Questions and answers

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## Helping Students Transition and Navigate Their Futures

## Teaching for Transition

- Curriculum Design for Transition:  
What should teachers teach?
- Rationale for selecting instructional objectives
  - Focus on promoting independent performance across grade levels to post-secondary settings

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## Elementary to Post-secondary Educational & Vocational Training Settings

- |  |                              |
|--|------------------------------|
| ■ Education & learning skills/strategies | ■ Classroom behavior skills  |
| ■ Reading skills                         | ■ Social skills              |
| ■ Writing skills                         | ■ Computer/technology skills |
| ■ Math skills                            | ■ Career & employment skills |
| ■ Study skills                           |                              |

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## Residential & Community Environments

- Independent living skills
- Financial & consumer skills
- Citizenship & legal skills
- Social & family living skills
- Health & wellness skills
- Community resource skills
- Career & employment skills
- Leisure & recreation skills

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## Selecting Transition Goals & Objectives

- Based on student/family interests & preferences
- Outcome based and directed toward independence in adulthood
- Integrating life and work skills into the curriculum

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## Goal Example

- Tony will increase his ability to distinguish the value of coins (e.g., penny, nickel, dime, quarter) from only naming the coins to describing each coin's value by the end of the nine-week grading period through direct instruction involving modeling, questioning, practice and teacher made tests using real money.

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## Objective Examples

- Given at least 5 sets of real coins, Tony will correctly count the money denominations with sums less than or equal to 25 cents in three out of four trials.
- Given at least 5 sets of real coins of various denomination values up to 25 cents, Tony will correctly convert the coins in order to make change for a specified amount of less than or equal to 25 cents in three out of four trials.
- Given 10 sets of real coins, Tony will correctly count the money denominations with sums less than or equal to 50 cents in one minute with 90% accuracy.

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## Life-Centered and Career Education Competencies

### Daily Living Skills

- Managing personal finances
- Selecting and managing a household
- Caring for personal needs
- Raising children and meeting marriage responsibilities
- Buying, preparing and consuming food
- Buying and caring for clothing
- Exhibiting responsible citizenship
- Using recreational facilities and engaging in leisure activities

## Personal & Social Skills

- Achieving self-awareness
- Acquiring self-confidence
- Achieving socially responsible behavior
- Maintaining good interpersonal skills
- Achieving independence
- Making adequate decisions

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## Personal & Social Skills (continued)

- Giving positive feedback
- Giving negative feedback
- Accepting positive feedback
- Accepting negative feedback
- Dealing with peer pressure
- Communicating with others

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## Occupational Guidance & Preparation

- Identifying and exploring occupational/employment/career possibilities
- Selecting and planning occupational choices
- Exhibiting appropriate work habits and behavior

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## Occupational Guidance & Preparation (continued)

- Seeking, securing, and maintaining employment
- Exhibiting sufficient physical-manual skills
- Obtaining specific occupational/employment skills

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## Self-Advocacy

- Refers to the ability of an individual to effectively communicate, convey, negotiate or assert one's own interests, desires, needs, and rights
- Assumes the ability to make informed decisions
- Means taking responsibility for those decisions.
- Providing students with opportunities to learn and use decision-making and self-advocacy skills can help prepare them to become full participants in a democratic society

(Van Reusen, Bos, Schumaker, & Deshler, 2007)

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## Link Between Intrinsic Motivation, Self-Determination, Learning & Self-Advocacy

- Intrinsic motivation is viewed as an important energizer of human behavior that is thought to be based upon an individual's need for competence and self-determination (i.e., internal control)

(Boggiano, et al. 1992; Cameron & Pierce, 1994; Deci & Ryan, 1985)

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## The Link (continued)

- People are described as “intrinsically motivated” when they complete activities or exhibit behaviors because of an inner desire to succeed or to act appropriately (i.e., self-determination)

(Deci & Ryan, 1985)

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## The Link (continued)

- Intrinsic motivation and self-determination are believed to have a critical role in the human ability to understand and regulate one’s own behavior and actions

(Deci & Ryan, 1985; Mithaug, 1996, 1998; Spaulding, 1992; Stipek, 1988; Zimmerman, 1994)

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## The Link (continued)

- Students who have positive self-perceptions and perceive that they have choice and control over their learning abilities opportunities and tasks are more willing and likely to work successfully with adults in their environments

(Brown, 1988; Chapman, 1988; Schunk & Swartz, 1993)

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## The Link (continued)

- Self-determination as been defined as the attitudes and abilities necessary to act as the primary causal agent in one's life and to make choices and decisions regarding one's quality of life free from external influences or interferences
  - Thought to be predicated upon the individual's acquisition and use of specific skills, behaviors and attitudes that are learned across the lifespan and associated primarily with reaching adulthood and fulfilling adult roles

(Wehmeyer, 1996; Wehmeyer & Schwarz, 1997)

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## The Link (continued)

- Essential characteristics of self-determined behavior are thought to emerge on the basis of the development or acquisition of a set of complex components or elements that provide a theoretical framework to direct instructional activities.

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## The Link (continued)

- According to Wehman (2001), these elements include the development of:
  - Choice-making skills
  - Decision-making skills
  - Problem-solving skills
  - Goal setting and attainment skills
  - Self-management skills
  - Independence, risk-taking & safety skills
  - **Self-advocacy & leadership skills**
  - An internal locus of control
  - Positive attributions of efficacy & outcome expectancy
  - Self-awareness
  - Self-knowledge

*All of the above components are addressed to some degree in the Self-advocacy Strategy*

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## The Self-Advocacy Strategy for Enhancing Student Motivation and Self-Determination

(Van Reusen, Bos, Schumaker, & Deshler, 2007)

## The '**SHARE**' Behaviors

- **S** it up straight
- **H** ave a pleasant tone of voice
- **A** ctivate your thinking
  - Tell yourself to pay attention
  - Tell yourself to participate
  - Tell yourself to compare ideas
- **R** elax
  - Don't look uptight
  - Tell yourself to stay calm
- **E** ngage in eye communication

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## Steps of the Self-Advocacy Strategy

- Step 1: Inventory your...
  - Strengths
  - Areas to improve or learn
  - Goals
  - Choices for learning or accommodations
- Step 2: Provide your inventory information
- Step 3: Listen and respond
- Step 4: Ask questions
- Step 5: Name your goals

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## 15 Ways to Enhancing Student Motivation, Self-determination & Self-Advocacy In and Out of School: *Important Practices for Teachers and Parents*

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## Number 1

- Provide frequent and on-going opportunities for the learner to make informed choices and decisions in a variety of situations and settings.

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## Number 2

- Model, describe and demonstrate effective choice and decision-making, communication and negotiation behaviors in front of learners.

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## Number 3

- Teach the learner how to set goals, how to make and use plans in the attainment of goals, and how to evaluate one's progress in reaching goals.

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## Number 4

- Identify and recognize the learner's perceptions, thoughts, feelings or beliefs about learning and making choices, decisions, solving problems and taking responsibility for choices, decisions and goals.

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## Number 5

- Use role-playing to allow the learner to practice choice and decision-making, problem-solving and the communication and negotiation behaviors needed to advocate for one's needs, interests and rights.

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## Number 6

- Make use of naturally occurring activities and routines to provide the learner with frequent opportunities to make informed choices and decisions in a variety of situations and settings.

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## Number 7

- Involve the learner in making informed choices and decisions related to school, home and community involvement on an on-going basis and as a means to increase the learner's perception of commitment, responsibility and control for decision-making, actions and/or behavior.

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## Number 8

- Watch for opportunities to recognize the learner's accomplishments or success and don't forget to note improvement and change in making sound decisions and choices;
- Build on the learner's success, and don't be too quick to rescue the learner from difficult learning or performance activities.

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## Number 9

- Use natural reinforcements for appropriate choices, decisions and problem solving and natural consequences for poor or inappropriate choices, decisions, and problem solving behavior or actions.

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## Number 10

- Provide the learner with strategies or plans for success when she/he is unsure of how to proceed;
- Introduce thinking and problem solving strategies to develop independence;
- Allow time for the learner to tell or show others how he/she thought through a problem, came up with an answer or plan, or arrived at a solution.

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## Number 11

- Help the learner get connected with the person she/he wants to become or which profession or career he/she want to pursue.

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## Number 12

- Use *Contractual* agreements to clarify the learner's intrinsic justification, personal choice and responsibility for decisions, actions and behaviors.

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## Number 13

- Provide the learner with a variety of options with regard to completing tasks or assignments and the process of learning as a basis for accommodating and capitalizing on the learner's motivational and development status.

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## Number 14

- Hold informal conferences or meetings with the learner to ensure communication, directions, feedback and support in the acquisition and use of informed choice and decision-making, problem solving and self-advocacy skills.

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## Number 15

- Inform and teach the learner about the rights and responsibilities of citizenship including sources of legal rights and basic civil rights, including the rights for individuals with disabilities.

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## Parent/Family Roles & Responsibilities as Participants in Helping Student Transition & Navigate their Futures

- Encourage student self-determination, self-advocacy and independence at home and in the community
- Promote and facilitate goal-setting and goal attainment
- Teach and assist in teaching, daily living and personal-social skills

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## Parent/Family Roles & Responsibilities (continued)

- Encourage the students to work at home, in the neighborhood or have a job in the community
- Reinforce work-related and independent living behaviors at home
- Explore and promote community resources for transition

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## Parent/Family Roles & Responsibilities (continued)

- Assist in the student assessment process
- Guide the student in the developing personal and social values, self-confidence, and self-direction
- Work with legal and financial experts, as appropriate to plan financial, legal and residential alternatives

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## Transition Education and Services, K-8

- Most states continue to be noncompliant at the secondary level with the transition service requirements (National Council on Disability, 2000);
- Many schools provide transition planning but not transition services or education
- Need for direct instruction in life-centered career education competencies as well as the academic areas.

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## Transition Education and Services, K-8

- The state of Utah's legal perspective (1991) concerning transition services and education at the elementary level relates to the interpretation made of the IDEA and carried a strong message:

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## State of Utah's Message

- Professionals and parents who feel transition planning and education is not needed at the elementary level are ignoring the fact that they expect schools to provide a coordinated set of learning activities and experiences.
- If basic academic skills are taught systematically through direct instruction and socialization, but independent living skills are taught only incidentally, a gap occurs in a “coordinated set of activities designed to provide a seamless system of transition.”

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## State of Utah's Message (continued)

- This gap highlights the importance of beginning early to provide direct, integrated instruction at the elementary school level in all adult (life-centered) outcome areas.
- From a legal perspective of a free and appropriate education, parents and professionals have not only the right, but also the responsibility, to determine whether a school's set of coordinated activities should be limited to direct instruction in academic skills only or should include other life-centered outcomes as well.

(Utah Agenda for Meeting the Needs of Students with Disabilities Statement, p. 3)

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## Example Life Steps for Transition Planning in the IEP Process at the Elementary Level

Same Basic Steps as used with  
Older Children

### Step 1

- Identify desired future environments or planning areas and the demands in each area of employment, education/training, communication, living arrangements, social relationships, life skills, community participation, health, recreation/leisure, and self-determination.

## Step 2

- List priority needs, interests and preferences as well as identifying potential programs, services, and support options to be considered by the IEP team.

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## Step 3

- Prepare for the IEP team meeting by preparing the students to participate actively in the meeting and working with the student to invite appropriate participants.

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## Step 4

- Develop the transition plan with appropriate goals, objectives, specific linkages, time-lines, responsibilities, and communication guidelines for future meetings in place.

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## Step 5

- Implement, monitor, and review the student's IEP progress on a regular basis.

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## Role of Curriculum in Planning & Programming for Transition at the Elementary Level

- Review what is currently offered in the elementary school's curriculum
- Give special attention to whether or not the subjects or skills taught (reading, language arts, arithmetic, social studies, science, music, art, PE, etc.) provide preparation for functional life skills that the student can apply at school, home and in the community.

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## Strategies for Integrating Transition Education in Grades K-4

- Include "Who am I" and "What I will be When I grow up" activities and discussions in reading, language arts, social studies or science

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## Strategies for Integrating Transition Education in Grades K-4 (continued)

- Identify gaps between what is being taught in all instructional settings (general education, resource programs, special classes or schools, etc.) and what students with disabilities need
- Develop resources and strategies for bridging the gap in the curriculum and students' needs

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## Strategies for Integrating Transition Education in Grades K-4 (continued)

- Discuss what parents and family members do for a living.
  - Talk about various careers in a non-gender-specific way
  - Include careers that may be unique to the location (agriculture, oil, marine biology)
  - Find age appropriate books about various careers in different fields

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## Strategies for Integrating Transition Education in Grades K-4 (continued)

- As stories are read, talk about what the vocations and jobs are of the characters in the book. Role play and simulate situations in the stories.

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## Strategies for Integrating Transition Education in Grades K-4 (continued)

- Select a 'Student of the Week' and have the student complete a bulletin board about himself or herself and family.
  - Include the child's strengths and what his or her hopes and dreams are on this bulletin board.
  - Invite the child's parents or guardian to come to the class during the week to share information about their jobs or take the class to their job site if permissible.

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## Strategies for Integrating Transition Education in Grades K-4 (continued)

- Talk about interests, preferences or talents. Share these with one another by staging a class 'talent show.'
- Plan field trips that will integrate into any study area, for instance, discussions of careers, jobs and volunteer opportunities noted on the trip

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## Strategies for Integrating Transition Education in Grades K-4 (continued)

- Study the community and the volunteer roles, jobs and careers available and how these roles keep the community progressing
- Utilize the counselor and resource people to study careers and job and the way people participate in the community

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## Strategies for Integrating Transition Education in Grades 5-8

- Include service oriented projects in the community as part of the school's curriculum. Discuss roles and collaboration needed to help the student initiate service-oriented projects.

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## Strategies for Integrating Transition Education in Grades 5-8 (continued)

- Have students involved in the community learn about the roles and the interrelationships of the community roles.
- Research and study various jobs, careers, and volunteer opportunities
- Use the Internet to explore job and career ideas and interests

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## Strategies for Integrating Transition Education in Grades 5-8 (continued)

- Plan author, artist and performer visits.
- Ask speakers with different jobs, careers and volunteer roles to talk with students.
- Discuss subject-related careers (scientist, writer, historian, etc.)
- Study famous and not-so-famous people and their careers.

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## Strategies for Integrating Transition Education in Grades 5-8 (continued)

- Arrange for each student to 'job shadow' an adult for a day.
- In the classroom, simulate various jobs in the community.
- Visit job sites (Community based Instruction).
- Visit vocational and post-secondary schools.

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## Strategies for Integrating Transition Education in Grades 5-8 (continued)

- Have students attend a job fair.
- Have students read the newspaper about employment, housing, money, entertainment, sports, etc.
- Arrange for students to identify recreation opportunities in and around the city.
- Have older students with/without disabilities talk about what it takes to be successful in high school.

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## Strategies for Integrating Transition Education in Grades 5-8 (continued)

- Encourage and support students in taking more challenging academic and/or advanced placement courses
- Have students consult with and work with teachers and successful students on how to become more independent learners
- Promote student active participation in IEP meetings and teacher-parent-student conferences

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## Strategies for Integrating Transition Education in Grades 5-8 (continued)

- Seek opportunities for students to become more independent at home, school and in the community.
- Assist students in identifying their learning and career preferences and interests.
- Provide on-going opportunities for students to set and work toward the attainment of self-selected goals and desired outcomes.

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## Strategies for Integrating Transition Education in Grades 9-10

- Help students develop their abilities to explain the impact of their disabilities.
- Provide students with instruction on their legal rights and responsibilities as citizens with disabilities.
- Teach students how to identify and pursue needed accommodations and support for assessment and learning; include such accommodations in the IEP.

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## Strategies for Integrating Transition Education in Grades 9-10 (continued)

- Continue to focus on teaching students strategies for learning and performing in and out of school.
- Implement and evaluate the effectiveness of accommodations provided in classes and the community.
- Encourage students to seek after school and part time summer employment.

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## Strategies for Integrating Transition Education in Grades 11-12

- Review and update IEPs for needed modifications and related services.
- Involve students in monitoring their academic progress and grades.
- Provide opportunities for students to explore the vocational/career interests and academic abilities with appropriate post-secondary institutions.

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## Strategies for Integrating Transition Education in Grades 11-12 (continued)

- Assist students in making arrangements for appropriate college or vocational training entrance examinations or other requirements.
- Have students begin identifying a broad range of post-secondary institutions, schools or training opportunities and then reduce the list based on competitiveness, location, cost, curriculum, level of support and success.

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## Strategies for Integrating Transition Education in Grades 11-12 (continued)

- Have students begin developing a file including current diagnostic information, IEP documentation, grades/transcripts, letters of recommendation, awards, and resume.
- Have students take/retake college or training school entrance exams.
- Have students identify colleges from lists and rank them as 'good bets for entrance, possibilities, and long shots.'

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## Strategies for Integrating Transition Education in Grades 11-12 (continued)

- Help students obtain and complete financial aid forms; be sure they are mailed or files with the agencies.
- Help students explore services / funding available from state and federal agencies.

(K-12 Transition Education Lists from: Sitlington, P.L., & Clark, G.M. (2006). Transition Education and Services for Students with Disabilities. Pearson; Boston.)

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# Questions?

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