



Vocational Rehabilitation Outcomes for Students Participating in a Model Seamless Transition Program

Richard Luecking

University of Maryland

Recent research suggests:

- Work-based experiences, especially paid employment, during HS predicts adult employment (Wehman, et al., 2014)
- Collaboration between schools, VR and other partners is effective to the extent it is outcome driven (Fabian, et al., 2016)
- Early VR case initiation is associated with successful youth engagement and successful case closure (Honeycutt et al., 2014)

WIOA features:

- Pre-Employment Transition Services (PETS), including work experiences
- VR/LEA collaboration
- VR service case referral well before projected school exit for eligible, or potentially eligible, students

One Transition Service Model that Integrates these Features

Maryland Seamless Transition Collaborative (MSTC) interventions:

- Discovery
- Work-based experiences
- Paid employment
- Family supports
- Early VR agency case initiation
- Systems linkages and collaboration
- Coordination with teachers and instructional staff

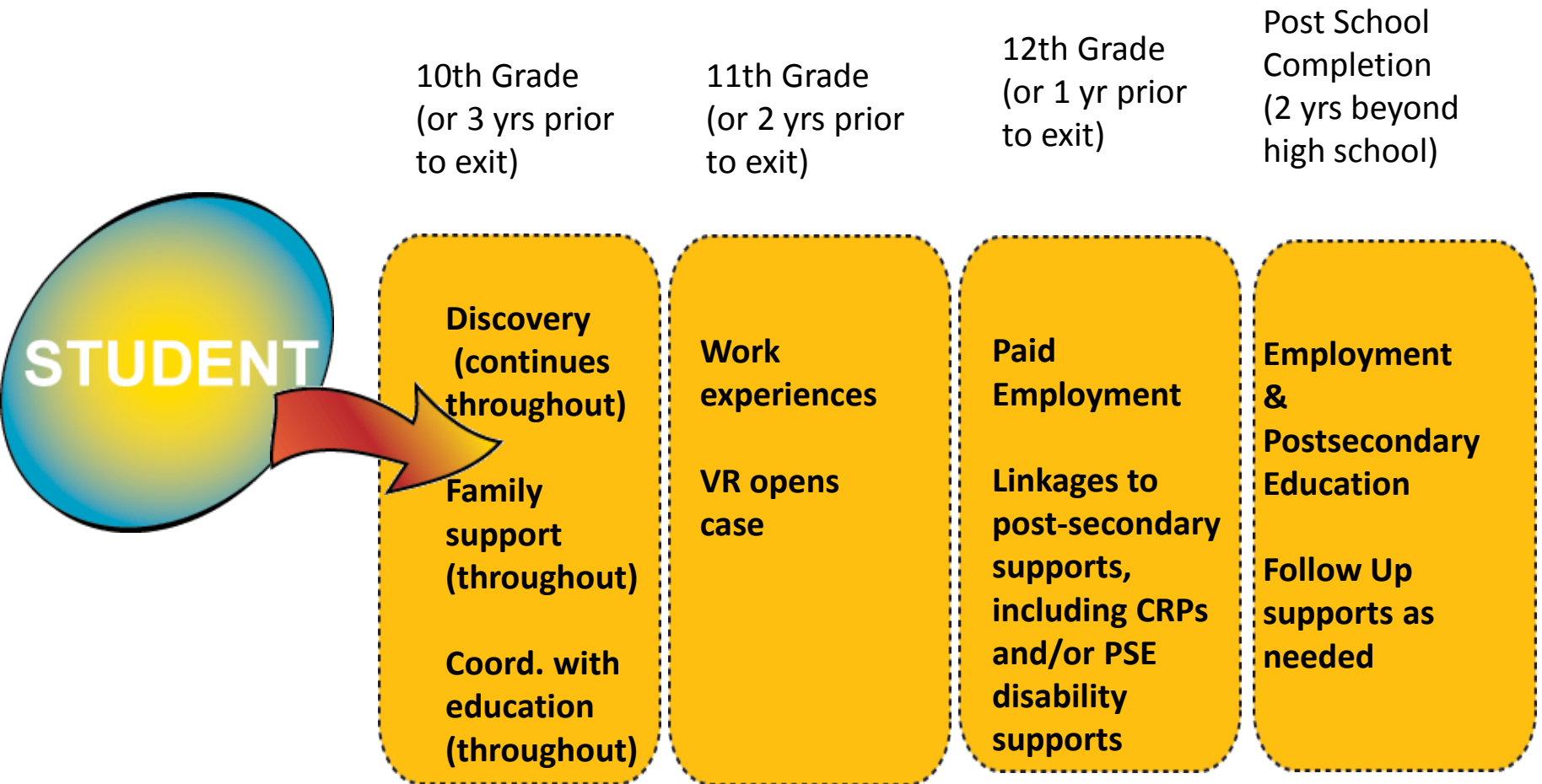
Seamless transition is intended to be:

A sequential delivery of specific transition service features beginning in early high school and....

the integration of resources of transition partners (VR, schools, CRPs, AJCs, PSE, other community services),

resulting in uninterrupted, collaborative transition from public secondary education to employment and/or postsecondary education.

MSTC Services Flow Chart



MSTC Implementation

- Led by Maryland Department of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) (2007 – 2012)
- Technical assistance from TransCen, Inc.
- 11 county-wide school districts, each with a local interagency team of collaborators
- Participants: eligible for DORS, consent to participate
- Targeted enrollment: 400

Methods

- Electronic administrative case service records extracted from DORS from 10/2007 – 1/2013 for 2 groups:
 - All MSTC youth (n=377)
 - Non-MSTC youth in MSTC counties (n=6844)
- Estimated propensity scores using youth characteristics
- All analyses conducted with inverse probability of treatment weighting (IPTW) to account for potential sample selection bias

Participants (n = 377)

- Male = 70%
- White = 61%; Black = 36%
- Disability:
 - Intellectual = 14%
 - Psychiatric/behavioral = 14%
 - Specific learning disability = 20%
 - Autism = 18%
 - Other = 34%

Key Service Findings

Compared to matched comparison group of other VR service recipients in the same counties, MSTC participants:

- Had shorter time between eligibility and IPE by average of 104 days
- Received more job training, job search assistance, and on-the-job support services
- Received less assessment and diagnosis/treatment services

Key Service Findings

Compared to matched comparison group of other VR service recipients in the same counties, MSTC participants:

- Had lower service costs - ~\$1,200 less on average
- Experienced longer time between application and closure – average of 1,013 v. 844 days

Key Outcome Findings

Compared to matched comparison group of other VR service recipients in the same counties, MSTC participants at closure:

- Were more likely to be employed – 55% v. 33%
- Earned less per hour - \$8.07 v. \$8.60
- Worked fewer hours/week – 22 v. 24.7
- Earned \$36 less per week on average

Discussion

- Overall, the MSTC intervention:
 - Resulted in faster time to IPE, but cases open longer
 - Cost less in terms of VR service dollars
 - Included more work focused services
 - Resulted in higher employment, but slightly lower earnings

Limitations

- Results are correlational, not causal
- IPTW analyses addresses some, but not all of the issues with lacking true control group
- An external objective indicators of outcome – such as record of post-exit earnings – would provide additional support for model effectiveness on youth employment outcomes

Implications

- Early VR case initiation yields better outcomes
 - Consistent with new WIOA regulations requiring more active outreach and case referral by VR counselors
- Focus on use of vocationally-oriented services vs assessment
- Focus on work experience category of WIOA Pre-ETS rather than other categories
- Maximize resources through multi-partner collaboration

Conclusions

- This evaluation study demonstrated the potential effectiveness of a career/work-focused transition intervention on improving employment outcomes for transitioning youth regardless of disability
- The study demonstrated that strategic management of existing services and resources (early case initiation, work-focused experiences, outcome-oriented service collaboration) = less service cost + better service outcome

Future study questions

- What is the reason for lower earnings?
 - IPE goals?
 - Referral selection biased?
 - Other?
- Do earning change over time, post-closure?

More on study and its implications:

- Summary on RRTC on VR Practices website:

<http://bit.ly/2f9DOot>

- Full report:

Luecking, R., Fabian, E., Contreary, K, Honeycutt, T., & Luecking, D. (2017). Vocational rehabilitation outcomes for students participating in a model transition program. *Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin*.

Pre-print online copy:

<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0034355217713167>

More background on MSTC

Luecking, D., & Luecking, R. (2015). Translating research into a seamless transition model. *Career Development and Transition for Exceptional Individuals*, 38, 4-13.

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