SECTION V: WHAT EFFECTIVE PRACTICES AND STRATEGIES EXIST TO PREPARE STUDENTS?

What skills or activities are likely to prepare students to enter and succeed in postsecondary education?

Findings from correlational research regarding outcomes for students with disabilities can provide guidance here. Teachers, students, and all members of IEP teams should focus on ensuring factors and skills correlated with postsecondary education enrollment for students with disabilities are at the core of student's programs at least by high school. Each of the "predictors" below are correlated with enrollment in postsecondary education. Rowe et al. (2014) conducted a Delphi study and identified operational definitions and essential characteristics of these predictors. The full list of predictors and characteristics are included in the Predictor Implementation Self-Assessment and some characteristics are included below.

Career Awareness

- o Provide numerous opportunities to learn about various careers
- o Identify skills for occupations aligned with core content

Career & Technical Education (Vocational Education)

- o Provide connection to postsecondary education and employment through site visits
- o Provide opportunities to earn certificates in certain career areas
- o Provide career counseling
- o Provide accommodations to ensure student access and mastery of content

Goal Setting

- o Teach goal setting and attainment strategies

Inclusion in General Education

- o Develop a school atmosphere receptive to including students with disabilities at all levels of the school building
- o Use diverse instructional strategies to meet the needs of all students including UDL and technology
- o Engage students as active participants in general education
- o Provide specific instruction to support students with disabilities

Interagency Collaboration

- o Develop an agreed upon mission and vision of transition services and programs

- Coordinate policies and procedures for service delivery and resource sharing

- Conduct asset/ resource mapping to identify strengths and gaps in service delivery

- Clearly define roles and responsibilities and schedule regular times for planning and measuring progress

Paid Employment

- Provide opportunities for all students to participate in job shadowing, work-study, apprenticeships, or internships

- Provide instruction in soft skills (e.g., problem solving, responding to feedback), and occupation specific skills (e.g., clerical, mechanical)

Parent Expectations

- Provide parents with information about postsecondary education and training options

- Provide parents with models or examples of students with disabilities who are or have participated in postsecondary education and training

Self-care/ Independent Living

- Offer instruction on (a) financial planning, (b) self-care, (c) food preparation, (d) housekeeping, (e) home maintenance, (f) transportation, (g) clothing care, (h) accessing community services, (i) time management, (j) citizenship, and (k) peer relationships

- Provide multiple opportunities for students to practice independent living skills throughout the school day

- Teach recreation skills that can be performed alone or with others in both organized and informal settings

Self-determination and Self-advocacy (essential characteristics)

- Use a student driven IEP and SOP process

- Embed choice in daily lessons across the curriculum

- Teach students self-monitoring strategies and provide opportunities for use of these strategies

- Explicitly teach students self-advocacy skills

- Foster development of students' leadership skills

- Ensure students with complex disabilities have a functional community system

Social skills

- Integrate social skills instruction across the curriculum

- Use direct instruction curriculum to teach communication, interpersonal, conversational, negotiation, conflict, and group skills in context

- Use ecological assessments to identify social skills students will be expected to perform in future contexts

What are effective instructional practices for academic and non-academic skills students need?

Factors associated with postsecondary education enrollment, identified through research, should be made available in students' programs. Also, instructional strategies for teaching the skills associated with college readiness should be implemented. Central to NTACT's knowledge development efforts is the identification of evidence-based, research-based, and promising practices to teach skills to secondary students with disabilities. NTACT has identified effective practices to teach academic skills in secondary settings to students with disabilities, including strategy instruction to teach reading comprehension skills, graduated sequence of instruction to teach algebra, and peer-assisted instruction across core academic content areas. Additionally, there are effective practices and lesson plan starters available at www.transitionta.org to teach such skills as goal attainment and social skills. There are also resources classroom teachers and other IEP team members can access on financial literacy, school-community-business partnerships, family engagement, and other factors associated with postsecondary education and training access. Finally, it is imperative for educators, service providers, counselors, family members, and students to use effective instructional strategies. Other websites that include such resources, relevant to this topic are The Transition Coalition and the National Center for Intensive Interventions.

Are there examples of programs that currently exist that include these practices and strategies?

NTACT also examined evidence from programs aimed at preparing students for college such as AVID or Project Lead the Way to determine their effectiveness for students with disabilities. This resource includes a list of programs that do include students with disabilities; however, none of the programs disaggregated efficacy data for students with disabilities. The list is a nice start; however, for IEP teams considering programs and program components they may implement as they prepare individual or groups of students for college success.

How can I incorporate those practices or strategies into my IEP, classroom, school, district, or community?

Examine your data and plan for implementation.
- At the individual student level, examine a student's performance data (transition assessment and other ongoing measures of academic performance) to determine areas of strength and need.
- Identify gaps between current skills and skills identified for PSET success.
- Teach those skills using effective practices.

- Family members can also use assessment information to identify gaps and provide students opportunities to develop skills at home and in the community. Additionally, students can also be a part of identifying their current strengths and areas for improvement, in order to be ready for PSET success.

At the classroom, school, or program level, examine the data across your student population.
- Consider outcome data (post-school). Is there a specific population you, your school, your organization want to "target" to improve access to PSET?
- Engage with other stakeholders from secondary schools, parent organizations, VR agencies, community service providers, higher education, training programs, employers and then consider the community's resources to assist in implementing effective practices.
- Plan to implement.
- Implement and collect data regarding student progress and outcomes along the way. Whether at the student or system level, following the model of (a) plan (using your data), (b) do (with effective practices targeting critical skills), (c) study (review your implementation and impact data and make necessary adjustments), (d) act (continue implementation) repeatedly is a successful process.