It Pays to Work!
Translating Research into Practice to Build Model Employment Transition Sites

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“Oh, is that today?”
Presumed Employability
What We Know
How do we know this?
Important Implications

- Work is both a critical intervention AND expected outcome

- A well defined and delivered intervention leads to outcomes
Other Important Factors

- Youth empowerment
- Family support and expectations
- Collaboration and service linkages
- Address issues of poverty
What are the Challenges
Take that LEAP...
How do you structure an intervention that leads to quality work experiences and ultimately paid employment
Essential Elements
Early Planning and Experiences to Focus Student Career Preferences
Early and Ongoing Collaboration
Work Experience
Support and Follow-up Needed to Stabilize Employment
Flow of Services

4 yrs prior to exit (Freshman)

Positive Personal Profile
- Knowing the Youth
- Career Assessments
- Summer Work
- Workplace knowledge and skills development linked to the Iowa Core and 21st Century Skills (e.g., soft skills, communication, work behaviors, math, problem solving, etc.)
- Family engagement and participation

3 yrs prior to exit (Sophomore)

IVRS Intake
- Work Experience (e.g., job shadows, worksite tours, internships)
- Summer Work

2 yrs prior to exit (Junior)

IPE Developed
Linkages (e.g., CRP, Higher Ed)
- Summer Work
- Dual credit

1 yr prior to exit (Senior)

Paid Employment

1 yr post exit

Post-school follow-up
- In paid employment receiving supports from CRP (if needed)
- or
- Enrolled postsecondary education

Student Outcome

Student Services
Phase of Job Development

- Awareness of Self
- Awareness of the World
- Exploration
- Preparation
- Employment
What is a Work Experience

- Any activity that puts youth in the workplace of an employers and offers an opportunity to learn about CAREERS and WORK BEHAVIORS.
Types of Work Experiences

- Career exploration
- Informational Interviews
- Company Tours
- Job shadowing
- Work sampling
- Service learning
- Internships
- Apprenticeships
Why Work Experiences

- Discover student skills, talents, interests, dislikes, support needs
- Learn what type of work environment is best for each student
- Give students exposure to real work
- Give employers exposure to talented youth
- Develop work behaviors and soft skills
- Make it easier to get students paid work prior to school exit
Schools Role in Planning for Work Experiences
“Quality” Work Experiences - Characteristics

- Clear program goals

- Clear expectations & feedback to assess progress toward achieving goals

- Clear roles & responsibilities for worksite supervisors, mentors, teachers, support personnel, & other partners

- Training plans that specify learning goals tailored to individual students with specific outcomes connected to student learning
“Quality” Work Experiences - Characteristics

- Convenient links between students, school & employers
- Range of work-based learning opportunities, especially those outside traditional youth-employing industries
- Mentor(s) at the workplace
- Assessments to identify skills, interests, & support needs at the worksite
Successful Employment

- A two way street
- Mutually beneficial relationship
- It is about adding value, NOT charity!
Set the tone for what is possible
Help Wanted

Company looking for individual with developmental disabilities, autism and history of aggressive behaviors. Extensive history of hospitalization preferred. Drug problems, poor social skills and delusional behaviors OK. Supportive co-workers and movie day on Fridays. Call for an application.
A Skills NOT Deficits Approach

- Reframe our perceptions of students with disabilities

- Focus on preferences and what a person *can* do, not what they *can’t*

- Shifts emphasis to adding value, not what needs to be fixed

- Able to target employment settings where job seeker’s unique characteristics and skills will be assets—where they will fit in and make friends
Deficits to Strengths
Stacy’s File

- Lazy
- Non-verbal
- No work experiences
- Irresponsible
- Can’t read
- Bad attitude
What We Said…

- Organized
- Creative with a good sense of fashion
- Great with kids
- Responsible (runs a household!)
- Likes to improve her surroundings
- Likes clean, organized environments
- Values doing the right thing
- Good multi-tasker
We Are Who We Are

- Reframe perceptions of students
- Start working with what they have to offer and their interests
- Focus on the skills not deficits
- Expose students to a wide variety of employment settings
- Prepare them with work
Top 10

Tips as you plan for the quality work experiences
#10…
Don’t get lost in the confusion over competing priorities.
#9…
Remember to keep your head on straight.
#8...Recognize when you need to make a change.
#7... Make your needs known.
#6...Don’t let your egos get in the way of the task at hand.
#5...Try out a new perspective.
#4... Be prepared for known and unknown hazards.
#3... Don’t be afraid of the challenges that lie ahead.
#2... Don’t let any constraints deter you.
#1...Keep Your Eyes on the Prize!
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