GRAB AND GO PRACTICES

HOW IEP TEAMS CAN USE DUAL ENROLLMENT EXPERIENCES TO DEVELOP ROBUST PLANS

by Maria Paiewonsky, Judi Bean, & Ashley Blanca Rodrigues

Individual Education Program (IEP) teams have a great opportunity to develop and implement transition plans for students with intellectual disabilities or autism, age 18-21, who are participating in inclusive dual enrollment experiences as part of their postsecondary program.

IEP teams may include transition specialists, college program staff, educational coaches, related services staff, adult service providers, students, and parents. This brief provides an overview of numerous ways that team members are capitalizing on dual enrollment college experiences that students are participating in to develop IEPs that reflect comprehensive transition experiences, and that communicate the progress students are making on measurable postsecondary goals.

BACKGROUND

Given the growth in the number of dual enrollment initiatives (Grigal, Hart, Smith, Domin & Weir, 2017), IEP teams are reconsidering how transition services are implemented when students with intellectual disability participate in college. Initially, many teams may view dual enrollment opportunities as "add-on" or supplemental activities, making the assumption that special education instruction must be provided in high school settings. Given this assumption, teams find themselves trying to fit both dual enrollment and traditional high school-based special education into student service plans, rather than taking advantage of the comprehensive student learning that occurs through college and work experiences.

All too often, though, when plans are written this way, students have less quality time in either educational setting. Instead, they spend more time traveling back and forth between high school and college and work, which abbreviates their time on learning.

INCLUSIVE DUAL ENROLLMENT EXPERIENCES ON A COLLEGE CAMPUS
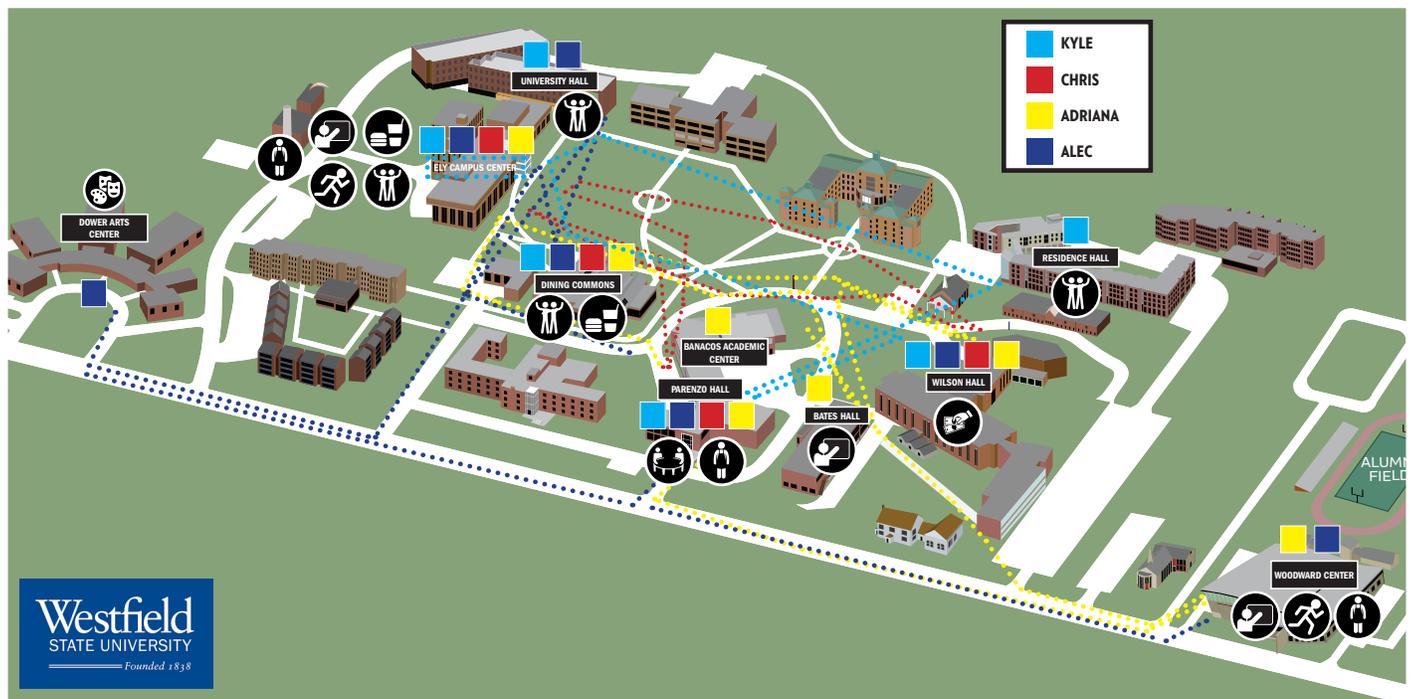
Therefore, IEP teams should include the college experiences of dual enrollment students in the IEP to make it more effective by reflecting the transition activities students are working on in college (e.g., participation in academic courses, competitive integrated employment, foundational skills).

With thoughtful planning, inclusive dual enrollment experiences can give IEP teams a framework for providing effective transition services in the most age-appropriate setting with their peers without disabilities in college. Through student participation in academic advising, course participation, socialization with peers, and campus engagement, teams can document a student's vision and measurable postsecondary goals and track student progress on attaining those goals.

IEP teams can also use dual enrollment experiences to meet the mandates of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004) to provide services that facilitate a student's move to high school to post-school activities which includes conducting relevant and age-appropriate transition assessments; identifying transition services, including a course of study; identifying and tracking progress of annual goals; and coordinating services with adult agencies (NSTTAC, 2014).

POSTSECONDARY GOAL DEVELOPMENT

Dual enrollment staff, specifically transition specialists and college program staff, often collaborate to facilitate person-centered planning (PCP) with students who are preparing for dual enrollment. The PCP often includes a vision statement that can be developed into measurable postsecondary goals. These goals may be further refined through academic advising each semester.

> *Here's an example of a vision statement from a dually-enrolled student: Carmen wants to take college classes that will help her to secure a graphic design or printing position at a print shop upon leaving high school in June 2019.*

TRANSITION ASSESSMENT

Transition assessment tools and surveys for dual enrollment practitioners (college and school district staff) can be used to guide development of a college course of study and internships on campus, and to assess the status of skills and accommodations the student needs to engage in the full breadth of campus activities. Transition staff often use situational assessments and informal assessments to gather information about the student's strengths, preferences, interests and needs.

IEP PLANNING AND DOCUMENTATION THROUGH INCLUSIVE DUAL ENROLLMENT		
IEP component related to transition services	Connection to dual enrollment experience	Additional information
Postsecondary goal	Stated reason for participating in inclusive dual enrollment activities	May come from person-centered planning or as a result of completing interest inventories. May also come from application to dual enrollment program and/or academic advising.
Transition assessment	Information can be collected to document travel skills, orientation and mobility around campus, academic growth in classes, participation in campus activities, social skills opportunities, and using life skills at college, campus, or community jobs.	Assessment information may be drawn from student travel schedules, class schedules, completed assignments, accessing and using accommodations, directing support personnel, work-based learning plans.
Transition services	Full scope of plan for student at college and/or work and accommodations, related services.	Best drawn from student fact sheet, or student profile sheet prepared for team supporting student.
Course of study	Sequence of courses, work experiences, and campus engagement identified to support student's postsecondary goals.	May be drawn from advisor's student plan, student's IEP.
Annual goals	Team works with student, coach, support staff to develop goals that lead student to be as independent as possible at college and work.	Information may be gathered from student's completed assignments, schedule, summary of work with support staff, accommodation plan.
Student invited to attend, engage in IEP meeting	Student encouraged to collect information through smartphone photos, student-coach agreement plans, transcripts, completed assignments, work based learning plans, digital calendar to report progress at IEP meeting.	Support staff may be directed to help student develop digital portfolio, digital story to discuss dual enrollment experience, progress.
Invitation to adult agency representatives to attend meeting	Check in with student and or parent/guardian about getting feedback from college personnel, employers, adult agencies. Plan for collaboration and transition to postschool activities.	Focus on fading support, planning next steps with natural supports, non-special education supports.

Most importantly, staff are able to facilitate these assessments in an age-appropriate setting: a college campus. Among the transition assessment tools that staff use are the following:

- **Student-Coach Agreement** (Helps students learn to direct their supports)
- **Kuder Navigator Career Assessment** (Offers a variety of career assessments)
- **Landmark's Guide to Assessing College Readiness** (Used to assess academic readiness and executive function skills)
- **Work-Based Learning Plan** (Identifies soft skills needed for successful work)
- **Transition Planning Inventory, 2nd Ed.** (Variety of informal assessments for multiple domain areas)
- **Person-Centered Planning** (Futures planning tool that relies on student's strengths and interests rather than perceived capabilities)
- **Informal tools** that represent college likes/dislikes/experiences, such as class observations, journals, checklists, photos of locations
- **CITE Learning Style Inventory** (Assessment tool to document learning styles)
- **Self-Determination Inventory: Student-Report** (2017) (Comprehensive self-determination assessment tool)

TRANSITION SERVICES

For students age 16 and up with disabilities (age 14 in some states), the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that IEP teams address the need for transition services through an Individual Transition Plan, or ITP. The ITP reflects the ongoing development of students, is maintained within the IEP, and is revisited annually for any needed revisions or modifications.

A required element to be completed on a ITP is the student's postsecondary vision, broken into goals (i.e., what the student hopes to achieve after leaving high school). A least one postsecondary goal is required in the area of education/training, at least one in employment, and if appropriate, one related to independent living.

After goals have been determined, an action plan is created to outline how the student can develop self-determination skills and be prepared both academically and functionally to transition to post-school activities to achieve their postsecondary vision. This is why a dual enrollment initiative is ideal in helping students achieve their goals in the natural environment (college) that they will be using these skills.

Example: Carmen's Transition Services

Student vision	Education	Employment/ training	Independent living
Carmen: college, print shop, travel	Intro to Graphic Arts; writing courses	Working in a print shop 2 days a week	Learning to use public transportation
Transition specialist	X	X	X
Related services		X	X
Assistive technology	X	X	X
Career Voc Specialist		X	
College coordinator	X		

COURSE OF STUDY

In typical dual enrollment experiences, students are accessing and working on several of their transition planning domains throughout the week. Here are some examples:

- **Education/training (instruction)**
  Taking college courses not only provides opportunities for students to develop their reading, writing, math, and computer skills, but also helps them increase communication and study skills, have richer social and academic interactions, and expand their worldview.

- **Employment**
  Career development resources are available on most college campuses that allow students to build their skills in resume writing, interviewing, dressing for success, and mock interviewing. Students may also have the chance to attend job fairs, and to engage in service learning opportunities, supported internship placements, part-time paid employment, job shadowing, and volunteer service learning projects. Students who take courses aligned with their career interests can determine if the field is indeed something that they want to pursue.

- **Independent living (community experiences / post-school adult living)**
  Students who are regularly going to a college campus are learning to apply life skills in typical environments with their peers and in naturally occurring situations. Dually enrolled students learn how to independently access community resources, socialize, manage money, meet their health care needs, use public transportation, navigate campus, build organizational skills, and self-advocate.

Example: Course of study for Carmen

Day/Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:00	MBTA/Shuttle to UMB	MBTA to job	MBTA/Shuttle to UMB	MBTA to job	MBTA/Shuttle to UMB
9:00	GRA 104 Intro to Screen Printing	Paid work at printing shop	GRA 104 Intro to Screen Printing	Paid work at printing shop	GRA 104 Intro to Screen Printing
10:00	Academic tutoring with coach or mentor		Academic tutoring with coach or mentor		Academic tutoring with coach or mentor
11:00	Athletic center or game room	Career counseling (job coach) meeting	Athletic center or game room	Career counseling (job coach) meeting	Athletic center or game room
12:00	Lunch at student center	Lunch break at work	Lunch at student center	Lunch break at work	Lunch at student center
1:00		Library: check email; work on assignments	Check in with peer mentor	Library: check email; work on assignments	Career workshops
2:00	WRI 101 College Writing	MBTA to home	WRI 101 College Writing	MBTA to home	WRI 101 College Writing
3:00	Shuttle/MBTA to home		Shuttle/MBTA to home		Shuttle/MBTA to home

ACCOMMODATIONS

IDEA does not apply at the college level, and participation in a dual-enrollment program is considered the student's choice. Because the student is continuing to earn high school credit, the IEP team plays a key role in providing recommendations and documentation for requested accommodations, but decisions about the accommodations provided in college classes will be determined by the college following 504/Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines. The ADA assures that individuals with disabilities are not discriminated against because of their disability. Dually enrolled students may be provided reasonable accommodations that allow equal access. However, colleges will not provide modifications to change the course content or alter performance expectations for the course.

In a dual enrollment program, students will need to self-identify to Disability Support Services (DSS) to request accommodations for educational support. DSS and dual enrollment program staff will do everything they can to help the student receive these accommodations. However, students are responsible for advocating for themselves to professors, other students, internship employers, etc.

IEP teams may develop learning goals that track how effectively students are using accommodations. For example, teams may collect information on how effectively students are using screen readers, enlarged text, extended time for taking tests, or graphic organizers to complete writing assignments.

CURRENT PERFORMANCE

The most important descriptions of a student's current performance come from objective data found in the most recent evaluations and Summary of Performance component of the IEP/ITP; however, anecdotal descriptions can be useful to supplement testing data. This information might be collected through course presentations, quizzes and tests, coach- or student-developed videos & photos from a typical college day, completed assignments, or student portfolios.

ANNUAL GOALS

Annual goals are developed by using information from transition assessments and focusing on the postsecondary goal areas. Typically these goal areas encompass employment, education, independent living, and self-advocacy/self-determination. Three resources that maybe be helpful for IEP teams are located in the Think College Resource Library *(www.thinkcollege.net).*

1. Wade's 2014 *Transition IEP Goals and Activities to Prepare for Inclusive Postsecondary Education* includes sample goals from 5 domains: education/training, employment, community participation, adult living/community options, and related services.

2. Boyle's 2017 *Inclusive Dual Enrollment Student Evaluation Tool* offers goals and performance levels in 7 domains: campus navigation & travel, time management and organization, classroom and campus, self advocacy and self awareness, social and communication, vocational/internship, and life skills.

3. Hart, Boyle, and Jones' 2017 *Foundational Skills for the College and Career Learning Plan* can be used to structure the goal setting and to track and document the achievement of foundational skills. It offers goal-setting in 4 domain: academic and career habits, cultural know-how, balancing multiple roles, and self-direction.

Using Carmen as an example, three annual goals might include:

• By the end of the 2018-2019 academic year, Carmen will have successfully completed two college courses through the dual enrollment program that relate to her interest in graphics and printing.

• By the end of the 2018-2019 academic year, Carmen will communicate with her college instructors via email, text or in person discussions to discuss class concerns.

• By the end of the 2018-2019 academic year, Carmen will navigate independently on campus to attend her classes, eat lunch in the student center and participate in two additional campus activities each week such as a club meeting, tutoring or campus event.

BENCHMARKS

Benchmarks are measurable indicators of student progress used to describe the skills the student will acquire to meet an annual goal.

Examples:

> *By _____, Carmen will meet with the dual enrollment coordinator in an advising meeting and self-advocate for at least 3 class choices of interest per semester.*

> *By _____, Carmen will independently ask her professor questions if she is unsure of expectations or needs for 4 out of 5 targeted opportunities.*

> *By _____, Carmen will independently navigate the college campus, with her Ed. Coach meeting her at her destination for 4 out of 5 targeted opportunities.*

Data Collection Formats

There are a few ways that students or staff supporting them can collect information for IEP teams. The most important factor is determining what is going to be the easiest and most effective way to gather information. Many students and staff use their smart phone or tablet apps to digital information. Data collection can include:

• Taking pictures to chronicle daily activities and to document important moments

• Developing a template with student benchmarks

• Using checklists with targeted activities and skills

• Recording in-the-moment progress or challenges with audio note apps

• Documenting progress with online journals, blogs, email, texting

• Archiving skills, experiences, and knowledge with paper or online portfolios

CONCLUSION

IEP team members who support students in inclusive dual enrollment experiences are in a great position to develop comprehensive transition services and to document student progress at college, at work, and in the community. In the true spirit of transition, students in dual enrollment experiences have the opportunity to prepare for education, employment, and independent living goals with support from their IEP teams.

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