



Benefits and Types of Post- Secondary Programs for Students With Disabilities



A Literature Review

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Introduction

Based on the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2022), individuals with disabilities have an unemployment rate of roughly 9.7%. A way to help lower this rate is to provide opportunities for these individuals to attend post-secondary programs. These post-secondary programs help individuals with disabilities with many life skills including social, academic, independent living, and employment. With acquisition of these skills, individuals with disabilities experience a higher quality of life than those who do not participate in post-secondary programs. There are multiple types of post-secondary programs and models that are known to meet the needs of individuals. Each of these types of programs and models have different goals. There are great benefits with post-secondary programs for individuals with disabilities.

Benefits of Post-Secondary Programs

Post-Secondary programs offer a multitude of benefits for students that participate in them, the main goal of which is to increase quality of living and encourage self-sufficiency and independent living. For these programs to be successful, they must consist of four components (**social, academic, independent living and employment**). To satisfy these components, students will experience periods of instruction, but will also have access to related services and be encouraged to participate in community experiences. These programs typically acknowledge student strengths and interests and adapt their content accordingly. After completion of the program, students will not only have received an education, but will also be working to achieve self-determination.

Types of Teaching Models of Post-Secondary Education

1. **Substantially Separate model**—Students within the program are kept mostly separate from General Education students. They are allowed to attend social events but the program itself is not inclusive. It is focused primarily on life skills and training with the opportunity to gain work experience.
2. **Inclusive Individual Model**—Students receive instruction alongside students without disabilities. Most individualized instruction revolves around academic needs.
3. **Mixed Hybrid Model**—This model is a mix of the Substantially Separate Model and Inclusive Individual Model. Students will sometimes participate in activities and instruction that does involve students without disabilities, however, they will also learn and participate in activities within a segregated environment.

Table 5.

Example of Achieved Employment Goals for Tessa
Goal: Working in an early childhood setting

Focus Area	Fall 2011	Spring 2012	Summer 2012	Fall 2012	Spring 2013	Summer 2013
Academic	Child Development (3 credits)	Intro to Early Childhood Education (3 credits)	—	Intro to Early Childhood Special Education (3 credits)	PAR (3 credits)	—
Career Exploration	Disability Mentoring Day, Childcare Center	Day Care Observation through class	—	Disability Mentoring Day, Observation	Resume building, Portfolio, Job Fairs	—
Career Planning	Maps	Resume Workshop, 7 Habits, Learning Style Assessment	Interest Profiler	—	—	—
Career Internship Experience	—	Burlington's Children Space	Internship at UVM Adventure Day Camp (3 credits)	—	—	Internship at The Fitness Center (3 credits), Job Search & Placement

Correlation Between Post-Secondary Programs and Employment Rates

According to the Former Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Madaline Will, only 15% of adults with disabilities have attended some form of post-secondary program. The fact that 90% percent of adults with intellectual disabilities are unemployed is the result of the low attendance rate of these individuals. Because of the correlation between unemployment rates and post-secondary education program attendance, the lack of attendance also influences the amount of adults with intellectual disabilities who are able to live on their own.

TPSIDS—Transition and Post-Secondary Education Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities

TPSIDS aim to provide students with support and services for academic and social inclusions.

1. Transition programs/ services
2. Post-Secondary Education
3. Vocational Education
4. Integrated Employment
5. Continuing Adult Education
6. Inclusive Academic Classes
7. Adult Services
8. Independent Living
9. Community Participation
10. External Experiences (i.e. Special Olympics)

Conclusion

Post-Secondary Programs for students with disabilities are crucial in ensuring a higher quality of life. Post-Secondary Programs coincide with higher levels or employment rates and therefore higher levels of independence and self-determination. Many different program options exist to help students meet their individual goals. It is important to offer a wide range of these programs in order to ensure students have access to the resources which will aid them in reaching their full potential.

References are available upon request