

Tools for Assessing Student Growth and Readiness for Competitive Employment

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MEDICINE *of* THE HIGHEST ORDER



Background: Employment First!

A national movement that promotes employment for all people with disabilities

Objectives of Employment First!:

- Person-centered planning
- Building infrastructure capacity
- Collaborations that increase employment
- Developing strategic partnerships with business

Background: Raising expectations

Adopting and Employment First philosophy in NYS

Belief that employment is attainable for all

Need to assess for and train towards least restrictive employment options

Integrated, competitive employment as Gold Standard:

- 20+ hours per week at prevailing wage
- Fully integrated within work environment, utilizing natural support

Background: Employment options

Sheltered workshops
Work activity centers

Individual or group
supported employment

Competitive
employment

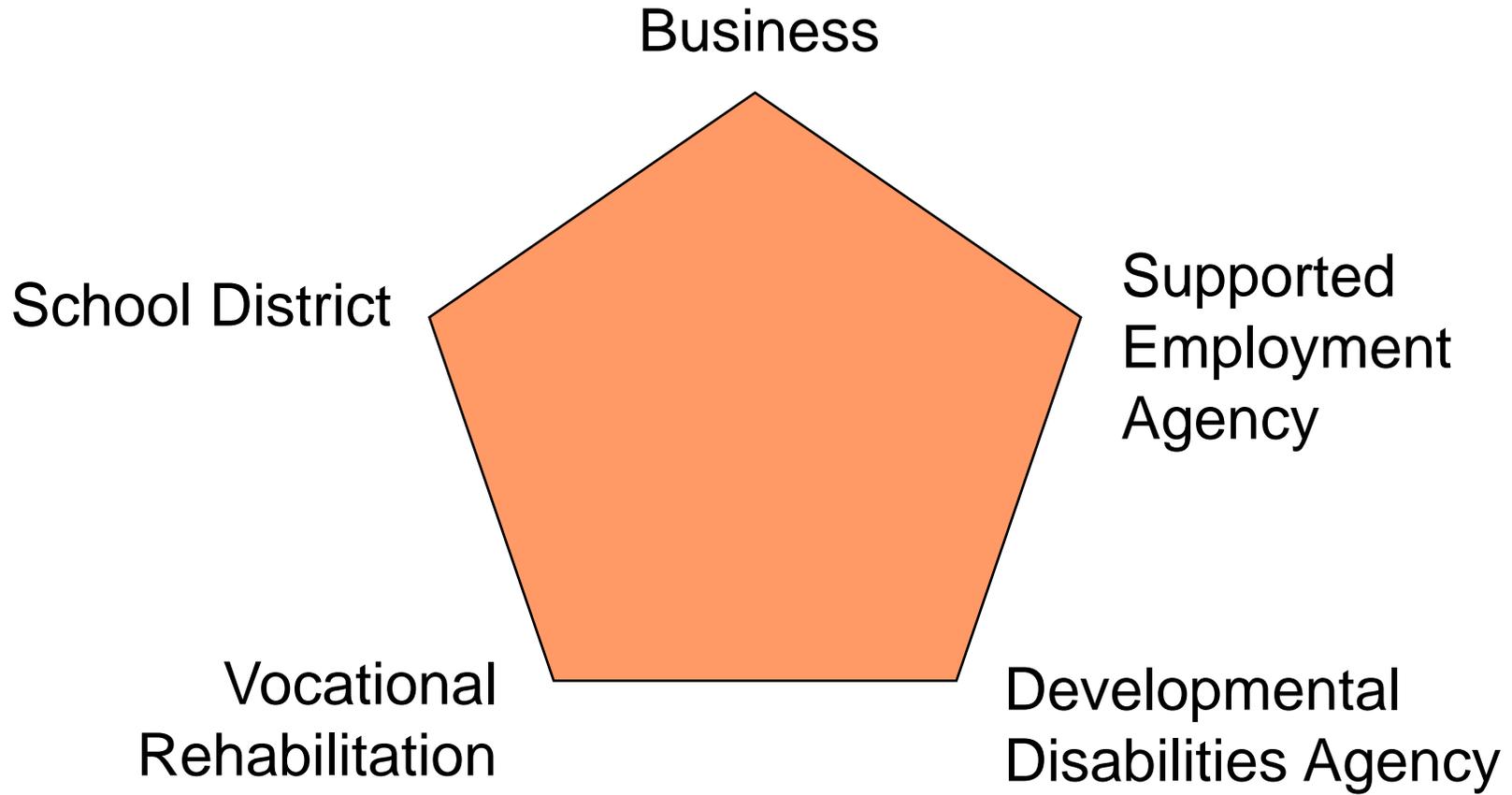
Fully supported
work environment

Independent
work environment

Background: Challenges and barriers

- Differing priorities
- “Language” barriers
- Funding
- Engaging with additional systems not directly incorporated into the model

Project SEARCH™: A collaborative model



Current programs in Monroe County, NY

- 3 programs
 - University of Rochester Medical Center
 - City of Rochester
 - Wegmans



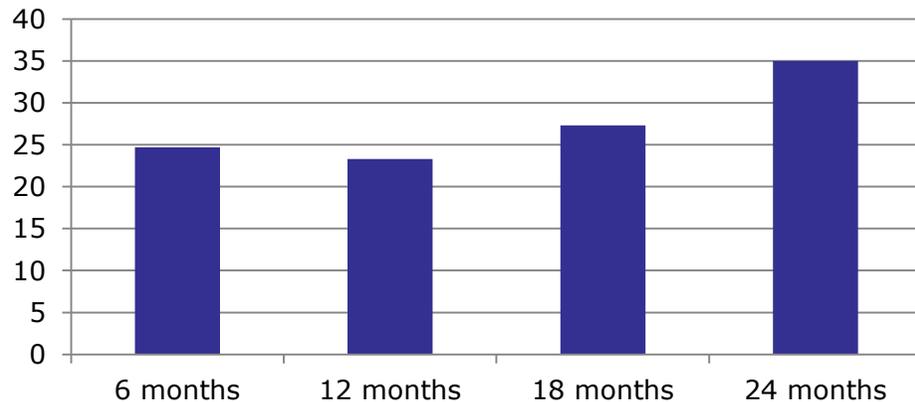
Project outcomes: The good news

- Promising results in first three years
 - 74 participants
 - Completion rate: 80%
- 78% of program graduates transitioned into competitive, integrated employment
 - 70% hired by partner host business
- Graduates work an average of 23 hours per week at \$8.52/hour at hire (range: \$7.25 = \$12.19)

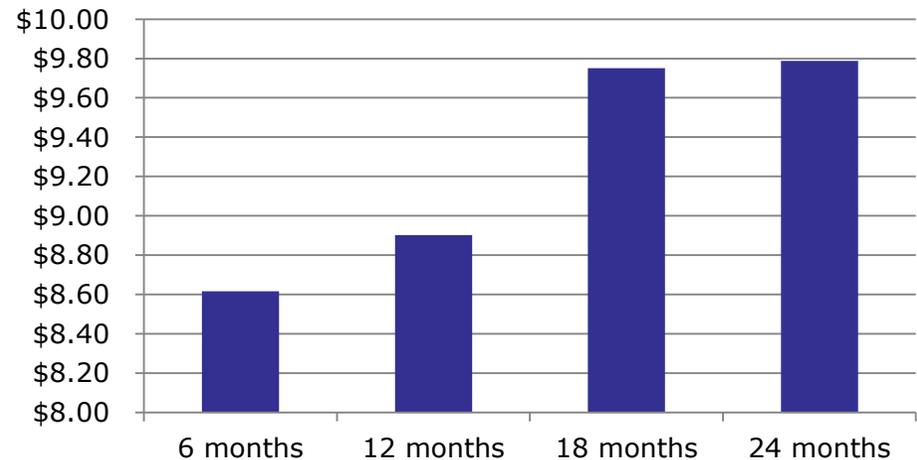
Project outcomes: More good news

- Graduates who maintain employment are growing in their positions

Avg. # Hours per Week Employed



Avg. Rate per Hour Earned



Project outcomes: The challenge

- Steady decline in ability to maintain employment
 - 86% maintained employment 6+ months
 - 86% maintained employment 12+ months
 - 60% maintained employment 18+ months
 - 50% maintained employment 24+ months

Goal of program evaluation

Strengthen program

- Improved outcomes
- Enhanced cross-systems collaboration and communication
- Increased fiscal efficiency

Objectives of program evaluation

Identify factors that contribute to success

Identify potential barriers to success

- Why participants don't complete
- Why participants who complete don't pursue competitive employment
- Why participants who obtain competitive employment are unable to maintain employment over time

Program evaluation approach

Continuous feedback and assessment

Data from multiple stakeholders (e.g., student teacher, job coach, business supervisor, family)

Program evaluation tools

Weekly internship assessment (completed by teacher and job coach)

Self-assessment (completed by student)

JOBS scale (completed by internship site supervisor)

Mid-year review

Student focus groups

Parent interviews

Weekly internship assessment

Completed by teacher and job coach

Reviewed at the end of each month

- Opportunity to learn from different perspectives

Action plan developed to address areas of needed improvement

- Includes both instructional and job coaching supports

Weekly internship assessment

Student internship assessment

Completed at the end of each month

Opportunity to compare self-rating to assessments completed by teacher and job coach

- Encourage self-awareness and honest self-reflection
- Practice receiving feedback
- Preparation for performance appraisal

JOB scale (Brady & Rosenberg, 2002)

Completed by internship supervisor at the end of each internship rotation

Standardized measure of readiness for competitive employment

JOB scale

JOB scale (Brady & Rosenberg, 2002)

Reviewed by team (including VR counselor)

- Opportunity to learn from business perspective
- Compared against teacher/job coach weekly assessments

Measure of progress towards goal of competitive employment

- Identify potential barriers to employment and develop action plan

[JOB Scale Score Sheet](#)

Mid-year review

Includes student, family, education team, job coach/adult agency, VR, DD, MSC, other appropriate supports

Goal:

- Discuss potential for readiness for competitive employment by end of program year
- Develop appropriate Employment First! exit plan
- Address logistics and systemic barriers to employment (e.g., referral to outside agencies for supports, regulatory issues with independent living)

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Student focus groups & parent interviews

Completed towards the end of 2nd internship

Opportunity for input on program design and supports

Semi-structured

[Focus group facilitator guide](#)

It's time for some group work!



Let's practice with the tools!

RED = Student

ORANGE = Instructor

YELLOW = Job coach

GREEN = Business (internship supervisor)

BLUE = VR and DD

PURPLE = Family

Let's practice with the tools!

In your groups, conduct a mid-year review:

- Student, instructor, job coach, site supervisor to each share strengths and challenge areas
- Family to share desires and concerns for student
- VR & DD to listen to all input

Let's practice with the tools!

As a group, discuss:

- Is this student ready to begin job development?
- What challenge areas does the student need to address during the upcoming internship?
- What barriers remain that might inhibit the ability to transition into competitive employment?
 - What resources can assist with these barriers?

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Let's practice with the tools!

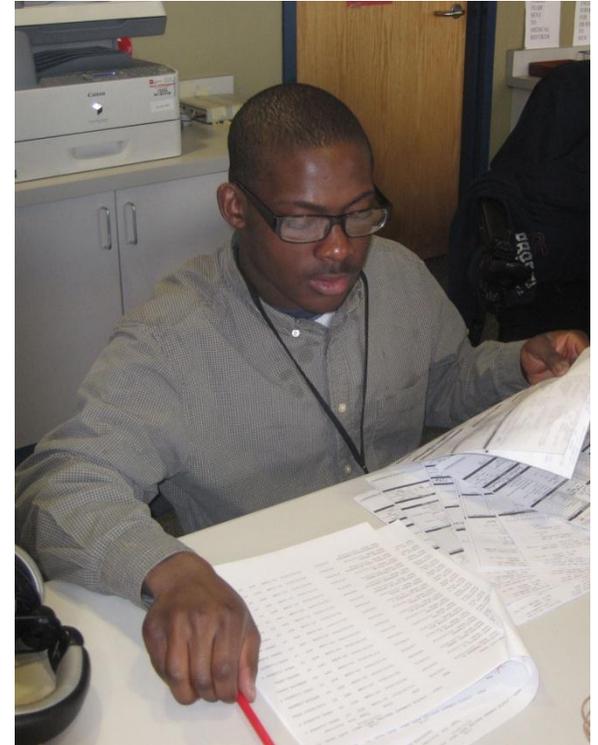


Case study: Gary

20yo w/ CP

Utilizes motorized wheelchair independently; has some ability to walk with supports

Interest in food services or office work



Case study: Gary

Weekly teacher and job coach assessments initially focused on mobility concerns and quantity/speed of work

Supervisor JOBS assessment identified significant behavioral concerns

Student acknowledged behavior concerns on self-assessment

Case study: Gary

Mid-year review

- Agreement that student had work skills to be competitively employed
- Behavioral concerns as significant barrier to employment

Case study: Gary

Mid-year review

- Agreement that student does not yet have necessary skills to independent living
- Group home regulations as barrier to pursuit of competitive employment
 - Pushing workshop placement (applications due in March)
- VR and DD not in support of workshop placement
- Adult agency acknowledged that vocational goal might not be met within necessary timeframe

Case study: Gary

Mid-year review outcomes:

- Student and family willing to pursue outside counseling to address behavior concerns
- Group home willing to work with partners explore other paths to employment beyond workshop placement
- VR, DD and adult agency to develop back-up plan for options if competitive employment not obtained by housing deadline

Let's compare!

How did your group do?

(Understanding that you had a brief period of time and limited information...)



Summary: Benefit of evaluation

Promotes opportunities for increased conversation and group learning across systems

Additional thoughts

What happens when there is disagreement between teacher and job coach?

- Most frequently teacher gives higher marks (awarded for effort vs. evaluated against employer expectations)
- Opportunity to cross-train

Additional thoughts

What happens with the business' assessment does not agree with the team's assessment?

- Opportunity for discussion and adjustments:
 - Is there a breakdown in communication?
 - Is the business being too critical (holding to different standard)?
 - Is the business not being critical enough (not holding student accountable)?

Additional thoughts

What if the student does not agree with the assessment (from teacher, job coach, or business supervisor)?

- Teachable moment related to realistic self-assessment
- Helps student accept constructive criticism and buy-in to improvement plan
- No surprises on exit interview or if not provided a positive reference

Questions & discussion

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Appendices

Evaluation Tools