

June  
2021  
Issue  
1

FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY  
**ACADEMY FOR  
COMMUNITY INCLUSION**

*A Research Bulletin for Programs that Serve College Students with  
Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities*



## CTP TRENDS

**Navigating College, Employment, Community, and  
Independent Living by Bringing the Research to Practitioners**



# ABOUT THE BULLETIN

## FOR POSTSECONDARY COMPREHENSIVE TRANSITION PROGRAMS

Each week a tremendous amount of information is published that could be helpful for educators who deliver postsecondary comprehensive transition programs for college students with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Unfortunately, much of this work does not make it into the hands of professionals and families who are working to develop, expand, and sustain these programs. This research bulletin disseminates the lessons of research and practical reports to help get this information into the hands of professionals who deliver these postsecondary programs, and individuals and their families who participate in these programs.

The professionals at the Academy for Community Inclusion (ACI) at Florida Atlantic University (FAU), a Florida Postsecondary Comprehensive Transition Program (FPCTP), regularly review over 30 peer-reviewed journals to identify promising practices and research findings that can improve these programs. Each article that is selected is summarized to report the major findings, and to provide pragmatic recommendations for college programs. Those research synopses are gathered into an issue of the research-to-practice bulletin, and disseminated to you to support your effort to deliver a meaningful postsecondary comprehensive transition program.

We hope you enjoyed the issue. Please provide us with feedback to improve our effort. If you see an article that you think might be helpful to others, please use the Article Template found at the end of this bulletin to summarize it. Send it to us and we'll run your contribution.

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# TEACHING SMALL TALK

INCREASING ON-TOPIC CONVERSATIONAL EXCHANGES IN COLLEGE STUDENTS WITH INTELLECTUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES USING REMOTE AUDIO COACHING

## PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) often have deficits in interpersonal skills due to limited social-communication opportunities. Knowing how to engage in “small talk” or simple social conversational exchanges can be beneficial in postsecondary schooling, employment sites, community environments, and social gatherings. Recently, covert audio coaching (CAC) showed a positive impact on increasing conversational exchanges. As the COVID-19 pandemic increased the need for remote delivery tools, the effectiveness of remote audio coaching (RAC) to teach this skill to college students with IDD was explored.

We used a multiple baseline design across participants to examine whether RAC might increase on-topic, small talk conversational exchanges. Results demonstrated that RAC effectively increased small talk skills between participants and a confederate. Upon removal of RAC, all participants still performed above their baselines, with two participants maintaining near mastery levels 2 weeks after the intervention was removed. Limitations and future research are discussed.



Photo credit: Dylan Ferreira

## RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY

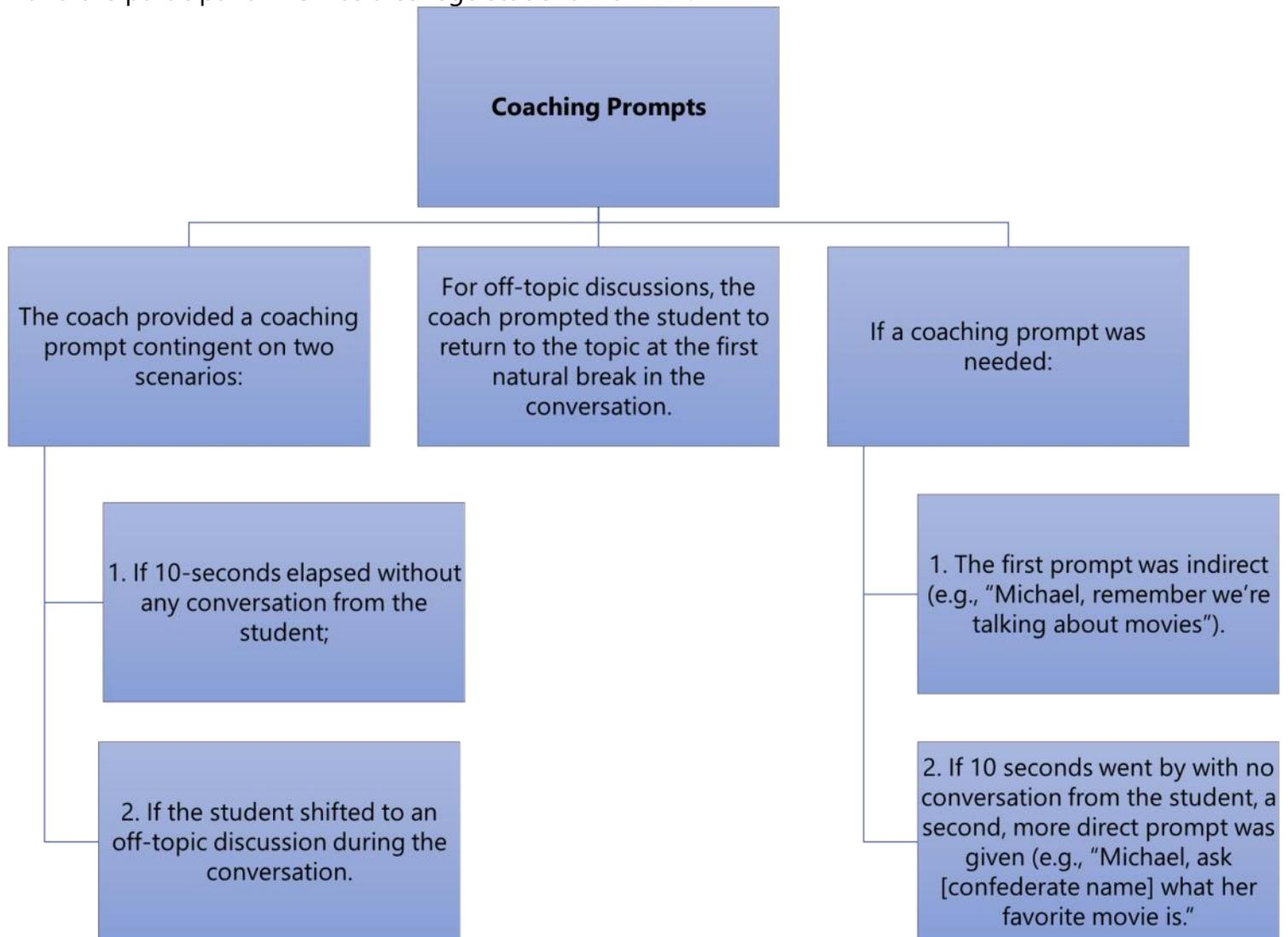
Increasing small talk and other reciprocal communication skills is necessary for building and maintaining social relationships, networking, and gaining and maintaining employment. Practitioners can use the strategy discussed in this article to foster “small talk” among college students with IDD and communication partners, through virtual coaching. Researchers developed this strategy to implement the intervention via video conferencing.

## Intervention

1. Coach (with video and microphone on) admits participant from virtual waiting room
  - Data collector and confederate were in meeting link with camera off and microphones muted
  - Coach provides suggested conversation topic
    - Such as music, movies, college courses, job internships, pandemic safety, nutrition, fitness, and favorite restaurants
2. The coach turns off camera but leaves microphone on to coach
  - Data collector sets timer and collects data on conversational exchanges
3. Confederates turn on microphone and camera
  - Engages participant after every conversation that was initiated by the participant (confederate does not initiate)
4. Coach provides coaching prompts as needed (see visual)
5. Data collector notifies coach in a private chat that the observation is over
  - Coach thanks participant and provides verbal praise.
6. The intervention was discontinued once the participant’s on-topic data reached 90% or higher for four consecutive days.

## STRATEGY SPOTLIGHT

Researchers applied CAC techniques using a video conferencing application instead of the bug-in-ear and called it RAC. This study included a coach who delivered prompting, a data collector who kept track of session duration and collected data on conversational exchanges, a confederate who was previously unknown to the participant and engaged in conversations with the participant, and the participant who was a college student with IDD.



## LESSONS LEARNED

Due to the pandemic, the need to deliver instruction from a distance has increased. The researchers have found a way to develop communication skills that are needed during and after the pandemic. The RAC strategy allows the use of coaching and minimizing prompt dependency by fading the prompts provided and keeping the interventionist's cameras off. Professionals in Inclusive Postsecondary Education (IPSE) programs can use this strategy to teach skills and conduct research on topics including and beyond employment.

## REFERENCE

Joseph, B., Kearney, K. B., Brady, M. P., Downey, A., & Torres, A. (2021). Teaching small talk: Increasing on-topic conversational exchanges in college students with intellectual and developmental disabilities using remote audio coaching. *Behavior Modification*, 45(2), 251–271. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0145445520975174>

# THE GOALS<sup>2</sup> PROGRAM

EXPANDED SUPPORTS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

## PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The occupational therapy department of a medium-sized eastern Pennsylvania University developed and piloted the *Greater Opportunity for Academic Learning and Living Successes* (GOALS<sup>2</sup>) program in collaboration with the Office of Student Accessibility. The program intended to expand the traditional accommodations offered to students with disabilities on college campuses through the provision of occupational therapy services to address student-selected academic learning and living goals. During the pilot semester, 13 of the approximately 110 students with disabilities on campus elected to participate in the GOALS<sup>2</sup> program. These students met over 80% of their self-identified learning goals and reported that the program had significant value. Researchers interviewed seven of the students who expressed that they found the GOALS<sup>2</sup> program to be valuable in reaching their self-identified goals. The GOALS<sup>2</sup> program utilizes graduate level occupational therapy students and appears to be an inexpensive approach to augmenting the services offered to students with disabilities to promote their academic success.

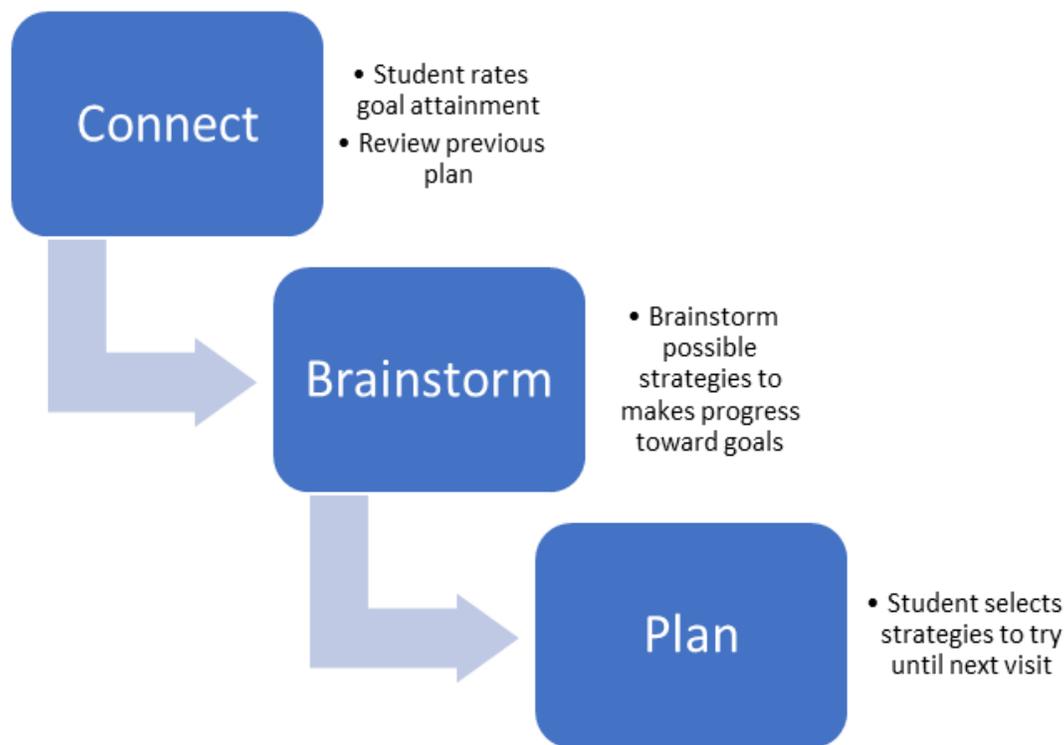


## RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY

This research focused on goal attainment of 10 college students with disabilities. The GOALS<sup>2</sup> program can be used on college campuses by practitioners who work with students with disabilities in collaboration with the campus' accessibility office to improve supports offered to students with disabilities. The GOALS<sup>2</sup> program supported participants in the following areas: academic, health and wellness, interpersonal relationships, and time management/organization. The academic goals addressed items such as study skills, test-taking strategies, and use of assistive technology to increase academic success. Health and wellness goals addressed sleep, exercise, eating habits, coping strategies, and stress management. Interpersonal relationship goals addressed social life, communication skills, and self-advocacy. Time management and organizational goals addressed task breakdown, initiation, and pacing.

## STRATEGY SPOTLIGHT

The GOALS<sup>2</sup> Program involved a coaching-in-context process to support students with disabilities to identify strategies they can use to meet the goals that they set for themselves. Progress monitoring occurred every session. The team included master's level OT students who acted as the coaches for the participants and occupational therapy faculty members who supervised. They used the Goal Attainment Scaling (GAS) as a primary outcome measure as well as qualitative interviews.



*Figure 1.* Coaching-in-Context process overview. This figure illustrates the three parts of a student session.

## LESSONS LEARNED

Students with disabilities tend to struggle with the transition from public grade school to college because there are often less supports at the collegiate level. The authors of this paper recommend increased collaboration between college accessibility services offices and inclusive postsecondary education programs or other programs that provide support to college students who have disabilities. The authors noted six themes they gathered from the GOALS<sup>2</sup> program participant interviews: academic success, emotional support, progress toward goal attainment, personal health and wellness, decreased stress and anxiety, and time management/organization.

## REFERENCE

Boney, J. D., Potvin, M.C., & Chabot, M. (2019). The GOALS<sup>2</sup> program: Expanded supports for students with disabilities in postsecondary education (Practice brief). *Journal of Postsecondary Education & Disability*, 32(3), 321-329.

# EXPLORING THE USE OF AN OCCUPATIONAL CARD SORT WITH YOUNG ADULTS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY

## A PRELIMINARY STUDY

### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

Transition planning is the foundation for addressing postsecondary goals leading to improved outcomes. Transition assessments guide the transition planning process. Given the importance of transition assessment results, practitioners need access to measures supporting the active involvement of young adults with intellectual disability. One such method is the occupational interests card sort. This study investigated the use of an occupational interests card sort with young adults with intellectual disability, assessing its impact on career decision self-efficacy. Results indicated that the occupational interests card sort influenced young adults' ability to select career goals, as well as identify career themes beyond occupational interests.

### **RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY**

Practitioners involved in transition planning with adults with intellectual disability can use the strategy discussed in this article as an assessment method that focuses on the individual's strengths. More specifically, using the card sort method gives practitioners information on the participant's understanding of career and work.

### **STRATEGY SPOTLIGHT**

Card sort qualitative career assessments allow assessment-takers to explore different aspects of a career from their own perspective. Researchers used a modified version of the Knowdell Occupational Interests Card Sort.

### **Benefits of the Card Sort:**

- The process of sorting the cards facilitates the organization of choices into meaningful patterns and define the reasoning behind those patterns.
- Assessment-takers can clarify, reflect upon, and evaluate their current career situations and arrive at new understandings.
- Through choice, reflection, and decision-making, card sorts promote a stronger sense of personal involvement.
- Immediate results enhance assessment-takers' satisfaction with the process.
- The flexible design diminishes structural barriers present in standardized assessments.
- Supports the development of shared terminology and discussion.
- Encourages collaboration between professionals and assessment-takers in interpretation of results.
- Addresses self-efficacy.

# Steps to Administer Assessment

1. Pre-test: Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale: Short-Form (CDSE:SF)
  - Researcher/Administrator provides purpose of the measure and directions
2. Administration of the occupational interests card sort
  - Researcher/Administrator introduces the purpose
  - Participant reviews each occupational title and corresponding picture and sorts into piles (definitely interested, unsure, definitely uninterested)
3. Second meeting: participants complete the career decision-making interview to develop a narrative based on the three categories of cards.
  - Administer Post-test: CDSE:SF and social validity questionnaire

## LESSONS LEARNED

The researchers identified 17 career decision-making themes and condensed them into the following six categories: (1) interests/disinterests, (2) strengths/weaknesses, (3) values, (4) preferences, (5) knowledge/experience, and (6) connections to career role models. Researchers noted improvements in goal setting among participants but saw limited influence on the other areas of self-efficacy. They found that a card sort procedure can contribute to better understanding young adults' career decision-making thought processes and experiences. The card sorts acted as a visual aid supporting discussion. Social validity results indicated that the card sort is viewed by participants as easy to use and by practitioners as accommodating of individualized needs. This semi-structured assessment can be a socially valid component to a youth-centered transition assessment.

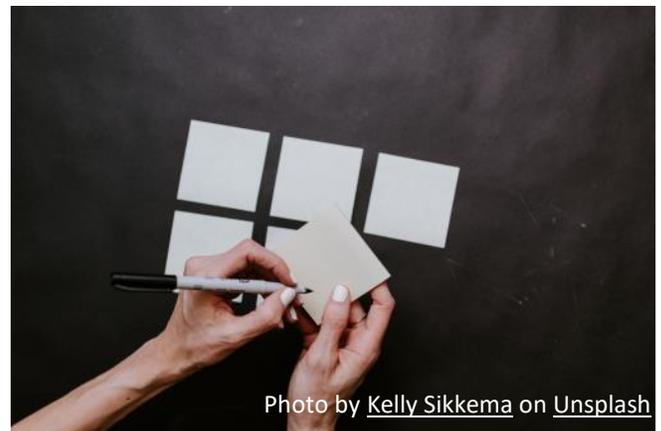


Photo by [Kelly Sikkema](#) on [Unsplash](#)

## REFERENCE

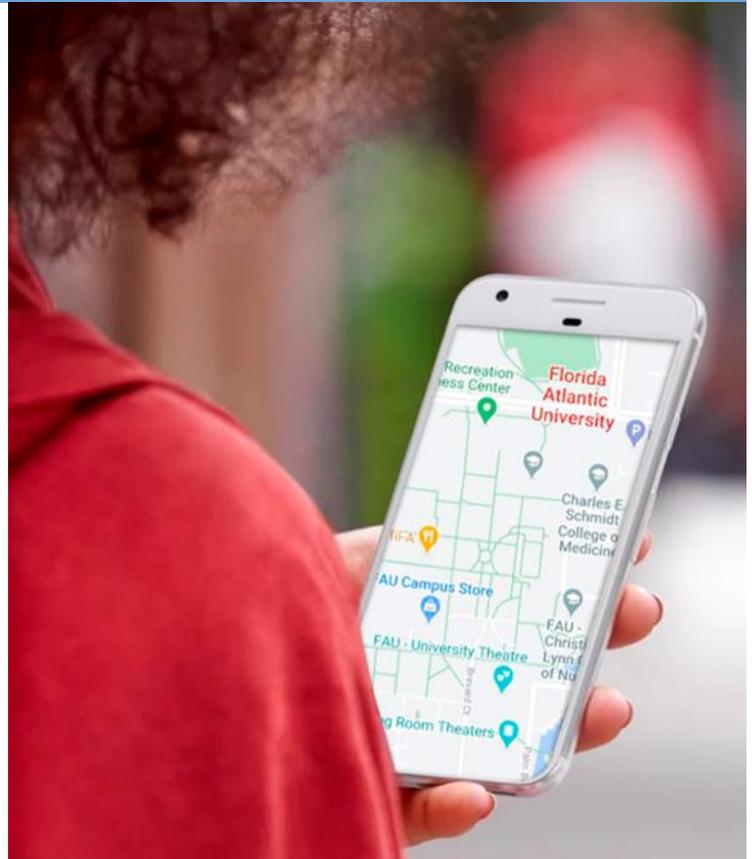
Carlson, S., Morningstar, M. E., Ghosh, A., & Munandar, V. (2020). Exploring the use of an occupational interests card sort with young adults with intellectual disability: A preliminary study. *Journal of Inclusive Postsecondary Education*, 2(2), <https://doi.org/10.13021/jipe.2020.2703>

# USING A PEER-MEDIATED INSTRUCTIONAL PACKAGE TO TEACH COLLEGE STUDENTS WITH IDD

TO NAVIGATE AN INCLUSIVE UNIVERSITY CAMPUS

## PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Colleges across the nation have seen an increase in programming for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) over the past decade. With this increase in programming comes the need to support students with IDD while accessing a large college campus. Using technology, such as Google Maps, on one's cell phone is a natural support that is relatively unobtrusive. This study used a peer-mediated instructional package consisting of total task presentation and error correction to teach college students with IDD how to use Google Maps to navigate a large, urban college campus in the Southeastern United States. The results from this single subject multiple probe design demonstrated that all students acquired the skills with 100% accuracy and maintained the skill once the instructional package was removed. Social validity data indicated that students thoroughly enjoyed learning the skill from the peer mediator. Implications and future research are discussed.



## RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY

**Setting:** university campus

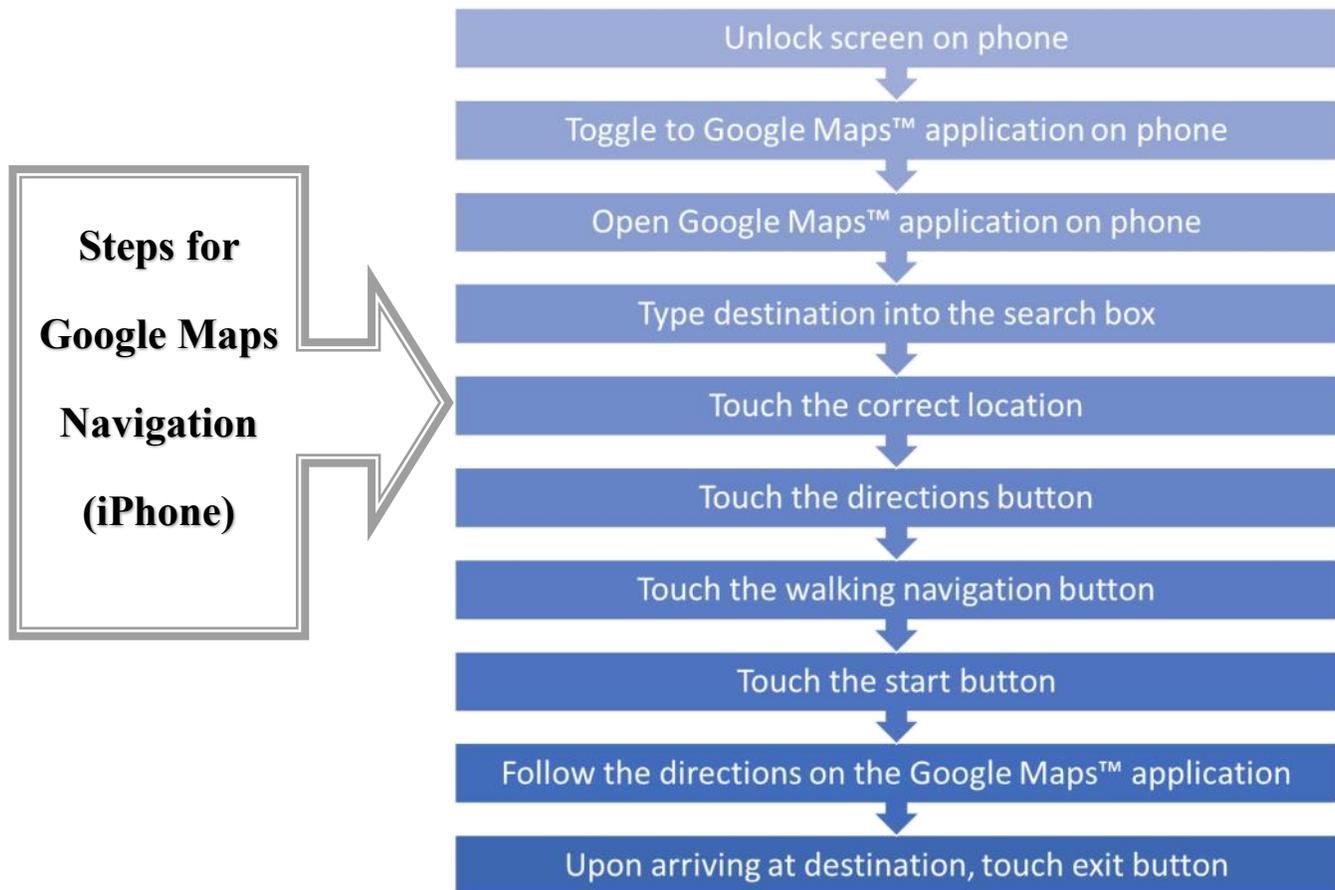
**Population:** college students with intellectual disability

**Skill:** campus navigation

This study taught college students with intellectual disability to navigate a college campus. A peer was trained by the researchers and then taught the participants how to navigate the university campus using their personal cell phones and the Google Maps application.

## STRATEGY SPOTLIGHT

This study used peer instruction to teach campus navigation. The peer was taught to model the skill of using Google Maps to navigate the university campus. While she modeled the navigation skill on her phone, she simultaneously described what she was doing for each step. She then asked the target student to complete the task on his or her personal smartphone. If the student made an error, the peer corrected the error by verbally restating the step. If the student made the same error, the peer would verbally restate the step while modeling it on her phone. See below for a task analysis of the navigation skill.



## LESSONS LEARNED

This intervention used peer-mediation and common handheld technology (personal smartphones) to teach the navigation skill. The peer already mastered the navigation skill and was excited to teach her peers how to use Google Maps independently to access all areas of the campus. Practitioners could potentially replicate this study with teachers and job coaches and use Google Maps to teach students how to access other environments, such as outdoor malls or downtown urban areas, as well as college and university campuses.

## REFERENCE:

Kearney, K. B., Joseph, B., Finnegan, L., & Wood, J. (2021). Using a peer-mediated intervention package to teach college students with intellectual disability to navigate an inclusive university campus. *The Journal of Special Education, 55*(1), 45–54. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022466920937469>

# WHAT AND WHO WORKS:

## STRATEGIES FOR FACILITATING WORK EXPERIENCE OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS ENROLLED IN POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION PROGRAMS

### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

When compared to the general population, employment rates for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDDs) are poor. This discrepancy is concerning, especially when considering the multitude of benefits associated with employment. To improve employment outcomes for this population, many inclusive postsecondary education (IPSE) programs provide career development services for students with IDDs. As engagement in paid work experience is a predictor of improved postschool outcomes for individuals with disabilities, this is a common career development program component. A study was conducted to better understand strategies utilized by IPSE programs to facilitate paid work experiences for their students. To identify these strategies, information from IPSE program personnel was sought. The study involved two phases, including a nationwide survey and subsequent follow-up interviews. Strategies most frequently identified by respondents included: (1) soliciting employer feedback, (2) relationship building with employers, (3) aligning placements with student interests, (4) job customization, (5) providing training and support at the job site, (6) developing natural supports, and (7) aligning curricular activities with job site needs. The findings from this research will support practitioners who are tasked with supporting employment goals for young adults with IDDs. By understanding effective strategies, more students may be able to engage in paid work experience to increase likelihood of employment.

### **RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY**

The study was conducted using respondents from the Think College website and surveyed a total of 65 participants. Staff members with knowledge and experience with career development were asked what strategies were used in order for individuals with IDD to obtain a paid employment. The study is geared more towards Job Coaches and provides insight on strategies used to develop employment candidates. Improving employment outcomes for individuals with IDD is necessary for postsecondary education programs to develop viable career training. Participation in training programs leads to a greater success rate in attaining paid employment and a more positive and sustainable future. In areas where Vocational Rehabilitation and other programs are underutilizing strategies, students are put at a disadvantage. For example, over half of postsecondary education staff do not or rarely invite employers to visit or be involved with their school. Getting the employer involved with the school creates a better partnership (Scheef, Barrio, & Poppen, 2017).

## STRATEGY SPOTLIGHT

Researchers identified useful strategies used by IPSE personnel when finding paid employment for their students. For each strategy included in the survey, respondents were asked to identify how often they used the strategy by selecting one of the following: *Never Used, Rarely Used, Sometimes Used, Often Used, or Always Used*. We highlighted the most commonly used strategies below:

TABLE 1  
Strategies to increase paid work experience opportunities for students

Strategy	Percent of respondents				
	Never	Rarely	Some-times	Often	Always
Utilize existing employer networks (like Chamber of Commerce)	16.9	16.9	33.8	13.8	4.6
Negotiate the scope of the job with employers so that it benefits both the business and student	3.1	6.2	33.8	13.8	43.1
Match student strengths with a position	3.1	4.6	20	33.8	24.6
Match student interests with their work experience position	3.1	0	6.2	29.2	46.2
Provide students with an opportunity to relate what is learned in the workplace to what is learned in the curriculum	3.1	3.1	13.8	30.8	35.4
Involve family members	7.7	3.1	26.2	21.5	27.7
Work with Vocational Rehabilitation	10.8	10.8	20	23.1	21.5
Work with employers who have had prior experience with employee with disability	3.1	4.6	35.4	36.9	6.2
Approach employers with a charitable appeal	27.7	13.8	20	20	4.6
Utilize natural supports in the workplace	3.1	3.1	4.6	40	35.4
Provide training to our staff on job development	7.7	15.4	20	18.5	23.1
Train employers and co-workers to improve skills to better work with people with disabilities	10.8	20	20	23.1	12.3
Encourage businesses personnel to be involved with our program at our program site (not the job site)	21.5	30.8	27.7	20	7.7
Build trusting relationship with employer	3.1	1.5	4.6	18.5	58.5
Use testimonials from businesses that have participated in the past	4.6	9.2	24.6	23.1	24.6
Solicit feedback from employer regarding the placement	3.1	0	7.7	15.4	60.0
Suggest short-term trials with workers	1.5	12.3	23.1	33.8	15.4
Identify potential co-worker mentors in the workplace	7.7	9.2	16.9	35.4	16.9
Approach employers with information about how a placement can positively impact their bottom line	7.7	9.2	12.3	27.7	29.2
Provide direct on-site training for the students in the workplace	4.6	4.6	10.8	26.2	40

n = 65.

## LESSONS LEARNED

The findings from the study can be used to support the work of IPSE programs, who need to understand and implement effective strategies to increase their students' opportunities for paid work experiences. These opportunities are dependent upon employer support. In working with employers, it is essential to identify frequently used strategies used by IPSE programs to facilitate paid work experiences and to conduct further research on which are most effective. By being aware of these strategies, we can increase paid work opportunities for individuals with IDD.

## REFERENCE

Scheef, A. R. (2019). What and who works: Strategies for facilitating work experience opportunities for students enrolled in postsecondary education programs. *Journal of Policy in Intellectual Disabilities*, 16(3), 223-231. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jppi.12285>

# SUPPORTING INCLUSIVE TEACHING THROUGH STUDENT OBSERVATIONS

(PRACTICE BRIEF)

## PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Institutions of higher education have a primary mission of providing a quality education to all of its student, including students with disabilities. This practice brief describes tools used in an innovative approach to teaching observations that were designed to improve access for students with disabilities through inclusive teaching strategies, an area where faculty members typically do not have robust expertise. Pivotal to this experience was observation and feedback by student mentors using a structured classroom observation and reflection tool. These tools provided unique and important information to faculty about how to improve the inclusivity of their teaching. The tool also gave students with disabilities agency in how they contribute to the improved accessibility of teaching on their campus. At an institutional level, this kind of tool may be a catalyst for collaboration between offices of disability services and faculty development as they work together to create a more accessible campus for students with disabilities.

## RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY

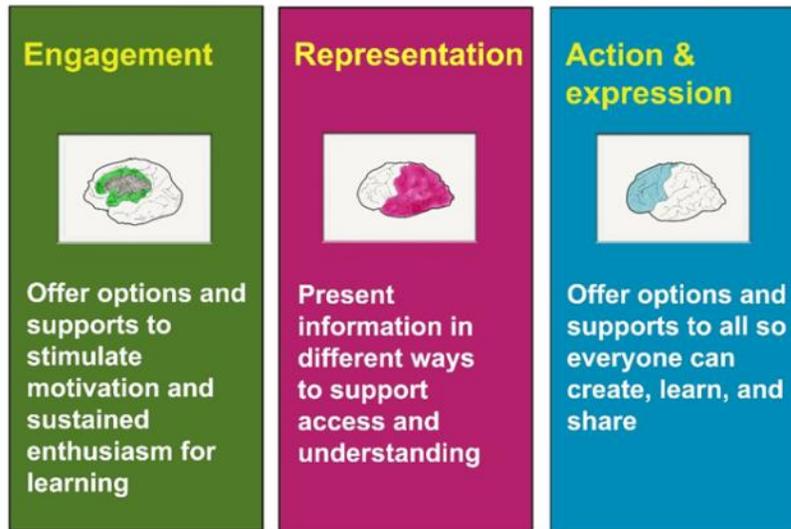
The purpose of this article was to describe the assessment tools and evaluation frameworks used in a collaborative project between faculty and student mentors/observers in improving the accessibility of postsecondary teaching. Specific goals of the project were to improve resources available for faculty, create training environments where faculty were encouraged to be innovative, reflective, and experiment with new resources and teaching strategies that support accessibility and inclusiveness, and to sustain and expand practices via multifaceted dissemination efforts. This article is relevant to the following stakeholder groups: 1) university faculty; 2) students interested in pursuing a teaching career or a related educational field; 3) higher education administrators charged with supporting faculty professional development initiatives; and 4) disability services personnel who can provide consultation and training to faculty on how to develop the skills needed to improve their teaching practices specifically in understanding and implementing inclusive and accessible teaching strategies with diverse learners including students with disabilities.



Photo credit: [Leon](#)

## STRATEGY SPOTLIGHT

- I. **Universal Design for Learning (UDL)** and its principles as a framework to think about accessible and inclusive teaching strategies.



**Universal Design for Learning: 3 principles**

- II. **Faculty Learning Community (FLC)** that included faculty members who agreed to spend a semester participating in a group to learn new practices, skills, and technology applications.
- III. **Class Observation Tool** served as a template for student mentors/observers to take observational notes about access and inclusion factors in the classroom and engage faculty in discussions to create pedagogical change.



### LESSONS LEARNED

The main takeaway from this practice brief is how to engage faculty and student mentors/observers within a learning community in a deeper dialogue about how to create classrooms that are more accessible and inclusive to diverse students including students with disabilities (e.g., deaf and hard-of-hearing).

### REFERENCE

Cawthon, S.W., Davidson, S., & Schley, S. (2019). Supporting inclusive teaching through student observations (practice brief). *Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability*, 32(4), 453-460.

# Journals Reviewed for the Dissemination

<i>Education and Training in Autism &amp; Developmental Disabilities (ETADD)</i>	<i>Journal of Inclusive Post Secondary Education (JIPSE)</i>
<i>Focus on Autism &amp; Other Developmental Disabilities (FADD)</i>	<i>Career Development and Transition for Exceptional Individuals (CDTEI)</i>
<i>Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities (RPSD)</i>	<i>Journal of Autism &amp; Developmental Disorders (JADD)</i>
<i>Journal for Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (JIDD)</i>	<i>International Journal for Developmental Disabilities (IJDD)</i>
<i>American Journal for Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AJIDD)</i>	<i>Journal of Policy and Practice in Intellectual Disabilities</i>
<i>Journal of Special Education (JSE)</i>	<i>Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin (RCB)</i>
<i>Inclusion</i>	<i>Behavior Modification</i>
<i>Journal of Special Education Technology (JSET)</i>	<i>Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis (JABA)</i>
<i>Journal of Rehabilitation (JOR)</i>	<i>Behavior Analysis in Practice (BAP)</i>
<i>Exceptional Children (EC)</i>	<i>Remedial and Special Education (RASE)</i>
<i>Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation (JVR)</i>	<i>Education and Treatment of Children (ETC)</i>
<i>Journal of Intellectual Disability Research</i>	<i>Journal of Disability Policy Studies</i>
<i>Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD)</i>	<i>Journal of Developmental and Physical Disabilities</i>
<i>Exceptionality</i>	<i>Journal of Behavioral Education</i>
<i>Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders</i>	<i>Research in Developmental Disabilities</i>

## Article Title

### PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

*What was the Study About? (Article Abstract)*

### RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY

*Where Would This be Relevant? In this section, discuss the relevance of the article: population, who should use it (practitioners such as teachers, job coaches, professors, IPSE administrators, parents, etc.), and where it is useful (social skills, community, employment, classroom, recruitment, etc.)*

### STRATEGY SPOTLIGHT

*Discuss the strategy that was used so that practitioners can implement it. This is a good place for visuals.*

### LESSONS LEARNED

*What were main takeaways from research? What would researchers want practitioners to know?*

### REFERENCE APA 7<sup>th</sup> edition

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## Acknowledgments

We would like to thank the partners who have made this bulletin possible. Their continued support allows us to disseminate the latest practical research to support professionals who work with adults with disabilities. Our partners include:

- The Taft Foundation
- The Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities