

Check & Connect: A Model for Engaging and Retaining Students with Intellectual Disabilities in Higher Education



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Why Implement a TPSID Model in MnSCU Institutions?

- **Occupational Skills Programs (OSP) designed for students with Intellectual Disabilities/Developmental Disabilities (ID/DD) have existed on MnSCU campuses for more than 30 years**
- **Schools with OSP programs have experience integrating ID/DD into regular classrooms, shops, and labs**
- **Number of students with ID/DD growing in MnSCU schools**
- **Lessons learned at CLC and Ridgewater in the TPSID Model can support other institutions in MnSCU and nationally.**

What Is Check & Connect (C&C)

A Model that Provides:

- **A comprehensive intervention designed to enhance students' engagement at school and with learning**
- **An evidence-based, targeted intervention**
- **Targeted strategies to fuel students' academic motivation and persistence regardless of students' family/home circumstances**

*The Check & Connect Model
focuses on factors that
educators, students, parents,
and communities can change
and influence to promote
successful educational and
work experiences*



Components of C&C:

1. **Coaches – who keep education salient for students**
2. **Systematic monitoring – the “check” component**
3. **Timely and individualized intervention – the “connect” component**
4. **Partnering with families – enhancing home-school communication and home support for learning**

What TPSID Coaches Do:

- **Check-in regularly with students**
- **Monitor attendance, grades and progress in school**
- **Provide timely intervention to ensure student success**
- **Collaborate with faculty, disability services, administration, etc. to help student be successful**
- **Support students' problem solving development**
- **Assist in finding outreach/support services**
- **Provide study groups**
- **Sponsor socially integrated activities external to school**

How Coaches Engage Students:



- **Voluntary participation creates atmosphere of learning and fun!**
- **Referrals from Disability Services, Voc. Rehab, Occupational Skills Program, High Schools**
- **C & C Club**
- **Summer Orientation Camp**
- **Transition Fairs Statewide**
- **Guest speakers (e.g.: Integration of arts in problem solving)**
- **Special education cooperatives**
- **Community Transition Interagency Committee (CTIC) Meetings**

Strategies to Increase Retention:

- **Tutor:** Provide study labs, train peer tutors, coordinate with peer tutors
- **Mentor:** Facilitate relationships with non-disabled students, “coaches in training!”
- **Assistive Technology:** Provide Kurzweil, Dragon Speaks, WordQ, Read Write Gold, Dolphin
- **Fun Events:** Offer game nights, movie nights: *“If you feed them, they will come”*
- **Project monitoring:** State Advisory Council, Design Team, OSP Advisory Council

Student Mentors



Project Strengths and Weaknesses

Trials and Tribulations

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