Similarities and Differences in Postsecondary Programs for Students with ID.

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Background

• In this age of “evidence based practices” and fiscal constraints, there is a need for research on outcomes.

• Problems:
  – differences in programs based on review of literature
  – Differences in programs based on information shared in SOS/SOA conferences on PSE
Types of Postsecondary Models

- Mixed/hybrid model (most common)
- Substantially separate model
- Inclusive individual support model
- Other considerations:
  - Dual enrollment
  - Supports within each model
  - Course development/enrollment options
Led to research proposal

• Through Mary E. Switzer research fellowship

• Develop a framework that could:
  – Articulate distinctions and similarities between programs
  – Use the framework to help with conducting outcomes research
  – Help program staff make decisions about what will work for them
Research design

• Participants
  – PSE programs for students with ID
  – Range of PSE models
  – Range of length of time for program existence
  – Range of locations

• Participants (actual)
  – 2 dual enrollment (one inclusive, one hybrid)
  – 2 substantially separate
  – 1 inclusive
  – 4 mixed/hybrid
Methodology

• Semi-structured interviews: project staff, parents, others involved in establishment of program
• Observations: on-campus (for all but 2 programs)
• Document review: items that would provide information on program design, program implementation, and program evaluation
Findings

• Dual Enrollment:
  – Students still receiving services from their schools
  – School staff provide services and/or teach courses
  – Enrolled in university

• Differences:
  – Not all considered fully enrolled in university
  – Vary in number of classes they attend with students w/o disabilities
  – Vary in employment experiences
  – One was more focused on community-access while other was more focused on the university experience.
Substantially separate

- Students participate only in classes with other students with disabilities
- Participate in generic social activities, and may have employment options

Differences:
- Types of classes
- Number of employment/internship options
- Both had residential component; differences in location & supports
- who teaches classes
- Social activities
- Movement toward hybrid model
Mixed/hybrid

- Students participate in social activities and/or academic classes with students w/o disabilities
- Also participate in separate classes (life skills/transition)
- Typically provides employment options off campus

- Differences in:
  - Academic focus (liberal arts or specific focus)
  - Focus of separate classes (life skills to technology)
  - Employment options (Project SEARCH to range of internships to paid employment)
  - Interactions with peers
  - Financial aid
Other differences

- Program inception: who started the ball rolling, who were the key players, state/local support
- Program enrollment: requirements for independence, transportation, *role of parents*, initial assessments
- Program implementation: degree of integration with typical university services, degree of connection with other students on campus, *key focus of program, role of students*.
- Program evaluation: frequency; evaluation process; *design own versus use existing options*
Challenges

• Role of parents
  – Typical university perspective versus transition best practices
  – “We need to work on your grades so we can get them to your parents....”
  – “We don’t usually communicate directly with parents; it takes them a while to get used to the difference between high school and college.”
  – “We involve parents in person-centered planning activities each year; we know that parent involvement is important in transition planning, so it’s important here.”
Challenges

• Evaluation
  – Time as well as relevance
  – “We are struggling to find the right assessments; what are other programs using to measure growth in independence?”
  – “We are developing an assessment that focuses on the social interactions students have on campus. Would you consider interactions with a mentor as interaction with peers without disabilities?”
  – “We have lots of videotaped interviews with students but we struggle to find time to go back to really analyze them.”
Challenges for research

• As many differences within models as between models
• Differences also exist in the approaches that programs take toward common features
  – Employment
  – Course enrollment
  – Supports in courses
  – Support for student self-determination/independence
  – Preparation for next transition
Next steps

• Evaluate data using different frameworks
• Collect additional data from other programs related to these differences
  – Additional qualitative data collection
  – National survey data collection
Taxonomy of Post-Secondary Education

- Four domains:
  - Academic
    - Courses with other students with disabilities
    - Courses with other typically-developing peers
    - College readiness coursework
  - Vocational
    - Coursework
    - Job shadowing
    - Internships
  - Independent Living
    - Life skills coursework
    - Dormitory
    - Other independent living
  - Social
    - Social skills coursework
    - Peer interactions
    - Clubs and sports
Think College

8 Standards, quality indicators and benchmarks recommended for inclusive higher education

- Inclusive academic access
- Career development
- Campus Membership
- Self-Determination
- Alignment with College Systems and Practices
- Coordination and Collaboration
- Sustainability
- Ongoing Evaluations
Questions?

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