

Customized Employment for Youth in Transition

Implementing a Multi-Faceted Pilot
Program

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Objectives of this Session

- ▶ Introduce
 - A model for piloting or integrating effective practices into service delivery systems
 - Application of Customized Employment to youth Transition
 - Learning Communities/Partnerships
- ▶ Discuss
 - Lessons learned

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Pilot Project

- ▶ Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
- ▶ Southeast Technical Assistance and Continuing Education Center (TACE)

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Piloting 2 Concepts

- ▶ Use of Customized Employment for High School Students
- ▶ Interagency Partners that:
 - Learn together
 - Implement together

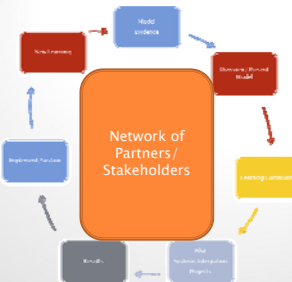
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Learning Communities/Partnership Fusion

- ▶ Learning communities
 - Stakeholders come together as learners to promote systems change
- ▶ Partnerships
 - Sharing of responsibilities, resources, risks and rewards
 - Capacity to shape and manage its own future....collaborative empowerment
- Source: Himmelmann, 1994

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Learning/Practice/Implementation Model



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Project Features

- › Multi-Agency Involvement
- › Use of a Project Charter
- › Team Learning
- › Results Focused
- › Evaluation → Lessons Learned → Dissemination
- › Plan for expansion/ sustainment

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Mission

- › The project will demonstrate a model in which multiple agencies work together to create customized employment outcomes for youth with the most significant disabilities to transition from school to work.
- › The anticipated outcome is to learn how each agency/system can work together using a customized employment approach.

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Project Charter

- › Scope
- › Outcomes
- › Roles and responsibilities
- › Timelines
- › Stakeholders
- › Communication
- › Reporting
- › Evaluating

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Measure of Success:

1. Funding efficiency
2. Clear definitions of successful outcome
3. Identification of potential positions across agencies to provide services
4. Impact on existing workload
5. Impact of meeting federal requirements
6. Impact of meeting state requirements

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Partners

- › State Department of Education
 - Bureau of Education of Exceptional Students
- › Local School Systems
- › Developmental Disability Council
- › Agency for Persons with Disabilities
- › SSA
- › CIL

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Customized Employment

According to US/DOL:

Customized employment means **individualizing the employment relationship** between employees and employers in ways that meet the **needs of both**.

It is based on an individualized determination of the **strengths, needs, and interests** of the person with a disability, and is also designed to meet the specific needs of the employer.

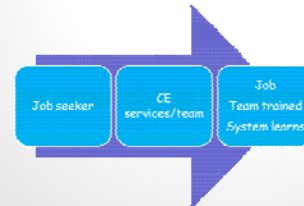
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Customized Process

- ▶ Discovery of the job seeker
- ▶ Capturing discovery through profiles
- ▶ Customized Employment planning
- ▶ Portfolio/visual resume development
- ▶ Job development and negotiation
- ▶ Job site analysis, accommodations, support

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The Team Approach for Interagency Capacity Building



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Local Teams

- ▶ Student → job seeker
- ▶ Parent
- ▶ Education
 - Teachers
 - Employment Specialists
- ▶ VR Counselor
- ▶ CRP – Placement Specialist

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Training Team Features

- ▶ Demonstration of a team of interagency and community members knowing the CE process
- ▶ CE Learning is accomplished through classroom style and “doing” the process
- ▶ System learning occurs when systems participate and reflect on the implementation
- ▶ This only happens if each team member makes a commitment.

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Components

- ▶ Training on the CE process took place over 5 months
- ▶ Involved blended learning
- ▶ Conference calls for technical assistance and project updates

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Schools and Vocational Rehabilitation
Services

What we learned

*working together for the benefit of
youth*

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Learning

- ▶ Customized Employment gave direction for employment
 - Impact on project: Students that were not seen as “employable” in the labor market were served
 - CE gave all personnel an opportunity to consider students that would not compete effectively for a job, thus seeing all youth as employable and eligible for VR services regardless of skill.
 - CE strategies defined the tasks necessary for employment, thus offering a functional way for agencies to share responsibilities in working with youth.

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Learning

- ▶ Partnerships are powerful to achieve outcomes
 - Creating an interagency team around the student while in school
 - Obtained more of a seamless transition
 - Offered additional support to students and the systems
 - Less opportunity for students to fall in a gap of service delivery as goal was mutual between school and VR
 - Shared training/knowledge created a “community of practice” with personnel working on common goals with the student

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Learning

- ▶ How Discovery, the foundation to Customized Employment and the alternative to traditional evaluations, can be utilized in this setting.
 - Impact on the project: The “best of the youth” was identified with people that knew him from years of school.
 - Consider this as a “transition” tool since it creates a picture of the youth when they are at their most effective in life. Environments, communication and instructional strategies,

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Learning

- ▶ Customized Employment Planning offered the initial proposal to a targeted employer for earning an income
 - Impact on the project:
 - Targeted employers that the youth would be successful in their business culture and be motivated to go to work.
 - Identified tasks the youth could offer the employer
 - Clarified any negotiations needed on behalf of the youth for success, such as “personnel waiting with him for the bus”

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Learning

- ▶ Compressed timeframe for implementation
- ▶ Impact
 - Home visits were a challenge
 - Difficult to assess how student functioned outside school

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Learning

- ▶ Shared Agency Trainings and Teams
 - Impact on the project: Relationships were built in a functional way, defining roles in relationship to each of the youth.
 - Relationships support staff to increase contact with other agency personnel on behalf of the youth

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Learning

- ▶ Systems take time to negotiate
 - Impact in the project: Students were not all enrolled in VR. This caused a delay with one of the students that had a job negotiated but no support.
 - Consider co-enrollment earlier than when the student is interested in employment.
 - Create a focused VR enrollment period at a specific time of the year (either at the end of the school year or the beginning of the school year)
 - Establish an interagency agreement that gives "employed special education students" an automatic enrollment in VR

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Systems Learning

- ▶ Local School Districts were not included at the initial state level discussion
- ▶ Impact-
 - Start up time delayed as school districts were brought up to speed

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System Learning

- Vendors (CRPs) were brought into the project on behalf of students after they got jobs or when school was not in session. (Providers are not connected to schools).
- Impact on project: Students had a transition of personnel which required a "catch up process" to implement services
 - Establish vendors immediately after enrollment if employment is the goal
 - Expect a team of school personnel, VR counselors and vendors
 - Vendors need training in customized employment

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Interim Outcomes

- ▶ 2 Placements
- ▶ 1 pending placement
- ▶ 1 Still in process
- ▶ 1 Withdrawal

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Measures of Success

- ▶ Funding Efficiency
 - Lower than average costs
- ▶ Impact on federal or state policy
 - No need for substantial policy revision
- ▶ Impact on counselor time
 - To be determined
- ▶ Identification of potential positions across agencies to provide services
 - To be determined

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Evaluation

- ▶ Based upon Measures of Success
- ▶ Focus groups scheduled for Oct 7-8
 - Focus group with Team
- ▶ Present to state partners
- ▶ Create a plan to sustain and expand

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Questions???