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Research Summary

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Evaluating the Differential Impact of Interventions to Promote Self-Determination and Goal Attainment for Transition-Age Youth with Intellectual Disabilities

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A quick look: ■

Self-determination is defined as the freedom to live as one chooses, or to act or decide without consulting another or others. Self-determination is a concept that is especially important for transition aged youth who are on the verge of entering the workforce. What is so important about self-determination for individuals with intellectual disabilities? Is there any training for them in regards to self-determination skills? The study of this article looks at the different effects of performing Self-Determined Learning Models of Instruction (SDLMI). The authors also examine SDLMI joined with the "Whose Future Is It?" training for transition aged youth with intellectual disabilities in the state of Rhode Island.

Key Findings: ■

Researchers have established that promoting skills associated with self-determination leads to enhanced attainment of school-based transition-related goals in adolescents with intellectual disabilities. SDLMI is an evidenced-based model that can be used by educators to provide instruction and support to enhance an individual's self-regulated goal setting. Whose Future Is It? is a technology-based curriculum with universal design features that deliver content to students about planning for transitioning from school to post-school employment and other community-related activities. Here are some of the findings for the study done in Rhode Island:

- ▶ Students in SDLMI by itself reported significant increases in their self-determination scores from the beginning of the study to the end of the year.
- ▶ Teachers of these students reported that student's goal attainment predicted change in their self-determination.
- ▶ Significant changes in students' self-determination were also reported for SDLMI combined with Whose Future Is It?

Putting It into Practice: ■

- ▶ The focus on integrated employment for individuals with intellectual disabilities should include young people with disabilities at the center of the process of identifying, setting, and working toward future goals.
- ▶ Results of the study indicate a strong benefit in self-determination for individuals with disabilities and SDLMI can be used to promote self-determination and goal attainment.
- ▶ Collaborations between schools and adult support agencies can be developed using self-determination as the base of instruction and support.
- ▶ SDLMI can be relevant for all students due to the instruction in key skills of self-determination and the individualization for any situation.
- ▶ SDLMI was developed to be student-directed as opposed to teacher-directed. Teachers individualize the instruction for students and their specific learning goals.
- ▶ SDLMI can be utilized for students with severe disabilities by individualizing the supports provided based on communication and comprehension-related needs.

More about this Article (Where to go from here?) ■

- ▶ Only 10% of adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities in the U.S. are competitively employed in the community.
- ▶ The go-to option for many adults with intellectual disabilities is segregated, non-community based employment, despite studies that show that those models of employment do not lead to integrated community employment.
- ▶ It is estimated that the lack of instruction, opportunities, and supports for self-determination for individuals with intellectual disabilities are the reasons that these individuals are often less self-determined than peers without disabilities.

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