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Increasing the Awareness of Post-High School Options for 8th-Grade IEP Students

Noelle Pipp

A Capstone project for the Bachelor of Science in Human Development and Family Science

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Introduction

There is often a lack of awareness of post-high school career and educational options for Individualized Education Program (IEP) students in middle school. Given that IEP students may not be on a college-prep track, may have an alternative educational pathway, or may not have the skills to be successful in a four-year university, they would benefit from knowing other post-high school career pathways than just a four-year university. By not having this information IEP students are disadvantaged when entering the workforce (Chen & Chan, 2014). To address this problem, I have created an interactive 2-day program for 8th-grade IEP students at Iron Horse Middle School in San Ramon, California.

Needs Statement

Often, middle school students, especially those in the Individualized Education Program (IEP), are unaware of career and educational options other than attending a four-year university. IEP students often face special difficulties in determining their career and educational futures because of the academic struggles they encounter. They grapple with their self-perception of their abilities, their self-efficacy (Klassen & Lynch, 2007). Individuals with learning disabilities tend to have less education and occupational opportunity (Rojewski, 1999). When they are given career and post-secondary education options, it is often presented in a manner that is not beneficial to them (Cummings, R., Maddux, C.D., & Casey, J. 2000 as cited in Chen & Chan, 2014). Their low self-efficacy, lack of statistical success, and the ineffective presentation styles causes difficulties for adolescents to determine their educational and career futures.

Self-efficacy is one's own judgment of how successfully they can complete a task or behavior (Bandura, A. 1977 as cited in Panagos & DuBois, 1999). A student needs an accurate

self-efficacy so they can evaluate their abilities and goals, and a student's level of self-efficacy is one of the strongest predictors of academic motivation (Pajares, F. 1996 as cited in Klassen & Lynch, 2007). In a focus group style interview with students with learning disabilities, participants were asked if they felt that there was a confidence difference between themselves and their peers, and most of the participants said that they thought there is a significant difference with their peers being more confident (Klassen & Lynch, 2007). This feeling of inadequacy in these individuals would be reflected in their self-efficacy causing them to refrain from more complicated opportunities.

Students who are part of IEP compared to general education students are underrepresented in colleges and universities and are 50% less likely to go to postsecondary education (Wagner, M., Newman, L., Cameto, R., Garza, N., & Levine, P. 2005 as cited in Chen & Chan, 2014). Later on, people with learning disabilities are also more likely to receive welfare benefits, be unemployed, and serve in correctional institutions (Blackorby, J., & Wagner, M. as cited in Chen & Chan, 2014). Only 40% of learning disabled individuals are employed two years after high school, and when they are, they have lower wages, fewer benefits (Murray, C., Goldstein, D.E., Nourse, S., & Edgar, E. 2000 as cited in Chen & Chan, 2014), less likely to have advancement opportunities, and more likely to hold entry-level jobs (Rojewski, J.W., Lee, I.H., Gregg, N., & Gimici, S. 2012 as cited in Chen & Chan, 2014). According to Murray, C., Goldstein, D.E., Nourse, S., & Edgar, E. (2000), students with learning disabilities were four times less likely to attend any four-year college or university than their non-learning disabled peers (as cited in Kortering, Barziel, and McClannon 2008). However, they were more likely to obtain job training or attend a two-year college (Murray, C., Goldstein, D.E., Nourse, S., & Edgar, E. (2000) as cited in Kortering et al., 2008). Since so much is already stacked up against

these individuals, the opportunity to offer assistance that can last through the rest of their education and career is vital. This program is a way to reach adolescents at a pivotal time in their development to help educate them on opportunities for their future.

Students with learning disabilities also face difficulties in career exploration (Lusk & Cook, 2009). During adolescence, individuals start to become aware of their strengths, weaknesses, and interests which could lead them to careers that would suit them (Lusk & Cook, 2009). While in school, these students have less opportunities to explore classes for careers they are interested in because they are in academic support classes (Luzzo, D.A. 2000 as cited in Lusk & Cook, 2009). With the limited time they have to explore career options much of the information that is given to them is delivered through written text or in classes that may be difficult for these students to understand and remember due to their processing difficulties (Cummings, R., Maddux, C.D., & Casey, J. 2000 as cited in Chen & Chan, 2014). This lack of accommodations in the curriculum can cause IEP students to understand what career and education options they have and how to navigate them.

The challenges that IEP students face in career development include self-efficacy, having limited job opportunities, and less exposure to career and college-oriented curriculum. To address these needs, I have made an interactive program for 8th-grade IEP students presenting alternatives to a four-year university education for eighth-graders at Iron Horse Middle School, in San Ramon, California.

Theory

Erik Erikson's theory examines how people develop over time, it includes eight stages across the lifespan, and each one has a crisis that needs to be addressed to successfully move forward to the next stage. During adolescence, ages 12 to 18, identity vs. role confusion is the

stage in which individuals will work to find a sense of personal identity (Erikson, 1950).

Adolescence is the period when forming an identity can be influenced by the people and things around: friends, family, media, and teachers (Cherry 2019). In addition to the social influences, adolescents integrate their learned skills and natural abilities to move towards presented opportunities (Erikson, 1950). Not developing an identity can lead to role confusion, causing an individual to be unsure of who they truly are or what they really want in life (Cherry 2019).

Offering career and education choices that are more attainable may reduce the struggle individuals have with self-worth and identity. Knowing this I am preparing an interactive program to offer 8th-grade IEP students information about a variety of post-high school options for career and education. Erikson's theory explains that changes take place during adolescence and what can influence those changes. Since adolescents are searching for an identity they could be visualizing different careers they could be interested in pursuing. This program would help them see different options and give them ideas on what could suit them well.

Consideration of Diversity

My project will be taking place in an 8th grade Individualized Education Program (IEP) class at Iron Horse Middle School in San Ramon, California. The demographics of the class should be expected to reflect that of the rest of the school population. There are 39.8% Asian America, 32.1% White, 12.2% Hispanic or Latino, 9.4% two or more races, 4% Filipino, 2.2% Black and African American, 0.1% American Indian and Alaskan Native, and 0.1% Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (Ball, 2020). Since the target audience is 8th-grade IEP students, they are not reflective of the larger student population since they have IEPs. This Capstone program is designed for students who are enrolled in IEPs and specific to the needs of that group.

The larger population of students might benefit from the program. The presentation will also be in English, so the participants are limited to those that are proficient in English.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the project, participants will be able to:

1. Indicate three of the eight career pathways other than a 4-year college degree.

Measured by a worksheet.

2. Classify careers by the pathways discussed.

Measured by student responses added to a whiteboard.

3. Indicate a pathway for a desired career.

Measured by a career plan worksheet.

Method

Day 1

I plan to begin by telling the students who I am, my personal experience with the school and the Individualized Education Program (IEP), and why I am presenting a program. I would verbally explain that there are eight different career and education options other than a 4-year college and I will refer to these options as pathways. After that, I will list and describe the pathways, which are community college, career and technical school, arts and entertainment, apprenticeship, volunteer, entrepreneurship, military, and straight to work. Next, I will give two to three examples of careers per pathway. Then I will ask the students to give some careers and I will make a list of them on the whiteboard. After that as a group we would categorize the careers into which pathway they fit. This would, hopefully, encourage discussion and get everyone

involved. Next I will hand out a worksheet in which they will write down four different pathways and one career per pathway. See Appendix A. I will collect the worksheet and open up a questions and answer period. Next I will hand out a brochure I created which includes the pathways, a brief description of each, and some resources. See Appendix B. I will end the day by asking them to think about jobs they could be interested in for an activity that will happen the next day. The whole day will take 60 minutes.

Day 2

On the second day, I will give a refresh on the previous day's content. After that I will pass out a career plan worksheet. See Appendix C. I will explain the career plan worksheet and how it is useful in evaluating many aspects of their preferred job. Next I will have them get a laptop from the cart that the school provides. I will give them time to fill out the worksheet for one job interest and do any research needed on the laptop. After they complete the worksheet I will collect it to look over it and give them to the teacher along with the day one worksheet and a picture of the compiled list from the whiteboard to be given back to the students to have as a resource. Next, I open for a questions and answer period. Then, I will reinforce that there are many options and they should continue to think about career and education pathways. I will hand out a pen and a notebook with a sticker of the eight pathways on the cover. See Appendix D. The whole day will take 60 minutes.

Results

Due to COVID-19, the actual project was unable to be completed.

Discussion

Due to COVID-19, the actual project was unable to be completed.

References

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https://doi.org/10.1207/sldrp1401_3

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<https://doi.org/10.2307/1511261>

Appendix

Appendix A:

Name: _____

Date: _____

Career and Pathways

List 3 different pathways that are not a 4-year college and a job that you could get going through that path.

Pathway

Matching Job

Appendix B:

Arts and Entertainment

Some individuals would prefer to pursue a creative passion. Whether it is painting, sports, acting, etc. it is a way to forego college and have an opportunity to attempt to find success.

Apprenticeship

Apprenticeships are ways to earn money while learning a skill. It is an arrangement where apprentices work for a sponsor, who pays their wages and provide the training for the individual. It is usually between 12 months and 6 years.

Volunteer

Volunteering is a way to give back to communities and help a cause you are interested in. Some volunteer opportunities will offer reimbursement for your services. Paid volunteers can receive some parts of their personal costs reimbursed. Often these opportunities are abroad.

Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is creating a product or service and offering it to the public for a profit-based income. This enables the individual to use their interests or talents as a way to support themselves.

Military

Military service is a job opportunity that does not always exclude getting a degree. There are financial benefits for education from serving in the military. College can be attended during or after the military.

Straight to Work

Some individuals already have ideas on what they want their jobs and careers to be and sometimes it does not require a degree. This can let someone start working and earning money right away.

Appendix C:

Name:

Date:

Career Plan Worksheet

This is a career plan worksheet that should help you see the steppingstones to get to a job you are interested in. Pick the job you are currently most interested in and answer the questions.

What job are you most interested in?

What pathway does this job fit into?

What other requirements does this job require (for example, experience, special training, licenses)?

What kind of conditions would you want to work in (for example, indoors, outdoors, weekdays, nights)?

Who could you talk to help guide you towards this job?

What jobs are similar to the one you are interested in?

What further research do you need to do?

Do you have any other questions?

Appendix D:

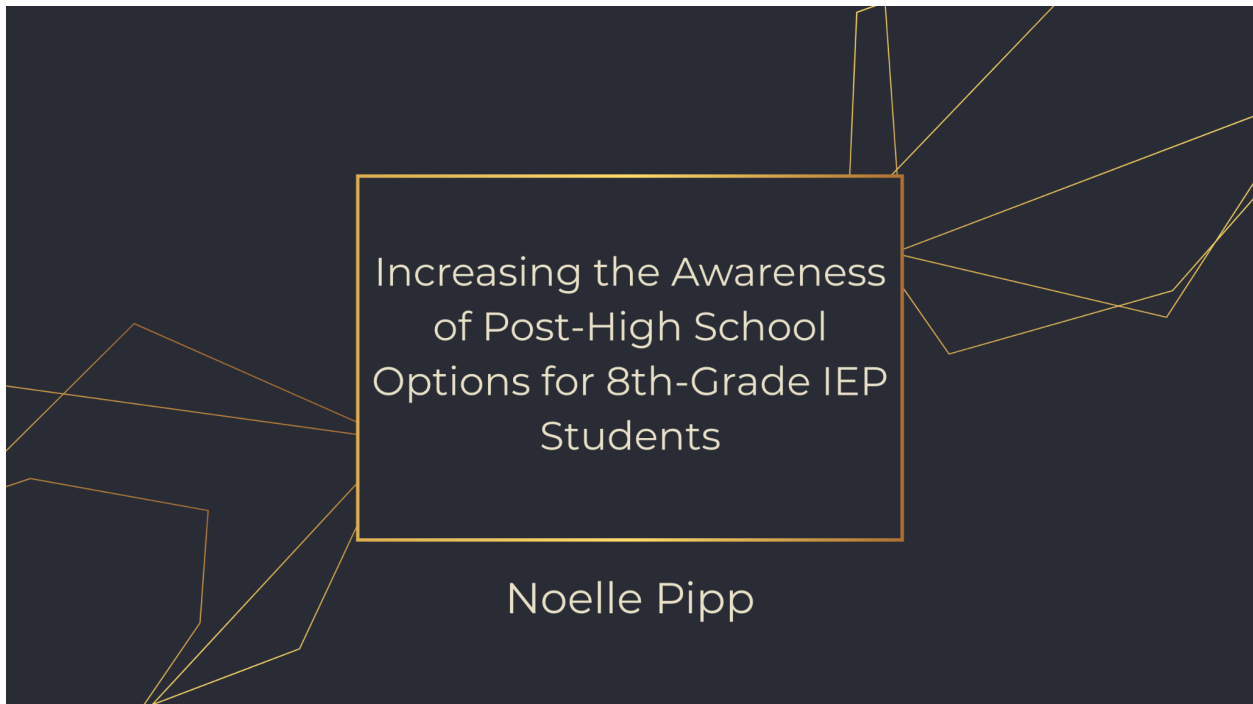


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The 8 Pathways

1. Community College
2. Career and Technical School
3. Arts and Entertainment
4. Apprenticeship
5. Volunteer
6. Entrepreneurship
7. Military
8. Straight to Work


Appendix E:



The image shows a slide titled "Need". The background is dark blue with a network of thin, light-colored lines. The title "Need" is centered at the top in white text. Below the title is a bulleted list of reasons. To the right of the list is an image of two street signs on a pole: "JOB" and "EDUCATION".

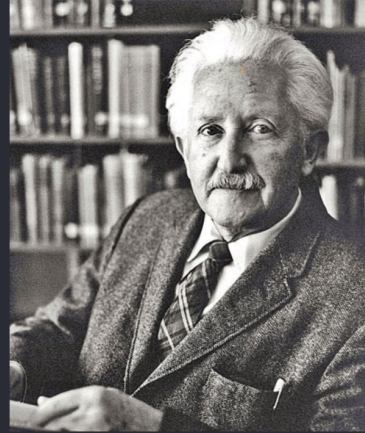
Need

- Individualized Education Program (IEP) students often do not know what post-high school academic and career options are available to them
- The three main reasons
 - Self-efficacy
 - Underrepresented
 - Ineffective presentation style



Theory

- Erik Erikson's Stages of Psychosocial Development
- 12-18 years of age
- Identity vs. Role Confusion
- This stage involves integrating skills and abilities to successfully move through adolescence
- Career goals often lead to a stronger sense of identity



Method

- Introduce a program containing eight post-high school pathways other than attending a 4-year university
- 8th grade IEP students
- Iron Horse Middle School in San Ramon, California



Day 1

- Explain the eight pathways
 - Community college, career and technical school, arts and entertainment, apprenticeship, volunteer, entrepreneurship, military, and straight to work
- Make a list of career and categorize them into pathways
- Career and pathway worksheet
- Pass out brochure with pathways and resources

Learning outcomes:

1. Indicate three of the eight career pathways other than a 4-year college degree.
2. Classify careers by the pathways discussed.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Career and Pathways

List 3 different pathways that are not a 4-year college and a job that you could get going through that path.

Pathway

Matching Job

Community College

Community college (also known as junior colleges or city colleges) are 2-year public institutions that offer certificates, diplomas, and associate degrees. They are a reasonably priced option that can also be used to transfer to a 4-year university. Their specialized career-oriented certificates can be used to head straight into the workforce.

Career and Technical Schools

These schools offer the skills and knowledge needed to perform certain jobs. Courses can be chosen based off of the individual's interest.

Resources

- Community College:**
Diablo Vista College- dvc.edu
- Career and Technical Schools:**
careerschoolnow.org/colleges/cities/san-ramon-ca
- Arts and Entertainment:**
tinyurl.com/2feszfap
- Entrepreneurship:**
tinyurl.com/6wksxmum4
- Apprenticeship:**
caihub.foundationccc.org
- Military:**
usa.gov/join-military
- Volunteer:**
thebalancecareers.com/post-graduate-volunteer-opportunities-2059849

Post-High School Pathways



Arts and Entertainment

Some individuals would prefer to pursue a creative passion. Whether it is painting, sports, acting, etc. it is a way to forego college and have an opportunity to attempt to find success.

Apprenticeship

Apprenticeships are ways to earn money while learning a skill. It is an arrangement where apprentices work for a sponsor, who pays their wages and provide the training for the individual. It is usually between 12 months and 6 years.

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Military

Military service is a job opportunity that does not always exclude getting a degree. There are financial benefits for education from serving in the military. College can be attended during or after the military.

Straight to Work

Some individuals already have ideas on what they want their jobs and careers to be and sometimes it does not require a degree. This can let someone start working and earning money right away.

Day 2

- Explain what a career plan worksheet is and it is uses
- Career plan worksheet
- Pass out notebook

Learning outcome:

3. Indicate a pathway for a desired career.

Career Plan Worksheet

This is a career plan worksheet that should help you see the steppingstones to get to a job you are interested in. Pick the job you are currently most interested in and answer the questions.

What job are you most interested in?

What pathway does this job fit into?

What other requirements does this job require (for example, experience, special training, licenses)?

What kind of conditions would you want to work in (for example, indoors, outdoors, weekdays, nights)?

Who could you talk to help guide you towards this job?

What jobs are similar to the one you are interested in?



Results

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Discussion

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Thank you

Are there any
questions?

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