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The Transition Portfolio: A Portfolio Project Designed to Facilitate Successful Transition for High School Special Education Students

Darla R. Biever

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THE TRANSITION PORTFOLIO:
A PORTFOLIO PROJECT DESIGNED TO FACILITATE SUCCESSFUL
TRANSITION FOR HIGH SCHOOL SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS

by

Darla R. Biever

July, 1998

A transition portfolio has been developed for high school students to aid them in preparing for life after graduation. The project focuses on strategies to increase the involvement of students in transition planning. Also emphasized are the Washington State Essential Academic Learning Requirements for Communication.

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CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND OF THE PROJECT

Introduction

"A highly competitive, technological economy can offer prosperity to those with advanced skills, while the trend for those with less education is to scramble for unsteady, part-time, low-paying jobs" (The William T. Grant Foundation Commission on Work, Family and Citizenship, 1988, p. 1). The message is becoming increasingly clear: Life is hard and getting harder. Job competition, even for those with a high level of skill and education, is becoming more intense. So, try to imagine the transition from high school to life beyond in today's society. It is a challenging prospect for anyone, and potentially offers even greater difficulty to the individual with special needs. Therefore, strategies need to be developed which will help prepare students for transition long before the end of high school.

Webster's Dictionary defines "transition" as "a change or passage from one place, action, mood, topic etc. to another" (1989, p. 1048). Transitions occur for people at many different stages of life. The focus in this project will be the change or passage which takes place as a student finishes high school. Of specific concern is the transition for students with disabilities from high school to the following stage of life.

Significance of the Project

Attention to transition for special education students is mandated by law (Public Law 101-476, 1990), and there is an abundance of research to support the need for students to receive assistance in planning for the future (Bassett & Smith, 1996; The William T. Grant Foundation Commission on Work, Family and Citizenship, 1988; The Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills, 1991). Unfortunately, there is also ample research which suggests a lack of cohesiveness between law, suggested practices, and reality (Browning, Brown, & Dunn, 1993; Halpern, 1992; Mallory, 1996; Wehmeyer & Lawrence, 1995). Numerous researchers advocate policy and program changes to improve existing conditions (Goldberger & Kazis, 1996; Leonard, 1996; Mallory, 1996). However, it is the author's experience that such recommendations can be frustrating to a classroom teacher who is interested in immediate intervention. Therefore, it seems prudent to explore options more readily available for use.

Further, the Commission on Student Learning for the State of Washington has adopted Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRS) to increase the standards of achievement expected from graduates of Washington high schools. As part of the Commission's reasoning for this action, it highlighted the need for students to prepare for "success in later learning, life and work" (Washington State Commission on Student Learning, 1997).

Purpose of the Project

Due to the complexities involved and the individual nature of transition, a student-centered portfolio process may provide a part of the solution to facilitating the transition from high school to life after high school for students with special needs. A portfolio format will allow for students to showcase their interests and skills in a personal and meaningful way (Mezich, 1993; Paulson, Paulson, & Meyer, 1991; Zessoules & Gardner, 1991).

This project will describe a "transition portfolio" developed by the author to aid in preparing students for life after high school. The process will emphasize the involvement of special education students in planning for the future and will stress the development of positive communication skills.

Limitations of the Project

The transition portfolio has been designed for implementation with 10th-through 12th-grade special education students at Davis High School in Yakima, Washington. Transition portfolios could perhaps be valuable tools for a broader spectrum of high-school students, but that cannot be substantiated on the basis of this particular project alone.

Definition of Terms

Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRS): Goals approved by the Washington State Commission on Student Learning for the purpose of improving educational outcomes for students in Washington State.

Portfolio: Definitions of portfolios abound. One definition appropriate to this project describes a portfolio as "a collection of samples that communicate your interests and give evidence of your talents. You use your portfolio to show others what you have accomplished, learned, or produced" (Kimeldorf, 1994, p. 4).

Transition: Transition, which is to be provided for all students age 16 or older who are served in special education programs throughout the United States, has been legally defined through The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) of 1990 (as cited in Brolin, 1995) in the following manner:

a coordinated set of activities for a student, designed within an outcome-oriented process, that promotes movement from school to post-school activities, including post-secondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation (p. 27).

Overview of the Remainder of the Project

Chapter Two consists of a review of the literature relevant to transition needs, Individualized Education Programs, student involvement, portfolios and communication. Chapter Three describes the process used to develop the transition portfolio project. Chapter Four is the project itself: procedures used for developing transition portfolios with special needs students in a high school setting. Chapter Five summarizes the project, discusses conclusions, and offers recommendations from the author.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Transition is an issue of concern in the field of special education. The nature of our society is such that jobs are requiring a higher level of skills, and competition for jobs requiring less expertise is fierce. As a result of their investigation, the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) reported in 1991 that "more than half our young people leave school without the knowledge or foundation required to find and hold a good job" (p. xv). Drier (1991) concurs that facilitating successful transitions for students should be a primary concern in education. Furthermore, there are numerous factors involved in transition. One thing is certain: students need help in preparing for life beyond high school. Brolin (1995), explains the transition dilemma.

It is not easy for anyone to successfully compete in today's modern and complex society. Almost everyone is worried about finding a good job, making enough money living on their own, having meaningful friendships, being able to engage in leisure and recreational pursuits of interest, and other areas of life that affect a satisfying life-style. To achieve success in life, one must be a competent person—to have the skills to compete and assimilate into the fiber of the community. We must give all students such an opportunity. To do this, schools must offer a curriculum that meets the

contemporary needs of its community in regard to productive paid and unpaid work, living, and leisure pursuits. (p. 62)

Several sources confirm that current transition services are generally not meeting student needs (Browning, Brown, & Dunn, 1993; Halpern, 1992; Mallory, 1996; Wehmeyer & Lawrence, 1995). In fact, Halpern (1992) strongly asserted that "transition planning is often ineffective or even nonexistent" (p. 206).

Additionally, many agree that there is a need for more comprehensive approaches which focus on students as individuals (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; Grigal, Test, Beattie & Wood, 1997; Spruill & Cohen, 1990). Blackorby and Wagner (1996) sum it up as follows:

This diversity of postschool experiences for youth with different disability, demographic, and school completion characteristics underscores the need for transition planning to be responsive to individual youths' goals, strengths, and needs. (p. 411)

Individual Education Programs and Student Involvement

Current law dictates that every secondary student who has an Individualized Education Program (IEP), is entitled to formal transition planning as a part of the IEP process. Public Law 94-142, the Education for all Handicapped Children Act of 1975, mandates that IEPs will be written for each "handicapped child" to document current functioning, to plan current goals and objectives and to describe all services provided for the student (89 STAT. 776). The Individuals with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Public Law 101-476) specifically defines services in the

area of transition. 1997 amendments to Public Law 101-476 uphold the need for transition planning and dictate that each IEP include "a statement of transition service needs" (p. 64) from the age of 14. Furthermore, the law stipulates that the IEP will be formally reviewed at least once a year.

Given the literature which proposes increased student involvement in the transition to adulthood (Morningstar, Turnbull, & Turnbull; Wehmeyer, 1992; Wehmeyer & Lawrence, 1995), logic dictates that students should participate fully in the IEP process as well. For example, Martin, Marshall and Maxson (1993) offer the reminder that law requires that students are invited to participate actively in the formation of their IEPs, and further maintain the following:

To help make transitions from school to post-school work or education successful, we believe that the Individualized Education Planning process must change. Self-management of the IEP process holds the opportunity to foster the development of self-determination skills. The IEP process provides opportunities for student planning and self-advocacy. Where else in a person's school life are choices more important? (1993, p. 55)

Others also concur that students should be actively involved in the IEP process (Gillespie & Turnbull, 1983; Keefe, 1992; Morningstar et al., 1996; Wehmeyer and Lawrence, 1995).

The notion of "self-determination" is central to the argument for more student input during transition planning. It has been defined by Wehmeyer (1992) as referring to "the attitudes and abilities required to act as the primary causal agent in

one's life and to make choices and decisions regarding one's actions free from undue external influence or interference" (p. 3). Wehmeyer further asserts that self-determination can be useful in enhancing skills necessary for transition in general, and can be specifically helpful in increasing success in job situations.

Wehmeyer (1995), conducted a field test of a transition enhancement program designed to promote self-determination for students with mental disabilities. While Wehmeyer suggests that further study is required, the test indicates positive results with increased student participation in the transition planning process.

Portfolios

Portfolios have been in existence for years in varying contexts. For instance, models and artists have typically organized examples of their work to showcase their abilities, and those collections of work have been called portfolios. In recent years, portfolios have rapidly gained popularity in the field of education for a variety of uses — from math or literacy portfolios to professional teacher portfolios (Hansen, 1992; Knight, 1992; Wolf, 1991; Yerkes, 1995).

Definitions for the term "portfolio" abound, but the unifying theme is that portfolios are thoughtfully created, process-oriented and individualized. Mezich (1993) termed a portfolio "a purposeful collection of a person's work" (p. 9). Cramer defined a portfolio as "an assessment tool" and "a collection of student work that documents the process of learning and individual growth" (1993, p. 2). Zessoules and Gardner (1991) called them "process-folios" (p. 58) because the

work in portfolios is chosen and collected over a period of time in order to show progress and growth. Kimeldorf (1994) states that portfolios can be thought of as "a special-purpose autobiography" (p. 4). Paulson, Paulson, and Meyer (1991) researched portfolios and came to the following conclusions:

A portfolio, then, is a portfolio when it provides a complex and comprehensive view of student performance in context. It is a portfolio when the student is a participant in, rather than the object of, assessment. Above all, a portfolio is a portfolio when it provides a forum that encourages students to develop the abilities needed to become independent, self-directed learners. (p. 63)

The use of portfolios in facilitating transition appear promising. Not only may students use them to document skills and growth for personal gratification and academic progress, but it is also possible that they could be used similarly to teacher's professional portfolios in the sense that professional portfolios can provide a means for teachers to demonstrate competencies that might otherwise never be revealed in the hiring process. In that way, students may share their portfolios with potential employers in order to highlight desirable job skills.

Portfolios lend themselves to increased student self-determination because they are largely student directed. According to Wesson and King (1996), "a critical ingredient of portfolios is the reflections of the students about their own learning," (p. 44). In addition, Paulson et al. (1991) declare that "portfolios allow students to assume ownership in ways that few other instructional approaches allow" (p. 61). Portfolios can also help students as they seek autonomy and the information to

make decisions regarding future action:

When students reflect on and interpret their learning experiences, paths for personal inquiry about learning emerge. No longer are students completing an assignment for the teacher or the letter grade or because they will need specific information or skills when they get to a higher grade level. Instead, they are motivated by the need to satisfy their individual inquiries. Through reflection, students are able to discover how they are different and appreciate the interactions that supported them in their endeavors to understand. (Porter & Cleland, 1995, p. 37)

As already established, self-determination is a beneficial skill for students with special needs to possess. Self-determination involves independent decision making which is encouraged through the portfolio process.

Some research has already reported experimentation with portfolios used in the transition process (Burdick, Pond & Yamamoto, 1994; Colorado State Board of Education, 1990; Sarkees-Wircenski & Wircenski, 1994). Burdick et al. (1994) work in a school program on a Navy base in Japan. In their program, portfolios take the form of student files with required contents, including job-related paperwork and items such as interest inventories and aptitude assessments. These accumulations of materials are then given to the students upon leaving the school. The Colorado State Board of Education explains their "transition skills portfolio" as follows:

The portfolio is simply a file folder that holds documents supporting a

student's preparation for entering the next phase of his or her education and training. It also indicates skill development that is needed for moving to the next level of education and training.

Sarkees-Wircenski and Wircenski (1994) describe a program in Texas where progress in five "competency" areas is charted, and the charts are organized into what they call a "career portfolio."

Communication Skills

To more comfortably participate in IEP meetings and transition planning, to express self-determination, and to experience an increased likelihood of success in both work-related and personal relationships, it is desirable for adolescents to gain expertise in communication skills. A review of the literature reveals support for an emphasis on social skills, including effective communication (American Guidance Service, 1989; Chadsey-Rusch, 1992; Dowd & Tierney, 1992; Schultz, 1989; Stevens & Lichtenstein, 1990). Schultz (1989) proposed a "Words for Work" model which placed communication at the center of "one's ability to be socially competent" (p. 17). Schultz further maintains that "radiating from the ability to be communicatively and socially skilled, lies one's interrelated successes in family, academic, occupation, social/personal, and leisure activities" (1989, p. 17). Additionally, communication has been noted as a key to the lifelong learning process (Commission on Student Learning, 1997). "Interpersonal skills" are cited in the 1991 SCANS Report as one of the "five competencies" which they believe are necessary for transition from school to work. Strong evidence for the

importance of positive communication comes from Kokaska and Brolin (1985):
"The inability to get along with co-workers and supervisors is one of the most common reasons people fail on their jobs" (p.158).

The Washington State Commission on Student Learning also values the acquisition of strong communication skills (Commission on Student Learning, 1997). The Commission was established as a result of the Educational Reform Act of 1993 with the following goal: "Update and elevate the standards of academic achievement and improve student performance in Washington State to prepare our young people for living, learning, and working successfully in the 21st century" (1997, p. 4). Four goals have been outlined by the Washington State Legislature for which the Commission on Student Learning has established "Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRS)" or "Essential Learnings." Of particular concern is the portion of the first state goal which affirms that students need to know how to "communicate effectively and responsibly in a variety of ways and settings" (1997, p. 2). Following is a list of the proposed EALRS relating to increased communication skills:

1. The student uses listening and observation skills to gain understanding.

To meet this standard, the student will:

- *be able to focus attention
- *listen and observe to gain and interpret information
- *ask questions to clarify content and meaning; demonstrate the ability to paraphrase accurately and precisely
- *identify and evaluate the techniques and influence of mass media messages

2. The student communicates ideas clearly and effectively.

To meet this standard, the student will:

*communicate clearly to a range of audiences for a variety of purposes

*develop a topic or theme; organize thoughts around a clear beginning, middle, and end; use transitional sentences and phrases to connect related ideas; speak coherently and compellingly

*adjust speaking strategies for a variety of audiences and purposes by varying tone, pitch, pace of speech to create effect and aid communication

*use language that is grammatically correct, precise, engaging, and well suited to topic, audience, and purpose

*use appropriate action, sound and image to support presentations

3. The student uses communication strategies and skills to work effectively with others.

To meet this standard, the student will:

*use language to interact effectively and responsibly with others

*apply content knowledge and skills to perform tasks as a member of a group

*participate in discussions to reach agreement or seek solutions

4. The student analyzes and evaluates the effectiveness of communication.

To meet this standard, the student will:

*assess own communication strengths and needs, and set goals for improvement

suggestions and comments to others, when appropriate

*explore options for career opportunities

Summary

The transition portfolio concept provides a natural format for highlighting student progress toward individual goals in the multi-faceted transition process, while also promoting self-determination and improved skill in communications. Keefe suggests "for learners with mild or moderate handicaps the portfolio process can demystify the IEP meeting, and at the same time, give students a sense of involvement in planning their educational destiny" (p. 38). Keefe further contends: "they [students] should be invited to attend the IEP meeting to present their portfolio and explain how they accomplished their goals and objectives."

Active participation during high school might also provide practice for job interviews and other life activities. Additionally, documenting experiences in a student-centered transition portfolio could provide information for future employers which most students leaving high school do not possess. According to Barton (1991):

a transcript gives little information about a student's qualifications for employment. Young people leaving school have no official record to document the characteristics that employers are seeking, such as communication and problem-solving skills, leadership, and responsibility. (p. 51)

Barton recommends use of a system that provides documentation of student abilities related to employment. Since it has been established that communication is conducive to employment success, a student-centered transition portfolio which emphasizes progress toward the essential learnings in communication could serve this function.

CHAPTER THREE

PROCEDURES

The author first became interested in the concept of a transition portfolio while taking a graduate course in assessment in the winter of 1996. As one of the requirements for the course, the author worked with one of her students to develop some ideas for activities which could aid in preparing students for the future. The result was the beginning of a transition portfolio project.

As a high school special education teacher, the author has long been interested in transition. It has been frustrating to the author that so few students seem to be able to graduate and progress somewhat smoothly to life in society beyond high school. Although law mandates that special educators address transition needs through the Individualized Education Program (IEP) process, the means for doing so remains the responsibility of the individual districts and the teachers involved directly with the students. Therefore, teachers need to employ creativity in curriculum which may enhance the transition process.

In the last two years, the author has also become quite familiar with the Essential Academic Learning Requirements devised by the Commission on Student Learning for Washington State. During the 1997-98 academic year, the author participated on a committee which examined the Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs) and discussed the role of special education personnel in helping students achieve the EALRs to the best of their individual ability levels. Achievement in all areas is important to the general progress of

special education students, and may promote positive transition for students. However, providing instruction in all areas is beyond the scope of this project. Therefore, the author has chosen to concentrate on the communication skills advised by the Commission.

A review of the literature provides support for the author's views that transition issues need to be addressed more completely than has been the case thus far in most situations. The literature also suggests that a portfolio format is useful for showcasing student interests and abilities. Furthermore, the literature review upholds the connection between positive communication skills and successful transition. Most of the lesson plans described in this project reflect the teaching experiences of the author, along with some adapted from other sources to more adequately address the needs of the author's student population.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE PROJECT

Introduction

This chapter describes strategies utilized by the author for the purpose of guiding special education students in the process of organizing individual transition portfolios. Each portfolio includes a variety of components. Those recommended by the author are briefly explained in the following paragraphs.

One section must demonstrate evidence of student involvement in the Individualized Education Program (IEP) process. Since each IEP should be unique, this part of the portfolio should look a little different for each student. This project simply suggests some general ideas for the IEP portion of each portfolio.

The project also offers suggestions for a wide range of items which could be included in each portfolio. The inclusion or lack of inclusion of some of these will be dependent on individual student interests, aptitudes and goals.

The majority of the transition portfolio project involves the Washington State Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRS) for communication. Contained in this project are a variety of lesson plans addressing the communication goals, as well as suggestions for grading criteria. Included here are some sample assessment forms.

FORMAT FOR THE TRANSITION PORTFOLIO PROJECT

***The IEP Component**

***Additional Features**

***Communication Lessons**

The IEP Component

As mandated by law, each student's IEP should be completely individualized. Therefore, it is not within the scope of this project to detail the process involved for each student. The goals and objectives for each student will vary according to individual needs. However, every student should become familiar with the process of setting goals in order to become more active in the IEP process. On the following page is one example of a lesson in goal setting.

Planning for the Future

Objective: *Students will practice setting goals.*

Materials: *Paper, writing utensils*

Procedure:

1. *Students write at least two paragraphs describing the perfect year. (Note: This assignment works particularly well at the beginning of either the academic or calendar year.)*
2. *Discuss students' dreams for the year and the necessary steps to take in order to make some of those dreams come true. Complete several examples as a group. For instance, if a student wishes to obtain a car in "the perfect year," they will need to save money for such a purchase, possibly obtain a loan, shop around for a car that will be a good value for the money, and so forth.*
3. *Each student writes an informal essay describing "the perfect year."*
4. *Each student reviews his or her essay and, on a separate piece of paper, writes goals that need to be met in order to achieve some of what they describe for "the perfect year."*

Evaluation: *Students will be graded on the initial assignment, and will also be required to monitor progress on at least a quarterly basis. This activity parallels the individual process each student will undertake in helping determine and monitor IEP goals and objectives throughout the year.*

Grading Scale:

<i>5 = superior</i>	<i>4 = well done</i>	<i>3 = acceptable</i>
<i>2 = needs work</i>	<i>1 = try again please</i>	<i>0 = no attempt</i>

Each student's portfolio should show evidence of participating in goal setting for each of the areas pertinent to the individual IEP. Additionally, each student should participate fully in the actual IEP conferences and work toward leading the meetings. This process will involve individual meetings with the student and the teacher responsible for writing his or her IEP. Following that, students will practice facilitating IEP meetings through role play in class and gradually assume a more active part in the actual meetings.

Experience in self-monitoring of the IEP process will benefit students in terms of meeting requirements for the Essential Learnings in communication as well. The fourth Essential Learning Requirement in communication states that "the student analyzes and evaluates the effectiveness of formal and informal communication," and the first component specifically directs students to "assess strengths and need for improvement" (p. 47). While this requirement relates to oral communication skills, the concept further applies to other components of the IEP.

Additional Features

Evidence of IEP involvement and progress toward the Essential Learnings in communication are the cornerstone elements of the Transition Portfolio, but other features are desirable as well. Each portfolio should begin with a table of contents and a cover letter typed on a word processor by the student. The purpose of the cover letter is to demonstrate each student's ability

to neatly and correctly type a business letter, and to describe some of the student's general goals and reflection.

Acknowledgment of interests and aptitudes should be evident in all of the portfolios as well. Some possibilities are copies of interest inventories, personal writing regarding interests and plans for the future, aptitude testing, and documentation of abilities (i.e. evaluations, work samples, and so forth).

The transition portfolios should all contain examples of general "job search paperwork" such as copies of a social security card and picture identification, a personal resume and letters of recommendation. Students should also show evidence of any honors or skills mentioned on the resume.

All portfolios will need to exhibit documentation of all required elements, and a variety of optional activities as well. Evaluations of the portfolio should be completed periodically by the student, the teacher, peers and others, such as parents, other teachers, IEP committee members, and so forth. The portfolio should never be viewed as a completely finished product. The transition portfolios are constantly in process – as are the students developing them.

*On the next two pages are ideas for additional portfolio activities and a list of prompts for student self-evaluation, followed by the communication lessons designed to teach aspects of the Essential Learning Requirements.

PORTFOLIO IDEAS

video or audio tapes of interview practice, presentations, personal reflection monologue, etc.

journaling, poems or other writing regarding dreams for the future

interviews of others about job experience

written answers to possible interview questions

photographs (i.e. of large projects, bulletin boards, art work, community service, appropriate extracurricular activities, work experience, . . .)

autobiography

evidence of activities reflecting knowledge of, and respect for, cultural diversity

group work and evaluations

written directions

creative writing

samples of note-taking skills

message writing

other self-selected work samples



SELF-REFLECTION SENTENCE STARTERS

This was hard work because . . .

*I like this because it shows that I
can . . .*

One special thing about this . . .

This shows that I am good at . . .

This is my best _____ because . . .

When I did this, I learned . . .

*It was my goal to _____, and
I accomplished it by . . .*

I chose this because . . .

***LET'S TALK
ABOUT
IT!***

***Lessons
in
Communication***

COMMUNICATION LESSONS

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ATTENTION PLEASE!

Essential Learning 1: *The student uses listening and observation skills to gain understanding.*

Materials: *volunteer speaker, writing utensils, paper*

Procedure:

1. *Prior to the activity, procure the assistance of a student or other volunteer.*
2. *Give the volunteer a subject to talk about to the class for approximately five minutes and briefly discuss ideas somewhere that the class cannot hear what is being said (preferably outside of class time.)*
3. *Volunteer gives a mini "speech" on prearranged topic and then exits the room until after students have been questioned.*
4. *Teacher asks the students in the room one question about what the student said and four questions about the volunteer's appearance. (i.e. Describe the shoes the speaker was wearing. What color are the speaker's eyes?) Questions need to be answered individually in writing.*
5. *Discuss the importance of observation in the listening process.*
6. *Repeat activity with a different volunteer as the speaker.*

Evaluation: *Students are scored on the basis of improvement in the number of correct responses between the first "speech" and the second.*

ARE YOU LISTENING?

Essential Learning 1: *The student uses listening and observation skills to gain understanding.*

Materials: *One copy of the incident report (see attached) for the teacher to read aloud, two copies of the questionnaire for each student (see attached), writing utensils, extra paper (optional).*

Procedure:

1. *Instruct students to listen carefully.*
2. *Read the incident report aloud to the class two times. In acknowledgment of varying learning styles, students have the option of taking notes while listening.*
3. *Following the reading, provide each student with a questionnaire which they must answer independently.*
4. *Collect the questionnaires and read the incident aloud a third time.*
5. *Provide each student with a second copy of the questionnaire and allow time for students to complete the work.*
6. *Discuss the answers as a class.*

Evaluation: *Questionnaire is scored on the basis of the number of correct responses and the improvement between the first and second trials.*

Incident Report

At about 2 p.m. on February 14th I was a witness to an accident. I was driving my 1990 green Honda Accord sedan east down Taylor Avenue on my way to a dentist appointment. The light ahead of me at the intersection of Taylor and 12th Avenue turned yellow, so I slowed down and came to a complete stop behind the crosswalk just as the light turned red. That's when I saw it happen. A white van, with the words "Rose's Floral" written on it in red, approached the intersection from the north. As it neared Taylor Avenue, the driver of the van slowed down and turned on the left turn signal to indicate a turn toward the east on Taylor Avenue. The van then proceeded to turn without stopping. At the same time, a red van from Lilly's House of Flowers was traveling north on 12th through the intersection. The two vehicles managed to almost stop, so the impact was not as severe as it might have been, but the damage was still costly. The rear doors of both vans flung open and the intersection of Taylor and 12th was flooded with dozens and dozens of red roses. It took nearly half an hour to clear enough roses so that traffic could begin to move again. As I watched the cleanup, I was thankful I had ordered my wife's valentine bouquet from Green Thumb Creations so that she would know I had remembered. I doubted that Rose's Floral and Lilly's House of Flowers could notify all of the customers before some wives and girlfriends became very upset about not receiving any valentine flowers!

Incident Report Questionnaire

Take your time, and answer all questions as completely as possible. Remember to do your best! Use the back of this paper, or attach a separate piece of paper if necessary.

1. *According to the witness, what was the date of the accident?*
2. *According to the witness, what was the time of the accident?*
3. *What type and color of vehicle was the author driving? (2 points)*
4. *Where was the witness going?*
5. *On what street was the witness driving?*
6. *Why did the witness see the accident?*
7. *Where did the accident occur?*
8. *Write down the type and color of each vehicle involved in the accident (4 points).*
9. *Describe the accident in detail (i.e. what direction was each vehicle traveling, how did the problem occur, etc.). (4 points)*
10. *What was the costly damage noted by the witness?*
11. *From where had the witness ordered flowers?*
12. *Was the witness a man or a woman? How do you know this? (2 points)*

LISTEN AND DRAW

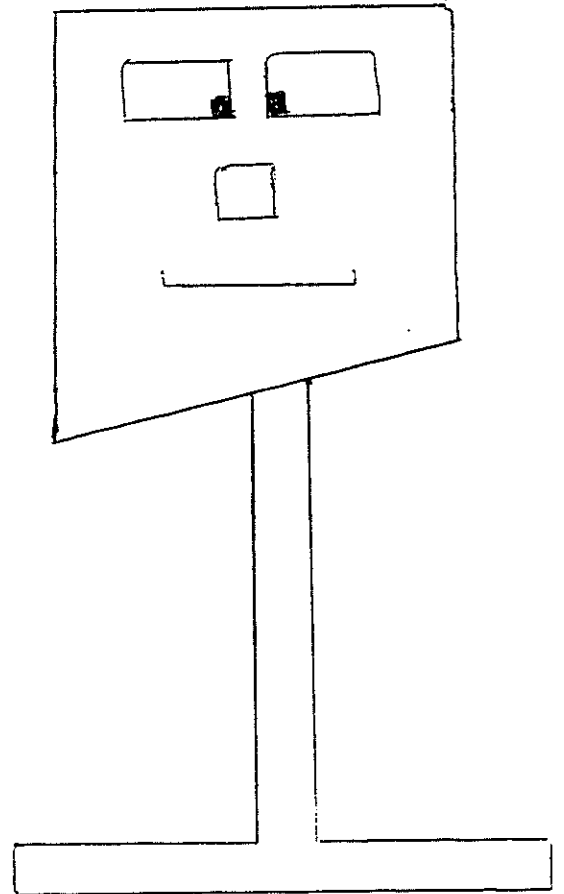
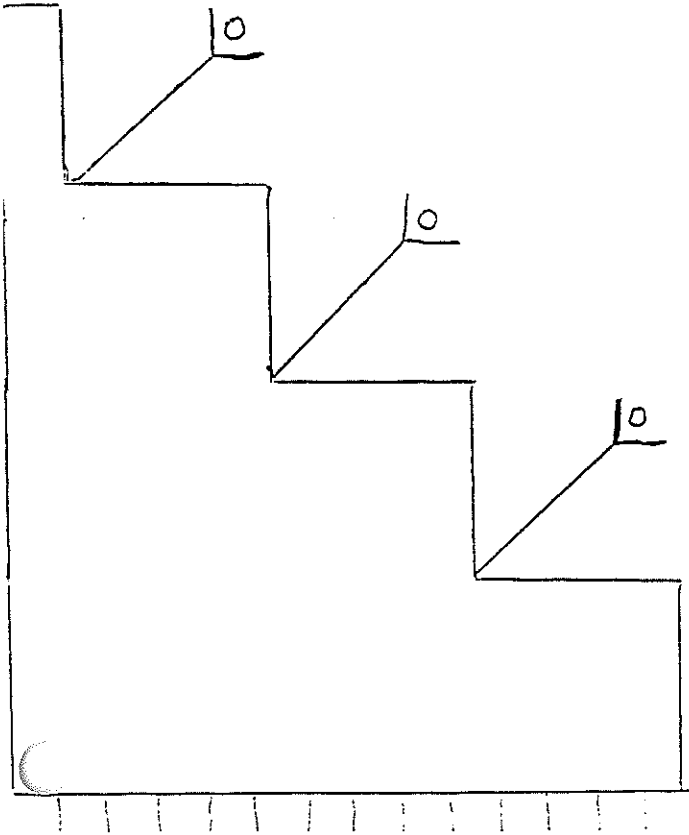
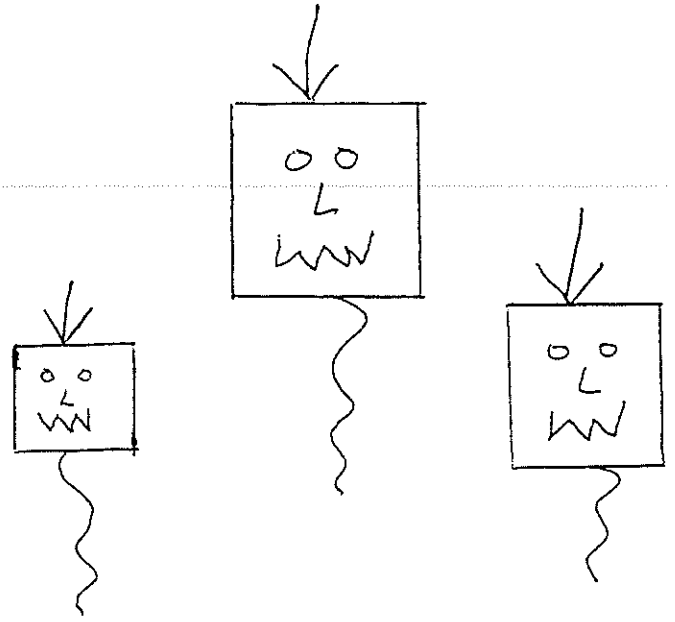
Essential Learning 1: *The student uses listening and observation skills to gain understanding.*

Materials: *3" by 5" index cards, each with a drawing on one side (see attached samples); writing utensils; rulers; blank 3" by 5" index cards or blank paper*

Procedure:

- 1. Divide students into pairs and instruct them to sit back to back, so that they cannot see the other person's desk.*
- 2. Give a blank index card to one person in each pair.*
- 3. Place one of the picture cards face down on the desk of each person who does not already have a blank card on their desk.*
- 4. Explain to the students that the one of the pair who has the picture on their card will be giving instructions to their partner, without saying what the picture is, and the student with the blank card needs to draw the picture to the best of his or her ability. The student doing the drawing may ask questions for clarification.*
- 5. Review acceptable direction words, such as perpendicular, right angle, parallel, and so forth.*
- 6. Give one example and instruct the entire class to draw what you are explaining on a piece of paper (i.e. a snowman - see attached).*
- 6. Allow time for any questions and then give the pairs the direction to begin.*
- 7. Repeat the activity with the students switching roles and using different pictures.*

Evaluation: *Students will compare their index card pictures with the originals and participate in a class discussion of the results. The class will also brainstorm a list of suggestions for giving clear directions and post them in the room. They will then do the same for listening and following directions.*



1-2-3 COMMUNICATION

Essential Learning 1: *The student uses listening and observation skills to gain understanding.*

Materials: *peel and stick name tags, pen(s); scenarios (see attached) and communication evaluations (see attached)*

Procedure:

1. *Divide students into groups of three.*
2. *Assign each group member a number (1,2 or 3) and have them put on a name tag with the appropriate number.*
3. *Call a number and gather all the participants with that number. Verbally give them their speaker instructions somewhere that other students cannot overhear (i.e. in the hall). Answer any questions and then have them return to the groups.*
4. *Call another number and gather all the participants with that number. Verbally give them their listener instructions somewhere that other students cannot overhear (i.e. in the hall). Answer any questions and then have them return to the groups.*
5. *Assign the remaining group member the job of observer.*
6. *Direct the students to arrange their groups so that the speaker and listener are seated directly opposite each other and the observer is off to the side where he or she can clearly watch both other group members.*
7. *Allow the students to act out the scenario for a couple of minutes and then instruct them to stop.*
8. *Ask for verbal feedback from each group member.*
9. *Assign new roles and continue in this manner until all scenarios have been acted out and discussed.*
10. *Students need to individually complete communication evaluations.*

Evaluation: *Credit given for participation and communication evaluation (5 = superior, 4 = well done, 3 = acceptable, 2 = needs work, 1 = please try again, 0 = no attempt).*

1-2-3 Communication Roles

Observer Role: The observer always listens and observes. He or she is not allowed to enter into the conversation.

For the speaker and listener roles, the numbers correspond so that when the speaker is portraying role #1, the listener follows role #1 as well, and so on.

Speaker Roles:

- 1) The speaker tells the most entertaining story he or she can think of to tell.*
- 2) The speaker talks about a problem they are having.*
- 3) The speaker tells a story of an event that has been life-changing for them.*
- 4) The speaker talks about a typical day in his or her life, but talks in as boring and monotone a manner as possible and does not make eye contact with the listener.*
- 5) The speaker talks about some very emotional event in his or her life.*
- 6) The speaker talks about some favorite memories.*

Listener Roles:

- 1) The listener fidgets and looks around while the speaker is telling the story.*
- 2) The listener stares at the speaker and continually nods his or her head up and down the entire time the speaker is talking.*
- 3) The listener assumes a position of active listening, but silently counts backward from 100 while the speaker talks.*
- 4) The listener leans a little forward, gives the speaker his or her full attention and tries to maintain eye contact.*
- 5) The listener listens intently to the speaker, but continually interrupts to talk about his or her own life and give advice to the speaker.*
- 6) The listener demonstrates active listening while the speaker talks.*

1-2-3 Communication Evaluation

Answer the following questions with no less than three complete sentences for each one.

1. *What was your experience as a speaker in your group?*

2. *What was your experience as a listener in your group?*
3. *What was your experience as an observer in your group?*
4. *Describe "active listening."*
5. *Why is active listening so important?*
6. *What are some factors that can cause active listening to be such a difficult task?*

DEBATE THE ISSUES

Essential Learning 1: *The student uses listening and observation skills to gain understanding.*

Essential Learning 2: *The student communicates ideas clearly and effectively.*

Essential Learning 3: *The student uses communication strategies and skills to work effectively with others.*

Materials: *writing utensils and paper for the recorder in each group, debate topics to be read by teacher (see attached)*

Procedure:

- 1. Divide students randomly into groups with five students each and aid each group in appointing a recorder, a timekeeper and three reporters.*
- 2. Teacher reads debate topics and answers any questions.*
- 3. Groups are paired up and assigned a topic and a pro or con stance for the debate.*
- 4. Groups of students are given 15 minutes to organize their arguments, while the group recorder writes down the points the group wishes to present to the class and the timekeeper keeps track of the 15-minute time allotment.*
- 5. The group with the pro side of the debate is given six minutes to present their arguments. During this time, no one in the room is allowed to speak except the group's reporters.*
- 6. The group with the con side of the debate is given six minutes to present their arguments. During this time, no one in the room is allowed to speak except the group's reporters.*
- 7. Continue this process until all groups have had the opportunity to complete a debate. Students take turns so that everyone in the group has a chance to perform each role. (Time needed for this lesson will vary, depending on the size of the class and the length of class periods.)*

Evaluation: *Each student will receive an individual grade, a group grade from his or her peers, and a grade from the teacher (see attached form). Results will be discussed and a final grade given to each student for each role performed.*

Debate Topics

1. *Should schools require students to wear uniforms? Supporters maintain that uniforms help ease peer pressure to wear certain styles of clothing. Others claim that mandating the wearing of uniforms takes away freedom of expression and can also be costly.*

2. *Should students be kicked out of school for smoking? Some schools have rules that stipulate students should be expelled after being caught smoking a few times. Some people think that is too strict. The schools that expel students for smoking contend that students need to be held accountable for their behavior and need to be punished for not following the rules. Those who oppose such strict action assert that expelling students for smoking will not help them quit, and will only prevent them from obtaining an education.*

3. *Should student athletes be allowed to play sports if they do not receive passing grades? Those who think that students need to earn decent grades in order to play sports claim that learning should come first. Others who oppose that stance argue that school athletics are a positive experience for students and should be viewed separately from class work.*

4. *Should schools follow a year-round calendar? Many people feel that there are several benefits to year-round school, such as varying vacation times and better use of school facilities. Others maintain that it's too hot in the summer for students to be in school.*

5. *Should drug addicts be supplied with clean needles? Supporters of this idea insist that addicts need to be given clean needles to help slow the spread of AIDS. Opponents think that supplying needles will encourage drug use and suggest that the money could be better spent.*

Students should also be encouraged to come up with other topics.

** Debate ideas taken from Scholastic ACTION magazines.*

Debating the issues: How did you do?

Key: RC = Recorder, T = Timekeeper, RP = Reporter

Grading Scale:

5 = superior 4 = well done 3 = acceptable
 2 = needs work 1 = try again please 0 = no attempt

Name	Role	Group	Points Possible	Student	Peers	Teacher
	RC		5			
	T		5			
	RP		5			

Debating the issues: How did you do?

Key: RC = Recorder, T = Timekeeper, RP = Reporter

Grading Scale:

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Name	Role	Group	Points Possible	Student	Peers	Teacher
	RC		5			
	T		5			
	RP		5			

DEBATE FOLLOW-UP

Essential Learning 3: *The student uses communication strategies and skills to work effectively with others.*

Materials: *copies of debate notes, copies of debate topics, writing utensils and paper*

Procedure:

1. *Divide students into groups of three or four.*
2. *Hand out copies of notes from debates recently held in class recently and copies of the debate topics used.*
5. *Assign each group the task of developing a compromise for each of the topics previously debated. Students within the group must reach consensus.*
6. *Discuss and compare solutions as an entire class.*

Evaluation: *Grades will be assigned based on participation and effort (5 = superior, 4 = well done, 3 = acceptable, 2 = needs work, 1 = try again please, 0 = no attempt).*

GUESSING GAME

Essential Learning 1: *The student uses listening and observation skills to gain understanding.*

Essential Learning 2: *The student communicates ideas clearly and effectively.*

Materials: *one-minute timer, game cards (see attached examples)*

Procedure:

1. *Divide students randomly into two teams.*
2. *Explain the rules of the game: The object of the game is to give clues for the team to guess the key word without saying any of the forbidden words. Students take turns giving clues to the team. The one giving clues stands at the front of the room and draws a card on which there is a key word at the top and a list of forbidden words underneath. As soon as the card is drawn the time starts. A point is given if the student's team guesses the key word from the clues given. (In fact, even if the other team speaks out of turn with the right answer, a point is given to the team with the card at that time.) If any of the forbidden words or any part or form of any word on the card is spoken (i.e., check, book, checking account, and so forth cannot be used as clues if checkbook is the key word), the point automatically goes to the other team. The teams take turns throughout the game, and the team with the most points at the end is the winner.*
3. *Enjoy!*

Evaluation: *Students will receive grades based on active, positive participation (5 = superior, 4 = well done, 3 = acceptable, 2 = needs work, 1 = try again please, 0 = no attempt)*

Game Cards

Note: Although these examples have been designed for an independent living unit on banking and money management, this game could easily be adapted for a multitude of subjects.

<p><i>CHECKING ACCOUNT</i> money bank deposit statement withdrawal</p>	<p><i>INSTALLMENT PLAN</i> buy payments monthly credit interest</p>	<p><i>BANK</i> teller savings checks savings money</p>
<p><i>BUDGET</i> expenses income needs wants money</p>	<p><i>INVESTMENT</i> future finances money save return</p>	<p><i>PAYCHECK</i> salary wages week work money</p>
<p><i>CREDIT CARD</i> plastic charge pay VISA MASTER CARD</p>	<p><i>INCOME</i> net gross paycheck job salary</p>	<p><i>CHECKBOOK</i> register deposit balance withdrawal statement</p>

**Adapted from the "TABOO" game by Milton-Bradley. The game cards for Credit Card, Investment and Paycheck are taken directly from "TABOO" cards.*

SPINNING A YARN

Essential Learning 2: *The student communicates ideas clearly and effectively.*

Essential Learning 3: *The student uses communication strategies and skills to work effectively with others.*

Essential Learning 4: *The student analyzes and evaluates the effectiveness of formal and informal communication.*

Materials: *poster-sized picture with people and/or animals involved in one or more activities, dry-erase board and pens or chalkboard with chalk, ball of yarn with large knots tied in it every few feet, tape recorder, evaluation forms (see attached)*

Procedure:

- 1. Place the poster where it is clearly visible to all students.*
- 2. Discuss the picture as a group and decide on names for each of the people/animals in the picture. Teacher writes names where they can be seen by everyone.*
- 3. Set tape recorder to record and have everyone sit in a circle.*
- 4. Teacher begins story, starting at the end of the ball of yarn and slowly pulling the yarn through his or her fingers until reaching a knot. As soon as the teacher reaches the knot, it is time to end his or her portion of the story telling.*
- 5. Maintaining a hold on the yarn, the teacher tosses the remainder of the ball to one of the students.*
- 6. The student continues telling the story until reaching the next knot and then tosses the ball of yarn to another student, while still maintaining a hold on the yarn. (With everyone holding "their" piece of yarn, it is easy to keep track of the students who haven't yet had a turn - and it also creates an interesting design!)*
- 7. Each participant adds to the tale, and each person in the room must have a turn before anyone takes a second turn. This continues until the ball of yarn is completely unwound.*
- 8. As a group, the class concludes the story with as few additional sentences as possible.*
- 9. Rewind tape and play back.*
- 10. (optional) Story may also be recorded in written form.*

Evaluation: Individual grades will be based on participation (5 = superior, 4 = well done, 3 = acceptable, 2 = needs work, and 1 = try again please!). The class, as an entire group, will also critique the story for essential story elements, and may try again the next time to improve on the flow and content.

Spinning A Yarn - Evaluation Form

Date: _____

Grading Criteria:

- 5 Superior**
- 4 Well Done**
- 3 Acceptable**
- 2 Needs Work**
- 1 Please Try Again**
- 0 No Attempt**

Circle your evaluation for each of the following, and please add comments on the back of this evaluation form.

<i>Strong Beginning</i>	5	4	3	2	1	0
<i>Character Development</i>	5	4	3	2	1	0
<i>Setting Description</i>	5	4	3	2	1	0
<i>Interesting Plot</i>	5	4	3	2	1	0
<i>Clear Ending</i>	5	4	3	2	1	0
<i>Use of Dialogue and Details</i>	5	4	3	2	1	0
<i>Pace</i>	5	4	3	2	1	0

Comments: _____

GROUP BOARD STORIES

Essential Learning 2: *The student communicates ideas clearly and effectively.*

Essential Learning 3: *The student uses communication strategies and skills to work effectively with others.*

Essential Learning 4: *The student analyzes and evaluates the effectiveness of formal and informal communication.*

Materials: *dry-erase board and pens or chalkboard and colored chalks, paper and writing utensils, evaluation forms (see attached)*

Procedure:

- 1. Invite students to the board one at a time and instruct each one to draw a different picture. (Note: If the class is large, students may be divided into groups to draw on the board at different times this activity is done.) Possibilities include people, animals, buildings, plants, vehicles, and so forth. Each person and animal should be labeled with its name after it is drawn.*
- 2. After each student has contributed to the picture, the teacher adds some "wacky weather" (i.e. a bright yellow sun and purple rain).*
- 3. Each student needs to write a story based on the picture that has evolved on the board.*
- 4. Allow time for students to be ready to read the stories aloud to the class.*
- 5. Students read stories aloud the following class period.*

Evaluation: *Student will be graded on a checklist of essential story elements and story delivery (see attached). Evaluations will be completed by the student, the teacher, and classmates.*

Group Board Stories - Evaluation Form

Date: _____

Name: _____

Group: _____

Grading Criteria:

5 Superior**4 Well Done****3 Acceptable****2 Needs Work****1 Please Try Again****0 No Attempt**

Circle your evaluation for each of the following, and please add comments on the back of this evaluation form.

<i>Strong Beginning</i>	5	4	3	2	1	0
<i>Character Development</i>	5	4	3	2	1	0
<i>Setting Description</i>	5	4	3	2	1	0
<i>Interesting Plot</i>	5	4	3	2	1	0
<i>Smooth Transitions</i>	5	4	3	2	1	0
<i>Clear Ending</i>	5	4	3	2	1	0
<i>Use of Dialogue and Details</i>	5	4	3	2	1	0
<i>Voice Projection</i>	5	4	3	2	1	0
<i>Use of Expression</i>	5	4	3	2	1	0
<i>Posture</i>	5	4	3	2	1	0
<i>Eye Contact</i>	5	4	3	2	1	0
<i>Pace</i>	5	4	3	2	1	0

Comments: _____

CONFLICT RESOLUTION: THINK, FEEL, ACT

Essential Learning 2: *The student uses listening and observation skills to gain understanding.*

Essential Learning 2: *The student uses communication strategies and skills to work effectively with others.*

Materials: *adult facilitator/mediator, conflict situations (Ask students for input.)*

Procedure:

Part 1: THINK

1. Mediator says to one of the students: *Tell us from the beginning what you think happened.*
2. Student B summarizes student A's version.
3. Mediator says to student B: *"Tell us what you think occurred."*
4. Student summarizes student B's version. (Note: It does not matter whether or not they agree. It also does not matter at this point who is telling the truth.)
5. Mediator says to student A: *"What do you think is going on now?"*
6. Student B summarizes student A's version.
7. Student B gives their version.
8. Student A summarizes student B's version.

Part 2: FEEL

1. Mediator to student B: *"What were you feeling as this was occurring?"*
 2. Student A summarizes B's feelings.
 3. Mediator to student A: *"What were you feeling . . . ?"*
 4. Student A summarizes student B's statement.
 5. Mediator to student B: *"What are you feeling now?"*
 6. Student A summarizes student B's version.
 7. Mediator to student A: *"What are you feeling now?"*
 8. Student B summarizes student A's statement.
- (Note: facilitator looks and asks for feelings beneath anger such as embarrassment, hurt, put-down, "dissed," etc.)*

Part 3: ACT

1. Mediator to student A: "What do you plan to do now to solve this problem and what do you want now from student B?"
2. Student B summarizes student A's statement.
3. Mediator to student B: "What to you plan to do now, and what do you want from A?"
4. Student A summarizes student B's statement.
5. Mediator and both students look for areas of agreement, attempt to facilitate a compromise that both parties can agree to, and thank them for working the situation through.

After practice, this could also be tried with different students taking turns as mediator.

Evaluation: An observer will check to make sure all guidelines are followed and an agreeable compromise is reached. The exercise may be repeated until this can be accomplished. Each student will also write a summary of the experience and the results to put in his or her portfolio.

*Adapted from the Davis High School (Yakima, WA) Counseling Department practices.

LET'S TAKE A VACATION

Essential Learning 3: *The student uses communication strategies and skills to work effectively with others.*

Essential Learning 4: *The student analyzes the effectiveness of formal and informal communication.*

Materials: *calculators, paper and writing utensils, maps of the United States, travel brochures and promotional information from each state,* telephone, telephone books, newspaper grocery advertisements (*Note: students could be assigned the job of writing letters to seek travel information several weeks prior to this assignment, or the teacher may gather information via the American Automobile Association [AAA] or some other service.)*

Procedure:

1. *Divide students into groups of three or four.*
2. *Give each student an assignment sheet (see attached), and orally review the directions.*
3. *Allow students time to complete the project and continually monitor their progress.*

Evaluation: *Students will be graded on completion of a detailed vacation itinerary and budget, a packing list, and individual assessments of communication within groups*

Let's Take A Vacation - Student Assignment Sheet

Spring break is almost here, but you need to plan ahead to make the most of your vacation experience. You will be "traveling" in groups of three or four. For this assignment you will need to write out a detailed itinerary for a trip that you can take as a group, and it is crucial that you stay within budget. Each person will have \$700 to spend, but you must pool your funds and all agree on how to spend the money (\$2100 for groups of three, \$2800 for groups of four). In addition to the itinerary and budget, each of you will need to complete a packing list.

ITINERARY: For this portion of the assignment, you will need to write out a plan for each day of your vacation. It should include any travel for the day, where you will be staying, and any activities planned.

BUDGET: You will need to account for all of the following in planning the ways in which you intend to spend money on your trip -

Transportation - If you choose to travel by car you need to budget 30 cents per mile. If traveling by airplane, boat, train or bus, you will need to call for current ticket prices. Remember that if you are traveling by car and taking a ferry for any part of your travel, you may need to pay fees for both vehicle and individuals traveling.

Food - You must budget for all food and drinks, including snacks. You may check the American Automobile Association (AAA) restaurant listings, area restaurant prices, and grocery advertisements.

Accommodations - Check local hotels, long-distance 800 numbers for major chains, and/or AAA listings for current prices. You may also opt for camping or youth hostels.

Activities - You will need to figure in money for activities in which you plan to participate on your vacation. Activities could include entrance to historical landmarks, state park use fees, movies, aquariums, zoos, attractions such as the Statue of Liberty, Mount Rushmore or the Space Needle.

Let's Take A Vacation - Student Assignment Sheet

Spring break is almost here, but you need to plan ahead to make the most of your vacation experience. You will be "traveling" in groups of three or four. For this assignment you will need to write out a detailed itinerary for a trip that you can take as a group, and it is crucial that you stay within budget. Each person will have \$700 to spend, but you must pool your funds and all agree on how to spend the money (\$2100 for groups of three, \$2800 for groups of four). In addition to the itinerary and budget, each of you will need to complete a packing list.

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Food - You must budget for all food and drinks, including snacks. You may check the American Automobile Association (AAA) restaurant listings, area restaurant prices, and grocery advertisements.

Accommodations - Check local hotels, long-distance 800 numbers for major chains, and/or AAA listings for current prices. You may also opt for camping or youth hostels.

Activities - You will need to figure in money for activities in which you plan to participate on your vacation. Activities could include entrance to historical landmarks, state park use fees, movies, aquariums, zoos, attractions such as the Statue of Liberty, Mount Rushmore or the Space Needle.

Miscellaneous - This area of your travel budget should include money for parking; phone calls; and individual spending money for souvenirs, post cards, stamps, etc.

PACKING LIST: Taking into account the possible weather conditions where you will be traveling, as well as the planned activities, the group needs to write out a list of clothing each member should pack for the trip.

PREJUDICE IN COMMUNICATION

Essential Learning 3: *The student uses communication strategies and skills to work effectively with others.*

Materials: *copies of the book Filtering People: A View Of Our Prejudices, "Filtering People" video, dry-erase or chalk board and dry-erase pens or chalk*

Procedure:

1. *As an entire class, read the book Filtering People: A View Of Our Prejudices," by Jim Cole.*
2. *Discuss factors involved in developing and perpetuating prejudice (i.e. self-doubt, discomfort, fear, lack of understanding). Also discuss strategies for overcoming prejudice and improving relationships.*
3. *Watch the video of the book.*
4. *Discuss the negative impact of prejudice in communication and brainstorm a list of possible situations in which this occurs. Write the list on the board.*
5. *Divide students into groups and assign each one to role-play one of the situations on the board. The number required in each group will depend on the specific scenario.) Each group's goal is to act out the situation two ways: first with prejudice interfering with the communication, and then with a positive result instead.*

Example scenario: A high school student is from a family in which the father is prejudiced against a certain race of people and very vocal about it. Furthermore, this student was in a situation earlier in life in which he was a minority in a group of people belonging to the race against which his father is so prejudiced. They did nothing negative to the student, but he felt uncomfortable in the situation because he did not understand their culture and felt like he did not fit in, so he began to develop his own prejudicial feelings to make himself feel better. Now in high school, this student is placed in a cooperative learning group with two students from the other race.

Evaluation: Grades will be based on the level of positive participation (5 = superior, 4 = well done, 3 = acceptable, 2 = needs work, 1 = please try again, and 0 = no attempt.)

TV TALK SHOW

Essential Learning 3: *The student uses communication strategies and skills to work effectively with others.*

Essential Learning 4: *The student analyzes and evaluates the effectiveness of formal and informal communication.*

Materials: *paper and writing utensils, computer with e-mail, telephone, presentation materials (will vary), community members and career information for research, information forms (see attached), evaluations (see attached)*

Procedure:

1. *Divide students into groups of five or six.*
2. *Assign three or four job areas (18 in all - see attached) to each group, depending on the number of groups.*
3. *Explain that each student group will be researching job areas in order to present information to the class about communication used in those particular types of jobs.*
4. *Explain the format in which the collected information will be shared with the class: Each group will appear on a "TV Talk Show" in the classroom, at which time each will play the part of someone with experience working in several jobs within a particular area.*
5. *Set dates for each group to appear on the "talk show." Allow time for two or three classes spent in research, as well as homework time to talk to community members. The following assignments will be due from each student in addition to the actual group performance:*
 - a. *description of the job area they are researching and presenting, with specific information about particular jobs in that area*
 - b. *notes on research*
 - c. *notes from interviews with at least two different people currently employed in jobs which are the subject of the student's research*
 - d. *two-page written report describing communication on the jobs within the area they are researching and presenting*

6. Talk Shows: Students will be asked questions by the talk show host (teacher) regarding the use of communication in each of their job areas. In addition to completely answering questions for the class, each student must also be prepared to demonstrate one way in which communication is used (i.e. computer e-mail, inter-office memos, telephone use, and so forth). Note: Students need to plan ahead so that each one is demonstrating a different communication method.

Evaluation: Each student needs to complete information forms regarding communication on the different job areas presented (see attached). Grades are based on whether or not answers are complete and accurate, along with points for the other assignments and the presentation itself. Evaluations of the presentation will also be completed by the group, classmate and the teacher.

Presentation Grading Criteria:

- 5 Superior*
- 4 Well Done*
- 3 Acceptable*
- 2 Needs Work*
- 1 Please Try Again*
- 0 No attempt*

(Note: The presentation itself will be weighted highest in final grading for the project.)

Job Areas

MANUAL: animal caretaker, sewing machine operator, machine tool operator, construction equipment operator, truck driver

SKILLED CRAFTS: carpenter, cook, tailor, auto mechanic, jeweler, electronics assembler, dental laboratory technician, electrician, TV-VCR repairer, military service person, farmer

TECHNICAL: airplane pilot, electronics technician, drafter, medical lab technician, air traffic controller, surveyor, technical illustrator

MATH-SCIENCE: chemist, mathematician, physicist, engineer, computer programmer, architect, biologist

MEDICAL-DENTAL: doctor, optometrist, dentist, veterinarian, chiropractor, physical therapist

LITERARY: reporter, playwright, poet, editor, novelist, translator

ART: commercial artist, painter, clothes designer, floral designer, interior decorator, photographer, graphic designer

MUSIC: musician, singer, conductor, composer, dancer

ENTERTAINMENT: model, actor/actress, comedian, radio/television announcer, public relations specialist

CUSTOMER SERVICE: barber, hair stylist, flight attendant, police officer, waiter/waitress, gas station attendant, taxi driver, bus driver, security guard, food counter worker

PERSONAL SERVICE: nurse aide, recreation leader, hospital orderly, coach, physical education teacher, emergency medical technician, county agricultural agent, vocational instructor

SOCIAL SERVICE: counselor, psychologist, probation officer, social worker, dental hygienist, sociologist, clergy, historian, nurse, x-ray technologist

EDUCATION: college professor, elementary or high school teacher, school or college administrator, librarian, preschool teacher

SALES: buyer, travel agent, sales agent (real estate, insurance, auto, stocks and bonds), manufacturer's representative

MANAGEMENT: office manager, president or other officer of a business organization, banker, hotel-motel manager, store manager, farm manager, restaurant manager, government administrator

LEGAL: lawyer, paralegal assistant, claim adjustor (insurance), judge, customs inspector, FBI agent

CLERICAL: bank teller, secretary, typist, mail clerk, dispatcher, cashier, court reporter, receptionist, hotel-motel clerk, telephone operator, data entry keyer, medical record clerk

DATA ANALYSIS: accountant, bank loan officer, computer operator, auditor, payroll clerk

**From the Harrington-O'Shea CAREER DECISION-MAKING SYSTEM
REVISED published by American Guidance Service*

Job Communication Evaluation Form

Date: _____

Name: _____

Job Area: _____

Answer the following questions as completely as possible. Adding constructive comments at the end will earn you bonus points!

1. *What are three things you learned about communication in the job area you researched? (3 points)*

a.

b.

c.

2. *What different types of technology are used for communication in the job area you researched? (Be specific! This is worth 3 points.)*

3. *If you were to choose a career in the job area you researched, what more would you need to practice/learn to be proficient at communicating in the job setting? (2 points)*

4. *What are the communication strengths you already possess that could help you in a job? (2 points)*

5. *What was the most difficult part of this assignment for you?*
(2 points)

6. *How did working in a group help you with this assignment?*
(2 points)

7. *In what ways might cooperating with others help you on a job?*
(3 points)

8. *What communication skills do you need to help you work effectively with others? (3 points)*

Comments: _____

TV Talk Show Evaluation Form

Date: _____

Name: _____

Group: _____

Grading Criteria:**5 Superior****4 Well Done****3 Acceptable****2 Needs Work****1 Please Try Again****0 No Attempt**

Circle your evaluation for each of the following, and add comments in the space provided at the bottom of the page.

<i>Clear, Understandable Speech</i>	5	4	3	2	1	0
<i>Organization of Information</i>	5	4	3	2	1	0
<i>Usefulness of Information</i>	5	4	3	2	1	0
<i>Visual Aids/Media</i>	5	4	3	2	1	0
<i>Preparation</i>	5	4	3	2	1	0
<i>Level of Interest/Creativity</i>	5	4	3	2	1	0
<i>Participation of All Members</i>	5	4	3	2	1	0

Comments: _____

FACT OR OPINION?

Essential Learning 4: *The student analyzes and evaluates the effectiveness of formal and informal communication.*

Materials: *Fact or Opinion? practice page for each student (see attached)*

Procedure:

- 1. Discuss the definitions of fact and opinion.*
- 2. Hand out practice page and review directions as a class.*
- 3. Verbally give one or two examples (i.e. "Mulan" is a Disney movie. - fact, Hockey is a great sport. - opinion) and answer questions.*
- 4. Allow time for students to complete assignment.*
- 5. Review answers as a class.*
- 6. Repeat with different statements as necessary.*

Evaluation: *Grades will be based on the number of correct responses. The exercise can be repeated as often as necessary for a student to understand the concept.*

Fact or Opinion?

Directions: Read each of the following statements carefully and decide if each one is a fact or an opinion. In the space in front of the statement, write an "F" for true or an "O" for opinion.

**Remember: A fact is something that is known to be true and can be proven. An opinion is something a person - or even a large group of people - believe to be true, but it cannot be proven.*

- ____ 1. Olympia is the capital of Washington.
- ____ 2. The "Spice Girls" are terrific singers.
- ____ 3. Our school principal is very nice.
- ____ 4. Smoking cigarettes can cause a variety of health problems.
- ____ 5. Some Toyota cars are manufactured in Japan.
- ____ 6. Hawaii has the best water for snorkeling.
- ____ 7. Helen Hunt won an Oscar for "Best Actress" at the Academy Awards in 1998.
- ____ 8. Ryan White died of AIDS.
- ____ 9. Notre Dame is everybody's favorite college football team.
- ____ 10. Dogs are the best pets.
- ____ 11. The Nile is a river in Egypt.
- ____ 12. There is too much news on television.

UNDERSTANDING THE ADS

Essential Learning 4: *The student analyzes and evaluates the effectiveness of formal and informal communication.*

Materials: *Advertising Appeals* handout for each student (see attached), newspapers and magazines with advertisements

Procedure:

1. *Provide each student with a copy of the Advertising Appeals handout.*
2. *Discuss the different types of advertising appeals and generate an example from television, radio or billboard for each of the advertising appeals listed on the handout. (i.e. Beer ads on television often show men with beautiful women, thus using the sex appeal technique.)*
3. *Assignment: Students need to look through newspaper and magazine advertising to find at least one example of each advertising appeal discussed.*
4. *Each student shares his or her examples with the class.*

Evaluation: *Grades will be based on participation and completed product (5 = superior, 4 = well done, 3 = acceptable, 2 = needs work, 1 = Please try again, 0 = no attempt).*

Advertising Appeals

FACTUAL APPEAL: describes a product's features and cost and tells where the product is sold.

WHOLESOME APPEAL: suggests that health, family life, or environmental conditions will be improved by the use of the product.

COMPARISON: emphasizes a product's features compared to a competing product. May also focus on new and improved product features compared to an earlier version of the product.

TESTIMONIAL: uses experts or celebrities to make product claims seem more believable. Comments about the benefits of the product may also be made by "people-on-the-street" who relate to the audience viewing the ad.

ATTENTION GETTER: uses humor, bizarre images, or other unusual techniques to make consumers aware of the product.

SPECIAL OFFER: uses contests, rebates, bonus quantities, and sale prices to encourage consumers to buy the product.

SEX APPEAL: makes consumers believe they will be more popular or attractive if they use the product.

BANDWAGON: suggests that everyone uses the product and invites the consumer to become part of the crowd by using the product too.

SNOB APPEAL: suggests that using the product will increase the consumer's status.

**From the 1993 Changes & Choices: Personal Development & Relationships textbook by Ruth E. Bragg*

GROUP RESEARCH REPORTS

Essential Learning 2: *The student communicates ideas clearly and effectively.*

Essential Learning 3: *The student uses communication strategies and skills to work effectively with others.*

Essential Learning 4: *The student analyzes and evaluates the effectiveness of formal and informal communication.*

Materials: *assignment sheets (see attached), grading criteria and group participation evaluation forms (see attached) with overhead transparency, overhead projector and vis-a-vis pen, library, various materials as needed for student visual aids and use of media for presentations*

Procedure:

- 1. Divide students into groups of four or five.*
- 2. Hand out assignment sheets and review directions as a class.*
- 3. Using the overhead, explain grading criteria while students take notes (forms will be handed out to be completed by students at the end of the project).*
- 4. Proceed with activities as outlined by the assignment sheet.*

Evaluation: *The final grade will be based on the presentation (see attached grading criteria on evaluation forms), written assignments due (see student assignment page), and group participation (see evaluation forms to be completed by each student and the teacher).*

Group Research Reports - Student Assignment Sheet

During the next four or five weeks, you will have the opportunity to work with three or four of your classmates to research a topic and present it to the rest of the class. Groups will be assigned randomly. In addition to the actual presentation, you will be responsible for some written assignments and positive participation in your group. The end result should be a thorough and well-prepared formal presentation.

Topic

I have already chosen a variety of subjects related to independent living (i.e. health and fitness, gun control, drug abuse awareness and prevention, etc.). After the groups have been assigned, each group will draw a topic out of the bag.

Written Assignments (Due dates will be assigned for each.)

**Source List: Each group member is required to document research from at least two different library sources (i.e. one magazine and one book or one newspaper article and one book, etc.) The combined documented sources from the group need to be alphabetically arranged and turned in on one source list.*

**Research Notes: Each person is responsible for taking notes on the information gleaned from the library resources.*

**Outline: Each group must work together to organize an outline of the information to be presented.*

**Note Cards: Each group member needs to plan the portion of the presentation for which they are responsible and write notes on note cards to be used to help in practicing and giving the presentation.*

Presentation Requirements

All members of the group must participate, as equitably as possible, in the presentation of the material. Each group must also use at least three different forms of visual aids/media. You will be graded on quality of speech, organization of information, the visual aids/media, smoothness of presentation, and the level of interest/creativity.

**Group Research Reports
Evaluation Form**

Date: _____

Name: _____

Group: _____

Grading Criteria:

5 Superior

4 Well Done

3 Acceptable

2 Needs Work

1 Please Try Again

0 No Attempt

Circle your evaluation for each of the following, and add comments in the space provided at the bottom of the page.

Clear, Understandable Speech	5	4	3	2	1	0
Organization of Information	5	4	3	2	1	0
Visual Aids/Media	5	4	3	2	1	0
Smoothness of Presentation (Practiced?)	5	4	3	2	1	0
Level of Interest/Creativity	5	4	3	2	1	0
Participation of All Members	5	4	3	2	1	0

Comments: _____

TEACHER FOR A DAY

Essential Learning 2: *The student communicates ideas clearly and effectively.*

Essential Learning 4: *The student analyzes and evaluates the effectiveness of formal and informal communication.*

Materials: *assignment sheets, lesson plan forms, evaluation forms (see the following pages for copies of these first three materials), library, various materials as needed for the students' teaching*

Procedure:

- 1. Hand out assignment sheets and review directions as a class.*
- 2. Hand out and discuss lesson plan and evaluation forms.*
- 3. Proceed with activities as explained on the assignment sheet.*

Evaluation: *The final grade will be based on teaching (see attached grading criteria on evaluation forms), and written assignments due (see student assignment page).*

Teacher For A Day - Student Assignment Sheet

Okay! Here's your chance to show me how it's done. This trimester you get to teach class for one day.

Subject

You may choose the topic that you would like to study and teach to the rest of the class. However, your lesson must fit in with the content of this class, and you will need to obtain prior written approval from me. You will have until next week to think about what you would like to teach, and then you will need to turn in a written proposal. If your idea is approved, I will sign the proposal and return a copy to you. If not, we will work together to come up with a solution. Teaching days will be assigned so that lessons will be presented in a logical order throughout the trimester.

Lesson Plan

At least one week before your day of teaching , you will need to turn in a detailed lesson plan. I am providing an outline for you (see attached). Also the week before your teaching, you will need to make sure you have arranged for any special materials you will need (i.e. overhead transparencies, computer, etc.)

Other Requirements

**The resources you use to obtain your information (i.e. textbooks, library materials) must be documented and combined on one paper with the sources listed in alphabetical order.*

**You need to use some kind of visual aid in your lesson, such as a poster or overhead transparencies, etc.*

**You are responsible for teaching the class during a 30-minute period of time, but you should not spend the entire time talking to the class. All of the students need to somehow practice what they are learning (i.e. an activity of some kind) and be evaluated to see if they have actually learned (i.e. written test or oral responses to questions).*

Lesson Plan

Topic:

Objective (What do you want the students to learn?):

Materials Needed for the Lesson:

Procedure (What steps will you follow in your teaching session? List them in order, by number):

Evaluation (How will you grade the students/know they have learned?)

Teacher for a Day - Evaluation Form

Date: _____

Name: _____

Group: _____

Grading Criteria:

5 Superior**4 Well Done****3 Acceptable****2 Needs Work****1 Please Try Again****0 No Attempt**

Circle your evaluation for each of the following, and add comments in the space provided at the bottom of the page.

<i>Clear, Understandable Speech</i>	5	4	3	2	1	0
<i>Organization of Information</i>	5	4	3	2	1	0
<i>Visual Aids/Media</i>	5	4	3	2	1	0
<i>Smoothness of Presentation (Practiced?)</i>	5	4	3	2	1	0
<i>Level of Interest/Creativity</i>	5	4	3	2	1	0
<i>Practice Time for Students?</i>	5	4	3	2	1	0
<i>Did Students Learn?</i>	5	4	3	2	1	0

Comments: _____

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Transition upon leaving high school is not an easy task for any student. The challenge can be particularly difficult for students in special education. An extensive review of the literature revealed that communication skills are essential for encouraging students to participate more fully in the transition process. It has been shown to be particularly important for students with special needs to increase competence in communication in order to more actively participate in the development and monitoring of the Individual Education Programs (IEPs) which guide educational goals and the process of transition for each student in special education. Furthermore, communicative competency has been tied to job success. In addition, Washington State's Commission on Student Learning has noted the importance of developing strong skills in the area of communication, and the Commission has established four Essential Academic Learning Requirements specifically designed to encourage enhanced oral communication abilities. It is the intent of this project to provide a solid foundation of lessons and activities to aid students in the transition process, with particular emphasis on the communication skills outlined by the Commission on Student Learning.

Conclusions

Thus far, the activities and lessons implemented as a result of this project have yielded positive results. Through primarily anecdotal records, evidence indicates increased time on task, high student interest and improved skills. The author's students have also become more aware of IEPs and the importance of their involvement in the process. Furthermore, students have been able to organize evidence of their interests and abilities, as well as progress toward goals, through the portfolio format. Additionally, the portfolios have provided a place to gather essential job search materials and evaluations of communication skills, along with an array of elective materials.

This project has been a positive learning experience for the author and her students. Prior to undertaking this task, the author had no formal training in the area of oral communication. Consequently, the communication lessons, although based on research and personal experience, have evolved through some trial and error throughout the course of the academic year. Based on project results and student response, activities will continually be evaluated and revised.

The IEP portion of the transition portfolio has caused the author some degree of frustration. Due to the individual nature of the IEP, and the variety of teachers and other adults involved in the process, time and scheduling considerations have limited progress in this area. Furthermore, most high school students are previously unaware of the IEP process and require some background information and general instruction regarding the IEP components

prior to assuming a more active role.

Other sections of the transition portfolio have been easier to facilitate. In terms of some of the communication lessons, the students involved benefitted from prior training in cooperative learning. It is the author's belief that students without such training would require further direction and assistance with the group activities required to complete the lessons required for the transition portfolio.

Another factor which has contributed to the author's success with this program has been the manner in which it was presented to the students. From its inception, the students have been informed regarding the reasoning and research behind the project. This seems to have provided a sense of purpose which motivated many of the students to willingly engage in the required activities.

The format of the transition portfolio has been particularly well received by the students. The majority of them have enjoyed the personalization and flexibility allowed in the process. Via the portfolios, students are able to see concrete evidence of growth throughout the year. The adaptability of the transition portfolio has been particularly appreciated by the author. With such a wide range of abilities among students in class, each student is able to add to the portfolio at his or her own pace for many of the required elements, and those progressing more rapidly than others can add work beyond the minimum requirements.

Recommendations

Although this transition portfolio was designed and implemented for use with students in a high school special education setting in Yakima, Washington, it is the author's belief that transition portfolios could benefit a much wider range of students. This project could easily be adapted for a variety of content areas and levels. Even students without IEPs need to plan for the future. Ideally, it is the author's opinion that students should begin a transition portfolio long before entering high school. Furthermore, the author would like to expand the transition portfolio beyond the communication requirements to include lessons for all of the Essential Learnings, and the current lessons could also be supplemented. Just as each student's portfolio should be constantly growing and changing, this project needs to continue to evolve.

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