



The TEACHER CENTER of Broome County
Teacher Study Group Grant Award
Winter/Spring 2006
FINAL REPORT
DOCUMENT PROCESSES AND OUTCOMES

STUDY GROUP TOPIC: Best Practices in Transition

List of group members: Barb Baker, Terry Dempsey, Pat Saunders

The final report must be word-processed and submitted both in print and on disk using this form. Include information under each of the following headings.

Describe the initial goal of the group noting any adjustments that had to be made as time passed.

We set out to articulate the steps that need to be taken to help our students transition from high school to college or the world of work. We have teachers that were new to Vestal and/or new to the high school setting. These teachers needed guidance, which led us to believe that a written, suggested procedures were necessary. We, too, would benefit from articulating our transition practices. Also, our relationships with community agencies needed strengthening. All professionals working with the transition of students needed an overview of information. We decided that we needed to produce a tri-fold brochure, informational pages for parents, and a brief handbook for teachers.

Describe the ACTION PLAN that the group followed.

We designed a systematic schedule of meetings that had to adjust due to conflicts and the general IEP process that we all were involved in. We had hoped to gain more information and resources from others but were able to obtain information that we could tweak, redesign, or copy and use to convey our message. We were very intent on keeping our materials brief, understandable, and useful.

Describe how the action plan was implemented.

We met with our representatives from STIC and VESID to strengthen those relationships and gain up to date information on how they can help our students. We had a hard time staying on topic because we were a trio of passionate teachers wanting to do their best in all areas for our students. Transition so overlaps with other areas of concern that it was easy to be sidetracked. This reinforced, in our minds, that transition needs to be a guiding principle in our high school special education program. Also, we had to keep reminding ourselves who our audience was and which part we were working on. Sometimes we got too bogged down in the wording and had to move on. The finished products we tested on students, parents, and special educators. It is obvious to us that we have a basis of information that will be ever changing.

Evaluation of the impact of the study group effort on teacher/student performance.

- How has this study group changed you as a teacher? Do you anticipate that any of your teaching practices will have changed?

This study group strengthened our belief that the Level I assessment is an ongoing critical process. Our efforts will result in transitions procedures that will be readily available to all teachers and other professionals. By using a more systematic approach to transition we hope to obtain more relevant and comprehensive information to help establish individual goals and activities for each student. Students will be more involved in their own planning.

- What evidence do you **expect** to see of student achievement improving as a result of your participating in this study group?

The evidence we will look for is increased independence, self-advocacy, and self-determination. We are allowing and encouraging students to be in control of their future. Students will see the relevance of what they are doing.

- What evidence is there that the goals of the study group has/has not been met?

The products that we produced are evidence that that we are on the path to providing better transition services to our students. Limited local resources preclude the inclusion of important transition activities such as job shadowing, supported high school employment, and informational interviewing. Although these activities are included under parent responsibilities, these tasks are more effective when they are planned and accomplished under the direction of a transition professional. Transition is a continuous learning process that we strive to improve so that our students achieve better adult outcomes.

Comment on the value of the study group process? Did it work for you?

The study group process worked very well for all of us. It forced us to focus and be accountable because there was a deadline. It provided an opportunity for collaboration, which resulted in increased regard and respect for the other participants. We would enjoy working together again. What's next?

How can we make this study group program better?

It might be helpful to have a midpoint check-in with someone at the teacher center. This would provide for articulation to an outside person.