Developing Job Sites for Students with Physical and Visual Needs: A Whole Child Context

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Overview

- I. Cotting School: General History and Off-Campus Work Program

- II. Components of a Whole Child framework through Vocational Programming

- III. Developing Job Sites for Individuals with Physical and Visual Needs

- IV. Case Studies

I. Cotting School: History and Off-Campus Work

- 1893: Founded with mission of educating students with physical challenges

- Today: Students age 3-22 with physical, communication, and learning needs

- 1990: Off-Campus work program founded with 8 students specifically selected for competitive employment potential

- Today: 47 students placed in off-campus vocational settings, but with socialization and self-advocacy critical to practice for student's future (transitioning to adult services where supported work can be a part) (Video)

Lexington, 2016:
President David Manzo and 110 students

Boston, 1893:
Superintendent and first teacher
Mary Perry and 6 students

Project Bridges: Off-Campus Work Experience

- Students aged 17-21
- 1-2 work experiences per week; 2 hours per shift
- Students have a 1:1 or 1:2 ratio with job coach, with occasional advancement to drop-off/independent work shifts
- 47 students, 30 partner employers
- Developed through connections of school, staff, families
- When possible, building connections that remain after graduation
- Extremely challenging for our students to do a "whole job"

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Project Bridges: Potential Outcomes

- Whenever possible, we hope to build student-employer relationships that result in work opportunities post-graduation, either as:

  - Competitive employment

  - Acceptance to a post-secondary Job Training Program

  - Volunteer opportunities

  - A supported work site through an adult services day program

  (who may be able to assist with transportation, job coaching)

  - Related field of study in post-secondary education
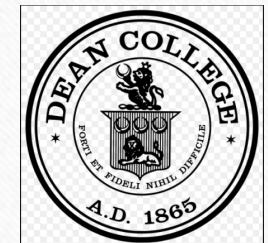
Project Bridges: Program Goals

- Documentation of student performance, particularly gauging independence
- Identification of accommodations and equipment that promote task completion
- Student reflection and selection of preferred and non-preferred types of work
- Exposure of students to different types of vocational settings and tasks
- most of our work experiences are in clerical, food service, horticulture, animal care, human services (including pre-school or nursing home settings), or maintenance

Inter-Department Collaboration

Many different groups work together to support the pre-vocational experiences of our students:

- Pre-vocational/Transition Team (includes supervisors, instructors and job coaches)
- Occupational Therapy & Physical Therapy
- Communication Therapy (SLPs)
- Assistive Technology Assessment Center (ATAC)
- Classroom Teachers
- Parents
- Employers

Making it Work

Our strength at Cotting is to adapt work tasks and environments for our students to be successful.

There are positives and negatives about this approach.

Pros: Every student is involved and everyone is supported to make a contribution to the work community.

Cons: Our students do not generally perform all the tasks that encompass a complete job, and our model does not always translate to post-22 environments.

II. Vocational Programming and the Whole Child

Two Models of Whole Child Programming:

1. The Whole Child & ASCD (Association for Curriculum and Development): Whole Child Tenets

2. Whole Child Initiative

A) Whole Child Education: What Works

Assessment

Integrating Movement

Professional Learning Communities

Parent and Family Engagement

Inclusive Environment

Community Engagement

College, Career, and Citizenship

Connecting Digital Learners

http://www.wholechildeducation.org

Assessment: Cotting Pre-Vocational

Each of our students that travel off-campus has a Vocational Goal in their IEP.

Cotting job coaches bring the IEP objectives to the job site to note progress toward the annual goal.

Every three years, a Vocational Evaluation is done as part of a student's three-year evaluation that includes a gathering of student interest, staff input, and recommendations related to vocational development.

Parent and Family Engagement

Each year, we survey our parents on a pre-vocational survey that gathers family input on their pre-vocational priorities for their students.

Parents of Capstone students are offered a second work slot and these placements are discussed individually with families.

Families can communicate to the Director of Transition Services with any ideas, questions, concerns, or possible worksites to develop.

Inclusive Environment/Community Engagement

Our off-campus work experience program is entirely focused on integrating our students into inclusive work environments.

This is done through community outreach and job development.

The common thread all of our employer partners share is the common value of wanting to diversify their workplace to include those with disabilities.

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Assoc. of Supervision and Curriculum: Whole Child Tenets

Healthy

Safe

Engaged
http://www.wholechildeducation.org/assets/content/mx-resources/wholechildindicators-engaged.pdf

Supported

Challenged http://www.wholechildeducation.org/assets/content/mx-resources/wholechildindicators-challenged.pdf

Engaged and Challenged: Two ASCD Tenets

B) Whole Child Initiative: Five Kinds of Learning

- cognitive-intellectual activity, associated with the left brain

- creative-intuitive activity (the arts), associated with the right brain

- structured physical movement and unstructured, self-directed play

- handwork, making things that can be useful

- engagement with nature and community

Student Takeaways: Reciprocity

What Students Are Learning:

- How to talk to peolpe and working for a long time
- I am learning how to use radio technology.
- I am learning how to use the control in Perkins radio. In empow studios i learning that the robotics group are building legos so they can build robots in the future.
- food skills, building maintenance and cleaning
- i learned on how to cut up rags and to do laundry and different rules the site has.

- I am learning how to work as a team while in the assembly line as well as learning social skills speaking with the residents and staff.
- I am learning how to know where things go if i don't know where to put it.
- I help people, protect people in the community.
- I am learning how to be honest and how getting things done

Student Takeaways: Reciprocity

What Students are Teaching Others:

- How I get my work done
- That my peer and I now know how to use their technology.
- They are learning that i am a good worker and focus and neat.
- they learned on that a person with a disability can work and is nice

- While working out in public I think what people learn from me is that I am a man that can do the same thing that everyone else can but with help.
- That I am smart. That I am a good worker.
- I think that other people at the job How to be a good worker

Student Takeaways: Conclusions

- I like having an off campus job becusa it get me ready for the ral work wold

- When I am at work I feel as I can do my jobs right and in the right significant order as well as my peers.

- I thank it is a fun expires for me i am learning more i am becoming more independent.

- i do not like do it

- i like working off campus

- My overall thoughts of working off campus has been very educational. With jobs that I like and jobs that I don't theres a lot of odd jobs out in the world.

- my thoughts overall working off-campus is because i'm having good Experience of working outside of school.

- Good - I love it.

- Working off campus is good

III. Job Site Development

- Possibilities to Consider (Structure and Job Categories)

- Planning and Advance Visits

- Modifying the Work Environment

- Collaboration with State Agencies

- Examples of Cotting School's Project Bridges job sites

Possibility to Consider: Teams of Two

Teams of 2 Students at one work site with complementary skills

- One student dictating and one typing

- One student stating the sequence and one carrying out the physical task

- One student answering/making phone calls

and one taking notes
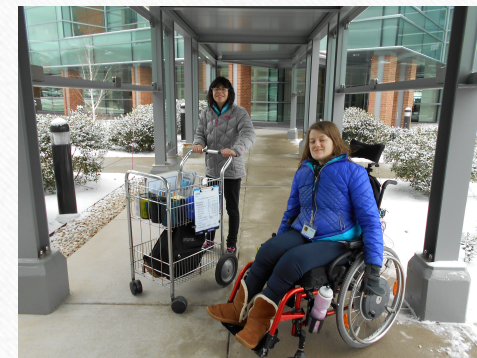
Possibilities to Consider: Communication

Consider jobs that are heavy on **communication and technology**, light on physical demands:

- Greeters
- Data entry
- Sending/receiving email
- Blogging

- Social media
- Customer service
- Social interaction (nursing home or hospital visitation)
- Public Speaking/Advocacy

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Possibilities to Consider: Not-for-Profits

- Not-for-profits often promote inclusive values (for profit companies do as well, but we have found solid partners with our friends in the non-for-profit field)

- May be volunteer work, but serves a need and may open up future employment connections

- Work pace may be less demanding

Possibilities to Consider: Entrepreneurship

Consider **entrepreneurial ideas**:

- We have an alumni who promotes and arranges the painting of the accessible icon in parking lots, an alumni who makes dog beds, and a current student who delivers flowers to nursing home residents

- Other services might be grocery/food delivery/personal shopping, bottle and can return, dog walking, cookie baking (http://www.colletteys.com/)

- Working for yourself (with family or friend assistance in management)

- Inventive Labs http://www.inventivelabs.org/

Additional Job Development Notes

- Gather parent and previous school staff input

- Use spring and summer for visiting potential sites, job shadowing

- Factor in future adult service programming – will student be receiving funding from the Department of Developmental Services (in Mass.) or equivalent state agency elsewhere? Coordinate with potential future programs student may attend and tap in to their resources

Planning and Advance Visits: Suggestions

- Identifying which parts of job are able to be done independently, which parts need direct instruction and supervision, and general timeline for fading away support

- identifying mentors in the community who are willing to work with a student during their time on the job

- Usage of Personal Care Attendants for beginning of shift setup, support for personal care/lunch, packing up at end of shift

Modifications that Support Independence

- Providing tools that create a more accessible work environment: magnifiers, tools that support folding, labeling. Example: supports that allow a student to successfully complete a tri-fold of an envelope.
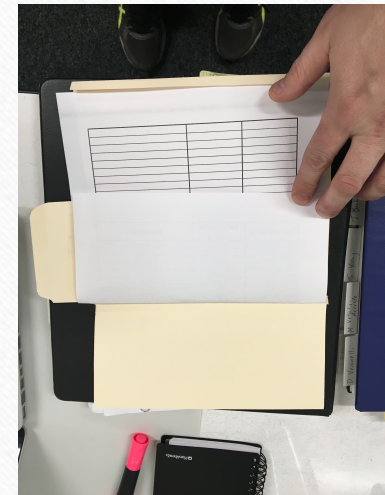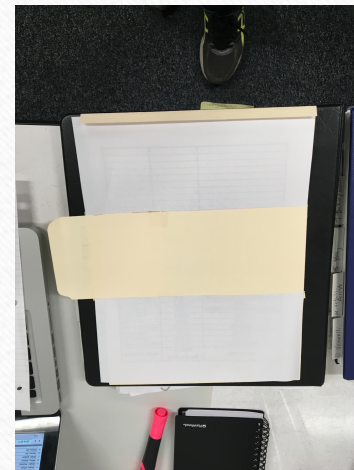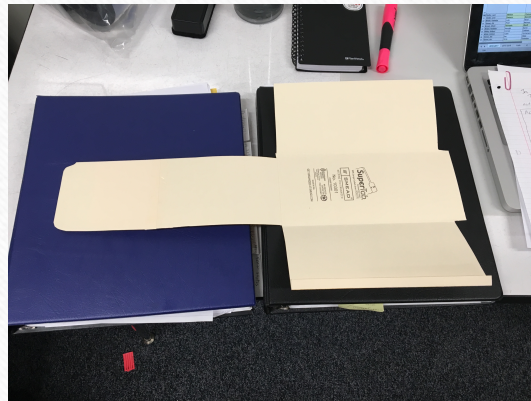
Additional Examples of Modifications

A homemade tool that supports accurate placement of stamps or labels.
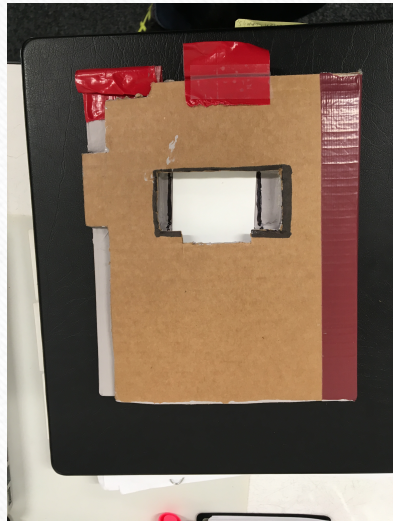
A tool created in our woodshop that holds coffee cups for a delivery job.

Sample Project Bridges Placements

The next two slides provide examples of businesses and organizations we are currently using or have used in the past.

Off-campus Project Bridges work sites for students with difficulty with gross motor tasks, but with functional fine motor skills (students using wheelchairs, walkers, or canes):

- Home Goods (pricing, sorting)
- YMCA (greeting, folding towels, arranging packets)
- Shire Pharmaceuticals (delivery)
- Cambridge Library (shelving, stamping)
- NE Animal Shelter (interacting with animals, watering, bringing toys)
- Bedford VA (Nursing home)
- Epicurean Feast (table setting)
- Perkins Radio (broadcasting)
- EPIC (phone calls, fundraising)

- Waltham Community Day Center (Hygiene Kit Assembly)
- Peabody Public Access TV (film editing)
- Lahey Lexington (data entry and mail sorting/delivery)
- TJ Maxx (processing retail)
- McWalter, Barron, Boisvert (clerical including shredding legal documents)
- Waltham Police (data entry)
- Burlington Food Pantry (sorting donations)
- Coolidge Middle School (data entry)

- Wagon Wheel Nursery Sancta Maria Nursing Home (flower arrangements)
- Seasons Four Hotel (watering plants)
- Mahoney's (box making)
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Off-campus work sites for students using a wheelchair without functional fine motor skills:

- Magic Garden Preschool (programming stories into communication device, reading to students)

- Cotting Consulting (mentoring students with a communication device)

- Waltham Crossing (social interaction with residents and flower delivery)

- deCordova Museum (stamping and sorting guest passes)

- Xerox (adapted photocopiers designed for people with disabilities)

- Adapted Vacuuming Job (designed and invented by Cotting and Minuteman Reg. Voc. Tech. School)

- Deaconess Waltham Hospital, Children's Hospital Waltham (greeting patients)

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IV. Case Studies

- Overcoming Motor Impairments
- Adapting for Physical and Visual Needs

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Case Study: Targeted Employment Tasks

Overcoming Motor Impairments:

John has a disability that does not allow him the use of his legs. He can propel his manual wheelchair and do many things with his hands. He had two very successful placements through our off-campus work program: Lincoln Public Library and Northeast Animal Shelter. At the library, he was able to re-shelve returned items and use library computers and scanning devices to process the de-activation of books selected to be removed from the library. At the animal shelter, he fills water bowls for dogs and plays with cats using everyday cat toys.

Case Study: An Adapted Work Environment

Marissa has both visual and physical limitations. We worked with the Xerox company on using photocopiers they have specifically developed for people with disabilities. This placement served two purposes: Marissa could complete copying tasks for the company, and she could also provide critical feedback on her user experience of the equipment. Many of our students enjoy testing and reporting on different technologies and equipment they use. This can be an added bonus for companies looking to serve diverse constituencies.

http://www.office.xerox.com/latest/SFTBR-53U.pdf

Case Study: An Adapted Work Environment

Overcoming Physical and Visual Impairments

Joseph has both visual limitations. Placed at a job required data entry, we used a portable magnifier called a Just Stand 2 that provides a stand for an iPad. The camera feature on the iPad is then used to zoom in on the material. Then the student used his keyboarding skills to enter the data into the computer program.
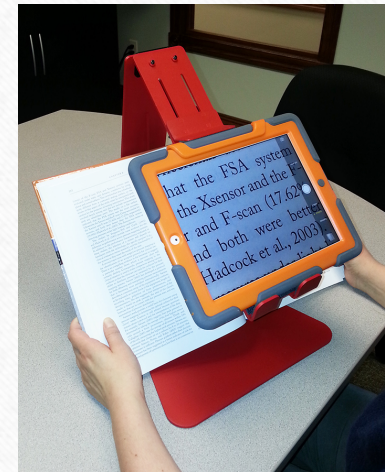
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Accessible Workplace Method - AWM (Items to Gauge to Determine an Accessible Workplace)

- Transportation to Site
- Building Access (doors, ramps, elevator)
- Stairs and Rescue Facilities
- Break Room Facilities
- Bathroom Facilities
- Meeting Room Space
- Workstation Ergonomics
- Access to Equipment
- Lighting and Noise
- Temperature
- Work Posture

- Fine Motor Movement
- Reaching/Handling of Materials
- Suitability of Work Tasks
- Amount of Work/Work Pace
- Flexibility of Work Time
- Use of Personal Helper
- Equality
- Getting Help from Others
- Accessibility of Occupational Health Services

Conclusions

- Identifying and developing job sites for individuals with physical and visual challenges is a process; it takes time.

- The most important factor is building relationships with business owners and nonprofit directors. Valuing a diverse workforce is just as important as the work itself.

- Try to build growth over time, providing decreasing levels of support along the way (job coaching on site to job coach check-in at beginning/end of shift to as much time on the job independently as possible).

Contact Us!

- Cotting School conducts monthly information sessions. Please contact Chief Operating Officer Bridget Irish (birish@cotting.org) to schedule a visit.

- You are also welcome to schedule observation times for our in-house and off-campus work. We would love to host you and showcase our students. Please contact Michael Teuber at mteuber@cotting.org to discuss the possibilities.

- Cotting Consulting serves 75 students in the public schools who require some of the interventions we provide for our students, generally in speech pathology, occupational therapy, and assistive technology. Contact Karen Waddill, Director of Consulting at kwaddill@cotting.org for more information.

Resources

- http://askjan.org
- http://disability.careercast.com/
- http://projecthired.com/
- https://www.trade-schools.net/careers-for-people/who-are-disabled.asp
- http://www.parentcenterhub.org/repository/foradults/
- https://www.prevencionintegral.com/canal-orp/papers/orp-2010/accessible-workplace-method-awm-workplace-adaptation-among-employees

- https://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/leg/foia/acshbom3.pdf
- http://www.educatethewholechild.org
- http://www.wholechildeducation.org
- https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/tools-and-samples/toolkits/pages/developinganaccessibleworkplace.aspx
- http://inclusionnl.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/AccessChckLst-PlaceOfBusiness.pdf
- http://www.mass.gov/ago/consumer-resources/your-rights/civil-rights/disability-rights/employment-rights.html