

Chapter 67

Evidence-Based Transition Practices: Implications for Local and Global Curriculum

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ABSTRACT

Preparing youth to become active and independent citizens is a critical goal for all societies. However, youth with disabilities are less likely to achieve the same adult outcomes as their non-disabled peers. Although there is a growing body of research that has identified best practices regarding the facilitation of youth with disabilities from school to an inclusive adult life, many teachers do not have the requisite skills or knowledge to facilitate this process. This chapter explores best practices in transition education for teachers beyond the academic content, identifying eight key strategies that should inform teacher preparation programs. Using a case study from Iran, this chapter critically reflects on the relevance of these strategies in an international context, where inclusion and education of students with disabilities is an emerging field.

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INTRODUCTION

Preparing youth to develop into full and active citizens is an essential goal for all societies (Arnett, 2004; Vespa, 2017). However, youth with disabilities are considered less likely to achieve the same outcomes as their non-disabled peers in relation to employment, postsecondary education and training, and independent living (Landmark, Ju, & Zhang, 2010; Lipscomb, et al., 2017; Pandey & Agarwal, 2013; Shattuck et al., 2012; UNESCO, 2018). This is true for youth and young adults with disabilities in the United States but also similarly reported in other countries, including South Korea (Chun, Connor, Kosciulek, Landon, & Park, 2016), India (Pandey & Agarwa, 2013), Canada (Stewart, et al., 2014), Brazil (Santos Rodriguez, Luecking, Glat, & Daquer, 2013), South Africa (Cramm, Naiboer, Finkenfluegel, & Lorenzo, 2011) and Iran (Ebadi, 2014).

The main objective this chapter is to provide an overview of the literature regarding research-based best practices that facilitate the transition of youth with disabilities from school to employment, both internationally and in the U.S, and the implications these have for effective teacher education preparation and curriculum.

This chapter also explores the universality of transition principles and practices, identifying both the similarities and differences in transition knowledge across various cultures, and suggests how curriculum development in teacher training could contribute to more positive post-school outcomes for students with disabilities in the U.S. and internationally. The chapter concludes with a case study from Iran, where the inclusion and education of students with disabilities is an emerging philosophy and practice. In this case study, the challenges of developing promising practices that are culturally relevant become evident.

The United Nations identifies the term “persons with disabilities” to apply to *all* people with disabilities, including those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various attitudinal and environmental barriers, hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others (CRPD, 2006). This chapter is focused on youth and young adults with disabilities. UNICEF identifies “adolescents” as those between 10–18 years old, and the United Nations describes youth as being between 19–24 years old. For the purposes of this chapter, the transition needs of youth and young adults in both these age groups (range of 10–24 years of age) will be taken into account, considering their similar needs and challenges to prepare for adult life.

Teacher Preparation for Student Transition

For all students, regardless of disability status, transitioning from school to adult life requires planning and support. All students need encouragement and assistance to assume more responsibilities, to make links in the community, and to adjust to changes in peer and personal relationships (Nguyen, Stewart, & Gorter, 2018). For young adults with disabilities, these transitions can be compounded by the need to apply for new support services, arrange for support personnel, and adjust to new expectations (National Center for Learning Disabilities, 2017; Pallisera, Fullana, Puyalto, & Vila, 2016; Sun, Lee, Ditchman, & Lee, 2016).

Globally, there is increasing evidence of raised social and legislative expectations that youth and young adults with disabilities must have the supports to ensure an inclusive and meaningful adult life, such as inclusive college and career development opportunities. In the US, as mandated through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014 and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004, student transition teams, including teachers, adult service providers and

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