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# Life-Skills and Transition Training in Special Education: Evidence-Based and Stakeholder Driven

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# Life-Skills and Transition Training in Special Education: Evidence-Based and Stakeholder Driven Westside High School Anderson, SC

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Capstone Report

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## 1.0 Introduction/ Background

#### 1.1 Transition Life Skills

Transition life skills are vital components of educational programs for children with disabilities. They have evolved to become a coordinated approach to enhancing academic and functional achievements. preparing students for post-school activities. This comprehensive approach, supported by The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), involves educators, teachers, school support personnel, related service providers, and community service providers (Morningstar et al., 2012). Life skills are a critical aspect of this transition and play a significant role in an individual's journey toward successful, independent functioning in adulthood. Life skills encompass a range of self-help skills, including self-care and domestic living, recreation, communication, vocational abilities, and skills for community participation (Nietupski et al., 1997). The acquisition of these life skills is fundamental for a successful transition into adulthood.

Individuals with disabilities are now experiencing longer lifespans and expressing a growing desire for community participation and self-determination (Stewart, 2006). However, challenges persist. Many individuals with disabilities often rely on caregivers for basic self-help skills and struggle with independence in life skills and employability when compared to their non-disabled peers. Factors such as limited experiential learning opportunities and the presence of medical and cognitive impairments contribute to this gap in life skill development (Gall et al., 2006; Stewart, 2006). These disparities are evident in various aspects of life, including employment, financial control, independent living, and leaving the family home, highlighting significant differences in lifestyle, living circumstances, and future expectations when compared to non-disabled individuals (Beresford, 2004; Hirst & Baldwin, 1994).

## 1.2 Key Legislation

Throughout the years, visionary leaders like Madeleine Will and key legislations, such as the 1963 Vocational Education Act, 1984 Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act, IDEA, Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), and the School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1994, have played crucial roles in shaping the lives of students receiving transition services. Federal mandates have been instrumental in integrating transition planning services into special education provision for youth aged 14 to 21 (Morningstar et al., 2012). The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act IDEA emphasizes a free and appropriate public education that underscores special education and related services, aimed to prepare children with disabilities for the transition to post-secondary education, employment, and independent living (Morningstar et al., 2012). IDEA stresses the importance of involving students and their families in defining post-school goals, requiring continuous and extensive family involvement in transition planning (Gresham et al., 2001). However, despite legislative and regulatory guidance, many young people continue to leave school without adequate planning, suggesting that the presence of legislation has not fully addressed this issue (Ward et al., 2003).

## 1.3 Transition Planning Curricula

Extensive research findings support the importance of effective transition planning and curricula. The What Works in Transition Research Synthesis Project reviewed two decades of research finding that student-focused planning strategies and skill development interventions are key elements in improving transition outcomes for youth with disabilities (Cobb and Alwell, 2009). Morningstar et al. (2009) and Alwell and Cobb (2006) found evidence-based practices, including teaching life and employment skills, community-based instruction, and dropout prevention, effective across diverse educational settings and disabilities. Test et al. identified 16 predictors of positive post-school outcomes: curriculum and skill development, student self-advocacy, interagency collaboration, family involvement, transition planning, and school program structures (2009). Additionally, it is important for stakeholders to collaborate to identify students' strengths and future

goals (Morgan, 2010). Nevertheless, conclusive statements regarding effective transition planning and curricula remain elusive in the overall literature (Allwell & Cobb, 2009).

#### 1.4 Transition Practice Frameworks

Kohler and her colleagues conducted extensive research on transition programming, resulting in the development of a comprehensive taxonomy. The Taxonomy for Transition Programming, initially introduced in Kohler's work in 1993, 1994, and 1996, has been refined and expanded over time to address the evolving landscape of transition-focused education and services.

The taxonomy is organized into five categories, namely: 1. student-focused planning, 2. student development, 3. interagency and interdisciplinary collaboration, 4. family involvement, and 5. program structure and attributes (Kohler, 1996). These categories encompass practices associated with positive student outcomes, grounded in theoretical foundations, supported in the literature, and socially validated by a national group of transition experts.

A more recent iteration of the taxonomy, known as Taxonomy for Transition Programming 2.0 (Kohler, Gothberg, Fowler, & Coyle, 2016), builds upon the earlier version. Figure 1 depicts this updated taxonomy, which incorporates concrete practices derived from effective programs and research literature. The practices focus on predictors of post-school success, strategies for increasing graduation rates and reducing dropout, school climate, and vocational rehabilitation services, all geared towards facilitating successful transitions for youth with disabilities into college and careers.

Furthermore, the updated taxonomy includes additional practices in key areas such as student supports, the instructional context within Student Development, and school climate within Program Structure. In the realm of Family Engagement, the updated taxonomy emphasizes cultural relevancy, empowerment, and family preparation.

Throughout the taxonomy, collaboration with service agencies, particularly vocational rehabilitation, is highlighted as crucial. This emphasis underscores the significance of establishing and maintaining connections with such agencies both before and during school, as well as during post-school transitions.

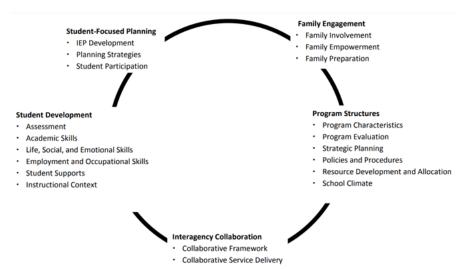


Figure 1 Taxonomy for Transition Programming 2.0

# 1.5 Shortcomings of Current Programs

A qualitative study by Cobb and Alwell indicated the perception that transition is more a promise than a reality. This may be in part to <a href="limited involvement of parents">limited involvement of parents</a> and <a href="strictive views on post-school outcomes">strictive views on post-school outcomes</a> for youth with disabilities persist. Additionally, challenges in the special education curricula, including a lack of cognitive clarity and systematic instruction, along with <a href="limited teacher training and attitudes issues">limited teacher training and attitudes issues</a>, further complicate the transition process (Cobb and Alwell, 2007). There is also an emphasis on the scarcity of evidence regarding effective transition strategies, often hidden in inaccessible 'grey literature' (Beresford, 2004). Forbes et al. highlight gaps in understanding what works during the transition to adult status for young disabled individuals, reflecting the need for better information provided to youth and parents about future options and available services, as well as an enhancement of specialist staff and expectations (Heslop et al., 2002; Morris, 2002; Dean, 2003; Hirst & Baldwin, 1994). Long-term research and understanding of parents' role in supporting their child's transition are also largely overlooked (Beresford, 2004).

#### 1.6 Teacher Training and Local School Services

Unfortunately, the outcomes of transition services often fall short of enabling young disabled individuals to achieve 'adult status' in various aspects of life (Hendey & Pascall, 2002; Heslop et al., 2002). For instance, students with learning difficulties face challenges in preparedness due to insufficient planning and life skills training (Morningstar et al., 2012; Ward et al., 2003). The need for additional life skills training, especially for the majority of high school leavers with autism, has been emphasized, as their limited self-help, life skills, and employability training hinder independence and place an increased burden on caregivers, adversely affecting the quality of life for both parties (Chiang et al.). Recent shifts in education have focused on academic accountability and college preparation, but ensuring effective life skills instruction that promotes learning and community membership while enhancing overall quality of life remains a challenge (Morningstar, 2012).

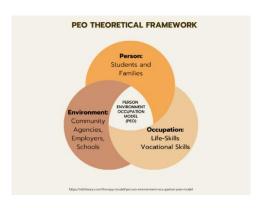
Furthermore, research has shed light on the unpreparedness of special education teachers for effective transition services. A multi-state survey found that teachers often plan and deliver transition services infrequently, and greater preparedness is linked to more experience (Blalock et al., 2003). The limited inclusion of transition competencies in teacher preparation programs suggests inadequate pre-service training, underscoring the need for in-service training.

At Westside High School in Anderson School District 5, there is a significant gap in providing life skills and transition programs for students with disabilities, a challenge exacerbated by the disruptions caused by COVID-19. By addressing this problem and implementing evidence-based transition and life skills programs, we can positively impact these students and others in Anderson Five and surrounding districts. Improved independence among transition-aged students will have wide-ranging benefits for the community, healthcare system, and the job market by enhancing employability. Furthermore, by sharing the program's impact, we can raise awareness of the significance of transition and life skills training for special education students and caregivers, extending the influence statewide, nationwide, and worldwide.

Despite measures aimed at improving the transition of young individuals with disabilities into adulthood, many students continue to leave school without the essential life skills required for a successful transition into independent adulthood, (Ward et al., 2003). This PPOTD Capstone project seeks to identify and recommend evidence-based and stakeholder-driven components to include when selecting a comprehensive life-skills and transition curriculum for Westside High School in Anderson, SC. This protocol will be developed in accordance with the Person Environment Occupation (PEO) model, which takes

into account the unique needs of students and their parents/guardians ("person"), as they work with the public school system, community agencies, and employers ("environment") to reach the transition goals in life skills and vocational skills ("occupation") that they aspire to achieve.

#### 2.0 Methods



#### 2.1 Design

To meet this purpose a mixed method quality improvement (QI) initiative was used. This project was guided by the Person Environment Occupation (PEO) model. The project's design will lead to recommendations for evidence-based and stakeholder-driven components to include when selecting a comprehensive life-skills and transition curriculum for Westside High School in Anderson, SC. This project will be completed in 2 phases: Phase 1: Needs Assessment, Phase 2: Resource Development

# 2.2 Project Phase Overview

- Phase 1: Evaluate the effectiveness of the current life skills and transition curriculum in Anderson School
  District Five through stakeholder feedback. By understanding the stakeholders' perspectives, we aim to
  identify strengths and weaknesses, enabling us to undertake a quality improvement project that
  addresses the curriculum's shortcomings and meets the transition goals of students both in Anderson
  School District Five and beyond.
- Phase 2: Examine available curricula components for evidence-based content within the special education population to guide special education administration in the selection curriculum that provides quality content and teacher resources, has applicability to real-world skills, and considers costs.

#### 3.0 Phase 1: Needs Assessment

**Aim 1:** Evaluate stakeholders' perspective on the effectiveness of the current life skills and transition curriculum in Anderson School District Five.

By understanding the stakeholders' perspectives, we aimed to identify strengths and weaknesses of the current curriculum to better meet the transition goals of students both in Anderson School District Five and beyond. The primary stakeholders involved in this assessment included students, teachers, parents/guardians, community agencies, and employers participating in pre-vocational work experiences and community-based instruction at Westside High School in coordination with Anderson School District Five.

## 3.1 Needs Assessment Methods

Community agencies and pre-vocational employers were invited to participate in a Redcap survey. The aim was to collect feedback on Anderson School District Five students' performance and preparedness during

community-based instruction/pre-vocational work experiences. The survey focused on tasks required for success in a vocational setting. Participants will be asked which skills are required and which the student possesses. Table 1 presents a list of these skills.

Table 1 Vocational Tasks Required for Success

Adaptability	Empathy	Resourcefulness
Assembly skills	Following multi-step directions	Self-awareness
Being proactive	Leadership skills	Social/interpersonal skills
Conflict management	Math skills	Stress management
Creativity	Openness to constructive criticism	Teamwork
Critical thinking	Organizational skills	Time management
Decision-making	Persuasion	Written and Verbal communication skills
Emotional intelligence	Problem-solving	Work ethic

Teachers identified four to five students and their parent/guardians for recruitment based on traits such as self-awareness, social/interpersonal skills, and verbal communication, along with consistent parental involvement in their child's education journey. A letter was sent home to inform the parent/guardian of the quality improvement project's purpose and to seek their willingness and permission for the child to participate in a focus group.

Stakeholder feedback from recruited students was gathered through a focus group at Westside High School in Anderson, SC. The group, led by the Occupational Therapist, consisted of the four recruited students engaging in a roundtable discussion. A formal focus group guide established ground rules and discussion expectations. The questions centered on the students' perceptions of the current life skills and transition curriculum and its alignment with their future transition goals. The focus group lasted for 60 minutes and was held at Westside High School. The focus group was recorded and transcribed, along with handwritten/field notes taken during the session.

Feedback from the parent/guardians of selected students was gathered through a one-on-one phone interview with the Occupational Therapist. The interview followed a formal guide to address the parent/guardian's vision for their child's future goals and plans. Topics covered included the parent/guardian's perception of their child's current performance, preparedness for independence and self-reliance, and community/pre-vocational work experiences. The insights aided in identifying and selecting programs and protocols to better train and prepare students for these roles. The interviews lasted 20-30 minutes and were scheduled on mutually convenient dates and times. Handwritten/field notes were taken during the interviews.

Rigorous quantitative analysis of the survey results gathered through the Redcap platform was utilized to discern prevalent patterns and trends within community agencies and pre-vocational employers. In tandem, we employed qualitative data collection methods by recording the focus group session, while meticulously documenting field observation notes during both the focus group and parent interviews. Our analytical

approach will delve deep into the responses, focusing on the specific questions posed, and employ a content analysis methodology to uncover consensus and thematic patterns within the data.

#### 3.2 Needs Assessment Results

#### 3.2.1 Community Agencies:

In total, 19 Redcap surveys were sent out to community agencies and pre-vocational employers. The final respondent rate was 11/19 or 57% in total. A variety of Community-Based Instruction (CBI) settings completed the survey including a salon, an elementary school front office, Goodwill, a grocery store, Vocational Rehabilitation, PAWS of Anderson County (animal shelter), an elementary classroom, and Westside High School Athletic Department. Each of these CBI settings and positions requires different skills depending on the task, setting/ environment, and the social/ interpersonal skills required. Tasks include washing and sorting laundry, cleaning locker room floors, preparing the football stadium and canteen for football games, working in a manufacturing setting, light lifting and stocking shelves, greeting/ interacting with customers, answering phones, bagging groceries, collecting, and returning shopping carts, sorting mail, caring for animals, and assisting teachers within a classroom setting.

Community stakeholders reported essential skills required for success in vocational settings. These skills were grouped into themes including cognitive, interpersonal, and emotional intelligence skills. Each theme includes preparatory skills needed to perform job tasks and are presented in Figures 3-5.

Figure 3

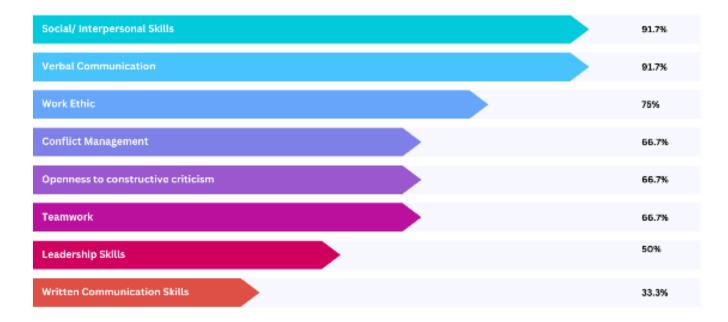
# Skills Required: Cognitive Skills



**Figure 3** presents the specific skills within the Cognitive theme. Skills are listed from most important to least important based on survey results. For example, following multi step directions is the most important skill necessary at 91.7%, compared to math skills which is reported to be the least important skill at 16.7%.

Figure 4

# Skills Required: Interpersonal Skills (IP)



**Figure 4** presents the specific skills within the Interpersonal Skills theme. Skills are listed from most important to least important based on survey results. For example, under interpersonal skills social/ interpersonal skills are the most important skill necessary at 91.7%, compared to written communication skills which is the least important skill at 33.3%.

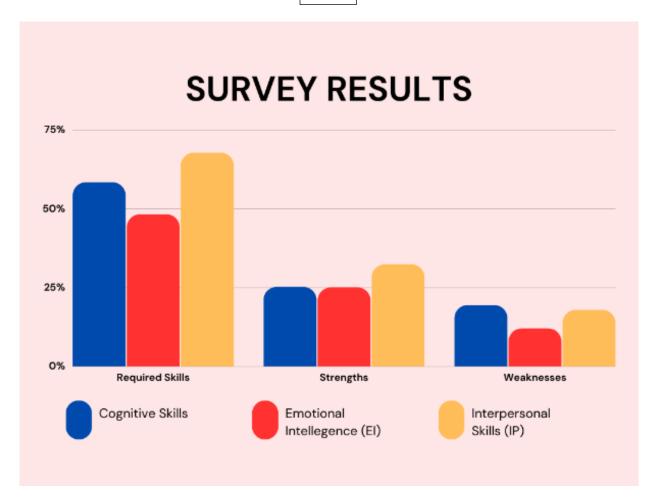
Figure 5

# Skills Required: Emotional Intelligence Skills (EI)



**Figure 5** presents the specific skills within the Emotional Intelligence theme. Skills are listed from most important to least important based on survey results. For example, under emotional intelligence skills, self-awareness is the most important skill necessary at 66.7%, compared to persuasion skills which is the least important skill at 16.7%.

Community stakeholders also reported on student's strengths and weaknesses within these specific skills as depicted in Figure 6.



**Figure 6** compares survey results including required skills, strengths, and needs categorized by theme. For example, under the required skills section interpersonal skills are the most required and emotional intelligence skills the least required.

CBI supervisors were asked if they felt a training skills program addressing these skills would be beneficial and 91.7% of respondents chose yes.

#### 3.2.2 Student Focus Group

The focus group was successfully conducted with all four student participants present. All students reported that their goal is to remain living in their family home with the support of their family. Each student reported areas of interest for employment including working with animals, nursing, science, and public transportation. When asked about the skills, training, or preparation they believe they will need to achieve their post-high school goals, the students lacked the insight to answer the question. When provided with additional information and guided through specific skills/requirements, they provided more feedback. The skills they reported needing to meet their transition goals included obtaining a driver's license, utilizing public transportation, reading, math, and learning skills, safety awareness, domestic living skills, shopping, community accessibility, health management, money skills, and management of finances. All students were supportive of the current transition and life-skills curriculum in place at Westside High School.

They were able to report aspects of the curriculum they felt were preparing them for transition, which included work kits addressing a variety of skills including sorting groceries into the correct storage locations, functional math skills, functional reading skills, money skills, the weather, reading menus, estimating prices, and typing skills. The use of computer-based programs for academics and life-skills training was also reported as a part of the current curriculum. When asked to reflect on their current strengths, most students identified sustaining attention to task, adaptability, time management, teamwork, organizational skills, stress management, leadership skills, work ethic, and openness to constructive criticism. Most students identified personal weaknesses in social/ interpersonal skills, following multi-step directions, verbal/written communication, math skills, assembly skills, teamwork, decision-making, problem-solving, critical thinking, self-awareness, and conflict management. Limited insight made identifying obstacles to the obtainment of goals challenging for the students but obstacles that were noted included openness to trying new things, maintaining a consistent schedule, the inability to drive, and difficulty following multi-step directions. Seventy-five percent of the students reported they felt a program focused on life skills was needed/beneficial and all were willing to participate in a pilot program for life skills and pre-employment training if one became available.

Community stakeholders identified needs focused on cognitive, EI, and SE skills. The student's report needs identified in these theme areas as well as an additional theme in the area of Instrumental Activities of Daily Living skills (IADL's).

# STUDENT REPORTED QUALITATIVE DATA

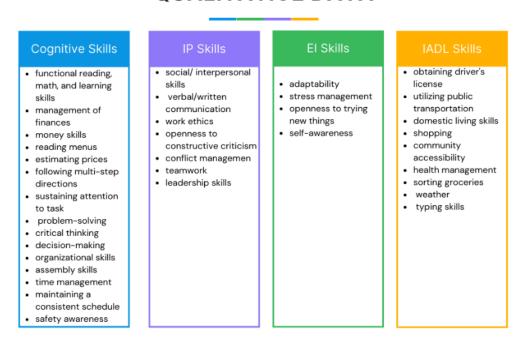


Table 2 presents thematic analysis developed from student report

#### 3.2.3 Parent Interview

Parent interviews revealed that 50% of parents aspired for their child to live independently outside of the family home and obtain gainful employment, 25% aspired for their child to remain supported by and live in the family home, with the other 25% indicating that a residential housing program would be most appropriate. Seventy-five percent of the parents were supportive of the current transition and life-skills curriculum in place at Westside High School. However, none of the parents could elaborate on specific details about the components of the current curriculum other than their student's participation in community-based instruction. All parents reported participating in their child's annual IEP, but none were certain of participation in an individual graduation plan (IGP) meeting. When inquiring about their child's strengths and weaknesses, parents had difficulty deciphering traits or skills that were relevant and significant to their child's future success in transition and life skills. When guided through a list of these skills parents were more able to reflect on their child's performance. Student strengths reported were time management, verbal communication skills, organizational skills, and openness to constructive criticism. Student weaknesses reported include following multi-step directions, social/ interpersonal skills, written communication skills, math skills, assembly skills, stress management, and self-awareness. Obstacles that parents reported to independence included domestic living skills, management of finances, cooking skills, safety awareness, lack of social/interpersonal skills, and obtaining and maintaining gainful employment to live independently. Seventy-five percent of parents reported that they thought a program focused on life skills was essential for their child's development and 100% were willing to allow their child to take part in a pilot program for life skills and pre-employment training if offered. Parent-reported weaknesses and obstacles fall into the themes of cognitive skills, interpersonal skills, and IADLs.

Based on results from the community, students, and parents the four areas of need for the life-skills and transition training protocol fall into the themes of cognitive skills, emotional intelligence, interpersonal skills, and IADLs.

#### 4.0 Phase 2: Reviewing Comprehensive Life Skills Transition Curricula Components

Aim 2: Review and compare the curricula identified of interest by A5 with the evidence supported in the
literature and identified needs of the stakeholders. These recommendations were used to guide special
education administration in the selection of a stakeholder-driven and evidence-based curriculum that
provides quality content and teacher resources, has applicability to real-world skills, and considers
costs.

#### 4.1 Curricula Review Methods

#### 4.1.1 Administration Input

Anderson School District 5 Special Education Administration was interviewed to determine what transition and life skills training curricula were being considered as their current curriculum addressing transition, Unique Learning Systems, renewal period was approaching. Upon consultation, the Special Education administration had narrowed the field to renewing their subscription with Unique Learning System or considering new options including TeachTown's Transition to Adulthood and Vizzle Special Education Skills Suite by ReThink Ed.

#### 4.1.2 Curricula Representatives Input

Meetings with representatives from each of the three curricula were scheduled and held. Through these meetings, each representative gave a detailed overview of the curriculum and features and answered any remaining questions. An opportunity was provided to demo each curriculum allowing for extensive, in-depth exploration into the content delivery methods, instructional methods, tiered/ differentiated instruction, units, lessons, skills taught, related activities for learning, data collection/ assessment, visual supports, accessibility

options, teacher support features, parent communication methods, etc. Of particular interest to educators are the features each learning management system (LMS) offers its users. Therefore, for ease of comparison, a chart was made depicting the LMS features offered by each learning platform. (See Appendix) From this research and exploration, a detailed overview of each curriculum was written.

#### 4.1.3 Process of Matching Needs to Content

The results of the stakeholder-informed needs assessment, completed in Aim 1, were carefully reviewed. The alignment of each curriculum to the needs identified by stakeholders was thoroughly evaluated. The alignment of skills addressed in each curriculum to the required skills identified in the needs assessment were visually depicted in chart form for ease of comparison.

Each curriculum incorporates High Leverage Practices (HLP) and Evidence-Based Practices (EBP). Through the review and research of each curriculum, a comprehensive review of these HLP's and EBP's were incorporated into each curriculum overview. A scoping review of the literature was completed for findings related to these HLPs and EBPs that have been tested in the special education population. Cost comparison consideration was also of importance; therefore, a quote was obtained from each curriculum representative. Upon conclusion of the thorough review and comparison of all curricula of interest, a written summary was assembled.

The final outcomes of this QI project were gathered through post-self-report surveys created via the Redcap Platform. The survey responses were rated using a Likert scale of 1-5 (1 not at all; 5 very much). A survey was created for special education teachers and parent participants of the needs assessment. The survey addressed knowledge, satisfaction, awareness, understanding, and confidence. A separate survey was created for Special Education and Westside High School Administration. The survey addressed knowledge, understanding, awareness, satisfaction, and preparation. Surveys were distributed via email to special education and all administration. Parents were sent surveys via text message and printed QR code attached to the "Transition 101 for Parents" infographic that was sent home. In all, surveys were sent to 14 individuals with a survey response rate for administration of 64% and 60% for parents and teachers. Data produced by self-report surveys include the following:

**Table 3 Outcome Measures** 

Outcome	Data each measure produces	How does it relate to the project's purpose?
Teacher Feedback:	<ul> <li>Confidence in administering content</li> <li>Change in Satisfaction</li> <li>Confidence in role</li> <li>Belief in action change</li> </ul>	Preparedness/ confidence in providing training using the curriculum component recommendations
Parent Feedback:	<ul> <li>Awareness/Knowledge/Underst anding of content</li> <li>Change in Satisfaction</li> <li>Confidence in role</li> <li>Belief in action change</li> </ul>	Parent awareness/ understanding/ and engagement in transition/ life skills
Administration Feedback:	Awareness/ understanding/ Knowledge of content     Preparation for/ Impact on decision-making	Preparedness/ confidence in identifying transition curriculum for implementation

Survey outcome data were collected using Likert scale surveys (1 not at all – 5 very much). *4.2 Curricula Review Results* 

#### 4.2.1 Presentation of Findings

A virtual presentation of the findings and recommendations were reviewed with Special Education self-contained teachers and Westside High School administration. Eleven invites were sent out with six in attendance for the presentation. Those invited unable to attend the live presentation were emailed the written summary and PowerPoint presentation for review at their convenience. Topics included in this presentation included the background and importance, quality of evidence-based content, teacher resources available, features of the learning management system, alignment with identified stakeholder needs, and cost-benefit analysis. This presentation model allowed for an interactive question-and-answer component upon conclusion and a chat room for feedback. The comments and feedback gathered through this presentation were used to clarify understanding and consider any additional needs. The curricula component recommendations and written summary were shared with stakeholders via email distribution, along with the PowerPoint presentation, and recording of the presentation.

An infographic was created and distributed to parents who participated in the parent interview portion of the needs assessment titled "Transition 101 for Parents". The infographic shared information about the current curriculum utilized for transition and life skills at Westside High School, results from the needs assessment, transition planning research findings, alignment of the needs assessment with the new curricula being considered, areas for parent engagement in transition, and life skills, as well as parent resources on transition. The "Transition 101 for Parents" infographic was shared with parents through email distribution and sent home with their student in print form.

#### 4.2.2 Curricula Alignment with Needs Assessment

Based on the needs assessment presented in Aim 1, the required skills and needs identified by stakeholders were compared to each of the instructional targets identified within each curriculum to determine integration and alignment as shown below in Figure 7.

COGNITIVE	UNIQUE LEARNING SYSTEM	VIZZLE SKILLS SUITE	TEACHTOWN T2A
Functional Academics		$\bigcirc$	
Critical Thinking			
Following Multi-Step Directions			
Time Management	$\bigcirc$	$\bigcirc$	
Sustaining Attention to Task		$\bigcirc$	
Problem Solving	igstar		
Organizational Skills		igstar	lacksquare
Decision Making Skills		$\bigcirc$	<b>S</b>
Assembly Skills	<u> </u>	<b>S</b>	

EI/ IP Skills	UNIQUE LEARNING	VIZZLE	TEACHTOWN
Self-Awareness	<b>⊘</b>	<b>O</b>	
Being Proactive	<b>O</b>	<b>S</b>	
Adaptability	<b>O</b>	<b>O</b>	
Emotional Intelligence	<b>O</b>	<b>⊘</b>	
Creativity	<b>O</b>	<b>⊘</b>	
Resourcefulness	<b>⊘</b>	<b>O</b>	
Empathy	<b>⊘</b>	<b>O</b>	
Persuasion		<b>O</b>	
Stress Management	<b>⊘</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>~</b>
Openness to Trying New Things	<b>S</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>O</b>
Social/ IP skills	✓	<b>O</b>	
Verbal Communication	<b>⊘</b>	<b>O</b>	/
Work Ethic	<b>⊘</b>	<b>O</b>	/
Conflict Mangement	$\bigcirc$	<b>O</b>	
Life Skills	UNIQUE LEARNING	VIZZLE	TEACHTOWN
Driving			
Utilizing Public Transportation	<b>②</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>O</b>
Domestic Living Skills	<b>S</b>	<b>S</b>	<u> </u>
Shopping	<b>O</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>O</b>
Community Accesibility	<b>O</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>©</b>
Health Management	<b>O</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>O</b>
Sorting Groceries	<b>O</b>		<b>S</b>
Weather	<b>O</b>	<b>Ø</b>	<b>©</b>
Typing		The state of the s	
Typing Safety Practices	<b>O</b>	0	<b>O</b>
	<u> </u>	0	<u> </u>

Figure 7 Needs Assessment/ Curricula Comparison

Openess to Constructive Criticism	<b>O</b>	<u> </u>	
Teamwork	<b>⊘</b>	<u> </u>	
Leadership Skills		<u> </u>	
Written Communication	✓	lacksquare	
Life Skills	UNIQUE LEARNING	VIZZLE	TEACHTOWN
Driving			
Utilizing Public Transportation	<b>⊘</b>	$\bigcirc$	<b>⊘</b>
Domestic Living Skills	<b>⊘</b>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Shopping	<b>⊘</b>	<b>⊘</b>	$\bigcirc$
Community Accesibility	<b>⊘</b>	<b>⊘</b>	<u> </u>
Health Management	<b>⊘</b>	<b>O</b>	<u> </u>
Sorting Groceries	<b>▽</b>		<b>S</b>
Weather	<b>⊘</b>	<b>⊘</b>	<u> </u>
Typing		<b>⊘</b>	
Safety Practices	<b>O</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>O</b>
Menu Reading	<b>Ø</b>	<b>O</b>	<u> </u>
Money Management	<u> </u>	<b>O</b>	<b>O</b>

Figure 7 Needs Assessment/ Curricula Comparison

## Synthesis of Guiding Principles of Transition Planning

Extensive research findings support the importance of effective transition planning and curricula. As previously highlighted, transition and life skills are vital components of educational programs for children with disabilities with the ultimate goal of facilitating their movement from school to post-school activities. Many evidence-based practices and strategies are incorporated into special education curricula development, materials, presentation, and instructional methods. The focus of this literature review was to determine the effectiveness of evidence-based practices and strategies utilized within transition and life-skills programming, structures, curricula, and characteristics for use in the special education setting with transition-aged students with moderate to severe intellectual disabilities. The following themes emerged within the literature as effective and efficient, evidence-based components, for inclusion within transition and life-skills curricula for students with moderate to severe intellectual disabilities.

## 4.2.3 Transition Curricula Components- Evidence-Based Findings

#### Student-Focused Planning

- Student-focused planning practices, informed by research, involve developing goals based on relevant assessment information, fostering student participation in decision-making, and encouraging self-evaluation of progress (Martin, Marshall, & Maxson, 1993; Ward & Kohler, 1996). Effective transition planning, supported by studies, emphasizes making students feel heard and valued, extending planning beyond annual IEP meetings, and considering the unique needs of students with special needs.

Attention to the development of students' interests, preferences, talents, and limits is crucial for those with identified special needs. Student-focused planning encompasses choices in establishing goals for postsecondary education, training, occupation, community-related and residential objectives, recreation, leisure, and personal needs (e.g., financial, medical, guardianship). Ensuring a student-centered approach involves the selection of appropriate planning tools and strategies, coupled with comprehensive age-appropriate transition assessments covering various aspects (e.g., achievement, intelligence, behavior, career, aptitude, skills, interests, preferences, and readiness).

The student-centered planning team, consisting of students and family members, actively drives decisions. Within the planning process, self-determination is facilitated through active student participation in IEP development and meetings, progress evaluation, and engagement in the planning process (Hoffman & Field, 1995; Wehmeyer, 1992). Fundamental aspects of self-determination, such as self-advocacy within a group setting and self-reflection, are integral components of effective student-focused planning.

# • Student Development

In the category of student development, practices focus on fostering life, employment, and occupational skill development through school-based and work-based learning experiences while nurturing youth autonomy. These activities facilitate the development and application of self-determination skills, academic proficiency, independent living skills, social and interpersonal skills, career awareness, and soft skills associated with positive post-school outcomes (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; Heal & Rusch, 1995; Wehmeyer & Schwartz, 1997).

Effective employment skill development should occur in authentic settings, such as school-based enterprises, structured work experiences, career academies, and opportunities for work-related experiences in the local business community. Instructional contexts, including co-

curricular and extracurricular activities, community engagement, and service-based activities, should embed Universal Design for Learning principles and allow for the practical application of skills to real-world problems.

Student support is essential and may include functional communication, related services (OT, PT, speech therapy, transportation, assistive technology), environmental adaptations/accommodations, and partnerships with community-based program providers (social services, welfare, mental health, law enforcement, etc.) as needed for student success. Instruction should be delivered in the least restrictive environments, ensuring rigor and relevance in education and services. This comprehensive approach to student development aligns with research findings and contributes to positive post-school outcomes for students (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; Heal & Rusch, 1995; Wehmeyer & Schwartz, 1997).

## • Interagency Collaboration

Interagency collaboration plays a crucial role in facilitating successful transition outcomes for students with disabilities and their families (Devlieger & Trach, 1999). Effective collaboration involves incorporating system-wide, student- and family-centered strategies, fostering substantive interagency collaboration, facilitating professional development, promoting visionary leadership, coordinating integrated reform efforts, and establishing connections among various local and federal transition initiatives (Hasazi et al., 1999).

Research over the past three decades has consistently shown that collaborative transition planning involving educators, families, students, community members, and organizations leads to improved post-school outcomes for students with disabilities. A collaborative framework should include stakeholders such as students, parents, educators, service providers, community agencies, postsecondary institutions, and employers. Essential elements of collaborative service delivery include established communication channels among service providers, cross-agency professional development, coordinated planning meetings, data collection and use, funding and staffing arrangements, program planning and development, employer involvement, and provision of transition-related services. Additionally, students and families should be linked with appropriate providers for assistance with financial planning, healthcare navigation, and access to adult disability or mental health services and transportation.

#### Family Engagement

Cobb and Alwell (2009) highlight the crucial role of family involvement in effective transition planning for students with mild disabilities, emphasizing the influence of families on career aspirations, values, day-to-day support, and practical living arrangements. Family participation in the entire transition planning process, including student assessment, program evaluation, IEP meetings, decision-making, and service delivery, is essential. Empowering families involves providing transition information in their ordinary language before the student turns 14.

Research suggests that dedicating more time to transition planning beyond annual IEP meetings is necessary (Cobb & Alwell, 2009). Effective communication strategies, such as face-to-face conferences, telephone contacts, open house events, teacher notes, and classroom visits, have been identified as beneficial for improving interactions between educators and families (McCarney, cited in Turnbull & Turnbull, 1990).

Benz, Johnson, et al. (1995) conducted a study focusing on collaboration improvement, where parents recommended better informational materials, joint training for vocational

rehabilitation and school staff, resource fairs, a knowledgeable contact person, and support groups to enhance the transition planning process and parent involvement. Family learning and preparation for transition-related planning, empowerment strategies, setting high expectations, promoting self-determination, advocacy, and linking families with adult service providers should be integral components of the process (Cobb & Alwell, 2009). These efforts contribute to fostering successful community experiences for youth with disabilities, including safety, transportation, social skills, and mobility. Support should also be provided to assist families and students in applying for college.

# • Program Structures

Program Structures in transition education and services benefit from evidence-based and promising practices, as identified in a survey by Meyer, Eichinger, and Park-Lee (1987). Browder, Wood, et al. (2014) outline five best practices for educating students with severe disabilities: Inclusion, home-school collaboration, staff development, data-based instruction, and the criterion of ultimate functioning.

Transition-oriented schools emphasize systematic community involvement, community-based learning opportunities, systematic inclusion of students in the school's social life, and increased expectations for skills, values, and outcomes for all students (Edgar & Polloway, 1994). Effective transition programs address various educational levels and relevant systems, offering flexible options to meet individual student needs. They focus on outcomes, maintain high expectations for all students, and implement evidence-based and promising practices through professional development, coaching, and feedback systems. Programs follow a tiered philosophy, offering increasingly intensive support as needed, providing a personalized learning environment and instructional process.

To ensure access to diverse educational opportunities, programs should cater to students' needs, encompassing academic, college-prep, work-based, and extracurricular options. Implementation strategies should aim to enhance classroom behavior and social-emotional skills, and ongoing program evaluation involving students and families should be part of a continuous improvement cycle. Data-driven practices, including the use of data systems to monitor progress and collecting post-school data for planning, are crucial. Strategic planning, involving multiple stakeholders and driven by evidence-based practices, should be conducted regularly, with needs assessments informing secondary-level education and post-school community programs and services.

# Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)

Students with disabilities experience positive outcomes through the implementation of Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), as evidenced by improved academic performance, reduced behavior problems, fewer inappropriate referrals to special education, and enhanced graduation rates. MTSS is a data-driven framework that continuously refines instructional practices, fosters positive learning environments, and employs evidence-based curricula to address the diverse academic, behavioral, and social-emotional needs of all students. This framework features a three-tiered system of practices and supports, with interventions tailored based on student responsiveness. For those with low responsiveness or higher risk, more intensive and specialized supports are provided. MTSS implementation can also aid districts and schools in fulfilling obligations under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and state laws.

The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) acknowledges the significant impact of MTSS in improving education, special education roles, and the system itself. By organizing

practices based on data, evidence, and research, the MTSS framework provides essential components to implement evidence-based practices and programs, ultimately enhancing academic, behavioral, and social-emotional outcomes for all students in educational settings (Council for Exceptional Children [CEC], 2004).

# • High Leverage Practices (HLP)/ Evidence-Based Practices (EBP)

Specially designed instruction for students with disabilities relies on evidence-based practices (EBPs) and High-Leverage Practices (HLPs), recognized as foundational in special education (Fuchs et al., 2010; Odom et al., 2010; Riccomini et al., 2017). HLPs, described as practices occurring frequently, manageable by novice teachers, and preserving teaching integrity, form a core set with the greatest impact on student learning (Grossman et al., 2009; McDonald et al., 2013; Hlas & Hlas, 2012). This set of 22 essential HLPs, approved by the CEC Board of Directors in 2016, serves as a curricular framework for professional preparation in teacher education programs (Billingsley et al., 2019; McLeskey et al., 2017). These practices are intended for all special educators across K–12 settings (McCray et al., 2017).

Evidence-based practices, validated through meaningful research supporting effectiveness, include Task analysis, Behavioral analysis, multi-sensory instruction, Cooperative Learning, Direct Instruction, Reinforcement, Self-Directed Instruction, Peer Tutors, Technology (Video Modeling and Computer Based Instruction), Antecedent Strategies, Functional Communication Training, Differential reinforcement of alternative behavior, Self-Management, and Social Narratives. Figure 8 depicts the quantity of individual studies and the correlation between High-Leverage Practices (HLPs) and disability or risk category. The darker shading in the figure indicates a higher number of studies providing evidence for each HLP based on the disability or risk category (Nelson et al., 2022).

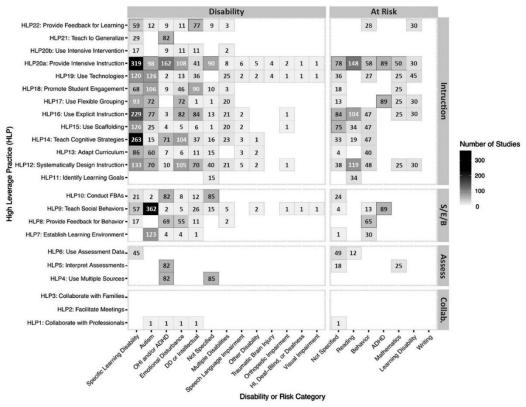


Figure 8 Study Quantity and Correlation of HLPs with Disability/Risk Category

The combination of HLPs and EBPs is highly beneficial for implementing Multi-Tiered System of Support(MTSS), where HLPs can effectively teach EBPs in specific content areas. This approach, particularly systematic instruction, receives strong research support for teaching both academic content and functional life skills to students with severe disabilities.

#### 4.2.4 Specific Curricula Characteristics- Evidence-Based Findings

#### • Embedding Core Content into Real-Life Applications

Secondary students with moderate and severe disabilities (MSD) benefit from a curriculum that integrates functional skills crucial for a successful transition to adulthood. Amidst the emphasis on teaching core content to students with MSD, finding approaches with practical applications for a successful transition becomes paramount. Balancing the need to teach both functional and core content poses a challenge for teachers of students with MSD. While the individualized education program (IEP) team may prioritize functional skills such as communication and daily living tasks, teachers must also address core content. The functional approach, as proposed by Browder, Flowers, et al. (2004), focuses on personalized skills necessary for independent functioning across various domains, identified through an ecological inventory of each student's current and future environments (Brown et al., 1979).

Researchers, including Collins, Evans, Galloway, Karl, & Miller (2007) and Jameson, McDonnell, Johnson, Riesen, & Polychronis (2007), have explored an embedded approach to instructing students with MSD. Two approaches are used as guidelines for teaching core content with meaningful applications to facilitate successful transitions for secondary students with MSD. The first involves embedding core content in instruction while teaching life skills, and the second involves adding functional applications as non-targeted information when teaching required core content. Strategies to enhance generalization, such as teaching with real

materials, in natural settings, and using multiple exemplars, have been suggested (Collins, 2007; Stokes & Osnes, 1986). Both approaches employ direct systematic instructional procedures grounded in a well-established research base of effective practices for teaching students with MSD.

## Skill Generalization through hands-on learning/ CBI/ Experiential Learning/ Situated Learning

Community-based instruction (CBI) is a crucial component in the education of students with moderate and severe disabilities (Alberto et al., 2005). Educators regularly employ CBI in diverse community settings to enhance independent functioning among students with disabilities (Brown et al., 1983). Stokes and Baer (1977) emphasized the importance of generalization across persons, settings, and time for effective instruction, yet students with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) often struggle to apply learned skills outside the classroom (Brown et al., 1983). To address this, teachers can use instructional strategies, as suggested by Stokes and Baer (1977), specifically designed for promoting generalization to the community.

A combination of community-based instruction and simulated instruction has been identified as supportive in enhancing skill generalization while addressing associated challenges (Cihak et al., 2004). The use of CBI increases the likelihood that students will generalize skills beyond the classroom setting (Cihak et al., 2004). Unlike skills learned in school that may not transfer to the community (Bates et al., 2001), providing instruction in the community reduces the need for repetitive teaching across settings (Nieptuski et al., 1986). Moreover, CBI offers teachers valuable insights into the challenges students face in the community, enabling them to respond to students' needs more effectively (Brown et al., 1983).

# Video Based Instruction (VBI)/ Video Modeling (VM)

Video-based instruction (VBI) and video modeling (VM) have proven effective in enhancing various skills, including functional daily living skills, for individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and developmental disabilities (Gardner & Wolfe, 2013; Bellini & Akullian, 2007; Mason et al., 2013; Rai, 2008; Van Laarhoven et al., 2009). However, the insufficient attention given to the generalization of acquired skills through VBI is problematic, as generalization is the ultimate goal of learning (Shurr et al., in press). Generalization signifies an individual's capacity to apply acquired knowledge or skills to new situations, such as different settings or stimuli (Snell & Brown, 2011). For individuals with intellectual disabilities (ID) who often learn skills in simulated settings, emphasizing generalization is crucial for performing skills within their natural contexts (Bassette et al., 2018).

Daily living skills were the most frequently taught skills for individuals with ID using video modeling and prompting, with additional strategies employed in most studies, and approximately one-third of studies addressing generalization. The findings confirm that video modeling and/or prompting interventions have a positive effect on teaching skills across various categories (e.g., independent living skills, job skills, leisure skills, and academic skills) for individuals with ID. However, the studies consistently suggest that combining video modeling/prompting with additional strategies is more effective than using video modeling/prompting alone.

# Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) / Discrete Trial Training (DTT)

Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) is a therapy rooted in the science of learning and behavior, aiming to enhance helpful behaviors while reducing harmful or learning-disruptive behaviors. Originating in the 1960s, ABA has been a cornerstone in assisting children with autism and related developmental disorders, utilizing methods studied and refined over decades. Comprehensive ABA treatment programs incorporate various intervention procedures like discrete trial instruction and natural environment training. These programs are grounded in fundamental learning and motivation principles,

including positive reinforcement, extinction, stimulus control, and generalization. Utilizing task analysis, instruction is systematically broken down into manageable steps.

One notable ABA technique is Discrete Trial Training (DTT), recognized for its effectiveness in teaching skills to children with autism (Smith, 2001; Stahmer, Ingersoll, & Carter, 2003). DTT involves many trials presented in a short duration, ensuring many learning opportunities. ABA-based interventions, as highlighted by the National Autism Center (NAC, 2015), yield benefits in various domains such as play, academic abilities, social functioning, independent living skills, and addressing challenging behaviors.

4.2.5 Curricula Comparison to Research Findings

#### **Student-Focused Planning:**

- **Vizzle:** Vizzle includes interactive lessons and resources for transition/vocational skills, emphasizing student independence. It offers a tiered curriculum with various levels of support, allowing customization and adaptation for individual student needs.
- **Unique Learning System:** Incorporates a GPS (goals, preferences, skills) feature for transition planning, including the establishment of yearly student profiles, IEP goal correlation, and tools for future planning in areas such as vocational, daily living, community, personal life, and lifelong learning.
- **TeachTown:** Incorporates student-centered planning, involving students in real-world skill development through task analysis, video modeling, and explicit instruction. Supports the development of individualized transition goals and objectives.
- **Literature Review:** Student-focused planning involves the development of student goals, participation in planning, and evaluation of progress. The literature emphasizes the importance of student-centered planning, self-determination, and involvement of students and family members in decision-making.

#### **Student Development:**

- Vizzle: The Skills Suite in Vizzle addresses life skills and social skills, providing comprehensive
  resources for skill development. The curriculum is organized with sequential topics and offers tiered
  instruction and support.
- Unique Learning System: Provides age-appropriate content with accessibility options, tiered systems
  of support, and evidence-based strategies such as Systematic Instruction, Explicit Instruction, and
  Interactive read-aloud.
- **TeachTown**: Provides opportunities for students to develop academic, independent living, social, and vocational skills through explicit instruction, video modeling, and task analysis. Emphasizes real-world applications and situational learning.
- Literature Review: Student development practices include life, employment, and occupational skill development. The literature emphasizes the importance of academic, independent living, social, and interpersonal skills.

#### Interagency Collaboration/Collaborative Service Delivery:

- **Vizzle:** The platform promotes a team approach involving parents to extend learning into the home and community. On-demand resources for in-home skills practice and extension activities for real-world experiences are provided.
- **Unique Learning System:** Fosters collaboration through parent communication/collaboration features, academic progress reporting, and collaboration during the IEP process.
- **TeachTown:** Offers a collaborative platform involving teachers, students, and relevant stakeholders in the planning and delivery of transition-related services. Focuses on partnerships and connections with community-based program providers.
- **Literature Review:** Interagency collaboration is highlighted in the literature as a crucial factor for effective transition planning. The collaboration involves educators, families, students, and community members working together.

#### **Family Engagement:**

- **Vizzle:** Vizzle encourages family involvement, providing resources for in-home skills practice and extension activities. It supports communication between educators and families.
- **Unique Learning System:** Enhances parent communication/collaboration through academic progress reporting, life skills updates, and features like remote sign-in for at-home learning.
- **TeachTown:** Supports family engagement by providing information, involving families in the transition process, and offering resources for family learning and preparation.
- **Literature Review:** Family engagement is emphasized in the literature, stating that the involvement of families in the transition planning process is crucial.

#### **Program Structures:**

- Vizzle: Vizzle offers a structured curriculum with tiered instruction, progress tracking, and customization options. It can be implemented in various settings, including group or one-on-one programming.
- **Unique Learning System**: Provides a comprehensive curriculum for moderate to severe disabilities, covering transition learning skills from preschool to post-high school and incorporating evidence-based practices and strategies.
- **TeachTown**: Offers a comprehensive curriculum with tiered levels of instruction, personalized learning environments, and ongoing data-driven program evaluation. Aligns with evidence-based and promising practices.
- **Literature Review:** Program structures should support evidence-based and promising practices for transition.

#### Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS):

- Vizzle: Vizzle incorporates a tiered curriculum with various levels of support, aligning with the MTSS framework. It focuses on data-driven decision-making and provides positive reinforcement based on individual progress.
- Unique Learning System: Utilizes tiered systems of support, offering Level 1 to Level 3 content differentiation with evidence-based practices such as Prompting/Modeling/Fading Strategies and Scaffolding.
- **TeachTown**: Aligns with MTSS principles by offering tiered levels of instruction and support based on student responsiveness. Incorporates data-driven decision-making.
- **Literature Review:** MTSS is recognized in the literature as a framework for improving academic, behavioral, and social-emotional outcomes.

#### High Leverage Practices (HLP)/Evidence-Based Practices (EBP):

- **Vizzle:** Vizzle is designed to implement evidence-based practices, with a focus on interactive lessons, tiered instruction, and progress tracking.
- **Unique Learning System**: Incorporates evidence-based methods, including lessons in PDF or digital format and various evidence-based practices and strategies.
- **TeachTown:** Incorporates video modeling, task analysis, explicit instruction, and data collection, aligning with high-leverage practices and evidence-based approaches.
- **Literature Review:** The literature highlights the importance of evidence-based practices in transition education.

#### **Effective Transition Practices Framework:**

• **Vizzle**: Vizzle integrates various components of effective transition practices, including student-focused planning, student development, interagency collaboration, family engagement, and program structures.

- **Unique Learning System**: Incorporates evidence-based methods, including lessons in PDF or digital format and various evidence-based practices and strategies.
- **TeachTown**: Aligns with Kohler's framework by addressing these key components in its Transition to Adulthood curriculum.
- Literature Review: The literature presents a framework for effective transition practices.

#### Skill Generalization through hands-on learning/CBI/Experiential Learning/Situated Learning:

- **Vizzle:** Vizzle includes extension and exposure activities for hands-on practice and real-world experiences, supporting skill generalization.
- **Unique Learning System**: Integrates transition learning skills from preschool to post-high school, fostering hands-on learning and daily-life applications. Utilizes routine activities and personal binders for skill development and generalization.
- **TeachTown**: Supports skill generalization through community-based instruction, simulated instruction, and video modeling, providing real-world applications.
- **Literature Review**: Skill generalization is crucial, and the literature recommends instructional strategies that promote generalization to real-world contexts.

#### Video-Based Instruction (VBI)/Video Modeling (VM):

- **Vizzle**: Vizzle incorporates video-based instruction and provides resources for in-home skills practice. It includes positive reinforcement and addresses different skill categories.
- **Unique Learning System**: Utilizes evidence-based strategies like Interactive read-aloud, prompting, and modeling within a tiered system, integrating video-based instruction. The system acknowledges the importance of generalization and incorporates additional strategies for enhanced effectiveness.
- **TeachTown**: Incorporates video modeling as a key feature, aligning with evidence-based practices for skill acquisition.
- Literature Review: Video modeling is recognized as an effective practice for teaching skills.

#### Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)/Discrete Trial Training (DTT):

- **Vizzle**: Vizzle does not explicitly mention ABA or DTT, but it focuses on positive reinforcement, systematic instruction, and progress tracking.
- **Unique Learning System**: Incorporates principles of ABA, emphasizing positive reinforcement and offering task differentiation at various levels. Provides a structured environment with evidence-based practices like systematic instruction and explicit instruction.
- **TeachTown**: Utilizes ABA principles with explicit instruction, task analysis, and discrete trial training to address academic, behavioral, and adaptive skills.
- Literature Review: ABA and DTT are recognized as effective behavior analytic techniques.

#### 5.0 Discussion

#### 5.1 Vizzle

Vizzle by ReThink skills suite curriculum, which is comprised of Life Skills, Social Skills, and Transition/Vocational Skills, aligns with the results of the needs assessment completed in Aim 1. The majority of skills identified as important by stakeholders in the area of cognitive, El/ SES, and life skills are addressed within this curriculum. Of note, there is no core academic content (ELA, Math, etc.) in Vizzle Life Skills Suite, as their core content is a separate curriculum. However, there are functional reading and math skills incorporated in skill areas such as money management, etc. where these functional academics are required. The Vizzle curriculum aligns well with the evidence-based findings and literature review on effective transition practices for students with moderate to severe intellectual disabilities. It incorporates key components such as student-focused planning, student development, collaboration, family engagement, program structures, MTSS,

HLP/EBP, and effective transition practices framework. The emphasis on customization, tiered instruction, progress tracking, and real-world application supports the literature's recommendations for a comprehensive and effective transition curriculum.

## 5.2 Unique Learning System (ULS)

Unique Learning System (ULS) provides tiered, differentiated, and standards-aligned content, along with assessments, data tools, and evidence-based instructional support. Unique aligns closely with the results of the needs assessment completed in Aim 1 addressing most all skills identified in the areas of cognitive, EI, SES, and life skills identified by stakeholders. Unique stands out from the competition by seamlessly weaving transition and life skills into the core academic curriculum. ULS offers consistent, high-quality instruction, an interactive learning environment, engaging symbol support, and a pathway to independence. Overall, Unique Learning System aligns with research and evidence-based practices, incorporating features such as systematic instruction, explicit instruction, interactive read-aloud, and differentiated strategies. It supports the diverse needs of students, emphasizing a personalized learning environment and fostering collaboration among educators, students, and families. It integrates transition learning skills by fostering hands-on learning through daily-life applications and utilizes routine activities and personal binders for skill development and generalization.

#### 5.3 TeachTown

TeachTown's Transition to Adulthood (T2A) curriculum is distinct as it incorporates principles of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), discrete trial training (DTT), and video-based instruction modeling to enhance the learning experience for students. When compared to the needs assessment, T2A addresses most all skills identified in the needs assessment by stakeholders in the areas of cognitive and life skills, however, it misses the mark in the area of EI and SES. The exclusion of these skills is due to individualized curricula addressing Social Skills, called TeachTown Social Skills. Core academic content is also taught within a separate software solution offered by TeachTown, named EnCore. Functional reading, writing, and math skills are utilized within functional transition and life skills training activities as required. TeachTown T2A aligns well with evidence-based practices and effective transition planning components identified in the literature review for students with moderate to severe intellectual disabilities. It encompasses student-focused planning, skill development, family engagement, structured program structures, evidence-based instructional practices, and opportunities for skill generalization and real-world application. Overall, the curriculum reflects a holistic and well-rounded approach to transition education for students with diverse needs.

#### 5.4 Comparison of Curricula

In conclusion, Vizzle, Unique Learning System (ULS), and TeachTown's Transition to Adulthood (T2A) curricula all demonstrate strong alignment with evidence-based findings and literature review on effective transition practices for students with moderate to severe intellectual disabilities. Although the organization of content and software structure differs, each curriculum incorporates key components such as student-focused planning, skill development, collaboration, family engagement, program structures, Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS), High Leverage Practices (HLP)/Evidence-Based Practices (EBP) and follows an effective transition practices framework. The emphasis on customization, tiered instruction, progress tracking, real-world application (including hands-on learning and routine activities), and the integration of research-supported practices underscores their commitment to providing comprehensive and effective transition curricula. These educational tools prioritize the diverse needs of students, promote collaboration among educators, students, and families, and offer personalized learning environments, contributing to the success of students with intellectual disabilities in their transition to adulthood.

The final decision by Special Education Administration for the transition and life-skills curriculum in Anderson School District Five for transition aged students is Unique Learning System by n2y. Unique Learning System

was already being used for the transition/life-skills curriculum; however, the transition grade band was not used by special education teachers due to a conflict with academic grade band needs of their students. Unique Learning System allows 1 grade band per license to be utilized, therefore if special education teachers were utilizing lower grade bands due to the academic needs of students, the age-appropriate transition and life-skills components were not accessible. As a solution, Special Education Administration purchased additional licenses to allow for special education teachers to have access to more than one grade band, providing instructional level academic content along with age-appropriate transition and life-skills for students.

## 6.0 Takeaway and Implications

Special educators will enhance their ability to prepare students for the transition to adulthood including the development of independent living skills, and better readiness for either entering the workforce or pursuing secondary education, and this improves the overall quality of life for special education students. Through this Capstone Project, I would like for the impact to reach not only students in Anderson School District Five but all of Anderson County and beyond. Following the Capstone, the next steps would be to continue my work through piloting, further refining, and finalizing the development of this evidence-based and stakeholder-informed life-skills and transition curriculum. The aspiration is for a broader impact on students with disabilities through the dissemination and sharing of this curriculum with educators, occupational therapists, transition coordinators, and others.

#### 7.0 Limitations

Some limitations of this project include the small sample size of the student focus group and the parents interviewed. A convenience sample of student/ parent participants was taken from Westside High School special education mild Intellectually Disabled classroom based on traits such as self-awareness, social/interpersonal skills, and verbal communication, along with consistent parental involvement in their child's education journey. The small sample size and convenience sampling make it more difficult to widely generalize the results of this project to other special education programs and populations. Due to the project timeline, it was not possible to pilot the chosen Life-Skills and Transition Training Evidence-Based and Stakeholder Driven Curriculum as a part of this project.

#### 8.0 Description of the Mentor Team

Dr. Roxanna Bendixen, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA served as the mentor for this Capstone Project. She is the Division Director and Associate Professor in the Occupational Therapy Program at The Medical University of South Carolina. She has a research background, has taught quality improvement, and has clinical expertise in children/ adolescents with a focus on the school system. Dr. Kelly McGloon, PhD, OTR/L contributed as well through her role as Capstone Instructor. Site support was provided by Carrie Evans, Special Education Teacher, Norman Hall, Transition Coordinator, Marie Marchant, Special Education Coordinator, and Community-Based Instructors serving Westside High School in Anderson, SC.

#### 9.0 Ethics

This Capstone project will be classified as quality improvement. Throughout this Capstone project, no names or identifying information will be collected instead, participants will be given a participant code. Data will not be collected and analyzed on an individual level but instead in aggregate form. After reviewing the AOTA (American Occupational Therapy Association) Code of Ethics (2020), no ethical concerns were identified.

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## Appendix

#### **Curriculum Overviews**

Special Education Administration at Anderson School District 5 determined three curricula of interest for use in the special education classrooms serving transition-aged students with moderate to severe intellectual disabilities and other co-occuring medical, and developmental disabilities. The curricula identified of interest by the Anderson Five Special Education administration were Vizzle by ReThink Ed, TeachTown, and Unique Learning System (ULS). An in-depth review of each of these curricula follows.

# **Unique Learning System by n2y**

Unique Learning System, developed by n2y, stands as a cloud-based platform meticulously crafted to support students with special learning needs. Educators leverage this platform to deliver tiered, differentiated, and standards-aligned content, backed by assessments, data tools, and evidence-based instructional support. The system caters comprehensively to students from pre-K through the transition years, fostering consistent, high-quality instruction within an interactive learning environment rich in symbol support and providing a clear pathway to independence.

The system seamlessly integrates core academic and life skills into a unified curriculum, tailored for individuals with moderate to severe disabilities. Core rubrics embedded in the curriculum address transition readiness skills across key areas such as employability, communication, self-advocacy, daily living, and social strategies. Transition learning skills are seamlessly woven from preschool to post-high school, encompassing essential aspects like choice-making, collaboration, and good citizenship.

Transition planning within Unique Learning System serves as a robust future planning tool specifically designed for Middle School, High School, and Transition-aged learners. The system ensures continuous support by offering a cost-effective license renewal at \$754.99, amounting to \$13,589.82 for 18 teacher licenses, without a student cap per license.

Unique Learning System boasts age-appropriate content enriched with accessibility features, including visual symbol support, pre-made communication boards, text-to-speech, highlighting, and more. The platform leverages research and evidence-based methods, delivering lessons in both PDF and digital formats. Adopting tiered systems of support, it caters to varying levels of learners with Level 1 being the easiest and Level 3 being the most advanced, incorporating task differentiation at each level.

The transition learning skills are integrated into the system span from preschool to post-high school, addressing diverse areas like choice-making, collaboration, and good citizenship. A dedicated transition band at the post-high school level further delves into vocational/employability, community engagement, daily living, personal life, and lifelong learning.

Core materials provided by Unique Learning System form the foundation for routine activities in the Transition classroom. These activities tackle crucial transitioning skills, including communication, employability, self-advocacy, and social strategies. The system ensures practicality by offering printable core materials and providing a personalized binder for each student.

Routine activities within the Unique Learners Transition classroom encompass various aspects such as morning meetings, break times, meal planning, mealtimes, recreation/leisure, fitness, and vocational tasks. The personal binder, transported between home and the transition class daily, facilitates communication with parents, sharing notes and activities.

To foster parent communication and collaboration, Unique Learning System provides channels for academic progress reporting, life skills updates, independent functioning reports, remote sign-in for at-home learning, and collaboration during the Individualized Education Program (IEP) process.

The system introduces the GPS (goals, preferences, skills) feature, supporting transition planning and pre/post assessment measures of monthly skill learning. Operating across six grade bands, GPS aids in data-driven decision-making, establishing a yearly student profile and providing suggested differentiation levels, instructional strategies, and skills to assess with benchmark assessments.

Transition Planning within GPS acts as a comprehensive data collection center for Middle School, High School, and Transition-aged students. It offers tools to assist students and their teams in progressing from academic learning to the application of skills and personal preferences in transition years.

Assessments within GPS encourage active student involvement in the transition planning process, covering future employment options, living arrangements, community engagement, personal life choices, and lifelong learning options. Additional teacher reference materials include instructional tools, guides, SC alignment documents, and instructional targets.

The transition passport, an integral part of Unique Learning System, provides a personal resource binder for post-graduate use. Divided into four sections – Vocational, Daily Living, Personal Life, and Community – the Transition Passport Binder includes monthly instructional topics and references tools in the Transition Passport Toolbox for extended learning and life skills.

n2y offers an optional but valuable addition, SymbolStix PRIME, at a cost of \$174.99/year during license renewal. SymbolStix PRIME is an evidence-based visual support and symbol communication tool, providing a vast array of dynamic and engaging education symbols. These tools empower teachers to create and deliver quick print and interactive communication and learning materials, enhancing instruction, and supporting individuals with communication challenges.

In summary, Unique Learning System by n2y emerges as a comprehensive, inclusive, and futureoriented platform, fostering academic and life skill development for individuals with special learning needs. Unique Learning System Standards Alignment

# **Unique Learning System- Scope and Sequence**

Employability Transitio				
Your State's General Education Standards	Your State's Extended Standards			
n2y Instructional Targets	n2y Transition Grade Band Lessons and Activities	n2y Supporting Activities		
Job Awareness	Unique	Unique		
<ul> <li>Demonstrate a desire to be employed and recognize realistic job options.</li> </ul>	Job Club	Core Task 1.1: Daily Schedules		
Demonstrate skills needed for a job interview.	<ul> <li>Job Exploration (Lesson 17)</li> <li>Applications and Interviews (Lesson 18)</li> </ul>	Core Task 1.3: Sign-In Core Tasks 2.0-2.9: A.M. Jobs		
Recognize and participate in job training opportunities in the	Job Interest Surveys	Core Task 4.0: Break Time		
community.	Work Attitudes	Core Tasks 8.0-8.1: Classroom Vocational Suggestions		
Work Skills	Volunteer Jobs	Core Tasks 9.0-9.11: P.M. Jobs		
Demonstrate basic employability skills, including work, social and	Transition Grade Band Unit Topics	Transition Passport		
hygiene habits.	Dress for Success (Unit 22)	Transition Planning		
Follow directions to complete a job task.	Work It! (Unit 28)			
<ul> <li>Complete a daily schedule of assigned tasks.</li> </ul>				

		Torontill
Daily Living Your State's General Education Standards		Your State's Extended Standards
Tour Guile's General Education Standards		Tour State & Extended Standards
n2y Instructional Targets	n2y Transition Grade Band Lessons and Activities	n2y Supporting Activities
Grooming and Hygiene Recognize and apply appropriate grooming habits and practices on a	Unique	Unique
<ul> <li>Recognize and apply appropriate grooming habits and practices on a regular basis.</li> </ul>	Lifetime Skills  ■ Banking Basics (Lesson 8)	Core Task 1.1: Daily Schedules Core Task 1.2: Monthly Calendars
Nutrition	What's in My Wallet? (Lesson 9)	Core Task 1.4: Grooming Check
<ul> <li>Recognize basic foods and/or meals that make up a balanced diet.</li> <li>Analyze information from a food package, recipe or menu including</li> </ul>	Time Matters (Lesson 10)	Core Task 1.6: Paycheck Register
nutrition facts, dates and other common labels.	3-Way Budget Planning (Lesson 11)     Greeting Cards (Lesson 12)	Core Task 2.2: Calendars Core Task 2.3: Weather
Food Preparation and Handling	Recipes (Lesson 16)	Core Tasks 5.0-5.1: Meal Planning
<ul> <li>Safely prepare basic foods using appropriate kitchen tools.</li> <li>Home Maintenance and Safety</li> </ul>	Transition Grade Band Unit Topics	Core Tasks 6.0-6.9: Mealtime
Demonstrate knowledge of routine home maintenance and safety.	Looking Good Everyday (Unit 5)	Core Task 7.0: Personal Fitness Core Tasks 9.0-9.11: P.M. Jobs
Household Appliances and Tools	Keeping My Home Safe (Unit 7) Restaurant Skills (Unit 9)	Transition Passport
<ul> <li>Responsibly use common household appliances (stove, washer/dryer, microwave, etc.) and/or tools.</li> </ul>	Nutrition: A Healthy Me (Unit 12)	Transition Planning
Home Cleaning and Organization	Time to Travel (Unit 13) Safety Matters (Unit 15)	
Maintain basic home cleaning routines and organization.	Ouch that Hurts! (Unit 17)	
Demonstrate knowledge of housing options for adulthood.	Wash. Dry. Fold. Repeat. (Unit 19)	
Time Management	Dress for Success (Unit 22) Do I Need a Doctor? (Unit 23)	
Apply and manage use of time in the context of real-world situations.	Housekeeping (Unit 26)	
<ul> <li>Use a calendar to manage time and dates in the context of real-world situations.</li> </ul>	(	
Money Management		
<ul> <li>Apply and manage use of money in the context of real-world</li> </ul>		
situations.  Personal Fitness		
Recognize the benefits of and apply appropriate fitness habits and		
practices.		
Personal Wellness and Safety     Identify and apply ways to enhance personal wellness (e.g., Sun		
safety, mental health, sleep habits, etc.) and avoid or reduce risks		
(e.g., substance abuse, stranger danger, community navigation,		
etc.).		
Community Living		Transitio
Your State's General Education Standards		Your State's Extended Standards
n2y Instructional Targets	n2y Transition Grade Band Lessons and Activities	n2y Supporting Activities
Community Resources     Explore community resources for personal, vocational and daily living	Unique	Unique
supports.	Job Club  Volunteer Jobs (Lesson 21)	Core Task 7.0: Personal Fitness Core Task 10: Rec-Leisure Activities
<ul> <li>Explore opportunities for civic participation.</li> </ul>		
	Transition Grade Band Unit Topics	Transition Passport
Recreation and Leisure	Transition Grade Band Unit Topics  My Community (Unit 2)	
	Transition Grade Band Unit Topics  My Community (Unit 2) Leisure Time (Unit 8)	Transition Passport
Recreation and Leisure  Participate in recreation-leisure activities of choice.	Transition Grade Band Unit Topics  My Community (Unit 2)	Transition Passport
Recreation and Leisure     Participate in recreation-leisure activities of choice.     Make plans and access community resources.	Transition Grade Band Unit Topics  My Community (Unit 2) Leisure Time (Unit 8)	Transition Passport Transition Planning
Recreation and Leisure     Participate in recreation-leisure activities of choice.     Make plans and access community resources.  Personal Life	Transition Grade Band Unit Topics  My Community (Unit 2) Leisure Time (Unit 8)	Transition Passport Transition Planning  Transition Planning
Recreation and Leisure     Participate in recreation-leisure activities of choice.     Make plans and access community resources.	Transition Grade Band Unit Topics  My Community (Unit 2) Leisure Time (Unit 8)	Transition Passport Transition Planning
Recreation and Leisure     Participate in recreation-leisure activities of choice.     Make plans and access community resources.  Personal Life	Transition Grade Band Unit Topics  My Community (Unit 2) Leisure Time (Unit 8)	Transition Passport Transition Planning  Transition Planning
Recreation and Leisure     Participate in recreation-leisure activities of choice.     Make plans and access community resources.  Personal Life	Transition Grade Band Unit Topics  My Community (Unit 2) Leisure Time (Unit 8)	Transition Passport Transition Planning  Transition Planning
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# **Unique Learning System Instructional Targets**

#### **Employability** Job Awareness Grooming and Hygiene Community Resources Demonstrate a desire to be employed and recognize Recognize and apply appropriate grooming habits and practices on a regular basis Explore community resources for personal, vocational and Nutrition and Food Preparation realistic job options. daily living supports. · Recognize basic foods and/or meals that make up a balanced diet. Demonstrate skills needed for a job interview Explore opportunities for civic participation. · Recognize and participate in job training opportunities . Analyze information from a food package, recipe or menu including nutrition facts, Recreation and Leisure Participate in recreation-leisure activities of choice. in the community dates and other common labels Work Skills Food Preparation and Handling Make plans and access community resources. · Demonstrate basic employability skills, including Safely prepare basic foods using appropriate kitchen tools Home Maintenance and Safety work, social and hygiene habits Demonstrate knowledge of routine home maintenance and safety. Follow directions to complete a job task · Complete a daily schedule of assigned tasks Household Appliances and Tools Responsibly use common household appliances (stove, washer/drver, microwave, etc.) and/or tools Home Cleaning and Organization Maintain basic home cleaning routines and organization. **Housing Options** · Demonstrate knowledge of housing options for adulthood Time Management Apply and manage use of time in the context of real-world situations Use a calendar to manage time and dates in the context of real-world situations. Apply and manage use of money in the context of real-world situations. Personal Fitness Recognize the benefits of and apply appropriate fitness habits and practices Personal Wellness and Safety . Identify and apply ways to enhance personal wellness (e.g., Sun safety, mental health, sleep habits, etc.) and avoid or reduce risks (e.g., substance abuse, strange danger, community navigation, etc.). Healthcare and Medical Needs Recognize basic and/or emergency medical needs (e.g., cold symptoms, routine checkups, serious injury, first aid, prescription maintenance, etc.) and identify appropriate ways to address those needs. Lifelong Learning Personal Life Reading Communication · Effectively ask and respond to questions within community, daily living and vocational activities. . Build word recognition within daily living and vocational materials. Participate in conversations related to current events in the community and beyond. Understand and apply vocabulary related to community, daily living and vocational situations Locate and use information from various sources to achieve a purpose Demonstrate expressive skills to participate effectively in a social exchange . Appreciate the value of print materials, such as newspapers and magazines for informational and Demonstrate appropriate use of interpersonal communication skills in work, community and daily living pleasure reading Writing Self-Advocacy · Produce purposeful writing documents that follow conventional style, grammar, punctuation and Demonstrate effective self-advocacy skills to maximize independence in home, community and spelling. Complete written forms related to life and job skills. Math Identify rights and responsibilities of citizens, including opportunities for civic participation Problem Solving . Use numbers in real-life situations, including basic computations, money and time

#### Vizzle by RethinkEd

Apply problem-solving skills to issues related to daily living situations
 Create a solution to a problem based on a problem-solving process.

Vizzle by RethinkEd stands as a specialized software solution crafted for K-12 schools and districts, with a primary focus on nurturing academic success. The platform encompasses a robust academic curriculum that spans across various subjects, including ELA, Science, SS, and Math. Additionally, it features a dedicated Skills Suite curriculum, specifically designed to cultivate essential daily living skills, fostering student independence from the foundational years of kindergarten through to graduation.

The Skills Suite tool within Vizzle offers a meticulously structured, tiered, and standards-aligned curriculum infused with Universal Design for Learning (UDL). This interactive suite caters to all K-12 students, presenting grade-banded courses in Life Skills, Social Skills, and Transition/Vocational Skills. These courses serve as holistic resources, providing support for planning, assessing, instructing, and generalizing new skills through engaging lessons and hands-on experiences. The curriculum adeptly addresses life skills and social skills for K-12 students, with a specialized focus on transition skills tailored for 6th-12th grade students.

Structured with sequential topics, the curriculum boasts a comprehensive organization, featuring scope and sequence unit guides and lessons. The three-tier support system – Level 1 (highest), Level 2 (guided

support), and Level 3 (most support) – ensures flexibility and adaptability. Levels 2 and 3 introduce effective methods such as errorless teaching and multi-play, enhancing repetition for improved learning outcomes.

The user-friendly interface of Vizzle empowers educators with tools to customize and adapt lessons, catering to individual students or entire rosters. Teachers have the added option to create original content, providing flexibility in tailoring the curriculum to specific needs. The platform facilitates efficient management of student settings, including seasonal filters, reinforcers, prompting, and choice options.

The diverse array of lessons covers many skills, ranging from instructional texts and vocabulary sorting to categorization, games, practice activities, sequencing, communication practice, and written/drawn responses. The curriculum encourages interdisciplinary integration, facilitating seamless incorporation into various areas of the academic curriculum.

With a commitment to data-driven decision-making, Vizzle employs tiered instruction and support. This approach incorporates an efficient structure for delivering tiered intervention, scaffolding, and practice implementation. Educators can establish specific goals, defining parameters such as date range and mastery criteria, ensuring a targeted and measurable approach.

The platform integrates unique positive reinforcers at the conclusion of each lesson, with customization options varying by grade level. Accessibility features such as screen reading and selection options (drag and drop, mouse click) are embedded, ensuring an inclusive learning environment.

Vizzle extends its impact beyond the classroom, actively promoting a team approach involving parents. The platform offers on-demand resources for in-home skills practice, fostering continued learning into the home and community. Extension and exposure activities provide opportunities for hands-on practice and real-world experiences, further enhancing offline learning.

Suitable for both classroom and remote learning, Vizzle is compatible with any computer or digital device. It allows for the downloading and/or printing of content, enhancing flexibility in implementation. The adaptability of Vizzle enables its effective use in various settings, including group or one-on-one scenarios, programming such as extended school year (ESY), and provision of homework materials. With its holistic approach and versatility, Vizzle emerges as a comprehensive solution for promoting academic success in diverse educational settings.

# Vizzle by ReThink Ed-Skills Suite Curriculum

# TRANSITION/ VOCATIONAL SKILLS

(Grades 6-12)

Focusing on career readiness as students plan for the transition to work, trade school, and post-secondary options.

Areas of emphasis will include:

Career Attire
Career Development
Careers in the Community
Empathy Skills
Employability Skills
Employment Skills
Interpersonal Skills
Job Demands
Job Performance
Job Seeking Skills
Self-Advocacy
Self-Determination
Personal Management
Workplace Awareness

#### **SOCIAL SKILLS**

(Grades K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12)

Building skills from early elementary through high school to advance student learning and development.

Units will include:

Decision Making Relationship Skills Self-Awareness Self-Management Social-Awareness

#### LIFE SKILLS

(Grades K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12)

Recognizing the importance of life skills, age-appropriateness, and the building of skills as a lifelong journey to independence.

Units will include:

Community Access Health Management Independent Living Money Management Personal Care Safety Practices Tools for Independence

# Vizzle by ReThink Ed-Skills Suite Curriculum Scope and Sequence

Life Skills		Social Skills			Transition/Vocational Skills			
Course	Unit	Topic	Course	Unit	Topic	Course	Unit	Topic
						Transition/Vocational		
ife Skills (9-12) 1. Personal Care	1. Eating Out	Social Skills (9-12)	1. Self-Awareness	Remembering How I Felt	Skills (Ages 14-22)	1. Self-Determination	Service Agencies	
	2. Dress Etiquette			2. Feeling Accepted			2. Accessing Services	
		3. Cleanliness			3. Using My Strengths			1. Plan Development
		4. Restroom Manners			4. Different Viewpoints			Taking Responsibility
		5. Self-Perception			5. Achieving My Goals			IEP Meetings
	2. Independent Living	Oversharing Information			6. What Makes You Different?			Post-Secondary Goals
		2. Food Palate			7. Determination			Applying for Jobs
		3. Everyday Chores		2. Self-Management	1. Mental Well-Being			2. Resume
		4. Mindfulness			2. Managing My Impulses			3. Interviews
		5. Planning			3. Reducing Stress	-		1. Paystubs 2. Ethics
		6. Self-Management			4. Staying on Track			Work Wardrobe
	3. Health Management	1. Quality Family Time			5.My Commitments	-		2. Body Care
		2. Community Outreach			6. Reasoning with Others			Technology Supports
		3. Staying Active			7. Setting My Goals			2. Employability Skills
		4. Mental Health			8. My Routine			Safety Issues
		5. Traveling			9. Taking the Lead			2. Injury Prevention
		Use of School Technology     Use of Community Technology			Showing Empathy     Being Thankful			
		3. Use of Community Technology						3. Temperature/Weather Conditions
		4. Use of Career Technology			4. Showing Respect			4. Alertness
		5. Use of Online Technology		+	5. Accepting Differences	-	10. Interpersonal Skills	1. Conversations
	5. Money Management	1. Function of Money			6. Accepting Others	_		2. Resolving Conflicts
		2. Essential Needs		4. Relationship Skills	Reading Body Language		11, Empathy Skills	1. Attitude
		3. Wish Lists		4. Relationship Skills	Community Awareness	_		2. Greetings/Condolences
		4. Obtaining Items						3. Concern/Sympathy
		5. Money Investments			3. Building Relationships	_		4. Special Occasions
	6. Safety Practices	Understanding Signs & Symbols			4. Working Together	_		5. Gestures
		2. Identifying A Crisis			5. Coming to an Agreement	_	42 Feeds was College	Leadership/Chain of Command
		3. Online Interactions			6. Asking for Help		12. Employment Settings	
		4. Participating with Animals			7. Being a Good Role Model			2. Departments
		5. Recreation Choices			8. Self-Advocacy			3. Teamwork
		5. Recreation Choices		5.Decision-Making	Self-Advocacy      Keeping an Open Mind			3. Teamwork
	7. Community Access	1, Traveling			2. Solving Difficult Problems		13. Workplaces in the	
		Traveling     Civic Centers			3. Examining Situations		Community	1. Environments
		2. Civic Centers 3. Convenience Stores			4. Leading by Good Example			2. Products/Services
		Convenience Stores     Taverns & Coffeehouses			Setting Community Goals		14. Employability Skills	Volunteer Experiences
		5. Financial Institutions		+		_		2. Co-Op Programs
		3. FINANCIAI INSULULIONS			6. Needs at Home			3. Part-time Employment

#### **TeachTown**

TeachTown's special education curriculum software is meticulously designed to cater to students with moderate to severe disabilities, embracing individuals with autism spectrum disorder, intellectual disabilities, and developmental disabilities. The software ensures equitable access to the general education curriculum and provides individualized interventions rooted in Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA). With a focus on continuity and intensity of instruction, the software targets academic, behavioral, and adaptive skill improvement from Pre-K through the transition years, accommodating various learning settings, including in-person, hybrid, or remote-based learning.

TeachTown presents a comprehensive suite of offerings, with the core academic curriculum, enCORE, covering ELA, Math, Science, and Social Studies. It integrates 18 transition skill lessons into the curriculum. Additionally, TeachTown provides a stand-alone social skills curriculum named TeachTown Social Skills, specifically tailored for students aged 4-15 with moderate to severe disabilities. This curriculum uses animated Video-modeling Episodes, Teacher-delivered Lesson Plans, and Student Activities.

The Transition to Adulthood (T2A) curriculum from TeachTown is strategically tailored for secondary to post-secondary settings, addressing independence, employability, and community access for individuals with autism spectrum disorders and intellectual/developmental disabilities. The program offers tech-based lessons via web or app, facilitating computer-delivered or teacher-delivered instruction, complete with visual support. It accommodates one-on-one, small, or large group settings, covering 100 skills across personal life, home, leisure, vocational, and community domains.

Notable features of the T2A program include task analysis, video modeling, data collection, prompting/fading, and generalization skills. It offers tiered levels of instruction based on the students' ELA/Math instructional level, making it ideal for students benefiting from scaffolded, systematic, and explicit instruction. The program breaks tasks into smaller pieces, providing multiple practice opportunities with techniques like prompting, faded prompting, positive reinforcement, and skill generalization. Visual support, including task analysis, troubleshooting, and task sequencing photo cards, aid students in problem-solving during tasks. Teachers have the flexibility to manage positive reinforcers, adjusting their frequency and duration.

Transition to Adulthood employs videos systematically breaking down skills, filmed and narrated from a first-person perspective. This approach simplifies language to match teaching materials, displaying an individual performing the skill in a real-world setting. Aligned with data collection tools, these videos help learners generalize skills and engage in real-life scenarios.

Generalization lessons within the program encompass plans, visuals, and data collection tools for real-world skill practice in various environments. Observational data collection during these activities can be done using paper datasheets or online data collection within the Transitions to Adulthood system, providing flexibility for staff.

Teachers can align TeachTown's offerings with Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals by assigning individualized skills or lessons tailored to each student's objectives. Instructional sequences empower the allocation of all computer-based lesson types accessible for a skill, while facilitator-selected lessons empower teachers to assign individual computer-based lessons without categorizing them under a specific goal or topic.

TeachTown provides two primary ways to purchase transition curricula: as part of a comprehensive package centered around enCORE or as a standalone resource. The T2A student license costs \$119 annually, while the comprehensive package, including enCORE K12, Basics, Social Skills, Transition to Adulthood, and the ABA Pro resource, is priced at \$375 per student license annually, with a minimum purchase requirement of 10 students for both options.

# **Teachtown Transition to Adulthood- Skills**

	Home	e Skills	
Cleaning a Surface	Making Pasta	Making a Turkey Sandwich	Operating a Dryer
Cutting an Apple for a Snack	Making a Bowl of Cereal	Running a Vacuum	Operating a Washing Machine
Folding and Putting Away Clothes	Loading and Running the Dishwasher	Making a Peanut Butter and Jelly Sandwich	Unloading the Dishwasher
Sorting Laundry	Sorting Silverware	Using the Microwave	Using the Toaster
Making a Smoothie	Making a Salad	Microwaving a Frozen Meal	Packing a Lunch
Washing Dishes by Hand	Cleaning a Toilet	Cleaning a Sink	Cleaning a Bathtub or Shower
Cleaning Windows	Making One Pot Macaroni and Cheese	Making Scrambled Eggs	Making Vegetable Soup in a Crockpot
Baking a Frozen Pizza	Making a Grocery List from a Recipe	Using a Plunger	Changing Batteries

Vocational Skills					
Bagging Groceries	Data Entry (computer skills)	Folding and Stacking Towels	Setting a Table		
Using a Hammer	Filing	Making Copies	Stocking Merchandise		
Bussing Tables	Using a Screwdriver	Rolling Silverware	Taking Orders		
Changing Sheets	Sending an Email	Shredding Paper	Stuffing Envelopes		
Taking Out the Trash	Sweeping the Floor	Mopping the Floor	Dusting Furniture		
Hanging Clothing by Size on Hangers and Racks (retail)	Collating and Stapling Papers	Pet Care – Bathing a Dog	Bringing in Shopping Carts		
Applying for a Job	Washing a Car				

Community Skills					
Ordering Food from a Menu	Paying at a Restaurant	Riding Safely in a Car			
Finding Clothes to Try On	Clothes to Try On Trying on Clothes in a				
(by size)	Dressing Room				
Making a Purchase from a	Crossing the Street	Using a Grocery List			
Vending Machine	! ! !	1 1 1 1			
Making a Purchase with a	Purchasing Groceries	Using an ATM			
Debit Card	! ! !	! ! !			
Scheduling a Ride (rideshare)	Riding a Public Bus	Ordering Fast Food at a			
	! ! !	Counter			
Eating at a Restaurant					

Personal Life Skills					
Applying Sunscreen	Tending to a Minor Cut	Handwashing	Using a Weather Report to Plan an Outfit		
Brushing Teeth	Putting on Deodorant	Maintaining a Clean Appearance			
Combing or Brushing Hair	Setting an Alarm Clock	Hygiene When Coughing or Sneezing	Getting Dressed for an Interview		
Shaving (Face)	Nail Care				

Leisure Skills				
Buying Movie Tickets	How to Play Soccer	Operating the TV		
How to Play Basketball	Operating a Music Player	Walking on a Walking Trail/Path		
Playing a Board Game	Playing a Card Game	Charging a Device		
Planting Seeds	Watering Plants	Changing Activities with a Timer		
Adding an Event to a Social Calendar				

# **Teachtown Scope and Sequence**

Transition to Adulthood

▼ Vocational Skills

▼ Grocery Store Jobs

Stocking Merchandise

Bringing in Shopping Carts

Bagging Groceries

▼ Restaurant Jobs

**Bussing Tables** 

Taking Orders Rolling Silverware

Setting a Table

▼ Office Jobs

Making Copies

Filina

Collating and Stapling Papers

Stuffing Envelopes

Shredding Paper

Sending an Email

Data Entry

▼ Cleaning/Housekeeping

Changing Sheets

Folding and Stocking Towels

▼ Retail Jobs

Hanging Clothes by Size

▼ Custodial Jobs

Mopping Floors

Taking Out the Trash

Sweeping the Floor

Animal Care

Pet Care - Bathing a Dog

▼ Construction/Maintenance

Using a Hammer

Using a Screwdriver

Automotive

Washing a Car

▼ Employment

Applying for a Job

▼ Home Skills

Laundry

Sorting Laundry

Operating a Dryer

Operating a Washing Machine

Folding and Putting Away Clothes

▼ Cleaning/Housekeeping

Cleaning a Surface

Running a Vacuum

**Dusting Furniture** 

Cleaning a Toilet

Washing Dishes

Cleaning a Sink

Cleaning Windows Cleaning a Bathtub

▼ Food Preparation

Cutting an Apple

Using a Toaster

Making a Bowl of Cereal

Making a Turkey Sandwich

Using the Microwave

Making a Peanut Butter and Jelly Sandwich

Making Pasta

Microwaving a Frozen Meal

Making a Smoothie

Making a Salad

Packing a Lunch

Baking a Frozen Pizza

▼ Grocery Store

Purchasing Groceries

Using a Grocery List

▼ Personal Safety

Riding in a Car

▼ Shopping

Trying on Clothes in a Dressing Room

Finding Clothes to Try On

Purchasing Clothing

▼ Transportation

Riding a Public Bus

Scheduling a Ride (rideshare)

▼ Leisure Skills

▼ Personal Leisure

Operating the TV

Operating a Music Player

Charging a Device

Changing Activities with a Timer

▼ Community Activities

Buying Movie Tickets

Adding an Event to a Social Calendar

Sports and Activities

How to Play Basketball

How to Play Soccer

Walking on a Walking Trail/Path

Playing a Card Game

Playing a Board Game

▼ Outdoor Activities

Watering Plants

Planting Seeds

▼ Health and Safety

Applying Sunscreen

Tending to a Minor Cut

Using a Weather Report to Plan an outfit

Hygiene When Coughing or Sneezing

▼ Daily Routine

Setting an Alarm Clock

▼ Dressing

Getting Dressed for an Interview

▼ Community Skills

**▼** Safety

Crossing the Street

▼ Handling Money

Making a Purchase from a Vending Machine

Using an ATM

Making a Purchase with a Debit Card

▼ Restaurant

Paving at a Restaurant

Ordering Food from a Menu

Ordering Fast Food at a Counter Eating at a Restaurant

# **Teachtown Learning Objectives**

Shredding Paper Stuffing Envelopes ▼ Restaurant Jobs ▼ TeachTown Learning Objectives **Bussing Tables** ▼ Adaptive Skills Rolling Silverware ▼ Community Skills Setting a Table ▼ Navigating the Community Taking Orders Riding a Public Bus ▼ Home Skills Scheduling a Ride (rideshare) Cleaning and Housekeeping ▼ Personal Safety Changing Sheets Riding in a Car Cleaning a Bathtub ▼ Restaurant Skills Cleaning a Sink Eating at a Restaurant Cleaning a Surface Ordering Fast Food at a Counter Cleaning a Toilet Ordering Food Cleaning Windows Ordering Food from a Menu Dusting Furniture Paying at a Restaurant Folding and Stocking Towels **▼** Shopping Making a Bed Community Objects - Vending Machine Finding Clothes to Try On

> Purchasing Groceries Trying on Clothes in a Dressing Room Using a Grocery List Wrapping a Present

Making a Grocery List from a Recipe

Using a Debit Card Using an ATM

Purchasing Clothing

▼ Daily Living

▼ Clothing

Clothing by Color Hanging Clothes by Size

Identifying Various Articles of Clothing

▼ Foods and Food Words

Identifying Various Foods

▼ Using Technology

Changing Activities with a Timer

Charging a Device

Operating a Music Player Operating the TV

Setting an Alarm Clock

Using an ATM

Making Copies Sending an Email

Running a Vacuum ▼ Food Preparation

Baking a Cake

Baking a Frozen Pizza

Cutting an Apple Kitchen Tools Concepts Making a Bowl of Cereal

Making a Peanut Butter and Jelly Sandwich Making a Salad

Making a Smoothie

Making a Turkey Sandwich

Making One-Pot Macaroni and Cheese Making Pasta

Making Scrambled Eggs Making Vegetable Soup in a Crockpot

Packing a Lunch

Peeling a Banana Measure Cups, Pints, Quarts, Gallons

Using a Microwave Using a Toaster

Microwaving a Frozen Meal ▼ Home Mainten me Maintenance Changing Batteries

Using a Plunger

Folding and Putting Away Clothes Operating a Dryer

Handwashing

Maintaining a Clean Appearance

Nail Care Putting on Deodorant Shaving (Face)

▼ Play and Leisure

**▼** Gardening

Planting Seeds Watering Plants

▼ Social Activities

Adding events to a calendar.

Buying Movie Tickets Playing a Board Game Playing a Card Game

▼ Sports and Outdoor Activities

How to Play Basketball How to Play Soccer Playing Sports Identify a Variety of Sports

Walking on a Walking Trail/Path

▼ Feature, Function, and Class

▼ Classes of Objects

Instruments Material Nature Plants and Plant Features

Rooms School Supplies

Shapes

Third Person Singular Pronouns Tools

Toys Transportation Transportation Features

Identify a Variety of Foods

▼ Temporal Order

Sequencing **▼** Verbs

Classroom

Music

Garden Household Playing Self Care Sensations Sports Transportation

#### **▼** Employability ▼ Animal Care Jobs Pet Care - Bathing a Dog Washing a Dog

▼ Automotive Jobs

Washing a Car ▼ Construction or Maintenance Jobs

Using a Hammer Using a Screwdriver

▼ Custodial or Housekeeping Jobs Mopping a Floor

Sweeping the Floor Taking Out the Trash ▼ Finding Employment

Applying for a Job Getting Dressed for an Interview ▼ Grocery Store Jobs

Bagging Groceries Bringing in Shopping Carts Stocking Merchandise

▼ Office Jobs Collating and Stapling Papers Data Entry Filina

Operating a Washing Machine

Sorting Laundry ▼ Washing Dishes

Loading and Running the Dishwasher Sorting Silverware Unloading the Dishwashe Washing Dishes

▼ Personal Care ▼ Getting Ready

Using a Weather Report to Plan an outfit

Applying Sunscreen Crossing the Street

Hygiene When Coughing or Sneezing Nutrition (Reading Labels) Nutrition (Oral Hygiene)

Riding in a Car Tending to a Minor Cut Healthy habits.

Responding to Coronavirus ▼ Personal Hygiene Applying Deodorant Brushing Teeth Combing or Brush Hair

# Teachtown Encore Transition Skills in ELA, Science, Social Studies

#### TRANSITION SKILLS

#### Transition Skills - 3 Weeks

#### Lesson Plans and Their Associated Printable Materials

Applying for a Job Lesson Plan
Charging a Device Lesson Plan
Cleaning a Surface Lesson Plan
Folding and Putting Away Clothes Lesson Plan
Getting Dressed for an Interview Lesson Plan
Maintaining a Clean Appearance Lesson Plan
Making a Grocery List from a Recipe Lesson Plan
Making a Purchase with a Debit Card Lesson Plan
Microwaving a Frozen Meal Lesson Plan

Ordering Fast Food at a Counter Lesson Plan
Ordering Food from a Menu Lesson Plan
Packing a Lunch Lesson Plan
Paying at a Restaurant Lesson Plan
Putting On Deodorant Lesson Plan
Sorting Silverware Lesson Plan
Stocking Merchandise Lesson Plan
Using a Weather Report to Plan an Outfit Lesson Plan

Ordering Fast Food at a Counter - Object Location Ordering Fast Food at Counter Sequencing

Ordering Food from a Menu Object Location

Ordering Food from a Menu Sequencing

Out of Place Cans and Boxes

Using an ATM Lesson Plan

#### Computer-Based Lessons

#### Α

Applying for a Job - Sorting Applying for a Job Object Location Applying for Job Sequencing

#### C

Charging a Device Object Location Charging a Device Sequencing Cleaning a Surface Object Location Cleaning a Surface Sequencing

#### E

Folding and Putting Away Clothes OL Folding and Putting Away Clothes Sequencing Folding and Putting Away Clothes Sorting

#### G

Getting Dressed for an Interview Object Location Getting Dressed for Interview Sequencing Getting Dressed for Interview Sorting

#### М

Maintaining a Clean Appearance Object Location
Maintaining a Clean Appearance Sequencing
Making a Grocery List from a Recipe Object Location
Making A Grocery List from a Recipe Sequencing

Making a Purchase with a Debit Card Object Location
Making a Purchase with a Debit Card Sequencing
Microwaving a Frozen Meal Object Location
Microwaving a Frozen Meal Sequencing
Multiple Meaning Words (Letter, Trunk, Bat) (Review)

Packing a Lunch Object Location
Packing a Lunch Sequencing
Packing a Lunch Sorting
Paying at a Restaurant Object Location
Paying at a Restaurant Sequencing
Putting on Deodorant Object Location
Putting on Deodorant Sequencing

#### R

Removing Damaged Goods

#### S

Sorting Silverware Object Location Sorting Silverware Sequencing Sorting Silverware Sorting Stocking Merchandise Addition Problems Stocking Merchandise Mixed Problem Solving Stocking Merchandise Subtraction Problems Stocking Merchandise Word Match

#### U

Using a Weather Report to Plan Outfit Object Location
Using a Weather Report to Plan Outfit Sequencing
Using an ATM Object Location
Using an ATM Sequencing

# **Learning Management System (LMS) Features**

	TeachTown	Unique Learning System	Vizzle
API			~
Academic/ Education	✓		$\overline{\mathbf{v}}$
Access Controls/Permissions			~
Activity Dashboard	✓	✓	~
Alerts/Notifications			~
Assessment Management	✓	✓	~
Asynchronous Learning	~		~
Attendance Tracking		✓	
Blended Learning	✓		$\overline{\mathbf{v}}$
Calendar Management	ī	ñ	$\overline{\mathbf{v}}$
Class Scheduling	ñ	<u> </u>	$\overline{\mathbf{v}}$
Classroom Management	ñ	<u> </u>	~
Collaboration Tools	ä		$\overline{\mathbf{v}}$
Communication Management	- i	~	~
Compliance Tracking	✓		~
Contact Management		ñ	~
Content Library	✓	- I	~
Course Authoring		Ä	Ž
Course Management	~	Ä	Ž
Course Management Course Tracking	Ž	H	V
Curriculum Management			V
Customizable Branding			
	✓	H	- 1
Customizable Reports			~
Document Management	~		~
eLearning Companies			
Email Management			
Enrollments/Onboarding	<u> </u>		
Financial Management		~	~
Gamification	∠		~
Gradebook		<u> </u>	
Independent/Private			
K-12			~
Learning Management	$\overline{\mathbf{z}}$		$\leq$
Learning Paths/ Tracks			~
Library Management			~
Mobile Learning			~
Online Payments			~
Parent Portal			⊢⊢
Payroll Management			
Progress Reports		<u>~</u>	~
Progress Tracking			~
Records Management		✓	
Reporting & Statistics		✓	$\leq$
Search/Filter		<u>~</u>	$\leq$
Self-Learning	✓		$\overline{\mathbf{v}}$
Single Sign On	✓		~
Skills Assessment			~
Social Learning			$\overline{\mathbf{v}}$
Student Information/Records		~	$\checkmark$
Student Portal		✓	~
Synchronous Learning	✓		✓.
Tests/ Assessments	✓		✓
Third Party Integrations			✓
User Management	$\overline{\checkmark}$		$\checkmark$