

Addressing Critical Issues for Teachers of Students with Developmental Disabilities and Autism

Developmental Disabilities Division Showcase Session

Robert A. Stodden, Ph.D.
Director & Professor
Center on Disability Studies,
University of Hawaii at Manoa



Areas of Panel Discussion:

A. Setting the Tone

B. Addressing Self-Determination

C. Life is One Transition

C. Alternate Assessments

D. Aligning Instruction with State Standards

Signs of Positive Growth & Progress

- Increased numbers of youth with disabilities graduating high school with a diploma
- Decreased numbers of youth with disabilities dropping out of high school
- Numbers of college freshmen with a disability have tripled over the past twenty years
- Increased numbers of students with disabilities persist in attaining a degree or credential

Signs of Positive Growth & Progress

- Increasing numbers of postsecondary education settings enroll students with disabilities
- Majority of postsecondary education institutions offer a minimum level of disability supports
- Higher employment rates are correlated with younger ages for persons with disabilities
- A postsecondary education degree serves as an equalizer for persons with disabilities in quality employment settings

Areas of Needed Outcome Improvement

- Youth with disabilities are less likely to complete a rigorous secondary school curriculum
- Youth with disabilities are less likely to graduate with a diploma
- Youth with disabilities are less likely to initiate postsecondary education
- Youth with disabilities are less likely to complete postsecondary education/will take longer

Areas of Needed Outcome Improvement

- Youth with disabilities are less likely to be employed
- Youth with disabilities are less likely to earn as much as peers without a disability
- Youth with disability are less likely to maintain a comparable quality of life to their peers

What Do We Know About Post-school Environments?

- Type and range of educational support offered varies significantly from one setting to the next
- Supports provided are not linked to learning or work
- Students are responsible for describing their disability needs and advocating for necessary supports
- Supports are not provided in an individualized way

What Do We Know About Post-school Environments?

- Support provision is linked to access rather than learning or work success
- Faculty and employer expectations and awareness of disability are low
- Little assistance with coordination of related supports and services required to function in adult roles.
- Technology can be an equalizer in post-school education & employment environments.

Implications for Teachers in Lower Education

- Focus upon preparing youth with the skills & behaviors needed to access, retain, & succeed in post-school settings
 - **Self-determination & advocacy skills**
 - **Academic process & content skills**
 - **Use of accommodations & supports**
 - **Management & coordination of disability and related supports & services**

Implications for Teachers in Lower Education

- Focus upon building a transition pathway of connecting supports & services
 1. Seamless pathway
 2. Connecting linkages (school, family, post-school environments)
 3. Supportive network of persons & agencies
 4. Solution focused, interagency coordination