Lesson 7: Digital Transition Portfolios & Preparation for Post-Secondary Studies and/or Employment

Guidelines for Lesson Administration

These lessons can be administered to individuals or small groups of students. If working with groups of students, it is highly recommended that participating students and their parents/guardians provide consent for participation and that there is a detailed description of the lesson contents and what information will be shared amongst participants. If working with groups of students, careful consideration will be needed to protect privacy and respect individual confidentiality as much as possible. It is the lesson administrator's responsibility to ensure that the lesson plan delivery conforms to school district policies and provincial/state/federal laws.

Qualifications for Lesson Administration

It is recommended that these lessons be administered by an educator who has some training in special education policies, practices, and assessment.

Preparation Required Prior to Lesson Administration

Students who participate in this lesson should be aware that they have a learning disability and have a very basic understanding of how their learning disability impacts their learning. It is recommended that an educator reviews the student's IEP and psychoeducational assessment in an individual meeting prior to commencing lesson number one.

OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

Black (2010) argues that the development of a digital portfolio can assist with the development of self-advocacy skills in high school students with learning disabilities and can be used to support students in their transition from secondary school to post-secondary studies and employment. Black (2010) further argues that the portfolio can be a tool to assist young adults in explaining their learning disabilities and the supports that they require to future educators and employers. A number of the portfolio ideas offered by Black (2010) will be adapted to meet the needs of high school students in British Columbia and the technological landscape of 2018.
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OBJECTIVES

1. Students will develop a digital portfolio of key documents to assist with their transition from secondary studies to post-secondary studies and/or employment.

2. Students will develop an understanding of how to use the digital portfolio to access services and/or accommodations at the post-secondary level or in future employment.

MATERIALS NEEDED

1. *Handout #1: Common Services Offered by Post-Secondary Institutions in BC*
2. *Handout #2: Digital Transition Portfolio Checklist*
3. *Handout #3: Timeline for Developing the Digital Transition Portfolio and Application to Post Secondary Institutions and Employment Services*
4. Access to digital copies of IEPs, IEP summaries with a list of accommodations, and past psychoeducational assessments
5. Access to technology with internet access
6. Online accessibility features as needed (Ex. Text to Speech Software)
7. Memory stick or other storage device

LESSON (60-minute lesson and ongoing Check-in's)

Incorporating Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Learning: When beginning the lesson with a small group, you may wish to acknowledge that you are learning on the traditional territory of the local First Nation through a circle process. The process can also be used to support connection and belonging.

1) Review Prater, Smith Redman, Anderson & Gibb's (2014) definition of Self-Advocacy:

   Self-Advocacy: To speak up and ask for what you need

2) Explain that the goal of today's lesson is to begin thinking about the kinds of self-advocacy skills high school students will need after they graduate. High school students may need to self-advocate in post-secondary studies or their future employment. Review the following three scenarios.

   a) Students with learning disabilities who plan on attending post-secondary studies have a right to accommodations and supports, just like they had in high school. However, it is the student's responsibility to advocate for these supports by disclosing their disability and applying for accommodations. The onus is on the student to advocate by making an appointment with a Disability Resource Center or Accessibility Services Department to determine what accommodations can be set up. These institutions will not have access to IEPs or assessments. Students must bring in their documentation for review and advocate for the accommodations that work best. To give

students a sense of the kinds of services offered at post secondary institutions in BC, provide a copy of Handout #1. Emphasize the importance of disclosure if students want to access services.

b) Students with learning disabilities who plan on working after high school may be working with employers who may not fully understand what a learning disability is or how it impacts an employee. While an employee can choose to keep their learning disability confidential and private, there are many instances where young workers need to advocate for supports on the work site and may want to disclose their disability. Some jobs may have testing, reading, or writing requirements and employees with disabilities have rights to advocate for the supports they need.

c) Some students with learning disabilities may struggle with attaining employment after high school. These young adults may need to advocate for resources to get a job. A good resource is the Back in Motion program at Work BC. Work BC offers customized work placement and skills development programs for individuals who disclose that they have a disability. Some of these programs can even support students with getting a job 6 months prior to high school graduation.

3) Introduce the definition of a digital transition portfolio and the learning intentions for this lesson:

> ***Digital Transition Portfolio:*** *a digital collection of documents which explain your learning disability and the kinds of supports you have accessed in the past. The development of this portfolio can assist greatly when it comes time to apply for services at a post-secondary level and may also come in handy if needing further supports in a future job.*

> **Learning Intention 1:** Students will further develop self-advocacy skills by developing a digital portfolio.

> **Learning Intention 2:** Students will develop an understanding of how to use a digital portfolio to advocate for accommodations and services at a post-secondary institution and in employment.

> **Learning Intention 3:** Students will reflect on privacy and confidentiality and to what extent they are willing to disclose and share their learning disability with others as an adult.

4) **Activity #1: Developing a Digital Transition Portfolio:**

    a) Provide a paper or electronic copy of Handout#2: *Digital Transition Portfolio Checklist*. Review the DTP and kinds of documents and information that could be included. Ensure that students know that it is their choice to participate in this lesson and develop a DTP. They can opt out. If students have concerns with digital security, they can assemble a paper portfolio.

    b) Have students work through the checklist of steps for completion. First, encourage students to consider their audience and purpose for their DTP and begin to consider the content that they are going to need to assemble. Second, have students reflect on the medium they will use for storage in relation to accessibility and security, and consult with their parents as well. Teachers may wish to provide some of the documents in electronic form, or have students work through a process of locating them.

    c) Teachers can provide specific instruction on ways to organize the information and content depending on the goals of the student. Teachers may need to explicitly teach students how to create, organize, and name digital folders and files. A diagram of folders could be created to assist students depending on their level of need.

    d) Provide students with time to prepare the portfolios. Encourage students to the use the checklist. They might need support with selection, organization, and use of media if creating their DTP for a larger purpose.

    e) You may wish to provide students with a submission deadline so you can review, assess, and provide feedback. Black (2010) suggests presenting the DTP at an upcoming IEP meeting. The checklist or a rubric may be helpful to determine if students have successfully completed the portfolio.

    f) Remind students that they are responsible for managing their DTP and safeguarding their privacy. It is also their choice if they want to disclose their disability to a PSI or employer. However, there are privacy rules which govern their disclosure.

5) **Conclusion**: Review Handout #3 and the timeline for applying for services at a Post Secondary Institution or with Employment Services. Explicitly explain how the DTP can be used when seeking supports.

> 💡 ***Educator's Note****: For students who require significant support with organization, you may wish to seek permission to back up their portfolio on a secure school network as it is being constructed.*

Extension Activity #1: Field Trip

a) Plan a field trip to a Disability Resource Centre or Accessibility Services Department and tour a campus. Students can learn about the resources which are offered and how to access them (Phillips, 1990). NEADS (2018) suggests that "one of the best ways students can get a sense of what to expect when beginning a post-secondary program is to talk with people who have first-hand experience in such programs" (High School Transition section, para 1). Students can benefit from meeting advisors, instructors or administrators at a college or university. There might be current or former students who can speak to the transition from high school to postsecondary school. Find out if there are any student groups or clubs which can provide support.

> ***Incorporating Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Learning:*** *If a field trip is planned, consider making arrangements for any interested and participating Indigenous students to learn about cultural supports which may be available on campus.*

Extension Activity #2: Online Resources for Students Who Are Graduating

a) Introduce students to a number of digital resources that may help them upon graduation.

> i) The National Educational Association of Disabled Students (NEADS) has a mandate is to support access to education and employment for post-secondary students and graduates with disabilities across Canada. Explore the website http://www.neads.ca/ and the resources which are offered.
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> ii) The Adaptech Research Network has "developed a number of resources over the years that may be helpful to members of the community, including an extensive database of free and inexpensive adaptive technology and a set of demonstration videos highlighting the capabilities of some of these tools" (Downloads section, para 1). Explore the website http://www.adaptech.org/en/downloads and the resources offered.
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> iii) Assistive Technology BC (http://www.at-bc.ca/for-students/) "provides assistive technology resources to make learning and working environments

usable for people with disabilities throughout British Columbia" (Our Services section, para 1).

iv) Work BC's Back in Motion can deliver customized employment services to people with disabilities. Explore the website http://backinmotion.com/employment-services/customized-employment and the services that are offered.

ASSESSMENT
1. Successful completion of the *Digital Transition Portfolio.*