Student Led IEPs

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The BIG Question:

Are students with disabilities empowered to be the leaders of their education?
Let's see what researchers in the field have to say.
Defining Terms:

IEP - Individualized Education Program

PPT - Planning and Placement Team

Student-Directed - the student drives their education

Self-Advocacy - knowing rights, responsibilities and speaking up for oneself

Self-Determination - motivation to benefit one’s self
What we know about Self-Determination...

→ Must be **developed** and continually **worked on**. (PBS, 2012)

→ ‘Protecting’ and ‘Helicopter Parenting’ ≠ Self-Determination. (PACER Center Inc., 2018)

→ It has to be **self-willed** and of **self-interest**. PACER Center Inc., 2018)

→ **Actions** have **consequences**, both good and bad. (Wehmeyer, 2014)

→ Promoting self-determination is **best practice** in special education. (Wehmeyer, Abery, Matthau, and Stancliff, 2003)

→ **Determination** to be like peers = **advancement** in education success. (Wehmeyer, 2014)
What we know about Self-Advocacy….

➔ Being instrumental in **advancing** one's rights. (Martin, Huber-Marshall, and Maxson, 2003)

➔ Risk taken = lessons learned. (Transition Tool Kit, 2015)

➔ **Rights** are often **overlooked** or **poorly taught**.

➔ **Self-Advocacy** is a skill that must be **taught**. (Transition Tool Kit, 2015)

➔ Disability Rights are Human Rights. (The Minnesota Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities, 2017)

➔ Knowing your **strengths** and **weakness** is power.

➔ Learning to **disclose** is important. (Transition Tool Kit, 2015)
What we know about Student Led IEPs...

➔ **IDEA** is what mandates **IEPs**. (Barnard-Brak, & Lechtenberger, 2010)

➔ Give access to **FAPE**. (Barnard-Brak, & Lechtenberger, 2010)

➔ **Strengths and Weakness = Hopes and Dreams**. (Transition Tool Kit, 2015)

➔ Participation is linked to a greater feeling of **control**. (Martin, Marshall, and Sale, 2004)

➔ Students have a better **understanding** of their **IEP**. (Stodden & Conway, 2002)

➔ IEP involvement is linked to greater **self-determination**. (Stodden & Conway, 2002)
RESEARCH

Let's see what the data says...
The Demographics of the Study

- Special Education Teacher: 62%
- Transition Coordinator: 4%
- Other: 32%

Gender:
- 22 Male (11%)
- 98 Female (89%)
How often do students in your classroom or on your caseload participate in the following activities?

- Attend their IEP/PPT meeting
- Provided input during their IEP/PPT meeting
- Student-led IEP/PPT meetings (also known as student-directed)
- Self-advocacy curriculum
- Have annual goals and objectives in the area of self-determination

Options:
- Never
- Rarely
- About half the time
- Usually
- Always
How frequently are students with the following primary disability category leading their IEP/PPT meetings?

- Never
- Rarely
- About half the time
- Usually
- Always

- Learning Disability (including Dyslexia)
- Intellectual Disability
How likely are students with the following disabilities to have at least one annual goal and objectives focused on self-determination?

- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Intellectual Disability
- Learning Disability (including Dyslexia)
- OHI/ADHD
- Emotional/Behavior Disorders
- Students who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing
- Students who are Blind or Visually Impaired
How involved are students in your caseload in their IEP/PPT meetings?

Students attend their IEP/PPT meeting, but are not that involved.

Students introduce themselves at their IEP/PPT meeting.

- Never
- Rarely
- About half the time
- Usually
- Always
How involved are students in your caseload in their IEP/PPT meetings?

- Students provide input prior to their IEP/PPT meeting on their strengths and needs.
- Students provide input prior to their IEP/PPT meeting about their goals/objectives.
- Students provide input prior to the meeting on their accommodations.

Legend:
- Never
- Rarely
- About half the time
- Usually
- Always
Implications
So where does this leave us......
So where does this leave us……

→ Students need to control their destiny.

→ IEP/PPT teams need to recognize their disconnect between what they are writing in goals and objective and what is actually being done.

→ Students should be primed so they can be confident in being active participants of the IEP/PPT.

→ We need to teach and encourage SEIf-determination and self-advocacy skills!
Student-led IEP Model

1. Laying the Foundation
   - Solicit support from school administrator
   - Select students
   - Inform parents of program
   - Develop timeline
   - Gather materials

2. Introductory Work With Students
   - Orientation
   - Establish ground rules
   - Introduce key vocabulary

3. Providing Instruction
   - Disabilities
   - Laws
   - Accommodations
   - Transition planning & services
   - Self-determination & self-advocacy
   - The IEP
   - The IEP meeting
   - Other

4. Developing the IEP
   - Invitations
   - Collect information
   - Draft document

5. Conducting the IEP Meeting
   - Reminder notices
   - Set meeting agenda with student
   - Practice with student
   - Conduct actual meeting

6. After the Meeting
   - Congratulate and celebrate the student
   - Implement the IEP
Self-Advocacy: Get Out of the Box!
Here’s what we currently have…
Resources for Self-Advocacy:

→ **Self Advocacy Online** is a website from the University of Minnesota that features lessons, videos, news, and other resources related to self-advocacy.

→ **Uncovering the Mystery of Your Learning Disability** - A website dedicated to the advancement of practical knowledge and understanding about learning disabilities.

→ **Zillow Center for Learning Enrichment** - They have multiple lessons entitled *ME!* that help students build self-awareness and self-advocacy skills.
Resources for Self-Determination:

→ **KU Beach Center on Disability** - Offers guides and assessments for Elementary, Adults, Transition, and LifeSpan on Self-Determination.

→ **Self-Determination and Transition Assessment** - This is a module offered by the Transition Coalition, it is a wonderful resource and highly recommended.

→ **Self-Determination** resource made by PACER.

→ **Self-Determined Learning Model of Instruction** - This was designed by some of the leading researchers in the transition field.
Resources for Student Led IEPs:

- **Zarrow Center for Learning Enrichment** - Website for multiple domains but there is a special section on IEPs.

- **I Am Determined** - This is a wonderful resource for high school students that they can fill out on their own or with assistance to help guide them in understanding their IEP.

- **Student Led IEP Toolkit** - The District of Columbia has put together this site for students, parents, and educators to help support them in creating student led IEPs.
Thanks!

Any questions?

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References:


