Self-Directed IEP

Reference Citation

Martin, J. E., Marshall, L. H., Maxson, L. M., & Jerman, P. L. (1996). *The self-directed IEP*. Retrieved from zarrowcenter.ou.edu

ChoiceMaker Curriculum Objectives

The Self-Directed IEP instructional program enables students to attain the following nine ChoiceMaker Self-Determination Transition Curriculum objectives:

Objective E1. Begin meeting & introduce participants.
Objective E2. Review past goals & performance
Objective E3. Ask questions if don't understand
Objective E4. Ask for feedback
Objective E5. Deal with differences in opinion
Objective E6. Close meeting by summarizing decisions
Objective F1. Express interests
Objective F2. Express skills and limits
Objective F3. Express options and goals

Description

The *Self-Directed IEP* contains 11 sequential lessons that typically take six to ten 45-minute sessions to teach. Lessons may be taught in a resource room, study skills class, or other settings. To teach students who are fully included in general education classes, teachers may choose to meet students during study skills or similar class. Some teachers find that removing the students from school for an IEP Leadership retreat day an effective method to provide students ample opportunities to learn the IEP meeting participating skills.

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                    Self-Directed IEP Steps
          1. Begin meeting by stating the purpose
          2. Introduce everyone
          3. Review past goals and performance
          4. Ask for others' feedback
          5. State your school and transition goals
          6. Ask questions if you don't understand
          7. Deal with differences in opinion
          8. State what support you'll need
          9. Summarize your goals
          10. Close meeting by thanking everyone
          11. Work on IEP goals all year
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The *Self-Directed IEP* teaches students to become active participants in their IEP meetings and to lead their IEP meeting, with coaching being provided as needed by the teacher who taught the lessons. The *Self-Directed IEP* contains four instructional tools.

Self-Directed IEP in Action video (seven minutes) (Martin, Huber Marshall, & Hallahan, 1996). This video shows students with different disabilities using the self-directed IEP lessons in their classes and talking about their experiences. This video is used to introduce the self-directed IEP to students, parents, teachers, and administrators.

Self-Directed IEP video (17 minutes) (Martin, Huber Marshall, Maxson, & Hallahan, 1996). This video shows a student, named Zeke, describing how he led his IEP meeting to a younger, reluctant friend. Through flashbacks, Zeke models each of the 11 steps of the *Self-Directed IEP*.

Teacher's Manual. This manual provides background information, detailed lesson plans, and a teacher answer key to the quizzes and activities. Detailed lessons include a variety of activities to teach each step, including a mnemonic learning strategy, vocabulary-building exercises, role-playing, discussion, and brief reading and writing activities. The lessons are all presented in a model, lead, test approach.

Student Workbook. This consumable workbook provides students an opportunity to apply each step of the *Self-Directed IEP* to their own meeting. Students complete a script, which summarizes all the steps, to take with them to their own IEP meetings.

Research Documenting Need

Over three consecutive years, Martin, Marshall, and Sale (2004) examined the perceptions of 1,638 secondary IEP team members including students from almost 400 teacher-directed IEP meetings. Students and other team members reported significantly lower ratings on students knowing the reasons for their meetings, students knowing what to do, students understanding what was said, and students talking less than all other participants. General education teachers and students felt less comfortable saying what they thought and knew what to do next significantly less than other participants. Special education teachers talked the most, and special educators and parents talked more about student interests than did the students.

To verify the survey findings, Martin, Van Dycke, Greene, et al (2006) observed 109 secondary teacher-directed IEP transition meetings using 10-second momentary time sampling. The results indicated that special education teachers talked 51% of the time, family members 15%, general educators and administrators 9%, support staff 6%, and students 3%. They concluded that "it seems naïve to presume that students attending their transition IEP meetings will learn how to actively participate and lead this process through serendipity – yet this is precisely what current practice tends to expect" (p. 4), but it does not need to be this way.

Imagine This

Imagine the following scene from the opening of Van Dyke, Martin, and Lovett's (2006) article entitled *Why Is This Cake on Fire?*

> Imagine being a small child, and hearing your parents talk about your birthday party. You hear the excitement in their voices as they talk and plan, starting with a theme for the party, deciding who will be invited, and then finally, who will do each job. As time draws closer, you hear more and more conversations about your birthday party, and so you know it is coming soon. And then your birthday comes and goes, but no one ever invites you to come to your party. Maybe they just forgot to invite me, you think.

> ### The Next Year
> The next year, you again hear your parents talking about your birthday party. Once again you hear the excitement in their voices as they talk and plan, choose a new theme for the party, decide who they will invite, and then finally, appoint someone to be in charge of each job. Again, as time draws closer, you hear more and more conversations about your birthday party, and so you know it is coming soon. And again your birthday comes and goes, but no one ever invites you to come to your party. It must not be important for me to be there, you think.

> ### The Following Year
> The following year, you once again hear your parents talking about your birthday party. You barely notice the excited tone in their voices as they decide on another

new theme, make the invitation list, and divide the jobs. As the time draws closer, you barely listen to the increased conversations about your party. Again your birthday comes and goes, but no one ever invites you to come. *Now you think that birthday parties are not important at all.*

Several Years Later

Several years later, when you become a teenager, you barely catch a snippet of a conversation about your birthday party. But since you've never been invited to your parties, you know that it's not important for you to be there. You think that birthday parties are not important at all, so you don't pay any attention to all the birthday plans going on. But this year, you get an invitation to your party!! You are so surprised, confused, and even scared!! You ask your parents why you are getting an invitation to your party this year. They say, "Well, because you are a teenager now, and its time for you to be included in all the things involved with birthday parties. Each year, we start out with a theme for your party, and decide the best ways to represent that theme. Then we make up the invitation list, and decide who will do all the different jobs. Now that you are a teenager, we thought you would like to be involved in all of this!"

But you respond by saying, "Why would I want to get involved now? If these were supposed to be **my** birthday parties, why wasn't **I** invited all along? Why didn't I have a chance to pick out some themes for my parties that I am interested in? Why didn't I get to help decide who to invite to my parties? And, why didn't I get to help choose who would get to do the different jobs?"

"We didn't think you were old enough to help with all of that."

"Now I'm so old that I don't know ***how*** to help with any of it; you've been doing it for me for all these years. Why don't you just keep on doing it without me."

NOW – imagine this scenario again, only this time, insert Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings in place of birthday parties.

Research Documenting Effectiveness

Several studies have documented the effectiveness of the Self-Directed IEP instructional package. The results of randomized control and intervention group study combined with one quasi-experimental study (Sweeney, 1997), four single subject design studies (Allen et al., 2001, Snyder, 2000; Snyder, 2002; Snyder & Shapiro, 1997), and the analysis of IEP documents study (Van Dycke, 2005) clearly demonstrate that the Self-Directed IEP instructional program should be considered an evidenced-based practice that results in more effective student participation in their middle and high school IEP meetings. The National Secondary Transition Technical Center in an analysis of the published studies examining the effectiveness of the Self-Directed IEP determined that the studies demonstrate a moderate level of effectiveness (NSTTAC, 2008).

Sweeney (1997) undertook a pre-post-controlled group study to determine the impact of the *Self-Directed IEP* upon Florida high school students with learning disabilities and mental retardation.

In comparison to students in the control group who did not receive instruction, the students who completed the *Self-Directed IEP*:

- Attended more of their IEP meetings
- Had more parents attend IEP meetings
- Talked more about their interests
- Shared more of their dreams
- Talked more about the job they wanted after leaving school
- Felt like they were the boss of their IEP meeting
- Felt more confident in reaching their IEP goals

Snyder and Shapiro (1997), Snyder (2000), and Snyder (2002) determined that the *Self-Directed IEP* taught adolescent students with emotional and behavior problems the skills needed to direct their own IEP meeting. Allen, Smith, Test, Flowers, and Wood (2001) used a multiple baseline design to determine if the Self-Directed IEP increased participation in IEP meetings by four students with mental retardation. Students learned to lead their meetings by stating the purpose, introducing everyone, reviewing past goals and performance, and closing the meeting. They also expressed their transition interests, skills, and stated their goals.

Martin, Van Dycke, Christensen, et al. (2006) found that the Self-Directed IEP instructional program, in comparison to a teacher-directed IEP meeting control condition, enabled students to start and lead significantly more IEP meetings, which teachers independently verified through evaluations on the ChoiceMaker Assessment. Direct observations of IEP meetings found that students who received Self-Directed IEP instruction significantly increased talking during their IEP meetings, which IEP team members verified through their responses on post IEP meeting surveys. Students who received Self-Directed IEP instruction reported in post IEP meeting surveys significantly higher positive perceptions of their IEP meetings, and higher transition issues ratings, even though our observations indicated that special education teachers dominated transition discussions. Last, Martin, Van Dycke, Christensen, et al. (2006) found the length of the IEP meeting itself did not significantly differ between Self-Directed IEP instruction and teacher-directed control group IEP meetings.

Van Dycke (2005) found that the written IEP documents of students who received Self-Directed IEP instruction in a randomly assigned study contained more comprehensive vision statements and more employment and independent living outcome statements than those of students who had teacher-directed IEP meetings.

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