NTACT THE COLLABORATIVE | National Technical Assistance Center on Transition

Using Project SEARCH to Teach Employment Skills
PRACTICE DESCRIPTION
(Evidence-Based Practice)

What is the evidence base?

This is an evidence-based practice for **students with disabilities** based on two methodologically sound group experimental studies with random assignment across 222 students.

Where is the best place to find out how to do this practice?

- https://projectsearch.us/start-a-project-search/

With whom was it implemented?

- **Students with disabilities (2 studies, *n* = 89)**
  - 63 students with autism
  - 17 students with Pervasive Developmental Disorder – Not Otherwise Specified
  - 8 students with Asperger's
- Ages ranged from 18–22
- Males (*n* = 64), females (*n* = 25)
- Ethnicity
  - African American (*n* = 41)
  - White (*n* = 45)
  - Asian (*n* = 3)

What is the practice?

Project SEARCH has been defined as "a high school program school-to-work transition model, which includes rotating internships for a school-year; experiences combining real-life work; employment and independent living skills training; assistance with vocational placement through active collaboration with employers, school systems; and vocational rehabilitation; and entire school-days spent in the workplace (Wehman et al., 2012)."

Originally designed at Cincinnati Children's Hospital as a 9-month internship model, youth participating in Project SEARCH are embedded into community businesses (e.g., hospitals, government complexes, or banking centers) rotate through three 10–12 week internships logging approximately 720 h learning marketable hands-on skills ad 180 h or classroom time

learning job skills and social skills at the business. Stakeholders (e.g., family members, local education agency members, local community rehabilitation program members, state vocational rehabilitation members, and community business partners) collaboratively support students with developmental disabilities in this endeavor. Wehmeyer et al. (2014) described the possibility of adding ASD supports (i.e., on-site, intensive, systematic instruction using the principles of applied behavior analysis; on-site support and consultation from a behavior/autism specialist; and intensive staff training in ASD and the Project SEARCH Model) to promote student success in employment settings.

Where has it been implemented?

- Community business settings (i.e., hospitals)

How does this practice relate to Common Core Standards?

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.3** – Knowledge of Language: Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

How does this practice relate to the Common Career Technical Core?

- **Plan education and career path aligned to personal goals.** Career-ready individuals take personal ownership of their own educational and career goals, and they regularly act on a plan to attain these goals.
- **Act as a responsible and contributing citizen and employee.** Career-ready individuals understand the obligations and responsibilities of being a member of a community, and they demonstrate this understanding every day through their interactions with others.
- **Apply appropriate academic and technical skills.** Career-ready individuals readily access and use the knowledge and skills acquired through experience and education to be more productive

References used to establish this evidence base:

Wehman, P., Schall, C. M., McDonough, J., Graham, C., Brooke, V., Riehle, J. E., Brooke, A., Ham, W., Lau, S., Allen, J., & Avellone, L. (2017). Effects of an employer-based intervention on employment outcomes for youth with significant support needs due to autism. *Autism*, *21*(3), 276–290. https://doi.org/10.1177/1362361316635826

Wehman, P., Schall, C. M., McDonough, J., Kregel, J., Brooke, V., Molinelli, A., Ham, W., Graham, C. W., Riehle, J. E., Collins, H. T., & Thiss, W. (2014). Competitive employment for youth with autism spectrum disorders: Early results from a randomized clinical trial. *Journal of Autism Developmental Disorders*, *44*(3), 487–500. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-013-1892-x

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