Positive Transition Special Education: A Call to Examine Approaches and Outcomes From an Interdisciplinary and Positive Lens

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Change is hard. The experiences of prolonged, challenging processes are hard. Transitions are hard. Thus, it goes without saying, the prolonged process of postsecondary transition and the requisite changes it demands of youth with disabilities and their families are particularly hard. Youth and their families work hard to navigate the transition planning process during (hopefully) middle and high school in order to prepare for the challenges of post high school life. Ideally, transition special educators, students and families spend time talking about goals for future work and education, plans for independent living, and interagency collaborations to support transitioning youth. There may be employment training or paid work experiences, internship opportunities, or support for college exploration and applications. For those in systems with well-rounded, evidence-based services, they may even encounter transition curricula which address self-determination skills and encourage students to think about things like self-advocacy, decision-making, goal-setting, negotiating skills, and anticipation of consequences (e.g., Field & Hoffman, 2007).

However, even in climates supportive of intensive transition efforts, the successful transition of students with disabilities into postsecondary environments continues to be a
challenge. The transition outcomes of students with disabilities relative to employment, education and quality of life continue to lag behind those of their peers without disabilities (Newman et al., 2011). In an effort to facilitate successful transitions for students with disabilities into postsecondary life, traditional transition efforts have centered on concrete employment and academic skills, as well as self-determination skills (Kohler & Field, 2003; Loman, Vatland, Strickland-Cohen, Horner, & Walker, 2010). However, longitudinal transition data for youth with disabilities (e.g., NLTS2) demonstrate that transition efforts simply have not been effective enough to leverage youth with disabilities to achieve outcomes comparable to their nondisabled peers.

This is usually where the conversation turns to important discussions about which transition programs, curricula and/or approaches show the largest effects on employment rates, college enrollment rates or functional life skills attainment. The conversation could turn to discussions of the difficulties in the transfer of transition skills learned in high school into “real world” settings and ways in which we may better promote that transfer. Then, someone could suggest an in-depth study of the personal or institutional obstacles postsecondary youth with disabilities encounter as they strive to achieve outcomes comparable to their nondisabled peers. Each of these conversations is truly important and has the potential to contribute to our understandings about how to promote better outcomes for youth with disabilities.

However, a very important piece of this conversation has been notably absent in the transition special education dialogue: the holism of the outcomes on which we focus. The notion of “transition outcomes” is a fundamental concept in transition and one that is usually taken for granted as related to work, education, or community participation in some form. However, are there other “outcomes” that may contribute to a larger conversation we should be having in transition special education to propel youth with disabilities toward more parity in overall life outcomes? Is there a way to think more holistically about what it means to be prepared for transition? To think more carefully about these questions, we need to explore some basic tenets from an academic discipline related to special education that has the potential to not only inform transition efforts but perhaps to transform how we think about and approach transition for youth with disabilities; that field is positive psychology.

The Field of Positive Psychology

While American schools experience criticism on any number of issues, one of particular relevance to special education is the concern that schools overly focus on addressing weaknesses rather than on nurturing and building strengths (Huebner, Gilman, & Furlong, 2009). Especially in the predominantly deficit-based framework of special education, children
are primarily identified for special education by what they cannot do and are systematically exposed to interventions designed to improve their areas of weakness. This approach aligns with the traditional model employed in the related field of clinical psychology/psychiatry in which individuals are diagnosed with syndromes based on the presence of constellations of pathological symptoms, and clinicians treat these “weaknesses.”

Recently, there has been increasing interest in the emerging field of positive psychology. This field requires a fundamental shift in thinking as it attempts to scientifically study what “goes right in life, from birth to death and all the stops in between” (Peterson, 2006, p. 4). Positive psychology attempts to illuminate optimal human functioning and includes the systematic, scientific examination of constructs such as hope, optimism, resilience, happiness, well-being, and strengths. Promising research in this field suggests that the study of “what goes right” can meaningfully inform our understanding of “the good life” and provide fundamental practices and frameworks for individuals to improve their lives. It is important to note that the field of positive psychology “is not meant to supplant the more traditional emphasis on problems (and their prevention and repair), but rather to complement such work by ensuring that equal attention is devoted to the recognition and promotion of positive aspects of individuals, groups and their environments” (Huebner, Gilman, & Furlong, 2009, p. 3). In a similar vein, I suggest that those working to help youth with disabilities must evolve beyond a primary focus on remediating areas of weakness, and work to systematically promote a culture that focuses on growing positive traits and orientations for youth with disabilities to enhance their postsecondary transition process. I do not suggest that positive psychology interventions should replace our training and remediation efforts in transition endeavors. Rather, I suggest that the field of transition might meaningfully augment efforts to improve outcomes for youth with disabilities by systematically investigating and employing school-based positive psychology approaches to promote optimal functioning.

Outcomes: What Are We Talking About?

And there is that word outcomes again. What do we mean when we talk about outcomes for youth with disabilities? A review of the transition literature as well as current transition curricula, programs and practice suggests that the word outcomes refers primarily to postsecondary employment, college enrollment/completion, independent living, and community participation. It is likely that these outcomes have been the focus of much of the transition discussion because they are the outcome data collected by the largest effort to understand transition outcomes for students with disabilities: The National Longitudinal Transition Study, now in its second iteration (NLTS2). Additionally, under Indicator 14 of IDEA, schools are required to report on students’ postsecondary education and employment
outcomes within one year of exiting high school. Certainly, it is appropriate that we focus on critical issues such as postsecondary education and employment. However, are the NLTS2 outcome variables where our conversations (and curricula and efforts) should stop? Research from the field of positive psychology should give us pause. Positive psychology data suggests that a focus on positive assets and variables is critical to understand and promote optimal functioning. Yes, traditional outcomes such as, for instance, employment is important, but other outcome variables matter too, especially those which are positively oriented. Some of those variables may actually be the key to improving the more traditional outcomes associated with college enrollment, completion and employment.

Other Potential Outcomes of Interest for Transition Special Education

Overarching constructs in the field of positive psychology that are particularly relevant to youth are subjective well-being, developmental assets, and wellness. Efforts in these psychological domains involve, for example, programming to promote optimal wellness in youth rather than focusing on disease treatment. Other programming acknowledges that well-being is promoted when the focus is on helping children thrive in the ecologies which surround them rather than merely survive. Recent positive psychology research has identified psychological constructs associated with optimal wellness outcomes and increased well-being, including hope, optimism, grit, and inherent strengths (Isaacowitz, Vaillant, & Seligman, 2002; Peterson, Park, Seligman, 2006; Seligman, 2002; Seligman, Reivich, Jaycox, & Gillham, 2007; Von Culin, Tsukayama, & Duckworth, 2014. Further research indicates that these constructs are not fixed, but are, rather, responsive to interventions and can change over time (Dweck, 2006; Seligman et al., 2007; Smith, 2014).

Thus, if these variables have been clearly linked to optimal life outcomes and they can be changed through directed intervention, why are we not focused on wellness, subjective well-being and other strengths-based outcomes variables in our transition efforts? Certainly those of us invested in transition outcomes for youth with disabilities want them to experience overall well-being and to thrive in their adult lives rather than merely survive. However, our current models as they are implemented across the majority of programs, do not focus on the promotion of well-being, wellness or the cultivation of strengths. Instead they focus on “filling in the gaps” we perceive in employment skills needed for work or academic skills needed for college. These efforts are important. But it is critical that we re-examine the outcome variables on which we focus and identify and strengthen those which will promote improved transition and overall life and well-being outcomes. When we examine positive psychology data and think about how we can promote positive orientations in transition, other important positive psychology variables emerge as potentially crucial areas of focus such as mindset, grit and
Carol Dweck and colleagues (see Dweck, 2006) have found that children tend to view their intelligence as either “fixed”, meaning they are “born smart or not,” or they view their intelligence as able to change in response to experiences, known as a “growth mindset.” The type of mindset a child holds is correlated to their motivational patterns toward academics and can have profound effects on academic achievement and engagement (Baird et al., 2009; Blackwell, Trzesniewski, & Dweck, 2007; Chen & Pajares, 2010; De Castella & Byrne, in press). In particular, students who have a fixed mindset tend to give up easily when they encounter failure, whereas those with a growth mindset are more likely to see failure as an opportunity to learn and grow (Blackwell et al., 2007). The potential implications of these findings for students with disabilities may begin with explicit instruction for students in how to think about and manage initial failure and cultivate a growth mindset in the context of challenging and frustrating academic experiences. Thus, a more holistic approach to transition efforts might include a focus on mindset.

Additional constructs that overlap with mindset and may be of interest in transition efforts are grit and optimism. Duckworth and colleagues (e.g., Duckworth, Peterson, Matthews, & Kelly, 2007) have explored the degree to which individuals persist in challenging tasks or those tasks which have a limited or delayed “return on investment.” In a nutshell, they have found that individuals with a high degree of “stick-with-it-ness” tend to have more positive life outcomes. In fact, grit seems to be such an important predictor of positive life outcomes, Duckworth and Eskreis-Winkler (2013) report that grit is more predictive of adult success than intelligence or academic achievement. Also related is the notion of optimism: a psychological orientation in which one views hardship as temporary and manageable (Boman, Furlong, Shochet, Lilles, & Jones, 2009). Several researchers have been able to identify optimism as a protective factor against school-related challenges (Boman, Smith & Curtis, 2003; Boman & Yates, 2001; Carvajal, Garner, & Evans, 1998). What roles might mindset, grit, and optimism play in preparing students with disabilities to transition to postsecondary life? These are important ideas to explore for students with disabilities in a model that embraces a holistic conceptualization of transition.

**Conclusion**

I believe it is important to begin to think about transition outcomes (and ways in which to promote them) through a more holistic lens. I believe that there are distinct psychological aspects of the process of transition that must be identified and explored for students with disabilities. The clarification of the relationships among positive psychology constructs and
holistic transition outcomes for students with disabilities is critical exploratory work that my colleagues and I are just getting underway. It will serve as a necessary prerequisite to begin to: 1) identify important transition outcomes beyond education and employment (to include well-being, degree of resilience, extent of hope, degree of grit etc.), 2) understand the relationships among these broader outcomes and positive psychology constructs, and 3) inform future intervention development to address these issues in secondary transition programming. For the present moment, as this research is undertaken, we can, at a minimum, begin to understand the role of positive variables in optimal outcomes, encourage the development of those constructs in youth with disabilities, and empower them to identify and own the unique set of positive characteristics and strengths they each have within themselves.

About the Author

Dr. Beth Tuckwiller is an Assistant Professor of Special Education and Disability Studies at the Graduate School of Education and Human Development at the George Washington University. She received her Ph.D. in Special Education from the University of Virginia with a focus on assessment and learning disabilities. Prior to this, she earned a B.S. in Psychology and an M.S. in Counseling Psychology, with a focus on developmental assessment, diagnosis and intervention. She has co-authored articles and book chapters on language and literacy development in at-risk children, the assessment and eligibility of students with high incidence disabilities, and instructional accommodations for secondary students with autism spectrum disorder. Dr. Tuckwiller's current research interests are situated in the field of mind, brain and education and the translation and application of findings from neurodevelopmental sciences to interdisciplinary approaches in the field of special education and disability studies. She is particularly interested in the application of positive psychology frameworks and interventions to school- and community-based programming for adolescents with high incidence disabilities to advance their holistic development and transition. She grounds her interdisciplinary work on the precepts of social justice, equity, and ethics in special education research, legislation, and provision.

References


The George Washington University


HEATH Resource Center at the National Youth Transitions Center (NYTC) Collaborative Announcements!!

NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR THE ADVOCATES IN DISABILITY AWARD (ADA) PROGRAM

Applications Due: April 10, 2015 (by 5:00pm ET)

The Advocates in Disability Award (ADA) program awards and encourages a young adult with a disability between the ages of 14 and 26 who is dedicated to positively affecting the lives of individuals with disabilities and their families. The program also supports an innovative project developed by the recipient to serve and empower individuals with disabilities.

Funded by both The HSC Foundation and the Sarah Beth Coyote Foundation, the selected recipient is awarded $3,000 in recognition of his or her disability advocacy and will receive up to an additional $7,000 in funding support for a project to benefit the disability community. Applicants must be a citizen or permanent resident of the United States at the time of application submission and recipient selection.
The Advocates in Disability Award Program is part of The HSC Foundation’s National Youth Transitions Initiative.

To apply, please see the attached guidelines and application. You may also apply online at: http://www.hscfoundation.org/2015ADA.php.

Applications must be received by April 10, 2015 (by 5:00pm ET).

Employer Survey Information Session

You are invited to attend an information session on the Employer Survey. The survey was conducted by DC Metro Business Leadership Network and TransCen, Inc., as part of the activities of the Youth Transitions Collaborative’s Employment Working Group. The information session will be held on April 17th from Noon- 1pm in the NYTC’s 2nd Floor Training Room. Lunch will be provided. Please RSVP to this session by emailing reasterly@cscn.org. RSVPs must be received April 13th. The original March 5th information session was rescheduled due to weather.

Youth Transitions Collaborative Emerging Leaders Program Invites YOU to our April 2015 Happy Hour event!

The YTC Emerging Leaders Program invites you to come and learn more about what our political leaders are doing to ensure equal rights for all. Virginia State Senator Barbara Favola will join and discuss Arlington, Virginia’s best practices for hiring people with disabilities. Senator Favola will also discuss the gaps that still need to be fixed in current policies. Refreshments will be provided.

Date: Wednesday, April 29, 2015
Time: 5:30-7:30 pm
Location: National Youth Transitions Center (NYTC) 2013 H St. NW Washington, DC 20006
To RSVP and request accommodations, please click here. Or you may register through email at ELP@aapd.com

The Emerging Leaders program, supported by a grant from The HSC Foundation, is a monthly event coordinated by the American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) for young people with disabilities in the Washington, DC metro area to help expand their professional
network with established professionals, representatives from 45+ organizations, and their peers at the National Youth Transitions Center (NYTC).

**Free Career Navigation Program**

The HSC Foundation is currently offering scholarships to participate in Goodwill of Greater Washington’s signature career navigation program at no cost. To qualify for the scholarship, recipients must identify as a person with a disability and be a District of Columbia resident. The Career Navigation Program provides unemployed adults with and without disabilities with job readiness instruction, wraparound supportive services, and job placement services. Scholarship recipients will gain access to a career assessment and individual employment support plan, 75 contact hours of training (including transportation navigation training), a $10 daily travel stipend, ongoing coaching and placement services, and placement retention services. For more information, contact Treva Smith, Program Services Coordinator at (703) 769-3712 or online at VACareerNav.dcgoodwill.org.

**National Youth Transitions Resume Database**

The Youth Transitions Collaborative is developing a resume database. We are seeking the resumes of young people and young veterans with disabilities, who are looking for work (full-time or part-time) in the private sector. These resumes will be incorporated into a database that will help employers connect with qualified young candidates with disabilities. The National Youth Transitions Resume Database will be national in scope and will be open to young people and employers from across the country.

If you are, or know of someone, interested in submitting a resume, please submit it at ytf@aapd.com. Once a resume is received individuals will be asked to complete a short form, which details their occupational and geographic preferences, etc.

**Resume Guidelines**

All resumes should include the following:

- Objective statement (a 1-2 sentence statement regarding your skills, interests, or career aspirations to give employers a better sense of the type of employment you are seeking)

- Contact information (Name, Address, Phone Number, and Email Address)
• Education history
• Work history
• Volunteer experience
• Professional skills
• Font size no smaller than 11 pt.
• Word or PDF format
• Maximum of 2 pages

Follow the National Youth Transitions Center Facebook and Twitter Page!

The National Youth Transitions Center officially has a Facebook page (at www.facebook.com/thenytc)! If you or your organization has a Facebook account, please "Like" the NYTC page. The NYTC has a Twitter account (at https://twitter.com/The_NYTC). Please check out their information and resources for youth and veterans with disabilities!! Please "Like" and "Follow" their Facebook and Twitter pages!!

Follow the HEATH Resource Center at the Facebook and Twitter Page!

The HEATH Resource Center at the National Youth Transitions Center has a Facebook page (at https://www.facebook.com/pages/Heath-Resource-Center). We have a Twitter account (at https://twitter.com/#!/heathcenter). Please check out both of our social media sites for the latest updates, resources, and scholarship information for students with disabilities!! Please "Like" our Facebook page and "Follow" us on Twitter!
Educational Opportunities at
The George Washington University

Transition Special Education Distance Education Certificate Program

There is still time for candidates to enroll in the Summer ‘15 cohort for our 12-credit Transition Special Education Certificate Program. Students who have enrolled in this program will be given priority when being considered for admission to the Master’s program and all credits earned will be easily transferred. Candidates who decide to apply to this program using ApplyYourself, the on-line application system, can use the link: https://app.applyyourself.com/AYApplicantLogin/ApplicantConnectLogin.asp?id=GWUGRAD.

Please list only official degree transcripts that indicate completion of a Bachelors and/or Masters. Listing all colleges attended may delay approval of your application. This will allow sufficient time for your application to be reviewed and approved, which must take place before they can register for class. Deadline: Rolling Admissions. For further information or additional questions, please contact Dr. Michael Ward, Program Coordinator, by e-mailing mjward@gwu.edu.

Secondary Special Education and Transition Services: Distance Education, Master’s of Arts (Non-teacher Licensure)

This 39 credit, on-line Youth Transition, Career, and Vocational Services Master’s degree program prepares professionals as change agents in teaching, leadership and support roles that assist youth with disabilities and youth at-risk to make successful transitions through high school to post-secondary education, employment and independent adulthood. Students will build knowledge and skills for performing the roles and functions of transition specialists through assessment, interdisciplinary planning, collaboration, and implementation of services for individuals with disabilities. The program encourages student involvement in research, scholarship, publishing and leadership activities as adjuncts to their program of study.
Candidates who decide to apply to this program using ApplyYourself, the on-line application system, can use the link: https://app.applyyourself.com/AYApplicantLogin/ApplicantConnectLogin.asp?id=GWUGRAD.
GWU Programs Focus on Teaching Students with Acquired Brain Injury

The George Washington University was the first university to develop a special education program to fill the unmet need of training professionals to serve children with brain injuries and their families. The brain injury special educator may work directly with children with acquired brain injury or with the school teams and families who support them. Curriculum focuses on training teachers to work in districts where the incidence of pediatric brain injury is very high. Students build knowledge through specialized coursework, and skills through high quality supervised internships.

If you are interested in a career in special education, you may also receive tuition assistance through a grant for pre-service special educators. Professionals and seasoned teachers have the opportunity to apply to a Graduate Certificate Program in Acquired Brain Injury, which is offered through distance learning. For more information on either program, please contact Theresa Sacchi Armstrong at tjsacchi@gwu.edu. Application Deadline: Rolling Admissions.

NCWD/Youth Releases Individualized Learning Plans Report

NCWD/Youth’s report, Use of Individualized Learning Plans: A Promising Practice for Driving College and Career Readiness Efforts – Findings and Recommendations from a Multi-Method, Multi-Study Effort, summarizes the findings and recommendations of ILP research and technical assistance activities that were completed between 2007 and 2013. The purpose of these activities was to investigate whether ILPs should be considered a promising practice for youth with and without disabilities and to identify promising state, district, and school ILP implementation strategies. ILPs are increasingly understood to be the lynchpin tool for linking the twin goals of college readiness and career readiness. Read the report online.
Federal Partners in Transition Release 2020 Federal Youth Transition Plan

The Federal Partners in Transition (FPT) recently released the 2020 Federal Youth Transition Plan: A Federal Interagency Strategy. The Federal Partners in Transition is a workgroup with representatives of several federal agencies, including the Department of Education, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Labor, and the Social Security Administration, which are involved in promoting inclusive service delivery for transitioning youth with disabilities from school into postsecondary education, the workforce, and independent living. This report outlines how FPT will enhance interagency coordination through the identification of compatible outcome goals and policy priorities, ultimately leading to improved outcomes for youth with disabilities by 2020. Read the report online.


HEATH Resource Center at the National Youth Transitions Center
2015 Summer Pre-College Programs for Students with Disabilities

Each year, HEATH staff members compile a list of summer pre-college for students with disabilities for families and educators. All programs listed in the publication are designed for high school students, usually rising juniors and seniors, and high school graduates who are planning to attend college. Campus disability support providers report that students with disabilities who receive some preview of the college experience can manage the first year with fewer adjustment problems than others. Pre-college programs are usually held on the campus residence halls or as day training, leisure, and recreational activities, and typically include some computer training. To review the publication, please go to: http://heath.gwu.edu/2015-summer-pre-college-programs-students-disabilities

Financial Aid Toolkit, U.S. Department of Education

The U.S. Department of Education has released an online Financial Aid Toolkit to improve efforts to improve college access and affordability. The Financial Aid Toolkit provides step-by-step
information about applying for financial aid as well as information about repaying student loan debt. The Toolkit is designed to be a resource to guidance counselor and teachers by providing financial aid night materials, presentations, brochures, videos, and sample social media posts. The online Toolkit will post professional development opportunities for parents and educators. To review the toolkit, go to: http://financialaidtoolkit.ed.gov/tk/.

College & Career Readiness & Success Center (CCRS) Blog
Reducing Summer Melt: Helping 12th Graders Successfully Transition to College

The CCRS published a blog to highlight the problem of 12th graders receiving a good financial package and ultimately becoming “victims of summer melt”. The blog provided an interesting statistic, “…that 20 to 45 percent of the graduates of large urban school districts who had concrete plans to attend college in the fall following high school graduation changed their minds during the summer months—and became victims of “summer melt” (Coles, 2015). The blog informed educators on strategies that can increase the likelihood of students enrolling in college in the fall. The article highlighted a study, conducted by two Harvard University scholars, which used two interventions with a treatment group and compared the results with a control group. The two interventions implemented in the study was text messaging and peer mentors, which focused on keeping students on track during the summer to enroll in the fall semester. The results indicated an increase of students starting college in the fall compared to the control group.

To learn more about the strategies and replication tools, please go to: http://www.ccrscenter.org/products-resources/blog/reducing-summer-melt-helping-12th-graders-successfully-transition-to-college.

Think College National Coordinating Center Annual Reports
Annual Report on the Transition and Postsecondary Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities

Think College (ICI) recently released a manual entitled, “Annual Report on the Transition and Postsecondary Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities”. The report focuses on the 27 Transition and Postsecondary Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities (TPSID). The report provides descriptive data, trend analysis, and focus group data. The content of the report includes the following topics: overview of student characteristics, academic access, career development and employment, self-determination, campus membership, summary of student exit outcomes, and more! The report can be a resource to parents, support coordinators, educators, and people with disabilities. To download a copy of the manual, please go to: http://www.thinkcollege.net/publications/annual-reports.
Campaign for Disability Employment

The Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), within the U.S. Department of Labor, have released “Who I Am” public service announcement in the format of posters and discussion guides. The “Who I Am” public service announcement introduces nine individuals with disabilities who share who they are and their roles within the world of work. To download the posters and discussion guide, please go to: [http://promotions.usa.gov/odep.html#campaign](http://promotions.usa.gov/odep.html#campaign).

Conference, Webinar and Forum Opportunities

April 8-11, 2015
CEC 2015 Convention & Expo
San Diego, CA

Registration for CEC 2015 is open! The CEC Convention and Expo is the largest conference for special educators and professionals who serve students with disabilities. For more information about the conference, please go to: [http://www.cec.sped.org/Professional-Development/cec2015/Register](http://www.cec.sped.org/Professional-Development/cec2015/Register)

April 13-14
2015 Multiple Perspectives
The Ohio State University, Columbus Campus

"It is crucial that disability studies be included in the curricula of schools so that when Rosa Parks and the civil rights movement are studied, when films on Stonewall are screened, Chicano authors are read — that disability history and culture be included as well."
--Lennard Davis

Twenty-Seven Sessions On Disability Identity, Culture, Advocacy & Compliance including Three Public Events

1. The Ken Campbell Lecture on Disability Policy "The Stories We Tell: The Americans with Disabilities Act After 25 Years" presented by Lennard J. Davis. Based on his forthcoming book, Enabling Acts the human story illustrating the successes and
shortcomings of the ADA in areas ranging from employment, education, and transportation to shifting social attitudes.

2. The Ethel Louise Armstrong Lecture on Disability Art & Culture “The Hearing World Around Me” presented by Trix Bruce reflects culture clash and connection, contact and confusion, and the many ways which language and identity can shape our perceptions.

3. Student Perspectives, a reception and poster competition that encourages students to network with professionals, the community, and scholars who share their interests in disability. A generous gift from the Ethel Louise Armstrong Foundation funds cash awards for graduate research, undergraduate research, arts, community service and class projects focused on disability. Student poster submissions are due 3/11/15.

http://ada.osu.edu/conferences/2015Conf/2015agenda.html

These three events are free and open to the public thanks to support from the Ethel Louise Armstrong Fund and the Ohio State University’s offices of Student Life Disability Services & the Office of Diversity And Inclusion.

May 2-7, 2015
The 9th Annual Capacity Building Institute
Charlotte, NC

The 9th Annual Capacity Building Institute hosted by National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (NTACT). The purpose is to provide state teams to collaborate and plan to improve transition services, high school completion rates, and improve post-school outcomes of youth with disabilities. For more information, please go to: http://www.nsttac.org/sites/default/files/pdf/Capacity_Building_Institute_2015_Registration_Agenda.pdf.

May 11, 2015
Occupational Therapy Participation in Transition Planning and Services
Webinar, 2:00-3:00 p.m. EST

This webinar, hosted by NSTTAC and NTACT, will explore the actions an OT can take to begin actively participating in the secondary transition process. In addition to resources and technical information, participants will have the opportunity to interact with the presenters to ask questions and problem solve any current challenges.
Presenters:
Emily Furgang Kertcher, Ph.D., MOTR/L
Assistant Professor, Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Linda Q. Rudd, M.Ed., OTR/L
Transition Services Coordinator
Peoria Unified School District, AZ

To participate:
1. Link to: http://tadnet.adobeconnect.com/ntact
2. Then, let the system “dial out” to your number or you can dial 1-877-512-6886 and use the pass code 145 430 4088.

May 12, 2015
TASH
Inclusive School and Community Engagement
Marlborough, MA

Join TASH and New England TASH in Marlborough, MA on Tuesday, May 12 for a full-day on Inclusive School and Community Engagement. Dina Traniello, co-president of New England TASH, will present on the inter-relationship of behavioral supports and inclusive school practices. Dina’s presentation will enable individuals who are involved in education - students, family members, school personnel, and advocates - learn more about PBS and effective interventions for supporting people with challenging behaviors. To learn more about Dina’s presentation and the TASH New England Regional Meeting, visit www.tash.org/newenglandconf.

May 12, 2015
How Physical Therapists Can Prepare Adolescents & Young Adults for Transition to Adulthood
Webinar, 3-4:30 p.m. EST

This webinar will present how the transition mandates of IDEA 2004 apply to school-based physical therapists. Participants will learn how to use available evidence to become integral transition team members and improve postsecondary outcomes for their students with disabilities through:
• student-centered transition planning
• interagency collaboration
• the role of the physical therapist
• evaluation procedures
• community-based intervention within the IEP process.

Two case studies will be utilized to explore how the speakers would practically approach each of these components of meaningful postsecondary transition.

Presenters:
Toni Doty, PT, Ph.D., PSC (OH)
Physical Therapist for Kent City Schools & Adjunct Professor, Walsh University

Laurie Ray, MPT, Ph.D. (NC)
Physical Therapy Consultant, NC DPI & Associate Professor, UNC-Chapel Hill

To participate:
1. Link to: http://tadnet.adobeconnect.com/ntact
2. Then, let the system “dial out” to your number or you can dial 1-877-512-6886 and use the pass code 145 430 4088.

May 15-16, 2015
TASH
Inclusive Education as a Results-Driven Imperative: Preparing Students with Significant Disabilities for College and Careers

Join TASH and North Carolina TASH in Greensboro, NC on May 15-16 for a two-day event on Inclusive Education as a Results-Driven Imperative: Preparing Students with Significant Disabilities for College and Careers. Cate Weir, coordinator of the National Coordinating Center for Postsecondary Education for Students with Intellectual Disabilities at the University of Massachusetts Boston, will present College as a Pathway to Employment as one of the six afternoon How-To-Workshops. Her presentation will speak to individuals who are interested in opportunities for students with intellectual disabilities, including K-12 educators, transition specialists, employment providers, higher education professionals, and parents who are considering college for their son or daughter. To learn more about Cate’s presentation and the TASH North Carolina Regional Meeting, visit www.tash.org/northcarolinaconf
May 18-19, 2015
31st Pacific Rim Conference on Disability and Diversity
Honolulu, Hawaii

The 31st Pacific Rim International Conference on Disability and Diversity will take place at the Hawaii Convention Center, Honolulu, Hawaii on May 18 & 29, 2015. For more information email prcall@hawaii.edu. Please visit http://www.pacrim.hawaii.edu/submissions/deadlines. Visit the website at www.pacrim.hawaii.edu to learn more about the conference.

May 19, 2015
The Speech Language Pathologist’s Role in Supporting the Transition from School to Employment or Education for Students with Disabilities
Webinar, 3-4:00 p.m. EST

This webinar will discuss the speech language pathologist’s role in supporting a variety of students as they transition from school to work or postsecondary educational settings. SLPs can play a critical role in supporting successful transitions for students with disabilities. This webinar will help SLPs understand a variety of ways they can support these students through case study analysis.

Presenter:
Perry F. Flynn, CCC/SLP (NC)
Speech/Language Pathology Consultant, NC Department of Public Instruction & Associate Professor, UNC-Greensboro

To participate:
1. Link to: http://tadnet.adobeconnect.com/ntact
2. Then, let the system “dial out” to your number or you can dial 1-877-512-6886 and use the pass code 145 430 4088.

June 22-24, 2015
Institute for Educational Leadership to Hold 2015 National Family and Community Engagement Conference
Chicago, Illinois

The Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL) will be holding the 2015 National Family and Community Engagement Conference at The Palmer House in Chicago, Illinois on June 22-24, 2015. This year’s conference theme is Shaping Our Future by Leading Together: Families, Schools, and Communities. Sessions will highlight high quality family and community engagement on the
following topics: Early Learning & Literacy, Student Achievement and Schooling, Community Partnerships, Teacher Leadership & Professional Development, Systemic Practice and Policy, Inclusive Education, Parent Leadership & Advocacy, and High School, College & Career Transition. Learn more and register online.

July 8-11, 2015
Autism Society’s 46th Annual Conference on Autism Spectrum Disorders
Denver, CO

The Autism Society’s National Conference and Exhibition is the only event to consistently bring together professionals, individuals on the autism spectrum, family members and advocates. Energetic forums provide in-depth presentations that cover what’s new in the field of autism and explore how to improve existing services and supports. The conference seeks to address the full range of issues facing those affected by autism today, provide best practices, practical skills/knowledge and cutting edge research on topics of interest to those affected by autism. Of particular interest are sessions with content appropriate for intermediate to advanced audiences. Content areas include early intervention, education, employment, quality of life, behavior, communication, social skills, biomedical interventions, mental health and others.

The varied expertise and experiences of presenters enables attendees to learn how to more effectively advocate and obtain needed services and supports. The ultimate goal of the Autism Society’s Conference is to empower family members, individuals on the spectrum and professionals to make informed decisions. Overall conference content addresses the full range of the autism spectrum and encompasses lifespan issues. Presentations in Spanish are also encouraged. To learn more about the conference: http://www.autism-society.org/in-the-news/call-papers-2015-autism-society-national-conference/

Questions?
Please call 800-3-AUTISM or email conference@autism-society.org

July 22-24, 2015
2015 Pennsylvania Community on Transition Conference
Navigating the Road to Success: Expect, Educate, Empower, Employ
State College, PA

The 2015 Pennsylvania Community on Transition Conference theme is focused on “Navigating the Road to Success: Expect, Educate, Empower, and Employ”. This year’s conference is held at the Penn Stater Conference Center and Hotel in State College, PA. To learn more about the conference, please go to: http://www.secondarytransition.org or http://www.pattan.net. Please
direct any questions or concerns regarding this year’s conference to: paconf2015@gmail.com.

Money, Money, Money!  
Who’s got the money?

IDF Scholarship Program

The IDF Scholarship Program is awarded to applicants diagnosed with primary immunodeficiency diseases. The scholarship is given to applicants who are enrolled or planning to enroll to a college or technical training school. **Deadline: April 15, 2015.** For more information on eligibility and application requirements, please go to: [http://primaryimmune.org/services/idf-academic-scholarship-programs/](http://primaryimmune.org/services/idf-academic-scholarship-programs/).

Hydrocephalus Association Scholarships

The Hydrocephalus Association Scholarships invites applicants who are diagnosed with hydrocephalus. Applicants will have an opportunity to be awarded one of eight scholarships being offered at $1,000 each. **Deadline: April 15, 2015.** For more information on the eligibility requirements, please go to: [http://www.hydroassoc.org/scholarships/](http://www.hydroassoc.org/scholarships/).

Little People of America (LPA) Scholarship

The LPA Scholarship provides scholarships to young adults who are members of LPA. Scholarships are awarded to high school students and college students who plan or are enrolled in college or vocational school in the U.S. The award amount is from $250 to $1,000. The awards will be given to two undergraduate students and one graduate student. **Deadline: April 22, 2015.** To learn more about this scholarship opportunity, please go to: [https://adobeformscentral.com/?f=Z3E0McR9UxD7zijQ4WGxXg](https://adobeformscentral.com/?f=Z3E0McR9UxD7zijQ4WGxXg).

2015 NBCUniversal Tony Coelho Media Scholarship

The American Association of People with Disabilities is pleased to announce that we are accepting applications for the 2015 NBCUniversal Tony Coelho Media Scholarship. We are offering four scholarships, which can be used for the spring, summer, or fall semesters of 2015, to 2nd year associate students; undergraduate sophomores, juniors, and seniors; and graduate
students with disabilities who are pursuing communication or media-related degrees. Each recipient will receive $5,625 for the tuition and fees at their college or university.

Students will need to provide us the following items to apply for the scholarship:

- Completed 2015 NBCUniversal Tony Coelho Media Scholarship application (download from the AAPD website [here](#))
- Resume
- Unofficial Transcript
- Two 300-350 word essays answering the following questions:
  - What inspired you to pursue a communications/media related degree?
  - How will you use your degree to positively impact the disability community?
- A letter of recommendation from a professor, academic advisor, or mentor

All applications and supporting materials should be emailed to scholarship@aapd.com by 5:00PM on Friday, April 24, 2015 in an accessible format.

**Organization for Autism Research (OAR): Schwallie Family Scholarship Program**

The OAR Scholarship Program is seeking students with an autism diagnosis (DSM-IV or later criteria) to apply for the award. Applicants need to be planning to be or enrolled as a full-time student at a university, college, or vocational-technical training program. **Deadline: May 1, 2015.** To learn more about the application process, please go to: [http://www.researchautism.org/news/otherevents/scholarship.asp](http://www.researchautism.org/news/otherevents/scholarship.asp).

**Sertoma: Hard of Hearing or Deaf Scholarship**

The Sertoma Scholarship invites applicants who have bilateral hearing loss. The scholarship amount is $1,000 and is to be used towards tuition, books, and supplies. Applicants must be pursuing or enrolled as a full-time college student in a U.S. institute of higher education. Applicants must be able to meet the eligibility criteria. **Deadline: May 1, 2015.** To learn more about the scholarship and receive the college scholarship application packet, please go to: [http://www.sertoma.org/document.doc?id=356](http://www.sertoma.org/document.doc?id=356).

**Friends in Art Scholarships**

The Friends in Art Scholarships awards high school seniors who are blind or visually impaired who desire to have career in the arts field (e.g., music, art, drama, or creative writing). The scholarship amount is $1,500. **Deadline: May 15, 2015.** For more information and application requirements,

**Education is Power Scholarship Program**

The Education is Power award offers individuals with hemophilia or von Willebrand Disease to apply for a $500-2,500 scholarship. Twenty scholarships are being offered for the 2015-2016 academic year. **Deadline: June 1, 2015.** For more information about the scholarship opportunity, please go to: [http://www.medprorx.com/about/community-outreach/education-is-power-scholarship/](http://www.medprorx.com/about/community-outreach/education-is-power-scholarship/).

**Possibilities: A Financial Resource for Parents of Children and Youth with Disabilities**

“Possibilities: A Financial Resource for Parents of Children with Disabilities,” first published in 2004 by the National Endowment for Financial Education (NEFE) and PACER, updates this financial planning guide to an online format, and includes more content relevant to parenting transition-age youth with disabilities. The guide offers tips and information on many financial issues and concerns of families raising children with disabilities from infancy to young adulthood. Topics include organizing financial records, managing money, preparing income taxes, health insurance options, dealing with debt, saving for college, preparing youth for adult employment, etc. [http://www.pacer.org/publications/possibilities/](http://www.pacer.org/publications/possibilities/)

**The Washington Center Scholarship**

The Washington Center Scholarship for Students with Disabilities is funded by the AT&T Foundation and HSC Foundation. These awards provide housing assistance in varying amounts (up to a full housing scholarship) to competitively selected students who self-identify as having a disability, as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Priority consideration is given to undergraduate students; however, graduate program applicants may be considered. [http://www.twc.edu](http://www.twc.edu)
National Research Center for Career and Technical Education (NRCCTE)

The National Research Center for Career and Technical Education provides the latest information and resources for individuals interested in issues related to workforce development, CTE, and college and career readiness. The website presents professional development opportunities as well as disseminates CTE research in the form of publications and resources. To learn more about the website and obtain the latest resources/publications, please go to: http://www.nrccte.org.

TASH

TASH is a professional organization, celebrating its 40th Anniversary, focused on advancing the rights of individuals with significant disabilities around the world. In addition, TASH disseminates and presents research and best practices in a variety of formats such as conferences, webinars, and journals. In addition, TASH has state and local chapters that individuals can join who are interested in advancing advocacy and issues related to education, employment, and independent living for people with significant disabilities. To learn more about TASH and how to join, please go to: http://tash.org.

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Submissions

We welcome submissions from transition-related organizations and entities to post resources and information in our quarterly newsletter. Please email us at askheath@gwu.edu to include your submission in our next newsletter.