Conducting Transition Assessment

Transition assessments can be formal or informal. Formal assessment typically involves using a standardized procedure for administering, scoring, and interpreting an assessment. By clearly defining how an assessment is administered, scored, and interpreted, this allows a student's score to be interpreted relative to other students (e.g., norms), although not all standardized assessments are norm-referenced. Informal assessment procedures are less structured and do not allow comparison with other students. However, because informal procedures allow assessment of student performance over time, they are useful in designing and evaluating the effects of instructional interventions.

Informal assessment may include data collected from a variety of individuals (e.g., parents, teachers, employers) using a variety of non-standardized methods. Those responsible gather the information needed to understand student needs, taking into account strengths, preferences, and interests through career awareness and exploration activities and a variety of formal and informal transition assessments. These assessments should seek to answer questions such as:

a. What does the student want to do beyond school (e.g., further education or training, employment, military, continuing or adult education, etc.)?

b. Where and how does the student want to live (e.g., dorm, apartment, family home, group home, supported or independent)?

c. How does the student want to take part in the community (e.g., transportation, recreation, community activities, etc.)?

The Individual Plan of Study (IPS) for a student is an excellent resource to use in planning transition assessment. It is recommended that whatever process is being used to develop the IPS in the school be used for all students, inclusive of students in special education. Transition assessment can be done through Career Cruising, Xello, or other tools used by schools to develop student career development activities for the IPS.

Another resource for transition assessment are the Pre-ETS services available through Kansas Rehabilitation Services. These services are free to the school and the student. Pre-ETS required services include:

- Job Exploration Counseling
- Self-Advocacy
- Workplace Readiness Training
- Counseling on Comprehensive Transition or Post-Secondary Education
- Workbased Learning Experiences

Formal Transition Assessment Methods

Adaptive Behavior/Daily Living Skills Assessments can help determine the type and amount of assistance that people with disabilities may need. This assistance might be in the form of home-based support services for infants and children and their families, special education and vocational training for young people, and supported work or special living arrangements such as personal care attendants. Each assessment relies on a respondent such as a parent, teacher, or care-provider to provide information about an individual being assessed.

General and Specific Aptitude Tests measure a specific skill or ability. There are two types of aptitude tests: multi-aptitude test batteries and single tests measuring specific aptitudes. Multiaptitude test batteries measure a wide range of aptitudes and combinations of aptitudes (e.g., general knowledge, spatial relations, form perception, color discrimination) and provide information that can be used in career decision making. Single aptitude tests measure specific aptitudes such as manual dexterity, clerical ability, artistic ability, or musical ability.

Interest Inventories provide information about an individual's preferences for certain careers, occupational activities, or types of work.

Intelligence Tests involve a single test or test battery to assess a person's cognitive performance. Generally, this has been established much earlier in a student's education.

Achievement Tests measure learning of general or specific academic skills. Results can be linked to occupational requirements while helping to identify potential areas needing remediation.

Temperament Inventories/Instruments identify students' dispositions towards various types of careers and work (e.g., careers that emphasize data, people, or things). The reports alone should not be viewed as a predictor of success or failure but rather should be compared with other data, including abilities and interests.

Career Maturity or Employability Tests are designed to assess developmental stages or tasks on a continuum.

Self-Determination Assessments provide information as to one's readiness to make decisions related to their postsecondary ambitions. Such assessments provide data to help a student identify his or her relative strengths and needs related to self-determination and factors that may be promoting or inhibiting this outcome.

Transition Planning Inventories can help identify transition strengths and needs in various aspects of adult living, including employment, postsecondary schooling and training, independent living, interpersonal relationships, and community living. They also question and identify students' goals and awareness of what is needed or required to achieve those goals. Results of questioning parents or guardians (and possibly siblings), and educators can be correlated to create and accurate account of transition goals and steps necessary to attain a satisfying quality of life.

Informal Transition Assessment Methods

Interviews and questionnaires can be conducted with a variety of individuals for the purpose of gathering information to be used to determine a student's strengths, needs, preferences, and interests relative to anticipated post-school outcomes. In other words, what is currently known about a student, and her or his family, that can be used to help develop postsecondary outcomes and to plan a course-of-study that will help the student reach his or her goals? An important part of this data collection process involves gathering information about a student and his or her family's current and future resources. For example, if a student's future education choice is to enroll in postsecondary education, it is helpful to know as soon as possible the financial resources a family might have or need. Another example might involve current and future transportation needs to get to work or to various activities/places in the community. Finally, families can often provide current and future resources in terms of employment options for their daughter or son or for other students in a high school program.

Direct observation of student performance should be conducted within the natural environment, or school, employment, postsecondary, or community setting. Sometimes called "community-based or situational assessment", direct observations can be often done by a job coach, co-worker, recreation specialist, general/vocational educator, and/or student. Direct observation data typically includes a list of steps required for completing a task, work behaviors (e.g., on-task, following directions, getting along with coworkers),and affective information (e.g., is student happy, excited, frustrated, or bored?). For example, if you are observing at a worksite, and a student quickly and accurately completes his or her tasks, interacts well with co-workers, and appears happy, this could provide evidence that this type of job is one that the student likes. However, after visiting a community residential setting where a student appears withdrawn, this may be an indication that the particular situation may not be suitable or satisfying for him or her.

Curriculum-based assessments (CBA) are typically designed by educators to gather information about a student's performance in a specific curriculum and to develop instructional plans for a specific student. To gather these data, an educator might use task analyses, work sample analyses, portfolio assessments, and/or criterion-referenced tests.

Environmental analysis, sometimes referred to as ecological assessment and/or job analysis, involves carefully examining environments where activities normally occur. For example, a student may express an interest in attending karate classes at the local YMCA. In this case an environmental analysis might be conducted to investigate transportation needs and the expectations at the YMCA for attending (e.g., being a member, using the locker room, taking a shower). Another example would be, if a student expressed interest in a specific type of job, a job analysis could be conducted comparing requirements of the job to the student's skills. A critical part of the analysis should be to identify the necessary academic and social skills, behavioral expectations and types of accommodations that could be provided to help a student perform the necessary functions of a particular job (e.g., job restructuring, modifying equipment, acquiring an adaptive device, re-organizing the workspace, hiring a personal assistant).

(From "Age Appropriate Transition Assessment", DCDT and the National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center (NSTTAC))

RESOURCES: (Please note this is not an exhaustive list)

National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (NTACT) : www.transitionta.org

Age appropriate Transition Assessment Toolkit:
https://transitionta.org/system/files/toolkitassessment/AgeAppropriateTransitionAssessmentToo lkit2016_COMPLETE_11_21_16.pdf

From Assessment to Practice: A Model for Teachers
https://transitionta.org/sites/default/files/news/Assessment%20to%20Practice%202.0_2019-2.pdf

Kansas Special Education Process Handbook
https://www.ksde.org/Default.aspx?tabid=598

Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) Technical Assistance Support Network
(TASN): www.ksdetasn.org   Secondary Transition Resources

Individual Plan of Study
https://transitionta.org/system/files/toolkitassessment/AgeAppropriateTransitionAssessmentToo lkit2016_COMPLETE_11_21_16.pdf

Transition Coalition
https://transitioncoalition.org/tc-assessment-reviews/?cat_ID=48

Your Complete Guide to Transition Planning and Services by Mary E. Morningstar and Beth Clavenna-Deane.

Planning the Transition to Employment by Laura A. Owens, Richard Parent-Johnson and Wendy Parent-Johnson.

Work Based Learning: https://www.ksde.org/Default.aspx?tabid=1035
https://www.ksde.org/Portals/0/CSAS/CSAS%20Home/CTE%20Home/Kansas%20Work-Based%20Learning_Personalized%20Learning%20Plan.pdf

Kansas Works: www.kansasworks.com

My Next Move: https://www.mynextmove.org/