

Pre-Employment Skills  
During Transition:  
A New Horizon for  
Students with Most  
Significant Disabilities

Mizzou Ed

**POWER THE KNOWLEDGE**



Hook Center  
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# Norms

- 🐾 Actively Participate
- 🐾 Be respectful with technology.
- 🐾 Have high expectations for consumers.

## Getting a feel for the expertise of the group.

**5 fingers: I can present on this topic.**

**4 fingers: I have vast knowledge but want to learn more.**

**3 fingers: I have an average amount of knowledge.**

**2 fingers: I know just enough to be dangerous.**

**1 finger: I am just beginning to learn about this topic.**



# Today's Agenda

## Overview, Introductions and Getting Started

- Norms
- Who We Are

## The Nitty Gritty of Our Services

- Who We Serve
- How We Started
- Why We Shifted & How We Look Now
- Why This Works for Our Learners

## Application

- Ideas for You
- Collaboration with Other Agencies
- Future Goals

## Questions & Closure

# Our Goal Today



Primarily to cast a vision about how we can all better serve people with significant developmental disabilities



Secondarily to talk about the services we offer



# Look for a nugget!

# Who We Are



A project of the University of Missouri to serve Missouri students with disabilities with pre-employment services



Federal funding through Vocational Rehabilitation



Fulfilling WIOA



Two segments of our services:  
General Pre-ETS & Horizons





# Who WE Are



Anna



Becky



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# Part I

## The Nitty Gritty of Our Services

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# Who We Serve

Before we describe our students...

People are people!  
We have more **similarities**  
than differences!

# Typical Student Characteristics

- Students 16-21 (sometimes 14 & up)
- Significant cognitive impairments: 40 IQ or lower
- Significant communication deficits
- Significant adaptive skills deficits
- Often motor skills impairments
- Sometimes behavioral delays

# Student Strengths

- Varied, just like all people
- Often a strong desire to work and contribute
- Desire to be socially engaged
- Sometimes very specific skills, like ability to alphabetize or ability to clean windows
- Willingness to do physical jobs
- Willingness to do the same tasks daily, although our students still need variety and challenge!

# How We Started



## SMART Goals, driven by the student's IEP



Specific



Measurable



Achievable



Relevant



Time Limited



## Discrete Skills Training





Discrete Trial Training (DTT) is a method of teaching in simplified and structured steps. Instead of teaching an entire skill in one go, the skill is broken down and “built-up” using discrete trials that teach each step one at a time (Smith, 2001).





# Why We Shifted

We...

-  Desired to do more good
-  Wanted to offer something unique and helpful to students, families, and teachers; beyond what teachers were already doing

# Why We Shifted

We...

-  Take a more global approach to these learners, just like we do across all Pre-ETS
-  Desire to provide students with more “real world” work and life skill experiences

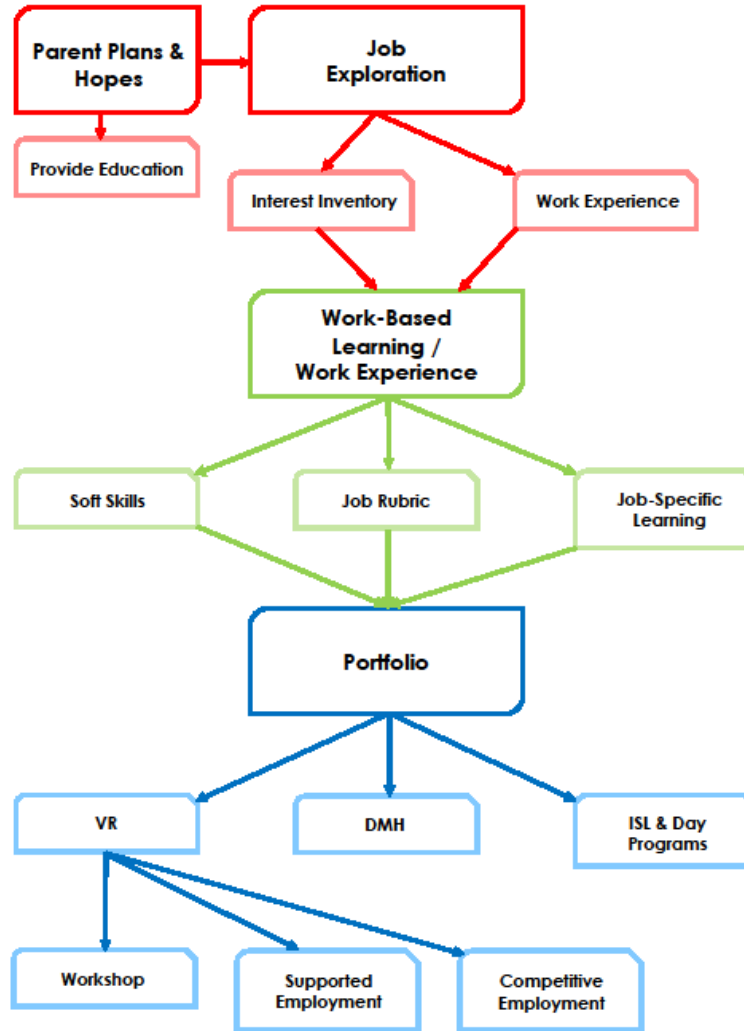


# How We Look Now






(Horizons Process Map)

## PRE-ETS (MSSD) PROCESS







# How We Look Now

## Job Exploration (one of the tenants of WIOA)

-  Pictorial Interest Inventory
-  Hands-on/Observation
-  Job Shadowing

## Work-Based Learning (WIOA)

-  School-Based Jobs
-  Community-Based Volunteering
-  Project Discovery Boxes
-  Task Boxes

# How We Look Now



***VALID ASSESSMENT:*** Learning how to assess, communicate with, and teach self-advocacy to non-verbal students

- Expressive vs. Receptive
- Save effort by learning best communication methods from family or teachers
- Modeling vs. problem solving
- Repeat opportunities



**Creativity**



# How We Look Now



Creating work experiences within the framework of employment and life skills opportunities that already exist at their schools



Tailored to individual student needs, school desires, and specialist strengths



# Why This Works for Our Learners



Repetition solidifies skills



Real experiences are more effective learning tools for our learners than hypothetical scenarios, role play, or traditional educational approaches



# Why This Works for Our Learners



We start with relationships, so...

- Our students trust us when we encourage them to learn something new.
- We know what satisfaction looks like for them individually when they enjoy their work.



# Part II

# Application

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# Ideas for You!






## Tips:

- 🐾 Change mindset from a deficit model to a strength model
- 🐾 Collaborate
- 🐾 Valid assessment
- 🐾 Effect of time elapsed (loss of skills)
- 🐾 Familiar settings, Routines



# Ideas for You!

-  Jeff – in school jobs, lack of problems solving, blossoming in Goodwill volunteer job
-  Marilyn – in school activities, lacks problem solving, now washing dishes for the school
-  Grant – echolalic, after collaborating with teacher learned he has a sense of humor and was pretending to not understand me, now sorting animals into mammals, reptiles, birds, and fish while learning about animal care workers

# Ideas for You!










## Job carving

- VA job folding towels
  - 1 hour/day cleaning/shelf facing job at gas station
  - 1 hour/day pulling colored tag clothing at Goodwill
  - Hanging up clothes at thrift store
  - Sweeping floors at a cabinet shop
  - Folding blankets at a daycare
  - Student with Asperger's folding fitted sheets at hotel
- \*\*\*very few of these students demonstrated job skill competence on the first day!!\*\*\*



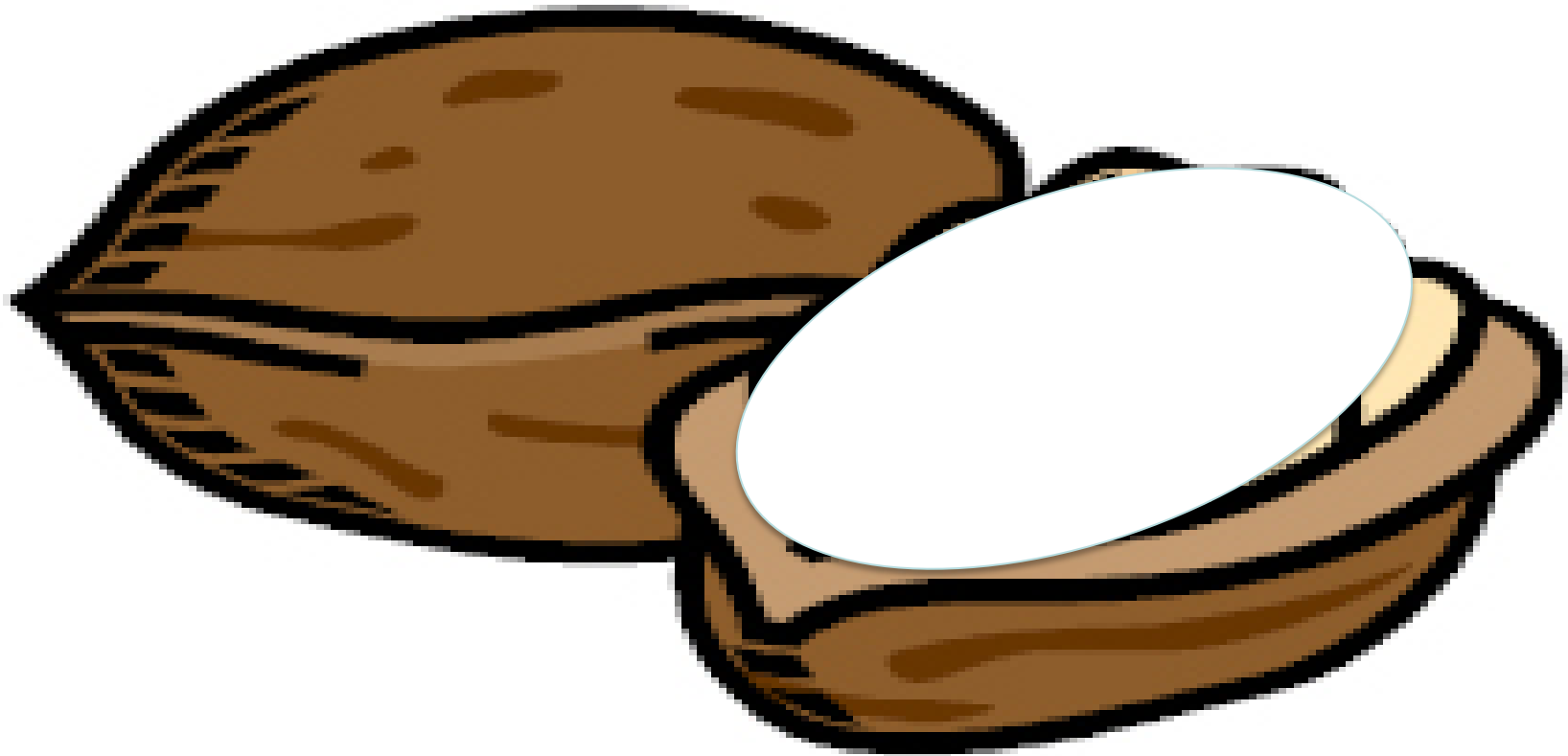
# Collaboration with Partners

-  Parents
-  School Personnel
-  Vocational Rehabilitation
-  Department of Mental Health
-  Community-specific services
-  Employers
-  Local Businesses

# Collaboration with Partners

- 🐾 Assume the best
- 🐾 Humility/Attitude of service
  - 🐾 There's no place for ego/territorialism in this game!
  - 🐾 There is enough work for all of us.
- 🐾 Communication
- 🐾 Persistence
- 🐾 Appreciation!!

Share your nugget!!



# Questions?

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