

Self-Determination for Secondary School Students

Objective: To teach **self-determination** to secondary school students by emphasizing skills that prepare them for the expectations of the next environment.

Setting and materials:

Setting: Students choose a family member or friend to accompany and support her or him through the learning experience.

Materials: The Steps to Self-Determination curriculum (Field & Hoffman, 1992) handouts and worksheets and teaching transparencies are to be provided. The transparencies include both text-based explanations and cartoon figures to illustrate concepts. Participant manuals are provided for students. These manuals have a place for students to record their experiences in the program, including worksheets, homework, and progress toward their personal goals.

Content taught

Orientation session: Overview of curriculum/planning for the workshop (What is self-determination?)

Workshop:

1. Getting to know each other
2. Overview of curriculum
3. Self-awareness
4. Self-acceptance
5. Rights and responsibilities
6. Accessing support from families and friends
7. Supporting the self-determination of others
 - Session 1: Dreaming to open possibilities
 - Session 2: What is important to me?
 - Session 3: Creating options for long-term goals
 - Session 4: Setting long-term goals
 - Session 5: Steps to short-term goals
 - Session 6: Planning steps to reach short-term goals
 - Session 7: Planning activities to reach short-term goals
 - Session 8: Taking the first step (risk taking)
 - Session 9: Creative barrier breaking
 - Session 10: A little help from my friends (the power of the group in solving problems)

Session 11: Journey to self-determination (role models: disability and self-determination)
Session 12: Assertive communication I
Session 13: Assertive communication II
Session 14: Negotiation
Session 15: Conflict resolution
Session 16: Where do we go from here?

Teaching Procedure

1. Designed to be delivered in one 55-minute orientation session, one 6-hour workshop session, and 16 sessions of approximately 55 minutes.
2. The curriculum is to be delivered either as part of a regularly scheduled class or scheduled as an extracurricular activity.
3. Optimal class size is 15 to 16 students.
4. The planning is conducted in class, where teachers are available as resources, and the applied learning takes place both in class and in the community.
5. Homework consists of completing the steps of the student's individualized plan to attain her or his goal.
6. Opportunities to share their work or experience are provided to the students each week at the beginning of the class.

Method of Evaluation

Self-Determination Observation Checklist (SDOC)

The SDOC is a behavioral observation checklist that may be administered by teachers or other appropriate school personnel. The student is observed for five 1-minute intervals during a class period. Thirty-eight behaviors that have been found to be correlates of self-determination in the classroom are checked if they are present during the time interval, resulting in a frequency count of the available behaviors as the score.

Self-Determination Knowledge Scale (SDKS)

The SDKS contains a pretest and a posttest based on the Steps to Self-Determination curriculum. These consist of 30-item structured-response tests designed to assess the student's cognitive knowledge of information and skill of self-determination taught in the curriculum. The reading level for these tests is approximately fifth grade, enabling their use with students with mild-to-moderate cognitive disabilities.

Lesson Plan Based on:

Hoffman, A., & Field, S. (1995). Promoting self-determination through effective curriculum development. *Intervention in School and Clinic*, 30, 134-141.

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