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### **Effective transition for students with multiple disabilities (A model)**

#### **Rajesh Ramachandran (RPMF-2018)**

#### **Abstract**

Change and growth are synonymous with transition. A well-planned transition plan should assist people with disabilities in progressing in education, employment, and independent living. The plan should be tailored to the individual's interests and abilities (Philbin, 2009). The manual effective transition for students with multiple disabilities (A model) is based on scale for assessing the skills related to transition (SAST) which is a reliable and valid scale and also to standardize the development of the scale as a curriculum for transition. The scale (SAST) developed by the author was administered to the sample prior to teaching, and a post-test was conducted three months later. The scores obtained in various domains were calculated using descriptive statistics (parametric tests). As a result, it was concluded that post-test scores were higher than pre-test scores, indicating that the student significantly improved in learning the curriculum for transition. The manual presented in colourful infographic style seems to catch attention of the parents in understanding the concept of transition for students with multiple disabilities.

**Key words:** Transition, multiple disabilities

#### **Introduction**

Individuals go through various transitions throughout their lives, such as transitioning from the protected environment of family life to school, then to high school, and finally to adult life and all of the routes and opportunities that it may provide. Transitioning from youth to adulthood, changing living situations, or losing a parent or caregiver are all traumatic experiences for most people. People with multiple disabilities, on the other hand, may face much greater difficulties.

According to Blacher (2001), transition success is strongly linked to the quality of life of people with disabilities and their families. Transition is a continuous process of balancing the specifics of a parent's life with the details of their children's lives in order to attain an integrated quality of life for

the entire family. Families are typically crucial in affecting a person's quality of life and are also helpful in making career decisions, guardianship issues, advocacy issues, recreational and leisure demands, and so on. Transition planning's ultimate goal is to improve early childhood, educational, and employment outcomes for all people with multiple impairments, their families, communities, and the country.

When planning transition for students with multiple disabilities, we must keep in mind that it necessitates a clear and systematic strategy, as well as the ability to forecast when to start transition, what areas to focus on, who should be on the team, and how to proceed with the transition programme. Further the author here suggests to have the following 7 Ps for a transition programme to be successful, which are professional training, parent participation, public participation, private co-operation, policy implementation, provide rehabilitation, provision of technology. In the model the author here suggests that ideal transition should from the age of 14 years, need to use skills related to moving from school to adult life based on individual needs and interests.

## Review of literature

A literature review is a summary of comprehensive scientific report or a section of a scholarly work such as a book or an article or any previously published works on a particular topic. Here the author is presenting with few review so as to provide the reader with a general overview of the existing knowledge on the topic which is under deliberation here.

**Katsiyannis and Zhang (2005)** undertook a study and the goal of this study was to look at data from the National Longitudinal Transition Study on transition planning for students with intellectual disability. Data on transition planning for students with emotional/behavioural disorders (E/BD) and learning disabilities (LD) were also evaluated for comparison reasons. According to the findings of this study, (a) nearly 60% of students with intellectual disability (ID) had started transition planning by the age of 14; (b) students with ID were less involved in their transition planning (about 10% did not participate at all), less likely to provide input (less than half of those who participated), and more likely to report no progress toward transition goals than the other two groups of students; (c) general educators involvement in the students having ID transition planning was minimal, though related service personnel was more involved; (d) a small percentage of students with ID had post-transition problems.

**Pandey and Agarwal (2013)** reported in their article that As individuals with disabilities enter adulthood, youth encounter many changes and obstacles, and those who have been involved in various social care systems may face even greater challenges. Any young person's adjustment to adulthood and self-sufficiency can be difficult. When they leave school and enter the adult world, individuals with disabilities, like all young people, go through a number of life transitions. In recent years, there has been a growing awareness of the need to improve transition planning and support for young disabled people transitioning to adulthood, as well as to coordinate this support across a variety of agencies, including health and social care, youth services, leisure, careers guidance, housing, education, benefits, and employment services. In various places of the world,

**Lindsay, et. al (2017)** in their study outlined that despite the fact that kids with disabilities have a lot to gain from employment preparedness programmes, they are frequently excluded or have limited access to them. Peer electronic mentoring (e-mentoring) is one promising strategy to filling gaps in vocational programmes, as it can help people make an easier transition to adulthood by providing support to improve coping skills. Despite the rise in online communities, little is known about their impact on vocational mentorship for children and their parents who have physical limitations.

**Devadrita et. al (2019)** in their study discussed that students with intellectual disabilities benefit from postsecondary transition plans and resources in areas like independent living, postsecondary employment, and postsecondary education (ID). Although school psychologists can make a significant contribution to the transition process, past research has shown that they are often underutilised in this area, as a result, they conducted a survey to analyse school psychologists' current knowledge, attitudes, and practises surrounding transition services for kids with intellectual disabilities. According to the regression results, attitude, knowledge, and previous experience with the

ID population were all significant predictors of transition-related professional conduct performance. The relevance of instruction (direct, 3 informal, and experiential) in school psychologist delivery of transition services was underscored by responses to open-ended questions, which backed up the quantitative survey results. As a result, suggestions are made to improve school psychologist understanding of and positive attitudes toward transition planning for students with intellectual disabilities and their families.

**Trainor et. al (2019)** discussed that research has had a significant and influential role in transitional education. Despite this, far too many young people with disabilities continue to lack outcomes that are in line with their specific goals and objectives. Furthermore, hurdles to job, education, economics, and other challenges continue to exist for people with disabilities far into adulthood. As a field, there is a need to engage in good scholarship and carefully evaluate new fields of inquiry. Further they provide a paradigm for transition research in their study, with the goal of identifying critical themes and intersections where future study should focus. To highlight these possibilities, they outlined research requirements in six different areas.

**Objective:**

1. To develop a scale for assessing the skills related to transition.
2. To standardize the development of the scale cum curriculum
3. To develop a manual based on the development of the scale cum curriculum

**Scope:**

Office of special education and rehabilitative services (OSERS) defines transition as Transitioning from education to work is a goal-oriented process that includes a wide range of services that lead to employment. High school, the point of graduation, subsequent postsecondary education or adult services, and the first years of employment are all considered transitional periods. According to the Wehman, Kregal, and Bracus- 1985 transition model, vocational transition is a carefully planned process that can be initiated by either school personnel or adult service providers to establish and implement a plan for either employment or additional vocational training of a student with disability who will graduate or leave school in three to five years. This is another transition model with three stages: input and foundation, process, and employment outcome.

Pathway's model focuses on the range of options that adults should have when it comes to finding work. It emphasises the importance of broadening the range of environments in which employment can take place. The action, service, outcome, and review stages are all present in the process of making an employment-related decision. Transition, according to Wehman, Moon, Everson, Wood, and Bracus, is an interagency planning and implementation process that occurs at the local level and results in new and different outcomes for youth with disabilities.

NIMH (NIEPID) transition model shows four stages of vocational training and employment for persons with intellectual disabilities. Based on the above concept, it was felt that transition model for students with multiple disabilities is required in terms of the start of the transition process, stage wise implementation of the transition programme, assessing the abilities and planning the programme while involving the parents and caretakers. Katsiyannis 4 and Zhang (2005) examined data from the longitudinal transition study, which revealed that nearly 60% of students with intellectual disabilities had begun their transition plan by the age of 14, hence it was felt necessary to start the transition programme right at the age of 14 years for students with multiple disabilities by using the functionally relevant academic skills, ADL skills, interpersonal skill and self-engagement skills with skill based training in simulated set up and community training with the help of the local and family. The below mentioned flow chart explains the model of transition.

**Brief about the Scale**

Based on the above framework model, a scale (SAST) which could be used a pre and post evaluation Scale for assessing skills with regard to Transition was developed to assess students with multiple disabilities in the age group 14-18 years. The scale can be also used as a curriculum for

teaching students with multiple disabilities towards transition. The scale (SAST) is divided into four domains and the four domains consisted of 80 skill items altogether.

1. Functionally relevant academic skills- 27 items
2. Functionally relevant ADL skills- 24 items
3. Functionally relevant inter-personal skills- 13 items Figure 1 5
4. Functionally relevant self-engagement skills- 16 items

**Scoring:** Does on own- 5, Does with hint-4, Does with verbal encouragement-3, Does with physical encouragement-2, fully dependent-1, not applicable-0. Since most of the scale uses prompt, cues, independently, totally dependent, here it was thought to keep certain common words that are familiar with parents and caretakers in general.

### **Reliability of the Scale (SAST)**

Reliability is the degree to which an assessment tool or scale produces stable and consistent results. In order to find the reliability of the scale (SAST), inter rater reliability was carried out. So here the rater 1 is pre-test values of the scale (SAST) and rater 2 is post test values of the scale (SAST). The results using statistical analysis show that there is a high degree of positive correlation between pre and post values of the scale.

### **Validity of the Scale (SAST)**

Validity is how well the scale is developed and reflects the reality it claims to represent. In order to find the validity of the scale (SAST), the scale was initially circulated among the special educators who were attending CRE programmes of RCI at various places in the country. 120 special educators were given the scale (SAST) and they were asked to rate the content (items) of the scale in terms of highly relevant, quite relevant and somewhat relevant. The results indicated that special educators have rated the scale as highly relevant, some special educators who said somewhat relevant about the content (items) were restructured accordingly.

### **Methodology**

Research Design: A pre and post-test evaluation under experimental design was used.

### **Pilot testing**

The scale (SAST) was carried out on a random sample of 20 (12 male and 8 female) students with multiple disabilities attending Model School of NIEPMD, Chennai. The sample was administered with the scale (SAST) prior to teaching and then after 3 months of teaching, post test was carried out. The scores obtained under various domains were calculated using descriptive statistics (parametric tests) where in standard deviation, which is a quantity expression by how much the members of a group differ from the mean value for the group was done. T test was also done. So it was concluded that post test scores were higher as compared to the pre test scores which indicated that the student significantly improved in learning the curriculum towards transition.

### **Feedback of the scale (SAST) and RR transition model**

To standardize the RR transition model along with scale (SAST), the content was introduced in the CRE programme of RCI. The participants consisted of rehabilitation professionals working in the field of disabilities. The title selected for the CRE programme was Understanding Transition in the life of persons with disabilities across life span, infant, children and adolescent at Punjab, Gorakhpur, Rajasthan and Kerala having 30 participants in each of the programme. The CRE participants were asked to give the feedback on the following item; a) understanding of the concept, b) explanation of the RR transition model, c) content of the model, d) examples given on a rating scale i.e. easy, difficult, very difficult and can't say.

Similarly a parent training programme under SIPDA was organised at NIEPMD, where the author presented the RR transition model along with the scale (SAST). 60 parents participated and the majority of the parents agreed with the introduction of the transition model and requested for implementation of the same. The task analysis mentioned in the model related to the curriculum was implemented with the 20 students in the age group 14 years attending the NIEPMD model school. Each the activity as mentioned in the manual was carried out in a highly structured environment, here the author was the teacher and taught the skills, which was recorded through pictures. The author prior to starting of the implementation with regard to the activities took consent from the parents and the institution.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

Every human being is unique and has unique needs, effective transition for students with multiple disabilities (A model) is a humble attempt for training students with multiple disabilities during the transition phase. The manual, which arose from the research, focuses on the types, models, assessment planning, and other aspects of training. We know that multiple disabilities are a combination of more than one disability in a given individual, and imagine how much stress there is due to the presence of additional disability, which drastically reduces functional abilities. Countless practitioners have written a lot of books and manuals on the topic 7 Transition with incredible precision, but the manual authored here seems more for parents and caregivers to understand the idea in a simple and lucid way, so it is colourful with info graphics.

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