

Implementing the TAGG to Promote Student Centered Planning in a Comprehensive Post-Secondary Ed Program

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Objective

The purpose of this pilot study was to utilize the TAGG (Transition Assessment and Goal Generator) assessment with a student-centered triad. TAGG is an online transition assessment for individuals with disabilities, families, and professionals to use to support student-centered planning. TAGG is made up of seven sections (Strengths and Limits, Disability Awareness, Persistence, Interacting with Others, Goal Setting and Attainment, Student Involvement in IEP (changed to Advisement/ Student Planning Meetings), Support Community). Each triad member (student, advisor, parent) took the TAGG assessment. Participants were then asked clarifying and expansion questions about their response within the TAGG assessment. The purpose of collecting this information was three-fold:

- i. To determine student strengths and needs in order to help them form goals
- ii. To understand each member of the triads' perceptions of the students' strengths, career objectives, and areas to improve. This information then is used to inform specific goals with the student.
- iii. The information gathered can be helpful in guiding advisement appointments and ensuring the process is student centered.

Methods

This study was conducted in partnership with the UI REACH program, a comprehensive transition program that serves students ages 18-25 years old with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The data from this pilot study will be taken into account while making an informed decision of implementing the TAGG for future REACH students to aid in goal identification and support advisors in supporting students.

Following normal operating procedures TAGG credits were obtained from the University of Oklahoma Zarrow Center for Learning Enrichment who has already obtained IRB approval from their institution to use and implement the TAGG with individuals with disabilities, educators, and parents/caregivers. Once credits were assigned to participating triads, the student's advisor took the professional version of the TAGG. Advisors are expected to routinely collaborate with students and families to set goals; therefore, the TAGG implementation would be used as an additional tool to support this ongoing process. The author supported the students in taking their version of the TAGG by meeting in person, via telephone, Zoom, and email providing instruction and clarification on questions. The parents and families completed their version of the TAGG through digital access and email instructions. Follow up interviews were conducted to provide further information on responses given by participants. The qualitative data gathered helped validate the ratings provided by each triad member. The interviews also provided insight into the reasoning, thoughts, and feelings of the participants. Due to the TAGG being designed for secondary aged students with mild to moderate disabilities the author modified some questions. The modifications included changing the questions that referred to the students participation and leadership within

the individual education plan (IEP). As UI REACH students are post-secondary students they do not have IEP meetings. This verbiage was changed to advisement and student planning meetings. Another modification that was made to all questions was to change the phrasing "his or her" to "his/ her/ they/ their", this modification was made to be more culturally inclusive.

Within the combined overall scoring of the TAGG, students scored themselves 1.8 points higher than the other members of their triad (parent/family and professional). Additionally, parents scored their child 1.6 points higher overall than the professional member of the triad. Two areas of the assessment that parents scored vastly higher than the student and professional were Strengths and Limitations and Disability Awareness. When asked about the discrepancy in the Disability Awareness section one parent said, "I guess I have done so much to learn about their disability for so many years I assumed they knew more, but now that I think about it we have not talked about their disability itself since they were young." This sentiment is echoed within the student data as students scored themselves lowest in the categories of Disability Awareness and Support Community. When asked about the Disability Awareness section one student participant said, "I know what makes me, me. But I wish I could tell other people what makes me, me. Why I do things different than them." This highlights the need for support systems to not only teach students with disabilities how to advocate for themselves but why they need to advocate.

Conclusions

This pilot study and other research demonstrates the effectiveness of utilizing evidence based student-centered planning tools such as the TAGG. The use of TAGG and student centered planning practices encourages an open dialog between the parent, student and professional. TAGG and similar data driven tools assist support teams in using each unique strength and perceptive to best aid the student in developing and accomplishing their goals.

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