

Examples of Standardized Tests Specifically Designed for Transitions Planning with Adolescents

- * Social and Prevocational Information Battery-Revised (SPIB-R)
- * Tests for Everyday Living (TEL)
- * The Work Adjustment Scale (WAS)
- * Life-Centered Career Education (LCCE) Competency Assessment Knowledge Batteries
- * Quality of Life Questionnaire (QOL.Q)
- * Quality of Student Life Questionnaire (QSL.Q)

- * Transition Competence Battery for Deaf Adolescents and Young Adults (TCB)
- * BRIGANCE® Employability Skills Inventory
- * BRIGANCE® Life Skills Inventory
- * Responsibility and Independence Scale for Adolescents (RISA)
- * Transition Planning Inventory (TPI)

Among the published standardized assessment instruments available, only a few target two or more primary domains of transition planning, such as post-secondary education or training; employment; and life skills related to living arrangements, independent living, consumer skills, communication, personal-social skills, health, and self-determination. Adaptive behavior scales, as previously described, come closest to focusing on overall transition skills and knowledge domains, but these scales are typically used for evaluating individuals who have developmental disabilities.

Two examples of domain-referenced achievement tests that have been used in the area of post-school adjustment for well over a decade are the Social and Prevocational Information Battery-Revised (SPIB-R; Halpern, Irvin, & Munkres, 1986) and Tests for Everyday Living (TEL; Halpern, Irvin, & Landman, 1979). These tests were designed primarily for secondary students classified under the mild disabilities category. The SPIB-R was designed for adolescents and adults with mild mental retardation, whereas the TEL was designed for junior and senior high school students in remedial programs and those classified as having learning disabilities or learning handicaps. Each of these deserves mention here.

Social and Prevocational Information Battery-Revised (SPIB-R)

The SPIB-R (Halpern et al., 1986) is designed to assess knowledge in five long range goal areas generally agreed to be important for the transition and community adjustment of adolescents and adults with mild mental retardation; those areas include employability, economic self-sufficiency, family living, personal habits, and communication. The nine subtest areas relating to the five major goal areas include Banking, Budgeting, Purchasing Skills, Job Search Skills, Job-Related Behavior, Home Management, Health Care, Hygiene and Grooming, and Ability to Read Functional Signs. The battery was designed primarily for use with junior and senior high school students. The 277 items are true-false statements and are orally administered (except for a few picture items). The estimated time for administration is 20 to 30 minutes for each subtest, with 20 minutes being the desirable limit.

A criticism of the use of this instrument is that some of the items are outdated. That will be true of any non-updated test that relates to examples of daily living and social expectations. However, it does not mean the items that are still appropriate cannot be used as informative criterion-referenced knowledge items. Remember that the primary information we gain from most tests like

this is the extent to which an individual demonstrates certain knowledge regarding the items on the test that are relevant to that individual. An item may be current but not relevant for an individual. Standardized results (e.g., percentile ranks) and use of norms have less value for individual planning than does a figure indicating the percentage of correct answers to relevant items, just as we would use through informal assessments in teacher-made tests.

Tests for Everyday Living (TEL)

The TEL (Halpern et al., 1979) is an instrument for measuring achievement in seven life skill areas, including purchasing habits, banking, budgeting, health care, home management, job search skills, and job-related behavior. It was designed for junior high school students and average- or low-functioning senior high school students. Students in remedial programs and those classified as having learning disabilities or learning handicaps (not students with mild or moderate mental retardation) at both junior and senior high school levels can be included in TEL assessment. The TEL is orally administered except for 36 items which assess reading skills. The test is intended to be diagnostic at the subtest level, permitting inferences to be made about individual strengths and weaknesses for program planning. There are 245 items in the TEL, and administration time is estimated at 20 to 30 minutes for each subtest. It is recommended that the administration be scheduled over several days.

New standardized instruments have been developed recently to give teachers, school psychologists, and vocational assessment specialists more options. Nine current examples of standardized assessment instruments designed specifically for two or more areas of transition planning are The Work Adjustment Scale (McCarney, 1991), the Life-Centered Career Education (LCCE) Competency Assessment Knowledge Batteries (Brolin, 1992b), the Quality of Life Questionnaire (Schalock & Keith, 1993), the Quality of Student Life Questionnaire (Keith & Schalock, 1995), the Transition Competence Battery for Deaf Adolescents and Young Adults (Reiman & Bullis, 1993), the BRIGANCE® Employability Skills Inventory (Brigance, 1995a), the BRIGANCE® Life Skills Inventory (Brigance, 1995b), the Responsibility and Independence Scale for Adolescents (Salvia, Neisworth, & Schmidt, 1990), and the Transition Planning Inventory (Clark & Patton, 1997). All of these examples are described briefly below.

The Work Adjustment Scale (WAS)

The WAS (McCarney, 1991) is a shortened and revised version of the Transition Behavior Scale (TBS; McCarney, 1989), although both are still published independently. The WAS was designed to measure a student's readiness for transition to employment and independent living. It is a scale based on teachers' and employers' observations of behaviors that are predictive of behavior in society in general and employment specifically. It can be used with students with a wide range of disabilities and severity. The subscales of the WAS include the areas of work-related, interpersonal relations, and social-community expectations. The scale has items reflecting school and community work behaviors that are observed and rated by at least three persons (teachers and/or work supervisors) with primary observational opportunities. The rater is directed to rate each item on a 3-point scale: 0 equals does not perform the behavior, 1 equals performs the behavior inconsistently, and 2 equals performs the behavior consistently. The scale can be completed in approximately 15 minutes. Scoring is simple, and a raw score conversion table provides a percentile ranking for the student for comparison with a national standardization sample. The percentile ranks provide a base of comparison for screening employment and community participation readiness, and aid in identifying areas of concern for transition-readiness decision making. (Note: Due to the similarities of the WAS and the TBS, both instruments should be evaluated before selecting one over the other or using both.)

Life-Centered Career Education (LCCE) Competency Assessment Knowledge Batteries

The LCCE Competency Assessment Knowledge Batteries (Brolin, 1992b) is a curriculum-based instrument designed to assess the career education knowledge and skills of special

education students, especially those with mild intellectual and severe learning disabilities in Grades 7 through 12. It is a standardized, criterion-referenced instrument consisting of 200 multiple-choice questions distributed across each of the three domains of the LCCE model (Brolin, 1989) and the Life-Centered Career Education Curriculum Program (Brolin, 1992a). There are 10 questions for each of the first 20 of the 22 competencies of the LCCE model. The batteries are designed to be used in conjunction with the LCCE Competency Assessment Performance Batteries (Brolin, 1992c; see description in the section on non-standardized transitions assessments).

Quality of Life Questionnaire (QOL.Q)

The QOL.Q (Schalock & Keith, 1993) was designed to assess quality of life as an outcome measure for persons with developmental disabilities, but the authors claim that it may be used with any disability population. Items are organized in sub-scale sections focusing on satisfaction, competence/productivity, empowerment/independence, and social belonging/community integration, all of which are areas of concern for assessing independent living and self-determination. In addition to a total score, there are separate percentile scores for each of the subscales. The scale is administered in an interview format, with questions directed to the individual and responses restricted to a 3-point scale, forced-choice response format. Administration time is estimated at 20 minutes. This instrument is not to be confused with the Canadian instrument by the same name which was developed for use with adults of normal cognitive abilities by Evans and Cope (1989).

Quality of Student Life Questionnaire (QSL.Q)

The QSL.Q (Keith & Schalock, 1995) is complementary to the QOL.Q and grew out of the authors' work with the QOL.Q. The QSL.Q's focus on secondary and post-secondary students with disabilities is designed to assess the psychological and social indicators that represent subjective student reactions to and perceptions of life experiences while in school. The scale has 40 items measuring four factors: satisfaction, well-being, social belonging, and empowerment/control, all of which are areas of interest in assessing certain features of self-determination. The QSL.Q may be administered to students who have sufficient receptive and expressive language (natural or augmented) to understand and to respond to the questions, through either an interview or a written questionnaire format. Administration time is estimated at 15 minutes. A total score can be obtained through hand scoring or through the QSL.Q scoring software. Percentile ranks can be estimated for hand-scored scales or can be calculated automatically through the software scoring program. Norms are based on secondary and post-secondary student populations.

Transition Competence Battery for Deaf Adolescents and Young Adults (TCB)

The TCB (Reiman & Bullis, 1993) was designed as a specialized assessment for transition competence of individuals who are deaf. It comprises six subtests: Job Seeking Skills for Employment, Work Adjustment Skills for Employment, Job Related Social/Interpersonal Skills, Money Management Skills for Independent Living, Health and Home Skills for Independent Living, and Community Awareness Skills for Independent Living. The average readability for the entire battery is 4.17, which is consistent with the estimated average reading level of the adult deaf population. The format permits individual or small group administration using a three-option multiple-choice format. Items are presented through a signed (Pidgin Signed English), color videodisk presentation (Bullis, Reiman, Davis, & Thorkildsen, 1994) in combination with a simply worded and illustrated test booklet. The battery consists of 243 items and administration time is about 4 hours. The TCB was standardized on students from both mainstreamed and residential settings and gives, for the first time, a language-appropriate, content-relevant, standardized measure of transition skills for persons who are deaf.

BRIGANCE® Employability Skills Inventory

The BRIGANCE® Employability Skills Inventory (Brigance, 1995a) is complementary to the BRIGANCE® Life Skills Inventory (Brigance, 1995b). It is made up of six subtests: Career Awareness and Understanding, Job-Seeking and Knowledge, Reading Skills, Speaking and Listening Skills, Pre-employment Writing, and Math Skills and Concepts. The inventory provides optional supplemental assessment through rating scales for students and/or teachers and parents. The rating scales include the areas of self-concept and attitudes, responsibility and self-discipline, motor coordination and job requirements, thinking skills/abilities and job requirements, job interview preparation, job interview skills, and work experience. The instrument has approximately 1,400 items and requires students to be able to read and comprehend high school-level material or have it read to them. It was designed for use with high school and adult populations in assessing a comprehensive array of career development and employability skills.

BRIGANCE® Life Skills Inventory

The BRIGANCE® Life Skills Inventory (Brigance, 1995b) was designed for use with high school students with mild cognitive and learning disabilities. The BRIGANCE® Life Skills Inventory is a criterion-referenced instrument, assessing life skills knowledge in the areas of speaking and listening skills, functional writing skills, money and finance, food, clothing, health, and travel and transportation. The inventory may be administered individually or in groups, and there is an oral or written administration option. Like its companion inventory, the BRIGANCE® Employability Skills Inventory (Brigance, 1995a), this inventory includes optional student rating scales. Scales are available in the areas of speaking skills, listening skills, health practices and attitudes, self-concept, and auto safety. The rating scales may be completed by students as self-ratings, by teachers or parents, or by both. There is a Learner Record Book provided to show a record of performance and instructional objectives generated from the results. There is also an optional Program Record Book provided to track progress of a group or class if the inventory is used as a curriculum-based assessment.

Responsibility and Independence Scale for Adolescents (RISA)

The RISA (Salvia, Neisworth, & Schmidt, 1990) is a measure specifically designed to assess adolescents' behavior in terms of responsibility and independence. It is similar to adaptive behavior scales but, unlike most adaptive behavior scales that focus on low-level skills and persons with developmental disabilities, the RISA targets higher level behaviors and is appropriate for many students with mild disabilities, at-risk students, or juvenile offenders. Subscales include domestic skills, money management, citizenship, personal planning, transportation skills, career development, self-management, social maturity, and social communication. The scale is appropriate for students aged 12-0 through 19-11. Scale scores and percentile ranks are norm-referenced indicators. The administration time is 30 to 45 minutes.

Transition Planning Inventory (TPI)

The TPI (Clark & Patton, 1997) is designed to provide school personnel with a systematic way not only to comply with the federal mandate for addressing transition service planning, but also to engage in the recommended practices of IEP planning for transition services found in many states' transition guidelines. The TPI is composed of five parts: a student form, a home form, a school-based personnel form, and a profile and further assessment recommendations form. The student, the student's parents/guardians, and professionals at school participate independently in the assessment.

The TPI consists of 46 transition planning statements, organized according to the following nine planning areas: employment, further education/training, daily living, living arrangements, leisure activities, community participation, health, self-determination, communication, and interpersonal relationships. Each of the planning areas has at least three items related to

knowledge, skills, or behaviors associated with successful adjustment in that area. The fundamental dimension evaluated in each TPI item is the level of agreement with statements reflecting present level of performance or current level of functioning that the student consistently displays in each planning area. A scale of 0 to 5 (0 equals strongly disagree; 5 equals strongly agree) provides the rater with a range of agreement over the extent to which the outcome represented in each item has been achieved and is consistently performed. In addition to the ratings of knowledge, skills, and behavior, the TPI student and home forms request preferences and interests in likely postschool settings (employment, further education or training, and living arrangements). Further, the student form is divided into two parts, with Part 2 presenting 15 questions eliciting responses regarding interests and preferences on current and future activities. A similar component is provided for parents as an optional activity in the administration guide. Both of these sources of information supplement the data on present level of functioning to help focus planning on the student's preferences and interests as well as his or her strengths and needs. A Profile and Further Assessment Form accompanies the inventory and serves two functions: (a) the profile section provides a visual reference for summarizing and comparing the information obtained from all parties and for identifying the type of planning that needs to be undertaken (i.e., IEP goals or linkage activities), and (b) the further assessment recommendations section provides professionals involved in the assessment and planning process with an opportunity to point out areas for which there exists no information or for which more intensive, specific assessment is needed before the IEP can be completed or before any future IEP planning activities are begun.