

Research Highlights

Topic: Self-Determination

Agran, M., Blanchard, C., & Wehmeyer, M. (2000). Promoting transition goals and self-determination through student self-directed learning: The self-determined learning model of instruction. *Education and Training in Mental Retardation and Development Disabilities*, 35, 351-364.

BOTTOM LINE

A description of the field-test results using single-subject design of the *Self-Determined Learning Model of Instruction* (SDLMI) is provided. This model enables teachers to teach students to set goals, take action on those goals, and adjust their goals and plans as needed. Seventeen of the 19 students with more significant disabilities in the field test made changes that exceeded teachers' expectations. The model is effective for students with a variety of disabilities. Students with mild mental retardation, learning disabilities, or significant disabilities will benefit from specific training in self-determination.

TIPS

- Students can set goals and solve problems with help from teachers or parents using the Self-Determined Learning Model of Instruction.
- Have students think about what they would like to learn or do. It's amazing how accurately students can decide what they need to learn, and this student involvement supports goal achievement.

KEY FINDINGS

- All but two of the 19 participating students improved their performance of target behaviors after instruction with the *Self-Determined Learning Model of Instruction*.
- For students participating in the study, 89 percent of their goals met or exceeded educational expectations as evaluated by their teachers.
- Initial findings indicate that individuals are more motivated to change their behavior when they have a direct and active role in their educational process.

METHOD

- Nineteen students, 12 male and 7 female, identified as having a disability participated in the study. Students were receiving special education services at a middle school, high school, or through a public-school post-secondary education program.
- Target behaviors identified by participants were related to transition goals. These goals included work, social, academic and community living skills. To achieve these goals, students followed the problem-solving model after receiving instruction. Teachers provided students with opportunities to practice their targeted behaviors and problem-solving skills.
- Six teachers and eight paraprofessionals collected data throughout the baseline, training, and post-training conditions of the study. Teachers were asked to complete a Goal Attainment Scale (GAS) for each student as a measure of goal attainment and program effectiveness.

RELATED PUBLICATIONS

- Agran, M., Blanchard, C., & Wehmeyer, M. (2000). Promoting transition goals and self-determination through student self-directed learning: The self-determined learning model of instruction. *Education and Training in Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, 35*, 351-364.
- Sands, D. L., & Wehmeyer, M. L. (1996). *Self-determination across the lifespan: Independence and choice for people with disabilities*. Baltimore: Brookes.
- Wehmeyer, M. L., Agran, M., & Hughes, C. (1998). *Teaching self-determination to students with disabilities: Basic skills for successful transition*. Baltimore: Brookes.

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