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A MASTERS THESIS  
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY  
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BY

COURTNEY E. PETERSON

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INDEPENDENT LIVING SKILLS CURRICULUM: A LITERATURE REVIEW WITH  
APPLICATION EMPHASIS

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### Abstract

This literature review with application thesis examines functional daily living and adaptive behavior skills teaching methods utilizing a community-based instructional approach for students with disabilities. The literature review data and supplemental research-based educational practices provides the foundation for the Independent Living Skills Curriculum designed for students with varied disabilities in grades 9-12. The curriculum introduces intentional instruction in units that begin with foundational skills and scaffold until students can generalize skills for community engagement and independent living. The curriculum targets functional skills in communication, reading, writing, social awareness, and problem solving while implementing research-based instructional methods that address the National Transition and Minnesota English Language Standards.

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## CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Students with disabilities enjoy field trips and community experiences, just like their mainstream peers. Students with disabilities also get many benefits from participating in the experiences that field trips offer. However, some think that bringing students with disabilities on field trips is much more difficult than mainstream students due to barriers for students and behaviors that teachers might have to manage. In my experience, students with disabilities enjoy these non-traditional experiential learning opportunities. In addition to enjoying movement, fresh air, and change of scenery, students benefit from discovery and learning in environments that provide the means to create connections between classroom learning and real-world applications. Students with disabilities benefit greatly from opportunities to learn and practice skills in natural and classroom environments. Students in special education, more so than mainstream students, need intentionally planned teaching approaches to ensure successful experiences and skill generalization. All students benefit from intentional approaches, but functional skills and adaptive behavior developmental deficits are greater for special education students. Community-based instruction (CBI) has existed as long as teachers have taken students on field trips for the purpose of generalizing functional and adaptive behaviors learned in classrooms. This practice helps to increase student independence. Functional and adaptive behavior skills such as sitting calmly and quietly on a bus, waiting in line, choosing and paying for items, or taking turns, are skills that are naturally reinforced when students are taken on field trips. Additionally, students are exposed to the academic concepts identified as the designated purpose of the field trip.

The opportunity for these experiences can be limited for some students with disabilities, including those on the autism spectrum due to sensory sensitivities, social ineptitudes, low

expectations, and barriers. ASD students need routine, visuals, and clearly defined expectations that can most easily be controlled in a pre-planned, organized classroom setting. This setting could be a special or general education setting but requires extra time, work, and resources that are not always available. Students with disabilities, especially those in center-based programming, are rarely given opportunities to participate in community outings to experience learning or to transfer skills in non-traditional environments, especially not to the extent needed to achieve skills mastery. Some center-based students receive programming in the same classroom for the entire school day without sunlight, fresh air, or interactions with others. This fact evokes my hypothesis: would special education students who receive instruction in a limited number of settings gain the same benefit as neurotypical students from experiential learning? Would skills transfer in community-based instructional settings?

I chose the topic: discovering personal growth as a result of intentional community-based instructional learning opportunities paired with research-based practices for students with significant disabilities. I am interested in how strategic, well-planned, pre-taught interventions, and learning strategies can affect students' development, learning, and success beyond high school when supports and expectations change. I worked with students with disabilities who participated in community-based instructional outings where coursework was related to curriculum outcomes. Conversely, I have also worked with students in similar settings who were rarely offered community-based opportunities due to the schools' lack of resources, strong beliefs in consistent routine, behavioral concerns, and low student expectations due to challenges with processing and cognitive development. Educating students in community settings can be stressful because it challenges students beyond their comfort levels. The opportunity to transfer classroom skills provided in new settings may enhance learning in unexpected areas, even



beyond community-based vocational instructional opportunities, the most widely known and researched experiential learning opportunity for students with disabilities. Community-Based Instruction (CBI) has been introduced, practiced, and researched as an educational approach to facilitate the generalization of functional and adaptive behavior skills into natural environments for students with disabilities. What barriers are there to acquiring independent living skills? What other research-based practices should be included to maximize student skill mastery? How would the curriculum be designed?

Students with disabilities struggle with functional daily living skill acquisition, adaptive behaviors, and the ability to generalize or transfer skills learned in the classroom to natural environments (Steere and DiPipi-Hoy, 2012, p. 60). Functional daily living skills can range from social communication and understanding nonverbal social cues to folding laundry and grocery shopping. Functional daily living skills include all of the skills that individuals need to function independently as members of society. Adaptive behaviors refer to the functional, conceptual, and social skills that people need to “adapt” and function within an environment (Dell’Armo & Tassé, 2018, p. 1639).

Research has also shown a variety of perceived barriers when individuals with disabilities participate in their home communities. The barriers include lack of community supports, opportunities for training, reactions to behaviors, social skills, and expectations of skill mastery. This list highlights the need to find ways to mitigate these barriers. In addition to barriers faced by students with disabilities, the support network (special education teachers, staff, or family members) face a variety of barriers in trying to provide relevant, appropriate community experiences including recreation and leisure activities (Kim & Dymond, 2010, p. 319) ;(Pickens & Dymond, 2014, p. 292). In classrooms where I teach a variety of students with disabilities,

including those with autism and other communication disorders, I experience the perceived barriers noted in literature. Members of the students' support team, including parents and school personnel, share their struggles with teaching students how to manage emotions, behaviors, communication, and how to adapt to the environmental barriers that persist in supporting these individuals. The struggles noted by support teams raise concerns about how students acquire and demonstrate competence in functional daily living skills. Some barriers include: resources, transportation, funding, staff support, difficulties with social participation and communication, comprehension, and low expectations.

It is important for students with disabilities to practice skills that promote independence in daily life. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004) requires all schools to assist students in working toward and practicing skills in specified transition goal areas so that individuals with disabilities can acquire adaptive behavior and functional daily living skills. The goals are incorporated into individualized education plans (IEP's) for students with disabilities. Areas of transition include post-secondary education and training, independent living, and employment. Under IDEA (2004), students should be included in the transition planning process and have the right to contribute to their overall transition programming goals. Consequently, due to unique learning needs and barriers, it sometimes seems that transition is the most difficult area for students with disabilities to show progress.

In addition to resources, transportation, funding, and expectations barriers, students with disabilities typically process and learn at a slower pace, have social skill deficits, struggle with comprehension, and need additional support to build adaptive behaviors that promote becoming successful members of a community. Even though individuals with disabilities and their support systems face many barriers to acquiring independence, a variety of research-based practices have

promoted skill development and progress towards independence. Through my experience as a special education teacher, when research-based educational practices are used, and teachers' expectations for students are raised, students are capable of acquiring functional daily living and adaptive behavior skills, more than some people realize. Many factors must be considered when teaching the identified skills to students. A consistent and coordinated effort from all people involved paired with encouragement, patience, and implementation of proven researched educational strategies is required for students to acquire targeted skills. Proven researched educational practices are integral for generalization of functional daily living and social skills into natural environments. These practices include constant time delay (Yuan et al., 2019), task analysis (Kamps & Parker, 2011), visuals (Meadan et al., 2011), prompting and fading systems (Gil et al., 2019), video modeling (Alzyoudi, M. et. Al, 2014), (Hart Barnett, 2018), giving choices (Hart Barnett, 2018), direct instruction (Randi, J., et. al, 2010), simulated instruction (Barczak, 2019), scheduling arrangements (Cihak et al., 2004), and community-based instruction (Dubberly, 2012).

Based on student barriers and transition needs, I discovered through research that many programs and curricula are designed to teach students vocational and pre-employment skills. I teach at a school with vocational programs for students, but rarely have students been exposed to structured and intentional independent living skills curricula. The independent living skills program targets a wide range of concepts including community participation, recreation and leisure, transportation, self-care, and home living. Through working in schools with special education students, I have found the need for an independent living skills curriculum that covers a wide scope of adaptive behavioral skills. Successfully mastering functional skills helps individuals' function as independent adults. Students with significant disabilities need skills

made achievable through task analysis and time to learn and generalize each skill. Research by Tint et al. (2016) found that lack of community programs was a perceived barrier to community engagement and living skills (p. 176). Students with disabilities need engaging opportunities within their communities to practice and generalize skills learned in classrooms and home environments. I focused on research-based educational practices to design a curriculum that delivers instruction focused on student acquisition and mastery of functional life skills.

## **CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Literature Search Procedures**

To find the literature and information for this thesis, searches of Education Journals, Academic Search Premier, Psychology Database, ERIC, PSYCHInfo, and EBSCO MegaFILE were conducted for studies and publications from 2010-2020. The key words used in the searches included: “service learning,” “disabilities,” “community-based instruction,” “fieldtrips,” “intellectual disabilities,” “barriers,” “researched based practice,” “transition needs,” “social skills,” “functional skills,” “strategies for generalizing skills learned outside of the classroom,” “evidence based practice,” “transition standards,” “autism spectrum disorders,” “autism,” “school barriers,” “independent living,” “research based practice,” “parents,” “special education teachers,” and “community participation.” Parameters were “peer reviewed journals,” published between the years of 2010 and 2020. This chapter is structured to review the literature on barriers that youth with disabilities face regarding social situations, community involvement, and independent living; researched educational practices that benefit and increase generalization of functional skills in individuals with disabilities; benefits of implementing community-based instruction; and sensory need fulfillment opportunities during community based instructional activities.

### **Barriers to Transition in Students with Disabilities**

It is commonly known that individuals with disabilities face a variety of barriers daily. Barriers create further limitations in cognitive and social development which can have lifelong consequences. For this thesis research, disability is defined as “a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.” (National Network, 2020). Transition skills identified in the Individual Education Plan (IEP) for students with

disabilities targets the development of adaptive functioning (functional skills) and independent living skills (daily living skills). Daily Living Skills are defined as “a wide range of personal self-care activities across home, school, work, and community settings. Most daily living skills, like food preparation and personal hygiene, need to be performed on a regular basis to master a reasonable level of health and safety. Adaptive functioning was defined as an “individual’s ability to care for self and function independently, is a primary consideration when supporting individuals with autism and other disabilities,” (Stabel, 2013). Adaptive behavior functioning is a predeterminant to success in post school outcomes (Dell’Armo et al., 2018). “Daily living skills constitute a critical domain in adaptive behavior which are defined as behaviors necessary for age-appropriate, independent functioning in social, communication, daily living, or motor areas” (Smith et al., 2012). Studies found that individuals with disabilities were more likely to struggle in the areas of social skills, employment, community engagement, and independent living skills.

### **Independent Living and Community Engagement Barriers**

Gray et al. (2014) noted that socioeconomic status, IQ, behavior and emotional problems, and comorbid Intellectual Disability can all impact independence levels in the three areas of Transition (p. 3013). Children and adolescents with autism mastered daily living skills at a faster rate than adults with autism (Smith et al., 2012). However, by the age of 30, adults with autism showed a decline in mastery of daily living skills. Subjects of a study conducted by Smith et al. (2012) showed that adults past 30 years old with autism had 2/3 independent completion rates of daily living skills targeted during the study compared to earlier years. For adults with autism and comorbid disabilities, completion and skill mastery rates were lower, even in childhood and adolescent years. Though each study had limitations, all identified the need for interventions to target social skills, community engagement, and daily independent living skill acquisition and

retention (Smith et al., 2012); (Gray et al., 2014). Students with severe disabilities have difficulties generalizing skills learned in the classroom to different settings (Steere and DiPipi-Hoy, 2012, p. 60). They benefit from consistent community-based instruction (CBI) programs with the goal to generalize daily living skills such as ordering from menus, grocery shopping, and crossing streets. Students with severe disabilities learn at a slower pace and need repeated exposure to skill building activities to truly acquire the skills. Short infrequent community trips to practice skills makes mastery or generalizing skills challenging for individuals with severe disabilities (Steere and DiPipi-Hoy, 2012, p. 60).

To help students with disabilities become successful in the three areas of transition: post-secondary education, independent living, and employment, it is important to look at research focused on preparation for adulthood. Social participation is one of most important predictors of the children's physical and mental health and is included in the transition process. Without social participation it is exceedingly difficult for a child to work toward post-secondary education, independent living (including community engagement), and employment goals. Although it is evidenced that children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) have restricted social participation, it is unclear which social factors play a significant role. Children with ASD participate less in their community than similar aged peers without disabilities. Research from Egilson et al. (2016, p. 193), using The Participation and Environment Measure for Children and Youth, found that children with autism participated but were significantly less involved in their communities than similar aged peers nondisabled peers. Parents were also noted as “less satisfied” with their children’s involvement in the community than similarly aged peers.

Similar research was conducted that included individuals with intellectual disabilities (ID) seeking to understand the extent to which individuals with ASD and ID participated in their

communities, along with barriers and potential factors that could be targeted through intervention to increase community participation. Tint et al. (2016) sought to find community participation barriers and factors to increase participation through online surveys. Online surveys were given to the caregivers of 212 Special Olympics youth with ASD and ID and with only ID between the ages of 11 and 22. Barriers found in the survey included social pressures of community-based activities and environmental factors (Tint et al., 2016, p. 169). The “cognitive demands of community activities and lack of appropriate available programmes,” were also noted as a community participation barrier by caregivers in the surveys (Tint et al., 2016, p. 176). These findings suggested that appropriate programs to support community participation and psychosocial skill development would help increase community participation in children and youth with disabilities (Tint et al., 2016, p. 176).

### **Social Participation Barriers**

Social skills and participation are barriers for individuals with disabilities. Research completed by Shattuck et al. (2011) showed that adolescents with autism were less likely to engage in social activities than their same-aged peers and experienced barriers to social participation. The study included data from three different sources: parent/guardian telephone interviews, National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS-2) school participant interviews, and special educator interviews from participating schools. Participants in the NLTS-2 included 11,000 special education students between 7<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade who were surveyed in two waves, once in 2001 and again in 2009. The research by Shattuck et al. (2011) included data derived from the 2001 sample of students diagnosed with autism by DMS-IV standards. Their research found that adolescents with ASD were more likely to interact with peers one-on-one in home settings than to participate in social groups or events in the community. Additionally, adolescents



with ASD were also found to participate more volunteering and taking classes outside of school than to participate in social activities with peers (Shattuck et al., 2011). “With only one-third of adolescents with ASD accessing such opportunities, there is an obvious need for greater supports and services to promote community inclusion for this population,” (Shattuck et al., 2011). Also contributing to lack of social participation included conversational impairment and low social communication skills.

Additional research by Ghanouni et al. (2019, p. 3139) found that there were three main barriers to social participation in youth with ASD including limited understanding of social situations, maladaptive behaviors, and provision of services. The researchers used interviews and three stakeholder focus groups to collect data on target points to find these three barriers and additional information regarding social participation. Stakeholder groups were comprised of community members who volunteered their time and were recruited by emails and posters sent to organizations and clinics that supported and served this particular demographic. The stakeholder groups included youth with ASD between the ages of 13 and 17, parents, and service providers of youth with ASD. Questions asked in the focus groups and interviews related to challenges and barriers faced by the youth. Information was collected through guided discussion and follow-up questions. Discussions were recorded and field notes taken to reflect information gathered from the discussion. Interviews were used when stakeholders could not participate in the focus groups. Themes found during the interviews and focus groups were the difficulty for youth clinically diagnosed with ASD to “pick up cues” in social situations. Social situations ebb and flow, they are conditional and fluid, and one of the clinicians noted that it was difficult for children with ASD to understand and grasp the “social nuances,” (Ghanouni et al., 2019, p. 3139).

“Many other barriers to positive social experiences described by participants related to maladaptive behaviors of children with ASD is social situations” (Ghanouni et al., 2019, p. 3140). Experiencing maladaptive behaviors, such as impulse control or the lack of desire or inability to dominate conversation, could lead to negative social experiences that decrease confidence in students’ abilities to socially interact appropriately, which overall decreases motivation to practice skills. Ghanoumi et al. (2019, p. 3140) stated that these maladaptive behaviors and inability to self-regulate and monitor, can lead to negative social experiences and peer rejection, which “consequently, limits their [student’s] involvement in social situations.”

Finally, throughout the study, lack of services, training, and opportunities were barriers to social interaction for youth with ASD (Ghanouni et al., 2019, p. 3140). Participants in the study identified lack of social skills opportunities for youth as the source of increasing difficulties they faced as they aged. Additionally, social skills were not typically targeted as an area of need in the transition components of students’ IEP’s. One of the clinicians performing the study stated that “They [instructors] won’t write in ‘a goal around friendship’ because they say that that is too much to ask of the school” (Ghanouni et al., 2019, p. 3140). Other clinicians in the study stated that teachers and paraprofessionals in schools rarely prioritized giving students’ opportunities to practice social skills and build friendships in natural settings and adult support was typically too overwhelming to provide students with disabilities the independence to build those relationships naturally. Schools are more focused on providing one-to-one support. The presence of an adult can make it difficult for students with disabilities to develop peer relationships. Nicole, a clinician in the study discussed the efficacy of social groups stating, “You can ask them [children with ASD] all the social questions and they probably know all the answers... But when it actually comes in real life, they don’t know what to do,” (Ghanouni et al., 2019, p. 3140). This

information supports that idea that students with disabilities aren't provided enough natural experiences to practice, acquire, and generalize skills.

### **Employment Barriers**

Employment and finding work is fundamental in our society, even for people with disabilities. The goals of education is to become a functional and contributing member of society including employment. Post-secondary education is imperative to finding future sustainable employment for individuals with disabilities and their neurotypical peers. Indicators of successful participation in postsecondary education are “primary post-high school goal for the student, parental expectations, high school type, annual household income, and academic performance” (Chiang et al., 2010). Research completed by Richard Sparks and Benjamin Lovett published in the *Journal of Learning Disabilities* (2009) suggested that “first, students with LD are less likely than their nondisabled peers to have received college preparatory curricula in high school, giving them less content knowledge and fewer skills that allow them to succeed in postsecondary programs.” Sparks and Lovett (2009) also found that students with learning disabilities did not have access to adequate research on the best fitting post-secondary program. The findings concluded that students with learning disabilities sought educational or training programs other than 4-year degrees. The research is important in identifying what transition resources and opportunities are made available to students with disabilities in comparison with their same aged peers.

Predetermining factors can influence the success rate of individuals with disabilities in obtaining and maintaining successful employment. Research completed by Holwerda et al. (2013, p. 2755), found that predeterminants of successful employment were future working expectations, gender, and living situations. Other important contributing factors predicting

whether or not participants with disabilities would find work were “perceived” parental support and parents’ attitudes regarding work. Both were key predictors in the study. For individuals with ASD, an additional contributing factor was motivation. Individuals highly motivated to find work, in addition to living independently and being expected to work, were more successful in finding employment than those without these attributing factors (Holwerda et al., 2013, p. 2758). When determining successful maintenance of work, predetermined factors for individuals with developmental disorders included gender, age, and “positive attitude of social environment regarding work.” For those with ASD, the predetermined factors included living situation and positive attitude of social environment regarding work (Holwerda et al., 2013, p. 2758). Expectations for working was noted across groups of individuals with disabilities for both finding and maintaining employment. Those who were expected to work were more likely to obtain and maintain employment when compared to those who were not expected to work.

### **Barriers to Transition Practice and CBI Integration**

Beyond the employment, social, community, and independent living barriers faced by students with disabilities, are barriers to practicing transition skills that would help to mitigate barriers. Dubberly (2012) stated that CBI’s are a vital component in transition planning for students with disabilities to build both vocational and functional daily living skills (p. 36). Students who participate in CBI’s have increased socially appropriate community behaviors, improved working habits, and community independence (Dubberly, R., 2012, p. 36). Dubberly (2012) studied how CBI’s could benefit the targeted transition areas for students and sought perspectives from individuals with disabilities (p. 37). To create successful CBI programs, Dubberly (2012) stated that it was imperative to “understand how students with intellectual disabilities perceive the community-based instruction program as a component of their post-

school transition plan,” (p. 37). Dubberly’s (2012) research was comprised of 47 randomized participants who participated in weekly CBI’s. Participants completed surveys by answering descriptive questions to gain perceptions about the participants CBI experiences (p. 38) The surveys targeted five areas of understanding and perceptions: “satisfaction of the program, learning, self-esteem, independent functioning, and social skills,” (p. 39). Results from the study conveyed that students were satisfied with the CBI programs and found them beneficial in working toward their IEP goals. All participants indicated higher levels in each of the five constructs targeted in the surveys, demonstrating perceived barriers of CBIs (Dubberly, R., 2012, p. 41). However, more research and practice are needed to find ways to make the CBI experience meaningful for students and create connections between school and community learning (Dubberly, R., 2012, p. 42).

Schools and teachers face obstacles to effective program implementation even though research proves that CBI is an effective intervention strategy for students to acquire and build on functional daily living and social skills. Teachers also face barriers during community instruction including community relations, transportation, adult support, scheduling arrangements, administrative support, liability, and financial considerations. Without support and administrators’ belief in program effectiveness, it is unlikely that teachers would gain approval for resources needed to effectively implement CBI intervention programs. Pickens and Dymond (2015) studied administrators’ and directors’ perspectives of CBI programs, because their perspectives can be barriers implementation. Pickens and Dymond (2015) sampled special education directors, lead coordinators, and administrators in Pennsylvania. The surveys targeted characteristics, barriers, and views toward the CBI programs implemented within their school systems. With an overall response rate of 30.5% of the participants selected, Pickens and

Dymond (2015) found that barriers ranged and produced varied responses (p. 300). Staffing and public transportation were reported as two of the biggest barriers to implementing community based (vocational) programs (Pickens & Dymond, 2015, p. 300). Utilizing paraprofessionals and changing their role in CBI programs may be a solution to address the staffing barriers. Districts may need to reassess policies to better support special education teachers. Dymond and Pickens (2015) found that some districts allowed paraprofessionals to work with children unsupervised by special education teachers in community settings to focus on community goals. However, 37% of districts surveyed did not allow this practice and may be a barrier faced by teachers when implementing CBI programs (p. 300). Additionally, responses from surveys showed that only 40% of participants used public transportation for CBI (vocational) programs, further indicating that transportation was a large barrier to supporting the students' learning and experience with vocational skills and community job sites (Pickens & Dymond, 2015, p. 300).

Additional barriers in CBI programs included low expectations for specific students. The Pickens and Dymond's (2015) survey showed that 25% of respondents answered that they did not believe students with "challenging behaviors or severe disabilities," should participate in CBI (vocational) programs (p. 301). The same respondents "felt that these "types" of students must demonstrate improved behavior or skills before they are "ready" to go into the community," (Pickens & Dymond, 2015, p. 301). Low expectations by directors and school personnel served as barriers students' participation in CBI programs.

### **Benefits of Community Based Instruction Programs for Students with Disabilities**

To better increase the likelihood of independence through adulthood, Individualized Education Plans (IEP's) have goals for students 14 and older to direct educational focus on transition goals and gain independence and understanding in three areas: Independent Living,

Post-Secondary Education/Training, and Employment. Independent Living (daily living skills) is divided into Community Participation, Recreation and Leisure, and Home Living. Functional skills are imperative to daily living skills. It is a well-known fact that students with disabilities are less likely to be independent in functional life skills compared to same-age peers. There is also a large discrepancy in paid employment rates and independent living between students with disabilities and their non-disabled peers. Daviso, Denney, and Flexer (2010) reviewed that community participation documented under Transition Services in the IEP's for students who graduated or phased out of special education only received a 46.6% approval rating highlighting the need for community experiences and opportunities embedded in school curriculum so students can practice IEP skills (Hoover, 2016). A community offers extensive opportunities that allow students to practice and apply skills learned in the classroom to real life scenarios. Additionally, the community offers a variety of resources and learning experiences that cannot be replicated in the controlled classrooms environments.

The ultimate test of any special education teacher is students' level of independence upon graduation and transition to the next stage in life. Community-based instruction that promotes functional and daily living skills development and acquisition supports generalization of academic skills. Community based instruction (CBI) is "the environment in which students practice the skill that is the same one in which they will use the skill," (Barczak, 2019, p. 314) in the natural environment. In a research article published by the Journal Teaching Exceptional Children, Mary Barczak examined the importance of both community-based and simulated instruction to promote generalization and independence with financial skills. "For many students, learning how to spend money is a first step toward independence," (Barczak, 2019, p. 314), and by teaching skills in the classroom first, through money management simulations, and then

allowing students opportunities to practice the skills in community settings aids in skill generalization. Incorporating appropriate CBI's within learning curricula is a generalization technique argued to harbor many benefits and has proven, when combined with simulated instruction, to produce "more effective and efficient outcomes for acquisition and generalization than either CBI or simulated instruction alone," (Barczak, 2019, p. 315).

Service learning is one form of CBI that can harbor reciprocal benefits. By participating in service learning or volunteering, students can practice transitional skills learned in community settings, a student's more natural environment (Miller, 2010, p. 74). Students with disabilities who engage in service-learning practices a model for learning empowerment, teamwork, motivation, and maturity (Miller, 2010, p. 74). By engaging in service learning, students practice vocational skills, independence, and community participation, all areas of transition; and with practice, students with disabilities can enhance their skills. In Miller's study (2010, pg. 74) with K-12 students in Florida, students with disabilities participated in Community Higher Education School Partnership service learning (CHESP) programs for two months. Inclusion in the study was determined through interviews with program participants and directors. Service-learning group program directors noted that participants developed responsibility and maturity. Additionally, one program director stated, "just being allowed to move around and being encouraged to move around was perceived as a positive aspect of the work." Another noted it could be detrimental to students' development when they are inside the same classroom all day (Miller, 2010, p. 74).

CBI's combined with simulated instruction can be an effective learning model for students to develop a variety of skill sets. Rasli and McKay (2015) found that simulated instruction combined with community-based instruction used with a prompting strategy over a



four-week span increased the number of steps completed independently when performing shopping tasks and phone conversation skills as the number of prompts declined. The study included 12 participants with intellectual disabilities between the ages of 9 and 13. The researchers concluded that the two interventions, when paired, positively affected skill acquisition tasks. With practice, the participants independence increased during multi-step tasks. Visual, physical, and verbal prompts were reduced. The study concluded that least to most prompting strategies were “effective in reducing the number of prompts required to complete the steps independently,” (Rasli and McKay, 2015, p. 6).

Current research completed by Hernandez and Kulkarni (2018, p. 14) found for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students with mild to moderate intellectual disabilities CBI opportunities and participation increased student independence in socialization task initiation. In this qualitative study, the researchers performed extensive observations via paraprofessional and special educator interviews to learn ways community-based instruction affected students with intellectual disabilities. Researchers found that beyond increasing task initiation in social scenarios, students also demonstrated increased independence in other areas. Researchers learned that by participating in calculated CBI’s, staff hoped the students could be independent in the future. Daily living skills increased as participation in programs continued (Hernandez and Kulkarni, 2018, p. 18). Additionally, researchers noted that beyond utilizing social skills on community outings, students practiced social skills daily at the school site during encounters with staff and peers. Consistent skills practiced on community outings resulted in skill acquisition and independence in social skills with other community members (Hernandez and Kulkarni, 2018, p. 19). Community instruction continually proved to provide valuable experiences to practice skills learned in natural environments. CBI provided opportunities to

learn and practice community social norms and display comprehension of community rules. These opportunities allowed students to acquire and then transfer the skills necessary to gain confidence and independence in future community interactions. Typically, students were held to lower expectations. The CBI opportunities allowed students to prove that they were capable of a variety of skills (Hernandez and Kulkarni, 2018, p. 7).

### **Researched Based Education Practices**

It is most effective to teach skills using a variety of teaching methods. Though it is important for students to participate in community-based instruction to acquire and generalize daily living and functional skills, CBI alone is not effective. Additional researched educational practices combined with community-based instruction reap benefits in academic, behavioral, and functional skills development for students with disabilities.

### **Simulated Instruction and Instructional Scheduling Arrangements**

When considering various teaching strategies and interventions to help students retain skills learned, specific skills need to be evaluated to assess the efficacy of the strategy. One strategy assessed in combination with CBI's was instructional scheduling arrangements. Instructional scheduling arrangements can be combined with both simulated and community-based instruction. Cihak D.F., et al. (2004) assessed instructional scheduling arrangements in both simulated only instruction (SOI's) and CBI's across an equivalent set of functional and vocational skills. Five secondary students with moderate intellectual disabilities participated in four instructional scheduling arrangements that measured skill acquisition, generalization, and maintenance of functional tasks. The four instructional scheduling arrangements examined were simulated-only instruction (SOI), community-based instruction only (CBI), combination of SOI and CBI on consecutive school days (CCD), and combination of SOI and CBI on the same

school day (CSD). The CSD schedule was significantly more effective for student acquisition performance than SOI, CBI, and CCD schedules. Although the CBI schedule resulted in the fewest number of instructional sessions for skills acquisition, fewer sessions for skill generalization were required for students during the combined simulation and community instruction CSD schedule. Overall, both combined instructional scheduling arrangements (e.g., CCD, CSD) produced more efficient outcomes for generalization than SOI and CBI scheduling arrangements individually (Cihak D.F., et al., 2004).

Given that simulated instruction combined with CBI proved beneficial in acquiring and successfully generalizing skills, it is worth considering different types of simulated instruction. Many types of simulated instruction can be used in the classroom to better prepare for CBI implementation. Classroom simulations include video modeling, video prompting, and picture prompts. When designing simulated instruction for CBI implementation teachers should determine the simulation based on each students' learning profile. If a variety of simulations are used, scaffolding of required skills and task analysis is recommended to meet student needs and assess progress (Barczak, 2019). After identifying areas of need, the teacher created a simulated environment by recreating "important features of the community," (Barczak, 2019, pg. 317). To do this, teachers restructured classrooms by creating an area within a classroom that represented the most important features of the target community setting. This provided skills practice and created connections between steps. Barczak specifically identified examples within banking. If a teacher instructed students to use the ATM, the teacher could project an image of the ATM on a screen and have students label and describe parts of the ATM that are used for different actions. In another example the classroom resembled the inside of a bank with a teller station. The students practiced waiting in line (Barczak, 2019). These simulated opportunities for students to

practice skills learned were beneficial especially when there were not enough community practice opportunities to completely generalize the skill being learned (Barczak, 2019). To appropriately assess and monitor skills progress, the main task must be identified and then reduced to multiple discrete parts, called a task analysis. A progress monitoring sheet can be created for sub skills and tracked to evaluate students' progress and determine areas of additional practice needed for specific skills before community implementation (Barczak, 2019). To ensure that simulated instruction is effective, teachers should implement a variety of simulated instruction techniques and give students many opportunities to practice before practicing in community settings.

Barczak outlined that once the teacher feels ready to assess generalization of skills learned through the simulation instruction, they should start planning the CBI considering scheduling, available and appropriate locations, and supports needed for success. Locations best suited for students include familiar locations where their families might visit regularly. The location should also be appropriate for learning opportunities and allow teachers to facilitate learning to allow students to practice as needed for generalization and mastery. Additionally, Barczak noted that multiple locations should be chosen across settings. In community settings teachers can assess whether more simulated classroom instruction is needed to target certain skills if students struggle with skills identified by task analysis. Finally, collaboration among team members is crucial. Teachers should collaborate with families, administrators, community members, and cooperating staff to ensure the fluidity of CBI. Administrators and parents need to approve the community instruction and can also assist with logistics. Community members ensure that students are supported as they practice skills (Barczak, 2019, pg. 320).

### **Constant Time Delay (CTD)**

Yuan et al. (2019) discovered when students with intellectual developmental disabilities (IDD) were taught first using the Constant Time Delay (CTD) skill acquisition intervention they better navigated the community using route planning and Google Maps. CTD is a skills acquisition intervention where students are required to master one step or skill in a task before advancing to the next step. The study followed three students with multiple disabilities including mild intellectual developmental disabilities (IDD) with IQ ranges between 58 and 70, fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS), and autism spectrum disorder (ASD). All three read at second grade levels according to Curriculum Based Measurements (CBMs) and attended a university in the Midwest for a 2-year post-secondary program and lived in a dormitory that was a 15-minute walk from the building that held most of their classes. They were referred to the study by their program coordinator due to their difficulties navigating around campus (Yuan et al., 2019, p. 217).

Each student who participated had a mobile device, pedestrian safety knowledge about when and how to walk across the street, and knew how to use sidewalks and crosswalks. Staff who implemented the interventions worked with people who had IDD for at least three years. They employed the intervention in a main office on campus using cue cards with the mnemonic the device of TRAVEL comprised of steps created from the task analysis using Google Maps. The steps in the mnemonic device were: T- tap the app, R- reach the search bar, A- address, V- Validate address, E- elect the icon, L- load and route. The researchers uploaded the Google maps app on the student's mobile devices but decided to use an iPad for the duration of the study for better visibility with the larger screen, (Yuan et al., 2019, p. 217)

Prior to the study, the researchers screened the participants to ensure that the intervention appropriately addressed their needs. Once the assessment was complete, researchers commenced the study using a multiple probe Constant Time Delay (CTD) intervention to help the participants build the skills necessary to navigate their communities independently using the Google Maps app and the TRAVEL mnemonic. During the intervention, instruction was delivered twice a week focused on two steps of the strategy. Instruction included a direction with a model, followed by a probe for the student to repeat the behavior. The researchers placed the mnemonic card for T, verbalized and demonstrated the action, which was to tap the app, and following the example participants practiced. The instruction was concluded after three or four sessions when the participants mastered all steps without error (Yuan et al., 2019).

Participants completed a post instruction phase where they demonstrated proficiency following the steps of TRAVEL using an iPad and location card. Participants transitioned the skills to their personal devices using the acronym TRAVEL in the community following the same procedure with researchers providing praise at increasing intervals. (Yuan et al., 2019). Participants were not rerouted if they took a wrong turn. Exposure to real life community navigation on the participants' campus highlights the benefits of community-based instruction to practice skills learned in more traditional educational settings.

### **Prompting and Fading Systems**

Skill generalization is important for individuals with disabilities. Daily living skills are better taught in the community versus in the classroom using learning simulations. Multiple teaching strategies can be implemented during community-based instruction to help students attain and generalize daily living skills such as shopping at the grocery store. The teaching strategies include prompting and fading systems such as most to least prompting, graduated

guidance, and time-delay (Gil et al., 2019, p. 649). Least to most prompting teaching strategy was used in a study “to teach young adults with intellectual disability (ID) to grocery shop exclusively using a list on an iPad in a grocery store” (Gil et al., 2019, p. 649). The same study also focused on “investigating the effects of generalization programming on participants’ ability to follow re-sequenced and replacement grocery lists for those participants meeting pre-determined mastery criteria,” (Gil et al., 2019, p. 649).

Three individuals with moderate intellectual disabilities and autism spectrum disorder participated in the study. All participants communicated using verbal behavior, read words associated with aisle signs and grocery items, and matched grocery item words to photographs of the items and actual objects. All sessions were conducted in a grocery store using an iPad 2 with a First-Then visual schedule application, a grocery cart, grocery items, and shopping lists. The shopping lists were uploaded on the First-Then visual schedule and pictures of items pictured on the aisle signs were presented according to the layout of the grocery store. First, the participants iPad application use was assessed to ensure they could appropriately navigate the application. The study was organized in three phases: initial grocery store lists, re-sequenced grocery store list, and a replacement grocery store list (Gil et al., 2019, p. 650). Participants engaged individually with the researcher in two 20-minute sessions per week where they received least-to-most prompting “contingent on topographical, latency, or duration errors” (Gil et al., 2019, p. 651). To advance to the next phase, participants needed to complete “85% of the task steps correctly and select five out of six items from the list over three to five consecutive sessions” (Gil et al., 2019, p. 651). Compared to the baseline data one participant reached mastery given resources in all three phases of the study. Two participants substantially

increased their task analysis and task completion skills but not enough to continue to subsequent phases (Gil et al., 2019, p. 652).

## **Visuals**

Many forms of visuals have been identified to support learning and comprehension for students with disabilities, specifically ASD. Visuals may include real objects, photographs, line drawings, picture symbols or words, and can be used in a variety of ways depending on the desired learning outcome. Visuals can be dynamic, static, or interactive for the user. Visual supports can be presented as scripts, sequences, schedules, for task analysis, used to structure the environment, or as rule reminders card. Visuals create a concrete representation of otherwise abstract concepts and form a basis for enhanced learning and comprehension (Meadan et al., 2011). Considerations that should be addressed when creating and using visuals to support student learning include: culture, age, gender, social acceptance, size, usability, purpose and type needed depending on purpose, and effort required to use the visual (Meadan et al., 2011, p. 29).

Visual schedules help students with disabilities “anticipate the order of activities, and increase independence” in those activities (Meadan et al., 2011, p. 30). Visuals placed in an environment provide structure that promotes independent navigation for individuals with disabilities. This mitigates the need for adult support to help students find and access things they may need (Meadan et al., 2011, p. 30). Visual scripts are used to help students navigate social communication scenarios and are combined with phrases represented visually to assist with comprehension of discourse. This allows students to independently navigate social scenarios. A commonly used visual script is a Social Story (Meadan et al., 2011, p. 31). Social Stories explain and help students visualize and comprehend social behaviors in a variety of environments and social situations. Visual Task Analysis, or visual sequences, help students comprehend larger



tasks via completing subtasks. Visuals placed by each subtask help students complete the overarching task (Meadan et al., 2011, p. 32). Tasks can range from folding laundry to brushing teeth. “By providing children with an accessible, visual reference guide, you can enhance children’s independence and decrease or eliminate adult prompting,” (Meadan et al., 2011, p. 33).

### **Task Analysis, Picture Prompting, and Social Stories/Scripts**

Research has shown that different educational practices coupled with community-based instruction reaps skill generalization benefits. Four education practices for skill acquisition interventions are task analysis, social scripts, picture prompting for social skill development, and independence in task initiation. Scripts, specifically, can be used to help students with disabilities, including ASD, initiate appropriate peer interactions. “Scripts are explicit written scenarios, skits, or examples, and/or visual prompts used to facilitate participation in (i.e., starting and continuing) an interaction or conversation and are implemented in classroom activities” (Hart Barnett, 2018, p. 666). Scripts need to be taught correctly for the student’s skills to progress. Scripts should be written to align with the student’s interests, reflect the student’s current abilities, and individualized for different scenarios that the student encounters. To effectively implement scripts, the teacher should introduce the script to the student and practice just prior to an opportunity to use the script (Hart Barnett, 2018, p. 667). Script supports should be accompanied by visuals and prompting, and scaffolded to allow the student to acquire the language and independently apply the skill during natural opportunities (Hart Barnett, 2018, p. 667).

Daniel Parker and Deborah Kamps analyzed the effects of task analysis, visual/picture prompting, script use, and self-monitoring with two, nine-year-old participants clinically

diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder to determine how the interventions impacted the development of social skills and initiating of conversations (2011).

At baseline both students produced “between 3-and 5-word spontaneous initiations and could respond appropriately to yes/no questions about their environment” (Parker & Kamps, 2011, p. 132). The students were reported to rarely interact with other students. They both received previous social skill interventions and still demonstrated social deficits. Both “engaged in verbal and postural stereotypy in home, school, and community settings” (Parker & Kamps, 2011, p. 132). The female student was reported to make more inappropriate, off-topic comments, while the male student appeared more withdrawn and abstained from peer and adult interaction (Parker & Kamps, 2011, p. 132). Students practiced social skill interaction with peers and participated in games, cooking, and restaurant activities. Including peers “provided social context for functional activities” (Parker & Kamps, 2011, p. 133). The activities were chosen to help generalize social skills across multiple settings (home, school, and community).

Task analysis materials were printed on 8.5”x11” sheets of paper with sequential steps outlined in boxes to mark off steps completed. Appropriate task analysis materials for each activity were given to both groups of students; those with autism and their neurotypical peers. Social scripts were implemented throughout the activities based on students’ needs (Parker & Kamps, 2011, p. 134).

Following baseline data collection, each student was trained to use the task analysis to self-monitor during activities using “graduated guidance, verbal prompts, and positive practice” (Parker & Kamps, 2011, p. 134). Peers were also trained to appropriately prompt the targeted students both verbally and nonverbally to assist the intervention process. The experimenter modeled the social scripts during the intervention. After the students exhibited understanding of

both task analysis sheets and social scripts, they started their intervention sessions which lasted approximately 30-minutes each (Parker & Kamps, 2011, p. 135-136). The results showed that the task analysis, social scripts, and prompting resulted in higher levels of task completion across all activities and settings (Parker & Kamps, 2011, p. 136).

“Social Stories are individualized short stories used to assist children with ASD in understanding social situations by describing and explaining appropriate behavior and providing examples of appropriate responses (Saad, 2016, p. 52). Social stories can include a variety of sentences based on the function of the story being created, and should include a specific amount of each sentence type to be effective. Types of sentences include: descriptive sentences, perspective sentences, directive sentences, control sentences, affirmative sentences, and cooperative sentences (Saad, 2016, p. 53). Saad stated that children with autism “are less able to learn social rules, conventions and behavior by institution compared with their typically developing peers.” When completing a literature review seeking to analyze the effectiveness of social stories in teaching appropriate behaviors and responses to certain situations, Saad found that social stories proved to be a widely used intervention for a variety of situations (Saad, 2016).

### **Video Modeling**

Another evidence-based practice proven beneficial with students with disabilities, specifically autism, is video modeling. Video modeling utilizes a shortened clip of an individual performing a specific task followed by student viewing and practice (Hart Barnett, 2018, p. 667). Hart Barnett also stated that it was important for the student to utilize and practice this learning strategy in natural settings to facilitate generalization of skills (2018, p. 667). Teachers must use their own task analysis during video modeling to ensure that it is effective. First, the teacher introduces the targeted behavior or task. Then students watch the video example. Next, teachers

check for comprehension of the behavior or task, and when completed allow the student to perform the behavior or task. To be most effective models include peers, classmates, the subject, or someone relatable. Strategic implementation of video modeling in social curriculum positively impacted many functional daily living skills such as communication, motor, social, vocational, and self-monitoring skills (Hart Barnett, 2018, p. 667).

Video modeling can be especially effective in supporting the development of social skills for students with disabilities, especially with ASD. Alzyoudi, M., et al. researched the “impact of video modeling on social skill development in children with autism,” (2014). The foundation for this research was based on the social learning theory which stated that children learn by seeing and then initiating, (Alzyoudi, M., et al., 2014, p. 53). Many studies have shown that video modeling helped remediate social and other skills including academic and functional skills in students with ASD. It also helps students with ASD develop play, communication, self-help skills, and academic instruction skills (Alzyoudi, M., et al., 2014, p. 54). Alzyoudi, M., et al. (2014) outlined four different styles of video modeling that could be used during instruction: modeling, feedback, cue, and computer-aided video teaching (2014, p. 54). Alzyoudi, M., et al. (2014) studied the effects of video modeling instruction for social skill development in five participants age 5 to 7 years old using an A-B baseline design across settings. The study concluded that video modeling was an effective intervention for increasing social skill development in children with autism.

### **Reading Comprehension – Direct Instruction**

Students of all abilities struggle with reading comprehension. Students with disabilities, particularly autism, have a tendency to develop “strong word recognition skills,” but lack in the development of understanding their meaning (Randi, J., et al., 2010, p. 891). Many studies have

been conducted to conclude which reading comprehension interventions are proven to be effective for teaching comprehension strategies to students with disabilities. Randi, J., et al. (2010) completed a literature review that found direct instruction, collaborative learning, peer instruction, computer assisted instruction, instruction in natural settings using authentic materials and rewards, usage of many support materials, and parent enhanced instruction all provided evidence that students with disabilities, ASD specifically, would show reading comprehension improvement if the interventions were used correctly (2010). Randi, J., et al. noted that because students with ASD struggled socially and tended to abstain from social opportunities, computer assisted instruction could replace peer mediated and collaborative learning strategies (2010, p. 897). Direct instruction is an evidence-based practice that has been studied and provides opportunities for students to build oral language and reading comprehension skills (Randi, J., et al., 2010, p. 897).

### **Choices**

Giving students a choice in their learning based on how and what they like to learn can have major benefits in a child's development. The choice strategy is meant to be strategic. A teacher who uses this strategy gives students an option between two or three different choices that allows the teacher to control the student choices. This strategy allows the student to practice decision making skills and to express themselves indicating their preferred choice, while allowing the teacher to modify the choices. This strategy ultimately leads to increased motivation, communication, social skills, and engagement in activities (Hart Barnett, 2018, p. 669).

## CHAPTER III: APPLICATION OF THE RESEARCH

### Overview

The Independent Living Skills Curriculum (ILSC) outlines a variety of units and weekly targets that students with disabilities should master to become independent in their daily lives. The units target the functional and adaptive skills that present barriers to independent living for students with disabilities. The curriculum lessons are scaffolded starting with a classroom introduction to fundamental independent living concepts followed by transitioning the skills into community settings using a CBI approach. Units should be delivered in the proposed order to maximize skill development. Context builds cumulatively utilizing prior knowledge to increase comprehension and skill mastery. This curriculum is designed for special education teachers who teach students with disabilities, targeted for public school students identified with autism and intellectual disabilities who spend >60% of the day in special education.

I created this curriculum for students in a level III special education setting who receive 70% of their academic curriculum with small group and one-to-one instruction based on their Individualized Education Plans (IEP's). Students are identified with a primary disability of Autism Spectrum Disorders and a secondary disability in the area of Speech Language Impairment, are in grades 9 through 12, and have many behavioral and sensory needs. This curriculum could be used to meet the functional and adaptive skill requirements for students with a variety of special education needs in different settings. This curriculum could be implemented with middle to high school students as an alternate or supplementary curriculum. To accommodate transportation, funding, and staffing barriers while scheduling effective education practices, the curriculum proposes utilizing a combined simulated instruction and community-based instruction approach. The scheduling arrangements combined with alternate researched

educational practices maximize targeted skill attainment. The curriculum targets and addresses the social skills needed to successfully navigate in community settings. Barriers to community participation are reduced by increasing student social competence and communication. Students need repeated exposure to learning targets and skills practice (Effective Educational Practices for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders, 2007). Therefore, visiting familiar community locations (accessing previous knowledge) promotes generalization and transfer of skills (Barczak, 2019, pg. 319).

The curriculum follows a two-year cycle that can be repeated or combined with alternate curricula. For my students, the curriculum would begin during students' freshman year and repeated in their junior year, to increase efficacy of master skills. Each unit has an Evidence of Mastery section that can be used to create IEP transition goals for students that targets independent living skills that can become students' individualized academic goals. The transition standards outlined in each unit are from the National Standards for Secondary Education and Transition for All Youth. The English Language Standards (Minnesota) have also been included to maximize teacher instructional time and learning targets. The specific activities for each week, materials needed, researched educational practices, vocabulary targets, functional and adaptive skills, are outlined for every topic. The essential questions assist with lesson planning and learning target mastery.

To implement the ILSC at my school, I will create a yearly CBI schedule and have it approved by administration to ensure that common barriers due to staffing and transportation are eliminated. I will create a budget for planned activities in advance to ensure that funding needs are met, whether they are parent or school supported. A lot of planning and coordination is involved with preparing CBI's, but can be more easily coordinated with proactive planning. I

will also meet with the administration the semester before implementation to ensure their full support. The research shows that some special education teachers identified their school administration as a barrier to CBI program implementation and viewed administrator support as an essential factor when planning (Kim, R. K., & Dymond, S. K. 2010). Every school hires staff differently so to help eliminate a staffing barrier, teachers should present the curriculum well in advance of scheduling to meet student's needs, to determine levels, and to prepare for experiences. If staffing is an issue, ask for parent volunteers who would agree to adhere to student confidentiality and ensure that students' rights are respected under the Family Educational Rights and Policies Act (FERPA). Having parents volunteer could encourage parent involvement that provides models for how to support their child which is a researched best practice for generalizing skills into multiple environments. Based on my current caseload, due to lack of community experiences, behavioral, and health needs, I would begin with providing one-to-one staffing support during community activities and fade support upon demonstrated independence and mastery. The ILSC is designed to include ongoing assessment of skills acquisition and, students' level of independence based on skill mastery and individualized learning styles. Reteaching, modifications, and accommodations should be provided to ensure that students meet basic learning targets before advancing to subsequent levels.



**Independent Living Skills Curriculum (ILSC) Planning Grid Outline Proposal (2-year cycle)**

**Year 1: Community Participation and Comprehension**

***Unit 1: Understanding My Communities***

Week 1: Introduction to “Community”

Week 2&3: Community Workers

Week 4&5: Community Places

Week 6: Community Simulation

Week 7: Community Comprehension Practice 1: CBI Application

***Unit 2: Me and My School Community***

Week 8: Being Part of a School Community

Week 9: Places to Know in My School

Week 10&11: School Behavioral Expectations

***Unit 3: Community Expectations***

Week 12&13: Community Social Behavioral Expectations

Week 14: Personal Hygiene Awareness

***Unit 4: Navigating My Community***

Week 15: Community Signs

Week 16: Community Modes of Transportation

Week 17: How to Use Transportation in My Community Safely

Week 18: How to Navigate My Community

Week 19: Practice Navigating in My School

Week 20: Practice Navigating in My Community (Practice 1): CBI Application

Week 21: Practice Navigating in My Community (Practice 2): CBI Application

***Unit 5: How to Help in My Community***

Week 22: Explore Different Helpers in My Community

Week 23: Ways That I Can Help in My Community

Week 24&25: Volunteering to Help in My Community: CBI Preparation and Application

***Unit 6: Learning About and Using Community Recreation Areas Safely***

Week 26: Community Recreation: Identify Vocabulary and Uses of Locations

Week 27: Different Recreational Places in My Community and How to Use Them

Week 28&29: Basic Safety and Social Skills Understanding in Community Areas

Week 30: Recreation and Leisure Practice: CBI Preparation

Week 31: Transportation Planning: CBI Preparation

Week 32: Recreation and Leisure Practice: CBI Application

***Unit 7: Practicing Community Living Skills***

Week 33-38: Community Practice Continuation

**Year 2: Home Living and Self Care Comprehension**

***Unit 1: Independent Living- Skills That I Need***

Week 1&2: Areas of Independent Living

***Unit 2: Meal Planning***

Week 3: Foods I Like and Where to Get Them

Week 4: Meal Ingredients

Week 5: Where and How to Buy Ingredients

Week 6: Grocery Store Social Skills and Behavioral Expectations

Week 7: Grocery Store Trip Planning: CBI Preparation

Week 8: Review: Community Signs and Safety in the Community

Week 9: Grocery Store Practice: CBI Application

### ***Unit 3: Meal Preparation***

Week 10: Common Kitchen Items: Vocabulary, Safety Signs, and Their Meanings

Week 11: Reading Recipes

Week 12: Kitchen Safety and Equipment Use

Week 13: Kitchen Cleanup and Meal Cleanup

Week 14: Review: Recipes and Making Meals Using Ingredients Purchased

Week 15: Practice: Meal Making and Cleaning Up After Eating

### ***Unit 4: Demonstration of Meal Planning and Preparation Knowledge***

Week 16: Grocery Shopping and Meal Planning Sequence Development Part 1

Week 17: Grocery Shopping and Meal Planning Sequence Development Part 2

Week 18: Grocery Shopping and Meal Planning Sequence Development Part 3

Week 19: Grocery Shopping and Meal Planning Sequence Development Part 4

### ***Unit 5: Taking Care of Food***

Week 20: Different Kinds of Foods

Week 21: Caring for Food

Week 22: Food Spoiling

Week 23: Practice: Taking Care of Food

### ***Unit 6: Taking Care of My Body: Hygiene***

Week 24: Taking Care of My Hands

Week 25: Taking Care of My Hair

Week 26: Taking Care of My Body

Week 27: Taking Care of My Face

Week 28: Taking Care of My Mouth

***Unit 7: Taking Care of My Home***

Week 29: Jobs Around My Home

Week 30: Washing My Laundry

Week 31: Putting Away My Laundry

Week 32: Dusting Around My Home

Week 33: Cleaning My Floors

Week 34: Washing Windows

Week 35: (Half Week) Cleaning Counters

Week 35: Washing Dishes

Week 36: Putting Away Dishes

Week 37: Cleaning My Bathroom

Week 38: Taking Care of the Garbage and Recycling

## ILSC - Curriculum Planning Grid

**Year 1: (38 weeks)      Grades: 9, 10, 11, 12**

Special Education Setting III- Communication Disorders (ASD)

Functional Academic Level of Understanding: K-2

Functional Skill Acquisition and Generalization – Community Based Instruction

### **Functional and Adaptive Skill Areas Targeted:**

Reading, Writing, Communication, Self-Advocacy, Planning, Preparing, Navigating, Problem Solving, Money Exchange, Organization, Social Skills, Self-Awareness, Self-Regulation, Perspective Taking, Critical Thinking, Creative Thinking, Listening, Following Directions

### **Areas of Transition for Minnesota:**

1. Work 2. Recreation and Leisure 3. Home Living 4. Community Participation 5. Post-Secondary Education

Transitions Standards from the National Standards for Secondary Education and Transition for

All Youth: [http://www.nasetalliance.org/docs/TransitionToolkit\\_InfoPages.pdf](http://www.nasetalliance.org/docs/TransitionToolkit_InfoPages.pdf)

ELA Standards

Unit 1: Understanding our Communities	
Transition Areas Targeted: Community Participation/Independent Living	
Transition Standards Addressed: 3.3.2, 3.3.6, 3.4.1, 3.4.2	
Academic Standards Addressed: English Language Arts 0.8.1.1, 0.8.2.2, 0.8.3.3, 0.8.4.4, 1.1.1.1	
Week 1: Introduction to “Community”	
Essential Questions:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-What does the term “community mean?”</li> <li>-What different places make up a community?</li> <li>-What is the purpose of each place in my community?</li> <li>-What signs do I see in my community and what do they mean? Why are they there?</li> </ul>	
Activities:	Materials:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Generate a class definition for the term “community”</li> <li>-Create a collage of pictures from community locations students visit in their communities</li> <li>-Create a collage of signs that students see in their community-write sentences to describe what the sign means</li> <li>-Read short stories about communities and the different characteristics of communities</li> <li>-Create short stories about why students utilize places and community spaces</li> <li>-Watch video models of people exploring communities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Community-based Books</li> <li>-Video modeling of people exploring communities</li> <li>-Worksheets identifying key community terms, places that make up a community, and signs that are seen in the community</li> </ul>
Researched Educational Practices:	
-Project familiar places in the community to promote generalization (Barczak, 2019).	

-Direct instruction (Randi, J., et al., 2010)
-Constant Time Delay Intervention- Student needs to master first step of task analysis before advancing to additional steps in the task analysis sequence (Yuan et al., 2019, p. 217).
-Video Models (Alzyoudi, M. et al., 2014), (Hart Barnett, 2018)
-Prompting and Fading Systems (Gil et al., 2019)
<b>Evidence of Mastery:</b>
Student can successfully define the word community and describe their community by stating attributes that make a community. Student can describe the function of community resources and how to stay safe by understanding and following community signs.
<b>Vocabulary Targeted:</b>
Community, Business, Store, Place, Building, Home, School, Park, Neighborhood, City, Town, State, Safety, Signs, Stop Light, Stop Sign, Sidewalk, Walk Sign, Yield Sign, Bike Lane, Safety, Community Locations: gas station, grocery store, gym, recreation center, beach, park, lake, school, bus stop/station, mall, restaurant, airport, hospital, doctor/dentist office, pharmacy, bank, library, coffee shop, ATM, police/fire station, big box store, dollar store
<b>Functional and Adaptive Skills:</b>
Reading, Communication, Writing, Social Skills, Problem Solving, Creative Thinking

Unit 3: Community Expectations	
Area of Transition Targeted: Community Participation	
Transitions Standards: 3.2.1, 3.2.2, 3.2.4, 3.3.3, 3.3.4, 3.3.6, 3.4.1, 3.4.2	
Academic Standards Addressed: English Language Arts 1.2.1.1, 1.1.10.10, 1.1.9.9, 1.10.5.5, 1.2.6.6, 1.8.4.4	
Week 12&13: Community Social Behavioral Expectations	
Essential Questions:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-What are the social and behavioral expectations in my community?</li> <li>-Why is it important to follow social and behavioral community expectations?</li> <li>-How should I behave while out in the community?</li> <li>-Why is it important to follow expected behaviors?</li> </ul>	
Activities:	Materials:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Read stories about community social expectations for different locations</li> <li>-Read stories about different community behavioral expectations</li> <li>-Worksheets identifying correct and incorrect choices</li> <li>-Video modeling of social and behavioral expectations when walking on the street, in stores, at restaurants</li> <li>-Worksheets to apply understanding of different social and behavioral expectations based on community locations (ie. at a pool is different than in a library)</li> <li>-Games and reflection worksheets to explore and practice different social expectations/decisions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Books on social and behavioral community expectations</li> <li>-Social stories</li> <li>-Visuals</li> <li>-Games</li> <li>-Worksheets</li> <li>-Video models</li> <li>-Choice boards</li> </ul>



<p>-Social stories of what to do if you need help (ie. feeling nervous, feeling sick, feeling angry, feeling tired)</p> <p>-Create a story about how to behave at community locations, students share and create a class series</p> <p>-Students create individual choice boards with visual prompts and cues for conversations regarding social and behavioral expectations</p>	
<b>Researched Educational Practices:</b>	
<p>-Direct instruction (Randi, J., et al., 2010)</p> <p>-Prompting and Fading Systems (Gil et al., 2019)</p> <p>-Video modeling (Alzyoudi, M. et al., 2014), (Hart Barnett, 2018)</p> <p>-Visuals (Meadan et al., 2011)</p> <p>-Choices (Hart Barnett, 2018)</p> <p>-Project familiar places/images within the community to promote generalization (Barczak, 2019).</p> <p>-Social Stories (Saad, 2016)</p>	
<b>Evidence of Mastery:</b>	
<p>Students can identify different social and behavioral expectations for a variety of locations and tell why they are important.</p>	
<b>Vocabulary Targeted:</b>	
<p>Expectations, Social, Behavior, Yell, Voice, Loudness, Volume, Conversation, Communication, Expression, Facial Expression, Verbal, Nonverbal, Thought, Reaction, Action, Choice, Hygiene, Impression, Expectations, Norms, Rules, Expectations, Volume,</p>	

Control, Loud, Quiet, Voice, Hit, Kick, Nice, Safe, Safe Body, Calm Hands, Self, Safety,  
Problem, Space, Social Space, Strategy

**Functional and Adaptive Skills:**

Communication, Reading, Writing, Problem Solving, Creative Thinking, Critical Thinking,  
Self-Awareness, Social Skills, Self-Regulation

Week 24 & 25: Volunteering to Help in My Community – CBI Preparation and Application	
Essential Questions:	
-How can I use my skills/strengths to help in my community?	
-Why is it important to give back to my community?	
Activities:	Materials:
-Class choice of where to volunteer	-Worksheets activity choice for helping in the community
-Review directions and application that is used to navigate	-Worksheets and video models about being safe in the community
-Review Safety signs, safety in the community	-Video models for activities chosen
-Worksheets and choice boards that identify how to ask for help if a student feels uncomfortable or needs something	-PowerPoint and video model of expectations for CBI
-Use personal skills/strengths to select volunteer opportunities	-Video models of self-advocacy and how to ask for help
-Overview of CBI (instructions and what to expect) using video modeling, worksheets, and prompting/advance notice	-Permission slips
-Complete reflection worksheet identifying how students felt helping others and how they think they made others feel	-Visuals for expectations
	-Choice boards/iPads for communication
Researched Educational Practices:	
-Direct instruction (Randi, J., et al., 2010)	
-Prompting and Fading Systems (Gil et al., 2019)	
-Choices (Hart Barnett, 2018)	
-Progress monitoring sheet with task analysis (Cooper et al., 2007).	

- Task analysis, social scripts, and picture prompts (Kamps & Parker, 2011).
- Students visit familiar places in the community to further promote generalization of skills (Barczak, 2019, pg. 319).
- Visuals (Meadan et al., 2011)
- Facilitating transitions using advance notice, multiple warnings, visuals, prompting, and schedules (Models of Best Practice in the Education of Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders: Preschool and Elementary, 2011)
- Video Modeling (Alzyoudi, M. et al., 2014), (Hart Barnett, 2018)

#### Evidence of Mastery:

Students successfully volunteer time, demonstrate understanding of safety in the community, and accurately identify how they could make others feel by volunteering.

#### Vocabulary Addressed:

Continue to build on previously learned vocabulary.

#### Functional and Adaptive Skills:

Social Skills, Emotional Intelligence and Regulation, Self-Regulation, Self-Advocacy, Reading, Communication

## CHAPTER IV: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

### Summary of the Literature

The literature review provides the foundation for the Independent Living Skills Curriculum (ILSC) developed for special education students in middle and high school. To create and propose an independent living skills curriculum that could be used by special education teachers it was important to understand transition needs of individuals with disabilities and the barriers to transition skill attainment. Transition needs for students with disabilities primarily intellectual disabilities and ASD, included social skills, adaptive functioning skills, and daily living skills, which affect success rates in employment post-secondary outcomes, and independent living abilities (Ghanouni et al., 2019); (Holwerda et al., 2013); (Shattuck et al., 2011); (Chiang et al., 2010); (Dell'Armo et al., 2018). Barriers to transition skills included a variety of variables and differed based on the perspective of the population surveyed. Overall, the research showed that individuals with disabilities, specifically intellectual disabilities and ASD, faced struggles with social pressures and environmental factors, lack of programs and opportunities for practice, and low expectations when assessing barriers and needs for interventions in regard to independent living and community participation (Ghanouni et al., 2019); (Holwerda et al., 2013); (Shattuck et al., 2011); (Tint et al., 2016). When researching barriers to community participation and independent living in regard to CBI program integration, teachers and administrators identified funding, lack of programs, staffing, support, and transportation as the main struggles to overcome for effective CBI program implementation (Kim, R. K., & Dymond, S. K. 2010); (Pickens & Dymond, 2015). It was also important to research the benefits of CBI programs on transferring skills students learn in the classroom to natural environments. When combined with simulated instruction and alternate teaching

strategies, CBI has proven an effective method for transferring skills to natural environments. Through CBI students have demonstrated increased independence in mastering tasks.

CBI is most effective when combined with alternate research-based educational practices. Research was sought to find the most commonly used and research-based strategies to pair with CBI experiences. These practices included: simulated instruction and scheduling arrangements (Cihak et al., 2004); (Barczak, 2019), video modeling (Alzyoudi, M. et. Al, 2014), (Hart Barnett, 2018), visuals (Meadan et al., 2011), prompting and fading systems (Gil et al., 2019), task analysis (Kamps & Parker, 2011), constant time delay (Yuan et al., 2019) , direct instruction (Randi, J., et. al, 2010), social stories (Saad, 2016), and giving choices (Hart Barnett, 2018).

### **Limitations of the Research**

In completing this research, I initially focused on community-based instruction due to my desire to find studies proving that CBI positively affects student's functional daily living and adaptive behaviors skill development. My initial search found studies dating back to the late 1990's and were considered outdated although they contained information relevant to my topic. I found a few research-based studies that targeted students' functional daily living skills development that were within the last 10 years; however, these studies targeted other learning strategies combined with CBI instruction as shown in research completed by Gil et al. (2019), the research also focused on *Least to Most Prompting*. Though it was beneficial to see combined strategies used, there was a hole in the research completed that included a variety of strategies combined with CBI that proved long-term mastery of targeted skills. One other caveat was the small sample size as noted in the research by Yuan et al. (2019), who utilized constant time delay strategies with CBI application using three students.

Additionally, I researched barriers faced by teachers and students with disabilities related to accessing and participating in the community to create a curriculum that addressed the barriers by teaching relevant skills. Selecting the specific barriers that related to students who have multiple disabilities was difficult, as many of the studies focused on only students with autism and intellectual disabilities, making it difficult to generalize the research for other students. It seemed that research also lacked in specific information on which strategies that teachers and families used to eliminate the barriers they faced to increase community participation and master adaptive and functional daily living skills. Finally, the research was spread amongst students with a broad range of abilities, ages, and academic levels.

### **Implications for Future Research**

In reviewing this research, there is a need for evidence regarding the long-term effects of how CBI programs impact students who have a variety of disabilities. More research is emerging on the short-term benefits of CBI programs related to students with intellectual disabilities and autism, but one questions the long-term impact. It is worth considering students' levels of mastering of adaptive behavior and functional living skills after participating in CBI programming. Are students successful and independent in the three areas of transition in their adult lives? Larger sample sizes and programs with varied participant demographics of participants would also be beneficial to determine whether the strategies were effective for specific groups. Much of the research focused on students with autism and intellectual disabilities and the sample pools were small. It would have also been beneficial to find research on how often students should practice functional daily living skills in natural environments, and how long to target a topic or a skill before mastery can be expected. There is a need for additional research on how teachers successfully overcome perceived barriers to implementing CBI programs, including perceptions

of students' abilities, overcoming funding, obtaining administrative support, finding solutions for staffing, and solutions for transportation. Finally, research needs to be conducted with students at the high school level in Federal Special Education Settings from levels 1-4 to identify specific learning targets and teaching methods for each special education group. The information could be used to select and modify the curriculum needed to address life-long mastery and skill attainment.

### **Implications for Professional Application**

To use the proposed Independent Living Skills Curriculum (ILSC) effectively, teachers and support staff (including possible volunteers) need training on the effective research-based strategies outlined in the curriculum for students to increase student success. Students with disabilities need consistency and opportunities to demonstrate targeted skills to master targeted skills through this curriculum. Parents of the students will also need to support the curriculum and be willing to assist the students in practicing skills in their home environment. If supportive parents need training to promote success in home environments, then teachers should provide training opportunities for parents on the proper use of strategies to maintain consistency. Parent involvement and parent implemented interventions have proven as effective strategies in teaching adaptive behaviors and functional living skills to students with disabilities (Amsbary, J., & AFIRM Team, 2017); (Dell'Armo et al., 2018).

The proposed curriculum should be approved by school administrators before implementation. This will help ensure that the administrators will support teachers in overcoming perceived barriers including transportation, funding, and staffing.

Prior to implementing the curriculum, the teacher or administrators should determine which community members would be willing to form partnership with the school to provide



opportunities for successful practice of Community Based Instruction. It is important to have community members on board with the curriculum to ensure safety and precautions, depending on individual student targets and needs.

Finally, teachers should make sure that they have the required materials for the curriculum and inquire with students and their families about prior knowledge, interests, struggles, and community participation experiences to ensure that the curriculum can be personalized to meet the specific student needs. Preparing ahead of time helps the teacher better understand the students' needs and foresee additional challenges that may arise during curriculum implementation

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, students with disabilities need access to appropriate programs to gain and transfer independent living skills. Educators need to consider the various barriers faced by our special education students when considering curriculum choice. Teachers need to use researched educational practices to provide appropriate instruction and opportunities for practice to help with mastery of skills and concepts. It is a well-known fact that students with disabilities have a need for guidance and support in adaptive behavior and daily living skills. The more that we can teach and guide students in attaining the skills, the more success our students will have in the areas of transition: independent living, employment, and post-secondary education. The proposed Independent Living Skills curriculum is one possible solution using research-based strategies to help students achieve mastery in the broad area of transition that can function as a foundation for success in the alternate areas of transition.

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