



Occupational Courses Correlated with Improved Education and Employment Outcomes

What is the level of evidence?

This predictor of post-school success has been labeled by NTACT at a Research Based level of evidence, based on two *a priori* correlational studies. *More information on NTACT's process for identifying effective practices is available here: [NTACT's Effective Practices](#).*

What is the predictor?

Occupational courses are individual courses that support career awareness, allow or enable students to explore various career pathways, develop occupational specific skills through instruction, and experiences focused on their desired employment goals.

What are the essential characteristics?

1. Embed career awareness activities, career planning, and vocational assessments in all occupational courses.
2. Design curriculum for each course to include technology, 21st century skills, and employability skills for specific career/career cluster content.
3. Provide hands-on and community-based opportunities to learn occupational specific skills within each occupational course.
4. Incorporate Universal Design for Learning principles in CTE programs including cooperative education programs to provide access to students with disabilities.
5. Provide course offerings throughout the school day so scheduling conflicts do not restrict student access to occupational courses.
6. Provide occupational courses that represent a wide variety of occupational clusters to provide students course choices that match their preferences, interests, needs, and strengths.

Where is the best place to find out how to do this practice?

The Division on Career Development and Transition of the Council for Exceptional Children developed a Fast Fact on Occupational Courses available here:

https://higherlogicdownload.s3.amazonaws.com/SPED/34aee1c1-7ded-4d59-af82-da4af08d5fc4/UploadedImages/DCDT-Occupational-Courses_Delphi_Final.pdf.

References used to establish this evidence base:

- Halpern, A.S., Yovanoff, P., Doren, B. & Benz, M.R. (1995) Predicting participation in postsecondary education for school leavers with disabilities. *Exceptional Children*, 62, 151–164.
- Heal, L. W., & Rusch, F. R. (1995). Predicting employment for students who leave special education high school programs. *Exceptional Children*, 61, 472–487.
- Test, D. W., Mazzotti, V. L., Mustian, A. L., Fowler, C. H., Kortering, L., & Kohler, P. (2009). Evidence-based secondary transition predictors for improving postschool outcomes for students with disabilities. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals*, 32, 160-181.

Reference used to define and identify characteristics of this predictor:

- Rowe, D. A., Alverson, C. Y., Unruh, D. K., Fowler, C. H., Kellems, R, & Test, D. W. (2014). A Delphi study to operationalize evidence-based predictors in secondary transition. *Career Development and Transition for Exceptional Individuals*, 38, 113-126.

This Description was developed by The National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (NTACT), Charlotte, NC, funded by Cooperative Agreement Number H326E140004 with the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS). This document has been reviewed and approved by the OSERS. Opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the U.S. Department of Education nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education. OSEP Project Officer: Dr. Selete Avoke. RSA Project Officer: Kristen Rhinehart-Fernandez. This product is public domain. Authorization to reproduce it in whole or in part is granted. While permission to reprint this publication is not necessary, the citation should be: National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (2015). *Occupational Courses Predictor Description*.