The Brookes
Transition to
Adulthood Series

DEMYSTIFYING
Transition Assessment

by

Colleen A. Thoma, Ph.D.

Department of Special Education and Disability Policy
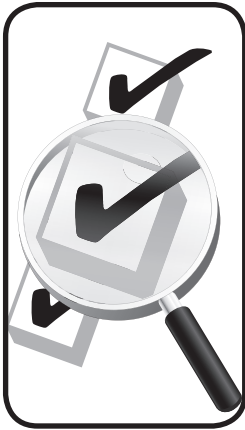Virginia Commonwealth University
Richmond

and

Ronald Tamura, Ph.D.

Department of Special Education and Reading
Southern Connecticut State University
New Haven

with invited contributors

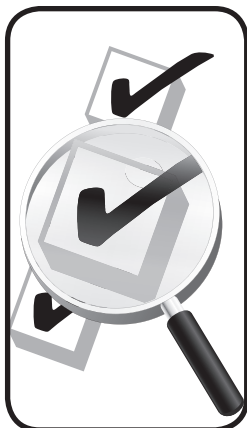·P·A·U·L·H·
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Contents

1   Transition Assessment...1
    Ronald Tamura and Colleen A. Thoma

    Transition, Transition Assessment, and IDEA

    Formal Assessments

    Informal Assessments

    Alternative and/or Performance-Based Assessments

    Transition as a Backward Design Process

2   Academic Assessment 19
    Colleen A. Thoma, Roberta Gentry, Kimberly Boyd, and Karren Streagle

    Formal Academic Assessments

    Informal Academic Assessments

    Alternative or Performance-Based Academic Assessments

    Applying the Principles of Universal Design for Learning to Academic Assessment

    Involving Parents in Academic Assessment

    Collaborating with Others in Academic Assessment

3   Self-Determination Assessment..41
    Colleen A. Thoma

    Self-Determination

    Formal Self-Determination Assessments

v

Contents   vii

About the Authors

Colleen A. Thoma, **Ph.D.**, Professor of Special Education and Disability Policy, Virginia Commonwealth University, 1015 W. Main Street, Oliver Hall, Room 4048, Richmond, Virginia 23284

Dr. Thoma earned her doctoral degree from Indiana University and is currently Professor in the Department of Special Education and Disability Policy at Virginia Commonwealth University. Her research interests include preparation of teachers to support self-determined transition planning, student-directed individualized education program development, universal design for transition, postsecondary education transition programs for students with intellectual disability, and the impact of student self-determination on transition and academic outcomes. She currently serves as a member of the Board of Directors for the Council for Exceptional Children, and is a Past President of the Division on Career Development and Transition. She is a recipient of the 2012 Mary E. Switzer Distinguished Research fellowship, conducting a qualitative research study on the education of students with intellectual disability in postsecondary settings. She has authored and coauthored multiple journal articles, book chapters, and conference proceedings related to transition, instructional strategies, and self-determination, including three books: *Transition Assessment: Wise Practices for Quality Lives* (coauthored with Caren L. Sax), *Universal Design for Transition: A Roadmap for Planning and Instruction* (coauthored with Christina C. Bartholomew and LaRon A. Scott), and *Getting the Most Out of IEPs: An Educator's Guide to the Student-Directed Approach*, co-edited with Dr. Paul Wehman.

Ronald Tamura, **Ph.D.,** Associate Professor of Special Education and Reading, Southern Connecticut State University, 501 Crescent Street, Davis 212, New Haven, Connecticut 06515

Dr. Tamura earned his doctoral degree from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and is currently Associate Professor at Southern Connecticut State University in the Department of Special Education and Reading where he teaches graduate courses in the areas of developmental disabilities, learning disabilities, collaboration and consultation, and secondary transition. His research interests include personnel preparation, self-determination, transi-

tion, and positive behavior supports. He was elected and served as a member of the Board of Directors for the Council for Exceptional Children. He is a former secondary-level special educator and has worked for the Connecticut State Department of Education in the Bureau of Special Education as an Education Consultant. He has contributed as coauthor on journal articles, book chapters, and conference proceedings in the areas of transition, instructional strategies, and self-determination.
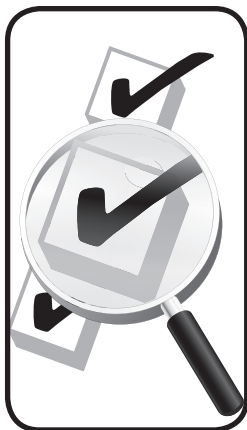
Preface

Assessment is a critical issue in the implementation of transition planning. Without assessment we cannot determine what and how to teach students as they progress through secondary education to their chosen adult experiences. The following chapters will describe a variety of assessment tools and resources that can be used for planning and implementing steps to achieve individual and family goals for adult life. The assessment process in transition planning is a dynamic experience that can involve many different professionals and service areas, including transition specialists, coordinators, special education teachers, and especially families and the students themselves. Throughout the following chapters the reader will follow an example teacher, Mr. David, as he uses a variety of transition assessment strategies to support two different students on his caseload. We hope that through the use of this transition assessment resource as a part of *The Brookes Transition to Adulthood Series,* students with disabilities will have a smooth, effective, and efficient transition to their own individual goals in adulthood.

Chapter 1 provides the reader with an overview of the transition assessment process as defined in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) of 2004 (PL 108-446). The reader is introduced to Mr. David and two of the students that will be on his caseload throughout the book. We learn about the importance for transition assessment and the transition process through Mr. David's use of the assessment process with students with varying support needs.

Chapter 2 provides information related to academic assessment and how it connects to transition assessment to support college and career-focused goals. Issues related to the Common Core State Standards and No Child Left Behind are presented in this chapter as Mr. David proceeds through the transition process with his students.

The importance of self-determination in transition assessment is presented in Chapter 3. Links between self-determination and transition planning have been shown to improve outcomes in several areas. Professionals will learn how to conduct self-determination assessments to improve levels of self-determination and inform the transition process.

Chapter 4 takes a look at the area of employment assessment. Mr. David uses both formal and informal employment interest inventories and surveys to determine the needs and preferences of his students for the world of work. Employment assessment options are from a variety of nontraditional educational sources and these resources are discussed in this chapter.

xix

For some students with disabilities, postsecondary education is considered as an option during transition planning. However, with creative and innovative assessment strategies more students can achieve the goal of postsecondary education. With the consideration of specific goals and supports needed, Chapter 5 describes assessments used for postsecondary education.

Chapter 6 describes assessments related to health and wellness for students transitioning from pediatric, child-centered services to adult health care options. Various assessments and strategies are described that look at health care needs, both immediate and long term, as well as employment options that may be more likely to provide health, disability and life insurance.

Community assessment is explored in Chapter 7 as Mr. David explores a difficult area in conducting transition assessments. The community agencies and resources available to an individual in his or her area must not only be assessed related to the student's needs, but additional assessment and collaboration must be established with community resources as well.

Chapter 8 will review all of the assessment areas and Mr. David's progress in transition planning with his students as they move through the transition process toward adulthood. This chapter also includes a look at the "big picture" of transition planning, such as looking at future visions and planning processes for the students and their family.

In closing, this book will serve as a valuable resource for transition assessment and planning for students' futures. It will be useful for a wide range of stakeholders in the transition process including transition specialists, coordinators, secondary high school special educators, families, and students with disabilities.

REFERENCE

Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) of 2004, PL 108-446, 20 U.S.C. §§ 1400 *et seq.*

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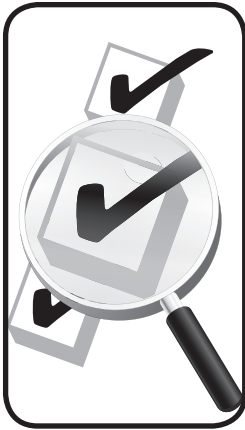
Academic Assessment

Colleen A. Thoma, Roberta Gentry,
Kimberly Boyd, and Karren Streagle

Students with and without disabilities are subject to a number of formal and informal assessments designed to evaluate their progress in mastering academic content and meeting academic standards for their age and grade level. In fact, general education reforms mandated through the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 (PL 107-110) as well as the work in many states to adopt a set of Common Core State Standards (CCSS) can leave teachers and transition coordinators like Mr. David with questions about how to address transition assessment, planning, and instruction while simultaneously assuring access to the general education curriculum for all students. This was the first challenge in addressing transition assessment that confronts transition teams: finding a way to creatively combine the two seemingly competing goals for assessment and instruction. There are a number of connections between academic and transition assessment, and that connection should be strengthened as the principles set forth by the CCSS identify knowledge and skills necessary to help students become "college and career-ready" (Kendall, Pollack, Schwols, & Snyder, 2007).

More than 40 states across the country have adopted the CCSS, a set of academic standards released in June 2010 that "outline the knowledge and skills in English language arts and math that students in grades kindergarten through 12 are expected to learn to be prepared for college and careers" (Kober & Rentner, 2012, p. 1). But even when states decide not to adopt the CCSS, they are still required to make changes to their state assessments in order to demonstrate that students exiting their high schools are college and career ready. One way they can do this is by asking local colleges or universities to verify that state academic standards for high schools continue to be challenging enough to ensure that high school graduates are ready for college work. The other option is for them to work with "other states to set standards that research determines prepares students for the rigorous academic challenges of college and to enter the workforce ready to succeed" (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2011, p. 1). *College and career ready* refers to preparing students with "the knowledge and skills needed to enroll and succeed in credit-bearing, first-year courses at a postsecondary institution (such as a two- or four-year college, trade school, or technical school) without the need for remediation" (ACT, 2010, p. 1).

19

How can educators make sense of the standards? *Unwrapping the standard* refers to a process of reading a standard to identify what students need to achieve the following:

1. Know (the concepts or content)

2. Be able to do (the skills)

3. Identify the context (how educators will teach the concepts and skills; Ainsworth, 2003, p. 5)

Once the specific standard and grade-specific indicators are chosen, the next step is to pinpoint the key concepts and skills. Ainsworth (2003) recommends underlining concepts, circling skills, and highlighting using different colors–or, on electronic versions of the standards, changing the font (e.g., italics for concepts and boldface for skills) can also work. A graphic organizer such as the one in Figure 2.1 can be used to represent the information in a way that makes sense. The information represented in the graphic organizer can then be used to decide on the specific lessons, activities, or units of instruction that will be used to teach the concepts and skills.

Grade level and content area: _____*Writing applications, grades 8–10*_____

Standard(s) and Indicators:

A. Produce letters (e.g., business letters, letters to the editor, cover letters for job applications) that follow the conventional style appropriate to the text, include appropriate details, and exclude extraneous details and inconsistencies.

B. Write a persuasive piece that states a clear position, includes relevant information, and offers compelling evidence in the form of facts and details.

Concepts—need to know:

Letters
• Business letters
• Letters to the editor
• Cover letters for job applications
• Conventional style
• Details: appropriate; extraneous; inconsistencies

Persuasive pieces
• Clear position
• Relevant information
• Compelling evidence: facts; details

Skills—be able to do:

• Produce (letters; job applications)
• Follow (conventional style)
• Include (appropriate details; relevant information)
• Exclude (extraneous details; inconsistencies)
• Write (persuasive piece)
• State (clear position)
• Offer (compelling evidence; facts and details)

Topics or context—activities to teach the concepts and skills:

• Write letters to an editor and/or a congressional representative on a topic of interest related to national policy and its impact on local or state level.
• Develop a resume and write a letter of application for a specific job; complete online job applications.

Figure 2.1.   Graphic organizer for "unwrapping" content standards. (*Source:* Ainsworth, 2003.)

FORMAL ACADEMIC ASSESSMENTS

Transition to school (college) or work can be difficult for students. The tasks of choosing a job and preparing for work, deciding to go to college or trade school, and deciding where to live and with whom are all areas of the decision-making process and present youth with disabilities the challenge of having to make complex decisions. In order to assist students with these decisions, information gleaned from formal, informal, and performance-based academic assessments is used to guide this process. The data gathered from these assessments assist in matching students' abilities and preferences to appropriate academic, vocational, and functional educational programs, and the assessment data provides useful information about a student's abilities and strengths. Good planning should address academic achievement and functional performance in order to facilitate the movement from school to postschool activities (Virginia Department of Education, 2010).

The performance of students on CCSS testing is one example of an important formal assessment process designed to measure student academic achievement and preparation. Academic assessments assist educators and transition specialists in determining the instructional needs of a student that will move the student toward his or her postsecondary goals. Data gathered from academic assessments also provides information for the present level of academic and functional performance and provides necessary guidance to write measurable postsecondary goals.

Formal academic achievement tests measure aptitude, achievement, intelligence, and adaptive skills. Since Chris's postschool plans are to attend college, updated educational and intelligence measures will be completed to assist his college counselor with planning and accommodations in the college setting. Mr. David knew that college counselors usually wanted testing that was less than one year old, so he requested updated testing in those areas. This assessment, typically conducted by a school psychologist or a medical doctor (depending on the nature of a student's disability) serves to 1) document that the student (in this case, Chris) has a disability that would qualify him for academic accommodations at his chosen university and 2) identify appropriate adaptations and accommodations that would address his specific learning needs. See Chapter 5 for more specifics about that process.

Academic assessments for Chris and other students who might be interested in transitioning to postsecondary education also need to include formal admission testing such as the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and/or the ACT. The SAT was designed to measure aptitude, or the potential to do well, in a college setting. In comparison, the ACT was designed to measure achievement in the academic areas of English, mathematics, reading, science, and writing. Efforts have been made to align the ACT test with the CCSS, and benchmarks were identified to determine whether a specific student's scores meet the criteria for being college and career ready. Mr. David found that Chris's scores in the areas of English, mathematics, and science met and/or exceeded those benchmarks while his reading and writing scores did not. A comparison of the benchmarks and Chris's scores on the ACT are included in Table 2.1.

In addition to the tests that are usually administered during the eligibility and college admission processes, Mr. David found the following assessments to be helpful:

- *Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery* (ASVAB; United States Military Entrance Processing Command, 2005) is a norm-referenced assessment given by the military to measure academic ability and predict occupational success. Eight test areas (general science, arithmetic reasoning, word knowledge, paragraph comprehension, mathematics knowledge, electronics information, auto and shop information, and mechanical

Table 2.1. Benchmarks and scores

Academic area	ACT college readiness benchmarks*	Student scores
English	18	18
Mathematics	22	27
Science	24	25
Reading	21	20
Writing	7	5

*ACT College Readiness Benchmarks for English, Mathematics, Science, and Reading are copyrighted by ACT, Inc. (2010) and reproduced by permission.

comprehension) are combined into three composites or career exploration scores. These scores help students understand their verbal, math, science, and technical skills in comparison to those of other students in the same grade. This test is available online for free at http://www.military.com/ASVAB.

- *Career Ability Placement Survey* (CAPS; Knapp & Knapp, 1976) is an individualized, norm-referenced measure of abilities related to various vocational fields. It measures eight vocationally relevant abilities (mechanical reasoning, spatial relations, verbal reasoning, numerical ability, language usage, word knowledge, perceptual speed and accuracy, and manual speed and dexterity) within the context of the entry requirements for a variety of jobs and careers.

- *Reading-Free Vocational Interest Inventory* (RFVII-2; Becker, 2000) is a norm-referenced measure of vocational interests presented in a reading-free format designed for use with individuals from ages 12 through 62 and may be administered in a group situation. Examinees view a series of picture triads of individuals involved in a variety of work-related activities and select the picture of the activity that most interests them. This assessment would be especially beneficial for Michelle, since there is no reading involved.

Formal Academic Assessments for Students with Significant Intellectual Disabilities

Alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards (AA-AAS) are designed to measure the academic achievement of students with significant intellectual disabilities as a mechanism for including these students in school accountability systems. These alternative standards are based on general education academic content standards in reading, math, and science. However, the academic content standards for students with significant intellectual disabilities have been reduced in complexity (U.S. Department of

Postsecondary Considerations

Be sure that you consider postsecondary options for all students with disabilities, including those who would not have been able to have this opportunity in the past. Encouraging all students with disabilities to take formal academic assessments such as the ACT and/or SAT keeps the doors open for all. In addition, it has been shown that there is a link between having an individualized education program (IEP) goal of going to postsecondary education and employment later according to data collected through the National Longitudinal Transition Study–2 (NLTS-2) survey (NLTS-2, 2008).

> In some states, students who take AA-AAS are not eligible to earn a regular high school diploma (U.S. Department of Education, 2005). Check with your school testing coordinator or director of special education to determine whether their participation would affect their graduation and diploma status. In addition, as more states adopt the CCSS and their inclusion of multiple assessment procedures, it will be important to keep up-to-date in regard to the impact on graduation requirements for students with more significant support needs. Check the web site for the common core standards (http://www.corestandards.org), and refer to the department of education in your state to keep up-to-date on the latest developments.

Education, 2005). These alternate academic content standards are intended to address the content areas of reading, math, and science, but they do not necessitate the depth or breadth of knowledge required of students in the general curriculum. While AA-AAS differ from state to state, they all fit into one of three main categories: rating scales, performance assessments, and portfolio assessments (Elliott & Roach, 2007). AA-AAS include checklists, observations in structured and unstructured settings, performance assessments, samples of student work, and portfolios (Roeber, 2002).

While students with significant intellectual disabilities are required to take AA-AAS, there is little evidence to suggest a relationship between how students score on these assessments and their postsecondary outcomes (Kleinert, Garrett, Towles, Nowak-Drabik, Waddell, & Kearns, 2002). Researchers have also found that students' IEP goals do not often align with the academic content assessed on AA-AAS (Karvonen & Huynh, 2007). Therefore, it is important for special education teachers working with students with significant intellectual disabilities to make connections between the academic content assessed on AA-AAS, what is included in a student's transition IEP, and the functional skills necessary for success after high school.

INFORMAL ACADEMIC ASSESSMENTS

In addition to using formal assessments, informal assessments provide useful and meaningful information about a student's academic achievement. Formal tests cannot measure important elements of transition planning such as identifying whether an individual can read social cues in various work, recreation, or social settings, and they do not address whether an individual can modify behavior to meet the demands of multiple environments (Black & Ornellas, 2001). For this level of understanding, informal assessments are needed. Informal assessments are nonstandardized measures that can be modified and adjusted in order to gain useful information about a student. Informal assessments include reports of observations made by teachers, parents, employers, and other school personnel as well as grade- or school-wide assessments, interest inventories, file reviews,

Did You Know?

Reading comprehension is an academic skill often assessed on AA-AAS. Reading comprehension skills relevant to a student's transition IEP may include reading and understanding a restaurant menu or job application. These functional life skills can be important to a student with a significant intellectual disability when he or she leaves high school. This type of linkage between a student's transition IEP and the academic content assessed on AA-AAS can make AA-AAS scores more meaningful to the transition process.

Did You Know?

In a survey of state education agencies, 50% of those responding indicated that they require specific assessments to be used as part of a student's age-appropriate transition assessment. Those assessments include the following: the Enderle Severson Transition Rating Scale, social skills rating forms, the Life Centered Education (LCE) Transition Curriculum competency-based assessments, self-determination assessments, the SAT, the Next Step Curriculum student portfolio, learning style assessments, and job analyses.

situational assessments, rating scales, and curriculum based-measurement. Teachers can use informal assessments to gather information across a variety of instructional settings that helps them determine a student's basic academic skills, how the student learns best, and the student's personal preferences and work habits (Sitlington, 2008).

Informal assessments are especially helpful when developing transition plans, since they generally provide information that is easier to link to specific transition and academic goals. They also can provide information that is more likely to address the needs of students with more significant support needs, like Michelle, since they often provide opportunities for students to represent their knowledge and skills in multiple ways.

Since Chris didn't meet the benchmarks for the reading and writing components of the ACT test, it was important for Mr. David to consider what other assessments might provide information to guide Chris's transition planning process. He considered a range of formal assessment options but targeted a learning style assessment for its ability to provide insight into how Chris learns best–information that would enable future academic instruction to build upon his strengths. A learning style assessment would provide information Chris could later use to advocate for accommodations and modifications he might need while in college. Mr. David found an online learning style assessment that both Chris and Michelle could access at http://www.learning-styles-online.com/inventory. They each then used the link to learn more about their preferred learning style and about strategies that could help them develop individualized learning goals and identify possible adaptations that would work for them. Figure 2.2 is the screen-shot from Chris's learning style inventory.

Some examples of other informal assessments include the following:

- *C.I.T.E. Learning Style Inventory* can be found at http://www.harding.edu/arc/PDF/ CITE.pdf. Another inventory called the Visual, Aural, Read/Write, Kinesthetic (VARK) inventory can be found at http://www.vark-learn.com/english/page.asp?p =questionnaire

- *The Brigance Transition Skills Inventory* (TSI; Brigance, 2010) is a criterion-referenced instrument designed to evaluate skills in areas generally taught within life-skills programs, including those involved in speaking and listening, money and finance, functional writing, food, words on signs and warning labels, clothing, health, telephone, travel and transportation, and reading. It was designed for students in eighth grade through adulthood. This instrument scores these areas as mastered or not mastered.

- *Choosing Outcomes and Accommodations for Children* (COACH) is a guide to educational planning for students with disabilities (Giangreco, Cloninger, & Iverson, 2011), and provides a variety of informal assessment strategies that can help teachers plan instructional supports and delivery methods that meet their academic needs.

For User: Chris

This page displays the results of your learning styles inventory. You can also select options below to compare your styles with anybody who has shared their results with you.

Your results

The scores are out of 20 for each style. A score of 20 indicates the style is used often.

Style Scores

Style	Score
Visual	13
Social	16
Physical	11
Aural	14
Verbal	12
Solitary	12
Logical	10

Figure 2.2. Learning Styles Inventory—Results Page. (From Advanogy.com. [2012]. *Results from learning styles inventory.* Retrieved from http://learning-styles-online.com; reprinted by permission.)

- *Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment* (ACLSA; Casey, 1994–2005) is an individually administered self-reporting assessment of life skill mastery across nine domains (daily living, self-care, work and study skills, social relationships, housing and money management, communication, home life, work life, and career planning). This assessment is available free online and can be completed by the student, parents, or teachers. A free report is provided as well as lesson plans. This assessment is available at http://www.caseylifeskills.org/pages/assess/assess_index.htm.

• *Study skills inventory (*Hoover & Patton, 2007) provides information that helps teachers rate students on study skills such as listening, test taking, note taking and outlining, time management, and organization. Teachers rate students on a scale from "not proficient" to "highly proficient." The book also helps teachers develop instructional strategies that address a range of study skills.

When deciding what information to gather, Mr. David understands that the right questions need to be asked so as to be certain that the information collected addresses identified domains or skill areas necessary for student-focused planning. Mr. David will use both formal and informal assessments to determine his student's needs and to construct meaningful and appropriate plans for the student. Then this data can be used to answer questions such as the following: What are the student's strengths related to the student's postsecondary vision? How are the student's functional and academic skills? Are the student's school programs and classes aligned with their postsecondary vision? What knowledge and skills does the student currently demonstrate in each of these areas? What knowledge and skills does the student need to acquire in the next few years?

The academic achievement data provided through formal and informal assessments is the starting point for the present level of performance, which provides the IEP team with a clear understanding of where the student is performing relative to where he or she wants to go. In determining which assessments (or combination of assessments) to use, Mr. David referred to the position statement on transition assessment of the Division on Career Development and Transition (Sitlington, Neubert, & Leconte, 1997), which identified eight guiding statements:

1. Assessment methods must be customized to specific types of information needed for upcoming decisions.

2. Methods must be appropriate to the learning and response characteristics of the individual.

3. Assessment must incorporate assistive technology or accommodations when necessary.

4. Assessments must occur in natural environments.

5. Assessment measures must produce outcomes that influence the development, planning, and implementation of the transition process.

6. Methods must include multiple, ongoing activities that sample behavior and skills.

7. Methods must be verified by multiple methods and persons.

8. Assessment results must be stored in user-friendly formats.

ALTERNATIVE OR PERFORMANCE-BASED ACADEMIC ASSESSMENTS

Many of the formal academic assessments discussed earlier in the chapter are formatted as multiple-choice tests, in which a question or statement is followed by four or five answer choices. Alternative academic assessments are intended to provide opportunities for students to demonstrate what they know in ways that serve as an "alternative" to paper-and-pencil tests. They are also sometimes referred to as performance assessments. These specialized assessments can be as individual as the students who benefit from them. Herein lies the strength of these assessments. Mr. David realized he could work with his students to develop academic assessments that would allow them to demonstrate what they knew

in the way that best suited their strengths. He was only limited by his imagination and the imagination of his students. His students enjoyed helping create these assessments and felt empowered that they were able to demonstrate their knowledge in a way that was meaningful and successful to them. However, freedom and creativity tie into the challenges of alternative assessments as well. Alternative assessments take a lot of time to develop, and they can be time consuming to score.

Alternative assessments are most successful when the teacher is well acquainted with a student's strengths and challenges in communication and how he or she understands concepts. It also helps to know a student's other areas of strength, such as art, music, computers, and so on. Allowing a student to demonstrate what he or she knows through art, music, computers, or other means can be a powerful way for the student to demonstrate his or her academic knowledge. It is also important to collaborate with the student who is taking an alternative assessment to ensure that he or she understands the skills and concepts to be demonstrated and the expectations of the teacher.

As already mentioned, alternative assessments can be as individual as the students who take them. Students may use performing, visual, or graphic arts to demonstrate their knowledge. They may create posters, models, or slide presentations. Alternative assessments may also be as simple as a conversation with a teacher about the content to be assessed. For example, in English class, Michelle developed a slide presentation to illustrate her understanding of the themes of Shakespeare's play, *Romeo and Juliet*, and she dressed in costume to represent one of the characters from the play while she shared her presentation with the class. She was able to program her communication device to "speak" parts of the slide presentation for emphasis. Chris was allowed to apply his love of music to illustrate his understanding of the themes of *Romeo and Juliet*. He wrote a song and performed it for the class. Although alternate assessment can be time consuming, students feel a great sense of accomplishment when they are able to show their knowledge in a way that is unique and successful for them.

Wiggins and McTighe (2011, pp. 10–11) provided guidance for assessment that clearly demonstrates the strength of alternative, performance-based assessments, recommending that in the best learning design, assessments are the following:

- *Clear.* There is no mystery as to the performance goals or standards.

- *Diagnostic.* They check for prior knowledge, skill level, and misconceptions.

- *Authentic.* Students demonstrate their understanding through real-world applications.

- *Purposeful.* Assessment methods are matched to achievement targets.

- *Ongoing.* Assessments occur over time with descriptive feedback.

- *Useful as learning opportunities.* Students are expected to engage in trial and error, reflection, and revision.

- *Student-directed.* Students have the opportunity to self-assess.

APPLYING THE PRINCIPLES OF UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING TO ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT

Within a typical classroom, a teacher uses many strategies from the principles of universal design for learning (UDL). The UDL approach is based on research designed to understand how the brain learns and how some people learn differently (Bowe, 2000). This research

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TIP

Consider developing a portfolio assessment to help students collect academic work samples, both formal and informal, to showcase their strengths. Students including both those with mild disabilities and those with more significant disabilities can use portfolios to demonstrate their academic abilities. For those students who will graduate from high school, it is helpful to include a sequence of required high school courses. Each semester, the student is able to have a visual picture of his or her progress toward graduation. Students with more significant disabilities can also keep a portfolio of their academic work and a plan of required benchmarks that will lead to independent living and employment. The most powerful part of a portfolio is teaching the student to reflect on his or her academic work—a skill needed for postsecondary education and training. For more information, go to Portfolios for Student Growth, Gallaudet University, National Center for Deaf Education's web site: http://www.gallaudet.edu/clerc_center/information_and_resources/info_to_go/transition_to_adulthood/portfolios_for_student_growth.html.

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demonstrates the success of using a mixture of technologies to enable students with diverse learning needs to succeed academically (Orkwis & McLane, 1998). Instruction and assessments designed using a UDL approach have three primary characteristics (CAST, 2007):

- Multiple means of representation, which give students various ways to acquire information and knowledge (materials and instructional delivery)

- Multiple means of expression, which provide students with alternatives to demonstrate what they know (assessment)

- Multiple means of engagement, which focus on students' interests to offer appropriate challenges and increased motivation and engagement

When thinking about the various activities that Mr. David could recommend teachers implement in their classrooms, he thought of group work, independent work, student projects, hands-on activities, test reviews, homework reviews, and many more. All of these activities can be considered academic assessments, can be presented with the use of UDL, and can be used as data to help support the transition process. When UDL is used for academic assessment, it "reduces or removes barriers (to help provide) an accurate measurement of learner knowledge, skills, and engagement" (CAST, 2011). Mr. David used the three main principals of UDL to guide teachers in transforming their classrooms into fully functional UDL environments.

Principle I: Provide Multiple Means of Representation

Teachers could provide various formats of academic assessments and allow students to choose which one best met their needs. Mr. David was also sure to remind teachers to provide assessments in the student's primary language, and he found that electronic versions of assessments could be translated into different languages more easily than translating a test into each language separately. Mr. David had learned that helping students in accessing prior knowledge would help in the comprehension, generalization, and long-term retention of the new information, and he therefore made it a habit to encourage teachers to use this strategy whenever possible.

When Mr. David helped a teacher adapt a test or quiz, the result often looked different from the original. He used different colored paper, different fonts, and different font sizes, provided both a pen-and-paper version and an audio recorded version, incorporated graphs/pictures/diagrams to support the question being asked (or the multiple-choice answer being provided), and made use of tactile opportunities whenever applicable. Mr.

David found this to be a better way to assess students on what they learned. It provided an opportunity for students to illustrate what they learned in the way that they felt most comfortable with. He also believed it helped alleviate student test anxiety and, in turn, raised their test scores.

Homework assignments looked very different when Mr. David adapted these assignments for teachers. Mr. David encouraged teachers to allow students to e-mail their answers, discuss or work with a partner, record answers, write answers in the traditional format, and use any other methods that they felt comfortable with. Again, he found that providing multiple ways for students to respond to assessments led to an increase in participation, an increase in scores, and a general increase in the happiness of the classroom environment. In addition, this translated into more accurate information to use for developing transition goals.

Principle II: Provide Multiple Means of Action and Expression

Mr. David recommended to teachers that when they assigned group work and presentations, they should allow students to choose how they present the information. Students could be given time to discuss how they would like to present–first with their group members and then with the teacher. The teacher could provide guidance regarding which methods of presentation made more sense given the information that they were presenting.

Mr. David was also a big advocate for the use of technology within the classroom. He understood that we are living in a technology savvy world and that most students needed or preferred to use some piece of technology to help complete their work. In addition, improving one's skills in the use of technology was a skill that translated to greater independence in a number of goals for adult postschool outcomes. He encouraged teachers to use a range of technology including computers, iPads, switches, computer overlays for touch screen access, different types of software, calculators, spellcheckers, approved social networking, discussion boards, and so on.

When teaching or presenting information to his students, Mr. David encouraged teachers to use visuals and hands-on manipulative materials daily. He encouraged them to make sure the tools they used were available for student use when they were completing assignments or doing any kind of assessment that would reflect what they had learned.

Principle III: Provide Multiple Means of Engagement

Mr. David encouraged teachers to create activities and assessments that varied in regards to how challenging they were and then allow students to choose among a variety of levels. This allowed teachers to assess all of the students on their own comfort levels while still assessing them all on the same topics/ideas that were taught.

When providing feedback in the form of observations or number/letter grades, Mr. David recommended that teachers provide more immediate and descriptive feedback to students, rather than focus on assigning a final grade, so that students could improve their performance. He encouraged teachers to focus on formative assessment rather than summative (or final) assessment by providing students the following information regarding their performance:

- An exemplar or standard for comparison

- A description of how the student's performance compares to the exemplar

- Sufficient information that the student can use to improve performance (Wiggins & McTighe, 2006)

Using grading rubrics along with providing an example (or exemplar) of the desired performance is one way that Mr. David recommended that teachers follow these criteria for effective feedback. Table 2.2 is an example of a grading rubric for evaluating student performance for a presentation. This rubric, along with a videotaped presentation that students could access on their laptop, provided a mechanism for providing feedback as well as an exemplar.

Universal Design for Transition

As you can see, Mr. David has put a lot of thought, time, and effort into helping teachers use a UDL approach in their classrooms. He also learned how to expand a UDL approach to transition assessment, planning, and instruction. This has been called universal design for transition (UDT) (Thoma, Bartholomew, & Scott, 2009). UDT "expands the concepts of barrier-free methods and design to include their application to the design, delivery, and assessment of educational services related to the transition from school to post-school for students with disabilities" (Thoma et al., 2009, p. 9). The UDT framework includes the characteristics of UDL described above but adds additional characteristics that reflect best practices for transition planning and services, including the following:

- Multiple transition/life domains

- Multiple means of assessment

- Student self-determination

- Multiple resources/perspectives (Thoma et al., 2009)

Using a UDT framework requires that educators change their instructional planning to address two questions that high school students often voice in class: "Why do I need to learn this?" and "When will I ever need to use this information?" Research supports

Table 2.2   Sample presentation rubric

	1	2	3	4
Subject Knowledge	Lacks a grasp of the information: unable to answer questions about the subject	Is uncomfortable with information and can answer only rudimentary questions	Is at ease with expected answers to all questions but fails to elaborate	Demonstrates full knowledge (more than required) by answering all class questions with explanations and elaborations
Elocution	Mumbles, mispronounces terms, speaking volume too low to be heard in back of classroom	Voice is low; incorrectly pronounces terms; audience has difficulty hearing presentation	Voice is clear; pronounces most words correctly; most audience members can hear	Uses a clear voice and correct, precise pronunciation of terms so that audience can hear presentation
Organization	Audience cannot understand presentation because there is no sequence of information	Jumps around in topic; audience has difficulty following presentation	Presents information in logical sequence that audience can follow	Presents information in logical, interesting sequence that audience can follow
Eye Contact	Reads all of report with no eye contact	Occasionally uses eye contact but still reads most of report	Maintains eye contact most of the time but often returns to notes	Maintains eye contact with audience, seldom returns to notes
Mechanics	Presentation has five or more spelling errors and/or grammatical errors	Presentation has three or four misspellings and/or grammatical errors	Presentation has no more than two misspellings and/or grammatical errors	Presentation has no misspellings or grammatical errors

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the use of this approach as a way to increase student academic achievement, engagement in learning, and understanding of the connection between the lesson and the students' transition goals (Scott, Saddler, Thoma, Bartholomew, Alder, & Tamura, 2011). Armed with this information, Mr. David can work with teachers to identify the functional applications of the material they were trying to teach and, in particular, help students make the connection to their goals for adult life.

INVOLVING PARENTS IN ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT

When families are involved as partners in their children's education and transition plans, outcomes are seen in regards to the students, the families, the schools, and the communities in which they live (Kochhar-Bryant & Bassett, 2002). One of the many ways parents and students can be involved in the education and transition process is through assessment.

When discussing how to use standards-based assessments as a team, there are some specific strategies that parents and students can use to become more active in their respective roles. One of the first things Mr. David asks his parents/families to focus on is how they can help analyze and use the results to create future academic and transition goals (Kochhar-Bryant & Bassett, 2002). He guides them in how to focus specifically on mastery of content and how to recognize whether an assessment assesses content that is needed for the student to accomplish his or her goals. Mr. David also helps the parents to understand how well their child performed in regards to the standard that was being assessed. He then asks the parent to discuss how the assessment aligns with their child's specific goals and needs and if they have any additional information that could be provided to support the results of the assessment. The additional information may be verbal, a recollection of previous assessments that Mr. David may be unaware of, or an observation that the parents saw within their home.

Before Mr. David can gain information from the parents/family, he believes he must make them comfortable and involved as members of the IEP team. They cannot be outsiders who simply attend the meeting, and their opinions and input cannot fall on deaf ears. Mr. David encourages his parents/families to speak about the accommodations that are appropriate for their students to use on assessments. He also offers to help the parents/families work with their children's teachers to get a closer look at the types of assessments that they are preparing their children for. This then allows the parents/families to work on practicing for the assessment outside of the school environment.

Parents can be helpful in summarizing their child's functional ability outside of the classroom, particularly as it relates to study skills, time management, planning skills, and problem-solving skills. A list of specific skills and information parents can provide that can inform the transition planning process include the following:

- Career interests

- Test preparation/study skills

- Budgeting/money management skills

- Recreation and leisure interests

- Friendships and relationships with others

- Transportation use and preferences

- Community activities and/or volunteer opportunities

- Time management skills

- Technology use at home

The Parent Survey of Student's Academic-related Skills form (see Figure 2.3) provides a parent survey form that Mr. David developed for teachers to send home and have parents complete. He could then use this information in combination with student academic assessment information to help with identifying transition IEP goals that would support student goals for their future.

Involving the parents/families in assessments and knowledge about how the information gained from them can help their child can provide a much more complete picture of student abilities, preferences, and interests. Mr. David found that it is an important step in gathering all of the information needed on a student in order to help make that student's transition plan and personal transition goals work for that student.

Outcomes for students with disabilities are most successful when IEP planning involves the family and considers the family's cultural values and beliefs (Artiles, Trent, & Palmer, 2004; Kim & Morningstar, 2005). Williams (2008) suggested the following steps to work with families of students with cultural and linguistic diversity:

1. Identify the cultural values that are embedded in your interpretation of the student's difficulty or in the recommendation of service. For example, why do you expect Johnny to live independently from his family?

2. Find out if the family recognizes and values those same beliefs and values or how they may differ.

3. Acknowledge and respect all cultures, and explain the basis for your professional belief.

4. Through discussion and collaboration, determine the most effective way to adapt your professional interpretations and recommendations to the value system of the family.

COLLABORATING WITH OTHERS IN ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT

Transition coordinators need to collaborate with general education teachers responsible for teaching academic content as well as with students and parents to be sure they are considering all relevant information to develop a comprehensive transition plan. General educators not only know the standards well; they also can provide information about how a student performs in academic settings–information that would be helpful for planning a transition to postsecondary education settings and adult life. Figure 2.4 is an example of a study skills inventory that provides the kind of information that Mr. David found to be helpful for transition planning, focusing on student performance in class as well as test-taking strategies (Spinelli, 2012, pp. 421–24). Mr. David asked Chris's teachers to complete this survey regarding his performance in academic classes.

Summarizing Academic Information

Mr. David knew that the best way to assure that this range of academic information was used to guide transition planning was to summarize the information collected by the various assessment partners: general education teachers, special educators, psychologists, parents, and the students themselves. In his research, he learned about the requirements for completing a summary of performance, which is used at the end of a student's high school career to help support the student in advocating for supports and services he or she may need from a variety of adult service providers. He learned that the "goal of the Summary of Performance is to enhance postschool outcomes for students with disabilities by providing them with relevant information about their academic achievement and

Parent Survey of Student's Academic-related Skills

Parents, please complete this form based on the level of independence your son/daughter exhibits in the following skills related to academics. Please answer each question based on how much independence your son or daughter typically demonstrates in performing the various tasks, using the following key:

1. *Completely independent* (typically doesn't need reminders or support to complete task)
2. *Somewhat independent* (might need reminders or general prompting to complete task)
3. *Is able to complete task with support*
4. *Is able to complete some of the task with support*
5. *Does not attempt to complete task*
6. *Is not expected to complete task*
7. *Would not be able to complete task*

Skill	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Area: test preparation							
-Set up/choose an area conducive to study?							
-Gather and organize study materials prior to beginning to study?							
-Develop a study plan that addresses the type of test and the material to be covered?							
-Looks up unfamiliar vocabulary to understand meanings?							
-Space studying over an extended period of time rather than cram for tests?							
-Use memory strategies to help with learning/remember key material?							
-Can identify accommodations needed for tests in specific content areas?							
Area: Career Awareness							
-Can identify one or more jobs that he/she would like to do?							
-Can identify preferences and interests for work environments (that is, outdoor/indoor jobs, working alone vs. as part of a team, etc.)							
-Can identify preferences based on prior work or other experiences							

Figure 2.3. Parent survey of student's academic-related skills.

Demystifying Transition Assessment by Colleen A. Thoma, Ph.D., and Ronald Tamura, Ph.D.
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(continued)

Parent Survey of Student's Academic-related Skills *(continued)*

-Has had a job in the past YES or NO, and please provide more information about the job and how long your son or daughter held that job							
-Can access transportation to get to and from work							
-Can read a bus schedule							
-Can get up on time (or otherwise plan day) to get to work on time							
Area: money management/budgeting							
-Has received a paycheck or allowance in the past							
-Uses money to make purchases							
-Plans for purchases by saving							
-Compares costs for an item that he/she wants to purchase							
-Is aware of the cost of various living expenses							
Area: affective/interpersonal skills							
-Is able to compromise with others							
-Is able to cooperate with others							
-Is curious about the world							
-Is dependable							
-Is enthusiastic to learn new things							
-Is persistent with a task							
-Is tolerant of change							
-Is able to work with others to complete a task							
-Is able to use the computer to complete tasks							
-Is able to use the internet to research a specific topic							
-Is able to complete reports using a computer							
-Uses a schedule or calendar to remember deadlines							
-Uses technology to communicate with others (e-mail, text messages, social media, etc.)							
-Has a friend or friends and makes plans to spend time with them							

Comments: Please use this section to provide any explanation to any of the above items:

Thank you for your assistance with this. The information will help us develop a comprehensive transition plan for your son or daughter. Please return this completed form to your son/daughter's teacher by the following date: _____.

Study Skills Inventory

Student Name: _____ Grade: _____

Completed by: _____ Date: _____

Directions: Rate each item using the scale provided. Base the rating on the individual's present level of performance.

Study Skill	Rating			
	Not Proficient (NP)	Partially Proficient (PP)	Proficient (P)	Highly Proficient (HP)
Reading Rate				
Skims	0	I	2	3
Scans	0	I	2	3
Reads at rapid rate	0	I	2	3
Reads at normal rate	0	I	2	3
Reads at study or careful rate	0	I	2	3
Understands the importance of reading	0	I	2	3
Listening				
Attends to listening activities	0	I	2	3
Applies meaning to verbal messages	0	I	2	3
Filters out auditory distractions	0	I	2	3
Comprehends verbal messages	0	I	2	3
Understands importance of listening skills	0	I	2	3
Graphic Aids				
Attends to relevant elements in visual material	0	I	2	3
Uses visuals appropriately in presentations	0	I	2	3
Develops own graphic material	0	I	2	3
Is not confused or distracted by visual material in presentations	0	I	2	3
Understands the importance of visual material	0	I	2	3
Library Usage				
Uses cataloging system (card or computerized) effectively	0	I	2	3
Can locate library materials	0	I	2	3
Understands organizational layout of library	0	I	2	3
Understands and uses services of media specialist	0	I	2	3
Understands overall functions and purposes of a library	0	I	2	3

Figure 2.4. Study Skills Inventory.

(continued)

Study Skills Inventory *(continued)*

Study Skill	NP	PP	P	HP
Understands importance of library usage skills	0	I	2	3
Reference Materials				
Can identify components of different reference materials	0	I	2	3
Uses guide words appropriately	0	I	2	3
Consults reference materials when necessary	0	I	2	3
Uses materials appropriately to complete assignments	0	I	2	3
Can identify different types of reference materials and sources	0	I	2	3
Understands importance of reference materials	0	I	2	3
Test Taking				
Studies for tests in an organized way	0	I	2	3
Spends appropriate amount of time studying different topics covered on a test	0	I	2	3
Avoids cramming for tests	0	I	2	3
Organizes narrative responses appropriately	0	I	2	3
Reads and understands directions before answering questions	0	I	2	3
Proofreads responses and checks for errors	0	I	2	3
Identifies and uses the clue words in questions	0	I	2	3
Properly records answers	0	I	2	3
Save difficult items until last	0	I	2	3
Eliminates obvious wrong answers	0	I	2	3
Systematically reviews completed test to determine test-taking or test-studying errors	0	I	2	3
Corrects previous test-taking errors	0	I	2	3
Understands importance of test-taking skills	0	I	2	3
Note Taking and Outlining				
Uses headings (and subheadings) appropriately	0	I	2	3
Takes brief and clear notes	0	I	2	3
Records essential information	0	I	2	3
Applies skill during writing activities	0	I	2	3
Uses skill during lectures	0	I	2	3
Develops organized outlines	0	I	2	3
Follows consistent note-taking format	0	I	2	3
Understands the importance of note-taking	0	I	2	3
Understands the importance of outlining	0	I	2	3
Report Writing				
Organizes thoughts in writing	0	I	2	3
Completes written reports from outline	0	I	2	3
Includes only necessary information	0	I	2	3
Uses proper sentence structure	0	I	2	3
Uses proper punctuation	0	I	2	3
Uses proper grammar and spelling	0	I	2	3

Study Skills Inventory *(continued)*

Study Skill	NP	PP	P	HP
Proofreads written assignments	0	I	2	3
Provides clear introductory statement	0	I	2	3
Includes clear concluding statements	0	I	2	3
Understands importance of writing reports	0	I	2	3
Oral Presentations				
Freely participates in oral presentations	0	I	2	3
Organizes presentations well	0	I	2	3
Uses gestures appropriately	0	I	2	3
Speaks clearly	0	I	2	3
Uses proper language when reporting orally	0	I	2	3
Understands importance of reporting orally	0	I	2	3
Time Management				
Completes tasks on time	0	I	2	3
Plans and organizes daily activities and responsibilities effectively	0	I	2	3
Plans and organizes weekly and monthly schedules	0	I	2	3
Reorganizes priorities when necessary	0	I	2	3
Meets scheduled deadlines	0	I	2	3
Accurately perceives the amount of time required to complete tasks	0	I	2	3
Adjusts time allotment to complete tasks	0	I	2	3
Accepts responsibility for managing own time	0	I	2	3
Understands importance of effective time management	0	I	2	3
Self-Management				
Monitors own behaviors	0	I	2	3
Changes own behavior as necessary	0	I	2	3
Thinks before acting	0	I	2	3
Is responsible for own behavior	0	I	2	3
Identifies behaviors that interfere with own learning	0	I	2	3
Understands importance of self-management	0	I	2	3
Organization				
Uses locker efficiently	0	I	2	3
Transports books and other materials to and, from school effectively	0	I	2	3
Has books, supplies, equipment, and other materials needed for class	0	I	2	3
Manages multiple tasks or assignments	0	I	2	3
Uses two or more study skills simultaneously when needed	0	I	2	3
Meets individual organizational expectations concerning own learning	0	I	2	3
Understands importance of organization	0	I	2	3

Summary of Study Skills Performance: _____

Study Skills Inventory *(continued)*

Directions: Summarize in the following chart the number of not proficient (NP), partially proficient (PP), proficient (P), and highly proficient (HP) subskills for each study skill. The number next to the study skill represents the total number of subskills listed for each area.

Study Skill	NP	PP	P	HP
Reading rate (6)				
Listening (5)				
Graphic aids (5)				
Library usage (6)				
Reference materials (6)				
Test taking (13)				
Note taking and outlining (9)				
Report writing (10)				
Oral presentations (6)				
Time management (9)				
Self-management (6)				
Organization (6)				

Summary comments about student study skills: _____

Rubric for Evaluating Impact of Study Skills Usage

Study Skill	1 Minimal Usage of Skill/No Impact on Learning	2 Some Usage/ Irregular Impact on Learning	3 Consistent Usage/ Regular Impact on Most Learning	4 Daily Usage/No-ticeable Impact on Most Daily Learning
Reading rate	1	2	3	4
Listening	1	2	3	4
Graphic aids	1	2	3	4
Library usage	1	2	3	4
Reference materials	1	2	3	4
Test taking	1	2	3	4
Note taking and outlining	1	2	3	4
Report writing	1	2	3	4
Oral presentations	1	2	3	4
Time management	1	2	3	4
Self-management	1	2	3	4
Organization	1	2	3	4

Comments: _____

Academic Summary Form

Student name	Date of birth
Address	Phone (home)
	Phone (cell)
Parent/guardian	
Anticipated graduation date	Diploma type
Disability category	Date of last eligibility

Grade	GPA	Class rank	Credits
9		/	
10		/	
11		/	
12		/	

SAT scores	Date	Verbal	Non-verbal	Writing	Composite

ACT scores	Date	English	Math	Science	Reading	Writing

Woodcock-Johnson	Date of test	Grade	Age
Test	Grade equivalent	Age equivalent	Age standard scores
Broad reading			
Broad math			
Broad written lang.			
Broad gen. know			

Employment/career goals	
Post secondary education goals	
Independent living goals	
Leisure and recreation goals	
Results of personal interest inventory	
Academic strengths	
Academic challenges	
Accommodations for success in class	
Accommodations for success on tests	
Results from learning style survey	

Figure 2.5.   Academic summary form.

From Davidsen, D.B., & Streagle, K.D. (2011). Developing the transition curriculum. In Wehman, P. (Ed.), *Essentials of transition planning* (p. 46). Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.; adapted by permission. In *Demystifying Transition Assessment* by Colleen A. Thoma, Ph.D., and Ronald Tamura, Ph.D. (2013 by Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., Inc.)

functional performance" (Kochhar-Bryant, 2007, p. 77). The Summary of Performance (SOP) is often completed during a student's final year of high school, so while it assists with the transition to postschool options for students, it does not provide assistance with transition assessment. Rather, it is a summary of the assessment information collected along the way. Mr. David found a link to a model on the web site of the Council for Exceptional Children at http://www.cec.sped.org/pp/pdfs/SOP.pdf.

However, Mr. David wanted a way to summarize academic information collected each year that would allow him to share it with the transition IEP team as they identified transition goals for the coming year. The Academic Summary Form (see Figure 2.5) is an academic summary form that worked for him, successfully allowing him to summarize information about individual students.

CONCLUSION

Transition assessment does not typically include a focus on academic assessment, but these types of assessments are completed for students with and without disabilities on an ongoing basis. Their results do help inform transition planning, and this chapter provided guidance for educators to make the most of this data and identify ways to solidify the link between academic and transition assessment through the use of a universal design for learning and transition approach.