



GUIDE TO MEETING THE EDUCATION AND
TRANSITION NEEDS OF ALL STUDENTS
WITH
PROJECT DISCOVERY

Margo Vreebrug Izzo, Ph.D.
Kristina Torres, MFA

The Ohio State University
Columbus, OH

Contributing Author:
Gina Johnson

Harlan County Schools
Harlan, KY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
1. Who They Are.....	1
2. The Need for Project Discovery.....	1
3. Project Discovery – Hands-on Instruction and Skill Development.....	2
4. Validation/Proven Effective.....	2
5. What to Expect.....	3
I. Integrating Academic Achievement with Career Exploration and Skill Development in Project Discovery	4
1. Diverse Learning Environments.....	4
2. The Inclusive Classroom.....	5
3. Commitment to All Students.....	5
4. Achievement for All Students.....	6
5. Flexible Approach to Instruction.....	6
6. Applied Curriculum.....	7
7. Active Learners.....	9
8. Facilitating Assessment.....	10
9. Teachers Join the Learning Community.....	12
10. Hands-on Instruction.....	13
11. Summary.....	14
II. Legislative Requirements	15
1. Current Legislative Mandates.....	15
2. No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.....	15
3. Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act.....	19
4. Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act.....	19
5. Summary.....	20
III. Supporting Every Student	21
1. Students with Disabilities and Students At Risk.....	21
2. The IEP Team.....	21
3. Access to Rigorous Curricula.....	22
4. Highly Successful Schools.....	22
5. Different Learning Styles.....	23
6. Principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL).....	24
7. Types of Disabilities.....	26
8. Summary.....	30
IV. Strategies for Implementing Project Discovery	31
1. Aligning the Academic Standards with Project Discovery Learning Objectives.....	31
2. Classroom Settings.....	32
3. Instructional Strategies.....	33
4. Summary.....	37
References	38
Glossary	42

Excerpts from the “Guide to Meeting the Education and Transition Needs of All Students with Project Discovery”

“The fact that each of the actual skills competencies are systematically addressed by the kits is fantastic for educators. Having pre-made lesson plans results in a great savings of valuable teacher time. Everything is at their fingertips.” *Page 2*

Flexible Approach to Instruction

What makes the *Project Discovery* program successful in the inclusive classroom is a flexible approach to instruction and activity design that allows teachers to determine the specific uses for the kits. The fundamental elements of the program include:

- An organized structure with groups of related occupations
- Self-contained hands-on learning experiences
- Career exploration with specific job opportunities in the workplace
- Activities that help students attain skills through self-directed instruction
- Defined steps that make students aware of the learning process and objectives

Page 6

In Bradley County and Orange County School Districts, *Project Discovery* impacted drop-out rates by approximately 15% and 11% respectively. One teacher commented, “*This program has turned our Option III program around. Our teachers are excited. The students are eager to learn and we are looking forward to next year.*” The integrated academic and career exploration will motivate students to become active learners, and will provide teachers with a readily accessible applied curriculum. *Pages 12 & 13*

In this age of high-standards and accountability, a program that facilitates gaining life skills and academic proficiency is invaluable. The teacher does not need to choose which to focus on; Project Discovery delivers both. *Page 13*

The IDEA of 2004 provided the opportunity for teachers to integrate career education and transition assessment into the classroom using *Project Discovery* programs. By delivering instructional programs such as *Project Discovery’s* career units, teachers are capitalizing on the student’s strengths, preferences, and interests, as required by IDEA. *Project Discovery* delivers instruction that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of your students, and also facilitates the students’ movement from school to post-school activities including post-secondary education, vocational education and employment. *Project Discovery* is an excellent program that can be used to assist students in gaining the awareness of what skills are needed to be successful in specific occupational areas, as well as the related academic skills that are required by workers in those areas. *Page 19*

It is critical that educators implement curricular models that have evidence-based research, such as Project Discovery, to meet the academic standards, as mandated in NCLB, and also prepare students to transition to employment, as mandated by IDEA. When students are provided a curriculum that has real world applications, an instructor can provide a new pathway toward learning.

Page 20

The IEP team can use the skills acquisition and academic achievement built into *Project Discovery* as indicators of students' progress. The Work Performance Benchmarks (See page 11 for sample) also assist the IEP team by enabling the teacher to:

1. Chart the student's progress through the kit.
2. Identify the tasks involved in each kit.
3. Provide a competency-based approach to learning-students learn tasks that must be successfully completed on the job.
4. Compare the knowledge, skills and abilities of the student to the actual ones required on the job.
5. Provide a tool to evaluate the student's ability to perform tasks.
6. Document tasks performed for the IEP.

Page 21

Access to Rigorous Curricula

The majority of students with disabilities can and should be educated in the general education classroom where they can access the same rigorous curricula that their peers need, such as the *Project Discovery* programs. Students with disabilities who are in the general education classroom tend to be significantly less behind than their peers in special education classes (Wagner, 2004). The *Project Discovery* curricula can and will prepare these students for the state mandated assessments if appropriate instructional strategies and supports are implemented in your classroom.

Page 22

The goal is to have students understand how to apply the academic standards and benchmarks being taught to practical and relevant settings. This is exactly what you will be doing when you use the *Project Discovery* program. Your students begin by acquiring basic knowledge, such as vocabulary recognition, and then begin to assimilate that knowledge into other core subjects. By the end of the program, your students will have moved into the most rigorous quadrant – adaptation. The students are applying their knowledge to real-world situations.

Page 23

This type of instruction is especially helpful for your students with disabilities and students at-risk. You are not teaching watered-down versions, so your students are being challenged; however, you are also creating an accessible framework for instruction. Students will see how they can succeed step-by-step, and will realize how they have the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in their communities.

Page 23

For a complete copy of the 50 page "Guide To Meeting the Education and Transition Needs of All Students with Project Discovery," please call 1-800-626-2950.