

# Project Discovery



## Research Presentation Report



NATIONAL  
DROPOUT  
PREVENTION  
CENTER/  
NETWORK  
MODEL  
PROGRAM



**EDUCATION ASSOCIATES**  
PASSIONATE ABOUT EDUCATION

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# PROJECT DISCOVERY

## *RESEARCH PRESENTATION REPORT*

### **Third Edition**

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## PROJECT DISCOVERY – SPECIAL EDUCATION TRANSITION SYSTEM

### 1. PRODUCT OVERVIEW & GOALS

#### A. Overview

*IDEA* legislation requires improving the academic and functional achievement of the child with a disability to facilitate the child's movement from school to post-school activities, and instruction that is based on the individual child's needs, taking into account the child's strengths, preferences, and interests. In addition, the truancy and drop out rate for students at risk and students with disabilities continue to rise as students find themselves in academic courses that are not related to their interests, nor do they understand how to apply the academic skills they are being asked to learn.

The Education Associates *Project Discovery Special Education Transition System* is a nationally-validated curriculum to help administrators and teachers accomplish many of these tasks required by NCLB and *IDEA*. This comprehensive curriculum is a hands-on approach that provides middle and high school special needs students with the career development, skills training and job preparation skills necessary for entrance into the general curricula, the workforce and an independent life. Students are exposed to a variety of career opportunities as they learn hundreds of real world job skills in many diverse career cluster areas. Students use real life tools of the trades to perform actual tasks of workers in career fields, while learning the academic skills necessary to perform the tasks. Students also gain important life skills and employability skills.

#### B. System Components

Designed with the diverse needs of special education students in mind, the *Project Discovery Special Education Transition System* consists of the following components:

1. **Career Development** – consisting of four levels: Adapted, Beginning, Intermediate, and Advanced
2. **Skills Training** – consisting of two components: Basic Skills Training and Enhanced Skills Training
3. **Lifelong Learning Skills** – consisting of two components: Job Preparation Skills and Life Skills
4. **Administrators' Resources** – components to help administrators assess and manage curricula

The **Career Development** component consists of a series of hands-on kits with activities at different benchmark levels, e.g., Adapted (IQs of <55), Beginning, Intermediate, and Advanced. The different functioning levels of the system allow for a customized approach for each special needs student. Administrators may select the appropriate component based on individual student abilities. Students then follow detailed instructions to perform the tasks in the kits.

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The **Skills Training** component is a series of hands-on kits designed to help students successfully exit school with “marketable” skills. This curriculum provides a year long course of study in eight career areas. Students exit the course with a Certificate of Skills Completion correlated to the National Occupational Competency Testing Institute’s competencies for each of the career areas.

The **Lifelong Learning** component consists of two components: Job Preparation Skills and Life Skills. This curriculum is delivered through a series of multi-media packages designed to instruct the user on key employability and life skills necessary to transition to a successful, independent life.

The **Administrator’s Resources** component provides many supports and resources to assist administrators including: Career Transition Assessments, Pre-Post Tests, Work Performance Benchmarks, Certificates of Accomplishment, and Electronic Portfolio (See Section 5, “Addresses NCLB/IDEA” for more details)

### **C. System Contents**

***Project Discovery*** truly integrates academic and career/technical education as students discover the math, science and language skills needed to perform job tasks and, thus, encourages students to further academic pursuits to help achieve career goals. Job tasks and competencies are taken from the U.S. Dept. of Labor’s O-Net/DOT and the National Occupational Competency Testing Institute’s (NOCTI) nationally-validated business and industry standards.

The System comes complete with...

- Materials, tools and equipment needed to perform over 1,600 job tasks!
- Instructor’s Notes containing manipulative and cognitive skill requirements, math, language and reasoning skill levels, Pre/Post Tests, Work Performance Benchmarks, Scope and Sequence implementation plan, Student Activity Worksheets, Job Qualifications Profiles
- Student Instructions - that detail step by step the tasks to perform
- Special Education Components
- Internet resources - sites to research more about careers
- Community Involvement Component - foundation to establish business/community partnerships with kit activities
- Training
- Correlation to National Standards & State Standards and Alternate Assessments

### **D. Special Needs Supports**

The ***Project Discovery Special Education Transition System*** is an all inclusive system. ***Project Discovery*** kits have Special Education Editions for Special Needs students. This component includes a “First Look” book that is provided as a PowerPoint CD specially written and illustrated to introduce the students to the terms and concepts of the kits on a 2nd-4th grade reading level. Then the students can mainstream into the general curricula activities after utilizing this component. In addition, these “First

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Look” PowerPoint CDs also contain assistive technology with audio that reads thru the materials at the user’s own pace.

In addition, the Adapted component of Project Discovery contains materials for students with IQs of 55 and below.

This broad range of materials enables students to function successfully at one level or across all levels of the system. Therefore, the curriculum is unique in that every level can be accessed by students with different abilities.

### **E. Goals**

The ***Project Discovery Special Education Transition System*** has the following goals:

1. to provide students with functioning-level appropriate hands-on career development activities.
2. to gain awareness of which work activities interest them and which do not
3. to gain awareness of which work activities they have ability for and which they do not
4. to integrate academic with career/technical instruction through an applied, hands-on approach
5. to help prepare for decision making about career areas.
6. to help students successfully transition to the workforce or further education.
7. to provide motivation for students to stay in school by linking the worlds of school and work.
8. to provide skills training so that students may exit the program with “marketable skills.”

### **F. Student Benefits**

Through ***Project Discovery***, students will:

- learn about a variety of traditional and non-traditional careers
- perform a diversity of work activities across multiple career clusters
- develop an awareness of personal interests, skills, abilities, likes and dislikes
- understand the importance of career planning and an educational foundation to achieve career goals
- gain an awareness of the academic and technical skills needed to perform job tasks
- gain knowledge of work-related terminology, work requirements, training and skills
- learn how to work cooperatively in teams
- develop interpersonal communication skills
- gain organizational and problem solving skills
- develop a positive attitude toward work and academics
- see the need to stay in school
- develop relationships with local business partners in selected careers
- link the worlds of school and work

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Students exit the program with a better understanding of the job world and the careers that interest them and that they have abilities for. Students are able to see the connections between their education and their lives. Thus, the curriculum is ideal for addressing transition services and NCLB and IDEA requirements.

### **G. Training**

Education Associates believes that professional development training is a critical component for a successful implementation. Therefore, training is included with a ***Project Discovery Special Education Transition System*** implementation. Nationally-certified trainers perform on-site training for administrators and teachers implementing the system.

### **H. Implementations**

***Project Discovery*** is a flexible curriculum that has been successfully implemented by both special education and general education classrooms. The curriculum is successfully used with a wider population that includes many different types of organizations and departments wishing to implement a proven career development system. Settings include school districts, workforce organizations, and juvenile justice facilities in such diverse areas as special needs, alternative education, dropout prevention and career/technical education. In addition, the system has been implemented in international educational organizations in Guam, Palau, and Puerto Rico.

#### **Organizations:**

- \* Middle Schools
- \* High Schools
- \* Alternative Education
- \* Juvenile Justice
- \* Workforce Organizations
- \* Indian Reservations

#### **Departments:**

- \* Special Education
- \* At Risk
- \* Dropout Prevention
- \* Alternative Education
- \* Career/Technical Education
- \* Pre-Vocational
- \* Pre-GED/Options Programs

***Project Discovery*** has been proven effective in many settings, such as:

- Urban, rural and suburban areas
- Small, medium and large districts, such as...
  - \* TN – Memphis City Schools, Greene County, Cumberland Co.
  - \* GA – Atlanta City Schools, Pierce County
  - \* LA – Alexandria, E. Baton Rouge, Ascension Parish, Louisiana School for the Deaf, Red River Parish
  - \* AZ – Cibecue Indian Reservation
  - \* NC – Caswell County, Caldwell County, Cabarrus County, Harnett County, Nash-Rocky Mount
  - \* NY – New York City Schools, Erie 2 BOCES
  - \* SC – York County #2, Calhoun County, Laurens County
  - \* IL – Chicago City Schools
  - \* NJ – Newark City Schools, No. Burlington

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- \* IN – Scott County, Madison Special Services, Greene-Sullivan, Indiana School for the Deaf, Harrison County
- \* FL – Indian River, Palm Beach, Nassau Co., Clay Co.
- \* MS – Rankin County, So. Panola
- \* TX – Irving School District, Plano School District
- \* VA – Virginia School for Deaf & Blind, Sussex Co., Henry Co.
- \* PA – Lincoln Intermediate Schools
- \* WI – LacCourte Schools, Bureau of Indian Education

(See Appendix A for a selected list of Client References.)

In addition, Project Discovery is a cost effective, sustainable system. Individual kits may be purchased within the system which allows for a customized approach that best fits each organization's needs and budget.

## **2. RESEARCH BASED**

### **A. Original Development**

*Project Discovery* was initially developed in the mid 1970s by a team of over 50 nationally-recognized curriculum experts and career guidance professionals as well as skilled workers in each career field. Initial design and evaluation was developed by a team led by Dr. Susan McBain, American Institutes of Research, and Dr. William Majure, Southwest Iowa Learning Resource Center. Partial funding was provided by the U.S. Department of Education, Bureau of Education for the Handicapped, and the Iowa Department of Education, Special Needs and Career Education Departments.

Job tasks for kit activities were taken from the Dictionary of Occupational Titles and correlated to the U.S. Department of Labor's Job Qualifications Profiles. In addition, Education Associates has developed a strategic partnership with The National Occupational Competency Testing Institute (NOCTI), a leading provider of nationally-validated business and industry assessments and competencies. Competencies for recent and future kit development have been validated by NOCTI, in conjunction with the O-Net Online.

### **B. National Validation**

*Project Discovery* is the only hands-on career education program **validated** and **approved** by the **U. S. Department of Education** for ages 12 and up. To receive this validation, *Project Discovery* went through rigorous field testing by the U.S. Dept. of Education in urban, suburban and rural settings in general and special education classrooms and workforce organizations.

*Project Discovery* has been listed in "*Educational Programs That Work: A Collection of Proven Exemplary Educational Program and Practices*" (U.S. Dept. of Education, 1978-1994, the last yr. of publication). Copies of national evaluation reports from the



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American Institutes for Research, Southwest Iowa Learning Resource Center and the National Training Network are available upon request.

*Project Discovery* has also been selected as...

- A **Model Program** by **The National Dropout Prevention Network** (NDPN) and, as such, is listed in their focus database on their website.
- A **Model Program** by the **American School Counselor Association** (ASCA)
- A **Model Program** by **The National Consortium for State Guidance Leadership**

### C. Project Discovery Research-Base

*Project Discovery* is built upon a foundation of research on the effectiveness of applied, hands-on instruction in career education and skills training; utilizing effective instructional methods that address multiple learning styles and modalities; providing supports for special populations; and building on knowledge to progress toward a higher level of thinking skills:

- The hands-on approach actively engages the learner in the learning process which researchers for decades have typically found to correlate with achievement (Attwell and others, 1967; Berliner, 1979, Cobb, 1970, 1972; Gaver and Richards, 1979, Lahaderne, 1968; Samuels and Turnure, 1974; Stallings, 1976; Stallings and Kaskowitz, 1974; Turnure and Samuels, 1972).
- Instruction methods that stimulate the widest variety of senses will generally be the most effective; people generally retain 90% of what they see, hear, do and say (Magnesen, 1983).
- Applied curricula generally involve career and vocational education and hands-on activities that make students active partners in the learning process (Hamill and Everington, 2002)
- Students are more successful when a broad spectrum of work-based learning components such as career exploration are included in the academic curricula (American Youth Policy Forum and Center for Workforce Development, 2000).
- Students with individualized instruction are more likely to complete school and have successful outcomes (Daggett, 2005; Lehr, 2004; Newman, Marder and Wagner, 2004; Wagner, 2004).
- Interest in school increases when students can apply what they learn in the classroom to nonacademic environments (Algozzine & Ysseldyke, 1993; Hamill & Everington, 2002; Rose & Meyer, 2002; NASET, 2005)
- Students in a learning environment that fosters personal development and self-esteem are more likely to continue with school and increase their achievement. Dropout rates for students at risk have been shown to decrease when they are in these environments (NASET, 2005; Wagner 2004).
- Truancy and dropout rates for students at risk and students with disabilities continue to rise as students find themselves in academic courses that are not related to their interests, nor do they understand how to apply the academic skills they are being asked to learn (Lehr, 2004; Wagner, 2004).

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- Students at risk are those youth that are in need of supports to stay in school (Dynarski & Gleason, 1999), this struggling population needs effective teaching strategies and better learning/supportive environments.
- Rigor and Relevance – teachers must provide students with a rigor/relevance framework that applies academic standards and benchmarks to practical and relevant settings; and is a process of building on knowledge and comprehension to synthesis and evaluation/adaptation. (Daggett, 2005).
- Inclusive learning environments commit to educating all students (Algozinne & Ysseldyke, 1992; Rose & Meyer, 2002; Hamill & Everington, 2002).
- An activity that engages multiple skill levels, preferences and interests will benefit a greater number of students, (Izzo and Torres, 2005).

Activities in each kit are designed to promote higher level thinking skills and progress from a knowledge and comprehension level to levels of application, synthesis and evaluation.

Research says.....and *Project Discovery* does...

- **Use a variety of strategies**
- **Actively engage students**
- **Use hands-on and applied curricula**
- **Make students active partners in learning**
- **Integrate academic standards and career development**
- **Make learning relevant**
- **Challenge all students to higher standards**

Students **see the relevance of what they are learning** and find that they have something to add to the classroom. The goals of IDEA are to encourage teachers to create a learning environment that challenges all students and embraces individualized instruction and assessment. When instruction is focused on students' learning styles and interests, and provides a relationship between academics and personal development, students will achieve success both in school and out.

Education Associates, Inc. has developed an **innovative curricular system that combines rigor and relevance**. Students experience a wide variety of hands-on activities across high interest careers that integrate job tasks and academic skills required by state departments. Students become prepared for not only the academic goals required in their education, but the abilities and skills necessary to succeed in today's workforce.

*Project Discovery* meets the "Principles of Effectiveness" by ensuring high quality academic and career opportunities correlated to state standards and by being a scientifically research-based program.

#### D. Additional Research

For additional information on how *Project Discovery* meets the tenets of effective, research-based programs, see the white paper by The Ohio State University, Dr. Margo Izzo, Project Leader (Past President, CEC Division on Career Development and Transition). This booklet is entitled “*Guide to Meeting the Education and Transition Needs of All Students with Project Discovery.*”

### **3. FIELD TESTED**

#### A. Original Field Testing

*Project Discovery*'s initial field testing occurred in multiple sites across the country including urban, rural and suburban settings with special education and general education classrooms, vocational rehabilitation, and workforce organizations. Populations varied among racial and socio-economic backgrounds. Experimental and control groups were utilized in the design and field testing. This evaluation/field testing process was managed by a team from the American Institutes for Research and The Southwest Iowa Learning Resource Center. Revalidation field testing was performed in 1991 by the National Training Network with over 200 adopters across the country in multiple settings.

#### B. National Advisory Board

Education Associates formally established a **National Advisory Board** in 2005 to provide direction and guidance in curriculum development, help ensure meeting state and federal guidelines and provide feedback on modifications. (See Appendix B for a list of the National Advisory Board members.)

#### C. National Development Team

Today the system has grown into a dynamic curriculum providing career development, skills training and lifelong learning instruction. Consistently recognized as a “best practice” and “proven program,” product enhancements and additions are continually being made to the curriculum by the **National Development Team** (See Appendix C for a list of the National Development Team.)

#### D. Evaluation Design

*Project Discovery* is currently field tested using mainly qualitative data as the Advisory Board and Development Team have determined this approach to be more appropriate due to the nature of the program. The current design used is three-fold:

1. A **follow-up telephone interview** with the Site Coordinator is conducted after the first four to six weeks after training to determine if the program is being successfully launched and if there are ways Education Associates can help the user site.
2. A **Site Support Survey** (See Appendix D) is sent to the Site Coordinator three months after training to disseminate to administrators and teachers to ascertain

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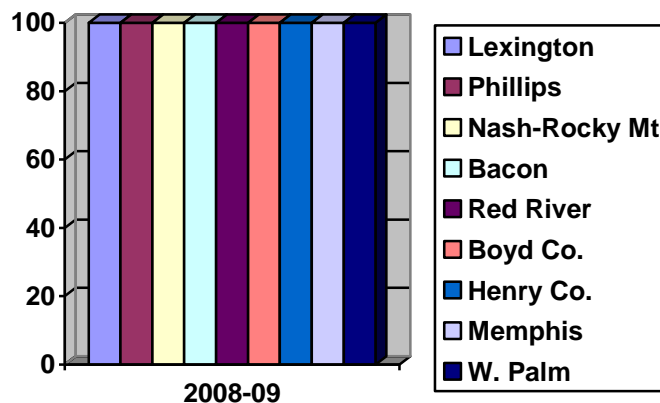
the program's impact and effectiveness on the local site. Results are reported in a Likert Scale (1-5, with 5 being the highest).

3. **Data Collection Survey** – (See Appendix E). In addition to the Site Support Survey, beginning with the 2006-07 school year, Education Associates has added an additional component to its evaluation of *Project Discovery*. A “Data Collection Survey” has been developed which will collect more quantitative data as well. This survey will be sent to administrators at the end of the school year.

Excerpts from Surveys:

*Site Support Surveys* - The following are excerpts from recent Site Support Surveys and customer evaluations:

### *2008-09 Selected Site Support Surveys & Evaluations*



1. Lexington Schools #1, Lexington, SC. 100% satisfaction rate on curriculum areas evaluated.
2. Phillips Academy, Charlotte, NC. 100% satisfaction rate on curriculum areas evaluated.
3. Nash-Rocky Mount Schools, Bailey, NC. 100% satisfaction rate on curriculum areas evaluated.
4. Bacon County Schools, Alma, GA. 100% satisfaction rate on curriculum areas evaluated.
5. Red River Parish, Coushatta, LA. 100% satisfaction rate on curriculum areas evaluated.
6. Boyd Co. Schools, Ashland, KY. 100% satisfaction rate on curriculum areas evaluated.
7. Henry Co. Schools, Collinsville, VA. 100% satisfaction rate on curriculum areas evaluated.
8. Memphis City Schools, Memphis, TN. 100% satisfaction rate on curriculum areas evaluated in survey by respondent.

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9. West Palm Beach, FL. 100% satisfaction rate on curriculum areas evaluated.

Excerpts of additional comments from surveys/evaluations include:

- *“The kids get really involved in the activities, every lesson is hands-on...students’ attention was great...we love it! Bacon County High School, Alma, GA.*
- *“Project Discovery kits are a wonderful starting point to hands-on curriculum for students as we address our standards.” Nash-Rocky Mount Schools, Nashville, NC.*
- *“Project Discovery was a godsend. As our students become more and more diverse, so must our ways of teaching them.” Orlando County Schools, Orlando, FL.*
- *“There is a huge void in quality materials for the moderate, severe and profound population. Project Discovery fills that void!” Harrison County Exceptional Learners Cooperative, Corydon, IN.*
- *“...an asset to the students participating in it. Students are discovering the relationship between their vocational interests and academics.”.....Henry County Schools, New Castle, KY.*
- *“The modules are very user friendly and provide hands-on/real life experiences for many different career cluster opportunities.” Clover School District/York #2, Clover, SC.*

***Data Collection Surveys*** - The following are excerpts from some surveys/evaluations:

### ***1. Bradley County School System, Cleveland, Tennessee.***

- *An increase in test scores-all students failed the Pre-Tests and 88% of students passed the post-test.*
- *100% of students reported a positive impact on their career decision making.*
- *100% of students reported an increase in learning about their interests, strengths and preferences.*
- *Positively impacted dropout rates and disciplinary referrals by 15%.*

### ***2. Red River Parish, Coushatta, Louisiana.***

- *Daily attendance has increased 10%*
- *Our dropout rate decreased from 21% to 6%*
- *We graduated 100% of our second-year students compared to 60% previously...our gains are seen as a direct result of Project Discovery.*

### ***3. Clover High School, Clover, South Carolina.***

- *An average increase in class test scores of nearly 50%.*

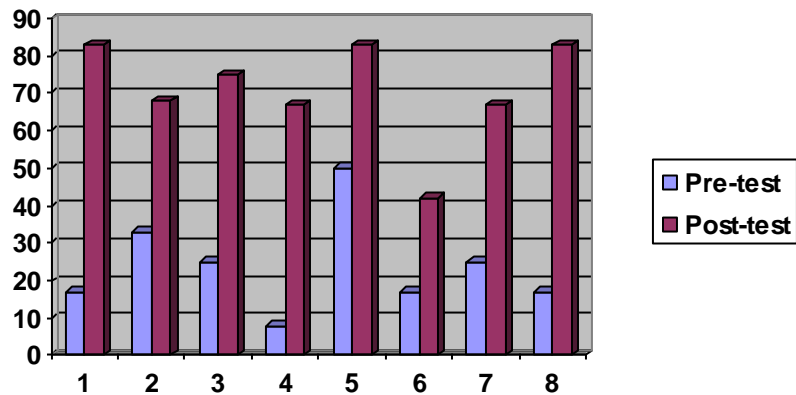
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**4. Ascension Parish Schools, Donaldsonville, Louisiana.**

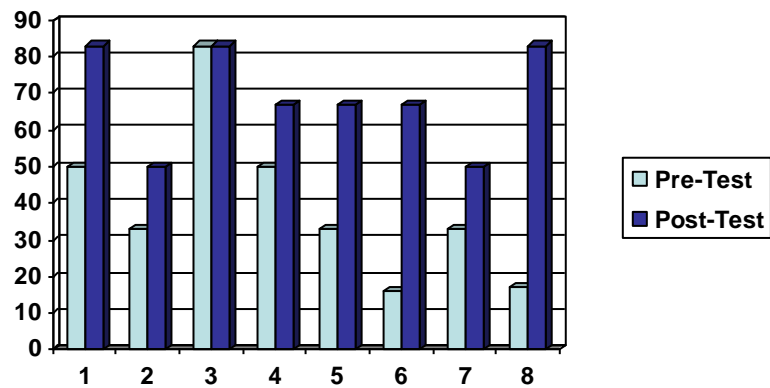
- *Our dropout rate has decreased from 58% to 28% and we attribute most of this impact to our Project Discovery program.”*

A sampling of further evaluation data collected includes:

1. *Camden Middle School, SC. Pre-Post Test Results, Spring 2008, Mild MD Class of 8 students.*



2. *Richland School District #2, Columbia, SC. Pre-Post Test Results, Spring 2009, Moderate Disabilities Class of 8 students, ages 11-15.*

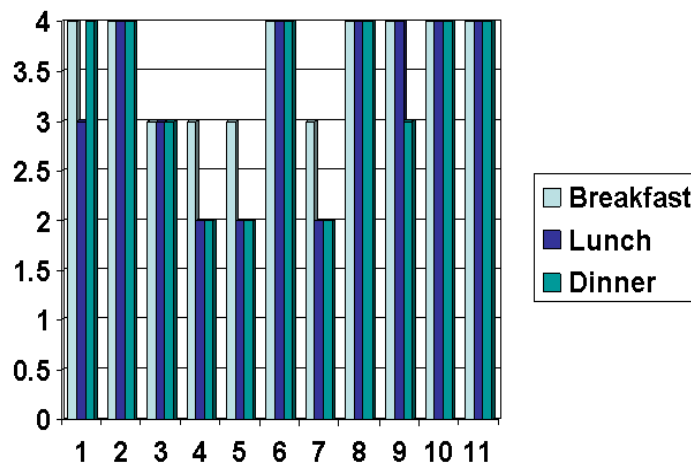


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3. *Clover High School, Clover School District/York #2, Clover, SC.*

Vickery, Jennifer; Petree, Michelle; and Short, Gary, 2009. Presented at the *National Division on Career Development and Transition Conference*, Savannah, GA, 2009). Class of 11 students, OHI, LD, E MD, TMD.

**Figure 1. Work Performance Benchmarks Evaluations for Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner Tasks from the Table Service Module**



4=Highly Proficient, 3= Competent, 2=Partially Proficient, 1=Extremely Limited

**Figure 2. Positive Transition Outcomes based on Student’s Interests, Strengths and Preferences identified through the use of Project Discovery.**

	Project Discovery Identified Career Interest	Transition Outcome
Student #1	Table Service	Employed in Food Service Industry - Bojangles
Student #2	Table Service	Employed in Food Service Industry - Subway
Student #3	Table Service	Employed in Food Service Industry – Courtney’s BBQ
Student #4	Table Service	Employed in Food Service Industry – T-Bones on the Lake

Additional data from surveys is continually collected and compiled. As a result of these surveys and analysis from the site contact person at each location, EAI strives to help clients ascertain the effectiveness and impact of the program.

The benefit of the Project Discovery curricula has proven to be effective in reducing drop out rates and disciplinary referrals, impacting student career decision-making and test scores, and aiding the transition to further education and employment.

#### **4. COMPANY LONGEVITY AND REPUTATION**

##### **A. Services and Longevity**

Education Associates, Inc. is a national research and development firm that provides a diverse array of services to the educational and workforce communities. Established in 1980, Education Associates has assisted organizations and institutions with...

- needs analysis
- assessment
- curriculum development
- media technology services
- grant writing
- professional development training
- evaluation

##### **B. Strategic Partners**

Due to our expertise as a recognized leader in the field of career education and employability skills, Education Associates has been selected as a strategic partner with the following national organizations:

- **U.S. Departments of Education and Labor**, National Technical Assistance Provider
- **National Occupational Competency Testing Institute (NOCTI)**, Strategic Partner
- **Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE)**, Founding Member, American Business & Education Partnership
- **National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education Consortium**, State Career Cluster Initiative Endorsement
- **American School Counselor Association (ASCA)**, Education Partner, and Model Program
- **National Consortium for State Guidance Leadership (NCSGL)**, Strategic Partner and Model Program
- **Workforce Excellence Network**, National Technical Assistance Provider, National Association of Workforce Boards

EAI is a frequent presenter at workshops and conferences on both a state and national level.



### C. Proven Programs and Practices

As noted earlier, Education Associates' curricular materials are consistently recognized as "proven programs" and "best practices." Our programs have garnered national validation and accolades, as well as winning awards from prestigious organizations such as ABC-CLIO, the American Film and Video Association, the Columbus International Film and Video Festival, and the National Educational Film and Video Festival.

## **5. ADDRESSES NCLB/IDEA**

### A. Project Discovery Meets Administrator Needs

The *No Child Left Behind Act* of 2001 and the *Individuals With Disabilities Education Act* of 2004 ensure that *all* students receive a free and appropriate public education designed to support, provide, and protect their education and transition needs within the least restrictive environment. IEPs must include transition services to facilitate the child's movement from school to post-school activities and be based on the child's needs, taking into account interests, strengths, and preferences.

The increasingly inclusive learning environment means that administrators and teachers must find innovative strategies and curricula that teach the academic standards in ways that are relevant to students and capitalize on their interests. The variety of different functioning levels and learning styles represented in an inclusive setting does indeed provide many challenges.

Inclusive learning environments operate under the commitment to educate *all* students and to bring support into the classroom rather than having students leave the learning community. Central to the success of an inclusive setting is considering how other students may benefit from modifications and adaptations in instruction, curricula, materials used, and means of participating. More than likely, an activity that engages multiple skill levels, preferences, and interests will benefit a greater number of students. The inclusive classroom accommodates different learners, work paces, and support needs. Successful inclusive curricula will provide teachers and students with flexible instructional methods, hands-on experiences, and learning objectives compatible to functional skills (Izzo and Torres, 2005).

*Project Discovery* is a comprehensive curricular system that helps administrators meet these demands.

#### IDEA & Educator Needs

- \* Inclusive learning environment
- \* Multiple learning styles
- \* Differing levels of ability
- \* Flexible instructional methods

#### Project Discovery Meets Needs

- \* All inclusive curriculum, special needs supports
- \* Visual, auditory and kinesthetic activities
- \* Different levels of curriculum
- \* Teacher-led, peer groups or self-paced

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- \* Hands-on learning
- \* Applied learning
- \* Student engagement
- \* Meets standards
- \* Research-based
- \* Improve Transition Outcomes
- \* Based on students' needs
- \* Hands-on curriculum
- \* Applied learning, links school and work
- \* Dynamic, exciting "real-world" activities
- \* Correlated to state standards
- \* US Dept. of Ed. Validated, Research-Based
- \* Facilitates movement from school to work
- \* Identifies students' interests, strengths & preferences

### **B. Administrator Services**

During the 2006-07 school year, Education Associates sponsored a series of free national workshops for administrators in special education. The topics centered on "Improving Transition Outcomes." Over 30 workshops were provided in the following states: TN, GA, LA, FL, NJ, PA, VA, TX, and WV with over 400 Special Education Administrators in attendance. CEUs were offered by Cleveland State Community College, Cleveland, TN. Evaluations of the workshop reported 98% "Excellent" or "Very Good." This is just a brief sampling of the types of workshops and services we offer to administrators nationwide.

Education Associates also provides services for administrators to help meet their needs and tailor our curricula to their local situation. This is accomplished by:

- Conducting a needs assessment with administrators (typically performed on-site)
- Determining which part of the system best meets their needs
- Developing a local Implementation Plan
- Providing on-site professional development training
- Research and development to provide new materials

#### *Examples of Local Implementation Strategies:*

##### Strategy #1

- |   |                    |                   |
|---|--------------------|-------------------|
| • | 7th – 8th grades   | Beginning kits    |
| • | 9th – 10th grades  | Intermediate kits |
| • | 11th – 12th grades | Advanced kits     |

##### Strategy #2

- |   |            |   |
|---|------------|---|
| • | 7th grade  | Awareness – Beginning kits              |
| • | 8th grade  | Vocational Assessment – Beginning kits  |
| • | 9th grade  | Exploration – Intermediate kits         |
| • | 10th grade | Career Education – Advanced kits        |
| • | 11th grade | Skills Cert. – Basic 90 day training    |
| • | 12th grade | Skills Cert. – Enhanced 90 day training |

### **C. Administrator Supports**

The *Project Discovery System* offers the following components to assist administrators:

## *Project Discovery Research Presentation Report*

- **Assessment.** Evaluation components are provided in the following forms:
  - 1) Knowledge based – Pre and Post-test are provided for each kit that provide a level to determine skills gained during kit activities and the impact on student career decision-making.
  - 2) Academic Skill levels – teachers and students can learn if the student has the academic skill levels needed to perform tasks on the job.
  - 3) Competency-based – Work Performance Benchmarks (see below) are provided with each kit to help evaluate the student’s ability to perform kit tasks, as well as provide documentation for IEPs.
- **Work Performance Benchmarks** – enable the teacher to:
  - \* Chart the student’s progress
  - \* Identify tasks involved
  - \* Provide a competency-based approach to learning
  - \* Compare knowledge, skills and abilities of students to ones required on the job (see the publications “*Guide to Using the Job Qualifications Profile Information*” and “*Guide to Academic Integration*”)
  - \* Provide a tool to evaluate the student’s ability to perform tasks
  - \* Document tasks performed for IEPs.
- **Correlations** – Correlations to individual state standards and alternate assessments have been completed.
- **Certificate of Completion** – certificate for each student to document tasks completed.
- **Electronic Student Portfolio** – CD to record, store and organize a student’s school information and documents, job information and work samples.
- **Toll free phone support** – no annual fee.
- **CDs of Instructor’s Binder, Student Instructions and First Look Books** - for easy customization.
- **Site Licenses** – no annual fee.

## **6. ENHANCE PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES ADVOCATED BY KEY NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

### **A. CASE and Project Discovery**

The **Council of Administrators of Special Education (CASE)** has as its mission to *provide leadership and support to members by shaping policies and practices which impact the quality of education.* **Project Discovery** supports CASE policies:

**CASE policies** state that CASE believes:

- All students have a right to a quality education which will enable them to develop to their maximum potential.  
*Project Discovery is an all inclusive system with developmentally-appropriate curricula to help students in their transition to further education or the workforce.*

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- Local administrators are critical change agents who affect the quality and future of special education and the education of students with exceptionalities.  
*Project Discovery partners with local school districts and organizations to customize a local implementation plan that will directly affect the district's quality of instruction, goals and outcomes.*
- Educational benefits, measured by individual achievements relative to ability and circumstances should be documented and promoted.  
*Project Discovery provides multiple components to assess and document individual student achievement, including pre-post assessments, work performance benchmarks, and Certificates of Accomplishment.*
- Special Education is an interdisciplinary, student support system committed to innovation in education.  
*Project Discovery is an innovative curricula that integrates academic and career/technical education. It is correlated to state standards and provides assistive technology supports. Students can succeed across different levels of the curriculum.*
- Local administrators make a difference in the quality and future of the lives of individuals with exceptionalities and their families within the educational system and the community.  
*Project Discovery helps administrators improve education and transition outcomes for their students. Students learn valuable life and employability skills and it assists them in becoming successful, independent members of society.*

### **B. CEC and Project Discovery**

The **Council for Exceptional Children's (CEC) mission** is: *to improve the educational outcomes for individuals with exceptionalities. Project Discovery supports this mission and CEC policies:*

**CEC policies** state that CEC believes:

- in equitable access to and meaningful participation in quality educational opportunities for individuals with exceptionalities.  
*Project Discovery is an all inclusive system for both regular and special needs education. Administrators may also customize the curricula for individual needs.*
- all individuals have the ability to learn and attain self-fulfillment.  
*Students may experience success across all levels of the curricula due to the assistive technology and supports provided.*

## ***Project Discovery Research Presentation Report***

- full participation of individuals with exceptionalities enriches all communities.  
*Through the integration of academic, job and life skills, students gain valuable instruction in career planning, life skills and entry-level job tasks, aiding in their transition to post-school activities.*

### **C. Standards and Project Discovery**

***Project Discovery*** integrates academic skills with job tasks. In order to help administrators show the link to academic standards, correlations have been made to individual state standards and alternate assessments.

## **7. EVIDENCE AND DOCUMENTATION OF CUSTOMER SATISFACTION**

Education Associates places a strong emphasis on developing long-term relationships with customers to help ensure the success of the customer's program. We provide continuing support and technical assistance to our customers in many ways. Customer satisfaction during the process of implementation, training and follow-up are documented by the following forms:

- **Training** - Evaluations are made after each training.
- **Site Support Follow-up Survey** – as noted earlier, this is provided three months after training to determine customer satisfaction as well as areas where assistance can be provided to help ensure a successful implementation. For evidence of customer satisfaction, see Section 3 “Field Tested.”
- **Data Collection Survey** – collected at end of school year (see Section 3).
- **Repeat Customers** – high rate of customers ordering additional materials or school districts implementing in additional schools/locations.
- **Advisory Board Evaluations.** See Excerpts below:
  - *“The materials are broken down in sequential steps which will not be overwhelming to our students. It’s easy to follow and understand for both teachers and students. Very user friendly!”*
  - *“This is a well-developed project that teachers can use for many years. It gives teachers a way of assessing student’s performance and it gives ways of monitoring student’s understanding of concepts and materials.”*
  - *“The program offers activities across curriculum areas by covering many subject areas, such as math, high-order thinking, critical thinking, reading, problem-solving, etc. Very little planning of activities are involved with the project, it’s all spelled out for you.”*
  - *“I was impressed with work ethics being embedded throughout the curriculum. I greatly appreciated the scoring rubrics and websites.”*
  - *“Honestly, you have done a magnificent job developing the kits!”*

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## EDUCATION ASSOCIATES CLIENT REFERENCES

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## **APPENDIX B**

### ***NATIONAL ADVISORY BOARD***

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## **APPENDIX C**

### ***NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT TEAM***

1. Dr. Phyllis Mayfield, Past Education Specialist, Alabama State Dept. of Education; Past Asst. Professor, Early Childhood Special Education, Univ. of Alabama; Past Special Education Coordinator, Sylacauga Schools, AL.
2. Ms. Betsy Gentry, Past Transition Coordinator, Bradley County Schools, Cleveland, TN.
3. Ms. Donna Alderman, Dept. Chair-Exceptional Children, Pitt County Schools, Winterville, NC; Nationally-Board Certified in Special Education.
4. Ms. Crystal Boggess, Special Education Teacher/Case Manager, Giles High School, Pearisburg, VA.
5. Ms. Zelda Rogers, Past Director of Career Development, State of Florida Department of Education, Tallahassee, FL.
6. Dr. Sandy Pritz, Senior Consultant, National Occupational Competency Testing Institute; past Research Specialist, Center on Education and Training for Employment, The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH.
7. Dr. Margo Izzo, Program Manager for Special Education and Transition Services of The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH; Past President, Division of Career Development and Transition, Council on Exceptional Children.
8. Ms. Marsha Kucker, Executive Director, Education Resource Center of South Dakota; past State Coordinator of Tech Prep/Career Guidance, State of South Dakota Department of Education, Pierre, SD
9. Ms. Lynne Voltaggio, Community School Administrator, Orange County Public Schools, Orlando, FL.
10. Ms. Fran Salyers, Writing Consultant; past Writer/Editor, State of Kentucky Department of Education, Frankfort, KY.
11. Ms. Yvonne Burry, President, The Adams Street Group; Curriculum Development Specialist, Upper Arlington, OH.
12. Ms. Shelley Mauer, Senior Vice President of Research and Development, Education Associates; U.S. Departments of Education and Labor National Technical Assistance Provider; Curriculum Specialist, Frankfort, KY.
13. Ms. Jamie Stricklin, Education Consultant, Canton, Mississippi; Past Director, Divisions of Special Education and Innovative Support, Mississippi Department of Education.
14. Ms. Angela Curran, Educational Diagnostician and Special Education Consultant, Salem, WV.
15. Ms. Kelli Jett, Special Education Teacher, Doddridge County Middle School, West Union, WV.
16. Dr. Karla Wade, Transition Specialist, Cobb County Schools, Marietta, GA.
17. Ms. Juanita Pritchard, Past Assistive Technology Specialist, Cobb County Schools, Marietta, GA.

## APPENDIX D

### SITE SUPPORT SURVEY

Thank you so much for the part you have played in making the lives of students productive ones and ones with solid futures. We would like to take a few minutes of your valuable time to get an analysis of your reflections and comments on how well the students are doing with the curriculum. Your input will be greatly appreciated and help ensure a quality program that helps students succeed!

**Please rate the following:**

<b>INSTRUCTOR MATERIALS</b>	<b>1</b> Strongly Disagree	<b>2</b> Disagree	<b>3</b> No Opinion	<b>4</b> Agree	<b>5</b> Strongly Agree
1. Helpful in implementation					
2. Provide useful information					
3. Easy to understand					
4. Provide clear objectives					
5. Work Performance Benchmarks are helpful in assessing student performance and with IEPs.					
<b>STUDENT MATERIALS</b>					
1. Provide effective hands-on career activities					
2. Motivate students to learn					
3. Motivate students to stay in school					
4. Help students in career decision-making					
5. Provide effective integration of academics.					
8. Relevant for different functioning levels.					
9. Help students learn about their interests, strengths and abilities.					
<b>OVERALL CURRICULUM</b>					
1. Helped us achieve our objectives.					
2. Students benefited from these materials.					
3. I would continue use of these materials.					

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
1. Did you attend the Education Associates certified training session?		
2. If not, did you receive any training from your local administrators?		
3. Please describe the following: A. Which kits you taught? B. Class size	A.  B.	
4. Comment on the strengths of these materials:		
5. Comment on changes you would make to improve the curriculum:		
6. Comment on how the students benefited from the materials:		
7. Comment on how teachers benefited from the curriculum.		
8. Any success stories you can share with us?		
9. Do we have permission to use your name and information provided for quotes about the program:	YES: ____	NO: ____

## APPENDIX E

### DATA COLLECTION SURVEY

Please provide us with a brief description of the following data to help us analyze your program's effectiveness.

1. Dropout statistics	2008 Year _____ 2009 Year _____
2. Number of disciplinary referrals	2008 Year _____ 2009 Year _____
3. % Student attendance	2008 Year _____ 2009 Year _____
4. State test scores: A. English/Language Arts/Reading B. Mathematics C. Science	2008 Year _____ 2009 Year _____ 2008 Year _____ 2009 Year _____ 2008 Year _____ 2009 Year _____
5. Number of students graduating. (%).	2008 Year _____ 2009 Year _____
6. Number of students using the Project Discovery kits.	2008 Year _____ 2009 Year _____
7. % of students (using kits) that are furthering their education beyond high school.	2008 Year _____ 2009 Year _____
8. % of students placed in jobs.	2008 Year _____ 2009 Year _____
9. Types of jobs students entered.	
10. Percent of students using the Project Discovery kits in their transition plans.	2008 Year _____ 2009 Year _____
11. Percent of students using the Project Discovery kits that reported they had impacted their career decision-making process.	2008 Year _____ 2009 Year _____
12. Percent of students reporting motivation to attend class due to Project Discovery kits.	2008 Year _____ 2009 Year _____
13. Number of new community/business partners due to use of Project Discovery kits.	2008 Year _____ 2009 Year _____
14. Number of parents participating in class activities due to Project Discovery kits.	
15. Dollars received per special needs student.	
16. % of students taking regular tests.	
17. % of students taking alternative tests.	
18. % of students who identified strengths, abilities and preferences per IDEA requirements.	
19. A. Overall average score on Project Discovery Pre-Tests. B. Overall average score on Project Discovery Post-Tests.	A. _____ B. _____
20. Any additional information/statistics relevant to the program.	

## SITE DATA SUMMARY EXCERPTS

### Strategies Will Improve Outcomes

Project Discovery is a career education and transition program that is proven to work. Documentation from user sites shows that students with special needs are:

### Making Significant Gains – Pre-Post test documentation reports dramatic student gains:

- Average class increase from Pre-Test to Post-Test was 82%, Clover School District, SC.
- Average Pre-test score was 24%, Post-Test was 71%, Kershaw School District, SC.
- Average class increase from Pre-Test to Post-Test was 51%, Richland School District, SC.
- Average Pre-test score was 31%, Post-test was 75%, Virginia Beach School District, VA.
- Average class increase from Pre-test to Post-test was 43%, Lincoln County, KY.
- Average Pre-test score was 70%, Post-test was 95%, Mt. Pleasant ISD, TX.
- Average Pre-test score was 30%, Post-test was 80%, Meade County, KY.

### Gaining Abilities and Skills – Work Performance Benchmarks validate students' levels of abilities for employers.

- 73% of students reported either “above average” or “highly proficient” skill levels on tasks in Table Service kit (transitioned to workplace-documented below), Clover School District, SC.

### Successfully Transitioning to the Workplace – Students successfully transition to employment based on discovering interests, matching those to the workplace and gaining job skills in the career area.

- 100% of students expressing interest in Food Service career area gained employment in local jobs after using Project Discovery – Clover School District, SC.
- 50% of students using kits were placed in jobs – Mt. Pleasant, TX.

### Staying in School-Dropout Rates are Impacted. A sampling of user site data includes:

- Daily attendance increased 10%, dropout rate decreased from 21% to 6%, Red River Parish, LA.
- Dropout rates and disciplinary referrals improved by 15%, Bradley Co. Schools, TN.
- Dropout rate decreased from 58% to 28%, Ascension Parish, LA.
- 25% increase in attendance rate, 25% decrease in disciplinary referrals, Westmoreland County, VA.
- 25% decrease in disciplinary referrals, Mt. Pleasant ISD, TX.

