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Educational Standards for Students with Significant Intellectual Disabilities<sup>1</sup>

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In 2004, President Bush's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities studied the employment status of the lowest intellectually functioning 3% of the adult USA population and concluded that 90% were unemployed or grossly underemployed (PCPID, 2004). A number of others reported similar findings (Harris, 2000; Magliore & Butterworth, 2008; Newman et al., 2011; Taylor et al., 2012; and The National Council on Disability, 2000). Governor Jeb Bush of Florida established a task force to study the status of Floridians labeled developmentally disabled and reported an unemployment rate of 80 % (FAPD, 2004). Many individuals with disabilities exit school and enter community colleges or vocational/technical schools. After brief stays, they flunk or drop out and join the ranks of the unemployed (Simon, 2012; U.S. Committee on Health, Education Labor and Pensions, 2012). Almost 300,000 spend their lives missing real opportunities to approximate their potential while restricted to relatively expensive segregated sheltered workshops (Wehman, 2011). Price (2012) reported that in 2011, Ohio spent 175 million dollars restricting individuals with disabilities to segregated workshops and a mere 5 million to keep them employed in the community. Further, the cost of sheltered workshops was \$22,000 per person per year while the cost of supporting similar individuals in integrated work settings was less than \$9600 per year. Recently, Oregon and Rhode Island were found out of compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act by the U. S. Department of Justice for restricting far too many individuals with disabilities to segregated workshops and thus not affording reasonable access to integrated work opportunities (Perez, 2012a; Perez, 2013). Confining persons with significant intellectual disabilities to large public or private residential institutions are no longer options. The extremely high taxpayer costs and the unbearable histories of abuse, neglect and wasted lives have resulted in less than 40,000 out of a population of 310 million remaining in these intolerable places. Tragically, increasing numbers are being confined to terribly inappropriate nursing homes and many thousands stay where they live all day doing little, if anything, meaningful (Perez, 2012b). These and related realities place tremendous strains on aging parents, family members and taxpayers.

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<sup>1</sup> A substantially expanded version of this document can be downloaded from the website of Lou Brown: [www.website.education.wisc.edu/lbrown](http://www.website.education.wisc.edu/lbrown). A version is also published in TASH CONNECTIONS, 2014

The education of all handicapped children became a national legal requirement in 1975. It and subsequent revisions have been operative for more than 35 years. Thousands of students with significant intellectual disabilities have received up to 21 years of educational and related services and consumed billions of tax dollars. Still, each year more and more graduate with no foreseeable employment options and often end up spending too much time at home. The post school outcomes experienced by individuals with significant intellectual disabilities in the USA are harmful, cost inefficient, depressing and unacceptable. Indeed, when school outcomes are considered, versions of the Education of all Handicapped Children Act are empirically “the education of all handicapped children with no meaningful skills acts.” Are all adults with significant intellectual disabilities unemployed? Absolutely not. Each year increasing numbers receive the training and extra supports needed to perform real work in the real world for extended periods of time (Brown, Shiraga & Kessler, 2006; Certo et al.; 2006; Wehman, 2006). Why do some have real jobs while the vast majority does not? Little is due to intellectual capabilities. Much is due to poorly trained professionals, inadequate and irrelevant instruction, low expectations, the lack or paucity of local opportunities and the absence of long-term post school extra supports (Certo et al., 2009). We know how to and actually do produce good employment, residential and social school outcomes for some. It is time to change our ways and produce them for the many thousands of others who so desperately need them.

#### The Students and the Dangers of Developmentalism

Students with significant intellectual disabilities refers to the lowest intellectually functioning 1 - 2% of a naturally distributed school age population. Several of their extremely important learning and performance characteristics are delineated below. None can be denied or dishonored and it is extremely important that they are honored concurrently.

**The Number of Skills That Can Be Learned.** These students can learn many skills, but less than 98 - 99% of all others. Thus, only the most important skills they can and should learn in order to function effectively in integrated society should be selected for instruction. Teaching unimportant skills, those they really do not need to know, those that will never be used and will therefore be forgotten, those that will be obsolete or chronological age inappropriate soon after they are acquired, those that will not be generalized/transferred and those that waste valuable educational time is unacceptable.

**Difficulty Range.** If these students are required to try to learn or perform skills that are too simple; i.e., at the lower ends of their difficulty ranges, they are not challenged, they become bored and underachieve. If they are required to try to learn or perform skills that are too complex, too abstract, too symbolic or otherwise out of their difficulty ranges,

they cannot learn them, they become frustrated and underachieve. The best instructional practice is to select important skills that are acquirable and near the upper ends of difficulty ranges.

**Observational Learning.** Almost all are capable of acquiring rudimentary observational learning skills, including those necessary to imitate - the ability to match or approximate some of the actions of models. This makes it extremely important that they function in the presence of the best possible communication, work, social and behavior models.

**The Number of Instructional Opportunities.** Most typically need many more opportunities to learn important skills in their difficulty ranges than all others. Thus, individually appropriate numbers of opportunities to learn important skills at the upper end of each difficulty range must be provided. If they are not provided, acquisition and accumulation will be extremely limited, if realized at all.

**Practice.** Without practice these students forget more and take longer to relearn what was forgotten than all others. This requires that we do not teach skills without arranging for reasonable practice opportunities. Knowing that forgetting will occur and then allowing it to happen is wasteful, harmful and professionally irresponsible.

**Generalization/Transfer of Training.** They have major difficulties generalizing/transferring training across similar but different conditions. If artificial or simulated instructional conditions are used, they should be as close as possible to authentic - real - conditions. However, even if artificial or simulated conditions are used, performance under authentic conditions must be validated empirically or developed.

**Synthesis.** More intellectually able students are remarkably good at synthesizing isolated bits of information. The students of concern are not. We know how to teach them many important skills in their difficulty ranges, but we also know they rarely synthesize them effectively. Thus, school officials are responsible for engineering synthesis by arranging for them to perform skills learned in meaningful clusters and contexts.

If a student is chronologically 5, but functioning as a normal 2 year old, the developmentalist argues that our responsibility is to "Start where she is and then take her to the next developmental step." Thus, all available resources are focused upon teaching her the skills of a typically developing 3 year old. The problem is that this "developmental milestone" is reached, at age 10. If all we know is developmentalism, all we can do is "Consider where she is and then take her to the next step". The next developmental step is to teach her to act like a typical 4 year old. We do and she reaches that important "benchmark" at chronological age 14. Then we start teaching her to act like a typical five year old. We continue this

progression until she finishes her school career. Tragically, we systematically increased rather than decreased differences between her and chronological age peers. Every child should be given reasonable opportunities to progress through normal human development stages. However, the myopic, longitudinal and inflexible quest to impose educational standards based upon or derived from normal human development theories and hypotheses is far too often harmful to individuals with significant intellectual disabilities. When performance discrepancies increase, the concepts and practices that directly support integrated outcomes at school exit must be substituted for those based on developmentalism.

#### The Educational Standards Movement

Since the 1990's "educational standards" have been among the most contentious, divisive and controversial phenomena in education. Those concerned with having educational systems equal to or better than Singapore, Finland and other countries want to raise academic standards in the USA. Business owners want schools that produce graduates with the skills needed in the economies and industries of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Almost all parents want higher standards for their children established and met. Many offer that life without a high school diploma can only be marginal. Some believe that if you do not have a college degree, you are doomed to a life at minimum wages. Reactions to these and related phenomena have been quite interesting.

First, absolutist language and fanciful conceptualizations of public education became politically popular. "Every child will read by the third grade"; "No child will be left behind" and, "Abolish social promotion" are examples. Second, there was a strong demand to rely on grade level scores on independently administered standardized academic achievement tests to validate educational progress or the lack thereof. Some even proposed that all students should be required to take the same academic achievement tests in the same way. If students did not obtain a particular score on an approved standardized academic achievement test, they could not advance to the next grade or school level, earn a high school diploma or be admitted to a post secondary educational institution supported by tax dollars. Third, there was a powerful movement to exclude all but grade level academic content from the general education curriculum. No more "mickey mouse", "dumbed down" or "watered down" resource wasters. Fourth, there were many calls for increasing the number of required school days and hours per year and concomitant increases in course and credit requirements. Fifth, some argued that public schools do not work, are beyond repair and are terrible wastes of scarce and valuable tax dollars. Their solution was to issue vouchers backed by tax dollars and allow students who choose to do so to use them to escape to private, charter or other educational institutions. Sixth, some operated from the premise that school officials are

responsible for the progress of the children in their care and must be held accountable for the results. If students do not achieve satisfactorily, school boards should be disbanded and mayors should take over school systems, teachers and administrators should be fired or schools should be closed or reconstituted with new and better personnel. Seventh, some demanded that instruction be based upon credible scientific evidence. There is no doubt that when these and similar policies and practices were implemented, the grade level standardized academic achievement and school exit test scores of many were enhanced. Conversely, there is no doubt that these and similar policies and practices produced disastrous effects on far too many others, particularly those with a wide variety of disabilities and children of families with low incomes in urban school districts.

#### The Fusion of Academic Standards and Inclusion

The academic achievement standards movement seemed so necessary, made so much sense as a national priority, was concerned with doing good for so many, it was easy to understand why many wanted to give it a chance to succeed or become a part of it. Some Special Educators adopted many of the basic tenets of the academic achievement standards movement and decided to seek ways in which students with significant intellectual disabilities could be included. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (PL 107 - 110), The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997 (PL 105 - 17), The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (PL 108 - 446) and the U.S. Department of Education (2005) required that students with disabilities have access to grade level general education academic curricular content and participate in district and state level accountability assessments. It was also required that students with disabilities be assessed in the same grade level academic content areas as all other students and that the assessment strategies utilized mirror those used with all other students. The major purposes of these requirements seemed to be to ensure that students with significant intellectual disabilities were included in statewide accountability systems and to encourage academic achievement. Finally, gains in academic achievement were to be followed by financial and other rewards or sanctions (Harr Robins, et al., 2012).

Requiring that educational achievement standards be the same as, mirror or be closely “linked” to general education grade level academic curricular content (High Fidelity) was devastating for students with significant intellectual disabilities. Consider the following.

- Jonas, a student with significant intellectual disabilities, was in a high school English class that was studying idiomatic expressions, the multiple meanings of words, contained in Steinbeck’s “Of Mice and

Men.” The curricular “linkage” for him was to try to teach him to match a word card to a picture of a tube of bologna (the luncheon meat) as well as to a picture of inflated balloons (Kleinert, Kearns and Kleinert, 2010).

- Wakeman et al. (2010) report that a student with significant intellectual disabilities could be taught such “linked” History content as touching a card with the word “constitution” printed on it in response to a teacher provided verbal cue when presented with four cards that contain different words. They also provide the “linked” Science example of teaching a student point to the core and the crust on a topographical model of planet Earth in response to verbal cues to do so.
- Ahlgrim Denzell, Rickelman and Clayton (2010) consider teaching a student with significant intellectual disabilities to use a graphic illustrator to sequence a series of pictures about the life of Paul Bunyan in chronological order an acceptable “linkage.”
- Courtade, Taub and Burdge (2010) suggest the “linkage” of having a student with significant intellectual disabilities in a high school Science class match a picture of a rock to an actual rock.

Are those skills “linked” to grade level academic curricular content? Yes. If we were asked to list 1000 of the most important skills we need to teach students with significant intellectual disabilities by school exit, would they be on our list? No. Consider the “linked” grade level academic skill of teaching a student with significant intellectual disabilities to touch a rock when presented with a picture of that rock in a high school Science classroom. Were measures of generalization required or taken? No. Where but in the Science class would the student be required to perform the skill? How often would he need to practice it so he would not forget it? Probably daily. Will it matter if a student is rated “Proficient” on this skill? No. Would this skill be important in his post school life? No. Is there an alternative that would yield better returns on scarce and valuable educational resources? Definitely.

Fortunately, each state is allowed to generate alternative assessment strategies and alternative achievement standards (AA - AAS) for students who cannot participate meaningfully in general education assessments, even with accommodations. In addition, students with disabilities are legally entitled to Individualized Educational Programs (IEPS) and Individualized School to Post School Transition Plans (ITPS) that address nonacademic needs and skills associated with their disabilities (Musgrove, 2012). Nonacademic skills are those generally considered functional, social, motor, vocational, communication,

travel, shopping, personal maintenance, domestic living, etc. These individualization mandates and the option to create and utilize alternative assessment strategies and alternative achievement standards afford legal and professional license to engender reasonable departures from rigid and myopic adherence to confining instructional content to that appropriate for more intellectually able students. In short, the concern is not with the need for alternative assessment strategies and alternative achievement standards but with those chosen for development and use. The portfolios of students with significant intellectual disabilities at school exit are too important to be confined to the grade level academic curricular content appropriate for those much more intellectually able.

### *Curricular Fidelity*

If the lowest intellectually functioning 1 - 2 % of a naturally distributed school district experienced the exact same curricula as all other students, 100% Fidelity would be operative. As few, if anyone, would so require or recommend, an important issue then becomes “How far from the curricular experiences offered students without intellectual disabilities can we depart and still be in compliance with the letters and spirits of relevant state and federal laws and administrative codes and best instructional practices” (Browder et al., 2009)? Substantial and individually determined flexibility based upon the integrated post school outcomes desired and the individualized accommodations and related experiences needed to realize them are clearly appropriate.

- If a skill is closely “linked” to general education grade level academic curricular content (High Fidelity) and it is important for a student with significant intellectual disabilities and if she/he is capable of learning it, we should attempt to teach it.
- If a skill is closely “linked” to general education grade level academic curricular content (High Fidelity) and it is important for a student with significant intellectual disabilities but she/he is incapable of learning it, we should not attempt to teach it.
- If a skill is closely “linked” to general education grade level academic curricular content (High Fidelity) and it is not important for a student with significant intellectual disabilities but she/he is capable of learning it, we should not attempt to teach it.

- If a skill is not closely “linked” to general education grade level academic curricular content (Low Fidelity) but it is important for a student with significant intellectual disabilities and she/he is capable of learning it, we should attempt to teach it.

#### A Diploma Is Not An Outcome

Some school districts claim that almost 100% of their students exit their schools with Standard, General Education Degree or IEP diplomas. Does this mean that all who are awarded a diploma have met the same educational standards? No. Does this mean that college admission officers can be confident that one who has a diploma has the academic skills needed for success in the first year of college? No. Does this mean that an employer can trust that twelfth grade level academic skills are in the repertoires of the graduates? No. Does this mean that all who earn or are awarded a diploma can read at the third grade level? No. What can we confidently infer about a student with a high school diploma? Very little, or close to it. If we cannot trust grades, credits, course titles or letters of recommendation from school personnel, how can we make reasonably valid predictive decisions about the meaning of a diploma? Indeed, high school diplomas are like going to the senior prom, on the senior trip or participating in a graduation ceremony. They are nice to experience, but they are not meaningful school outcomes.

Everyone wants a diploma to mean something, so what can we do? We can establish a set of relatively high academic standards for all students, establish grade level academic admission standards for all classes and school levels, do away with social promotion and then watch tragically large numbers continue to fail and either refuse to come to or to drop out of school. Conversely, we can establish admission and progression standards that are so low all who can breathe can meet them. If we do that, what do we tell parents, employers, taxpayers, military recruiters, school board members, college admission personnel and the general citizenry when they ask us what a public school education means? If educational standards are conceptualized abstractly, it is relatively easy to agree on those that are appropriate for all: “Be prepared to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.”; “Be a constructive and productive citizen.” However, given the extremely wide range of intellectual capabilities of millions of students, one set of standards for all is too nebulous and abstract. The educational standards we establish for the most intellectually able of the school age population should overlap but in some ways should be dramatically different from those we establish for the least intellectually able. If one size does not fit all, how many sizes should we have? How do we decide who gets which size?

If a school district chooses to award diplomas, either one or various levels and kinds, to all, so be it.



Schools should be safe, fair to all, fun, social, equitable, engendering of maximal individual achievement and respectful of and responsive to individual religious, familial and cultural differences.

A portion of each school day is an end in itself and all involved should try to make the most of each moment.

However, a portion of each school day is also a means to an end and should be devoted to realizing the end of living, working and playing in integrated society, doing as much as possible for oneself, making the fewest possible demands on others and being the best possible citizen.

Students of dramatically different intellectual abilities need, deserve and should be provided different educational experiences that are designed to produce different integrated outcomes.

#### Nine Meaningful Educational Standards

Our primary concern is to generate educational standards and practices that result in meaningful integrated post school outcomes (Brown, Nietupski & Hamre Nietupski, 1976). The task of delineating all the skills that could or should be in the repertoires of all students with significant intellectual disabilities as they exit school is beyond the purpose here. Thus, only nine of the many possible important outcome driven achievement standards are addressed. It is the responsibility of each IEP team to decide upon and operationalize individually meaningful skill clusters and the associated assessment strategies and achievement standards. Few, if any, standards can be met perfectly. Fortunately, we do not have to be perfect in order to live, work and play in integrated society.

*Responsibility and Accountability.* What if you learned that 90% of the students who attended this expensive segregated school for 21 years were unemployed at school exit and remained so the rest of their lives? What if you learned that the only individuals who interact with these students in post school life are others with disabilities, family members and persons paid to do so? What if you learned that these students will live at home until their parents die and then they will be remanded to group or nursing homes? What if you learned that the students you have been paid to educate for 21 years can do almost nothing for and by themselves because you arranged for others to do so much for them? What if..... Accountability, in this context, refers to assuming responsibility for the outcomes of educational services provided. General education officials are held accountable if a high percentage of the students they serve do not qualify for admission to colleges. That is, they are reprimanded, put on probation and required to do better in the near future, fired, transferred to less important jobs, etc. What should the school officials responsible for the education of students with

significant intellectual disabilities be held accountable for? Preparing them to live work and play as cost efficiently as possible in a wide array of integrated environments and activities at school exit. If the students they are responsible for cannot do so, Special Education officials should be reprimanded, put on probation and required to do better in the near future, fired, transferred to less important jobs, etc.

*Home Schools, General Education Classes and Authentic Assessment and Instruction.* In almost all instances, the students of concern can be prepared best for integrated lives at school exit if they attend the same schools and many of the same general education classes they would attend if they were not disabled (Brown, Long et. al. 1989; Causton et. al. 2011). However, the nine standards presented cannot be met or even closely approximated without the longitudinal and comprehensive use of authentic assessment and instruction strategies (Brown, 2005; Brown Nisbet et. al. 1983). Authentic assessment and instruction are evidenced based practices that require arranging for a student to participate in an authentic - real - activity and empirically validating the nature of his/her repertoire as she/he actually engages therein. Then, empirical verification of acceptable performance in real environments and activities is developed. A major requirement of authentic assessment and instruction is that serious consideration be given to knowing and honoring the learning and performance characteristics of each student. There are thousands of valuable uses of authentic assessment and instruction in schools, homes, work places, recreation/leisure environments and general community settings. Consider the teacher who constructed a five item pictorial list of food items Jon's family typically buys in the market they use most often. Then she took Jon to the market, gave him the list and assessed how well he could complete the required skill sequence. He could not perform the actual sequence appropriately. Thus, the specific skills he needed to learn, the materials needed, the performance criteria appropriate for the setting, the adaptations and commitments for practice responsibilities, etc. were decided upon. Some of the needed skills could be best taught at school and followed by generalization/transfer checks until criterion performance was realized in the real market. Matching a picture to a box of cereal to an actual box of same is an example. However, skills such as finding a particular item from among hundreds in a busy food market aisle are best taught in the actual market. Prior to instruction, family members agreed to assume practice responsibilities when he learned the skills of concern. When he successfully performs the sequence in accordance with the minimally acceptable standards of the integrated food market, items could be added to the list, he could be taught to shop in a pharmacy, etc. These and similar skill clusters can be learned and performed in context throughout his life. In short, instruction in home schools and in general education classes must be gradually reduced starting no later than the first year

of high school. When not in general education classes in home schools, the students should be receiving instruction in the integrated environments and activities in which they will or most likely will function at school exit. If authentic assessment and instruction are not provided, integrated functioning in post school years is minimized, if not denied. If they are provided only during the few years after peers without disabilities exit school, there is not enough time to teach the necessary skills.

*Standard # 1. Be Nice and Manifest a Good Work Ethic*

If a person with significant intellectual disabilities is reasonably nice to others and appears to be at least trying to give her/his best effort, most individuals without disabilities will extend themselves to accommodate to limitations. In most instances the inverse is also accurate. Thus, two extremely important skill clusters that must be developed are being nice to others and expending best efforts.

*Standard # 2. Use Meaningful Academic Skills*

Should attempts be made to teach the lowest intellectually functioning 1 - 2 % of our students individually determined arrays of grade level academic skills in such domains as Reading, Math, Science, Civics, Geography, History, Literature, Economics and the Arts? Yes. But the time and other resources devoted to teaching them must be prioritized and balanced in relation to many other kinds of critically needed skills. The academic skills selected for instruction must offer reasonable chances for acquisition and must be appropriately performed in an array of current and meaningful school and nonschool environments and activities. If such arrangements are not operative, there will be little, if any, generalization/transfer, practice, much forgetting, little accumulation and unnecessary and unaffordable waste. One way to address this standard is to construct a *Cumulative Academic Skills Booklet*. Assume a child is 3 and we analyze the academic skills in her/his repertoire. Each IEP should include a component specific to the development, maintenance and enhancement of a healthy range of meaningful grade level academic skills. It is extremely important that the academic skill repertoires of persons with significant intellectual disabilities be inventoried, practiced and expanded annually so that when they exit school they are using them to function effectively in a wide array of integrated environments and activities.

*Standard # 3. Function In a Reasonable Array of Environments*

The vast majority of the students of concern does not function in, have access to or otherwise experience the same number of environments as do individuals without disabilities. One way to continually address and correct for this unfortunate reality is to construct a *Cumulative Environments Booklet*. Assume a child is chronologically 3 and we count the number of environments she and local chronological age peers experience. If there are no differences, celebrate. However, if she functions in fewer environments, all reasonable efforts must be made to minimize the differences. If this process is engaged in annually, at school exit she should be functioning in close to the same number of environments as chronological age peers without disabilities. Some operate from the premise that first we should teach many skills in a few environments, a home and a school, and then hope the students will generalize/transfer those skills to many other settings and contexts. When the well documented generalization/transfer of training difficulties as well as the terrible post school outcomes reported above are considered, the absurdity and dangers of this strategy are obvious. First, we must increase the number of environments in which a student functions. Then, we must enhance functioning in each: a home, a school, a park, a workplace, a public bus, a library, the house of a friend, a store, a Girl Scout meeting place, etc. This will ensure the person can function in a more typical array of environments at school exit. If someone other than school personnel provides such instruction, school personnel can focus upon other skills. The tragic reality is that as no one else can or does and too many lives are terribly and unnecessarily constricted.

*Standard #4. Enjoy a Reasonable Social Relationship Range*

The overwhelming majority of the students of concern are restricted from opportunities to develop reasonable ranges of social relationships with peers without disabilities. As a result: they spend inordinate amounts of time in solitary activities; they spend excessive amounts of time with adult family members and paid caregivers who almost always become unnaturally intrusive in their lives; extraordinary pressures are placed upon family members to arrange, provide, pay for and transport them to and from time filling activities of dubious value; and, the environments and activities most often arranged are segregated and therefore restrictive. When children are born we do all we can to insure they survive and thrive. As they get older we are responsible for teaching or otherwise arranging for them to interact effectively with more and more individuals. Most parents do this naturally and without much difficulty. Because most children want to become involved with others, such growth and development is generally assumed and underappreciated. Thus, few parents of children without disabilities keep empirical records of the annual growth of the social relationship range of their children. Parents of children with significant intellectual disabilities and others involved in their lives can afford no such luxury. In far

too many instances, loneliness and isolation are the worst disabilities. This reality provides one of the most important reasons why the students of concern must attend schools that also serve large numbers of students without disabilities who live near them. Specifically, home schools offer opportunities to develop decent ranges of social relationships and ultimately meaningful social networks. Nonhome schools do not. Without the premeditated, systematic and otherwise engineered interventions of people in authority over long periods of time, the development of critically needed arrays of social relationships is at best impeded and in far too many instances prevented. Eleven of the many nonmutually exclusive kinds of social relationships that should be parts of the life of every student with significant intellectual disabilities are presented in Table 1. Except for friends, how to develop all of them is well known (Brown, Udvari Solner, Courchane et al., 1994). One way to address this critical standard is to construct a *Cumulative Social Relationships Booklet*. Assume a child is chronologically 3 and we analyze his social relationship range. Then we consider the social relationship ranges of relevant chronological age peers without disabilities. Then we do all we can to minimize the differences. Each IEP should include a component specific to the development, maintenance and enhancement of a healthy range of at least the 11 social relationships delineated in Table 1. One school day should not pass without a student experiencing at least 3 or 4 of these relationships. It is extremely important that social relationship ranges are inventoried and expanded annually so at exit school they can function effectively with a wide range of individuals with and without disabilities who are and are not family members and who are and are not paid to be with them. During school to post school transition years social relationships can and must be developed with persons the students should and will interact with at school exit. Coworkers, service providers, recreation/leisure companions and faith community members are examples.

*Table 1. Eleven Kinds of Social Relationships*

Kind	Definition
1 - Eating companion	A peer without disabilities who agrees to function with a peer with disabilities during lunch time. While the student without disabilities may provide assistance, the relationship is primarily for companionship rather than instruction.

2 - Art, home economics, in arts, music, physical education companion	A peer without disabilities who agrees to provide assistance and encouragement to a peer with disabilities in integrated instructional and related activities arranged by relevant professionals.
3 - Regular class companion	A peer without disabilities who agrees to sit next to, monitor or assist a student with disabilities function acceptably in appropriate regular/general education classroom activities.
4 - During school companion	A peer without disabilities who "hangs out" with a student with disabilities during free time at school. The purpose of the relationship is social and it may be manifested at many places and times throughout the school week.
5 - Friend	A reciprocal, mutual, nurturing and sharing relationship between a student with and a peer without disabilities.
6 - Extracurricular companion	A peer without disabilities who guides, assists, monitors and attempts to ensure that everything goes well for a student with disabilities during school sponsored extracurricular activities both during and after school days and times.
7 - After school project companion	A student without disabilities who interacts with a peer with disabilities in the process of completing projects initiated at school.
8 - After school companion	A peer without disabilities who "hangs out," plays with or attends an activity with a student with disabilities during nonschool days and times.
9 - Travel companion	A peer without disabilities agrees to help, guide, monitor or just be with a peer with disabilities as she/he walks, wheels or otherwise travels to and from school and related environments.
10 - Neighbor	A nonpaid person without disabilities who interacts with a student with disabilities constructively in nonschool environments and activities during nonschool days and times.
11 - Peer tutor	An instructional relationship between a student who is and one who is not disabled. The primary purpose of the relationship is for the student without disabilities to teach someone that has been approved by an adult in authority.

*Standard # 5. Utilize a Large Repertoire of Functional Skills*

If a person with a disability can or should perform an action but does not and someone else must, it is referred to here as a functional skill. If a person with a disability can or should perform an action but does not and no one else must, it is considered other than a functional skill. For example, a student must be dressed for school. If he does not dress himself and no one else must do so, dressing himself for school is not a functional skill. If someone else must dress him if he does not, dressing himself for school meets the criterion of a functional skill. An important part of becoming the most that you can be is learning to do as much as possible for yourself. The more you do for yourself, the more privacy you have, the less dependent you are and the fewer financial, emotional and other pressures you place upon others (Brown, 2009). Again, when children are born we are obliged to do all we can to insure they survive and thrive. As they get older we are obliged to teach or require them to do more and more for themselves. Most parents do this naturally and without much difficulty. Because most children want to learn to do things for themselves, the significance of such growth and development is generally underappreciated. Indeed, few parents of children without disabilities keep empirical records of the expanding arrays of functional skills their children learn each year. Parents of children with significant intellectual disabilities and others involved in their lives can afford no such luxury. One way to address this important standard is to construct a *Cumulative Functional Skills Booklet*. Assume a child is chronologically 3 and we analyze and make written and video records of the functional skills in her repertoire. Then we consider anything that we are doing for her that she could learn to or should do for herself. Then we teach or otherwise arrange for her to perform specific functional skills. When she learns and practices them appropriately, we select others. It is extremely important that her functional skill repertoire is inventoried, practiced and expanded annually so that when she exits school she can do as much as possible for herself in a wide variety of integrated and respected environments and activities. If we increase the number of environments in which a student operates, we never run out of meaningful functional skills to develop. Conversely, if we confine the number of environments in which a student functions, we quickly run out of functional skills to develop.

*Standard # 6. Utilize a Reasonable Array of Integrated Travel Skills*

When the students of concern exit school they should be able to walk, wheel or otherwise travel about their communities on public busses and trains, in car pools and in taxi cabs by themselves and with individuals who are and are not disabled to and from a wide variety of integrated vocational, recreation/leisure and general community settings. If they are not taught to meet this extremely important integrated travel standard during school years, chances are great they will not be taught

to meet it later. Unfortunately, if they are dependent upon specialized transportation services in post school years, the work, recreation/leisure and other general community environments and activities they experience will be unnecessarily constricted.

*Standard # 7. Produce Real Work in Integrated Settings*

In 1975 most parents of children with significant intellectual disabilities were happy to have a school their child could attend. When their children exited school, they were happy to have access to a segregated workshop or activity center. However, each year new children and their parents entered the educational system. Increasing numbers wanted educational standards and practices that focused upon integrated schooling with real work in the real world as a post school outcome. Specifically, in some communities authentic vocational assessment and instruction were provided by school personnel during school days and times. Individualized school to integrated post school work transition plans were designed and implemented. Agencies that provided the necessary long term extra supports were established and the integrated work movement emerged. Can the integrated work standard be realized? Yes. How can we realize such outcomes? If individuals with significant intellectual disabilities are to be prepared to perform real work in the real world, they must be taken to the actual settings in which they are being prepared to function by school personnel during and after school days and times and then taught to function in accordance with the minimally acceptable standards of employers. One way to address this critical educational standard is to construct a *Cumulative Vocational Skills Booklet*. When a student enters high school, each IEP should include a component specific to the development, maintenance and enhancement of a healthy range of authentic vocational and related skills. It is extremely important that these skills be inventoried, practiced and expanded annually so that they culminate in functioning effectively in the actual integrated and related work places in which the students will function when they exit school. Three of the many components of a Cumulative Vocational Skills Booklet are addressed below.

First, when many employers imagine the vocational capabilities of the students or hear of the depressing adjectives too often ascribed them; they have difficulty conceptualizing how such persons can contribute to the successes of their businesses. To neutralize or attenuate such negative influences, each student should have at least 10 different integrated vocational training experiences before exiting school. One integrated work training experience for one half day per week should be provided each semester for the first 4 years of high school. Additional integrated work experiences should be arranged during summers. As time passes, integrated experiences on the campuses of schools should be systematically



reduced and integrated experiences that are the most preferred and appropriate at school exit should be provided. If students remain enrolled in school after their chronological age peers graduate, virtually all of their instruction should be provided in the integrated and related environments and activities in which they will or will likely function at school exit. In each vocational training setting video records of acquisition and performance should be made. These video records across time, settings and work tasks are excellent empirical verifications of competence and can be used as powerful reasons for subsequent employers to allow access to their businesses. Second, they cannot successfully perform all the real work and related tasks required of persons without disabilities. However, they can successfully perform some of the work and related tasks of any worker without disabilities. By performing those tasks, workers without disabilities are released to concentrate on those that are more complicated and valuable. Thus, at the end of each vocational training experience the testimonials of employers and coworkers about the performance of the students should be recorded visually and in print. These testimonials should address factors that are important to employers. Manifesting a reasonable work ethic, reliability, meeting at least minimally acceptable performance standards, noninterference with the productivity or enjoyment of coworkers and completing relatively simple tasks that release coworkers to perform those that are more complex and economically valuable are examples. These testimonials are extremely helpful because most employers place more value on the experiences of other employers than on the endorsements of advocates. Third, it is extremely rare that the students can succeed at a work place without the aid of individualized adaptations that allow at least meaningful partial participation (Ferguson and Baumgart, 1991). Some adaptations can be used to accommodate for physical limitations. Using head or mouth pointers to enter data into a computer, systematically rotating across time limited body positions so as to allow longer work periods without pain or muscle contractions and electronic voice communication devices are examples. Other adaptations can be used to accommodate to intellectual limitations. Picture sequences that can be used to make salads at a fast food restaurant, to deliver urine specimens to a laboratory from an outpatient clinic at a hospital or to secure and distribute supplies from the supply room to clerical workers in a large office are examples. The actual adaptations made at each worksite must be visually or otherwise documented and accumulated. Continually creating and using individualized adaptations will maximize vocational achievement.

*Standard # 8. Manifest Integrated Break and Lunch Time Skills*

Assume the instruction a student has received has prepared her/him to function in a real work setting at school exit and that he/she will function therein indefinitely. Each day at work she/he is allowed two 15 minute breaks and 30 minutes for

lunch. One hour per day for five days per week for 50 weeks per year totals 250 hours per year. During this time he/she cannot or does not want to read or compute. She/he does not like and does not understand complex conversations. He/she does not smoke. What can she/he do that is appropriate at his/her work place 250 hours per year? Indeed, many individuals with significant intellectual disabilities do not experience difficulties when actually working, but do so during break and lunch times. Thus, we must teach them to engage in a healthy, meaningful, subjectively enjoyable array of individually and situationally appropriate recreation/leisure activities during their school careers. In contrast, we must teach them to refrain from negatively affecting the lunch and break time experiences of others. Taking a nap or a walk, watching television and listening to favored music through ear phones are possibilities. What will be tolerated, unobtrusive, permissible, practical and possible can only be determined in the process of moving from school to specific post school work settings.

*Standard #9. Function In A Supported Apartment*

For the first time in history large numbers of individuals with significant disabilities are outliving their parents. None are capable of surviving or thriving without the direct and sustained assistance of fellow citizens without disabilities. Where do they live when their parents die? The option of placing them in large public or private residential institutions is essentially gone. They are too expensive, too dangerous and too restrictive of human dignity, achievement and enhancement. Extremely few families are financially able to arrange for one of their members with significant intellectual disabilities to own a single family home. Group homes and nursing homes are rejected as too costly, too repressive and restrictive and too disallowing of decent lives. Siblings or other family members will always assume the responsibility for some, but the overwhelming majority will become the responsibility of taxpayers. If taxpayers are responsible for paying for 21 years of schooling and then for many other services until death, it is in their self interest to insure that the individuals of concern cost as little as is reasonable to lead decent lives (Brown and Knollman, 2011). One way to address this standard is to construct and maintain a Cumulative Residential Skills Booklet. The skills a person should and could have in her/his repertoire at school exit in order to survive and thrive in a supported apartment could be delineated. Then at an early age we can start teaching specific skills on the list. By the time the student exits school she/he is performing as much as possible by and for her/himself. Those skills that she/he cannot perform can then be performed by persons who are paid to live with him/her and with no more than one other individual with disabilities or by someone who comes to the apartment

periodically and provides the needed extra support. Apartments are the best options because of the balance between the costs of the extra support needed and the quality of life they allow.

#### *What We Can Do To Continue To Produce Horrible School Outcomes?*

We are really good at producing individuals who can only function in segregated settings and activities, who comprehensively underachieve and who otherwise live terribly restricted lives at great taxpayer and family expense. If we choose to continue to produce such individuals, we can continue to engage in at least the following practices.

- Confine them to segregated schools, classrooms and classes. This will disprepare them to function in integrated settings and activities. No one can argue that functioning in segregated schools, classrooms and classes is a good way to prepare for effective functioning in integrated society.
- Deny or ignore the horrible post school outcomes you have been producing for years and continue to confine them to general education classrooms in symbiotic relationships with paraprofessionals.
- Continue to teach to their normal human development levels and disregard chronological age appropriateness.
- Make sure that their unique learning and performance characteristics are not determined or not honored.
- Make sure that the curricular content they are exposed to is abstract, symbolic, complex, highly verbal and precollege in nature and clearly above their difficulty ranges.
- Reject the creation and use of individualized adaptations and meaningful partial participation.
- Confine instruction to school grounds. This will ensure that they cannot function safely and efficiently in real streets, busses, work places, stores, parks, theatres, etc.
- Make sure they are assigned untrained teachers with emergency, probationary or temporary licenses. Keep thinking they cannot learn very much so they do not need highly trained teachers and therapists.
- Keep parents out of or minimize their involvement in school policies, decisions and operations.
- Resist all changes and pressures from “outside.” Function from the premise that you are the school professionals with experience. You and only you should decide what and how services are provided.
- Never conduct post school follow up studies of your graduates. This will allow you to continue what you are doing without learning what was wasteful and harmful or helpful and productive.

- Reject or otherwise disregard the values, dreams and testimonials of “advocates” and other integration agitators. Keep believing that the students who are experiencing success in integrated settings and activities those people are talking about are not as disabled as those for whom you are responsible.

*What We Can Do To Produce Better And Integrated School Outcomes?*

Each day evidence that integrated post school outcomes are achievable accumulates. If we choose to prepare more individuals with significant intellectual disabilities to live, work and play in integrated society at school exit, we can engage in at least the following practices.

- Arrange for them to function in the same schools, classrooms and classes they would if not disabled. This will provide them and millions of others without disabilities with the experiences necessary to learn to function effectively together.
- Provide authentic assessment and instruction starting in integrated early childhood settings and activities. Increase and expand these practices throughout school careers. Just as segregated schools, classrooms and classes and confining instruction to the physical property of schools beget segregated post school lives, integrated schools, classrooms and classes and authentic assessment and instruction beget integrated post school lives.
- Increase the number of environments in which they are taught to function successfully each year. When they exit school, they should be functioning in basically the same array of environments as local chronological age peers without disabilities.
- Gradually increase the social relationship ranges operative each year. When they exit school, they should have basically the same array of social relationships as chronological age peers without disabilities.
- Gradually increase the functional skill repertoires operative each year. When they exit school, they should be doing as much as they possibly can for themselves.
- Prepare them to produce real work in integrated work settings.

- Conduct annual post school follow up studies of your graduates. This will allow you to determine what you taught that was needed and helpful and what you taught that was not. Then you can then adapt your instructional program to the evolving needs of your students.

We know what to do. We know how to do it. Let's make it happen.

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