TEL.A.VISION: Preliminary Implementation Summary: Special Education District of McHenry (SEDOM) County Transition Program, 18-21 year old students with disabilities

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SEDOM: The Special Education District of McHenry County is a special education cooperative in Northern Illinois serving the 18 school district be providing special education programs and services in the 90 schools serving a student population of over 55,000 students in the county.

Transition Program: SEDOM administers a program for students 18-21 years of age in collaboration with McHenry Community College to prepare students with disabilities through education and work experiences for transition from school to work.

Implementation Description: A SEDOM Teacher, Ms. Margaret Molnar, implemented the Tel.a.vision curriculum with 20 MCC transition students during the fall 2009 and spring 2010 semesters. Implementation was supported by the program aides, Education and Careers Director, Ms. Sharon Slover, and consultant Christy Chambers.

Teacher Experiences: During visits and through interim email communications, the teacher made the following observations and comments to the consultant:

Ms. Molnar was surprised and impressed with the ability of her students to grasp the concept of visioning and their ability to frame their life dreams in the present tense. Although some of the students took longer and more individual attention to grasp the concept, she observed that her students successfully grasped and applied the concept.

Ms Molnar commented she should have spent more time on the technical aspects of implementation the program such as how to upload student selected music and graphics outside of the music and graphics housed in the application.

Ms. Molnar commented that the process of students visioning their future and expressing their abilities and hopes for the future was a positive experience for her the students and for her as a teacher to understand the goals and dreams of her students. She now had a better idea of student interests and goals and could better advise them on class and life choices to align with their life visions.

Ms. Molnar also stated that the next time she implements Tel.a.viison, she will have a better grasp of the curriculum and the software application and how to individualize the process. Those students who quickly grasp and create life visions can share their expertise to assist others and also have the opportunity to create additional vision videos such as annual review or topical videos as other students work to complete their initial life vision videos.

Student Experiences: During onsite observations, students were observed actively engaged in creating their life vision videos. At the time of the observations, students

experienced the initial lessons of the curriculum guide, had created their dream statements and were at the point of creating the initial Director's Cut. Students were uploading music and graphics and were proudly sharing their visions videos with the consultant and with one another. They were eagerly assisting one another as one student would figure out how to technically implement aspects of the software and would proudly assist his/her classmates. The program aides were needed to assist some of the students working more slowly and needing individual assistance to grasp the concept of stating life visions in current terms. At first many of the students found learning the software confusing. After they understood how to use the program, the comments were uniformly positive, with virtually all students taking great pride in their presentations.

Student Comments:

They really enjoyed creating the vision videos.

We were able to review each other's videos and find mistakes and make suggestions with kindness.

Our grammar improved from the beginning of the class.

We worked better in groups than at the beginning of the class. We were able to help each other.

It gave me a chance to express myself.

I liked thinking about the future.

They were excited each time I came to visit, which was every week except the one when the comments were made.

Social Worker Comments: Dave Munson

As a social worker, I found the software to be of great value in working with students preparing for adult life. The software promoted a positive future focus, which is difficult for many students who have low self esteem. The project stimulated planning, self examination, and thought in the students. From my perspective, the projects also give staff working with students a great deal of information to work with when attempting to educate and guide students toward transition. The nature of the software allows a projective look at student values, self worth, and sense of efficacy in relation to functioning in the non academic world. So not only does the software help students to focus on the future in a positive manner, it is a good diagnostic tool for assessing student's transition needs.

Parent Comments: Feedback on the parents' surveys was very positive. Some parents, however, answered Not sure to 6 (realistic goals) and 11 (encouraged to develop and focus on a positive future).

Consultant Comments: Christy Chambers

Although this is a preliminary report, this consultant continues to support the Tel.a.vision experience of creating vision videos and its ability to instill hope in the future for our students with disabilities. Not only does the creating and sharing a life vision instill hope for the future for our students, it also is an effective vehicle for students to communicate their hopes and dreams for the future to their families, teachers and friends. This is vitally important because for some students, this may be the only vehicle available for them. Parents and teacher often think they know the hopes and dreams of their children, but often project their own hopes rather than seeing the actual hopes of these students.

It is evident that teachers may need support during the initial implementation of Tel.a.vision, whether it is to encourage them, substantiate their approach, or advise on effective accommodations and individualization strategies. Depending upon their background with software applications, the online supports such as the blog should be most beneficial.

Tel.a.vision will decrease the number of students with disabilities at risk of developing disabilities from dropping out of school by providing ways for students to think positively about their futures and by giving them more home and social an emotional support.

Online Curriculum: The online curriculum worked well for SEDM. The teacher comments that she should have spent more time with the curriculum and personally experiencing the creation of the videos before working with students to anticipate the supports they might need. The teacher appreciated the lessons and thought they went well in her program.

Summary and Conclusions:

The Pathways Program staff view Telavison as a beneficial tool and visioning process. They are excited as they prepare to share more of the results with parents and look forward to offering the course each semester.