Transition and Postsecondary Programs for Students with Intellectual Disability

- Waives restrictive regulations to IHEs- like a standard high school diploma
- 27 Model Demonstration (TPSID) sites 2010-2015; 25 2015-2020
- 1 national coordinating center (Think College)

Postsecondary Education (PSE): A Growing Movement

Think College! Lists 245 Postsecondary education programs in the United States, with 111 of those at 4-year institutions. This is up 60% since 2012.

Only 4% of 4-year colleges and universities in U.S. have programs facilitating college participation for students with ID...

VCU is one of them!
**Why College?**

The same reasons as every other student:
- Enhance knowledge and skills
- Explore interests
- Meet new people and make friends
- Learn to live more independently
- Prepare for employment doing something you enjoy and are good at
- People with ID who engage in PSE have better jobs and make more money than those who don’t.

**What is VCU’s ACE-IT in College?**

- **Inclusive:** on-campus, 30 month certificate program for students with intellectual disabilities. Students have the opportunity to participate in all aspects of college life.
- **Employment Driven:** all activities designed to explore career interests, build career skills & secure employment in the community
- **Student Centered:** individualized supports provided through education & job coaches
- **Collaboration:** school divisions, agency personnel & campus departments

**What “type” of Postsecondary Education program is ACE-IT?**

- **Non-residential**
  - Serve the Greater Richmond Metro Area
  - Commuter students
- **Part-time**
  - Students typically take fewer than 7 credit hours a semester
  - Students balance support and independence
- **Comprehensive Transition Program (CTP)**
  - Pell Grants, Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants and Federal Work Study (*note: students must complete the FAFSA to become eligible)

**Certificate Requirements**

- Audit 20-24 credits over 5 semesters
- Campus & community employment
- Campus and extracurricular participation
- One credit internship semester
After Graduation

- ~90% of VCU ACE-IT graduates have attained paid, inclusive, competitive employment
- 86% of students and families describe an increased quality of life from program participation
- Aggregate improvement on Informal Reading Component Assessment

Reaching Positive Outcomes

- Attend ALL classes
- Form a good relationship with instructors
- Review for tests and exams
- Submit all assignments on time
- Communicate and advocate
- Assess obstacles and set goals
- Manage stress
- Structure time
- Access supports and services

Education Coach Position

- Study Partner
- Role Model
- Facilitator
- Co-Planner
- Coach
- Connector

The Role of an Education Coach

- Role Model
- Co-Planner
- Study Partner
- Facilitator
- Connector
- Ally
- Coach
## Responsibilities of an Ed Coach

- Orient to campus
- Provides academic reinforcement
- Assists with time management
- Models appropriate behavior
- Takes detailed notes
- Relays concerns/achievement to ACE-IT staff
- Facilitates communication with faculty
- Maintains confidentiality
- Completes summary on Blackboard after every review session
- Completes Survey Monkey identifying daily successes and needs

## Support for Education Coaches

- Interactive Trainings
- Mentor to Mentor
- On-site
- ACE-IT Staff

## Successful Education Coaches

- Build relationships with students
- Assist students to understand themselves as learners
- Provide minimum supports possible
- Mentor students how to advocate for themselves
- Utilize strategies to increase independence

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VCU ACE-IT in College Student Perspective

Troy Carter, First Year Student
Troy’s experiences 1: Preparing for College

Academic preparation
Increased independence
Family support
High school Career & Tech Program

Troy’s Experiences 2: Thoughts on College

• 2-for-1: With ACE-IT I get to go to college and have a job.
• Doing things on my own
• I am meeting people, making friends, and making my own choices about where I go.
• Classes: have to be organized, more responsible, better time management.
• I want a career where I can travel and talk about design and logos.

Troy’s Experiences 3: Education Coaches

- Help me with class and homework
- Take notes
- Read my tests and work to me
- Keep me posted
- We have a good relationship.
  - We talk about our weekend and things happening on campus.
  - They are close to my age so I can relate to them.
  - Part tutor, part friend
- It is rewarding to work with them.
- They have good communication with me.

VCU ACE-IT in College

Education Coach Perspectives

Brooke Fulton
Courtney Graham
Morgan Jacobs
Brooke Fulton

ACE-IT in College Education Coach
(Fall 2015-Present)

B.A. Fashion Merchandising
B.S. Marketing, Product and Brand Management

3 Things
You learn in college

1. Find something you are passionate about!
   College is the perfect time to explore your interests and find what you love to do.
   Take advantage of every opportunity and gain inspiration from the world around you.
   Learn to manage your time effectively.
   It is easy to give into temptation and procrastinate, but it is vital college students learn to work ahead, create a schedule, and set deadlines.

2. Build your social skills and challenge yourself.
   Step outside your comfort zone!
   Meet new people, email your professors, join organizations that make you think outside the box, network with professionals.

3. Ultimate goal is to fade support over time!

The Role of an Education Coach
Education Coaches guide students in their role as a college student while providing academic support that fosters student independence on campus and for the future.

In-Class Support
• Help students to adjust to college...
  – High expectations
  – Model appropriate behavior
  – Build skills
    • Preparedness
    • Timeliness
    • Note-taking
    • Active participation
    • Working in groups
    • Understanding others viewpoints
    • Test-taking strategies

In-Class Support

Types of Support

In-Class
Outside of Class
Social

Ultimate goal is to fade support over time!
Outside of Class Support

- Adjusting to campus - knowing your surroundings
- Learning course content:
  - Review notes
  - Work on assignments
  - Create study materials
  
  *Learn what works best for each student!*
- Building skills:
  - Time management
  - Organization
  - Setting goals
  - Looking ahead

Social Support

- Email etiquette
- Working in a team
- Joining organizations & meeting new people
- Encouraging self-advocacy
- Interacting with others on campus

An Example: Managing Stress

The Solution
Courtney Graham

ACE-IT in College Education Coach
(Spring 2014-Present)

Fashion Merchandising Major ’17
General Business Minor

Education Coach Role
A coach is someone who knows a student’s needs and conditions under which they perform best and uses that information to provide individualized support in an academic environment.

Student enrolled in Music Appreciation

Barrier to Academic Success

• Listening Quizzes
  • Must recognize musical composition title
  • Must recognize composer
Steps Taken

• Use of Livescribe pen for notetaking
• Records musical compositions played in class
• Allowed student to replay professor’s lecture about each composition and composer

Results

• Increased student confidence
• Helped improve memory
• Student was able to increase their knowledge of the material by about 35%

Morgan Jacobs

- Junior at Virginia Commonwealth University
- Studying Social Work and Strategic Advertising
  - Minor in Nonprofit Management and Administration
- First year with ACE-IT in college
  - Why I think ACE-IT is so important
  - Moving to college with my brother

A day of class looks like:

- Notetaking
- Going over the course material together during one on one coaching sessions
- Finding ways to make the course material relatable
  - This often means finding parallels between the student’s own life and what we are learning
  - Getting to know each student and what works well for that individual
- Support outside of in-class-time
  - Asking what else is going on in a student’s life
  - What can I do to better support you?
Case Study: Finding Solutions

ACE-IT in college is all about finding solutions.

1. What is preventing a student from reaching success?
2. Why is this happening?
3. How can a student and their coaches work together to find a solution?

1. A student is enrolled in a very reading intensive course and has expressed reading is something she struggles with.
2. Reading is a limitation for her because she runs into words she is unfamiliar with, preventing her from understanding the information.
3. We’ve created a running list in her notebook for her to look up and write down the definition of these words whenever she comes across them.
   a. This solution works on her own time AND can be reinforced in coaching.

ACE-IT in the VCU News
Questions