

HEADMAN, DEBORAH A., Ph.D., December, 2005

SPECIAL EDUCATION

ACCESS AND ADAPTATION OF ORIENTATION AND TRAINING PRACTICES IN HIGH SCHOOL JOB TRAINING PROGRAMS (139 pp.)

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This study investigates the potential of students with disabilities to succeed in competitive employment beyond the period of direct support by their job training coordinators. It uncovers the orientation and training practices inherent in businesses that students are accessing. It further reveals the prevalence of adaptations made to these standard practices by coordinators for their students. And finally, it examines the likelihood that employers will make changes to their training practices as a result of hiring persons with disabilities and working collaboratively with job training coordinators. A survey including 17 orientation and training practices common in business was used to elicit feedback from job training coordinators. Results indicated that students in high school job training programs were accessing a majority of the orientation and training practices inherent in business, without adaptations. Practices having the highest frequency for adaptations involved employees in learning general information about the business, for example, written policies (41.9%), handbook (40.0%), and general orientation (37.0%). There were 242 adaptations specified by coordinators, with 68.2% of them involving the provision of direct support to students. This study also investigated the claim that we are closing the gap between the disparity of practices used in training persons with disabilities and the general workforce. Several adaptations were reported as "very" or "somewhat likely" to be adopted by employers as standard training for all

employees. Recommendations are offered to enhance the success of persons with disabilities by taking advantage of the expertise of both business and job training program professionals.