

Final Report — SMART Competency-Based IEPs

PD29448 - May 4th, 2022

Our last whole group meeting was on April 8th. Due to current circumstances, we scheduled a few more sessions to address questions and concerns that arose with the guide;

- language consistency
- correct terms
- addition of visuals that support the IEP process
- creating and curating of support material
- and editing and review

Once we were satisfied with the content and layout, we shared it with ETSB's directors. Once the directors approve the document, we will discuss how we will be sharing it with everyone across the board. We will also want to plan out how we will be supporting school teams in shifting their practices when it comes to developing SMART IEPs.

Initial Project Description

Our initial objective was to improve student IEPs by ensuring that teachers focused on students' strengths and needs and that objectives are connected with the educational program.

By collaborating and consulting with many educators, we aimed to understand better the issues surrounding the difficulties in writing IEPs, compile all necessary documentation and address all questions and concerns we had to ensure that we would support teachers and school teams to consider IEPs as a great tool that supports the inclusion of special needs students and the educational success of our at-risk students by having strength-based, meaningful, authentic, responsive, and triangulated IEPs.

Observations

Although the initial idea was to create a simple guide that would prompt teachers with questions to develop SMART IEPs, we created a much bigger resource. We created a comprehensive guide that addresses many of our team members' concerns and needs that reflect the needs of many ETSB staff. The Guide is composed of four sections.

- 1) focuses on the legal aspects and roles and responsibilities of the IEP
- 2) provides essential information needed to understand each section of the IEP and essentials needed before, during and after when developing an IEP
- 3) creating SMART IEPs
- 4) offers a selection of curated resources.

Working Sessions

We planned six sessions, one session to look at the structure of the IEP, one to develop a resource, and the following to write IEP examples following a SMART IEP approach.

Observations

We quickly realized that PD about IEPs was needed. The first two sessions focused on supporting the team to understand what an IEP is as well as what is considered a good objective. Questions around adaptations and modifications and other terms took up much of our time. It was essential to ensure we all understood what an IEP objective would look like depending on the support measures provided. Understanding what is considered a need, a strength, an objective, and means was quite challenging, but we got it eventually.

The remainder of the meetings were focused on creating a guide that could address staff needs.

It was challenging to meet as a big group and respect dates due to the lack of teachers and last-minute events. One teacher stepped down, one principal could not honour her commitment, and another teacher became a pedagogical consultant. Although everyone saw the importance of this PDIG, many felt they didn't have sufficient knowledge to support the creation of the guide. I felt their questions and concerns helped enormously. If they questioned, it should be clarified and included in the guide.

Everyone felt they learned more about the IEP process and our educational system and were glad to participate in the discussions.

It was a great experience, and the result was worth the result.

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