



PATHWAYS FOR EVERY LEARNER

A Multistage Continuum Linking Inclusive CTE, CTSOs, and Competitive Employment. This presentation explores how Career and Technical Student Organizations can serve as foundations for professional development, enabling learners with disabilities to achieve competitive integrated employment.

THE CHALLENGE: BRIDGING LEARNING AND EMPLOYMENT

Even with years of schooling, many students with disabilities still find it incredibly tough to move from the classroom to a steady, competitive job. There's a big gap between learning in school and actually succeeding at work, largely because the right "safety nets" and clear career paths aren't always in place. To change this, we need to stop looking at education and employment as two separate worlds and start building a bridge between them while students are still in school.

Key Takeaways

- **The Problem:** The transition from school to a career is often a "cliff" rather than a smooth path.
- **The Missing Link:** Students need scaffolded support—step-by-step guidance that builds their confidence and skills.
- **The Solution:** We need a joined-up strategy that connects school lessons with real-world work experience early on.

38.9%

of people with disabilities obtain competitive integrated employment after graduation.

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 **PHASE 1: FOUNDATION - REIMAGINING CTSOS AS FOUNDATION**

 **PHASE 2: APPLY - EXECUTE CO-COACHING MODELS**

 **PHASE 3: RESULT - MEASURE CAREER READINESS**

LEARNING OUTCOMES

The three-phase continuum framework provides a structured pathway linking

- Inclusive Learning within
 - CTE
 - CTSOs
 - Workplace Experiences

Each phase builds upon the previous, creating scaffolded support that guides learners with disabilities (and the professionals provide instruction) from skill development through workplace readiness to increase access to competitive employment.

PHASE 1: FOUNDATION REIMAGINING CTSOS

▶ Emphasis on Soft Skills Development

▶ Building Professional Stamina

▶ Transition Experiences





COMMUNICATION



LEADERSHIP &
RESPONSIBILITY



TEAMWORK &
COLLABORATION



CRITICAL THINKING &
PROBLEM SOLVING



PROFESSIONALISM &
ETHICS

SOFT SKILLS & PROFESSIONAL STAMINA DEVELOPMENT

CTSO involvement develops essential workplace competencies that employers value. These foundational skills prepare learners with disabilities for competitive integrated employment by building the professional behaviors and interpersonal abilities needed to succeed in any career pathway.

- Low Risk environments allow students to fail safely, receive peer feedback, and build confidence within their own school community.
- High Risk environments simulate the "real world," where performance directly impacts competitive rankings, scholarship opportunities, or the organization's reputation at a state level.

Practical Strategies

Soft Skill (NE Standards)	How CTSOs Deliver It	Low Risk (Practice/Local)	High Risk (Performance/State)	Professional Supports
Communication	Competitive Events, Presentations, Interviews	Providing a 30-second committee report during a local chapter meeting. Using technology or a script to deliver this or a peer to prompt.	Presenting a prepared speech or technical report to a panel of judges at the State Leadership Conference. This may use communication device or other prompts to complete.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programming from SLP to use with communication device prepared prior to event. • Specific strategies to prompt use of this activity. • Accommodations of notecards or positive peer in front to encourage and focus. • Para support during initial participation per IEP
Teamwork & Collaboration	Community Service, Group Projects	Working with 3–4 classmates to organize a local canned food drive. Participate in a local toy repair event by greeting or accepting drop offs of gently used toys for others to repair.	Coordinating a host event at their school for district level contest, managing assigned activity with para support in a forward facing role.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer role model to shadow during activity (conscientious pairing) that could also provide leadership for the peer role model. • Visual schedule or checklist to prepare for event. Resource here
Leadership & Responsibility	Officer Roles, Project Management	Serving as a local chapter committee chair or managing a small event budget. Shadowing/partnering with an experienced peer. Bring a meeting to order or call for a vote; organize refreshments (sign up genius); manage sign in sheet; welcome guests and peers	Serving as a Local or State Officer, representing other students and speaking at legislative events, schools boards or contributing to social media or written news.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-class preparation of budget with special education teacher support • Fill in a template for a social media posting or news update and asking a peer to proofread it during a classtime event through CTE classroom. • Using a prewritten script to practice bringing a meeting to order during classtime, then implementing during a meeting after practice.
Critical Thinking & Problem Solving	Simulations, Case Studies, Competitions	Brainstorming creative ways to increase local chapter membership. Create posters to welcome new members. Using simple communication boards to indicate choices in service events.	Competing in a live "Management Decision Making" event where you solve a business crisis in 30 minutes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requesting an accommodation in their IEP for the competition • Using a preplanned problem solving strategy to participate after practicing with it during supported learning. • Utilizing technology (i.e. Canva, Graphic Design programs, voice to text) to create, solve or communicate in competitions or projects.
Professionalism & Ethics	Professional Development Conferences, Networking	Learning proper business attire and "handshake etiquette" in a classroom setting. Using technology for greetings or contributions that are preplanned.	Networking with industry CEOs and potential employers during a formal career fair or job expo. Creating self-disclosure in the workplace guides for self or others to utilize when networking with professionals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requesting special education teacher or para support to "preteach" etiquette and greetings. • Preplan attire to meet CTSO guidelines and practice with a visual schedule day of personal hygiene and dress with Special Education teacher and parent. • Ask Pre-ETS VR specialists to practice networking skills prior to event.

Helpful Tools for Creating

Checklists and Visuals

These tools have templates and pictures you can use to make schedules and checklists.

- Canva (free and easy to use): <https://www.canva.com/create/checklists/>
- Jotform Checklist Maker: <https://www.jotform.com/checklist-maker/>
- Visme (good for visual schedules): <https://www.visme.co/checklist-maker/>
- Creately (good for visual planning): <https://creately.com/lp/online-checklist-maker/>
- Venngage (good for visuals and infographics): <https://venngage.com/features/checklist-maker/>

Simple

Schedule Elements

Show what the routine looks like with words or pictures

- Morning routine (wake up, breakfast, get ready)
- Learning time (reading, math, life skills)
- Active time (outside, movement)
- Lunch and quiet time
- Afternoon activity (errands, outings, hobbies)
- Free time
- Evening routine (dinner, family time, bedtime)

PHASE 2: EXECUTE CO-COACHING MODELS

Brings together CTE instructors and Special Education/Transition Professionals in a collaborative partnership to provide

- scaffolded support to leverage high-stakes environments with low risk strategies
- supported practice to help learners meet IEP goals and develop executive functioning skills
- set the stage for workplace readiness in CTE classes, CTSO's and Transition based learning experiences.



SCAFFOLDED SUPPORT STRATEGY

CTE instructors and Transition Professionals work together with clearly defined roles. IEP supports are utilized to support students during school days, but also during intra/extra curricular activities. Accommodations and modifications become part of the learning environment both within and outside the classroom to consistent, coordinated support across technical instruction and transition planning.



HIGH-STAKES CTSO ENVIRONMENTS

CTSO competitions and events create authentic opportunities to practice executive functioning skills. These high-stakes settings help learners work toward IEP goals while building real-world competencies. Utilize accommodations that are allowable by the competition. Can the event be modified for participation? Would Para support make the event more accessible while still exposing students to high-stakes environments? Think about a modified event--do they need to attend all three days of state convention?



CTE INSTRUCTORS

**SPECIAL EDUCATION
TRANSITION
PROFESSIONALS**

JOINT PLANNING

**REAL TIME
COMMUNICATION**

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES IN CO-COACHING

Effective co-coaching requires clearly defined roles between CTE instructors and Special Education/Transition Professionals. Planned learning experiences, ongoing feedback, and collaboratively adjusting supports to meet each learner's unique needs increases future success in competitive employment.

QUICK COLLABORATIVE METHOD

Key points:

- Discussion of curriculum/learning in CTE Course, Work Based Learning Experience, or CTSO participation.
- Communication of individualized learning characteristics, needs and plans provides real time understanding for professionals
- Included plan for student individualized learning within and across environments to share responsibility
- Specific procedures to create a stronger collaborative effect and increase the fidelity

Quick Collaborative Method Template

Quick Collaborative Method/Essential Learning Outcomes

CTE Example of QCM

- One priority at a time (keep goals in mind)
- Set a time limit for the meeting
- Engage in positive problem solving
- Commit to the process
- Implement the agreed upon strategies



PHASE 3 – MEASURING CAREER READINESS

▶ CTSO Rubrics for Skill Assessment

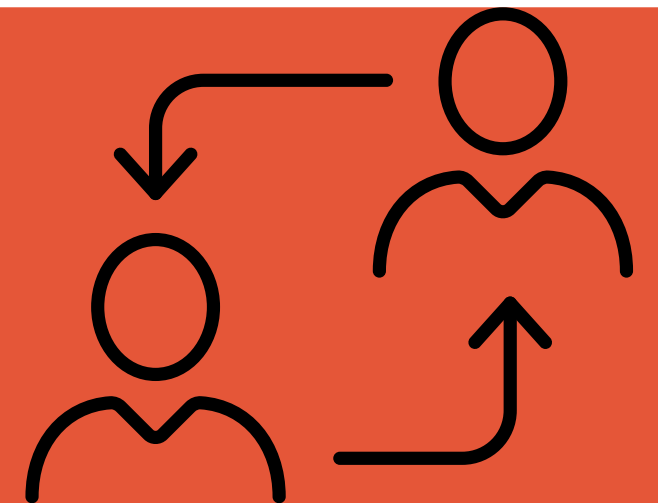
▶ IEP Data Tracking Goals

▶ Work-Based Learning Evaluations



Communicating Career Readiness

- CTSO rubrics and event outcomes often align directly with IEP goals, transition activities, and assessment needs. When these occur in authentic settings—like CTE courses or CTSO events—they carry greater relevance, build transferable skills, and increase readiness for competitive, integrated employment.
- Strong communication is critical: CTE teachers should share CTSO results with IEP case managers, transition specialists, and WBL employers, while IEP case managers reciprocally share goal progress and evaluation insights. WBL evaluations should also be included to reflect real-world performance.
- These tools can further support special education staff and related service providers in developing aligned annual goals. Together, CTSO data, IEP tracking, and WBL evaluations create a clear, comprehensive picture of student readiness—highlighting strengths, addressing gaps, and supporting postsecondary success.



Networking Activity Rubric

100 POINTS

Name _____

Member Number _____

Chapter _____

State _____

INDICATOR	Strong evidence of skill 5-4 points	Moderate evidence of skill 3-2 points	Weak evidence of skill 1-0 points	Points Earned	Weight	Total Points
First Impression	Exhibited a clear, polite introduction; used correct posture and body language	Had an introduction; somewhat exhibited correct posture and body language	Did not use proper posture and body language		X 2	
Communication Skills	Clear, confident, sincere, and concise; avoided rambling; was very engaging in the conversation and stayed very detail oriented	Rambled at times; attempted to engage in conversation; fairly detail oriented; fairly confident, sincere, and concise	Lacked confidence; insincere; rambled; struggled to engage in conversation and vague		X 6	
Making the Connection	Clearly connected career interest to company/person; found commonalities with company/person; posed appropriate questions; made positive comments about company/person	Attempted to connect career interest to company/person; found commonalities with company/person; posed questions; made positive comments about company/person	Struggled to connect career interest to company/person; found commonalities with company/person; posed questions; made positive comments about company/person		X 6	
Overall Impression	Demonstrated courtesy to everyone involved in the networking activity, engaged in appropriate small talk, maintained focus through entire networking activity, demonstrated appropriate table etiquette skills when eating	Was courteous to most individuals in networking activity, engaged in appropriate small talk, was generally focused through entire networking activity, most table etiquette skills while eating were appropriate	Exhibited discourteous behavior to individuals in networking activity, engaged in big talk (deep conversations), unfocused through entire networking activity, table etiquette skills while eating were inappropriate		X 4	
Conclusion	Proficiently used appropriate thanks; exchanged contact information; left positive impression upon exit	Attempted to use appropriate thanks; exchanged contact information; left neutral impression upon exit	Struggled to use appropriate thanks; failed to exchange contact information; left negative impression upon exit.		X 2	
TOTAL POINTS						

FUNCTIONAL SOCIAL/ADAPTIVE SKILLS: By March 6, 2027, with support Michalla will demonstrate appropriate social skills with both adults and peers in a generalized setting by receiving 3 on each skill as measured by special education teacher and/or support staff.

FUNCTIONAL LITERACY: By March 2027, Michalla will demonstrate the ability to read and comprehend functional texts, (Ex. job applications, checks, bus schedules, menus, safety signs, and workplace instructions) with 20% to 50% accuracy in 8 out of 10 opportunities, as measured by teacher observation, work samples, and task performance in real-life or simulated and work settings, to support independent living and employment.



Career Readiness Standards Evaluation Rubrics High School Version



Standard 1: Applies appropriate academic and technical skills			
1a Academic Attainment			
Level 0 (not proficient)	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Indicators <input type="checkbox"/> Lacks proficiency in mathematics and English/language arts skills.	Indicators <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates grade-level proficiency in academic core standards (mathematics, English/language arts, science, and social studies)	Indicators <input type="checkbox"/> Routinely applies academic knowledge to workplace situations	Indicators <input type="checkbox"/> Has attained an industry or postsecondary credential (dual-credit, certificate, etc.)
1b Technical Skill Attainment			
Level 0 (not proficient)	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Indicators <input type="checkbox"/> Cannot demonstrate technical skills	Indicators <input type="checkbox"/> Has completed some training or started a career education program of study	Indicators <input type="checkbox"/> Has satisfactorily demonstrated technical skills in a career education program of study	Indicators <input type="checkbox"/> Has qualified for licensure and/or certification required for the occupation
1c Strategic Thinking			
Level 0 (not proficient)	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Indicators <input type="checkbox"/> Repeatedly relies on others to understand processes or systems	Indicators <input type="checkbox"/> Navigates processes or systems with initial training and some coaching	Indicators <input type="checkbox"/> Reasons through a situation or issue without coaching	Indicators <input type="checkbox"/> Uses strategic thinking to improve a situation or process

Creed Speaking Handbook

Employment Skills Handbook

Introduction to Social Media

KEY TAKEAWAYS

▶ CTSOs as Professional Stamina Foundation

▶ Co-Coaching Enables Personalized Support

▶ Multiple Data Sources for Readiness

▶ Collaboration Across Educators is Critical



NEXT STEPS FOR IMPLEMENTATION



Build Collaborative Teams



Advocate for Inclusive Pathways

As you plan for next year-think of one student who is in your CTE class and participates in your CTSO:

- What specific data could you share based on previous or upcoming experiences with the special education teacher?
- What information do you need from the special education teacher to help you ensure this student experiences greater opportunity for success in the CTE or CTSO activities?

QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION

