

PRACTICE NOTES

Centre for Disability Employment Research & Practice

Discovery Fidelity

The Griffin-Hammis - Utah State University project into the fidelity sale is undergoing field validation trials. This exciting project is aimed to benchmark Customised Employment practice to ensure fidelity of practice.

Our current study run by Lauren Pavlidis is nearing its point of validity trials and this will go some way to ensuring that Discovery is Australia in delivered with fidelity to the evidence base. Lauren is in touch with Tim Reisen from Utah State to exchange notes and ensure consistency.

Stay tuned for more information.

Transition to School

We had a great discussion with our friends at USFSP about their transition program. Their program starts with the IEP before the age of 14 and identifies the transition supports that the student needs to pursue future education and employment opportunities. Consisting of ten milestones, this is a program that we'll be investigating and seeing how we can apply it here. Exciting!



Learnings from APSE 2018

This year was our second visit to APSE after last year's successful study tour that took in APSE 2017 in Portland, Oregon. Conferences and presenting for me are secondary to the private conversations with industry leaders in research and practice. At the onset I'd say that our presentation whilst not well supported did have a highly interested and engaged group of people, including ODEP personnel. I suspect our approach to sheltered workshops is quite different to the US experience, so I'm not surprised by the attendance.

Playing the Zero Sum Game.

I took the opportunity to have a number of private discussions on the future of disability employment practice in the USA and there is something of a feeling that taking an all or nothing approach - a zero sum game - is detrimental to changing the future for all. We're starting to see some of this occurring in Australia with the NDIS versus DES approach to employment. Let's be frank here, neither are the solution alone and neither have the solution alone. The solution sits with the person with the disability, their family and employers. Providers are intermediaries and the beneficiaries,



Self Guided Discovery

We've been using Self Guided Discovery to educate and engage with families and school career guidance counsellors and are starting to see very engaging results. That's consistent with our view that you have to engage families with the system, educate and support them if we are to see better consistent employment funding and outcomes.

This approach is different to what is happening overseas and is something that our colleagues in the USA are interested in. We'll be continuing our practice of wrapping research around everything that we do with providers to assist to build a stronger evidence base around practice.



if that's the correct word for this relationship. Something to ponder.

Policy and Practice

I don't think that it would come as a surprise that good policy drives or rather supports good practice. Do we have that, no at least not to my mind, I think we are still in a situation of competing policy with no real understanding of how this is creating negative space. By that I mean in the absence of good policy, a range of practices ranging from the self serving to good fill the void.

Ok, so by now you starting to wonder why your great practices aren't being acknowledged? Let's not single out individual providers, but lets look at collective outcomes. If employment outcomes have flatlined for the past few decades, then can we really say that we're doing a good job?

An interesting conundrum in the USA is that outcomes though sheltered workshops and open employment settings have stalled, whilst the biggest growth area is those participants in non work. That's a concern because to me that's the big question. Why and who are they?

I wouldn't be surprised to see that same issue arises here and its worth investigating our situation. To me that's where the answer to improving outcomes lays. The bigger fear is that we won't understand that and we'll see a groundswell back towards shelter employment and mini institutionalisation. This defeats the promise of the NDIS. Anyone want to understand this?

Pat Ourselves on the back - why not!

Over the past three years, we've been evolving our "Work First Customised Employment (WFCE)" training curriculum. Supported through our technical alliance with Griffin-Hammis Associates, we've evolved the program through using the evidence base and practice experience. Today it includes a number of exemplars of evidence based practice such as systematic instruction training, positive behaviour support and post training mentoring and support for staff using a psychologist. We're about to add further to the program and after talking with colleagues, Customised Employment is evolving and the direction that we're going is correct. CE is an evolutionary process and our evolution will be different, as it should be, just as it is for clients and their environment.