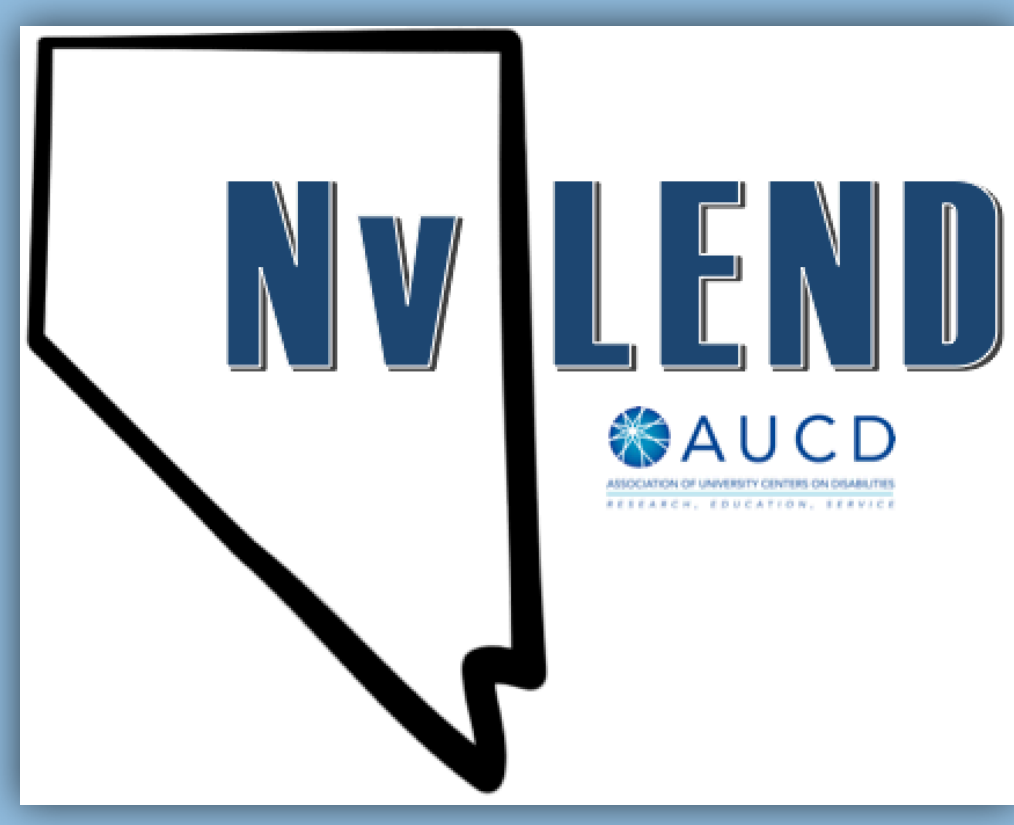




Building Self-Determination Skills in Post-Secondary Education

NvLEND Leadership Project

Trainee: Rachel Blinn, MSW; Advisors: Diane Thorkildson, MPH & Eric Albers, Ph.D.; Partners: Mary Bryant, BA & Riley Fitzgerald, BA
University of Nevada, Reno



Methodology

- Leadership project completed in partnership with Think College program called Path to Independence
- 100% of the P2I students never received evidence-based self-determination transition training
- Structured with a Pre-test (baseline) & Posttest (ending)
- Utilized two assessment scales (curriculum & ARC)
- Co-taught a 16-week evidence-based course called "Steps to Self-determination" by Field & Hoffman
- **Goal:** Use evidence-based self-determination materials to teach an university course within a postsecondary environment to determine effectiveness in increasing self-determination skills

Population

- 8 students in P2I, 2 students from community
- 7 male, 3 female
- Two male students did not complete posttest
- All students had neurodevelopmental disabilities (e.g. down syndrome, autism, intellectual disabilities, etc.)
- Age range 20-26; average 23

Lessons Learned

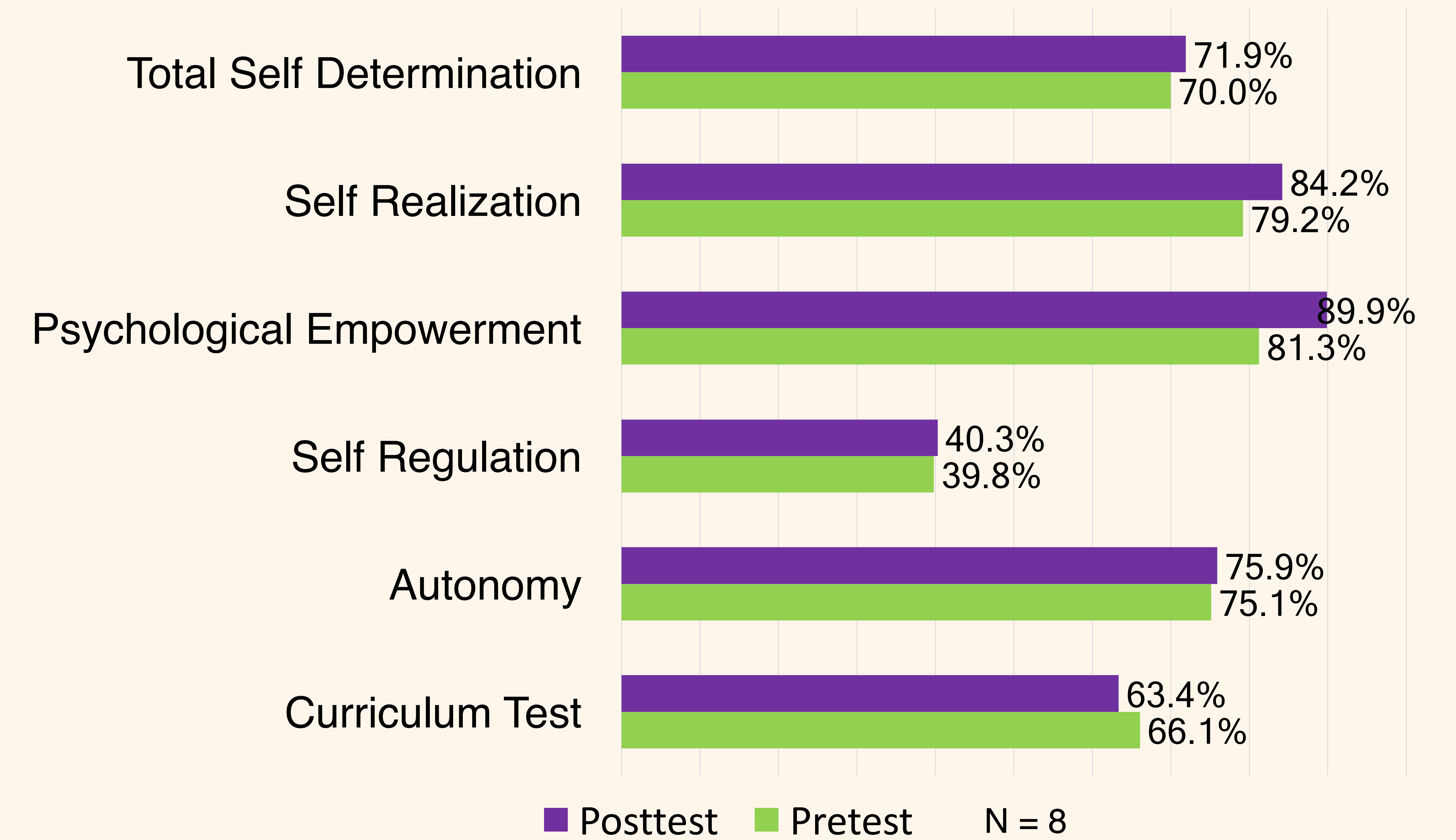
- Wide variety in reading and writing abilities
- Need for accommodations in research and classroom
- Need to utilize more qualitative research (numbers did not capture this story well)
 - Life's ups, downs, and frailties
 - Personal journeys
 - Mentor stories
 - Participant's video summary

Background

- People with disabilities have lower rates of employment and college enrollment or attainment
- Self-determination concepts have the strongest evidence-based support for transition services
- Higher self-determination result in a more successful transition into post-school life
- In Nevada, there is a lack of self-determination training as part of transition planning
- Self-determination theory means the right of self-governance, emphasizes independence and freedom
 - Acting as the causal force of one's life – initiating choices
 - Occurs throughout the lifespan; developmental
 - Four essential characteristics: autonomy, self-regulated behavior, psychological empowerment, and self realization

Results

- Curriculum assessment scale scores - decreased
- ARC assessment scores in all domains - increased
- Highest domain increases were in the self-realization and psychological empowerment
- Self-regulation – 6 out of 8 student's scores increased from 10 or below (mode = 5) to 11 or above (mode = 12 & 13)



References

- Anctil, T. M., Ishikawa, M. E., & Scott, A. T. (2008). Academic identity development through self-determination successful college students with learning disabilities. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals*, 31(3), 164-174. doi:10.1177/0885728808315331
- Field, S., & Hoffman, A. (1996). Steps to Self-Determination: A Curriculum to Help Adolescents Learn to Achieve Their Goals (2nd ed.). Austin, TX: Pro-Ed.
- Malian, I., & Nevin, A. (2002). A review of self-determination literature implications for practitioners. *Remedial and Special Education*, 23(2), 68-74. doi:10.1177/074193250202300202
- Wehmeyer, M. L. (2015). Framing the future: Self-determination. *Remedial and Special Education*, 36(1), 20-23. doi:10.1177/0741932514551281
- Wehmeyer, M. L., & Palmer, S. B. (2003). Adult outcomes for students with cognitive disabilities three-years after high school: The impact of self-determination. *Education and Training in Developmental Disabilities*, 38(2), 131-144.

Research Project Sponsored by:



Rachel Blinn - 775-338-8437; blinn.rachel@gmail.com
Diane Thorkildson – 775-682-7025; dthorkildson@medicine.nevada.edu

