

Integrating Best Practices of Cultural Diversity and Linguistic Accessibility into an Employment Training Program for Young People with Disabilities

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Background

- Spring 2017: Sonoran University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (SUCEDD) initiated a cultural and linguistic competence (CLC) self-assessment and identified a number of areas for development.
- Spring 2018: SUCEDD CLC workgroup members applied for individualized consultation for Project SEARCH Arizona through the "Embedding Cultural Diversity and Cultural and Linguistic Competence: A Guide for UCEDD Curricula and Training Activities Project" (Embedding Project).
- Consultants evaluated Project SEARCH Arizona program curricula and materials based on the "Embedding" tools and vetting criteria.



Methods

- Created a table of stakeholders and opportunities for CLC training
- Identified goals for the consultation
- Collected consultant feedback on materials
- Established a plan and a process for utilizing materials



Results

Goals for the Consultation:

- 1) To improve the CLC of Project SEARCH Curriculum for interns; and
- 2) To create/identify CLC trainings for various Project SEARCH stakeholders (Table 1).

Long-term Plan:

- 1) Development of CLC resources, trainings and curricula;
- 2) Information-sharing events to encourage reflection about Project SEARCH stakeholders' experiences and biases; and
- 3) Application of language-access policies to Project SEARCH collateral materials and events.

Table 1. Project SEARCH Stakeholders and opportunities for curricular enhancements

Stakeholder Audience	Opportunities for Curriculum Enhancements
Families and support people	Orientations
Interns	Classroom curriculum
Instructors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of "boilerplate" classroom curriculum that meets vetting criteria • Creation of CLC resources document
Job coaches	Professional development & CLC presentation
Instructors	Professional development & CLC presentation
Employers & business site staff	Professional development & CLC presentation wrapped into "disability awareness"
Project SEARCH partners (e.g. DDD, RSA, etc.)	Conversations about their needs

Conclusion

- The complex structure of Project SEARCH Arizona presents an ideal case for assessing CLC and identifying opportunities to enhance training and incorporate best practices at all levels of the program.
- Project SEARCH serves as a case study for applying the available Embedding tools/resources.
- The SUCEDD team will use this process to inform CLC improvements in existing SUCEDD programs and as a framework for developing new programs.

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What is Project SEARCH?
 An international program focused on job training and competitive employment of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. In Arizona, Project SEARCH is a partnership between the SUCEDD and statewide employment agencies, with involvement from school districts and employers in Phoenix and Tucson.

