Validating Students’ Career Dreams

Supporting students in gaining meaningful employment after college is a hallmark for those involved with the TPSID inclusive postsecondary initiatives across the country. In achieving this end, I often hear questions ranging from “Is it the college’s position to help students gain meaningful employment” to “how can we give our students more support beyond the scope of what already exists on campus?” The issue of “how” to help with employment after college becomes more complex when we listen to students desires, and dreams of what they would like to do upon completion of the program. Through the initial person-centered planning process and sometimes beyond, the question that often arises is, “How do we respectfully validate students’ dreams or desires for careers when we suspect that these hopes may be beyond the scope of what is possible?” Dale DiLeo, a respected professional for his training and advocacy for individuals with disabilities, notes that “Dreams, however seemingly unreachable, must be treated with respect...helping people to approach their dreams is always possible. And learning what we can from their desires can help guide us in their job search” (DiLeo, 2012). DiLeo gives a more in-depth understanding in this two minute video clip: https://daledileo.com/learning-to-respect-peoples-dreams/. Providing college experiences, patience, and skillful listening that is necessary, students can begin to understand and have access to employment options that they could only have imagined. Inclusive postsecondary education assists with the realization of these dreams.

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