



MEET KEENAN

Pre-Reading Question

- *What factors should a teacher take into consideration when designing a career preparation experience?*

Keenan is a high school student diagnosed with emotional behavioral disorder and a learning disability in reading. Keenan has expressed an interest in working as an auto mechanic in his family's auto-body shop, and assessment data supports this. However, Keenan will need behavioral supports, as he struggles with social skills and has a history of physically aggressive behavior. His teacher has developed some behavior supports, but these will need to be monitored over time to ensure that they are appropriate for Keenan.

Keenan's teacher knows that Keenan should have work experiences before graduating high school. She has already arranged for him to work at the school's auto mechanic shop, and feels that this is sufficient experience for him. There is little communication between Keenan's teacher and the shop teacher, who knows that Keenan has a history of physical aggression. In order to avoid any instances of problem behavior from Keenan, the teacher gives Keenan simple mechanical tasks and does not require him to speak to any customers. Keenan does not learn any new skills on the job and only practices skills he already has.

What's the Problem?

Students should be exposed to a variety of work experiences before graduating high school, preferably in a community setting. Because Keenan is doing work that he has already mastered, he is not getting any practice with problem-solving novel situations. He is not getting exposure to the different skills he will need for employment, including social and financial skills. Keenan is not learning anything new at this job site and may not be prepared for paid employment.

What's the Solution?

Keenan's teacher arranges for him to complete an internship at a community auto mechanic shop. She explains to his work supervisor that the purpose of this internship is to prepare Keenan to be successful in a paid employment setting after graduation. At this internship, he will rotate through tasks and get exposure to the different aspects of work, including speaking with customers, working the cash register, and completing time sheets. His teacher works with his supervisor at the work site to develop task analyses and data sheets that will keep track of Keenan's progress. They also develop a "cheat sheet" with simple conversation starters and



Transition

T E N N E S S E E

responses to basic questions that will help with Keenan's anxiety about talking to customers.

Post-Reading Questions

- *Why is it important for students to have exposure to a variety of work experiences?*
- *What strategies could Keenan's teacher have used when approaching the school's auto-shop supervisor that would have improved Keenan's experience?*