**Self-Advocacy Activity: Self-Assessments Transcripts**

**Introduction:** Welcome to our activity on self-assessments. Students can use self-assessments to gain an understanding of their own needs and then communicate this information to others. Self-assessments allow students to ask and answer questions such as: “What strategies best help me learn?” “What supports do I need to be successful in school and at work?” and “What are the careers I am interested in exploring?

**Targeted Focus:** Formal and informal student assessments involve students evaluating their work and learning process.  The student usually administers them. Let’s explore why self-assessments are valuable activities. Rather than focusing solely on academic knowledge, self-assessments allow students to identify and explore their unique interests and capabilities. Self-assessments can help prepare students for life-long learning and develop strong self-advocacy skills. There are many great self-assessments, but, in this lesson, we will focus on assessments that target:

* Learning Styles
* Strengths and Needs
* and Preferences and Interests

**Defining the Purpose:** Before choosing an assessment, you need to define the purpose. For example, what does the student hope to learn about themselves by completing a self-assessment? If a student wants to understand which strategies best help them learn, consider administering a learning styles assessment. If a student wants to learn what accommodations are helpful to them, a strength and needs assessment might provide desirable results. If a student is struggling to set goals, a preference and interest assessment can help them narrow down their options.

**Choosing the Right Self-Assessment**:

[B-Roll video footage of Transition Tennessee Self-Assessment website]

After you’ve identified the reason for the assessment, the next step is choosing the right self-assessment. Becoming familiar with different types of assessments and their characteristics will help you with this task.  Don’t forget to ask the student and teacher if any assessments have been previously taken.  Reviewing prior assessments with the teacher and students can help define purpose and direction for future assessments. Subsequent assessment should build off easier assessments. Focus on selecting an assessment that allows the student to define their purpose.

**Resources for Self-Assessments:** Keep in mind, it’s important to select an assessment that’s accessible for the student. For example, if a student struggles with reading, consider choosing an assessment that uses pictures or text reading software. Our Self-Assessment Guide, which can be found in the supplemental materials and resources tab, can be a helpful tool for choosing self-assessments. The Transition Tennessee Educator Portal, has a great resource that identifies a large number of assessments and their targeted audience.

**Accommodations for Self-Assessments**:  The next step is to have the student complete the self-assessment. Self-assessments are typically completed at school and in a paper or electronic-format. Although such assessments are often completed independently by the student, you can provide a student with any necessary accommodations.

[B-Roll footage of student typing on laptop. Video cuts to student using tablet.]

For example, if students have limited motor skills, you can provide them with alternate ways to answer the questions, or you may scribe for them. You will also want to be sure students understand all of the vocabulary used in the assessment. Let them know that they can ask for clarification on any term or that you can discuss a question to aid in interpretation.

**Scoring Self-Assessments:** After an assessment is completed, support the student to compile the results. Unlike traditional classroom assessments where the teacher completes the scoring or grading, self-assessments allow students to measure their responses. By enabling students to take ownership of their evaluation, self-assessments empower students. While it’s important that they lead their scoring process, it is also vital to help students during the process.

**Discuss Findings**: Next, you will want to discuss the findings with the student. Discussing results with a student allows you to guide them to reflect and critically evaluate their progress and skill development. Self-assessment supports student learning.  This is one of the essential skills that students need for future professional development and life-long learning.

**Revisit Self-Assessments**: Finally, revisit the assessment over time! Self-assessments are ongoing activities. As students’ progress in their classes and work experiences, they may see changes in their strengths and needs, along with preferences and interests.  Revisiting the assessment or taking a different assessment is an excellent time for the student to see the progress they are making.

**Learning Style Assessments**:

[B-Roll footage begins playing of students in a classroom. Video cuts to students using laptops. Video cuts to students writing on paper in classroom.]

The first type of assessment we are going to look at is a learning style assessment. This assessment focuses on students answering questions about various instructional strategies to provide insights into their preferred learning style. Everyone has a mix of learning styles, but they usually have a dominant form of learning. Learning styles are grouped in the most common way that people learn.  A student’s preferred learning style will guide the way they learn.

**Learning Styles**:  The most common types of learning styles based on Howard Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligence are: spatial, naturalistic, musical, logical-mathematical, existential, interpersonal, bodily-kinesthetic, linguistic, and intra-personal. When students develop an understanding of their learning style, they will have a greater insight into how they uniquely process information.

**What Learning Styles Mean**: When discussing learning styles with a student, it is important to consider what their preferred learning style means.  For example, if the student is a spatial learner, they tend to understand information best when they see it. If the student is a kinesthetic learner, they understand information best when they physically interact with it. By understanding their preferred learning style, students can articulate their needs to be successful in a learning environment.  They also gain self-confidence and reduce their stress during learning situations. You can find Gardner’s eight learning styles and their characteristics in the supplemental materials tab.

**Strengths and Needs Assessment:**

[B-Roll video footage begins playing. Video cuts to students in a classroom with computers. Video cuts to instructor showing an image. Video cuts to student working on a computer in the classroom.]

Another way to learn more about your students is through strengths and needs assessments. This form of self-assessment prompts students to answer questions about their strengths regarding transition areas, like communication, daily living, personal care, academics, and work. By completing strengths and needs assessments, students can:

* develop an awareness of individual strengths
* become more willing to set goals for areas of growth
* and increase motivation, self-confidence, and happiness

**Preference and Interest Assessments:**

[B-Roll video footage begins playing. Video cuts to students in a kitchen. Video cuts to student using sewing machine with adult assistance.

Preference and interest assessments support students in developing the skills needed to meet goals in the areas of employment, education, and independent living. To set personal goals for employment, students can complete career interest assessments to explore different career paths. For higher education and independent living, students can use surveys to create a vision and develop action steps for enrolling in postsecondary education, increasing independence, and becoming more involved in the community. Let’s listen to a teacher explaining her experience with self-assessment.

**Utilizing Self-Assessments**: As a Provider of Pre-ETS, you strive to prepare every student for a successful transition into adulthood. If you are working with a large number of students, this is not such a simple task! However, gathering information from students’ self-assessments can help you construct individualized, meaningful learning experiences. With an understanding of their unique preferences and interests, you’ll be able to facilitate activities that engage all students. Let’s listen to a teacher talk about some tips for delivering self-assessments

[Video of Jena Galster, Educational Consultant, begins playing]

[Text on screen reads: Self-Assessments]

“The first to consider is the purpose of the assessment. So, you need to know if you’re looking for the student’s preferences, needs, strengths, or interests and you also need to be able to explain to the student why they are taking that assessment. They have very busy schedules, um, they have a lot of work and tests coming their way, so it’s important for them to know what exactly is going on and what’s going to be measured by spending their time doing this.”

[Text on screen reads: Delivering Self-Assessments]

“Consider the format, um – is it paper? Is it online? Or it going to be in interview format? You also want to consider any accommodations you may need for students. You want to consider how accessible that assessment is, including vocabulary or um if it’s on the computer and students are able to access the computer. You want to make sure that you have that printed out. Another thing that I like to do is to be sure that I take the assessment first, so that I can experience what it feels like to actually take it. And so if there’s places where the assessment may feel confusing, or long, or the vocabulary may be confusing, I can identify that beforehand.”

[Text on screen reads: Individualizing Self-Assessments]

“So when considering which assessments to give to which students, um, it’s definitely okay to group them and to give the same assessment to a group of students, but what you want to consider is how you deliver it. Um, just because you’re giving the same assessment doesn’t mean that it will be delivered in the same way to each student. Um, some students may need a read-aloud accommodation. A lot of theirs can take it independently. So it’s just important to keep those things in mind.”

[Text on screen reads: Collaborating with Teachers]

“Work with teachers. Meet with the teachers and determine times that they can potentially take assessments while they’re in their classroom or when they’re supposed to be doing independent work. Another option would be to speak with the teacher about utilizing a teacher assistant to help give these assessments. You can always be the one to review the results with the student, but if it works well in their schedule to have an assistant help them take it during their normal school day, that’s always a great option.”

[Text on screen reads: Making Accommodations]

“When considering what accommodations to give students on an assessment, it’s really important to be proactive. Meet with their teachers, know what accommodations they would have on any given assessment in the classroom and you want to provide those same ones. Pre-teach vocabulary. Any words that you think would be challenging…teach it to them beforehand. Give them that opportunity to be successful while they’re taking it.”

[Text on screen reads: Involving Students]

“One thing I like to do when, uh, accumulating the results of self-assessments is to let students score them by themselves. Um and let them be the reporters. So, when we go over those self-assessments, that gives them an increasing self-awareness, more motivation, and some ownership of their learning. Also, keep in mind that you can retake these assessments every so often so that you can keep track of changes, growth, or continued areas of need and giving the students that empowerment to be in charge of those scores and reviewing that process. It really helps with self-advocacy.”

**Leadership Opportunities:**  As Jena shared with us, it is important to provide students with multiple opportunities to take on leadership roles. This will help them to build confidence with problem-solving, communication, and collaboration. Once students are familiar with the process for self-assessments, you can give students leadership opportunities by encouraging them to lead the process. Students can choose the time and location, request accommodations, and be in charge of scoring and reporting the results back to you.

When the students are discussing the results with you, prompt them with reflective questions, but empower them to lead the conversation as if they were leading a meeting. This promotes students’ accountability and ownership of their results and may motivate them to complete more self-assessments in the future. Schedule some time to regularly meet with the student so that they can self-reflect on what leadership skills they have demonstrated and if they need any coaching or support

**Self-Assessments**:

[B-Roll video begins playing. Video cuts to instructor working with student on self-assessment. Video cuts to small group of students playing board game outside.]

Self-assessments help students develop a stronger sense of self-awareness. And when students are self-aware, they are more likely to create a plan for their future and self-advocate in school, the workplace, and the community. Thanks for watching this activity on self-assessments! Additional information can be found in our supplemental materials tab.

**Conclusion**: We hope you enjoyed this activity on Self- Assessments. Discover additional activities and supplemental materials found in our self-advocacy course.