TTAP-CV

Introduction to the **TEACCH Transition Assessment Profile–Computer Version**

Acknowledgments

The development of this software involved a large number of teachers, supported employment staff members, job coaches, and administrators primarily from four very different programs. Amy Salomon, Gary Grigull, Virginia Huels, Virginia Warrick, and a host of staff in Broward County Schools, Florida, were pivotal in the development of the ongoing assessment instruments. The staff of the PASS Program at Atlantic Technical Center in Coconut Creek, Florida, now referred to as ACCESS, used the forms, made recommendations to improve their functionality, and provided consistent feedback on what was needed as they prepared more than 100 students in job training. The staff of Elwyn Media Campus in Pennsylvania provided great feedback and ideas in the development of the Job Site Analysis Form. The staff of Division TEACCH Supported Employment Program also assisted in refining the system and ensuring a process of goal identification that was more precise and concrete. Additionally, Mike Chapman and I were fortunate to work with the brilliant educational staff at Langagerskolen and other programs in Denmark. Bent Vandborg. Anya Vestergaard, Torbjorn Andersson, Neel Svane Kraus, and several other highly trained professionals helped us adapt the instruments to address issues in the education of 16–19-year-old students with significant disabilities as they move into adult vocational environments in Denmark.

Ann Palmer, author of *Realizing the College Dream With Autism or Asperger Syndrome,* provided crucial information in the development of the Continuing Education reference. Her insights helped determine the core skills that an individual may need in order to access educational environments as an adult. Her guidance and insight helped us design Individualized Education Program goals that support continuing access to instruction for adults with autism.

Finally, we continue to owe a remarkable debt of gratitude to Dr. Eric Schopler for his leadership, for his meticulous devotion to a precise and logical approach to meeting the needs of people with autism, and for the passion he shared with us in finding ways to support the lifelong health and well-being of individuals with autism. His gentle smile, prodding intellect, and commitment to families of individuals with autism lives with us and continues to guide our work.

—John B. Thomas, MEd

Overview

Career planning is a lifelong process that requires repeated, ongoing assessment to adjust preferences and skills and to prioritize needs. The TEACCH Transition Assessment Profile–Computer Version (TTAP-CV) serves as a companion to the TTAP. Together, they create a system that supports continuity across the life span in defining and programming for positive adult outcomes. The TTAP-CV is a dual-platform (Windows and Macintosh) software program designed to support the development and documentation of goals for transition planning and career/job training. The TTAP-CV uses a range of tools from an initial assessment of transition needs to a series of ongoing assessment instruments and resources. This system manages, tracks, and expedites the creation of a résumé of skills associated with positive adult outcomes, known as the Cumulative Record of Skills, for individuals with autism. It allows users to easily track and document community-based assessments and gather community-based information from various sources into one centralized format. Users will enter information via an easy-to-use interface, and the program will automatically process the data to create the Cumulative Record of Skills. The TTAP-CV will help school districts meet the reporting and transition assessment requirements of the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and will be an invaluable resource for the development of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and Individualized

Transition Plans (ITPs). Moreover, the system can be transferred to and used by adult service providers throughout the adult's residential and vocational career to help ensure continuity of programming.

The TTAP-CV assists with the maintenance and creation of learner reports and stores them in a central database. Users will appreciate the easy data entry features, including pull-down menus, auto-fill text, instant time and date stamps, and instant year, month, and day age calculation. Moreover, all of the pop-up lists of statements are customizable—users are able to add their own domains and objectives, depending on the needs of the individual as well as on the cultural differences of the region in which the system is used. The TTAP-CV will instantly complete statistical analyses and present the data in an easy-to-interpret set of reports. An enhanced report feature will allow users to enter narrative summaries and recommendations. All TTAP-CV summary reports can be printed to share with parents and service providers.

Structure

The TTAP-CV provides five sections that facilitate application of the continuous assessment and instructional process required by IDEA. Upon opening the program, the user obtains access to all databases and forms by clicking on and generating a "new record." Section 1, Learner Information, provides the fields to enter personal and school-related information that identify the person targeted for individualized assessment. IDEA states that transition planning must contain both formal and informal assessment. Section 2 addresses the formal, or initial, assessment of transition needs. Section 3 addresses the informal, or ongoing, assessment process. Section 4 provides a format to compile data on different job sites in the community. This data can then be used to identify a good match between the potential employee and a job site. Section 5 provides the various assessment tools and references that can be printed and used in the community during the informal, or ongoing, assessment process.

Section 2, Formal Assessment, provides the fields for the Direct Observation, the Home Scale, and the School/Work Scale. The Profile/Scoring Form and Recommendations for Structured Intervention are created dynamically when all fields are completed. These final reports can be viewed by clicking on "Show Profile/Scoring Form" and can be used in test interpretation and in written reports. The subsection, Summary Notes, provides the user with a means of consolidating observational notes to support both test interpretation and written reports. Note that the information from Section 1, Learner Information, is automatically added within these Section 2 documents.

Section 3, Informal/Ongoing Assessment, provides a means of managing data produced in the ongoing process of community-based assessment and instruction. Upon entering this section, the user is presented with the Manage Community Sites page, which organizes data compiled in the process. The user can add new sites for community-based assessment and instruction by clicking the New Site button. The user adds data to both the Community Site Assessment Worksheet and the Daily Accomplishment Chart at each site to provide the data that will be used to produce the Cumulative Record of Skills. Note that the completion of post-instruction performance levels on the Community Site Assessment Worksheet automatically adds data to the Cumulative Record of Skills.

Section 4, the Job Site Analysis Database, is a new tool provided in the computer version of the TTAP. This database provides a broad set of features of job sites that have historically created problems or concerns for individuals with autism in job training or employment. The instrument provides fields for the specific responsibilities of a job, the physical demands, cognitive demands, and supervision requirements or expectations of a job site. A detailed list of environmental factors that have proven difficult for individuals with autism is also part of this database. Just as crucially, the social demands of a job site are identified. The database provides a means of comparing potential challenges in various sites, thereby assisting in the process of effective matching of individual to job site. The job site analysis, through use in a variety of settings, can be completed in a 45-minute site observation.

Section 5, Assessment Tools, provides printable forms that can be used as references and as data collection forms in the informal/ongoing assessment process. In addition to five forms that were present in the TTAP, a new Job Site Analysis Form, consistent with the Job Site Analysis Database, is introduced to support finding a good "job match" for individuals with autism. These six forms are organized under the General tab of Section 5. There are two additional tabs, Hard Skills and Soft Skills. Twelve new reference forms provide single-page (front and back),

easy-to-use references on six different vocational, or "hard skills," areas and on six "soft skills" areas. The six hard skill forms represent concrete skills of domestic, culinary, clerical, landscape, library, and warehouse (retail) skills that have lead to independence in residential living and employment for individuals with autism. The soft skill areas represent the five skill areas of the formal assessment, vocational skills, independent functioning, functional communication, leisure skills, and interpersonal skills, and one new reference describing skills necessary to support independence in continuing education.

Forms

The TTAP introduced the Community Site Assessment Worksheet (CSAW), the Daily Accomplishment Chart (DAC), and the Cumulative Record of Skills (CRS), which are used to assist with goal development and documentation of performance and achievements for the individual during the Informal/Ongoing Assessment process. The TTAP-CV uses dynamic, interactive versions of these forms to track and document the Informal/Ongoing Assessment process over the life span and educational and vocational career of the student with autism or intellectual disabilities.

These three forms that were introduced in the TTAP are also available in the TTAP-CV. The Transition Planning Analysis Form, for use in yearly IEP and service planning, is also available, along with the Community Behaviors Checklist and the Community Skills Checklist. The TTAP-CV introduces a new form, the Job Site Analysis Form, in Section 5, for use in determining the demands of a job training site that have proven problematic for certain individuals with autism. This form is identical to the Job Site Analysis Database. The coach can take this form to a site for completion and later fill out the database to compare job sites. In multiple transition and employment programs, this form has been used as an observation tool to document specific features of a community-based setting in a 30–45-minute observation. The Job Site Analysis Form supports the coach or provider in identifying the various factors that are crucial to a successful match between site and potential employee. It does not require more than a brief (5–15 minute) discussion with employers or job site supervisors after a period of site observation. In this way, the coach takes very little of the employer's time while getting information on the demands of the site and the job. In addition, more efficient job matches between site and individual can be created because the form supports looking at a wider range of problematic issues in the community site. This detailed review of multiple factors in various job sites helps us avoid many issues that would hinder both employer and employee satisfaction in job placement and performance. Therefore, thorough assessment of job sites is highly recommended prior to making decisions about job placement.

Hard Skill and Soft Skill References

Within the TTAP-CV is an additional set of curriculum references. The references are derived directly from the original Cumulative Record of Skills (CRS) but have been expanded to assist with various aspects of the assessment process. Essentially, each reference is a refined section of the CRS formatted to support goal development during the assessment process. The objectives within each reference have also been restated in more measurable terms to support IEP and life plan development. Each reference can be printed on two sides of a page so that the provider has a single-sheet reference to use in community-based instruction. There are 12 references within the TTAP-CV. Six of these represent the concrete hard skills that have led to successful job placements over the past 20 years with more than 400 individuals with autism in the TEACCH Supported Employment Program. These references use objective, measurable terms to define specific domestic, culinary, landscaping, library, clerical, and warehouse/retail skills that have been necessary for successful job performance in North Carolina. Note that the hard skill references address residential, community, and vocational skills.

The goal is to support skill development across multiple adult environments. The Community Skills Checklist provides a one-page reference that summarizes the principal categories of skills within each reference. This form can also be used as a reference when considering hard skills within a setting or potential skills for an individual with disabilities.

Soft skills, or conceptual skills necessary for job performance, pose the greater challenge for so many individuals with autism and other developmental disabilities. These vocational behaviors, independent functioning skills, functional communication skills, interpersonal behaviors, and leisure/recreation skills are crucial to address in job training. In the TTAP-CV, there are five soft skill references that help to identify (in measurable terms) skills related to time management, supervisor interaction, stamina, quality, use of break time, and interaction that most frequently prevent success in community environments. Again, these references were developed as a result of 20 years of experience in the TEACCH Supported Employment Program. The Community Behaviors Checklist provides a one-page reference that summarizes the principal categories of soft skills that have historically proven problematic for individuals with autism in TEACCH Supported Employment. This form can also be used as a broad reference in considering the soft skills that should be addressed within a potential community-based setting.

In addition, with the assistance of Ann Palmer, author of *Realizing the College Dream With Autism or Asperger Syndrome*, a sixth soft skill reference has been developed to help IEP teams plan for post-school outcomes in continuing education. This reference identifies various skills that are necessary for performance in college, community college, or another continuing education environment. This reference defines self-advocacy and self-organization skills in measurable terms to support the IEP process as well as the development of skills in adulthood. The soft skills identified in this reference emphasize targeted self-management and should alert the IEP team to expected behaviors in adult learning settings.

These references can be used in several ways. First, they are used to assess job and community training sites. When assessing job training sites, a coach or provider can take the appropriate single-sheet reference into the site to assist with definition of skills that can be addressed within the job site. For example, when a transition specialist or job coach goes to a potential job training or job placement site for the first time, that provider would take and complete the Job Site Analysis Form (available in Section 5) to create a review of the site. The provider, if reviewing a retail store, would also take the warehouse reference sheet to the site. This reference serves as a tool to help the provider look at potential tasks that would benefit the employer while providing skills to train in the student or trainee.

Second, the references can be used to assess individual skill sets. When assessing the specific skills of an individual, the appropriate references can help identify the strengths and needs of that individual either before entering a job site or at a potential job site. The hard skill references can assist teachers in designing activities and zones of activity within their school or classroom. Note that it is often important to teach skill sets in more controlled classroom settings prior to using those skills in the community. Teaching a new skill in a new context may prove overly complex for certain individuals. These hard skill references can also help identify the competencies of an individual that can then be practiced in potential job training sites. In other words, the clerical reference can help a teacher or provider identify skills that may be within the capacity of the student and thus be trained in a specific office setting.

The soft skill references address performance skills across all community and job training settings. In other words, in any retail or office setting, it is appropriate to examine the vocational behaviors, independent functioning, leisure skills, functional communication, and interpersonal skills of the individual. Using these five references in looking at an individual's performance helps the provider prioritize the principal objectives that require attention. Considering that soft skill deficits are most problematic for individuals with autism and developmental disabilities, choosing skills from multiple soft skill references to train within different job training sites (e.g., clerical vs. retail vs. landscape) is essential to creating job success. It is recommended that each individual in a job training site should have one to three hard skill objectives and four to five soft skill objectives, stated in terms that support achievement in a period of 9–15 weeks of job training. Moreover, student performance with soft skills often varies depending on the site and the specific work. Comparative assessment of soft skills in various settings may assist with successful job placement. This suggests the importance of comparing performance across settings to find the best job and community settings for positive adult outcomes.

Third, the reference can assist with identification of target skills for job training and for career development. The references support the identification of skills to target in specific job training sites and support the initial stages of assessment in a community-based site. Moreover, because the objectives are stated in concrete, measurable terms, they can be used in IEP development and in adult service plan development. Specific references can be printed on single sheets from the Assessment Tools section (Section 5) of the TTAP-CV to support practical use in community-

based settings. The format of the references supports prioritization of goals and objectives for an individual within each job or community training site. The primary advantage of the references is as a resource in defining the objectives of short-term community-based training or of long-term job placement.

Formal Assessment

IDEA states that transition planning must contain both formal and informal measures, and the TTAP was developed to meet this need. The TTAP Formal Assessment* provides an initial assessment of transition needs and serves as a first step in defining strengths and areas of need across multiple environments. The TTAP Formal Assessment provides three scales—Direct Observation, Home Scale, and School/Work Scale. These three scales combine to provide evidence of how setting and context affect performance. The TTAP Formal Assessment examines in multiple environments a range of concrete vocational and residential skills, as well as the soft skills, or conceptual skills (i.e., vocational behaviors, independent functioning, leisure, functional communication, and interpersonal skills), that are particularly problematic for so many individuals with autism spectrum disorders and other developmental disabilities. The TTAP-CV provides electronic scoring forms for the TTAP Formal Assessment, which facilitates the identification of strengths and needs while supporting prioritization of goals related to post-school outcomes.

Informal/Ongoing Assessment

According to IDEA, the process of assessment must be ongoing. Moreover, assessment information that can be transferred from provider to provider in a "common language," or consistent format, will be most practical. The TTAP provides a set of tools and resources to form a framework that assists with goal development, performance documentation, and ongoing analysis of strengths and needs. These tools and resources are intended to be used throughout the life span and career of an individual with an autism spectrum disorder or other developmental disability. The TTAP-CV provides an electronic data storage and tracking system for use in conjunction with the TTAP Informal/Ongoing Assessment.

The match between individual and job is designed first using the Job Site Analysis Form or Database. The Job Site Analysis Database helps employment and transition specialists in identifying features of a work training or work environment that will fit the sensory, communication, and vocational needs of individuals with disabilities. Once the match between site and individual is completed, the coach uses the Community Site Assessment Worksheet (CSAW) to determine the hard skills, or vocational skills, of the specific job. The coach performs the job and uses the left side of the front page of the CSAW to analyze the work tasks. During this initial trial, the coach begins to use the right side of the CSAW to design the structure and visual/environmental supports that will enhance the individual's independent performance on the job.

Once this initial information on vocational skills is gathered, the coach scores the individual's performance of each task step on the front page of the CSAW. The coach also uses the references (described previously) to define the soft skills, shown on the back page of the CSAW, that will be target objectives in the job training. The CSAW assists the coach in job carving and in design of the site. Finding those task steps that are at a failing or "low emerging" level is crucial to job training success. The CSAW helps to document those aspects of the job that should be taught in other, more structured environments or carved out of the job to prevent failure in job training. This completed pre-instructional CSAW helps to identify both the objectives and the structures and techniques that will support independent performance and define measurable objectives in job training. Note that, in general, the coach uses the Job Site Analysis Form and Database to carve the job and negotiate with the employer how to ensure that the individual with a disability can perform according to the standards expected for the position. The coach then uses the CSAW to determine structures and strategies that will improve quality and ensure independence. Moreover, the CSAW helps

---

*Refer to the TTAP for all information on the administration and scoring of this instrument.

define the goals of job training or of job coaching. In general, experience has shown that having one to three goals for hard skills, or vocational skills (front page of the CSAW), and three to five goals for soft skills (i.e., vocational behaviors, independent functioning, functional communication, interpersonal skills, and leisure skills; see the back page of the CSAW) provides a reasonable set of targets for intervention. Since soft skills are more often associated with job failure, there should be more emphasis in training on soft skills.

The objectives and structures/techniques are then transferred to the Daily Accomplishment Chart (DAC) for daily documentation of performance. The DAC helps ensure that the coach and supervisor can monitor performance and adjust the site as needed to prevent problems. The targeted goals identified on the CSAW are transferred to the DAC along with the structures and strategies that the coach will need to implement to help ensure independent performance by the individual with a disability. Then the coach uses the DAC to provide daily documentation, thus providing a means of evaluating fluctuations in performance and of determining whether additional adjustments are needed during job training. Experience again suggests that recognizing a sudden or gradual deterioration in performance through the DAC can help ensure adjustments that will prevent job failure.

The Cumulative Record of Skills (CRS)

The entire system of the TTAP-CV allows users to record and update learner progress toward obtaining skills related to post-school outcomes in an easy-to-use electronic system. With each job training site comes the opportunity to document performance achievements by an individual with a disability. The use of the ongoing assessment tools (the CSAW, the DAC, and the references) leads to an opportunity to note performance level, date, and environment on the electronic version of the CRS. When the CSAW is completed and post-instructional performance levels are entered as data, these performance levels automatically populate the data fields of the CRS. The CRS is created as a result of completed community site assessments, noting the skill level, context in which the skill was achieved, and the date of achievement.

The end product of the CRS will be a comprehensive report that providers can use to identify learner areas of relative strengths and weaknesses. The CRS can serve as a basis for the development of the senior exit document required by IDEA. The CRS will provide greater insight into what the learner can do and under what conditions.

The TTAP-CV provides a clean way for users to generate reports about individual learners and to further identify necessary transition skills. The system lends itself to periodic review (for example, the IEP process). How the entire system is used in yearly review is illustrated by the following flow chart. This illustrates how to use the various tools in both an initial and an ongoing assessment process.

A Flexible Format for Assessment

This need for individualized objectives led to the creation of the TTAP-CV as a flexible framework that allows the user to individualize objectives and document performance achievement. Although the system provides more than 700 possible objectives, adding and adjusting objectives is a goal of the electronic format. Teachers and other professionals must adjust objectives to levels that are achievable within time periods for job and community-based training. This requires adding criteria (setting, prompts, and conditions) that are relevant to the individual and to skill performance in the community-based site. A major goal in community-based training is moving skill levels from emerging or partial skill to passing skill levels in the community.

Cultural and community differences mean that different objectives must be produced to fit the needs of an individual within a specific community. Although in North Carolina successful job placements have been identified in domestic, culinary, warehouse/retail, clerical, library, and landscape settings, other regions will have different opportunities and settings for community-based performance as an adult. For instance, the fishing communities of the northern sections of North America may provide opportunities for job training that are very specific. To address this need for flexibility, the TTAP-CV allows the user to add not only objectives to the current skill areas but also an entirely new hard skills section so that skills that are culturally relevant are available within the system.

Overall, we feel that the TTAP-CV is an invaluable tool in assisting with the documentation of transition outcomes for adults with autism spectrum disorders and other intellectual disabilities. Its flexibility and document/data management tracking easily allow for a tool that can grow to meet the needs of the student to help obtain more robust and complete adult outcomes. We hope you enjoy the tool and thank you for supporting people with autism.

Transition Process

Get to Know the Student Through Informal Meetings or Observations
What Are the Referral Questions?

↓

Formal Section of the TTAP

Home & School Work Scale

Direct Observation Scale

Write Up:
Answer the Referral Questions
Present Level of Functioning
Recommendations

↓

Schedule IEP/ITP Meeting to Discuss Findings
Create Transition Plan
Assign Responsibilities for Ongoing Education and Linkage Goals

↓

Informal Assessment

Cumulative Record of Skills (CRS)
To Identify Skills

↓

Community Site Assessment Worksheet (CSAW)
Preinstruction

↓

3-4 sites per year
6-15 weeks per site

Daily Accomplishment Chart (DAC)

↓

Community Site Assessment Worksheet (CSAW)
Postinstruction

↓

Cumulative Record of Skills (CRS)
To Record Skills

Annual IEP/ITP Meeting to Prepare for New Transition Goals

↓

End of School/Informal Assessment
Give Completed CRS to the Next Agency