

Discovery: Finding the Direction to Facilitate Successful Employment



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Discovery: Finding the Direction to Facilitate Successful Employment



The tools of facilitated
discovery

The *translational* aspect of discovery

The job seeker's life provides opportunities to see activities, routines, interactions and other typical aspects of daily performance

We then *translate* those features into:

- Conditions for Success
- Interests toward an aspect of the Labor Market
- Potential Contributions to Employers

Conditions for Success

Conditions refer to those factors of employment that must be matched or negotiated to meet both the needs of the job seeker and the expectations of employers.

If we can identify the necessary conditions for success, we can often find matched situations and/or employers who are willing to negotiate their expectations.

Job seekers with complex lives often have numerous conditions necessary for success.

Interests: Finding the right motivational match

Interests refer to types of work that appeal to job seekers and fit their personality and life style.

Interests are often narrowly stated in terms of job titles and we must look broadly at general categories of work.

We can often discover interests by looking at what job seekers do in their lives without being expected to do so.

Specific Contributions

Specific Contributions refer to discrete tasks and skills that represent the best of the job seeker's performance.

Job seekers with complex lives rarely have the "whole package" to offer employers but often have specific competencies that might be of significant benefit to employers.

The tools of Facilitated Discovery

The tools of facilitated discovery can be intuitive and informal, but they are also the time-honored tools of qualitative researchers: *interview and conversation, observation and time together, review of existing information and organization of newly discovered information.*

Strategies for Facilitated Discovery

- Conversation
- Interview
- Time together
- Observation
- Reflection
- Sharing with others
- Finally, Review of records

Additional Strategies for Facilitated Discovery

When above strategies are not sufficient:

- Structured situational assessments or discrepancy analyses
- Targeted evaluations to answer *specific* questions

Recalling what you've discovered

- *Prepare for the Discovery interaction*
- *Stay focused during the interaction*
- *If you need to take notes, ask for permission*
- *Use words, phrases or photos*
- *Before you drive, take notes in your car*
- *Use the Profile outline*
- *Avoid using audio tapes or video cameras*
- *Don't wait too long*

Descriptive note-taking

Writing descriptively is a strategy that allows us to focus on competence by removing our evaluation of performance and by concentrating on what the student is actually doing.

If notes are developed descriptively, we start looking at performance in an optimistic, competence-based manner.

Example of Descriptive Note-taking

Jenni carries a box of caps that have been prepared for the embroidery machine. She carries the box under her left arm and carries a single cap in her right. As she walks through the office area, she looks down at the floor to find a clear path.



Note-taking activity

Marci and Doris are working together to do stapling in a newspaper distribution center. Write a descriptive sentence to for this activity.



When to do Observational & Participatory Discovery

- **During Typical Activities of Life**
This aspect comprises the majority of discovery interactions. Just be there.
- **During Planned Familiar Activities**
This aspect is done once or twice during discovery in places where the individual is at his/her best.
- **During Planned Novel Activities**
This activity is done once during discovery. Make sure the novel activity makes sense.

When to do discovery

General interactions: Discovery is possible during general, non-focused time spent with a targeted individual. This is often done as part of a non-related, group activity such as during classroom activities for teachers or unscheduled time for adult staff or family members.

Facilitators need strategies to do this approach effectively. We recommend using the concepts of *remarkable moments* and *intentional moments*.

During Typical Life: Remarkable moments

Remarkable moments refer to the strategy of focusing on those aspects of the individual of concern's performance/behavior that are felt to be of sufficient significance to merit our descriptive remarks.

In this way, facilitators who do not have dedicated time for discovery can find these moments of time to write up the description of the behavior/performance.

Observational notes

The following excerpt represents an example of descriptive observation notes:

Megan sat at her desk and matched felt letters to printed letters/words on a poster sheet. There were about 20 words on the sheet. Megan placed the felt letters on the corresponding printed letters in a random manner. When her teacher cued her to start at the beginning of a specific word, Megan looked at the printed letter, scanned the felt letters and picked up and placed the corresponding felt letters on each subsequent printed letter until all printed words were covered.

During Typical Life: Intentional moments

Intentional moments refer to the strategy of planning for a specific time in the near future for a focus on discovery and descriptive writing, regardless of whether the performance is "remarkable".

We recommend that a 2 - 4 minute focus period be planned for discovery purposes. Facilitators should plan for this observation during times when the individual is likely to be engaged in performance activity.

Observational notes

The following represents an example of observation notes in an inclusive classroom:

In Arts and Humanities class, Mathew sat at his desk, without talking, as the teacher lectured on musical forms. He leafed through his handout papers as the teacher spoke, occasionally glancing around the room at others. Mathew raised his hand while the teacher continued lecturing on Romance Music. He kept his hand up and behind his head until called on. He asked if there was Jazz and Rock 'n Roll during that time. The teacher said, "That music didn't happen for another 50 or 60 years."

When to do discovery

Scheduled Interactions: In most instances facilitated discovery is conducted through a series of planned interactions with the individual and others with positive and useful information.

These interactions include visits to the individual's home, conversational interviews, participation in activities, planned and informal and observations.

Descriptive Writing Scenario

To help understand the distinction between descriptive writing and evaluative writing, consider the following traditional *evaluative* scenario of a young person who is cooking brownies in his kitchen.

Damian can cook simple items with assistance. He cannot set the oven temperature independently and care should be taken to assure that he does not burn himself. He cannot read the directions on the box. Damian required one-to-supervision to mix and prepare the brownies and to put them into the oven. He cannot be trusted to cut the brownies with a knife.

Descriptive Writing Scenario

When writing descriptively, we focus solely on the performance of the individual, using action verbs in the active tense. Here is an example of the same scenario written descriptively during observation:

*Damian selects the brownie mix from the pantry, finds a mixing bowl from the cabinet and removes a mixing spoon from the utensil drawer, after being reminded by a staff person. As the staff person reads the directions he opens the box, pours the mix into the bowl and continues to blend in ingredients. When he completes the mixing he pours the mixture in a glass pan following a gesture by the staff person. The staff person says, "What's next?" and Damian points to the oven thermostat. The staff person says, "Which button is for bake?" and Damian pushes the **Bake** button.*

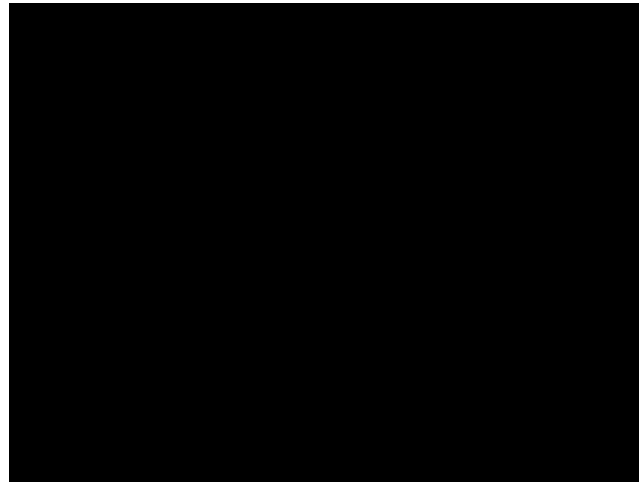
Descriptive Writing Scenario

Descriptive writing scenario, continued:

Damian then begins to turn the thermostat and the staff person says, "Stop at 375." As Damian nears 375, the staff person says, "That's it." and he stops at a nearby indicator. The staff person says, "One more click." and Damian completes the setting. The staff person asks, "How long do we cook them?" and Damian says 30 minutes. Damian sets the timer similar to the oven. When the timer goes off, Damian puts an oven mitt on his right hand and opens the oven with his left. As he reaches in the staff person says, "Careful, everything is hot." Damian grasps the pan and slides it out of the oven, keeping the container level. When the brownies had cooled, Damian removes a serving knife from the utility drawer and cuts the brownies into small squares with hand-over-hand assistance from the staff person.

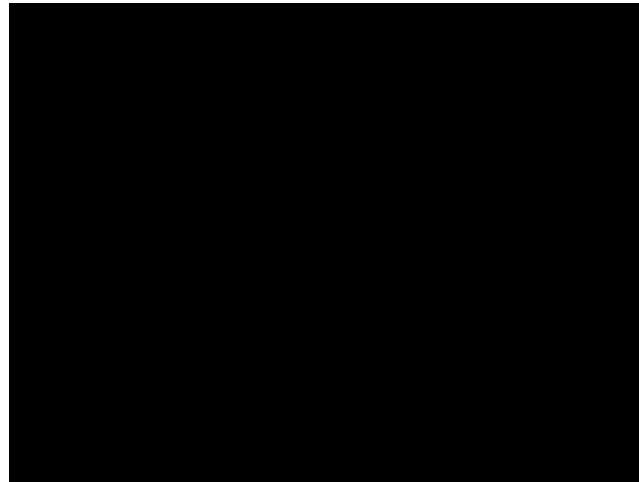
Observational Note Taking

Colin on
the family
farm
feeding
COWS



Observational note taking

Colin on
the
family
farm
catching
chickens



When to do discovery

Focused Group interactions: Discovery can occur within intentional times involving a group of individuals who are focusing on discovery as a topic. People can work individually or as part of a participatory activity to develop information.

Facilitators should observe and take notes of the outcomes of the activities as well as collect samples of the individuals' work.

Observation - Participation Strategies

There are basically two kinds of observation:

- Observation from a position removed from an activity.
- Observation from within an activity as a participant.

Observation Strategies when Removed from Activity

- Always ask for permission of the individual and others in the setting
- Introduce and explain yourself
- Offer to share you notes
- Focus on an array of actions: task performance, social interactions, subtleties, best dimensions

Observation Strategies within Activity

- Try to remember what you see
- Take notes afterwards
- Offer the individual the "lead", subtly
- Use an "asking" conversational style
- Let the individual speak
- Wait for the person, allow periods of silence
- Notice small things while you participate

Features of rich task observation:

- Description of performance
- Supports offered/used/needed
- General Performance: Pace, correctness, consistency, stamina
- Interest/competence indicated
- Translation to potential conditions, interests or contributions

Reflection

Reflection is the act of looking inward to determine the answer to the question, "Who am I?"

Reflection is one of the most difficult activities for any person to accurately engage in. Students will need a structure, on-going assistance and feedback to be successful.

Sharing with Others

Sharing is a discovery strategy that is useful in group situations such as classrooms as well as by facilitators who are willing to share information for purposes of establishing a balanced relationship.

Sharing focuses only on who students are not on feedback, evaluative statements or possible solutions.

Reflective/Sharing Questions

1. Who are you?

a. Where do you live?

b. Who do you live with?

c. Who do you spend the most time with?

d. Who do you consider your closest friends?

See questions for discovery for additional questions.

Reflective/Sharing Questions

2. *How do you spend your time?*
 - a. *What are your weekday routines? (list variations, as appropriate for specific days)*
 - b. *What is your weekend routine?*
 - c. *What is the best part of your day/week?*
 - d. *What is the toughest/most challenging part of your day/week?*

Strategies for Reviewing Records

- Get to know the person first
- Look for the positive aspects of records
- Be skeptical of the record rather than the individual
- Look for possible solutions to complexities
- Follow up with interview of individuals who seem hopeful in their writing



Questions?

Website to find presentation:
www.ncwd-youth.info/webinars