

Supporting Individuals with Significant Disabilities in Pursuing Self-Employment

Sarah DeAngelo, M.A.T.

Joanna Keel, Ph.D.

Allison Antman, OTD Student

Fabricio Balcazar, Ph.D.

University of Illinois Chicago



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The Entrepreneurship for Youth with Disabilities Project (EYD) Aims:



To design, implement, & evaluate an intervention to engage youth with disabilities in self-employment and entrepreneurship

To offer real opportunities for youth to explore skills, abilities, interests, and motivations for self-employment and entrepreneurship

To improve transition services for youth with disabilities interested in pursuing self-employment

The main goal of this project is to develop and conduct formative and summative evaluations of a school-based model intended to promote self-employment outcomes among transition-aged youth with disabilities from low-income communities.

YEAR 1

Interviews were conducted with 20 young adults with disabilities, 6 service providers, and 5 school administrators

YEAR 2

1 school site
7 students with disabilities

YEAR 3

3 school sites
20 students with disabilities

YEAR 4

4 school sites
45 students with disabilities
Comparing transition outcomes of participants with Indicator 14 data

YEAR 5

School site implementation and Indicator 14 data review continues

The Critical Importance of Self-Determination

Individuals with significant disabilities are given fewer opportunities to make decisions about their lives in comparison with nondisabled individuals and individuals with less significant support needs (Lipscomb et al., 2017).

It is important that we focus on meaningful activities **defined by the individual themselves.**

Motivation and Occupation

- Occupation: a meaningful activity that an individual wants to, needs to, and gets to do
- Engaging in meaningful activities → better outcomes and supports greater transference to client's goals
- Dignity of freedom: Provide student with wide range of experiences and the freedom to choose
- What does the student like/dislike? What are their strengths?
- Collaborate with student to develop individualized goals and monitor/evaluate progress

Supporting Self-Determination In the Business Idea Stage

While self-determination is of key importance for individuals with significant disabilities, these individuals may require support to make decisions about their business that fit with their goals, abilities, and needs for support.

This program takes students through a brainstorming process to develop a business idea based on their strengths, interests, and needs they see in their community.

The Challenge:

How can we find ways for individuals to make meaningful decisions about starting a business while accounting for their support needs?



The EYD Curriculum

13 Units (multimedia PowerPoint presentations)

1. Entrepreneurial Mindset
2. The Power of Your Story
3. Empowerment, Advocacy & Professional Presence
4. Entrepreneurial Skills
5. Brainstorming
6. Idea to Opportunity
7. Testing Ideas
8. Business Planning
9. Mentorship, Networking & Support
10. Marketing
11. Money Matters
12. Operations
13. The Pitch

What is in each unit?



Each Entrepreneurship Unit has different activities throughout the slide show.
Here is a quick guide for each kind of activity you will see:

CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

Check For Understanding activities are comprehension questions that refer to videos or presented content. These questions are listed on the accompanying worksheet in the google drive unit folder.

THINK ABOUT IT

Think About It questions can be completed independently, with a partner, small group, or whole class. These are questions that can be answered out loud, in your mind, or written down.

PLAN AHEAD

Plan Ahead questions are completed on the planning graphic organizer in your google drive folder. This is a planning guide before you complete your official business plan.

SUPPORT MAP

Support Map activities are completed on the Support Map slide in your google drive folder. This is a PowerPoint slide that can be resaved and edited to identify supportive people to help you start your business.

Support Map

TOOL SLIDE

ADD SUPPORTS

NAME

NAME

NAME

NAME

NAME

NAME

NAME

NAME

ADD CONNECTORS

ADD MARKERS



ACCOMODATION



EMPOWERMENT



PROTOTYPING



WRITING



FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS



DIGITAL SKILLS



SOFT SKILLS



JOB SPECIFIC SKILLS



CUSTOMER SERVICE
SKILLS



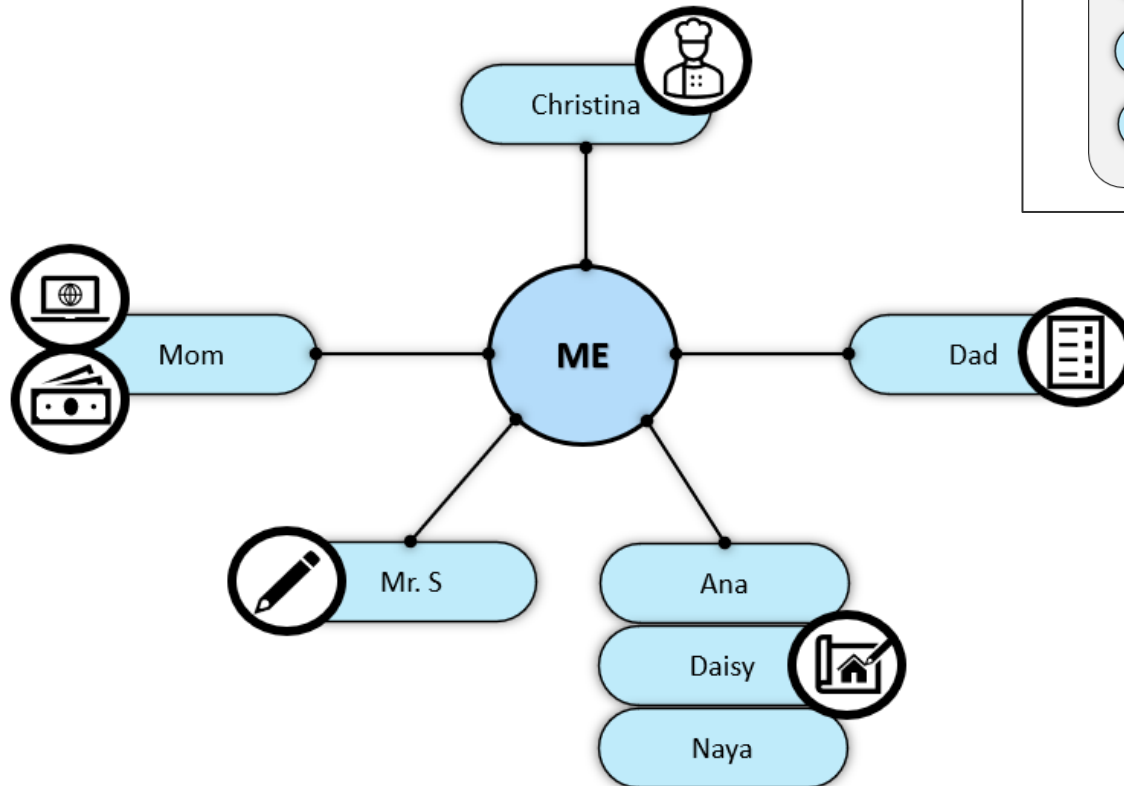
FINANCIAL SKILLS



PLANNING SKILLS



FORMAL SUPPORTS



MAPPING SLIDE



EYD Student Case Example: Ella

Ella is an autistic 18-year-old senior at a rural high school.

Ella has foundational academic skills including reading and comprehending simple texts independently. Ella does basic math operations up to two digits. She is extremely motivated in school and excited about starting her own business. She has a bubbly personality and works well with other people.

Ella has significant difficulties with planning, organization, and cognitive skills such as problem solving and reasoning. She struggles to apply her academic skills to real world scenarios (ex. dealing with money, reading text in the community). She will need significant support in both planning and running her business.

Ella is passionate about fitness. She wants to start a small business teaching fitness classes to people in her community. This business is a good fit for her skill set and is something she has experience with as she volunteers as an assistant teacher for fitness classes at her community center.

To help Ella be successful in planning and starting her business, we made some significant modifications to the curriculum.

Ella's Business Planning Process

Ella's idea of teaching fitness classes easily fit with her individual interests and strengths.

She required more support to make smaller decisions about her business like:

- Where to teach?
- Who are her customers?
- How much to charge?

These decisions required multi-step research and decision-making processes.

Solutions:

- Walking through these decisions one step at a time 1:1.
- Task analyzing the decision-making process.
- Scaffolding the research process.
- Finding out what her options are and presenting them to her.
- Plain language lists of the pros and cons and options (ex. Teaching her class at a gym vs. Virtually).



What if Ella did not have a business idea?

- Conversations with friends, family, support network
- Get family or caregivers involved from the very beginning
- Preference assessments

Coaching & 1:1 Support

Challenges for Ella with EYD Curriculum

- Didactic learning (presentation format)
- Application of content knowledge to own business idea
- Needs ongoing support in planning and organization of business

Using Coaching and 1:1 Support for Ella

- Used Graphic Organizer as Lead Teaching Tool instead of presentations
- Prompting and Scaffolding using Graphic Organizer to develop business idea

What is built into each EYD unit?

- Slides with text, visual organization of information
- Videos with advice and perspectives from real entrepreneurs with and without disabilities
- Voiceover of all text built into PowerPoint presentations

WHERE DO IDEAS COME FROM?



Hobbies:

You love gardening so you start a landscaping business.



Using your skills:

You are good with computers so you start designing websites for small businesses.



A fun idea:

You start a business throwing superhero themed parties for kids.



Spotting a gap in current businesses:

You notice none of the businesses in your area sell gluten free products, so you start a gluten free bakery.



Putting two ideas together:

You want to work with animals and food so you start an organic pet food company.



Solving problems for people:

Lots of people in your community need flexible childcare so you start a babysitting business.

Modifications for Ella

Access Issues:

- Abstract concepts and higher order thinking skills
- Too much content to get through because it takes Ella more time to understand abstract concepts

Solutions:

- Reduce the scope of concepts

Consider:

- What are the most important skills and concepts?
- What skills and concepts does the student have the hardest time with?
- How do the skills and concepts fit with the student's specific business idea?

CRITICAL THINKING & PROBLEM SOLVING



Critical thinking is when we think carefully about our goals.

- Critical thinking can take a lot of energy, so many people do not do it.
- Entrepreneurs must use critical thinking to get better at it!

Critical thinking skills are:

- Problem-solving
- Reasoning
- Careful risk-taking

Modifications for Ella

Many of the videos feature entrepreneurs telling their story.

Access Issues:

- Some videos are longer than Ella's attention span
- Some videos don't have much visual information

Solution:

- These stories can easily be turned into simplified short stories or multimedia presentations with pictures using PowerPoint or Google Slides.

SELF-ADVOCACY



Listen to Abby Edwards and how she self-advocated for her needs in life.

Modifications for Ella

Access Issues:

- High level vocabulary
- Abstract concepts (effective communication)

Solutions:

Modify Language

1. Why is it important to ask for help?

Modify Content to make it more concrete and applicable to the student

2. Who can you ask for help with your business?

Other Tips

- Use student's preferred mode of communication
- Scaffold Responses
- Alternate Response Methods (Give choices, student picks from a menu of support people)

THINK ABOUT IT



From the information on communication:

1. Why is effective communication important?
2. Do you think you are good at effectively communicating? Why or why not?



Plan Ahead Graphic Organizer

The Plan Ahead Graphic Organizer scaffolds the business planning process.

It provides structure and prompts to help students develop their business idea in preparation of writing their business plan.

Access Issues:

- Broad open-ended questions
- Difficult perspective taking skills

Unit 10

Part 1: Take a look back at the people phase of design thinking process discussed in Unit 5. This asks you whose needs or problems your business aims to address. It is time to think more deeply about who these people are. Fill out the following chart to create a customer profile. If some of the factors do not apply to your business or target market, you can leave them blank.

Age	
Gender	
Location (ex. Country, city, neighborhood etc.)	
Personality (attitudes, beliefs, opinions, interests, values, etc.)	
Income Level	
Job/Career	
Education Level	
Other	

Modifying the Plan Ahead Graphic Organizer for Ella

Solutions:

- Limit the scope: Take out sections that don't apply directly to Ella's idea.
- Add options for Ella to choose from that are most relevant to her situation.
- Make concepts more concrete and specific to Ella's business idea.
- We would add more visual supports for a student with fewer academic and/or language skills

Unit 10 Part 1: Fill out the table to think more about the people you want to buy your product or service.	
Age	How old are they? Kids Teenagers Adults Everyone
Gender	What is their gender? Male Female Other Everyone
Personality (attitudes, beliefs, opinions, interests, values, etc.)	What kind of workouts do they like? Weight-Lifting Yoga Dance Kickboxing
Other	

Budgeting Modifications

Creating a budget for a small business is a challenge for anyone, and this may be an especially challenging step of business planning for students with significant disabilities.

Solutions:

- Partial Participation
- Scaffolding



MONEY MATTERS

UNIT 11

Partial Participation

This is Ella's business plan budget.

Ella knew she needed to get a training and certification, but she didn't know how. We worked with her family to find a training that worked. This helped to ensure that Ella will have family support as she continued to run her business.

The price for monthly Choreography wasn't on the website, so we helped Ella email the company and ask.

We task analyzed the process of getting an estimate for flyers on the Office Max website.

Finances

What are your start-up costs? What will you need to buy and pay for before opening your business?

Materials & Equipment				
Item name & brand:	Where can you buy it?	Price per item:	How many items?	Cost
Pound Instructor Certification Training	https://poundfit.com/instructor-training/	229.00	1	229.00
Drum Sticks – Pound Brand “Rip Sticks”	https://shop.poundfit.com/product-category/all-products/accessories-all-products/ripstix/	19.99	5	99.95
Total Materials & Equipment Costs:			328.95	
Websites & Subscriptions				
Site/Service Name:	Price per month	How many months?		Cost:
Pound Pro Monthly Choreography	50.00	3		150.00
Total Websites & Subscriptions Costs:				150.00
Advertising				
Advertising Strategy & Location (ex. Facebook)	Where can you buy it?	Total Cost		
Printed Flyers (Color)	Office Max	20.45		
Total Advertising Costs:				20.45
Other				
Total Startup Costs:				499.40

Scaffolding

- Broke budgeting down into much smaller steps
- Added visual structure and support

Materials and Equipment

1. Training

- Go to <https://poundfit.com/instructor-training/>
 - How much does the training cost? \$229.00

2. Drumsticks

- How many people will be in each class? 5
- Will any of them have their own drumsticks?
 - Maybe but I want to have extra just in case.
- How many sets of drumsticks will you need?
5
- Go to <https://shop.poundfit.com/product-category/all-products/accessories-all-products/ripstix/>
 - How much does each set cost? \$19.99

How much will you spend on drumsticks?

$$\underline{\text{5}} \times \underline{\$19.99} = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$$

Business Plan & Pitch

- Students submit a completed business plan and pitch slideshow with video or audio
- Students can receive up to \$500 in supplies to start their business with a completed business plan and pitch

Ella's Pitch Presentation:

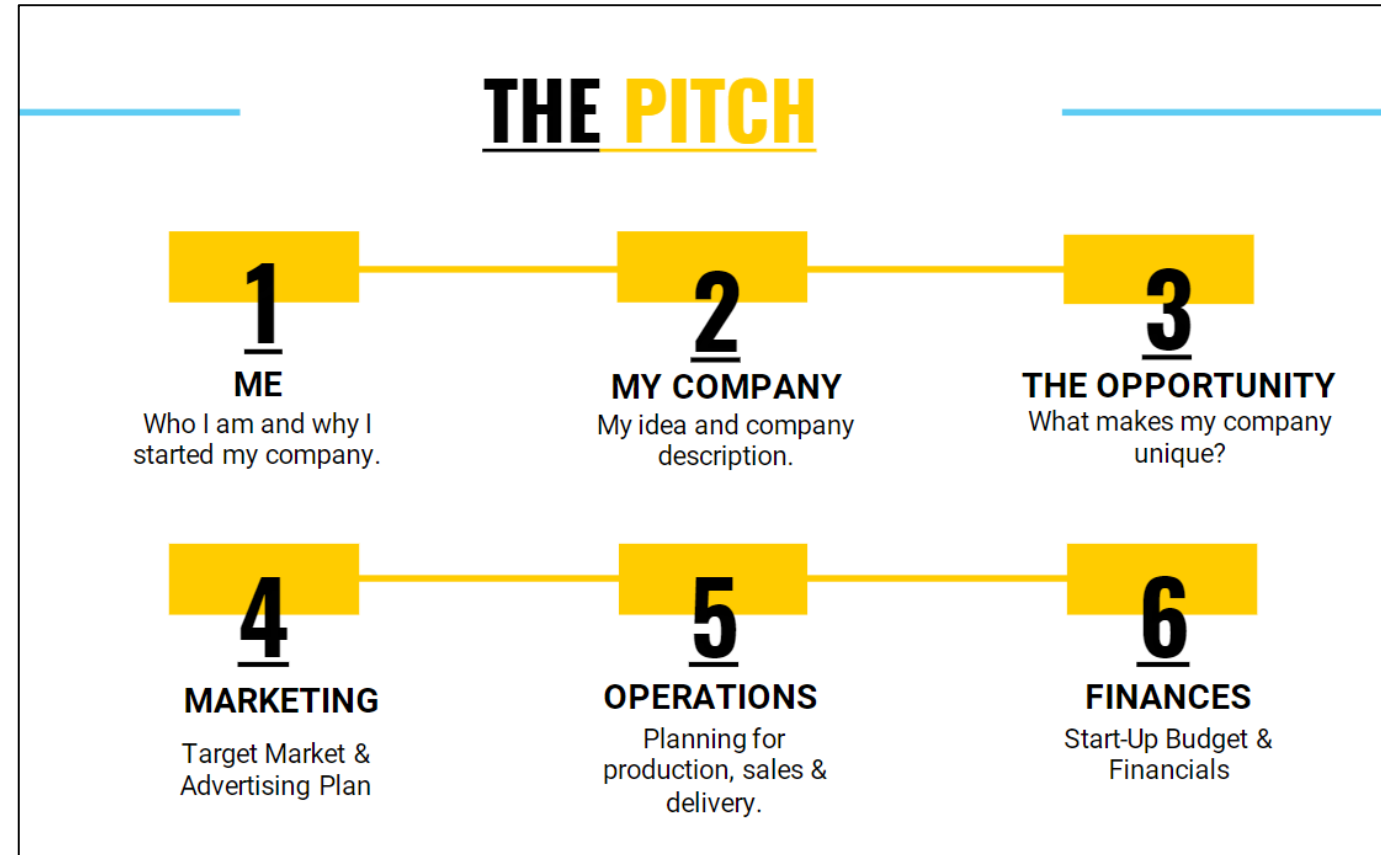
- We supported her to draft a script and complete a slide deck
- Ella's family and teacher helped with the filming of her pitch

Access Issues:

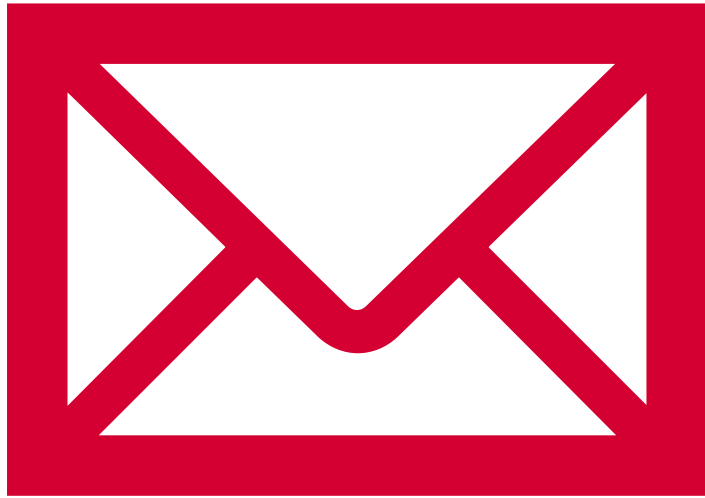
- Anxiety around speaking
- Using AAC

Solutions:

- Ask student for a prototype or storyboard of their business along with their pitch deck, instead of video or audio



Thank You!



For inquiries,
please contact
Joanna Keel at
jross7@uic.edu