

USING NJCAN TO PROMOTE COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS



**A Guide for Assisting
English Language Learner Students,
Gifted and Talented Students
&
Learning Disabled Students**

INTRODUCTION

College and Career Readiness requires our students to have the academic background and the critical thinking and reasoning skills to enter postsecondary training, and the workforce, able to successfully navigate the challenges and opportunities presented. While this is a laudable goal for all learners, we know that the pathways to this goal vary. Students come to us with a variety of backgrounds, learning preferences, abilities, and outside influences. In order to best help these diverse learners, additional resources or alternative instructional approaches may be needed.

The State of New Jersey has a free, on-line, interactive resource named the New Jersey Career Assistance Navigator (NJCAN). NJCAN is designed to support lifelong career exploration, career planning and decision making through easy-to-use, straightforward search and sorting utilities. It allows students to take a deep look at career and college options so they can make informed choices about course work, college costs, and job prospects. NJCAN also includes information about job interview preparation, resume and cover letter creation, how to keep a job, self-employment and military occupations.

In the New Jersey Department of Education, Office of Career and Technical Education, our focus is helping all students become college and career ready through utilization of both mentorships for students, such as those outlined in Personalized Student Learning Plans (PSLP) and the use of career guidance systems such as NJCAN. One advantage of NJCAN is that it has a variety of features designed to help a range of students. For students with lower reading levels the high school version of NJCAN can be linked with the middle school version, NJCAN Junior, which is written on a 6th grade reading level. There are assessments on NJCAN that are included to help students understand the tools needed for future success. There are also a number of activities on the site that are written in both English and Spanish.

Educators have been impressed with all of the adaptations that can be made in NJCAN therefore we developed an NJCAN accommodations guide. In each section of the guide we offer both general and specific strategies to help assist the identified class of students with career readiness and use of NJCAN. It is our hope that with this tool, each educator and school will be more effective when supporting their diverse student populations.

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Overview

It takes money to go to college, but it is completely worth the investment. Most college graduates earn **\$1.3 million** in their lifetime as high school graduates. There is a lot of financial aid available to students, including scholarships, grants, and loans. There are also many other ways to pay for education, including community or military service.

Learn all you can about how to apply for financial aid. Understanding the application process will help you get the most out of it – and get the most cash for your education!

Cost of School
How much does higher education cost? It's more than just tuition. But you probably won't have to pay the full amount, either!


Applying for Financial Aid
Learn as much as you can about the process to get the most money for your education. And start applying early!

Scholarships
Scholarships are financial aid awards for your accomplishments. There is one for just about every talent or achievement!

Grants
Governments, schools, and other organizations offer aid based on financial need. You don't have to be poor to receive grants though!

Loans
Nearly all students are eligible for educational loans, and most students borrow at least a little. But loans do have to be repaid!

Other Ways to Pay
Financial aid is just the start. There are hundreds of ways to earn money for school. Some may even help your future career!



What is the Value of a College Education?

Note: If you are looking for information on specific scholarships, use the Clusters Index, Titles Index, or Search tabs in the top toolbar.

Figure A.6 shows a screen shot of the “Paying for School” section on NJCAN.

English Language Learner Student Resources

Resource Name	Content
Curriculum Guide: Integrating Career Awareness into the ABE and ESOL classroom	<p>A guide published by the National College Transition Network and Systems for Adult Basic Education (ABE) Support that gives lessons that can be used in conjunction with NJCAN to incorporate career awareness.</p> <p>http://www.collegetransition.org/docs/ICAcriculumguide.pdf</p>
Career Exploration Unit for the Beginning ELL Student	<p>A unit published by the Minneapolis public school that integrates some of the strategies above into a complete classroom program of study.</p> <p>http://www.brycs.org/documents/upload/careerexploration.pdf</p>
Effective Teaching Strategies for English Language Learners	<p>This has an overview of helpful strategies, as well as connections to resources, and a video clip on unconscious messages ELL students receive.</p> <p>http://www.supportrealteachers.org/strategies-for-english-language-learners.html</p>

II. GIFTED AND TALENTED (G&T) STUDENTS

Many people mistakenly believe that if a student is gifted, career exploration will take care of itself. After all, because gifted students may be above average intelligence, many believe they are already mature and do not need guidance. This is not true. Research related to Gifted and Talented Education and its connection to career exploration finds a number of issues. Multipotentiality and Early Emergence are two such issues.

Multipotentiality

One issue educators and parents may encounter with Gifted and Talented students is something that is coined as "Multipotentiality." What this means is that the students have so many options in front of them that they become paralyzed by the multitude of choices. There are specific strategies teachers can take with this type of student that allow them to carefully weigh their choices without feeling like they are eliminating other possibilities.

Early Emergence

Early emergence is when a student knows from a very young age his or her area of interest and what he or she wants to do. This should be viewed as a positive, but it needs to be developed. If students are discouraged from a preference or not given sufficient information about an area of strength it could have significant impact on lifelong earnings, career satisfaction, and educational attainment.

The strategies listed below can be beneficial for students with multipotentiality, early emergence, or both as indicated in parentheses.

- Volunteer Opportunities (both)

In both middle and high school, students can volunteer in a few selected areas of interest. At the middle school level this can be less intensive though it should be regularly scheduled. At the high school level it should be for a longer period of time and the student should take on more of a leadership role. *Note: NJCAN has a link to various volunteer opportunities in New Jersey at the bottom of the homepage.*

- Job Shadowing (both)

Allows students to spend a complete day viewing the daily operations of an employee in a career that is of interest to them. Students can save their reflections in their NJCAN student portfolio. *Note: If a school is registered on NJCAN the students can get individualized accounts where they can save this information.*

- **Value Based Job Exploration (both)**

Allows students to explore what they value most. This can be done by a school counselor who has training in career exploration or by a vocational exploration professional. By using values as a career search lens students will also learn about atypical careers choices.

- **Pointed Academic and Extracurricular Selection (both)**

It is important for students to select courses that will lead to solid preparation in a favored career field. However, many of these students are involved in so many out-of-school activities they can be overwhelmed and have a hard time focusing their academic efforts. By having students hone in on what really matters to them they can make better decisions in the future.

- **Highlighting Serial or Concurrent Careers (multipotentiality)**

As previously mentioned, students with multipotentiality have a hard time narrowing down their career options. Since they have a variety of interests and strengths it is helpful to highlight Career Clusters and how one career path can lead to another. Students can research their top four Career Cluster choices and then work on a plan connecting the careers. The Career Cluster Inventory on NJCAN is a great place to begin this process.

- **Select Colleges with an Area of Expertise (early emergence)**

For an early emerger a large university may not be the best choice as they will benefit most from an enthusiastic mentor. In large colleges it may be harder to have a professor act as a guide due to a focus on research and larger class sizes. It is ideal, if the student can connect with a mentor while in high school. Using the college search tool on NJCAN can help students find a college that focuses on the student's particular area of interest and may lead to that mentor/mentee connection.

Gifted & Talented Student Resources

Resource Name	Content
Career Planning for Gifted and Talented Youth	<p>This is a research article found on the Davidson Institute for Talent Development's website. It offers additional intervention strategies for elementary, middle, and high school students.</p> <p>http://www.davidsongifted.org/db/Articles_id_10354.aspx</p>
Early Career Planning is Essential for Gifted Adolescents	<p>A 21st Century look at the importance of planning for a career as early as possible. It is from the Center for Talent Development at Northwestern University.</p> <p>http://www.ctd.northwestern.edu/resources/displayArticle/?id=46</p>
Gifted Students: Recommendations for Teachers	<p>This is a list of 26 strategies that work for gifted students.</p> <p>http://www.education.udel.edu/wpcontent/uploads/2013/01/GiftedStudents.pdf</p>

III. LEARNING DISABLED STUDENTS

Students with disabilities lag far behind their peers in achievement, graduation rates, postsecondary education and employment outcomes. Even where strong support systems in the educational environment are established, individuals with learning disabilities face more challenges to enter employment. That is why it is so important that career exploration and other career tools are used consistently to prepare learning disabled students for the future. By using these strategies as well as some of the suggestions for ELL students and G&T students, a variety of students can be prepared for future careers.

Give Students Ownership of Career Exploration

If a student is considered learning disabled there are often a variety of courses and interventions that are required which gives the student little opportunity to make choices. With career exploration they should be allowed to research and look at jobs they are interested in, not just the jobs that adults may think are best for them. It may well be that the student may not be qualified for a particular job, but by allowing the student that ownership it is easier for the student to find a similar job that may be better suited to their strengths, and is of interest to them.

Highlight College and Career Equally

According to the Council for Learning Disabilities publication "College as a Realistic Option for Students with Learning Disabilities," currently 80% of students who are labeled LD (Learning Disabled) enter the workforce immediately. Therefore, only 20% of the students are doing some type of postsecondary training. There are a variety of postsecondary options that can accommodate those with learning disabilities. Using the college search in NJCAN and focusing on the earnings potential of jobs with additional education should be highlighted just as much as career exploration.

Spend Time Explaining Each Career Cluster® with Concrete Details

In order to give students ownership they need to understand what options are available. Students should go through each of the Career Clusters and the instructor should provide a brief summary of each. This can be done by the students themselves, by using a set of posters, or through the videos available on NJCAN.

Provide Scaffolding Tools

As the student moves through college and career exploration it is important that he or she makes connections between the various steps they may engage in using career planning tools.

There are worksheets available on NJCAN and it is also helpful if the teacher creates a grid or a visual and summarizes key concepts as the students move through the plan.

Build Models of Abstract Concepts

When the teacher is going over something that is abstract in the career planning process, it is helpful for the students to summarize their understanding with concrete visuals. This can be done with photos, electronic media, or with a physical model.

Practice Real World Scenarios

Many career and college preparation activities have the students creating resumes and practicing job interviews with their teachers. Students can go beyond these activities. For example, the students could interview with local business owners. They can participate in a phone or online interview about their resume. Practice should be for workplace scenarios that might happen. This can lead to a higher level of preparedness and the additional benefit of letting them know what still needs to be improved prior to a real college or job interview.

Learning Disabled Student Resources

Resource Name	Content
<p>Helping Youth with Learning Disabilities Chart the Course: A Guide for Youth Service Professionals</p>	<p>An Info Brief that describes the challenges faced by youth and young adults as they prepare for their future. It supplies a number of practices and strategies that can be used to help students and it is supported by the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth (NCWD/Youth).</p> <p>http://www.ncwd-youth.info/information-brief/helping-youth-with-learning-disabilities-chart-the-course</p>
<p>Careers are Everywhere! Activity Workbook</p>	<p>A very accessible guide that breaks down the Career Clusters® and lists jobs found in each Career Cluster®. It can be used as an additional resource with NJCAN.</p> <p>http://breitlinks.com/careers/career_pdfs/CareerActivitiesBook.pdf</p>
<p>Four Supportive Pillars in Career Exploration and Development for Adolescents with LD and EBD (Emotional or Behavioral Disorder)</p>	<p>This article highlights several broad research based strategies that are common to successful career development. It gives additional research on the social aspects of career exploration.</p> <p>http://intl-isc.sagepub.com/content/48/1/15.full.pdf+html</p>