



## Discovery and Customization

The Touchstone of Customization:  
Who is this person?

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## Customized Employment & Discovery

- Customized employment requires *knowledge of the individual*. Therefore it is necessary to take a close look at the person's life, through an exploration process we call *Discovery*.
- Discovery simply answers the question, "Who is this person?"

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## Discovery & Customization

- These are compatible concepts that are used sequentially to facilitate employment for individuals who might otherwise not achieve employment.
- Discovery provides the foundation information on the applicant that is used to customize a position with an employer.

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## Discovery

*Discovery* is necessary whenever the complexity in people's lives – often as a result of significant disability – prevents them from competing with others against arbitrary employer demands.

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## Discovery is...

- a process that involves getting to know people, or helping them get to know themselves, before we help them plan;
- spending time with applicants, instead of testing or evaluating them, as a means of finding out who they are;

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## Discovery is...

- the best way to find out the best that people have to offer;
- An common-sense strategy to determine complexities and preferences.

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Discovery is...

- a way to identify the unique contributions offered by those who might not compete as well as others;
- enhanced when we get to know people in settings *where they are most who they are*;

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Discovery is...

- not a plan, but the foundation of employment planning, that seeks to customize outcomes;
- compatible with self-determination and customer choice.

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We Need to Discover

- **Discovery:** to gain insight or knowledge of something previously unseen or unknown; to notice or realize; to make known, reveal, disclose

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## Asking

- Asking works for some people.
- What about for others?
  - Different people ask & get different answers.
  - The same person can ask at different times & get different answers.
  - If you ask a group of people, group dynamics can direct the focus of what people say.

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## Testing

- Most tests are standardized and measure against a “norm”.
- Most are a check list or short answer.
- Tests usually answer “yes” or “no”.

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## Testing

- Tests are a reflection of one specific time.
- Tests typically predict success or failure.

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## Need for Discovery

- Discovery is often assumed.
- Information on an applicant is often disjointed.

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## Need for Discovery

- Disability is like a fog.
  - Discovery shows us the impact of disability on work.
  - It allows a description of a person to emerge.
  - It shows possibilities and leads to things a person is motivated to do rather than what “we” think

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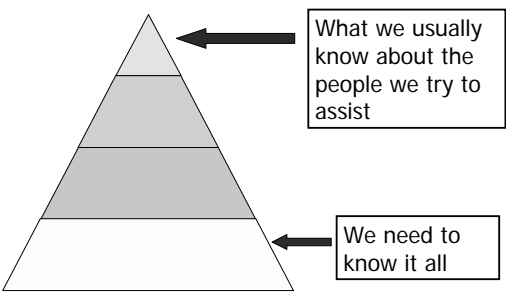
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**Approaches  
to Discovery**

Discovery can either be:

1. facilitated by someone else, typically an employment professional
2. part of a group experience, or
3. accomplished through “self-discovery”

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**The Tools of  
Facilitated Discovery**

The tools of facilitated discovery are the time-honored tools of qualitative researchers:

- » interview and conversation,
- » observation and time together,
- » review of information,
- » and organization of information.

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**Strategies for  
Facilitated Discovery**

- Conversation
- Interview
- Time together
- Observation

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**Strategies for  
Facilitated Discovery**

- Participation with the applicant in activities both familiar and novel
- Finally, Review of records

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**Additional Strategies  
for Facilitated Discovery**

*When above strategies are not sufficient:*

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

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**Discovery,  
Step-by-Step**

*The Person's Home:*

1. Set a time to visit the individual's home with parents and family available.
2. Before or after the meeting, drive throughout the immediate neighborhood for a radius of about 1/4 to 1/2 mile noting relevant dimensions.

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**Discovery,  
Step-by-Step**

*The Person's Home:*

3. Meet with the individual and his/her parents or representatives at their home. The meeting should last approximately 1½ hours. Permission should be obtained.
4. Return to the individual's home for additional information, unstructured conversation, observation and interviews.

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**Discovery,  
Step-by-Step**

*Interviews:*

1. Interview selected staff who have provided the person of concern with instruction and support.
2. Contact advocates, neighbors and close friends of the student to gain information concerning the student's social life, skills, preferences and connections.

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**Discovery,  
Step-by-Step**

*Interviews:*

3. Have both structured and informal conversations with the individual, as appropriate, to determine their perspectives.

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**Discovery,  
Step-by-Step**

*Observations and Participation:*

1. Observe the person in a sample of the activities – school, home & community -- that comprise the majority of his/her day.
2. Accompany the person on planned community activities, both familiar and novel.

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**Discovery,  
Step-by-Step**

*Observations and Participation:*

3. Spend time with the individual in a variety of environments and situations.

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**What is a Profile?**

- A Profile is a descriptive picture of a person with a disability developed through the process of discovery.

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## What is a Profile?

➤ A Profile involves the development of:

- a) positive and useful information,
- b) a form that delineates the information and
- c) a relationship with the person which allows access into the personal information of life.

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## What is a Profile?

➤ A Profile is an alternative to the traditional ways of testing and evaluating persons with disabilities that involved comparison and competition.

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## Why do a Profile?

- ❖ To capture all relevant aspects of the applicant's life, including the complexity of their disability.
- ❖ To find the passion that propels job development efforts.
- ❖ To identify potential contributions for employment.

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## Why do a Profile?

- ❖ To determine the applicant's conditions for employment.
- ❖ To capture the applicant's range of preferences and any specific employment outcomes.

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## Why do a Profile?

- ❖ To describe the applicant in a manner which prepares the job developer to effectively negotiate personalized job descriptions with employers.
- ❖ To provide the foundation for employment planning by "putting together the puzzle pieces" in a manner so that the applicant can be understood by all who participate in the planning process.

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## If you do not choose to write a complete profile:

1. Use the profile form as a guide for informal note taking.
2. Take pictures – useful for the portfolio.
3. Develop a narrative vignette that describes the person.

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If you do not choose  
to write a complete profile:

4. Use graphics or mapping strategies to describe the person.
5. Write only the most critically important aspects of the person.

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If you do not choose  
to write a complete profile:

6. Hold a *Discovery Meeting* prior to planning that creates a kind of oral history of the individual.
7. Develop a presentation portfolio for representing the person to employers and community members.

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Discovery can lead to a  
Profile document which is:

- **Narrative:** *It uses complete sentences to describe the person.*
- **Comprehensive:** *It covers all relevant areas of the person's life relating to employment.*
- **Optimistic:** *It focuses on the best of who people are rather than on difficulties or shortcomings.*

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Discovery leads to a  
Profile document which is:

- **Respectful:** *It belongs to the individual and therefore treats carefully the intimate information which is developed.*
- **Non-Competitive:** *It does not require comparison against any arbitrary norm, skill or other person.*
- **Robust:** *It fully develops aspects of the person's life so that contributions and qualities can be translated to employers.*

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Discovery leads to a  
Profile document which is:

- **Descriptive:** *It describes the individual and carefully avoids any evaluative or opinion-based statements.*

*This is perhaps the most important characteristic of the profile in that all persons can be described, regardless of the significance of their disability.*

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