

MIT 530: Needs Assessment Plan

Context

The needs assessment plan for the project “Changing Views on Autism Spectrum Disorder” was developed in the spring of 2006 under the direction of Dr. Sue-Jen Chen as part of the course requirements for MIT 530: Evaluation and Change in Instructional Development.

Conditions

Before beginning this project I had some experience conducting needs assessment at both the micro- and macro- level but had not fully utilized the available techniques and tools for conducting a large scale needs assessment. The school that was involved in the needs assessment was experiencing a growth in their population of students with Autism and needed a way to integrate the students more effectively by training their staff in how to work with these students. This needs assessment later led to the development of a ToolBook course on Autism.

Scope

In planning the needs assessment, considerations about needed information were addressed and it was decided that extant data analysis, needs assessment, and subject matter analysis would need to be conducted using interviews, observations, and surveys. The tools were created and revised for inclusion in the data gathering stages of the project.

Role

For this project, I worked with a team of MIT students including Melissa Ennis, a current MIT student, and Kristen Lee Parks, an alumna of the MIT program. My duties within the team were to identify tools that could be used to gather extant data, needs assessment data, and subject matter analysis data as well as act as the liaison between the group and the school’s administration. We collaborated on the development of the plan and revised the plan as a group.

Reflection

I would like to learn more about the outcomes of needs assessment in business and industry applications for future use in my career. In addition, based on the needs assessment plan I enjoyed collecting the data required and would like more experience working to develop survey instruments using various types of data scales. I was fascinated by the intricacies of survey tool design and feel that what I have learned in that area will benefit me in my future work.