



GRIFFIN-HAMMIS ASSOCIATES, INC.

Discovery/Discovering Personal Genius (DPG)

Fidelity/Information Checklist

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Use this informational checklist for guiding adherence to Best Practice in Discovery & Customized Employment

- Thorough documentation of each stage

Throughout the process of Discovery or Discovering Personal Genius (DPG), documentation of each step or stage is imperative. Documentation occurs in several ways, including short narrative descriptions of home visits, neighborhood mapping, and interviews with the employment seeker, family members and other people as identified/known by the employment seeker. In some cases, employment specialists are required to complete case notes while for others, case notes are an ordinary part of their work requirements.

In addition to written documentation, photographic and video evidence are powerful augmentations. Photos that illustrate observations made during discovery can be undeniable proof of skills, interests, hobbies, living arrangements, etc. Photos can easily be imported into a Discovery Staging Record (and digital resumes) along with the narratives.

Lastly, any completed worksheets and other DPG forms should also be available for review. The DPG De-Briefing Guide, Themes Maps, and Job Analysis Records (JAR) are important foundational documents that tell the story of the Discovery journey. These forms are provided by GHA to training participants.

The more thorough and complete the documentation is, the easier it will be to follow the process and assure continuity for current and future employment development.

- Time/Effort to complete each stage recorded

The process of Discovering Personal Genius can take between 20 and 60 hours depending upon the skill and experience of the employment specialist facilitating DPG.

(Current average for a seasoned facilitator is about 30 hours). However, there are certain stages that must be completed within a tight timeline. The initial home visit, interviewing others, and neighborhood mapping should be completed within the first two weeks of beginning DPG.

The initial visits and interviews provide the direction for learning about skills, interests, preferences, habits and learning styles. The next couple weeks focus on scheduling activities that highlight and verify the above. As more is observed and learned about the job seeker, additional activities are added.

The two deadly sins of Discovery are wasted time and inactivity.

- Time
 - Discovery generally takes 3 - 8 weeks (again, with a seasoned facilitator using a team-based approach). Depending on the employment seeker and the skill of the facilitator, DPG can be completed within 20-60 hours. There will always be exceptions, but the above numbers, based on experience from across the country, are reasonable time frames to complete discovery.
 - Discovery facilitators should develop a weekly plan. Planning ahead and following the plan helps build momentum as well as keeping team members on track with tangible timelines and targeted outcomes.
 - DPG is a team activity. At a minimum, the lead facilitator (typically a transition teacher, parent, an Employment Specialist or Resource Coordinator) and the employment-seeker form the nucleus. Family, friends, stakeholders and others should be enlisted to assist, inform, and contribute. Discovery performed by one person may prove too weak an effort.

- Inactivity
 - Discovery is fast-paced, so there should be a minimum of 3 direct contacts with the employment seeker every week. This demonstrates a commitment to getting things done on the part of both the discovery facilitator and the employment seeker. It also builds momentum and keeps everyone involved.
 - The Discovery facilitator should be doing something related every day, such as: phone calls, documentation, exploring the community and setting up Discovery activities and informational interviews. The DPG facilitator should also schedule periodic reviews with the employment seeker and the Discovery Team to assess progress and determine additional steps.

Discovery proceeds quickly and purposefully when performed with a sense of urgency.

- Home Visit(s) Outcomes & Follow-up Activities

The value of the home visit cannot be overstated. Meeting with someone and his/her family on their own turf – where they are most comfortable – changes the dynamic. It

moves the home visit from an “interrogation “ to a conversation. Learning about a person’s interests, skills, chores, accomplishments, etc. will be enhanced when you visit the home. **Unless the Employment Seeker (or Family) objects, a home visit is not optional.** Home visits are essential to the Discovery/DPG process.

A follow up to the home visit involves touring the neighborhood to learn about resources, available services, social opportunities, and of course, businesses located nearby.

Documentation related to the home visit may include:

- Number of home visits
 - Other people who contributed information and/or assistance
 - Neighborhood mapping summary (as relevant)
- Array of Skills and Tasks observed and described (for each Emerging Vocational Theme)

The home visit also provides information related to the skills a person has and the tasks they regularly perform. Hearing about a skill or task is not enough. Document the skills/tasks, and the employment-seeker’s proficiency, with observational notes, and detail, using pictures or short videos, the person performing the skills or tasks that are identified. Skills and Tasks documentation include:

- Photos
 - Videos
 - Brief Narrative Descriptions
- Vocational Themes

Everything up to this point sets the stage for determining Vocational Themes™. Now explore the community to explore and verify vocational themes. This requires visiting a few places where each of the themes may be present or where people with similar themes work. Schedule and conduct informational interviews with people who share or employ people with similar themes. This is essential to determining if the themes are correct.

Documentation includes:

- Description of the initial Vocational Themes
 - At least 1 informational interview for each emerging Vocational Theme
 - At least 1 Skill/Task Activity conducted related to each of the emerging Vocational Themes
 - Documentation of each interview & activity (dates, photo, video, narrative)
 - 3 Vocational Themes identified
- Discovery Staging Record Complete, including written Vocational Narrative

Once the themes are verified, the Discovery Staging Record is complete and includes a short, descriptive Vocational (personal) Narrative. Essentially, the narrative is the “story” of the employment seeker. This concludes the formal part of discovery and leads to the

next phase in the Customized Employment process: job development. Key to job development planning is creation of “The Lists of Twenty™”.

- Lists of Twenty/Career Development Plan under development

Twenty places accessible to the employment seeker, for each theme where these themes, ideal conditions of employment, and skills identified in Discovery are possibly present.

Informational interviews and/or “Warm” calls are conducted until employment is retained.

Note that that the lists are not static; they evolve throughout DPG. A common strategy for constructing the Lists of Twenty involves requesting a referral from a business owner/manager who was interviewed. Generally this referral comes from the company’s supply chain (or the owner’s personal connections).

“Mining” the supply chains of companies where employees share Vocational Themes is a quick way to complete a List of Twenty.

Lists grow to 20 quickly, even in the most remote communities. Remember that circumventing common competitive hiring processes is best, so identify small artisanal companies as often as possible. There will be less competition from other job seekers, fewer written job descriptions to amend, and fewer layers of bureaucracy to appease. Instead, in a small company, the owner, manager, and decision maker are usually the same person.

Documentation should include:

- A brief synopsis of each informational meeting
 - Revisions to the Lists of 20 based upon referrals from informational interviews
 - Next steps for job development and/or further exploration
- Other points to review:
 - Names of team members involved in the Discovery planning process
 - Notes from Discovery Planning Team meetings
 - Action items
 - Number of direct contacts made with the employment seeker each week.
 - Businesses contacted for informational interviews, etc.

Fidelity to these action steps is essential to a proper Discovery/Discovering Personal Genius approach.