Learning That Goes Places

A learner-chosen goal. A community connection. A useful next step.

An editorial adaptation inspired by Sally Golden and Springfield's Community Transition Program. This is not her verified lesson plan or an endorsed CTP method.

Goal: Practice one personally meaningful community skill and identify useful support.
Suggested setting: Transition learners ages 18-21; adapt with learner input.
Estimate: Three 30-45 minute sessions plus optional supervised community practice.

Prepare with the learner, not just for the learner

Ask what the learner wants to do: reach a familiar destination, shop for a meal, explore work or use a community service. Agree on one achievable step. Invite an appropriate colleague, family member or partner with the learner's consent. Confirm access, supervision, permissions and partner responsibilities before any visit.

Materials and estimated cost: Paper, photos or symbols, a current local route or task guide and a simple observation sheet. Classroom rehearsal can use existing supplies; check actual fares, materials and staffing costs locally. A device is optional.

Try it: plan, practice, use, reflect

1. Choose and define. Record the learner's goal in their preferred communication format. Agree what a useful first success would look like.

2. Rehearse together. Break the task into a few meaningful steps. Use modeling, role-play or photos. Agree how the learner can request help or stop.

3. Practice in context. When approved and accessible, try the task with agreed supervision. A partner supplies authentic context; the educator supports learning. Use a classroom simulation if a visit is not appropriate.

4. Review and revise. Ask the learner what felt useful and what they want next. Record the task completed and support used. Adjust support collaboratively rather than treating doing everything alone as the only success.

Access, evidence and a next possibility

Offer AAC, symbols, translated materials, sensory breaks, extra rehearsal and accessible routes. Do not remove a necessary support to test independence. Record learner choices, completed steps and requested help across attempts; use no public photos or identifying details without permission. Extend the same cycle to a new setting only when the learner is ready and wants to.

Adapt the Idea with Care

Three optional AI prompts. Use placeholders, never identifiable learner data.

1 Plan around a chosen goal

Help me plan a community-skill learning cycle for [age range] around [learner-chosen goal]. Our setting is [context], available support is [staff/time], and access needs are [non-identifying description]. Suggest preparation, rehearsal, optional community practice and reflection. Include learner choice, AAC/visual options, a low-tech alternative, partner roles and supervision checks. Label estimates and verify all local route, cost and access information with an adult.

Teacher check: Check the plan with the learner, team and partner. Confirm permissions and staffing.

2 Create practical materials

Create a short, editable step guide and observation sheet for [task] using [preferred communication format]. Include a way to ask for help, pause or stop, and spaces for learner feedback. Record completed steps and support used without ranking people. Use placeholders for local facts. Do not invent routes, fares, accessibility details or a learner's abilities.

Teacher check: Check every step in the actual setting. Keep text readable and symbols meaningful.

3 Reflect on evidence

Review these de-identified observations: [task attempts, choices, supports, learner feedback]. Separate what was observed from possible explanations. Suggest one change and one question to ask the learner. Do not diagnose, infer motivation or equate reduced help with success. Propose a next attempt that preserves necessary support and the learner's choice.

Teacher check: Compare suggestions with direct evidence. The learner and educator decide next steps.

Sources and limits

Context: Oregon Teacher of the Year announcement (October 3, 2025); Golden's CCSSO biography. Research context: University of Minnesota ICI, Employment Outcomes (2026), a brief on school work experiences and employment supports, not an evaluation of Golden or this activity. AI use here is optional; no claim is made that Golden uses these prompts.