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# Students' Perception of Involvement In Transition

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**Students' Perception of Involvement In Transition**

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*December 6, 1995*

**Running Head: STUDENT INVOLVEMENT**

### Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the exceptional student's perception of his or her involvement in the transition process as well as expectations and desired outcomes for adult life. A sample of twenty-one students classified as learning disabled who were taking a study skills class chose to participate in this study. The results show that over half of this sample were not aware that they were currently in a program designed to assist them with planning their future. Even so, over ninety percent stated that they had a future plan in mind, with over ninety percent planning to continue their education. These findings show that the population surveyed has a positive outlook for the future.

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## Students' Perception of Involvement in Transition

### Introduction

Young adults in special education programs need to have greater participation in decision making and choices in career and transitional planning. The outcomes for special education students have not been remarkable. Dropout rates are alarmingly high, especially for learning disabled students (Wagner, 1987, Edgar 1987). Unemployment, job-hopping, remaining in entry level positions, and low wages are the current trend for most special education students. Since the passage of Public Law 94-142 and 101-476, numerous programs, services, and agencies have become available to assist the special education student in reaching his or her fullest potential. Transition planning from school to life after school is included as part of the Individual Education Plan. Numerous transitional programs and models which result in minimal improvements have been developed, but the question of why students with exceptional needs continue to experience poor outcomes remains.

### Outcomes

Outcomes for special education students remain bleak. The dropout rate for special education students has remained consistently high. In his study conducted in the state of Washington, Edgar (1987) found that 42% of students with learning disabilities or students with behavior disorders dropped out of school. He also found that while the dropout rate for students with learning disabilities was high, the dropout rate for students classified as mildly mentally retarded was considerably lower at 18%. Wagner (1990) found that, of the students classified as learning disabled in

the 1985-1986 or 1986-1987 school year, 32% dropped out. Dropping out of school has an impact on both employability and wages (Wagner, 1990; Edgar 1987).

Employment follow-ups on special education students show that transitioning to employment has been less than successful. Hasazi, Gordon, and Roe (1985) conducted a follow-up study involving 462 students who received special education services in the state of Vermont from 1979 to 1983. Of those students who graduated, 60% were employed. Those who dropped out of school before the age of 18 showed an employment rate of 51%. Those who dropped out of school after the age of 18 had an employment rate of 30%. A surprising finding was that of those students who dropped out of school, only 11% had secured jobs waiting for them (Hasazi, Gordon, & Roe 1985).

Wagner (1990) reported that students with learning disabilities and students with behavior disorders who graduated from secondary schools had an employment rate of 61%. For students with learning disabilities and students with behavior disorders who dropped out of school, the employment rate was 42%. Students with mild mental retardation showed an employment rate of 13%. Although students with mild mental retardation are more likely to stay in school for completion of the program, the employment results do not reflect this achievement.

The majority of work obtained by special education students are part-time jobs that pay minimum wage or slightly above minimum wage with no benefits. Hasazi, Gordon, and Roe (1985) found that the majority of special education students who do find employment earn minimum wage or wages



close to minimum wage. Edgar (1987) found similar results with only 15% of special education students who are employed earning above minimum wage. Roessler, Brolin, and Johnson (1990) found in their follow-up of special education students that the average wage for students with mild mental retardation is \$4.82 per hour while the average for students with learning disabilities is \$5.06 per hour. Part-time minimum wages would hardly allow for economic independence.

Factors influencing employment include the way a student exits school, vocational education, summer jobs, and gender. Hasazi, Gordon, and Roe (1985) found that those students who received vocational education showed an employment rate of 61% as compared to those students with no vocational education who had an employment rate of 45%. Also those students who had outside or unsubsidized part-time jobs during high school showed a 70% employment rate versus 41% for those students who had no outside job experience (Hasazi, Gordon, & Roe, 1985). The majority of jobs obtained were in the service industry such as fast-food restaurants, sales, or clerical jobs. Gender also seems to be a factor in employment status. Males tend to be employed at higher rates and remain in jobs for longer periods of time than do females (Edgar, 1987, Hasazi et al. 1985).

Postsecondary education is at best minimal. Edgar's (1987) findings revealed that only 10% of his sample of students with mild disabilities enrolled in postsecondary education. In their study on transition into the postsecondary setting, Fairweather and Shaver (1991) discovered that youth with disabilities, mostly learning disabilities, participated in postsecondary education substantially less than nondisabled youth. They found that youth

with mental retardation had enrolled in a vocational educational program at a higher rate than those who enrolled in a two year college program. Youth with learning disabilities choose vocational programs over two and four year college programs as well (Fairweather & Shaver 1991). In the sample used, Fairweather and Shaver (1991) discovered that the students who came from families with less education and lower annual incomes were less likely to enroll in a postsecondary program than students whose parents were more educated and had a higher annual income.

Many of the same factors that influence school and employment success for individuals with disabilities influence the participation of individuals with disabilities in postsecondary education. Factors found to be related to the attendance of disabled youth in postsecondary education are student ability/achievement, parental education, family/school, urban/city, parent expectations, enrollment in academic classes, and involvement in high school group activities (Newman & Cameto, 1993).

Because of low income, part-time jobs, and limited involvement in post-secondary education, special education students are often unable to live independently. Follow-up studies of residential status show that most special education students never leave home. Follow-up studies report that 64% to 74% of special education students, who no longer attend school, are residing with parents or guardians (Hasazi, Gordon, & Roe 1985, Roessler et al. 1990). Edgar (1987) reported that 61% of his sample reported no formal activities such as work, continuing education, or involvement with a community organization. In a survey of 85 parents of youth with a disability, well over fifty percent preferred that their child not live at home



once schooling was complete, but over fifty percent expected that their child would (McNair & Rusch, 1990).

### Evolution of Transition

A pathway of legislative efforts exists which led to transition planning becoming mandatory. This pathway began with the Job Training Partnership Act of 1982 which provided funds for job training and placement to youth and unskilled adults considered to be economically disadvantaged or individuals with disabilities. Next came a significant push towards transition with Section 626 of the 1983 Amendments to the Education of the Handicapped Act of 1975. Over 6.5 million dollars was authorized for grants and contracts to be used by the U.S. Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services for the improvement of education and transition into employment for students with disabilities (Brolin & Gysbers, 1989). The Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act of 1984 followed providing funds for career development services for students, including those with disabilities (Brolin & Gysbers, 1989). Beginning no later than the ninth grade, the student's IEP was to include information provided about vocational education opportunities, assessment of vocational abilities, interests, needs, and any vocational services provided. The Amendments of 1984 to the Developmental Disabilities Act delivered supported employment for people with severe disabilities.

With the passage of Public Law 101-476 in 1990, which is the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), transition planning for students with disabilities became mandatory. The Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for each student must include a statement of the needed transition

services and, if appropriate, a statement concerning each servicing agency's responsibility and/or linkages before the students vacate school. The rules and regulations for IDEA were released from the U.S. Department of Education in 1992 defining transition services as follows:

- (a).. a coordinated set of activities for a student, designed within an outcome-oriented process, that promotes movement from school to post-school activities, including postsecondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation.
  - (b) The coordinated set of activities....must--
    - (1) Be based upon the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's preferences and interests; and
    - (2) Include--
      - (i) Instruction;
      - (ii) Community experiences;
      - (iii) The development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives; and
      - (iv) If appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.
- ( *The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*, P.L. 101-476, 34 CFR 300.18)

If the IEP team determines that services are not needed in specified areas stated in 300.18, then justification as to why the services are not needed must be included.

### Transition Planning Process

The previous focus of legislation had been on employment outcomes. Currently, although employment is still a major outcome, a more holistic approach has evolved which included daily living skills, independence, and



community participation. Functioning in the least restrictive environment in all areas of living is still the goal for life after school. The purpose of transition is to assist in developing a smooth passage from school into post-school life. Post-school life may include continuing education, independent living, leisure activities, community involvement, family life, and work. Transition provides for a linkage between school and other agencies and/or services that may be needed by the student in order to reach his or her goals.

Studies and research have been conducted involving the process of transition and successful transitioning programs. Three factors associated with transition are outcomes, assessment, and cooperation. First, outcomes need to be established. Transitional outcomes could be thought of as long-term goals which are not reached upon graduation from high-school, but extend from high-school into post-school life. Employment outcome is one of the main focuses of a successful transition, but all areas of life functioning are included. Halpern (1993) suggests evaluating transitional outcomes by using a model that assesses the quality of life domains. His model includes eight outcomes which are: 1) mobility and community access; 2) vocation, career, and employment; 3) leisure and recreation; 4) personal relationships and social networks; 5) educational attainment; 6) spiritual fulfillment; 7) citizenship; and, 8) social responsibility ( Halpern, 1993, p. 490). These goals would encompass the areas of physical and material well-being, performance of adult roles, and personal fulfillment (Halpern, 1993). Hill and Moon (1990) evaluated a transitional program for students with severe disabilities in Virginia that contains outcomes involving areas such as advocacy /legal services, residential/living arrangements, and

vocational placement/postsecondary education. Once areas of outcomes are identified, a plan for developing goals and objectives can then be established.

Secondly, assessment should be used to collect data for identifying needs, setting goals in relation to achieving the desired outcomes, and monitoring performance of both the students and the transition program being used. Kupper (1993) suggests collection of data from a wide array of tests should be used in identifying a student's needs. Sources of data collection may include achievement tests, psychometric tests, observations, vocational assessment, self-assessment, and ecological assessment. In order for a smooth and positive outcome in employment, planning must be based on significant, clear data collected from assessment in a number of different areas, including vocational assessment (Spruill, 1993). Follow-ups, once the student has vacated school, should be a part of the transition program assessment process. Follow-ups would give accountability to the transition program in place and help in identifying areas that are in need of improvement. Assessment helps establish goals and identify services needed to reach the desired outcomes.

Thirdly, but most importantly, cooperation and coordination among agencies and individuals involved in transition are essential. Transition regulations mandate that when transition is to be discussed as the topic of an IEP meeting, the student and any agency that is likely to be responsible for paying for, or providing services must be invited in addition to the usual IEP participants (e.g., parents, student's teacher, the student, and a school representative). The responsibility for transition planning includes the



educational system, parents, the student, as well as any outside agency needed to aid in the transition process (Brotherson, Berdine, & Sartini 1993). This is not to say that the agencies or students are required to attend, but that their input and interests must be recorded and considered in establishing transitional outcomes and goals. Since there are a number of agencies which may be involved in transition, it is crucial that responsibilities and roles be clearly stated in the transition planning. For example, social services may be involved in the area of finances and living arrangements. The department of rehabilitative services may be responsible for services and/or payment of vocational assessment, career planning, and job placement. One important point to consider is that if an agency fails to provide stated services, the responsibility falls back on the school system involved (Kupper, 1993). A transition meeting may be used to develop alternative ways of reaching the goal, but the goal itself can not be changed for the sake of convenience.

#### Considerations for Developing Outcomes and Essential Skills Needed

Although usually not invited to transition meetings, community businesses should participate in the planning of transition programs. Community and business leaders are valuable resources that could provide transitional activities and work experiences to students with exceptional needs (Schriner & Bellini, 1994). Community businesses should be considered as future employers of students. Potential employers' values concerning important work traits should be considered in developing a transition program. McCrea (1991) investigated the relationship between employers' perceptions and special educators' perceptions in ranking skill

categories and specific skills deemed most necessary for successful employment. The study found that both groups ranked the work-related category highest. Employers ranked individual factors such as following instructions, being able to read and write, and understanding work routine as more important than did the special educators. In contrast, special educators ranked communication of basic needs, responding appropriately to supervisors, and displaying a socially acceptable attitude as more important than employers. Education and training in preparation for employment should incorporate skills that employers view as critical (McCrea, 1991).

Weisenstein and Koshman (1991) investigated the influence of the label "handicapped" on employer's perception of worker traits. This study found that the label "handicapped" had not influenced the ratings of nonspecific worker traits. This finding supports inclusion both in the classroom and in employment because when educating nondisabled students for future employment, the same work traits are valued for students with disabilities as for students without disabilities. Among the top five traits, the two traits that were in agreement as being essential were "good attendance" and "willingness to work". If one looks at school absenteeism, as well as disciplinary problems as being indicators of these desired traits, these results are alarming. As absenteeism and disciplinary problems for students with learning disabilities increase, the probability of receiving a failing grade also increases (Wagner, 1990). As failing grades increase, so does the likelihood of dropping out of school, and with this, the chances of meaningful employment decrease.



Parents, as well as teachers and counselors, have a great influence on career attitudes and options for children and young adults (Brotherson, Berdine, & Sartini, 1993; Wehman, 1990). Strategies that support parents of young adults with disabilities with the transition process include encouraging early expectations for community life, supporting parents in honoring the choices of their son or daughter, and addressing parent concerns regarding future employment (Brotherson, Berdine, & Sartini, 1993). These findings suggest that students and their families should be educated on all the possible community choices and opportunities regarding employment, independent living facilities, continuing education, and other aspects that involve transition needs for the individual student. Data received from assessments should be shared and explained with the student and family as to how this will affect job selection and evaluation as well as community life. This information would help the student in developing career decision making skills, such as self-evaluation, examining occupational expectations and attitudes, and making career or occupational choices. This information may also help the student when considering living arrangements and community life after school. Students, as well as families, need to know what their opportunities are and what their opportunities could be (Wehman, 1990).

McNair and Rusch (1990) investigated the involvement of parents of disabled youth in transition programs. Practically all parents surveyed indicated that they wanted to be involved in the transition process. Two-thirds of the parents surveyed were involved or anticipating involvement in a transitional program. Parents were found to be less involved in the

transition program than they wished. They also wanted an equal part in the decision making process and felt they did not have the opportunities to do so.

Successful transition planning and outcomes also require major input from the students (Wehman, 1990). Focusing on the student's career interests can provide for a smoother more successful employment transition. Halpern (1993) recommended developing ways of enhancing personal choice and self-determination for students involved in the process of transition. According to Wehman (1990), student choice is not reflected as a major component in school curriculum planning, IEP or rehabilitation planning, or in teacher and counselor attitudes. It is important to offer meaningful choices to young adults as the expression of choice leads to independence and self-confidence, as well as increasing the quality of life (Brotherson, Berdine, & Sartini, 1993; Wehman, 1990; Gillespie & Hillman, 1993).

Gillespie and Hillman's (1993) study on self-efficacy expectations on adolescent career choice showed that students who were receiving special education support reported the least self-efficacy. The hypothesis for this finding questioned the confidence of the special education students as compared to general education students in their ability to perform tasks and behaviors required for effective career decision making.

Taylor and Popma (1990) reported that lower self-efficacy expectations for the performance of career decision making tasks were related to career indecision. Perhaps this may be due to a lack of practice of real life choices. Children with disabilities need to be given every



opportunity to exercise choice, which would in turn allow them to feel more in control of their destiny (Brotherson, Berdine, & Sartini, 1993).

Meaningful choices should be made available to the student both in the classroom and in the home environment.

### Transition Programs and Models

The process of transition requires a great deal of planning in many areas of life functioning. Many different individuals and services may be involved in the planning process and delivery of service. A number of programs and models are now in place with most focusing on students with moderate disabilities. One transitional program which was developed for students with moderate to severe disabilities in Chesterfield County, Virginia is called STEP (Student Transitional Educational Program). Major components considered in designing this program are identifying resources available, student assessment, and identifying transition outcomes (Getzel, 1990). One of the main focuses of STEP is that the program planning should involve the transition team collecting and assessing information about what type of post-secondary services and programs are available in the area. Types of information needed about a secondary program may include admissions policies, assistance available in registration, financial assistance, academic support, and availability of other support services. The process of transition allows for the opportunity of sharing information about services and support available. It is important that parents and students know all the choices and opportunities available.

Similarly, another program which serves as a transitional model designed for adults with mental retardation is the Structured Training and

Employment Transitional Services (STETS). STETS is implemented in five sites located in Ohio, California, New York, Minnesota, and Arizona. Job placement with supported employment and follow-up are the key aspects in this program (Kerachsky & Thronton, 1987).

Gaylord-Ross, Robert, Seigel, and Waxman (1992) conducted a four year follow-along study of a school-to-work transitional program for students with milder disabilities called the Career Ladder Program (CLP). CLP is implemented in the San Fransisco public schools for students with learning disabilities, but students with mild mental retardation are also included in this program. The data collected showed that even though employment rates increased above the National Longitudinal Transition Study (Wagner, 1989), the occupations held by most participants stabilized at entry level with low wages. The enrollment in post-secondary education increased as well, but few participants completed even one course.

In a review of transition services and programs for secondary students with disabilities in Virginia, ninety percent of the school divisions participating in the study reported instruction in career awareness and job seeking skills (Anderson & Asselin, 1992). Adequate support services were also provided. Although the support services are for the most part in place, the outcomes for youth with disabilities are still in dire need of improvement.

#### Statement of Purpose

Most studies have focused on the participation and cooperation of school personnel, agencies, support services, and parents in the transition process. However, few studies have been conducted to determine the student's perception of his or her role in the transition process. This study



investigated the exceptional student's perception of his or her involvement in the transition process as well as expectations and desired outcomes for adult life.

The targeted subjects were sixth through twelfth grade students with learning disabilities who were receiving special services in a self-contained study skills class. The students selected were identified and listed according to state and federal definitions of learning disabilities. The sample was based upon the number of available people in each grade and the number of those who chose to participate in the survey.

#### Instrument

The survey consisted of eleven selected questions utilizing the demographic bases from the survey used in McVee and Smith's (1990), Parent Involvement in Transition Program. These questions were selected because of adaptations that could be made to reflect the needs of students. For example, the adaptation which originally asked "how often do you talk to your child's life" is "planning for your life." The word "parent" was also used in the survey to allow for greater participation by students. The word "parent" was replaced with "future" and/or "planning" as the word was more appropriate.

As in the McVee and Smith (1990) study, respondents of students' perceptions of involvement and expected and desired outcomes were made. The subjects in this study were of different age categories according to their grades to question students' expectations of involvement in the transition process. The number of items of items was not the same as in the original study as a program of our school district was not available. The survey was designed to measure the perceptions of students and parents.

## Method

### Subjects

The targeted subjects were ninth through twelfth grade students with learning disabilities who were receiving special education services and taking a study skills class. The students selected were identified and labeled according to state and federal definitions of learning disabilities. The sample was based upon the number of available prospective participants and the number of those who chose to participate in the survey.

### Instrument

The survey consisted of eleven selected questions, excluding the demographic items, from the survey used in McNair and Rusch's (1990) Parent Involvement in Transition Programs. These questions were selected because of adaptations that could be made to profile student involvement. For example, the adaptations include changing the "planning for your son's or daughter's life" to "planning for your life". The word "transition" was not used in the survey to allow for greater readability and comprehension, but was replaced with "future" and/or "planning for future life" as appropriate.

As in the McNair and Rusch (1990) study, comparisons of students' perception of involvement and expected and desired outcomes was made. The subjects in this study were grouped into categories according to their answer to question number eight of the survey related to involvement in a transition program where a choice of three answers was available (a) will be involved in a program, (b) currently involved in a program, (c) there is no program that I know about. In the Parent Survey there is an additional

grouping by an added choice of (d) has completed a program. The choice of (d) has completed a program was omitted because the students, being engaged in school, have not completed a transition program. In addition, the survey included questions that address the students' plans once they leave school. Also, questions relating to expected and desired outcomes were included in the survey. Some of the choices offered in McNair and Rusch's (1991) Parent Survey were not applicable for a students survey, and therefore, were omitted. Other choices such as post secondary education options were added. Only the students' perception of involvement in transition, their future plans, and their expected and desired outcomes provided a basis for analysis.

The survey's content was validated by two college professors in the field of special education, a counselor educator who teaches a course in career counseling, a director of a rehabilitation facility, and a special education high school LD resource teacher. Field testing was conducted for readability and understanding by a sample of high school students of the same grade range who were not labeled with any disabilities and were not participating in this study. The only change made was that the choice of "living in your own apartment" on question five was omitted since "living in the community" was thought to represent the same idea of living outside the home. The choice of "living in your own apartment" was not omitted in question six in error, but responses made to "living in your own apartment" were combined as a total with "living in the community" for data analysis. This combination allowed for "living in the community" and "living in your own apartment" to represent the single idea of living outside the home.



### Procedure

The Director of Special Education, the School Superintendent, and the Principal of a rural high school located in central Virginia were asked permission to conduct the study. One LD resource teacher volunteered to assist with this project. The total number of identified resource students with learning disabilities in grade nine through twelve were requested in order to prepare surveys needed. Thirty-five LD resource students who were taking a study skills class were randomly selected to participate by the LD resource teacher. The students were told that the survey was voluntary and in no way would affect their grade. The survey was to be used as an instrument for collecting data not only for a study but for the teacher to help in planning future lessons and skills. The LD resource teacher gave the survey orally having the students write choices made on a separate piece of paper. The students were told not to write their names on their paper. The LD resource teacher then collected the answers and transferred them to the survey. The survey or the papers could not be linked to a student as there were no identifiable tracers (e.g., name). If a student who chose to participate was not present that day, he/she was not included in the survey. Both the papers and the survey were given to the researcher for verification of answers.

## Results

The data was analyzed using the SPSS/PC+ Program. Because some of the surveys were not fully completed, data was keyed in as yes, no, or missing data for each question. Sixty percent or twenty-one students chose to participate out of a possible thirty-five selected. Of the twenty-one students who participated, six students represented grade nine, nine students represented grade ten, one student represented grade eleven, and five students represented grade twelve. Ages ranged from fifteen to nineteen. Four females were represented in the study. Twenty-five percent or five of the students had answered "no" to being contacted by either a guidance counselor or teacher in planning their future. On the other hand, over ninety percent or nineteen students responded that they did have a plan in mind for their future. About seventy-six percent or sixteen of the respondents felt that they had been an important part in planning their future. This leaves approximately twenty-four percent or five students who felt they had not been an important in planning their future.

### Future Living Arrangements

Out of eighteen students who answered question five, only nine responded to one of three choices dealing with future living arrangements. Fifty percent who answered other parts of question five did not give a response to this section. Two students expect to be living at home after high school, six expect to be living outside the home, and one expects to be living in a group home. Out of nineteen students who answered question six, sixteen students or eighty-four percent responded to choices dealing with

future living arrangements. Nine students expressed a desire to live at home after high school and seven expressed a desire to live outside the home.

#### Expected Earnings and Desired Earnings

All eighteen students who chose to answer question five gave a response as to expected earning. The results show that sixty-one percent or eleven students expect to be earning minimum wage after high school, thirty-nine percent or seven students expect to be making more than minimum wage, and none expect to be earning less than minimum. Out of nineteen students who responded to question six, seventeen responded to desired earnings with results showing that thirty-seven or seven students would like to make more than minimum, fifty-two percent or ten students would like to make minimum, and no one wanted to make less than minimum wage.

#### Future Plans

All eighteen students who chose to answer question five dealing with expected future plans gave at least one or more responses in this section. The only choice that was not chosen by any student was "not working at all". Approximately twenty-eight percent or five students expect to be holding a job in the community. Approximately twenty-eight percent or five students expect to be joining the military. Over ninety-four percent or seventeen students expect to continue their education with seventy-eight percent or fourteen students expecting to attend either a community college and/or four-year college and sixteen percent or three students expecting to attend a training school. All nineteen students who chose to answer question six dealing with desired future plans gave at least one or more responses in this section. Twenty-one percent or four students replied that they would like to



hold a job in the community. Two students did give the response of "not working at all". Sixteen percent representing three students expressed wanting to join the military. Fifty-eight percent or eleven students would like to attend college. The same percentage that expect to attend training school expressed a desire to attend training school.

### Help In Planning Future

Eighteen of the twenty-one students responded to question seven. Well over fifty percent of the students who responded to this question expressed a need for "more information about your skills" (see Figure 1). Also requested was information on adult services, options for work, more information about school, options for independent living, emotional support, a support group, and professional support. Only two students, representing eleven percent, responded "I do not think I need any help".

### Program Involvement

Sixteen students responded to question eight. Of these students, approximately thirteen percent or two students responded that they will be involved in a program in the future (see Figure 2). Thirty-one percent representing five students are currently involved and fifty-six percent or nine students responded that they are not aware of any program.

### Past Program Involvement and Desired Program Involvement

Sixteen students responded to question nine which focused on past program involvement. The greatest past program involvements were in the areas of job placement, living arrangements, and final decision making. No student had responded that they were a member of a planning team. Twenty-five percent responded that they had no past involvement. Sixteen

students responded to question ten which focused on desired involvement. Approximately thirty-eight percent or six students desired involvement as a team member. Other areas of involvement desired included job placement, being an equal partner, and final decisions. One student indicated a request for involvement in seeking possible future living arrangements.

Approximately nineteen percent want no involvement.

Sixteen students answered the question of whether they were currently holding a job. Of these students who answered, seventy-five percent or twelve students responded that they were currently holding a job.



### Discussion

The results of this study show that approximately fifty-six percent of the students surveyed were not aware that they were currently in a transitional program. The students surveyed, however, seemed to have definite plans for the future with well over ninety percent expecting to continue their education. This expectation of continuing education, along with a high number of the students surveyed currently holding a job, is a much more promising outlook than the past statistics reveal. Because of the lack of response to living arrangements after high school as compared to the response in other parts, one could say that this was the least addressed area by the students surveyed. The reasons could possibly be due to the survey structure, or that the students did not consider this area as being essential in planning their future. Further investigations into this area would have to be done to specify whether a need exists for addressing this area. The students surveyed expressed interest in receiving more information that would help them in planning their future. Interest in receiving information is especially displayed with the high percentage of students requesting feedback on their skills.

Since the results of this study were based on a limited and selected group of the learning disabled population, they possibly do not represent generalizable information. Also, the survey was given orally and answers transferred to survey copies, errors in question interpretation and/or in transfer could have possibly occurred. Therefore, it is recommended that future studies in this area compare a broader and larger sample of special education populations to help determine the areas of greatest need. Another

recommendation would be to combine desired and expected outcome to ask just one question relating to different areas of outcome. Dividing the areas such as living arrangements, income, future education, and future job expectancy into separate questions may also make for easier understanding and greater response. A follow-up study of the same population of students surveyed could also be useful in finding out if expected and planned goals are achieved and the reasons why or why not investigated.

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DATE \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

This letter is being written to ask permission to conduct a survey of student involvement in transition. The targeted subjects are students with learning disabilities in grades six through twelve. The survey would be strictly voluntary and no one from the district or school system involved. The survey would take approximately 15 minutes and would take no longer than one class period. The purpose of this study is to investigate the student's perceptions of their involvement at the transition process and their expectations of life after high school.

**APPENDIX A**

**School System Permission Letter**

Please contact me for a copy of my proposal which would include a copy of the survey, permission slips, and submittal procedures. My schedule is listed below. I would be happy to set up an appointment at your convenience to discuss any questions or concerns. This study is being conducted through the supervision of Longwood College, Special Education Department.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



DATE

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Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

This letter is being written to ask permission to conduct a survey of student involvement in transition. The targeted subjects are students with learning disabilities in grades ten through twelve. The survey would be strictly voluntary and in no way would identify the student or school system involved. The survey consists of eleven questions and would take no longer than ten minutes for the student to complete. The purpose of this study is to investigate the student's perception of their involvement in the transition process and their expectations of life after high school.

Please contact me for a copy of my proposal which would include a copy of the survey, permission slips, and anticipated procedures. My number is listed below. I would be happy to set-up an appointment at your convenience to discuss any questions or concerns. This study is being conducted through the supervision of Longwood College, Special Education Department.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Linda D. Sadler  
(804) 561-5631



**APPENDIX B**

**Student Volunteer/Permission Letter**

December , 1994

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Dear Student,

A survey of student involvement in transition will be conducted at your school. The survey is also being used to assess future planning of skills taught in the study skills class you are taking. Your participation in this study is being requested. The survey will take no longer than ten minutes to complete and will in no way be traced back you. No names or identifying codes will be on the survey. The survey has eleven questions dealing with student involvement in planning your future and expectations of life after high school. This survey is strictly voluntary. Your permission is needed in order to participate. Your study skills teacher will explain and give the survey orally to you. You may decline to take the survey with no fear of any penalty.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Longwood College Office of Academic Affairs at (804) 395-2010 or myself. You may also ask your study skills teacher , \_\_\_\_\_, about the survey. My number is listed below.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Linda D. Sadler  
(804) 561-5631

enc.

Student Survey (Please do not give your name)  
Grade \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Sex \_\_\_\_\_

1. Have you been contacted by your teacher or guidance counselor to plan for your future after high school?  
\_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no

2. Do you have a plan in mind for what you will be doing once you have finished high school?  
\_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no

3. Do you know what adult services are available in the community for you once you have finished with high school?  
\_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no

4. Do you feel that you have a plan for your future from high school?  
\_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no

### APPENDIX C

#### Student Survey

5. What do you expect you will be doing once you've finished with high school? (Check all that apply)

- \_\_\_\_\_ Living in the community
- \_\_\_\_\_ Living in a group home
- \_\_\_\_\_ Living at home
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ Earning less than minimum wage
- \_\_\_\_\_ Earning minimum wage
- \_\_\_\_\_ Earning more than minimum wage
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ Holding a job in the community
- \_\_\_\_\_ Not working at all
- \_\_\_\_\_ Joining the military (army, navy, coast guard, marines, national guard)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Attending community college
- \_\_\_\_\_ Attending a four year college
- \_\_\_\_\_ Attending a training school



Survey (Please do not give your name)

Grade \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Sex \_\_\_\_\_

1. Have you been contacted by your teacher or guidance counselor to plan for your future after high school?

\_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no

2. Do you have a plan in mind for what you will be doing once you have finished high school?

\_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no

3. Do you know what adult services are available in the community for you once you have finished with high school?

\_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no

4. Do you feel that you have been an important part in planning for your future from high school to independent living or work?

\_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no

5. What do you expect you will be doing once you are finished with high school? (Check all that apply)

\_\_\_\_\_ Living in the community

\_\_\_\_\_ Living in a group home

\_\_\_\_\_ Living at home

\_\_\_\_\_ Earning less than minimum wage

\_\_\_\_\_ Earning minimum wage

\_\_\_\_\_ Earning more than minimum wage

\_\_\_\_\_ Holding a job in the community

\_\_\_\_\_ Not working at all

\_\_\_\_\_ Joining the military (army, navy, coast guard, marines, national guard)

\_\_\_\_\_ Attending community college

\_\_\_\_\_ Attending a four year college

\_\_\_\_\_ Attending a training school

6. What would you like to see yourself doing once you are finished with high school? (Check all that apply)

- Living in the community
- Living in a group home
- Living in your own apartment
- Living at home
  
- Earning less than minimum wage
- Earning minimum wage
- Earning more than minimum wage
  
- Holding a job in the community
- Not working at all
- Joining the military (army, navy, coast guard, marines, national guard)
- Attending community college
- Attending a four year college
- Attending a training school

7. Please check each of the following that would help you plan for your future once you have finished with high school.

- More information about your school
- More information about your skills
- A better understanding of your options for work in the community
- A better understanding of your options for independent living in the community
- Increased emotional support and encouragement from your family
- Involvement in a student support group
- More information about adult service agencies
- Increased professional support (from teachers, doctors, clergy, etc.)
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- I do not think I need any help

8. Which of the following describes your involvement in a program to help you in planning your future from high school to independent living or work.

- Will be involved in a program
- Currently involved in a program
- There is no program that I know about

9. What kind(s) of involvement have you had in programs assisting you in planning a future from high school to work?

- A member of a planning (transition) team
- An equal partner in decision making
- Involved in finding possible job placements
- Involved in finding possible living arrangements
- The person who makes all the final decisions
- No involvement
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

10. What kind(s) of involvement would you like to have in programs assisting you with planning your future from school to work?

- A member of a planning (transition) team
- An equal partner in decision making
- Involved in finding possible job placements
- Involved in finding possible living arrangements
- The person who makes all the final decisions
- No involvement
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

11. Do you have a job right now?

- yes     no



Figure 1

Information Requested to Help Plan Future After High School

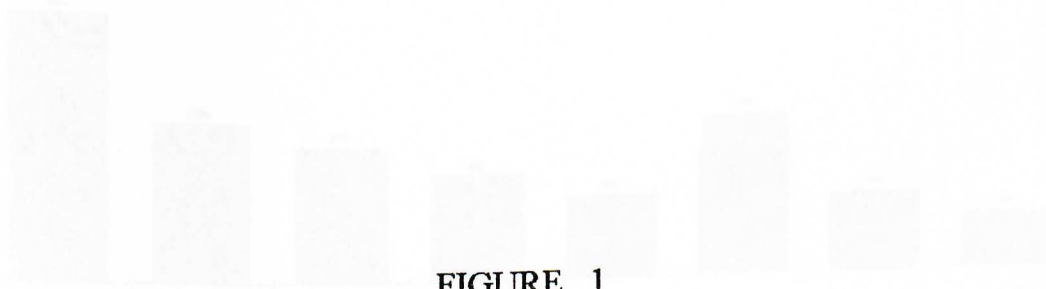
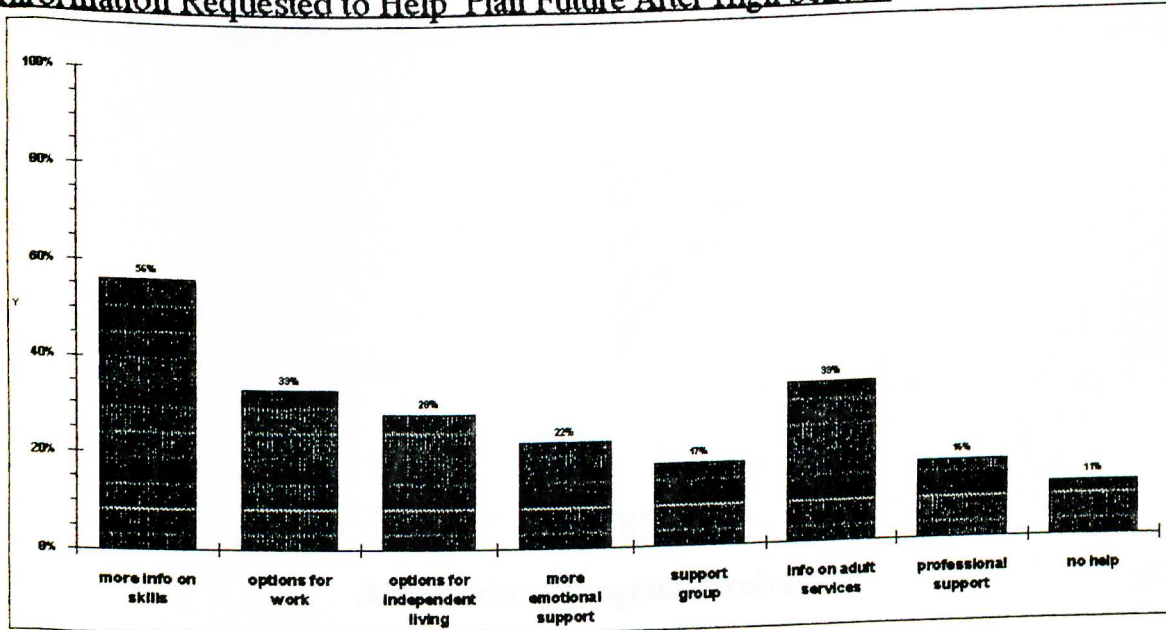


FIGURE 1

Information Requested to Help Plan Future After High School

Figure 1

Information Requested to Help Plan Future After High School.





**FIGURE 2**  
**Awareness of Program Involvement**



Figure 2

Awareness of Program Involvement

