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Transition Practices for Students With High-Incidence Disabilities in a Rural School

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Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

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Dr. Joey Cope, Dean of the
College of Graduate and
Professional Studies

Date 03 / 21 / 2020

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Abilene Christian University

School of Educational Leadership

Transition Practices for Students With High-Incidence Disabilities in a Rural School

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction

of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

by

Kristina M. Martin

April 2020

Dedication

This research is dedicated to my family and friends who supported me during my research. This research is also dedicated to the current and future students and their families that I serve.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my dissertation committee for their dedication and guidance throughout this journey. The suggestions you all provided made my research stronger. A special thank you to Dr. Wade Fish for his advice and guidance as my dissertation chair.

I would like to thank my husband and three boys who supported and encouraged me throughout this process. A special thank you to my husband Vincent Martin for always pushing me and being my rock during the difficult moments. Your love for me never ceases to amaze me and I thank God for you and our life together every day. I would like to thank my family and friends who gave words of advice and encouragement when I needed an extra boost to complete this research.

Also, I would like to thank the school district for allowing me to conduct this research. I would like to thank each individual participant. Without your contribution and willingness to participate, my research would not be complete. My hope is this will bring local change for individuals with disabilities that will expand into surrounding rural communities and have a lasting impact.

Abstract

Individuals with disabilities often have difficulty obtaining and maintaining employment after graduation from high school. Employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities are significantly less than their typical peers. One potential cause of lower employment outcomes for people with disabilities is the result of public schools' failure to implement appropriate individualized transition plans and services. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to investigate the effectiveness of evidence-based transition practices as perceived by school educators, parents of students with high-incidence disabilities who receive special education services, and outside agency providers in a rural school in the North Central Texas area. The data collected targeted 5 evidence-based transition practices: person-centered planning, self-determination skills, interagency collaboration, parental involvement, and community/work-based learning programs. This single-case qualitative study had multiple units of analysis from 2 targeted participant groups: educational staff and parents of students with high-incidence disabilities serviced through special education services in grades 7–12. The researcher interviewed each group of participants face-to-face or by phone conference using a semi-structured responsive interview model. School staff and parent participants identified areas of improvement in relation to the district's evidence-based transition practices and procedures for the 2018-2019 school year. The areas of focus should be the following: parent and outside agency involvement initiatives; training for identified needs for students, staff, and parents; and exploring options to provide opportunities for career exploration.

Keywords: transition services, person-centered planning, self-determination skills, interagency collaboration, parental involvement, school/work-based learning programs

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Chapter 1: Introduction

After graduation from high school, many students leave their parents to attend postsecondary education programs or obtain full-time employment while living on their own. This is not the case for a vast majority of individuals with disabilities. Individuals with disabilities often have difficulty obtaining and maintaining employment after graduation from high school. According to Shandra and Hogan (2008), students with disabilities are less likely to work and less likely to receive employment benefits than those of their peers without disabilities. Furthermore, data collected from the National Center for Education Statistics confirmed individuals with disabilities continue to experience diminished employment rates when compared to their nondisabled peers (Trainor, Morningstar, & Murray, 2016). This population faces many barriers and obstacles that impede their successful transition to adulthood (Oertle & O'Leary, 2017). The U.S. government has acknowledged there is an issue regarding lack of successful employment rates for individuals with disabilities.

The U.S. federal government has outlined legislation for adult service agencies, employers, and public education agencies. The purpose of each piece of legislation is to ensure this population will not be discriminated against based on their disability and to ensure employment skills are developed prior to graduation from high school. The first piece of significant legislation began with the Section 504 Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Lazar & Hoccheiser, 2013). The Section 504 Rehabilitation Act of 1973 was designed to protect individuals with disabilities from discrimination (Lazar & Hoccheiser, 2013). Later, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) established in 1990 addressed employment discrimination directed towards individuals with disabilities (Maroto & Pettinicchio, 2014).

The ADA was developed with hopes to increase the employment rates for this population. Prior to the ADA authorization, employment rates for this population in the United States were reported at only 30% (Maroto & Pettinicchio, 2014). Federal and state mandates were designed for public education agencies through the authorization of the Educational for All Handicapped Children of 1975 and the reauthorization of subsequent amendments: the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) 1990, 1997, and Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004. The main principles of the IDEA and its predecessor statute, The Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, is the guarantee of a free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment necessary to meet the needs of the individual with a disability (Noonan, McCarthy, Shea, Marcus, & Mandell, 2016). The development of transition services was one addition to the IDEA. The 1997 reauthorization designated the transition process to be an "outcome-oriented process" to promote the individual's success from school to post-school goals.

The most current reauthorization of the IDEA was completed in 2004—Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA). This piece of legislation changed the definition of transition services from outcome- to result-oriented (Petcu, Yell, Cholewicki, & Plotner, 2014). The reauthorization brought to light the importance of developing appropriate transition plans that include individualized transition assessment to develop goals and transition activities. The 2004 reauthorization of IDEIA required the individual education plan (IEP) team to generate appropriate postsecondary goals and activities developed from transition assessments in the areas of instruction, related services, community experiences, development of employment, and post-school living objectives, and where appropriate, daily living skills

(Targett, Wehman, West, Dillard, & Cifu, 2013). Also, IDEIA requires public education agencies to invite outside service agencies when appropriate to the individual's IEP meeting.

In addition, with the revision of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014, vocational rehabilitation counselors are charged with collaborating with secondary educators to arrange provision for services for secondary students with disabilities (Oertle & O'Leary, 2017). Honeycutt, Thompkins, Bardos, and Stern (2015) suggested inconsistency between team members can have a negative impact on the transition process for the student. Research supports interagency collaboration as a critical link for postsecondary success for individuals with disabilities (Povenmire-Kirk et al., 2015). Without the input of all stakeholders, the transition plan may not be successful. Etscheidt (2006) stressed the importance of collaboration between all members of the transition team for positive post-school results for the student.

Based on the comparison of information collected from 1995–2005 released by the National Longitudinal Transition Study and the National Longitudinal Transition Study 2, there was no statistically significant difference between year 1995 and year 2005 in postsecondary employment rates (Yamamoto & Olson, 2016). To facilitate progress in this area, it is important to identify gaps that hinder this population's ability to obtain successful transition from high school to postsecondary employment. According to researchers Webb, Repetto, Seabrooks-Blackmore, Patterson, and Alderfer (2014), gaps within the transition process are found in the lack of application of evidence-based transition practices. Evidence-based transition practices include but are not limited to a) person-centered planning, b) self-determination skills, c) interagency collaboration, d) parental involvement, and e) community/work-based learning programs. More research and data are needed to determine the impact of evidenced-based transition practices on successful transition to employment for this population.

Statement of the Problem

Employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities are significantly less than their typical peers. Employment rates for those with disabilities differ by 20% to 30 % compared to individuals without disabilities (Honeycutt et al., 2015). After graduation from high school, many individuals with high-incidence disabilities who receive special education services are unsuccessful in finding and maintaining employment. Approximately 21% of people in the United States with disabilities live below the poverty line (Arrango-Lasprilla, Ketchum, Hurley, Getachew, & Gary, 2014).

One potential cause of lower employment outcomes for people with disabilities is the result of public schools' failure to implement appropriate individualized transition plans and services. OKeefe and Behan (2010) highlighted a lack of success in postsecondary settings for individuals with disabilities due to the lack of transition programming services. Data collected from 2011 graduated high school students with disabilities did not meet the criteria for adequate secondary transition plans (Miller-Warren, 2015). Chiang, Cheung, Li, and Tsai (2013) reported only 56% of the disabled population participated in employment since leaving their high school program. Honeycutt et al. (2015) claimed there are many inconsistencies from vocational rehabilitation agencies and the services provided. People with disabilities may need additional accommodations, supports, and services to maintain their employment (Sundar, 2017).

Employers are less confident about people with disabilities and their work skills (Russinova, Griffin, Bloch, Wewiorski, & Rosoklija, 2011). Employers have expressed concerns regarding hiring employees with disabilities and providing accommodations (Hartnett, Stuart, Thurman, Loy, & Batiste, 2011). Also, research found employers have concerns about the productivity, safety, social skills, and appearance of disabled people when compared to their

nondisabled peers (Bachrach, 2015). Persons' with disabilities have been prevented from demonstrating their full potential and abilities within the workforce due to employer ignorance and misunderstanding (Charles, 2004). Furthermore, employers are key stakeholders in the workforce, and their attitudes towards employees is an important factor that influences employment rates for individuals with disabilities (Ju, Roberts, & Zhang, 2013). Employers benefit from employing individuals with disabilities when provided with appropriate accommodations (Sundar, 2017).

Jackson (2018) emphasized the importance of further research in the area of the design of school transition programs, supported employment opportunities, and evidence-based practices (EBPs). Communities are struggling to make improvements for successful employment opportunities for this population (Bumble, Carter, McMillan, & Manikas, 2017).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to investigate the effectiveness of evidence-based transition practices as perceived by school educators, parents of students with high-incidence disabilities who receive special education services, and outside agency providers in a rural school in the North Central Texas area. This study targeted a rural population. People with disabilities living in rural communities have less advantages to access needed services than in metropolitan areas (Wark, Hussain, & Edwards, 2013). The data collected targeted five evidence-based transition practices: a) person-centered planning, b) self-determination skills, c) interagency collaboration, d) parental involvement, and e) community/work-based learning programs.

According to Pallisera, Vilà, and Fullana (2014), transition partnerships are considered key factors in fostering successful transition outcomes. Individuals with disabilities can be

productive members of society with the right supports and applied evidence-based transition practices. This research will analyze the effective application of EBPs in the transition process within a population of a rural district located in North Central Texas from data gathered from semi-structured interviews of educational staff, outside agency representatives, and parent participants of students with high-incidence disabilities who receive special education services. Also, the findings will be used to bring awareness to other rural school districts to help facilitate better outcomes and successful transition into employment for individuals with high- incidence disabilities who received special education services within their communities.

Research Questions

RQ 1. How do educational staff perceive the effectiveness of transition practices for students with high-incidence disabilities who receive special education services through person-centered planning, self-determination skills, interagency collaboration, parental involvement, and school/work-based programs?

RQ 2. How do parental stakeholders perceive the effectiveness of transition practices for students with high-incidence disabilities who receive special education services through person-centered planning, self-determination skills, interagency collaboration, parental involvement, and school/work-based programs?

RQ 3. How do the self-determination theory (SDT) concepts of autonomy, competence, and relatedness influence the perceptions of educational staff, outside agencies, and parental stakeholders?

Definition of Key Terms

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The ADA was established to protect individuals with disabilities in the area of employment, state and local government services, and accessibility of public accommodations (Lazar & Hochheiser, 2013).

Annual, review, and dismissal (ARD). An ARD committee determines the services developed and provided through an annual review of the student's individual education plans (IEPs) developed to target the student's areas of deficits ("The Legal Framework," 2018). The ARD team includes the following persons: the student's parents, a special education teacher, a general education teacher, a representative of an educational agency, and a person who can interpret the evaluations of the results (Petcu et al., 2014).

Community/Work-Based learning experience. Community/Work-based learning is an evidence-based transition strategy that exposes students with disabilities to social situations in natural work environments (Flexer, Baer, Luft, & Simmons, 2008).

Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975. The Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 was passed and became P.L. 94-142. This guaranteed a free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment necessary to meet the needs of the child for students with disabilities (Noonan et al., 2016).

Employability skills. Employability skills are identified based on the student's individual performance in this area. The Legal Framework (2018) defines employability skills as the skills directly related to the preparation of students for employment including general skills necessary to obtain or retain employment.

High-incidence disabilities. High-incidence Disabilities refers to disabilities of high-prevalence that include emotional disturbance, specific learning disability, other health

impairment, and mild to moderate intellectual disability (Bryant, Bryant, & Smith, 2017). For the purpose of this study, mild to moderate intellectual disability will be defined by a student with a full-scale IQ standard score of 55 or more.

Individual Education Plan (IEP). An IEP is a legally binding written statement for each child with a disability that is developed, reviewed, and revised by the ARD committee, which includes the student's present levels of academic achievement, functional performance, and access to services (The Legal Framework, 2018). Petcu et al. (2014) suggested it is important to develop legally correct and educationally appropriate IEPs that satisfy the transition services requirements of IDEA.

Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). IDEA was a subsequent amendment to P.L. 94-142 Education for Handicapped Children Act of 1975, which focused on the appropriate education for children with disabling conditions (Morse, 1990). IDEA was first established in 1990 then reauthorized in 1997 and again in 2004 to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) targeted to improve transition services (Petcu et al., 2014). The change of IDEA of 1990, to 1997 IDEA, to IDEIA of 2004 changed how transition services are defined (Luft, 2015).

Interagency collaboration. Interagency collaboration is the involvement of government agencies and not-for-profit agencies who provide support to student with disabilities outside of the school setting (Flexer et al., 2008).

Parental involvement. Parental involvement is the active involvement of parents in the student's transition planning and providing information regarding the student's strengths, weaknesses, needs, and preferences (Terrell, 2017).

Person-centered planning. Person-centered planning focuses on the student's history, dreams, relationships, abilities, and plan of action for the future (Flexer et al., 2008).

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Section 504 requires that recipients of federal funding, such as universities, public schools, health care facilities, and federal contractors, not discriminate against individuals with disabilities in programs, benefits, opportunities, or services (Lazar & Hochheiser, 2013).

Self-determination skills. Self-determination skills are characterized by one's ability to be: self-aware, make informed decisions, self-advocate, and set appropriate life goals (Webb et al., 2014). People who exhibit self-determination skills are able to act autonomously, self-regulate their behaviors, and are psychologically self-empowered (Wehmeyer, 1999). Self-determination skills are developed through autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2017)

Texas transition plans/regulations. According to 19 Texas Administrative Code §89.1055, the ARD committee must consider the following issues in the IEP: (a) appropriate student involvement in the student's transition to life outside the public school system; (b) appropriate involvement in the student's transition by the student's parents and other persons invited to participate; (c) appropriate postsecondary education and/or employment options; (d) an appropriate functional vocational evaluation; (e) appropriate employment goals and objectives; (f) the use and availability of appropriate supplementary aids, services, curricula, and other opportunities to assist the student in developing decision-making skills; and (g) supports and services to foster the student's independence and self-determination, including a supported decision-making agreement under the Texas Estates Code, Chapter 1357 (The Legal Framework, 2018).

Transition services. Transition services must address the following areas: "(a) appropriate, measurable postsecondary goals based on age-appropriate transition assessments; (b) a description of the transition services to meet those goals; and (c) a statement the student has been informed of his or her rights the year prior to reaching the age of majority" (Stevenson, Flynn, & Test, 2016).

Summary

In summary, individuals with disabilities are underrepresented in the workforce. It is important to identify areas of improvement to help increase this population's ability to be equally employed as their peers. Stakeholders should consider whether the services that individuals with disabilities can access during the transition process from high school to post-school are adequate in meeting their individual needs (Pallisera et al., 2014). The purpose of this study is to determine the effectiveness of evidence-based transition practices in a rural school district as perceived by educational staff, outside agencies, and parents of students with high-incidence disabilities who receive special education services. The information collected will be used to develop and improve transition programming in a rural North Texas school district. This research is important to bridge the gap for individuals with disabilities leaving high school and facilitate a safe passage into the workforce.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Evidence-based practices (EBPs) have been proven beneficial to develop growth. Evidence-based transition practices (EBTPs) span across a variety of categories: a) career awareness, b) interagency collaboration, paid employment/work experience, c) parental involvement, d) self-determination/self-advocacy skills, and e) vocational rehabilitation supports (Southward & Kyzar, 2017). Evidence-based research practices can contribute to positive transitional outcomes (Burke et al., 2019). While EBTPs are well identified within the literature, what remains in dispute is the effectiveness of these practices in rural school districts and their impact on employment outcomes for individuals with cognitive disabilities within their community. Therefore, in order to understand why there is a significant variance in successful employment outcomes for individuals with cognitive disabilities in relation to their nondisabled peers, stakeholders of this population must draw from the current research in this field.

Most individuals with disabilities have difficulty obtaining and maintaining successful employment after high school. There are many areas to consider when trying to determine the leading cause of poor employment outcomes for this population (Honeycutt et al., 2015; OKeefe & Behan, 2010; Russinova et al., 2011). It is vital to understand the role of these areas prior to investigating this issue further. These include employment rates and discrimination for individuals with disabilities, federal and state mandates for public education agencies and adult service agencies, and evolution of transition services and programs. Mazzotti and Rowe (2015) emphasized the importance of improving the quality of instruction in secondary transition programs. Schools are faced with the challenge of meeting the transitional needs of persons with disabilities as well as following legislative policies focused on the development of academic skills. Over time, policies have shifted their focus to more rigorous college and career readiness

standards. The push for more academically driven curriculum has had an impact on the time available to ensure that students with disabilities acquire both academic and functional skills. This continues to be an obstacle that special educators need to balance to meet the established standards without forsaking their students' functional skills. In order to implement effective transition services and programming, special educators must be aware of which EBTPs they can implement and how they benefit their students. It is crucial for youth with disabilities to have opportunities to participate in the most effective secondary transition programs to prepare them for post-school life (Mazzotti & Rowe, 2015).

The challenge for special educators, families, and adult services providers is to prepare youth with disabilities for the obstacles of adulthood. Secondary transition services and planning is essential. Furthermore, clearly defining transition services can assist schools in better preparing students with disabilities for employment (Collins & Wolter, 2018). Shogren and Ward (2018) identified the need to develop interventions and supports to improve transition outcomes for this population. Consistent implemention of EBTP can improve post-school outcomes. According to Russo-Campisi (2017), EBPs must be implemented with fidelity in order to be effective. This can pose as a challenge for all stakeholders. EBPs often take time, training, and understanding in order to ensure staff can implement each strategy appropriately. EBTPs have been identified to improve postschool outcomes for individuals with disabilities. This research seeks to identify the effectiveness of EBTPs as perceived by educators, adult service providers, and parents in rural communities. This research is needed to generate knowledge, understanding, and explore possible contributing factors within the presented areas and the impact on people with disabilities. Specifically, this research is needed to explore these areas and their impact on people with disabilities in rural communities.

I conducted the review of literature by using a variety of resources, including the ACU Online Library and search engine, Google Scholarl, Google books, transition books from my personal professional library, and the Legal Framework website. When first searching for materials to review, the keywords I used were *transition programs and services*. This search provided information regarding transition legislation and the transition process in public schools. My second search keywords were *evidenced-based transition practices*. From this information, I was able to identify the most commonly used transition practices of *person-centered planning*, *self-determination skills*, *interagency collaboration*, *parental involvement*, *and community/work-based learning*. I searched each EBP individually to gather information on each practice and how to implement each practice within the school setting. I conducted searches in reference to legislative policies for public schools and adult services agencies of the past and present. Further, I supported the findings from my search with my personal professional library. I utilized the Legal Framework (2018) resource to define *IEP*, *Texas transition regulations*, and *employability skills*. Through the process of exploring the research, I was able to acquire more knowledge regarding transition practices and strategies to use to build appropriate transition service plans.

The following review of literature highlights identified areas of concern restricting positive employment outcomes for individuals with cognitive disabilities and reviews research based best practices for transition services and/or programs. The review of literature identified critical components for this population, such as employment rates and discrimination, federal and state mandates for adult service and public education agencies, and the evolution of transition services and programs. In addition, this section defines and describes the following commonly used EBTPs: person-centered planning, self-determination skills, community-based instruction,

interagency collaboration, and parental involvement. Each section will highlight the benefits and implementation of each EBP and how each practice is implemented.

Framework

For this research, I used the self-determination theory (SDT) as the theoretical framework. The framework is the anchor for the literature review, research design, and questions (Grant & Oslanoo, 2014). SDT is an evidence-based theory where an individual's motivation is developed through three basic needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness (O'Brien, 2018). Transition services and goals are developed with the goal of building an individual's autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Furthermore, SDT highlights the importance that self-determination skills are a product of both the individual and the environment of the person using the skills, knowledge, and beliefs at their disposal to act on the environment with the goal of obtaining valued and desired outcomes (Wehmeyer, 2003). The person acquires transition skills both from their learning environment and the their individual motivation to learn. EBTPs allow special educators, caregivers, and adult services providers the opportunity to review the student's job skills, design a plan of intervention, monitor progress, and prepare for employment placement. The remainder of this chapter highlights employment rates for this population, mandates, and evidence-based transition programs and strategies.

Employment Rates and Discrimination

In 2014, the employment rates for individuals with disabilities was 34%, less than half the employment rate of their nondisabled peers (Eckstein, Sevak, & Wright, 2017). Hoover (2016) reported there is a discrepancy between the employment rates of youth with disabilities after high school compared to their nondisabled peers. Estrada-Hernandez, Wadsworth, Nietupski, Warth, and Winslow (2008) reported that unemployment rates for individuals without

disabilities were 4% while those with disabilities were 77%. In a more recent study, Poppen, Lindstrom, Unruh, Khurana, and Bullis (2017) reported the unemployment rate for youth with disabilities ages 16 to 19 was 42%. The rate for their same-age nondisabled peers was 26%. Competitive employment for minimum wage or more is the primary goal for individuals with disabilities as they leave high school (Francis, Gross, Lavin, Velazquez, & Sheets, 2018).

In a more recent study conducted by Shogren and Ward (2018), employment rates of working-age people with disabilities in 2015 was 35.2% while the employment rate of people without disabilities was 78.3%. The data indicate a significant obstacle for the disabled community. Further, evidence suggests employment rates for people with disabilities in the U.S. workforce is less than one-half the rate of those without disabilities (Hogan, Kyaw-Myint, Harris, & Denronden, 2012). Based on findings reported from the National Survey in 2010, 85% of individuals with an intellectual disability were unemployed (Southward & Kyzar, 2017). More recently, the National Council of Disability of 2012 reported that young persons with disabilities are less likely to engage in their community unlike their nondisabled peers (Mazzotti & Rowe, 2015). This leaves many to question why employment rates for the disabled population are far less than their peers without disabilities. Are the findings related to employer discrimination, lack of jobs skills, or lack of implementation of secondary transition plans and services?

Employer discrimination may contribute to poor employment rates for individuals with disabilities. Employment discrimination continues to be on the rise. Bruyere, Schrader, Conduti, and Bjelland (2010) reported that in the United States in the years 1993 to 2007, the total number of cases filed due to discrimination under the ADA and Age Discrimination of Employment Act was 462,956 or roughly 30,800 per year. When viewing the timeline data, Bruyere et al. (2010) discovered an increase in discrimination cases as the years increased from 1993 to 2007. Further,

Bruyere et al. (2010) determined individuals with disabilities reported more cases than any other subgroup, which raises the curiosity as to what employers are finding difficult to accommodate and if a more effective intervention is needed to better assist employers or the employee. This also raises the question if the persons with disabilities asked to receive job accommodations. Advocacy is a skill that must be developed. Many individuals with disabilities lack the knowledge of how to advocate for themselves and request accommodations to ensure their needs are met on the job.

Overall, the data indicated areas for concern in relation to employment rates for persons with disabilities. People with disabilities should have equal access to employment and be able to provide for themselves. In order to make improvements in this area, stakeholders should evaluate the discrepancies and determine how job skills can be improved to enhance successful employment outcomes. Furthermore, secondary schools, caregivers, and adult services providers should better focus their transitional planning for each individual with disabilities and collaborate to improve current employment outcomes for this population.

Mandates

In the last 20 years, legislation has cited transition mandates for public education and adult services providers (Rumrill et al., 2017). In efforts to improve outcomes related to employment, federal mandates have been established that require public schools to provide transition services to students with disabilities (Collier, Griffin, & Wei, 2017). Educational government mandates at the federal and state level have been enacted to ensure public school agencies address transition services in the IEP annual meeting for persons with disabilities. Educational federal legislation has evolved from the first mandate of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975. The Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975

was paramount in society's acknowledgment that students with disabilities have the right to receive an education. It was reauthorized as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1990. This reauthorization mandated the focus of transition services for students with disabilities under the special education program (Petcu et al., 2014). It established the importance of focusing on the future outcomes for individuals with disabilities rather than only their access to education. IDEA was reauthorized in 1997 and 2004 to Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA). The reauthorizations focused on the need for transition planning emphasizing the student's preferences, interests, and strengths.

The defnitions of transition services changed with the evolution of the IDEA of 1990, to 1997 IDEA, to the IDEIA of 2004 (Luft, 2015). With this change, public schools had to make the shift from containing statements regarding the child's postsecondary goals to establishing appropriate measurable postsecondary goals driven by transition assessments. The 2004 amendment highlighted several changes and added more specific guidelines for providing services (Luft, 2015). The 2004 amendment made the following changes: change the age from beginning discussion of transition services at 14 years of age to beginning no later than 16 years of age and updated yearly, appropriate measurable postsecondary goals based on transition assessment, independent living skills where appropriate, and notification of age majority under State law (Sec. 614(d)(2)(D)(5)).

In the state of Texas, transition services must be addressed prior to age 14. The Texas administrative Code 89.1055(j) states that no later than when a student reaches 14 years of age, the IEP team must consider the appropriateness of the following: student involvement, involvement by the parents and other persons invited to participate, postsecondary options, functional vocational evaluation, instructional environments (community settings or

environments) if the person in 18 years old, employment goals, independent living goals, and referral to governmental agency (The Legal Framework, 2018). However, Texas schools can decide to address transition services and needs prior to age 14 if the IEP team determines the student would benefit from earlier interventions targeting transition skills. Further, IDEIA requires the IEP have one or more transition goals to facilitate movement toward the student's postsecondary goal prior to age 16 (Kellems, Springer, Wilkins, & Anderson, 2016). Targeted transition goals allow the IEP team to monitor the student's progress and develop additional plans and services based on the skills mastered. The emphasis of IDEIA is to ensure students have a successful transition into adulthood.

In addition to IDEIA regulations, public schools must adhere to the guidelines set forth for standards-based school reform. In 2001, the No Child Left Behind Act was established. Its primary focus was to ensure every child had the opportunity to learn and progress. The act was recently reauthorized and renamed to the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015. It emphasizes the importance of preparing students to succeed in postsecondary education and the workforce (Bartholomew, Papay, McConnell, & Cease-Cook, 2015). ESSA standards-based school reform efforts places major emphasis on raising academic standards for all students. ESSA standards raise the bar in academic areas of math and English language arts, implement better assessments aligned with college and career-ready standards, and implement instructional models based on evidence-based supports (Bartholomew et al., 2015). As the academic standards continue to rise, so do the concerns of special educators. Bartholomew et al. (2015) highlighted that the raising standards could be eliminating transition skills from students' transition services and program due to lack of time to teach both academic skills and transition skills. This is a critical concern

educators and policy makers should reevaluate in order to ensure students with disabilities are benefitting from all programs individually designed to meet their needs.

In addition to public school mandates, it is important to understand how adult service agency regulations impact the public-school setting. The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 was the first act to establish persons with disabilities right to access federally funded programs (Chamusco, 2017). The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 was a monumental step in civil rights for individuals with disabilities. The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 required vocational agencies to coordinate with educational agencies to facilitate positive transition outcomes for individuals eligible for services (Poppen et al., 2017). Later, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 was created from support of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. ADA provides civil rights protections to individuals with disabilities and equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities in public accommodations, employment, transportation, state and local government services are guaranteed (Americans with Disabilities Act Questions and Answers, 2013). ADA is composed of five sections, two of which address the areas of employer discrimination against individuals with disabilities and access to government funded services and beyond (Chamusco, 2017). Policies have been in place for over 40 years, yet the employment outcomes for this population remain well below their peers.

Recently, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) was established to improve services for transition-age youth. WIOA requires vocational rehabilitation agencies to focus efforts in providing pre-employment services for high school students still enrolled in school (Honeycutt, Martin, & Wittenburg, 2017). The goal of WIOA is to establish relationships between secondary schools, caregivers, and adult services agencies sooner rather than after graduation. Furthermore, WIOA emphasizes the importance of pre-employment transition

services such as: a) job exploration, b) work-based learning experiences, c) social skills related to workplace readiness, and d) self-advocacy instruction (Oertle, Chelsey, & Sax, 2017). Also, WIOA requires 50% of each state's supported employment grants be allocated for services for youth with disabilities which requires a positive shift in resources for youth with disabilities ages 14-24 years of age (Honeycutt et al., 2017). This act requires the collaboration of vocational agencies and public-school personnel who work directly with students with disabilities. Honeycutt et al. highlighted a potential barrier to WIOA in that vocational rehabilitation agencies may not have the funds to support all youth applications in which the agency is only required to serve those with the most significant disabilities. This can lead to obstacles for this population, service agencies, and public education personnel.

According to Henninger and Lounds Taylor (2014), many people have stressed the importance of redefining what it means to successfully transition to adulthood. Federal and state mandates push to prepare individuals with disabilities for life after high school. One requirement of IDEIA is the collaboration of outside service agencies in the transition process. However, the research indicates there is poor communication between the school agency and outside service agencies. Petcu et al. (2014) reported the most prevalent issues regarding current court cases for transition services is the lack of agency contact and appropriateness of the transition plan. The lack of agency collaboration is a considerable concern. As indicated within the literature, educators and adult service agency representatives should understand how to establish relationships between their organizations and established coordination between their services.

Transition Programs

Public school transition programs and outside agencies are the primary resources to support employment efforts for individuals with disabilities. In the United States, over a half-

million students ages 14 to 21 receive transition services and exit special education instruction each year (Oertle et al., 2017). The evolution of transition programs and services in public education has made great improvements since the first legislative address of transition skills. Transition is the period when adolescents move into adulthood and assume new responsibilities and roles expected of them within society (Luft, 2015). Youth with disabilities need repeated direct instruction and services in order to make progress towards independent adult skills. Transition services are an important part of educational programming for youth with disabilities and entitlement to a free and appropriate education (Poppen, Sinclair, Hirano, Lindstorm, & Unruh, 2016). Gragoudas (2014) defined transition as changes that occur in the lives of adults as they move from high school to the workforce. According to Martin, Morehart, Lauzon, and Daviso (2013), transition planning seeks to help students make the shift from school life to adult life in a smooth manner. Transition planning is a valuable piece of the student's IEP because this step helps the student to find meaning in their educational activities (Flexer et al., 2008). Transition services should include a set of coordinated activities driven by the student's interests, preferences, and the development of employment and postsecondary living skills (Poppen et al., 2017). Transition services can be implemented in a variety of settings throughout the student's school day.

Transition planning occurs when students are developing their academic, emotional, moral-reasoning, and employment skills that will transform them into adults (Luft, 2015). Transition planning is a key component of IDEIA 2004 (Achola & Greene, 2016). Furthermore, transition planning is a partnership between educators, parents, students with disabilities, and the community to discuss and plan postschool goals and develop appropriate services to best prepare the student for life after high school (Fullarton & Duquett, 2015). The collaboration between all

stakeholders is a necessity. Without appropriate collaboration and coordination between all parties, the student with disabilities is less likely to have a successful transition into adulthood. Transition services are designed to facilitate movement towards individual goals and services created based on individual needs, preferences, and interests (Rumrill et al., 2017). Transition planning does not occur only one time a year but is instead an ongoing relationship between all parties. The primary goal for students with disabilities after leaving high school is to find employment, and/or have adaptive skills necessary to be independent (Hoover, 2016). Transition services and planning are the building blocks to achieve successful employment.

Through transition services, public schools have an opportunity to address employment issues for people with cognitive disabilities while they are still in school (Rumrill et al., 2017). Transition services are intended to help youth with disabilities make a positive transition from the school world to the adult world (Achola & Greene, 2016). According to Collier et al. (2017), the primary function of secondary education is to facilitate successful transition into the adulthood by focusing on areas of postsecondary education, employment, and independent living. Special education teachers and transition coordinators support students and families in transition planning to develop positive future-focused realistic goals and build appropriate transition service plans (Flexer et al., 2008). It is crucial for transition professionals to gather information from a variety of sources: a) parents, b) the student, c) other family members, d) members of the community, e) and school personnel (Achola & Greene, 2016). The more resources and input received from a variety of sources regarding the individual's performance and needs, the more likely a transition plan will be appropriately developed to enable progress in the individual's skills. It is important for stakeholders to be aware, when collaborating, the individual's desires and interests at the center of the planning.

Although legislation has mandated that all students learn academic skills, students with disabilities continue to need explicit instruction in transition skills (Bartholomew et al., 2015). The emphasis has moved from studying basic academic skills to creating goals based on the individual student's need in the area of education, employment, and living skills. Bartholomew et al. (2015) indicated teachers tailor the academic curriculum and use instructional strategies to meet individual learning needs. However, studies have indicated a need for further training and quality implementation of transition plans and transition service instruction. Transition planning and skills go beyond short-term goals and should focus on lasting long-term outcomes (Achola & Greene, 2016). Russo-Campisi (2017) conveyed there is a gap between research and practices. Harrison, State, Wills, Custer, and Miller (2017) emphasized the need for further study in the quality of transition goals and practices. Evidence suggests practitioners need to be well aware of how to implement EBPs in order to benefit the students they serve (Russo-Campisi, 2017).

A host of transition models have been circulated within the literature since the 1980s (Evert Cimera, Gonda, & Vaschak, 2015). The utilization of EBPs is a contributing factor to positive student outcomes (Burke et al., 2019). EBPTs are necessary and correlate with post-school employment success (Nochajski & Schweitzer, 2014). Evidenced based transition services and programs include person-centered planning, self-determination skills, school/community/work-based learning opportunities, interagency collaboration, and parental involvement (Thoma, Agran, & Scott, 2016). I present the research and literature on EBTPs in the following sections.

Person-Centered Planning

Certo and Luecking (2011) presented one strategy that changed the implementation of the transition process: person-centered planning(PCP). Developed from the student's strengths,

weaknesses, and preferences, PCP helps students to visualize their future and provides

opportunities for open communication (Flexer et al., 2008). Furthermore, PCP focuses on the

individual and their needs while allowing the individual to direct their lives (Diliberto & Brewer,

2014). PCP is an approach developed with all stakeholders who support the individual student:

health care, social care, family, and educational parties (White & Rae, 2016). It takes time and

resources often not available; however, the benefits have proven to provide more opportunities

for the individual. According to Kaehne and Beyer (2014), PCP has improved opportunities and

increased individual participation in their future planning process. Achola and Greene (2016)

identified two important components of PCP: The transition team must consider the individual's

personal preferences and the importance of the relationships the individual has within their

family and community. Also, Hagner, May, Kurtz, and Cloutier (2014) found PCP to be

effective in increasing community participation and social supports for this population.

Furthermore, PCP is a multicomplex intervention that has the potential to affect the individual's

quality of life (Ratti, Hassiotis, Crabttree, Deb, Gallageher, & Unwin, 2016).

PCP occurs when all stakeholders collaborate to develop a plan of action centered on the

person with a disability and the person's desires and opinions for the future. It is vital for the

committee to listen and build a plan geared to the person's interests and not those of the

committee members. Flexer et al. (2008) emphasized the importance of beginning with the end

goal in mind and working backwards addressing the supports needed in the areas of abilities,

relationships, and dreams. Furthermore, PCP can develop a variety of self-determination skills

and provide opportunities for the individual to actively participate in life (Collier et al., 2017).

Schools can implement a variety of activities to obtain the student's desires and future

personal goals for employment and living. Informal or formal measures can help collect all

necessary information. In order to collect the information needed from the individual student, school staff can implement a series of informal assessments (Hagner et al., 2014). The informal assessments collect information regarding the student's strengths, preferences, and desires for their life. The assessment can be administered in a variety of ways: verbally communicate the questions and discuss each area while the examiner takes notes, visually through a series of pictorial tests, and/or online career inventories. It is best to collect the information in the student's natural environment and by individuals the student is familiar with. Also, it is vital to collect information from the student's support system, including parents, caseworkers, and siblings and other family members. Information regarding supports can be collected in a variety of ways from personal interviews to surveys. Collaboration should occur prior to the student's IEP meeting. Also, schools can promote PCP by allowing the IEP meeting to be student-led. Student-led IEP meetings are beneficial so the committee members stay focused on the student's individual needs and do not lose track of who's desires they are working toward. Caevendish and Conner (2018) reported student involvement in IEP development was linked to higher levels of goal attainment. If students have the opportunity to be a part of the goal-setting process, then the student is more likely going to be willing to work toward those goals. In addition, student-led IEP meetings can lead to practicing self-determination skills. Student attendance in IEP meetings can lead the committee to better focus on the student's strengths and can facilitate better understanding for the parent of the supports needed for their child to be successful (Caevendish & Conner, 2018). PCP is necessary to address the critical area of needs and supports for the individual student as perceived by the student.

Self-Determination Skills

Self-determination skills are crucial to the success of the individual. Recent studies suggested that a student's self-determination affects school and post-school outcomes (Shogren, Villarreal, Lang, & Seo, 2017). The student's ability to advocate for themselves is a good predicator of how the individual will advocate to have their needs met after leaving high school. Also, studies have indicated students who practice decision making accompanied with self-efficacy have shown a decrease in school dropout rates (Ginerva, Nota, & Ferrari, 2015). Self-determination skills are vital for individuals to be able to take control of their lives and make decisions (Flexer et al., 2008). Many individuals with cognitive disabilities are unaware of their legal rights when making the transition from secondary to postsecondary settings (Rumrill et al., 2017). Promoting self-determination skills is an established best practice and enables students to have better transition success to adult life (Gragoudas, 2014). Shogren and Ward (2018) asserted reinforcement of self-determination skills can lead to more positive post-school outcomes. Furthermore, Rumrill et al. (2017) identified that many students with disabilities do not understand their disability, the impact it can have on employment, or how to advocate for accommodations. Direct instruction of self-determination skills can give individuals with disabilities the opportunity to have a voice. Too often, others are the ones making decisions for their future because they lack the skills to advocate for their future goals.

Self-determination skills are characterized by one's ability to be self-aware, make informed decisions, self-advocate, and set appropriate life goals (Webb, Repetto, Seabrooks-Blackmore, Patterson, & Alderfer, 2014). Based on the current evidence, self-determination goals are often not an area of focus (Collins & Wolter, 2018). Self-determination and self-advocacy skills contribute to successful postsecondary transitions (Rumrill et al., 2017).

According to Thoma et al. (2016), promoting self-determination skills for students with disabilities has lasting positive long-term effects. Teaching self-determination skills can better prepare students for adult life (Mumbardó, Shogren, Guárdia-Olmos, & Giné, 2017). Collins and Wolter (2018) emphasized the importance of shifting interventions from specific instruction to strategy instruction to produce self-directed and self-regulated individuals. Self-determination skills are crucial in developing the skills needed for individuals with disabilities to participate in their community and in the political system (Martin et al., 2013). Self-determination skills allow persons with disabilities to make choices based on their preferences and interests. Lastly, persons with disabilities who exercise self-determination skills have greater independence, employment, and quality of life (Martinis & Jm, 2015). Ultimately, one goal for individuals with disabilities is the ability to have greater independence, which can lead to successful employment.

There are a variety of subskills needed to develop self-determination skills. Stevenson, Flynn, and Test (2016) identified the following component skills that foster the development of self-determination: choice-making, decision making, problem solving, self-advocacy, and self-awareness. Each skill is fundamental in developing self-determination skills in individuals with disabilities to ensure they are able to advocate for themselves and their desires. Students with disabilities need to have a more active role in the decisions being made at their IEP meetings. In order to have a more active role, this population needs to understand and communicate their strengths, needs, and become self-aware (Carter, Lane, Pierson, & Glaeser, 2006).

Furthermore, Fullarton and Duquette (2015) emphasized the importance of individuals with disabilities understanding the supports, accommodations, and services they need. Youth with disabilities should be able to determine what supports and services they may need in order to be successful at a task. Self-determination skills are important to develop confidence when

advocating for supports and services from school agencies, employers, and outside adult service agencies. Rumrill et al. (2017) highlighted the need for more effective development of self-determination skills. According to Flexer et al. (2008), allowing students the experience in choosing, expressing, and making decisions can support progress in developing self-determination skills. Teaching these skills will vary based on the individual student's needs.

According to Flexer et al. (2008), targeted intervention for self-determination skills include choice-making, decision-making, problem-solving skills, self-management skills, self-advocacy skills, and self-awareness (Flexer et al., 2008). Opportunities can be given throughout the school day that enhance self-advocacy, self-awareness, and decision-making skills. Martinis & Jm (2015) emphasized the importance of teaching children to take responsibility and solve problems. The goal of teaching self-determination skills is to prepare persons with disabilities to maximize their personal choice and autonomy (Martin et al., 2013). Educators can teach self-advocacy skills through direct instruction (Fullarton & Duquette, 2015) or through incidental teaching. Teaching self-determination skills can be used by educators to improve student's progress across a variety of skills related to self-management (Burke et al., 2019).

Researchers have devised a variety of models to improve self-determination skills. Two models of practices for improving self-determination skills have shown positive results: the self-determination learning model of instruction (SDLMI) and the post-school achievement through higher skills (PATHS) model. The SDLMI allows educators to create multiple opportunities for students to engage and practice goal setting and self-determination skills (Burke et al., 2019). The PATHS module is a gender specific curriculum targeted to females that covers key topics of career development: self-awareness, disability issues, gender identify, and career planning (Lindstrom., Doren, Post & Lombardi, 2013). SDLMI can be used to teach problem-solving

skills and allows teachers to support their students in setting their own goals, developing a plan

of action toward goal attainment, self-monitoring progress, and goal revision (Burke et al. 2019).

The PATHS model supports progress in the areas of vocational self-efficacy and self-awareness

(Lindstrom et al., 2013). According to Burke et al. (2019), the SDLMI model showed significant

positive growth in self-determination skills.

Furthermore, students can develop self-determination skills by identifying their strengths

and weaknesses, setting goals, and participating in discussions about their transition plans

(Collier et al., 2017). Gragoudas (2014) encouraged teachers to facilitate learning self-advocacy

skills by teaching individuals how to speak up for what they believe in, how to make decisions,

and educate them about their rights as an individual. Special educators are encouraged to provide

educational decision making and self-advocacy opportunities for their students (Martin et al.,

2013). Students can practice advocacy skills when needing additional supports or assistance from

school staff. Also, students can attend their IEP meetings and advocate for the supports and

services they wish to receive. In addition, students can develop self-awareness skills and self-

advocacy skills when they are involved in IEP goal development (Martin et al., 2013). A vast

array of opportunities exist within the student's school day to practice self-determination skills. It

is important for special educators to create a social environment that allows multiple practices of

choice-making and problem-solving skills (Martin et al., 2013).

Making decisions is often a difficult task for individuals with disabilities. According to

Curryer, Stancliffe, and Dew (2015), if persons with disabilities do not receive support and

encouragement to make decisions, they will have a limited awareness of their options and

preferences. Gragoudas (2014) emphasized the importance to establishing a safe setting to

practice decision-making skills. Teachers and parents can develop an environment where the

student is free to make decisions in a controlled arrangement in order to facilitate decision making and problem-solving skills. For example, students can be offered choices throughout the school day, for example by selecting a preference for lunch or making decisions when problems arise. The more opportunities students have to develop self-determination skills the better chance they will have to succeed after high school.

Career Exploration

The research has indicated a strong connection between exposure to job skill training and successful employment outcomes for students with disabilities. Career exploration bridges students' knowledge of themselves to possible career outcomes (Cease-Cook, Fowler, & Test, 2015). Early employment opportunities are important (Oertle, 2017). According to Southward and Kyzar (2017), transition programs with strong work-based learning experiences facilitate the skills needed for positive post-school outcomes. Career exploration involves a variety of activities such as job shadowing, career and technology courses, work/school-based learning programs, internships, and paid-employment opportunities. Cease-Cook et al. (2015) reported that a middle-school curriculum offers career exploration to all students in middle school. School to work-based learning programs facilitate skill acquisition and help students with disabilities generalize skills across settings. Furthermore, Cease-Cook et al. (2015) reported work-based learning experiences are very valuable for this population. Flexer et al. (2008) reported community-based work experiences are a better preparation and effective intervention than academic achievement. Work-based learning experience directly teaches this population skills they will need when entering the workforce. According to Trainor et al. (2016), students who have early work experience are more likely to experience post-school success. The more

experience and exposure to job skills students can receive prior to graduation from high school, the better their chances of obtaining employment.

Further, Nochajski and Schweitzer (2014) stressed the importance of school to work-based learning programs (WBLPs) because students have the opportunity to experience real working environments and can be supported through their school programs when a reteach of skills is necessary. Exposure to natural working environments is beneficial and allows students to develop confidence in their ability to perform the job tasks while interacting with their surroundings. Career exploration gives students the chance to learn about themselves and about possible careers (Cease-Cook et al., 2015). Papay, Unger, Williams-Diehm, and Vickie (2015) determined exposure to a variety of community employment opportunities provided students with knowledge about careers that exist in their local community. Career exploration in a variety of settings can help the student determine what working environments they like and dislike and would like to pursue further in the future. Also, students who have employment before leaving high school make smoother transitions to adulthood (Flexer et al., 2008). Work-based learning experiences provide students the opportunity to have exposure to jobs within their community while developing their social skills and employability skills. They provide opportunities for students to learn a variety of work job skills, discover different working environments, and find out what supports are available on the job (Cease-Cook et al., 2015). Also, work-based learning opportunities develop the student's self-confidence within themselves.

WBLPs can take many forms. Schools can arrange work-based learning experiences through a variety of activities: job shadowing, career exploration, job sampling, internships, paid and non-paid employment, and volunteer work. Stevenson et al. (2016) suggested WBLPs can include opportunities for paid and unpaid experience, supports to develop appropriate work

behavior and social skills, course sequence to build on employment skills, career guidance, and teaching soft skills. Teachers can encourage employment goals by targeting areas of weaknesses identified by transition assessments, model and council appropriate work behavior, and provide ample opportunities in a variety of employment settings. Teachers are an instrumental part of the success of a WBLP. Without the guidance and direct reteaching of skills, work-based learning would not be as effective. Teachers serve as mentors to guide students and build employment skills. Also, teachers help build connections in the workplace and in the community (Fullarton & Duquette, 2015). Teachers can partner with community businesses to allow students opportunities to job shadow and learn job skills. These partnerships can provide future opportunities within the individual's community.

Furthermore, community-based instruction is an additional beneficial learning tool that allows the student to have exposure to a variety of settings within their community. Community-based instruction can include numerous activities that include grocery shopping, crossing streets, using self-check-out lines, using ATMs, and ordering a meal in a restaurant (DiPipi-Hoy & Steere, 2012). These activities give this population additional practice on social skills that will be needed for the students to obtain successful employment. Students have opportunities to interact within their community and learn functional skills while under the supervision of a teacher.

Interagency Participation

In order to ensure a successful transition for this population, it is vital for school transition staff to coordinate with adult services agencies, which are often state-funded and regulated by the state. Legislation has enacted the Work Force Innovation Opportunities Act (WIOA), which focuses on improving employment outcomes for youth with disabilities and allots 15% of vocational rehabilitation funding for pre-employment services while students are

still in school (Collier, Griffin, & Wei, 2016). It was established to improve collaboration and coordination of services for individuals with disabilities (Gingerich, 2016). However, the act did not fund additional staff and nor increase resources (Gingerich, 2016). Adult services agencies and programs are a vital component of connecting the employer world to the individual needs of this population. Rumrill et al. (2017) concluded people with disabilities need open and easy access to adult services programs. Poor post-school outcomes have been linked to inadequate interagency collaboration between schools and these agencies (Meadows, Davies, & Beamish, 2014). Pallisera et al. (2014) stressed the importance of transition partnerships between schools and agencies. School services and post-school services have a significant impact on positive employment outcomes for this population (Poppen et al., 2017). The literature indicates when appropriate collaboration between all agencies occurs, positive outcomes for this population increase.

It takes all stakeholders' involvement to establish a firm foundation in the workforce for persons with disabilities. Webb et al. (2014) encouraged collaboration among educators, rehabilitation agency professionals, individuals with disabilities, and their families to facilitate effective transitions into post-school life. Francis et al. (2018) emphasized the importance of coordination and collaboration between caregivers and professionals to enhance successful post-school outcomes among this population. Under the changes of WIOA, vocational rehabilitation counselors are to collaborate with educators in secondary education to provide pre-employment services (Oertle, 2017). Adult services agencies provide employment supports to the individual with a disability and can participate in secondary-school transition planning and provide vocational counseling support (Honeycutt et al., 2017).

Adult services providers, such as vocational rehabilitation services, help persons with disabilities become employable (Ju, Kortering, Osmani, & Zhang, 2015). Further, the ultimate goal of adult services agencies is to provide services that result in positive long-term success. Also, collaboration among educational and outside agencies is endorsed by the policy and practices of the IDEIA (Fabian, Simonsen, Deschamps, Shengli, & Luecking, 2016). Interagency collaboration between schools and adult services agencies is a difficult task to achieve. Evert Cimera et al. (2015) reported referrals for youth with disabilities from high schools to adult services agencies are down by 31.4%. Only 8% of youth with disabilities apply for services each year (Honeycutt et al., 2017). This leaves a wide range of youth with disabilities left unserved who could qualify for additional supports. When students begin receiving transition services through the school, it is important for the student to establish services with adult services agencies (Martinis & Jm, 2015). School transition staff should provide information to the student and families regarding services available. In the state of Texas, schools have access to the *Transition and Employment Guide* developed as a resource for parents and educators. This guide has the available outside services agencies information and what services they each provide to persons with disabilities and their families in the state of Texas. Persons with disabilities can qualify for services by meeting the following criteria: The person with a qualified disability can work and the person can benefit from services to achieve an employment goal (Hoenycutt et al., 2017). Educators cannot invite outside agencies to collaborate in transition planning without the consent of the adult student or parent (The Legal Framework, 2018). It is important for persons with disabilities and their families to understand the benefits of receiving additional services outside of the school setting.

Stakeholders may encounter many roadblocks when trying to establish collaboration (Meadows et al., 2014). Sherman, Eischens, Leierer, Meola, and Bethune Scroggs (2017) concluded that coordination of services between all agencies can be difficult due to multiple factors. Martinis and Jm (2015) emphasized the importance of a detailed plan between schools and adult services agencies. It is important to understand the steps needed to develop appropriate collaboration between schools and these agencies. Interagency collaboration can include developing interagency teams to share interest in transition services, coordination polices for service delivery and sharing recourses, and providing training for staff members to ensure all members of the team are knowledgeable of the supports and services the student is eligible for (Stevenson et al., 2016). Best transition practices have identified the importance of interagency collaboration. Persons with disabilities, families, and professionals can take a number of actions to access vocational rehabilitation services and supports (Martinis & Jm, 2015). Hagner et al. (2014) reported the need for well-designed collaboration efforts between adult services agencies, families, and schools. School district transition designees can establish collaborative relationships with outside service providers by the following steps: Identify agency providers and representatives, establish methods of communication among all service providers, share data and information regarding student progress after appropriate consent is obtained, develop a shared understanding of roles and responsibilities, and ensure the agency has the opportunity to participate in any IEP meetings once consent is granted (Kohler, Gothberg, Fowler, & Coyle, 2016).

Meadows et al. (2014) identified effective strategies to enhance collaboration between agencies: flexible scheduling, agency meetings with families, following up after meetings and/or transition activities, and relationship-building. Each party must be willing to make an equal

effort in order for successful coordination to take place. Overall, coordination and collaboration between agencies can pose as a challenge. However, the benefits of overcoming these challenges are monumental for the individual with disabilities. The literature has identified the impact interagency collaboration can have on the individual's life and employment ventures. Without successful coordination and collaboration between all agencies, the disconnect between school services and outside agency services will remain ineffective.

Parental Involvement

Parental involvement is essential to the success of the student's post-school outcomes. White and Rae (2016) reported parental involvement is positively linked to student achievement. Parents and family are the one consistent factor that will remain the same throughout the course of the individual's life. In order to create an appropriate transition plan, parental and family involvement must take place. Further, collaboration must take place more than once a year.

According to Diliberto and Brewer (2014), communication and collaboration is the driving force behind successful IEP plans. Rabren and Evans (2016) estimated over 5.9 million students with disabilities in the United States who are under the age of 21 live with their family. In order to facilitate successful transition from school to post-school, the opinions and perceptions of the parent(s) must be obtained during the transition planning process. According to Hirano, Garbacz, Shanley, and Rowe (2016), parental involvement is strongly associated with successful post-school outcomes. Families need to understand the importance of their involvement and be motivated to be active participants in their child's planning (Papay et al., 2015). Appropriate parental involvement is a vital component to ensure the development of an appropriate transition plan. Achola and Greene (2016) argued that professionals should acknowledge that the family is a constant in the life of youth with disabilities and their input and

concerns are relevant to the planning process. An individual's caregiver is the person who will remain a constant in the child's life, is the most influential, and provides ongoing supports for the duration of the individual's life (Francis et al., 2018).

Research has indicated that parents are not satisfied with their child's transition services received in the public-school setting (Thorton, Thomas, Owens, Salley, & Blackborn, 2018). In order to improve this area, school staff should seek appropriate feedback from the parents. School staff can ensure parent satisfaction by effectively collaborating with the family. School staff can provide parents with ample opportunity to contribute information for transition planning for their child's future through multiple communication attempts and establishing a relationship with the parents. Open communication regularly throughout the year fosters equal team member partnerships (Diliberto & Brewer, 2014). Relationships are important to facilitate a safe environment where parents or guardians feel they can openly ask questions and contribute their opinions. Parents should be included in the entire transition planning process that includes student assessment, evaluation of the student's program, IEP planning meetings, and decision making (Kohler et al., 2016). Their inclusion should not be solely at the IEP meeting but rather during the course of the student's attendance in high school. Cavendish and Connor (2018) emphasized the importance of parent training on the transition process.

Parental involvement and interaction are critical components of successful career outcomes (Cawthon & Caemmerer, 2014). Furthermore, schools can encourage parental involvement by asking questions throughout the process and remove the formal educational language to help the parent better understand what is being discussed. School personnel can increase parental involvement by establishing rapport with the family, be attentive to the family's desires and needs for their child, and establish a safe environment where the parent is

comfortable to ask questions. Schools can facilitate parental involvement by establishing positive relationships by creating an inviting environment and using informal, friendly dialog (Larios & Zetlin, 2012). Parental involvement should not be an afterthought, rather a first thought when gathering information for transition planning. Fenton, Ocasio-Stoutenburg, and Harry (2017) emphasized the importance of utilizing parents because they are the greatest resource in their child's education. Often, parents have great insight to their child's abilities and are their number one advocate for success. The information parents provide to the transition planning team can help target skills the student may demonstrate well in the school setting but has difficulty generalizing into different settings, such as the home and community surroundings. Overall, parental involvement is necessary to ensure positive post-school outcomes. Without parental involvement, the student with disabilities would lack input from their main support and provider resulting in a plan with gaps. Educators should be active listeners and establish an inviting environment that creates a collaborative atmosphere.

Summary

In summary, employment rates for persons with disabilities is well below their nondisabled peers. The U.S. government has identified the need for improvement in this area within the school and community setting; therefore, legislation has been established to promote better employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities. Throughout the course of history beginning with the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 to the revisions of IDEA to IDEIA, policies have been enacted to protect and ensure appropriate services are implemented to ensure successful post-school outcomes for youth with disabilities. IDEIA and WIOA are two pieces of legislation focused on developing improvements for transition services to enhance outcomes for this population for independence and employment.

Developing appropriate transition services and programs based on EBTPs is an essential component to ensuring the youth with disabilities have the best opportunities for a successful life after high school. According to Stevenson et al. (2016), the need for effective intervention for students with cognitive disabilities throughout their school day is supported by high quality scientific research. Research has shown that EBTPs lead to successful post-school outcomes for students with cognitive disabilities.

In this chapter, I discussed five EBTPs: person-centered planning, self-determination skills, school/community to work-based learning opportunities, interagency collaboration, and parental involvement. Each strategy is a vital component to the success of the student. Person-centered planning focuses on the desires and interests of the individual with disabilities. Planning is centered on the student's goals for himself and access to supports after high school. Self-determination skills focus on the student's ability to be self-aware, make decisions, and self-advocate. Self-determination skills help develop "inner talk" to think through situations and make decisions (Stevenson et al., 2016). Community/work-based learning programs offer students exposure to a variety of working and community environments while receiving supports and services from the school setting. Interagency collaboration and coordination can include activities such as coordinating services, scheduling planning times, and collaborating to develop goals for the individual (Stevenson, 2016). The collaboration and coordination of outside service providers and school transition staff is necessary to ensure the student is able to generalize skills across settings to promote better post-school outcomes. Lastly, parental involvement is another key component but one of the most important aspects of the transition plan. Parents and family members are the individuals who will continue to chart the course of life along with the student with disabilities. Their role and involvement throughout the transition and IEP process is

exponentially important to the success of the individual. Outside agencies and school providers should employ EBTPs to improve transitional outcomes (Stevenson, 2016).

I used this research to identify the effectiveness of the EBTPs in rural schools as perceived by educators, parents, and adult services agencies. In this study, I aimed to gather information from a variety of stakeholders to improve transition programming in a rural North Texas School district. The outcome of this single case study will be shared with other rural schools to improve transition programming. Improving transition programming can lead to better post-school outcomes. Thus, this study aims to bring about change and assist in developing interventions for this population to gain employment in rural communities through effective implementation of EBTPs.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the research methodology for this qualitative case study focused on effective evidence-based transition services for students with high-incidence cognitive disabilities in a rural North Texas school district. When a case is special, a single case study is the desired approach (Rowley, 2002). This single case study had multiple units of analysis from two targeted participant groups: educational staff and parents of students with high-incidence disabilities serviced through special education services in grades 7–12. I targeted a single rural school district in North Texas. This case was special because there are not many published findings available that target EBPs for transition services in rural school districts. A case study design allows the researcher to discover actual events within a group (Terrell, 2016). This research targeted specific EBTPs as perceived by a group of educational staff and parent participants.

Throughout this chapter, I explore the important role of qualitative design when applied to this research. The methods section highlights the relevance of qualitative case study designs and why this method was selected for this research. The population and sampling section describe the targeted population parameters and the participant sampling selection process. The instrument and data collection sections provide an in-depth description of the type of data collection that I used and how I collected participant data. The data analysis segment identifies the procedures used to analyze the multiple pieces of data collected throughout the study. In this section, I identify and describe the strategies and tools I used to assist in organizing the data to identify the themes. The researcher's role is clearly defined and identifies how I implemented all of the components of the study. Last, I explain ethical considerations, assumptions, limitations, and delimitations.

Research Questions

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to investigate the effectiveness of EBTPs as perceived by school educators and parents of students with high-incidence disabilities who receive special education services in a rural school district in the North Central Texas area. The study addressed the following questions:

RQ 1. How do educational staff perceive the effectiveness of transition practices for students with high-incidence disabilities who receive special education services through person-centered planning, self-determination skills, interagency collaboration, parental involvement, and school/work-based programs?

RQ 2. How do parental stakeholders perceive the effectiveness of transition practices for students with high-incidence disabilities who receive special education services through person-centered planning, self-determination skills, interagency collaboration, parental involvement, and school/work-based programs?

RQ 3. How do the self-determination theory concepts of autonomy, competence, and relatedness influence the perceptions of educational staff and parental stakeholders?

Research Design and Method

The research design was a qualitative, single case study with multiple units of analysis targeting two groups: educational staff and parents of students with high-incidence disabilities who receive special education services. Qualitative research is characterized by the collection of data through personal interviews, open-ended questions, and documents to find a pattern within the data (Patton, 2015). Baxter and Jack (2008) identified four occasions when a qualitative case-study design should be considered: The focus of the study is to answer "how" or "why" questions; the researcher cannot manipulate the behavior of those involved in the study; the

researcher wishes to cover contextual conditions because the researcher believes they are relevant to the phenomenon under study; or the boundaries are not clear between the phenomenon and the content. Cases are studied when the researcher has a special interest in the case and looks for interaction between the details of the case (Stake, 1995). As an educational diagnostician and transition coordinator for a rural school district, I have a special interest in this case to identify areas of strengths and weaknesses within the current programing and create a plan for service improvement.

For the purpose of this study, application of a qualitative, single case study design was the most appropriate selection for this research because it focused on answering "how" questions in relations to current EBPs within a rural school district as perceived by the participants. I used the findings to cross-compare perspectives and identify reoccurring themes within the data. Thus, I developed a plan of action to address the weaknesses within current EBTPs within the Grand ISD (pseudonym) rural school district. Investigating the answers to the research questions among a variety of participants' perspectives within this single case allowed me to identify the changes needed to improve current EBTPs within Grand ISD.

I used the information collected to establish an instrumental case study. Instrumental case studies are used when the researcher identifies a set of questions and seeks to find the answers to the questions to identify areas of change. Stake (1995) emphasized that researchers apply instrumental case studies when the they need more than knowledge and understanding. Instrumental case studies are characterized by their ability to provide insight into an issue, facilitate a better understanding of the issue and perspectives, and promote movement for change (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Further, the more information and cross-comparison alignment the study can demonstrate among the stakeholders, the more credible the findings. According to

Golafshani (2003), maximizing the trustworthiness within a study lends more credibility to the results. It is imperative for the research design to establish markers of trustworthiness and credibility. Further, Shenton (2004) suggested trustworthiness of a research study results from its ability to be credible, transferable, and confirmable. In order to establish trustworthiness, I considered these elements: a) research questions were clear; b) the case study design is appropriate for the research questions; c) I applied purposeful sampling strategies; d) data collection was manageable and reliable, and e) I analyzed the data in a credible manner (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Further, I conducted field testing of my interview questions prior to initial data collection procedures to ensure that participants easily understood the questions.

Also, qualitative research does not restrict a participant's response and allows the researcher to analyze factors that may otherwise be left unstudied. Through a qualitative design, the research can be explored through a variety of lenses which can reveal a multitude of facets (Baxter & Jack, 2008). The information I collected was from a wide array of stakeholders that included parents and educational staff. The frame applied to the methodology findings is based on the basic principles of the conceptual framework. I based he conceptual framework on three purposes: a) identifying who will and will not be included in the study, b) what relationships may be presented based on logic or experience; and c) providing me with the opportunity to gather general constructs into information (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

I selected to research the effectiveness of current EBTPs based on stakeholders' perspectives in the Grand ISD school district because I have a vested interest in this population. I desire to see more of my students with disabilities working within the community after graduation from high school. Conducting this research allowed me to investigate the current strengths and weaknesses of current practices. Further, now that I have identified the areas of

weaknesses, I can present the information to my school leadership team and develop a plan of action to improve current programming and practices for this population. Last, it is my hope that other rural school districts will use the findings and relationships revealed in this study for training to improve practices for students with high-incidence disabilities who receive special education services.

Population and Sampling

After approval from the Abilene Christian University Internal Review Board (IRB; Appendix A), I gathered data from a variety of participants: educational staff and parents of students with high-incidence disabilities who receive special education services. The research targeted a rural community school district in North Central Texas. I served as the transition coordinator for the district and desired to identify weaknesses within the transition practices to improve student programming. The community population was roughly 9,238. The school district houses two secondary campuses. The junior high campus serves the sixth to eighth grades. The high school campus serves students in the ninth through 12th grades and the 18-plus program. The schools are Title I schools and approximately 2,000 students were enrolled in pre-kindergarten through 12th grade. The town was a central hub for surrounding communities for food, groceries, and retail.

I collected data from a number of participants that included secondary-school administrators, secondary special education teachers, the district school administrator, and parents of secondary students with high-incidence disabilities who receive special education services. Each participant had experience with these students. I received approval from the school district to conduct interviews and to utilize school IEP records to triangulate the research findings. The research data I collected focused on the effectiveness of evidence-based transition

services and programs for students ages 13 to 21 with high-incidence disabilities receiving special education services and supports in a rural North Texas community.

I used purposive sampling in selecting participants. Researchers employ qualitative studies because it allows them to identify small groups to work with (Terrell, 2016). After reviewing student IEP documents, I determined that 42 parent participants fit the criteria set forth for the study. I emailed them a letter describing the purpose of the study and requesting their participation. A total of five parents of secondary students agreed to participate. I selected parents who had actively participated in their child's IEP meetings and collaborated with the local school district. Upon approval for request to participate in the study, I contacted each parent participant individually through email to coordinate a date and time to arrange a time to review the research consent and conduct the interview. I conducted the interviews for this population either face-to-face if by phone conference. Three parents engaged in face-to-face interviews; two requested a phone conference.

During the meeting, I reviewed the informed consent and conducted the interview. Prior to conducting the interview, I reviewed all aspects of the informed consent and reassured the participant that their identity would remain confidential and would not be used within the research. During the interview, I gave a copy of the parent participant interview questions to the parent as a visual representation in case they needed to reread the questions. For the two participants who requested a phone conference, I emailed the participant the informed consent and a copy of the parent interview protocol questions (Appendix E). I reviewed the informed consent prior to the participant signing the consent. The consent was signed electronically using Hellosign.

After reviewing the total number of school staff members, I asked 16 school staff who fit the criteria for the study. I sent the request to school staff members, including secondary special education teachers, school administrators, school counselors, and the special education director. I sent a Google form requesting participation from the listed participants. Enclosed in the Google form was a description of the study. Some participants responded to the Google form invitation to participate in the study. When a selected participant did not respond to the Google form, I contacted the individual by email to inquire if they would like to participate. After two weeks and two attempts to resend the Google form along with follow-ups from school email, a total of eight school staff members agreed to participate. I used email correspondence to arrange a date and time with each school staff member to conduct the interview. During the meeting, I reviewed the informed consent and conducted the interview. Prior to conducting the interview, I reviewed all aspects of the informed consent and reassured the participant that their identity would remain confidential and would not be used within the research. All school staff members selected to conduct their interviews face-to-face. During the interview, I gave a copy of the school staff participant interview questions to each staff participant as a visual representation in case they needed to reread the questions.

Instrument and Data Collection

The instrument I used for this study was an interview protocol. As identified by Turner (2010), creating effective research questions is one of the most critical components of the interview design. I interviewed each group of participants face-to-face or by phone conference. I also applied a responsive interview model in which the researcher acknowledges that the participant is human and creates an inviting and safe environment for the interview to gather in-depth information from the participant (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). I used predetermined interview

questions and applied a semi-structured interview process (see Appendix B for interview protocols). Semi-structured interview protocols allow for the researcher to ask follow-up questions to gather more data regarding the participants' response (Terrell, 2016). Rubin and Rubin (2005) encouraged the use of predetermined main questions, follow-up questions, and probing. Throughout the interview process, I asked follow-up and probing questions to clarify meanings and to help keep the conversation flowing. Furthermore, I used the interview protocol as a guide to ensure I asked the appropriate questions to each group of participants. Interview guides are useful tools that assist in structuring the interviews (Kvale, 2008). All responsive researchers prepare guides that help with what main questions need to be asked of each group (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

I used a variety of means to conduct the interviews. Furthermore, I recorded each interview. Recording the interviews allowed me to go back and review each interview to ensure I did not miss any critical information. Audio recordings assist the researcher in being a good listener, attending to the responses, and reducing the emphasis on note-taking (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). The interview questions focused on the effective evidence-based transition services and practices as perceived by the selected groups of participants. Prior to the data collection process, I conducted a field test. I interviewed one retired secondary special education teacher to field test the educational staff interview questions. The field test was used to adjust the interview protocol as necessary. Field tests assist the researcher in determining if there are flaws or weaknesses within the interview design (Turner, 2010).

During the interview process, I used strategies of briefing and debriefing to ensure the purpose of the study was clear and the information received from the interviewee was correct. Kvale (2008) encouraged researchers to implement briefing and debriefing strategies within the

interview process to create an environment conducive to an in-depth conversation. After each interview, I took field notes and reflected on immediate themes that arose. Field notes identify what is happening within the research and can be cross-compared to other relationships in other groups (Eisenhardt, 1989). Merriam (2014) emphasized the importance of completing data analysis while in the process of collecting data. The application of field notes and interview reflections was a useful tool to identify themes within the data and across participant groups.

I triangulated the data across each stakeholder's perception from educational staff and parental perspectives to establish if there was relationship present concerning the effectiveness of the EBTPs for students with high-incidence disabilities. In addition to collecting interview data, I reviewed transition supplement documents embedded within the student IEPs for the 2018-2019 school year and students' full individual evaluation records to establish a sampling of students with full scale IQ scores of 55 or more. According to Rowley (2002), case study research often uses a variety of different sources such as documents to collect evidence. I reviewed the documents to determine what current transition services are being implemented, how often outside agencies participate and/or attend the IEP meetings, and how often parents attend student IEP meetings. I triangulated these data with interview findings to determine if the findings correlated.

Data Analysis

Analyzing interviews can be taxing and should be done concurrently while collecting the data. According to Turner (2010), analyzing qualitative data can be overwhelming. DeCuir-Gunby, Marshall, and McCulloch (2011) highlighted the importance of understanding that analyzing interview data is a multistep endeavor. Furthermore, quantitative data analysis is best completed simultaneously when collecting data (Merriam, 2014). I implemented coding to assist

with the interview data analysis. The coding process allows for researchers to reflect on the overall responses and determine similar relationships within the data (Turner, 2010). Through coding, researchers are able to make connections and identify relationships within the research data (DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2011). I used open coding to identify basic themes within the data to identify distinct concepts within the data for categorization (Williams & Moser, 2019). In order to maintain organization with the data analysis, I created a codebook. A codebook is a tool researcher can use to define codes and assist in making the analysis easier. The codebook should include the code name, a brief definition, full definition, inclusion criteria, exclusion criteria, and examples (DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2011). I reviewed and coded each transcript. I used a color-coding system for each theme identified and triangulated the data comparing responses in the different groups of participants to determine areas of alignment and agreement as well as using the students' IEP records and transition supplement. Triangulation is a strategy used to improve the validity of the research findings using a variety of sources (Golafshani, 2004; Guion, Diehl, & McDonald, 2011).

To further establish creditability within my study, I used member checking. Member checking gives participants an opportunity to determine if the interviewer's interpretations and/or data analysis findings are true and can be applied during the data collection and data analysis process (Harper & Cole, 2012). For the purpose of my research, I applied member checking during the interview process through debriefing. After I triangulated and analyzed the data, I interpreted the findings, which I present in depth in Chapter 4.

Researcher's Role

I have served in a rural school district in North Texas as the transition coordinator and educational diagnostician for the last six years. Also, I have taught transition-age students life

skills, employability skills, and adult skills in rural communities. I have encountered first-hand the difficulties my students have had entering the workforce in my local area.

My relationship with the participants varied. I worked daily with many of the educational staff I enlisted for participation. My role as a diagnostician was not a supervisory role, but one where I worked closely alongside my colleagues. I collaborated with each parent participant at different intervals and amounts depending on the student's need and parent's level of need and guidance. I collaborated with representatives of Texas Workforce Commission and Helen Farabee agencies at least once every six months. I attended trainings facilitated by the representatives from the regional service center, and I have enlisted their guidance when I had questions regarding issues that arose throughout the school year.

For this study, I was the sole implementer of all methods and data collections. Harrison, Birks, Franklin, and Mills (2017) stressed the importance of the researcher's connection to the participants and connection to the field of study. Terrell (2016) emphasized the importance of the researcher's direct involvement in the data collection process. As the sole implementer, I completed the following tasks: requested research approval from the IRB, requested permission from the identified organizations to conduct research, enlisted participants, developed and revised interview questions and protocol based upon field testing and participant input, set up and conducted interviews, took field notes after each interview, reviewed the data for interpretation, conducted member checking, and reported the findings. My background in this area of research was beneficial to the interpretation of the findings and understanding the implications of each participant's perspectives. It is important to note that I did not interject personal bias when gathering, interpreting, or reporting data. Rubin and Rubin (2005) cautioned

researchers to be aware of their own biases and sensitize personal bias during research interpretation.

Ethical Considerations

I have completed training to ensure I understand how to protect human subjects. I submitted verification of my training to ACU personnel. Prior to enlisting participants, I submitted a research review request to the International Review Board (IRB) through ACU. Upon approval, I reviewed with each volunteer participant their rights as a research participant, that their consent is voluntary, and their right to end their participation at any time. I reassured the educational staff that I work closely with that their responses would be used to help develop better transition services and approaches within the district, and that their responses would not change my professional perception of them nor affect our professional working relationship. I took extra precautions when reviewing this information with the parent participants and disclosed that some of the questions may be emotionally difficult. I ensured that I wrote the parent consent forms in understandable language. Also, I encouraged the parents to ask questions about anything they may not understand as I was reviewing the consents and their rights.

After approval from the IRB, I wrote a formal letter to the identified organization for permission to conduct research within their entity. I enlisted the permission to conduct research from the following organizations and persons: director of special education and/or superintendent of a rural North Texas school district. I secured the confidentiality of the by keeping all documentation and data securely locked in a file cabinet or password-locked on my personal computer. The information collected does not identify the school district, region, nor any participants by name.

After approval from the school entity, I recruited participation in a variety of ways. For local selected staff, I used a Google email form requesting their participation in the study. The Google form explained what the purpose of the study was and that their participation was voluntary. For selected parent participants, I emailed a letter describing the purpose of the study and requested parent participants. I contacted each parent participant individually by email asking if they would like to participate in the research study.

Assumptions

I assumed all participants gave honest opinions in regards to their feedback to the interview questions. It is important to note that the participant could have unintentionally skewed the data collected. This may be caused by a variety of factors, such as a lack of knowledge and understanding of the questions being asked and a lack of experience in the area. I informed participants to ask questions for clarification if they did not understand the questions asked. Their perspective was recorded and reviewed with all other data.

Limitations

Terrell (2016) identified limitations as constraints outside the control of the research. The limitations of this study include the following: The participation sample, the knowledge and understanding of the research topic, and overall stakeholder involvement were all limited.

Delimitations

Further, the information collected was limited to educational staff and parents who have experience with this specific population. I collected no data from general education teachers.

Summary

In summary, this chapter discussed the research methodology and research design approach for investigating five research questions related to EBTPs in a rural North Texas school

district. The purpose of this research was to determine effective transition services for students with high-incidence disabilities receiving special education services and supports in rural school districts as perceived by educational staff and parents of students with high-incidence disabilities who receive special education services. A qualitative case study design was implemented for this research. A case study design allows for the research to be investigated within my local rural school district. The participants answered semi-structured questions related to selected evidence-based transition practices. The interview questions focused on gathering data on how each stakeholder perceives how transition services for students with high-incidence disabilities receiving special education services and supports in the rural North Texas school district for students ages 13 to 21. The research focused on five evidenced based transition practices: a) person-centered planning, b) self-determination skills, c) interagency collaboration, d) parental involvement, and e) career exploration programs.

Upon approval from the IRB, I recruited participants through purposive sampling. The participant sample includes: school staff and parents of students with high-incidence disabilities receiving special education services and supports in the secondary setting. After receiving consent to participate from each stakeholder, I conducted a semi-structured interview in a variety of ways by face-to-face and phone interviews. I used coding to analyze the data and determined if cross group relationships exist. I triangulated the findings by reviewing the transition supplements and IEP documents for the 2018-2019 school year to establish a cross-reference correlation among the relationships of current documented practices and stakeholder's perceptions. To establish creditability, I conducted member checking during the data collection. The results are reported and the data will be used to determine a plan of action and/or changes

needed to current transition practices to improve student programming within my local rural

district for students with high-incidence disabilities who receive special education services.

Chapter 4: Results

In this chapter, I present the findings of this single case study. The research focused on gathering the perspectives of educational school staff and parents of transition procedures for students with high-incidence disabilities serviced in the special education program in a rural North Texas school district. This research targeted specific EBTPs as perceived by a group of educational staff and parent participants. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to investigate the effectiveness of EBTPs as perceived by school educators and parents of students with high-incidence disabilities who receive special education services in a rural school district in the North Central Texas area. The study answered the following questions:

RQ 1. How do educational staff perceive the effectiveness of transition practices for students with high-incidence disabilities who receive special education services through person-centered planning, self-determination skills, interagency collaboration, parental involvement, and school/work-based programs?

RQ 2. How do parental stakeholders perceive the effectiveness of transition practices for students with high-incidence disabilities who receive special education services through person-centered planning, self-determination skills, interagency collaboration, parental involvement, and school/work-based programs?

RQ 3. How do the self-determination theory concepts of autonomy, competence, and relatedness influence the perceptions of educational staff and parental stakeholders?

In this chapter, I present information describing the single case study, the demographics of the targeted population and participants, and the findings to each research question. Also, I analyze and compare educational school staff and parent perspectives. The comparison analysis highlights the differences and similarities revealed through the findings.

Grand Independent School District, a pseudonym for the rural North Texas school district selected to participate in this research, is a public school districted located in North Central Texas. The community population is roughly 9,238. The community is a central hub for the surrounding communities for food, groceries, and retail. There is a small junior college located in the town where citizens can obtain an associate's degree or attend technical courses, such as welding and HVAC. The town has several major businesses in the areas of retail, oil and gas, and manufacturing. There are community services agencies for individuals with disabilities including the Texas Workforce Commission, Helen Farabee Mental Health and Behavioral Supports, a therapy center for occupational, physical, and speech services, and a psychological service center. In addition, the community has a regional medical center for patient care.

The school district includes three elementary campuses and two secondary campuses. The elementary campuses are broken into the following grade levels: early-childhood special education and kindergarten, first through third grade, and fourth and fifth grade. The junior high campus serves sixth to eighth grade students. The high school campus serves ninth to 12th grade students and the 18-plus program for individuals with disabilities returning to continue learning functional life skills. The schools are Title I schools and approximately 2,000 students are enrolled in the district.

Grand ISD is considered a district of innovation. It follows the regulations established by Chapter 12A and Texas Education Agency (TEA). Adoption of a district innovation plan gives the local school district authority to make decisions based on the best interests of the community and local school district, rather than the state. A district-of-innovation endorsement allows traditional independent school districts access to most flexibilities available to Texas's charter schools. Grand ISD's innovation plan began in the 2017-2018 school year and will be completed

at the end of the 2021-2022 school year. The plan targets the following areas: school start date, teacher certification for general teacher certification, teacher certification for Career and Technology Education (CTE), Fine Arts, Health Science, Law Enforcement, and Probationary Contracts. The plan targets the need to address hard-to-fill positions, such as CTE courses like welding. In rural communities, CTE teaching positions are difficult to fill due to lack of applications and lack of funding and resources.

Grand ISD's instructional design consists of a school board, district superintendent, assistant superintendent finances, assistant superintendent of human resources, director of special populations, curriculum directors, technology director, campus administrative team, campus counselor, campus general education staff, and campus special education staff. Also, the campus administrative team and the director of special programs oversee the special education staff (Figure 1).
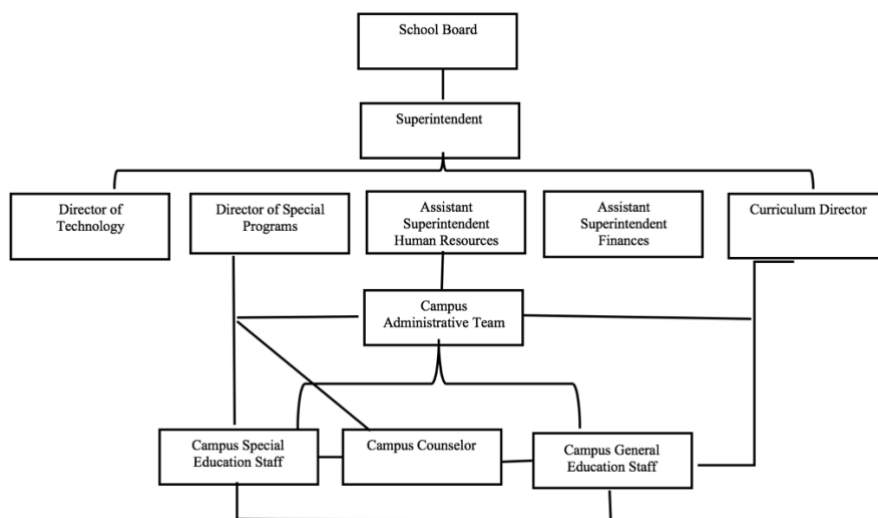
Figure 1. Organizational chart of the instructional design of the Grand ISD educational staff hierarchy.

Figure 1 illustrates the roles of collaboration within the school network. For the purpose of this study, it is important to note the partnership between the director of special programs, the

campus administrative team, and the special education school staff. These three groups were the targeted participants for this study. The director of special programs is responsible for overseeing educational programming for special education services, 504 services, English language learners' services, and the gifted and talented program. The director collaborates with campus staff, parents, and individuals within the community and regional educational staff to ensure the district's special programs are meeting state and federal guidelines. The campus administrative team consists of the campus principal and assistant principal of each campus. The campus administrative role is to manage school staff personnel, provide instructional oversight at the campus level, and improve the campus for the staff and student body. The special education staff is responsible for overseeing and implementing special education services individually designed for each student. Special education staff are to collaborate with general education staff, school counselors, and parents to track each student's progress. Each group's role is important to the implementation of services for students with disabilities.

Prior to gathering data, I contacted the district's director of special programs to enlist the district's participation in this single qualitative case study and to determine if the district met the purposive sampling criteria. Grand ISD met the established criteria for a rural area school district serving students in special education with high-incidence disabilities in the secondary setting implementing transition services and supports. The director of special programs agreed to participate in this research study with the approval of the district superintendent and granted permission to request participation from identified parents of students with high-incidence disabilities in the seventh to 12th grades for the 2018-2019 school year. The director of special programs signed the site permission approval form. The research focused on the following questions:

RQ 1. How do educational staff perceive the effectiveness of transition practices for students with high-incidence disabilities who receive special education services through person-centered planning, self-determination skills, interagency collaboration, parental involvement, and school/work-based programs?

RQ 2. How do parental stakeholders perceive the effectiveness of transition practices for students with high-incidence disabilities who receive special education services through person-centered planning, self-determination skills, interagency collaboration, parental involvement, and school/work-based programs?

RQ 3. How do the self-determination theory concepts of autonomy, competence, and relatedness influence the perceptions of educational staff, outside agencies, and parental stakeholders?

Interviews of Educational Staff

I collected the data from a variety of participants from the targeted groups of educational staff: secondary school administrators, secondary special education teachers, secondary special education teachers, and the district school administrator. Each participant had experience with students with high-incidence disabilities receiving special education services and supports. The data I collected focused on the effectiveness of evidence-based transition services and programs for students ages 13 to 21 with high-incidence disabilities receiving special education services and supports in a rural North Texas community.

I used purposive sampling when selecting participants. I collected the data through individual interviews with secondary special education school staff and school administrators for the seventh to 12th grades for the 2018-2019 school year. I conducted face-to-face interviews. After reviewing the total number of school staff members, I determined 16 school staff

participants fit the criteria set fourth for the study. The request was sent to school staff members of: a) secondary special education teachers, b) campus administrators, c) school counselors, and d) the special education director to participate in the research study. I sent a Google form requesting for participation from the listed participants. Enclosed in the Google form was a description of the study. Participants responded to the Google form invitation to participate in the study. When a selected participant did not respond to the Google form, I contacted the individual by email and inquired if they would like to participate. After two weeks and two attempts to resend the Google form along with follow-ups from school email, a total of eight school staff members agreed to participate in the research. I used email correspondence to arrange a date and time with each school staff member to conduct the interview.

In total, 16 school staff members were given the opportunity to participate in this study and eight agreed to participate. There were six special education teachers (46%) and two campus and/or district administrators (15%) who participated. School staff represented 57% from the junior high campus, 42% represented the high school campus, and 1% represented both campuses as campus and/or district administrator. The number of years of special education experience varied: four years or less at 50%, five to 10 years at 38%, and 11 or more years at 12%. During the meeting, I reviewed the informed consent and conducted the interview. All school staff members chose to interview face-to-face. During the interview, I gave a copy of the school staff participant interview questions to the participant as a visual representation in case they needed to reread the questions. The interview times varied based on each interview. The time of each interview ranged from 12 min. to 30 min. I identified each participant by a pseudonym (see Table 1.)

Table 1

Educational Staff Participant Pseudonyms

Participant role	Number of participants per role	Participant pseudonyms
Special education staff	6	Sheena, Rachel, Sky, Jessica, Christian, Cali
Campus and/or district administrator	2	Georgia; Nicole

The special education staff participants had a wide array of job duties, experience, and responsibilities. Sheena was an inclusion special education teacher in mathematics for the junior high campus. She had experience as a special education teacher for five years. Prior to teaching special education, Sheena taught general education seventh grade science and currently coaches eighth grade girls' athletics. In her role, she is the special education department head for the secondary junior high campus. Sheena was responsible for the development, tracking, and progress of 20 students' IEPs.

Rachel was an inclusion special education teacher in English for the junior high campus. She had five years of experience as a special education teacher. Prior to teaching special education, Rachel taught general education English to junior high and high school grades for 15 years. Rachel was responsible for the development, tracking, and progress of 22 students' IEPs.

Sky was an inclusion special education teacher in the area of English for the high school campus. She had six years of experience as a special education teacher, two years at the high school level and four years at the junior high level. Prior to teaching special education, Sky taught seventh grade general education English. In her role, she was the special education department head for the secondary high school campus and responsible for the development, tracking, and progress of the IEPs of 15 students.

Jessica was an inclusion special education teacher in the area of science and social studies for the junior high campus. In addition, she was responsible for the development and implementation of social skills to a small group of five students serviced through special education. She had experience as a special education teacher for two years. Prior to teaching special education, Jessica taught general education culinary arts/CTE for 20 years. Jessica was responsible for the development, tracking, and progress of 15 students' IEPs.

Christian was an inclusion special education teacher in social studies for the high school campus. He had three years of experience as a special education teacher. Prior to teaching special education, Christian taught seventh grade general education social studies and currently coaches high school football and baseball. Christian was responsible for the development, tracking, and progress of 14 students' IEPs.

Cali was a life skills special education teacher for the high school campus. She had experience 13 years of experience as a special education teacher. Cali was responsible for the development, tracking, and progress of 18 students' IEPs.

Two participants represented the district and/campus administrative staff. Georgia was the principal of the secondary junior high campus. She served as the campus principal for the previous four years. Prior to her role as a principal, Georgia taught high school Spanish for 15 years.

Nicole was the director of special programs for the district. She had served as the director for two years. Prior to her role as the director, Nicole served as a high school counselor for three years, a special education life skills teacher for two years, and a special education inclusion teacher for five years.

Educational school staff interview protocol. The instrument I used for this study was a responsive interview protocol. I used predetermined interview questions and applied a semi-structured interview process (see Appendix B for interview protocols). Throughout the interview process, I asked follow-up and probing questions to clarify meaning and to help keep the conversation flowing. The follow-up questions were not the same for each interview. Furthermore, I used the interview protocol as a guide to ensure I asked the appropriate questions to each group of participants. I audio recorded each interview. The interview questions focused on the effective evidence-based transition services and practices as perceived by the selected groups of participants.

Analysis overview. I implemented coding to assist with the interview data analysis. I used open coding to identify basic themes within the data and created a codebook (Appendix C). Each section disclosed the themes found within the data collection process. I reviewed and coded each transcript. I used a color-coding system for each theme identified. I then triangulated the data comparing responses among the participants. I analyzed the responses to these questions based upon each EBTP question in the areas of person-centeredness, self-determination skills, interagency collaboration, parental involvement, and career exploration. See Appendix D for interview transcripts. After identifying the strengths and weaknesses within the targeted transition practice, I identified themes across the educational staff responses. The four themes identified throughout the data analysis include collaboration, explicit teaching, formatting, and training.

The theme of collaboration relates to the district's ability to collaborate in a variety of formats that enabled opportunities for parents, students, and outside agency involvement. The theme of explicit teaching relates to the district's ability to provide teaching opportunities to

students through exposure to skills, application of skills, and opportunities to engage with a variety of learning options. The theme of formatting relates to the district's ability to appropriately format information that is user-friendly to students, staff, and parents. Last, the theme of training relates to the district's need to provide training for students, staff, and parents.

Collaboration. This theme focused on the district's ability to collaborate in a variety of formats that enabled opportunities for parents, students, and outside agency involvement. According to the responses from educational staff, the overall consensus was that parents have ample opportunities to participate in their child's transition progress throughout the year. School staff indicated that 100% of the parents are given many opportunities to participate in their child's IEP process. The interview responses indicated that school staff concern for parental involvement centered on the lack of participation from parents at IEP meetings. Jessica noted, "We do not have adequate parent collaboration from all parents, at the parents' choice. There is lots of correspondence from parent square, post cards, email. The teacher tries but it's based on how involved the parent wants to be." School staff reported that 38% of the parents are involved at the meeting level only. Sheena's information revealed it was often the lack of response from parents when staff initiated collaboration. It is important to note that school staff relayed information to parents prior to the meeting for collaboration, but often they received no response until the IEP meeting, if at all. Sheena reported that parents are given multiple opportunities to collaborate, however, she indicated parent attendance is less than half.

> Last year, maybe half of the parents came to their meeting. Trying to get in touch with the same parents; that doesn't happen. Parent collaboration is needed. There is contact with parents before the meeting for sure during the meeting. I am not sure about follow-up regarding transition. So, before and during, parents are asked to fill out a transition page prior to the meeting and during the meeting questions are asked. Parents are given many opportunities if they are in attendance and involved.

However, Rachel indicated that parents are involved at the admissions, review, and dismissal (ARD meeting. Rachel reported, "They are involved at the ARD level. The students are involved also in the ARD. Parents are given resources." Jessica supported Rachel's claim. Jessica stated, "I think parents are given lots of information but are not involved with the planning. They view them (IEP goals), they have the option to call if they have questions." Both Rachel and Jessica indicated during their interview that parents have opportunities to participate and collaborate with school staff. Rachel stated, "They (parents) are a huge part of that planning process." Also, Jessica stated, "Collaboration takes place all throughout the year." Mostly, the educational staff give ample opportunities for parent collaboration; however, as indicated in the data, parent response to the opportunity is lacking.

In addition, the lack of collaboration between outside agencies and the school indicates a significant area of concern. School staff proclaimed 88% of participants have a lack of collaboration with outside agencies. It should be noted that students serviced through special education in the mainstream inclusion setting only would be less likely to collaborate with outside agencies. Sheena's response indicated she has had little experience with working with outside agencies. Sheena reported, "I have not ever seen that. I have not witnessed this." Sheena was referring to the question: How often do outside agencies collaborate with school personnel? Furthermore, Rachel supported Sheena's claim of lack of collaboration from outside agencies at the Junior High level. Rachel reported, "I haven't seen it at the junior high but have at high school I have collaborated with Helen Farabee a couple of times in ARDs."

However, as indicated in the data analysis, collaboration with outside agencies at the high school level is sporadic. Sky and Christian both reported no experience with collaborating with outside agencies. Sky disclosed, "I have not had an IEP meeting with them." Christian had

positive feedback regarding his perspective of outside agencies, but he reported he had no interaction with them, "I haven't noticed them talking with our school personnel. I have heard great things about them, but I don't have any or very little interactions with them." Further, one observation I made while analyzing the interview correspondence, was the relationship between Cali and Nicole's responses in relation to interagency collaboration with school staff. It was established by the family's efforts to participate in the collaboration efforts. Nicole proclaimed collaboration with outside agencies was, "sporadic, based on individual rather than a systematic approach, driven by the family by being vocal. The more vocal the family is the more likely they will participate."

Cali's response supported Nicole's claim when she stated, "I think they (outside agencies) do if they have active families to begin with. [It's] family driven, not agency driven." This is an important aspect to reflect on when evaluating district policies and procedures regarding collaboration with outside agencies. When triangulated with the district's transition plans from the 2018-2019 school year, the data showed that outside agencies attended student meetings four times. A majority of the transition plans indicated outside agencies were not involved with the students.

Last, student collaboration and involvement are important pieces to effective transition practices. Student collaboration is important to ensure the student has a voice in the development of their transition plan. Georgia supports this claim:

> We have ARD meetings, and we start asking the students to join us. We ask what are you interested in, what are your likes, and 8th-grade-year students start to think about what high school classes they would want; the students have the voice in saying what classes they are interested in. It is important for the student to have a voice.

Furthermore, Sheena addressed the need for more collaboration with students when gathering their transition information. Sheena disclosed the need for more time with individual

students to discuss their interests. Sheena stated, "Opportunity for more than ten minutes to talk

to the kid." I discovered her response during the debriefing section of the interview. Also, Jessica

indicated the need for further collaboration with students. She indicated that "an additional

meeting or additional time for transition conversations," is needed to better collaborate with

students. When triangulated with the district's transition plans from the 2018-2019 school year, I

determined that the majority of the students attended their IEP meetings and completed transition

information prior to their meeting.

In summary, the educator perspectives yielded collaboration with parents, outside

agencies, and students as an important aspect of effective transition practices. According to the

information collected, Grand ISD demonstrated adequate efforts to involve parents and students

in the transition process. As reported by Georgia, "Our team makes every effort to get parents to

participate, make phone calls. We create a positive environment for parents, including them in

the meeting. We do a good job navigating that." The director of special programs supports this

claim. Nicole reported, "We create a collaborative environment." The overall consensus is

parents are provided the opportunity to participate, but often fail to respond to these

opportunities. Also, outside collaboration is driven by the family rather the school. Last,

educational staff reported that student involvement is important. Multiple times throughout the

data analysis, participants indicated that more time for student collaboration was needed.

Explicit teaching. This theme relates to the district's ability to provide teaching

opportunities to students through exposure to skills, application of skills, and opportunities for a

variety of options. According to the responses from educational staff, the overall consensus was

the district provided opportunities for explicit teaching to students with high-incidence

disabilities served in special education to build transition skills throughout the school year. The

subcategories that emerged during the data analysis were the following: the frequency of how often students receive exposure and/or explicit teaching, using in-the-moment teaching, and the limited options for courses, exposure, and/or transition services. I found each of the subcategories within the eight responses I analyzed.

School staff reported that students were learning to make decisions and build their skills in this area. Sheena reported students were learning to make appropriate decisions "during the flex period and character education." Building self-advocacy skills was described to be used at school by half of school staff participants. Rachel reported that "they (students) have to make decisions constantly throughout the day, what assignments to complete, self-advocacy throughout class lets us know if you don't understand something, or need help, every single day and class period." School staff used in-the-moment teaching to develop these skills. School staff noted that they used it frequently. Sheena disclosed, "The inclusion teachers are guiding the student." Further, Sky supported this claim in her response, "[Teachers] step back and let the kids ask for help and be independent, not being right on top of them all the time. [We are] making them advocate for themselves." Lastly, Christian proclaimed the district implemented strategies geared toward building students' skills. Christian said that

> We actually do a good job as a district, seeing where their weaknesses are. They may have a hard time facing it, but we constantly make sure they understand why they need help. Students learn how to advocate for themselves from their freshman to their senior year.

However, educational staff indicated a lack of explicit teaching and/or goals for self-determination skills. Sheena reported, "Really, self-advocacy is not is not explicitly taught and there is no follow-up or opportunity to work on those job skills." Also, Nicole supported this claim, "I don't think it's explicitly taught, more teaching in the moment is done; we don't have a curriculum for this. We can improve in the goal-setting meetings to look at self-determination

skills." As indicated in the results, the district did not have a specific curriculum adopted for teaching self-determination skills, nor did the district have a policy in place for direct goal development and monitoring of explicit self-determination goals to build self-determination skills. Overall, the district was able to build student skills through a variety of opportunities throughout the school day to build self-determination skills. As indicated in the results, the district provided supports to students in order to develop and teach these skills. The district may lack a specific curriculum for teaching self-determination skills, but the data reviewed supported that students continue to receive instruction to build these skills multiple times throughout the school day.

The district provided students with a variety of career exposure and exploration opportunities based on the feedback collected. Educational staff indicated students had more than two opportunities a year for career exploration. Also, it is important to note the variance of opportunities that were offered at the junior high campus and the high school campus. As reported by junior high staff, students have been exposed to a variety of career exploration opportunities multiple times throughout the year. Sheena disclosed students receive career exposure by "going to a career fair in October and completing another standardized test regarding careers and research jobs and pay." Also, Rachel reported, "They [students] have done a research project to research a career and the strengths and skills needed of that career. Also, with a field trip to the local junior college." Finally, Jessica stated, "[Students have] multiple times throughout the six weeks" for career exploration and exposure. As reported from experienced high school staff, Nicole proposed career exploration is completed:

> [This is] done through electives for the most part, given the same opportunities as general education students, they are offered different practicums and internships, and career prep and work programs. We have a wide variety of programming. We have a functional application of the different careers through electives.

Sky's and Christian's responses supported this claim. Sky reported, "Kids have the option to do various electives, for instance, cooking." Christian indicated, "[Students have] exposure to AG and Culinary programs, floral design. There are many opportunities for authentic learning." Overall, school staff was supportive of the district's efforts in providing career exploration opportunities.

Finally, school staff expressed the need for more exposure to career fields. School staff indicated students were exposed to a limited number of resources because the school district is in a rural area. Therefore, the access to a variety of career options was limited. Multiple participants disclosed the need for more opportunities for career exploration and exposure. Sky indicated, "I don't think we [the district] go far enough with some of of the students. We need courses on campus so that they can have a certification when they graduate." Also, Rachel expressed that students "need yearly exposure, not just in 8th grade." Furthermore, Jessica supported her colleagues' claims with her statement, "We need to have an assembly to cover job skills, career day things; the more exposure to things, the better." Both administrator participants identified the district had limited opportunities to career exposure. Georgia expressed that

> I think we can't offer as many electives because of staff, and we are rural; we are lacking in career and technology electives at the junior high. We should be offering for students to do things with their hands. I wonder if we are really are exposing them to enough career fields. We are not providing enough opportunities for technical fields.

Further, Nicole confirmed this allegation and called for more programming and supports. Nicole conveyed that "we can always provide more opportunities. [There is a] lack of resources for career and economic development in this community." Nicole is the only participant to discuss the economic development of the rural community outside of the school setting. Nicole continued to describe the district's situation to provide services, "[We are] not currently

providing job shadowing, job coaching, because we are limited due to staffing." Last, staff noted the district was not able to provide a variety of options geared toward the students' interests. Cali revealed, "It [student exposure] is not based on their interest level, just what is available in our community because of the lack of community resources." This revelation supports the additional findings that the students had limited exposure and opportunities at Grand ISD.

In summary, the district provided a variety of opportunities to help students build skills and practice these skills multiple times a day. Staff reported the district did not have access to specific curricula to teach skills, rather the staff was implementing in-the-moment teaching. Also noted, the district did not have a policy or procedure in place to address specific self-determination goals within each student's IEP. Overall, staff reported students have opportunities for career exposure. Staff noted the frequency of opportunities provided; the frequency of opportunities varied from the junior high and high school campus. In conclusion, the overall consensus from the educational staff was the need to address the limited number of career exploration opportunities in a variety of settings geared toward each student's interests.

Formatting. The theme of formatting relates to the district's ability to appropriately format information that is user-friendly to students, staff, and parents. School staff reported having concerns regarding the format information collection from students and teachers. Sheena reported a weakness in the formatting of the transition information collected from the students, "[It's] not very specific at this time because our kids don't know in depth what they want. Need to add specificity to the questions." In addition, Sheena relayed that "the transition paperwork the teachers had to fill out, they don't understand or know the students really well in order to truly complete that section." Also, Rachel provided feedback regarding the accessibility of the information collection process, "I think they (students) would be more open if it was on the

computer speech to text versus in an interview format." Rachel is the only staff participant to indicate a concern regarding the accessibility of the information collected. Christian had concerns regarding the overall format and the length of the information being collected. Christian's response indicated a need to reduce the overall length:

> One big change would be to find some way for the paperwork to be very easy and manageable. That way we can spend time with our students in a more precise manner. Instead of 20 questions on a questionnaire, there are three questions. The value is lost in the wordiness.

His response concerned the information obtained from the students and teachers. Also, Cali indicated a concern with the forms used to collect transition information. Cali directed her concerns toward a less individualized approach and the use of generic copies for all students. Cali explained, "We had folders that were filled with generic copies that were filled out. Teachers guided that process. It didn't elaborate too much." Cali's response indicated a need for a more individualized approach when collecting transition information from parents, students, and teachers.

In essence, school staff reported the need to re-evaluate how data is collected and what instruments and/or tools are used to collect data from teachers, parents, and staff. Student transition tools should be accessible in a variety of settings, such as in an electronic format. Also, the length of each transition assessment tool should be evaluated to determine if the information can be collected in a shorter format with the same value. Lastly, transition assessments and tools should be individually developed. The forms for each student should be geared toward the student's abilities. Also, the forms implemented should provide valuable feedback to assist in the development of appropriate transition goals and plans for the student.

Training. The theme of training relates to the district's need to provide training for students and staff. School staff identified the lack of awareness students have in relation to their

preferences, goals, and desires. Jessica indicated, "Sometimes their desires are not really in the realm of their abilities and need support to realize the area that is more obtainable." It was a reoccurring theme throughout the data analysis that students were often not self-aware to make realistic, appropriate decisions regarding their life. Christian indicated, "They can't make great decisions at this age. They need everyday training to help them." Also, Sky reported, "I find the younger the kid is the more trouble they have in knowing what they want to do. They need help to understand their preferences is important." As indicated in the responses collected, training students to become more self-aware and set realistic goals is an important part of effective transition practices.

Teachers need training within the district. The research revealed a lack of awareness of resources for school staff. Various separate interviews revealed the need to provide staff training. The areas of training needed included knowledge of transition resources and materials, access to transition resources and materials, and how to implement and teach transition skills. Multiple participants reported that parents were given materials, but they were unaware of what the materials were. Rachel disclosed, "I am not sure of the names, but parents are given multiple resources at ARDs." Also, Jessica indicated, "I think parents are given lots of information. I don't know how, from the diagnostician." Cali reported, "In our ARD meetings the diagnostician addresses verbally provided paperwork to the parents as well." In order to fully assist parents in accessing outside resources, school staff should be knowledgeable of resources available. Last, one participant revealed the need for staff training in the area of teaching self-awareness skills. Georgia reported, "There is a lack of trained staff to truly help students build their self-awareness, we could benefit from training teachers to train students how to self-advocate

appropriately." As reported, appropriate staff training is necessary to implement effective evidence-based transition practices.

In summary, educators' perspectives concluded a need for training for students and school staff. The results indicated a need for training in the area of self-awareness and setting realistic goals for the student population. The interview outcomes determined a need for staff training. The district has a need for staff training in multiple areas, such as knowledge of transition resources and materials, access to transition resources and materials, and how to implement and teach transition skills. The district should review their procedures for student and staff training and develop a plan of action to address the identified areas of concern.

Interviews With Parent Participants

I collected this data from a variety of participants from the targeted group of Grand ISD parents of students with high-incidence disabilities in the seventh to 12th grades for the 2018-2019 school year**.** The data focused on the effectiveness of evidence-based transition services and programs for students ages 13 to 21 with high-incidence disabilities receiving special education services and supports in a rural north Texas community. This section of the research focused on the following question:

RQ 2. How do parental stakeholders perceive the effectiveness of transition practices for students with high-incidence disabilities who receive special education services through person-centered planning, self-determination skills, interagency collaboration, parental involvement, and school/work-based programs?

I used purposive sampling when selecting participants and collected data through individual interviews with Grand ISD parents. I conducted the interviews through face-to-face and phone conference interviews. I reviewed student IEP documents to determine which parents

would meet the established criteria to participate in the study. After reviewing the total number of illegible parent participants, I determined 42 parents fit the criteria set forth for the study and sent an email request to identified parents of junior high students with high-incidence disabilities receiving special education services and supports for the 2018-2019 school year and high school students with high-incidence disabilities receiving special education services and supports for the 2018-2019 school. Enclosed in the email was a description of the study asking parents to respond to the email if they were willing to participate in the study. After two weeks with no responses, I sent a follow-up email. Within the second follow-up, two parents agreed to participate. Again, I sent a third email, and three additional parents responded. I used email correspondence to arrange a date and time with each parent participant to conduct the interview.

Out of the 42 participants, only five parent participants agreed to participate. They represented four students with high-incidence disabilities enrolled at the high school and one student with a high-incidence disability enrolled at junior high. At the start of each interview, I gave a copy of the interview questions to the participant as a visual representation in case they needed to reread the questions. The parent interview times varied based on each interview. The time of each parent interview ranged from 12 min. to 22 min. I identified each participant through pseudonyms (see Table 2.)

Table 2

Parent Participant Pseudonyms

Campus Represented	Number of participants per role	Participant pseudonyms	Disabilities represented
Grand Junior High	1	Lena	Specific learning disability; Other health impairment
Grand High School	4	Dixie, Kristen, Cindy, Monica	Specific learning disability; Other health impairment; Autism; Intellectual disability

Grand ISD Parent Participants

Parents within the sample identified their child had one or two of the following high-incidence disabilities: specific learning disability at 40%, other health impairment and specific learning disability at 20%, autism at 20%, and intellectual disability and other health impairment at 20%. Lena was the only parent participant to represent the Grand ISD junior high parents. Her son met the eligibility criteria for special education services as a student with a specific learning disability and other health impairment for ADHD. Lena's son was in the seventh grade during the 2018-2019 school year. He received services in the mainstream setting with accommodations and inclusion supports from the special education staff.

The remainder of the parent participants represented the Grand ISD high school parent participants. Kristen's daughter met the eligibility criteria for special education services as a student with a specific learning disability. Her daughter was in the ninth grade during the 2018-2019 school year. Her daughter received services in the inclusion setting with accommodations and inclusion supports from the special education staff.

Dixie's daughter met the eligibility criteria for special education services as a student with a specific learning disability. Her daughter was in the 10th grade during the 2018-2019 school year. Her daughter received services in the inclusion setting with accommodations and inclusion supports from the special education staff.

Cindy's son met the eligibility criteria for special education services as a student with autism. He received services in the inclusion setting with accommodations and inclusion supports from the special education staff and vocational instruction in the life skills setting for two periods of the day. Her son was in the 11th grade during the 2018-2019 school year.

Last, Monica's son met the eligibility criteria for special education services as a student with an intellectual disability and other health impairment for ADHD. Her son received services in the inclusion setting with accommodations and inclusion supports from the special education staff in four classes and four classes in the special education life skills setting for vocational instruction. Her son was in the 10th grade during the 2018-2019 school year.

Parent interview protocol. The instrument I used for this study was an interview protocol using a responsive interview model. I used predetermined interview questions and applied a semi-structured interview process (Appendix B). Throughout the interview, I asked follow-up and probing questions to clarify meanings and to help keep the conversation flowing. The follow-up questions were not the same per each interview. Furthermore, I used the interview protocol as a guide to ensure I asked the appropriate questions to each group of participants and audio recorded each interview. The interview questions focused on the effective evidence-based transition services and practices as perceived by the selected groups of participants.

Analysis overview. I implemented coding to assist with the interview data analysis. I used open coding to identify basic themes within the data and created a codebook (see Appendix

C). Each section disclosed the themes found within the data collection process. I reviewed and coded each transcript. I used a color-coding system for each theme identified. The triangulated data among a variety of information collected comparing responses of the participants. I analyzed the responses to these questions based upon each targeted EBTP question in the areas of person-centeredness, self-determination skills, interagency collaboration, parental involvement, and career exploration. The raw qualitative parent interviews can be found in Appendix E. After identifying the strengths and weaknesses within the targeted transition practice, I identified themes across parent responses. The four themes identified throughout the data analysis include collaboration, explicit teaching/opportunities, formatting, and training. These themes aligned with the themes identified from the educational staff interviews.

The theme of collaboration relates to the district's ability to collaborate in a variety of formats that enabled opportunities for parent, student, and outside agency involvement. The theme of explicit teaching/opportunities relates to the district's ability to provide teaching and/or opportunities to learn skills to students through exposure to skills, application of skills, and opportunities for a variety of options and formats to collaborate. The theme of formatting relates to the district's ability to appropriately format information that is user-friendly to students, staff, and parents and is communicated in a variety of ways. Last, the theme of training relates to the district's need to provide training for students, staff, and parents.

Collaboration. This theme relates to the district's ability to collaborate in a variety of formats that enabled opportunities for parent, student, and outside agency involvement. The subcategories identified within the collaboration theme included collaboration environment for parent and student, opportunities to collaborate, and collaboration with school staff and/or outside agencies. According to the responses, the overall consensus was parents feel encouraged

to participate in the development of their child's plan. Monica disclosed a positive perspective related to a positive collaborative environment: "I am very much encouraged. There's a very receptive environment, openness, a lot of reaching out from the school to collaborate." Cindy, Kristen, Dixie, and Lena relayed similar feelings of being encouraged to participate. However, Dixie highlighted an area of concern in her response: "I feel encouraged, but I am not able to." Dixie reported that she was "more readily available to collaborate through email, maybe by phone conference, after working hours would probably encourage me to be more involved." Cindy reported she has experienced constant contact from school staff and "all my questions are always answered." Also, Kristen noted she received adequate collaboration from special education staff, but not the general education staff: "Really good communication with the SPED [special education] side, but the classroom teacher lacks communication to help with tutorials or communication from the teachers to parents and students." This piece of data revealed an additional area of concern related to collaboration efforts across all staff roles. Also, Monica reported the school has involved her son in the planning process and about "staff interviewing him, (his) job interest, future plans, spending time with him and collaboration with TWC." Kristen supported this claim that the school collaborated with her child: "[School] asks her what she likes now and she is choosing her classes for her future." Based on the responses, Grand ISD has created a positive collaborative environment; parents feel encouraged to participate in their child's planning and involve the students in their transition planning.

Second, I evaluated the number of opportunities where parents were able to collaborate in the transition process. The range of responses fell between "at the ARD level" to "all year long." The overall consensus from the participants was they have opportunities throughout the year to participate in the collaboration process. Cindy disclosed the school communicates throughout the

school year, "It stays in contact with us all year long." Monica supported this claim: "There's ongoing collaboration, communication with the classroom teacher." Lena and Kristen had similar reports. Kristen reported she has opportunities throughout the school year: ". . . three times a year and at the (IEP) meeting. The school is always in communication with me."

However, Dixie reported she doesn't feel she has many opportunities to collaborate. Dixie replied, "Not as much as I would like, but I feel that is my fault because I haven't been able to attend. Email would be easier to do and use to collaborate." Again, Dixie's response highlighted a need for Grand ISD to provide opportunities for collaboration in a variety of formats.

Last, information was gathered to determine collaboration efforts with outside agencies in the local area from the Texas Workforce Commission and Helen Farabee service in relation to school transition services. Of the five participants, two parents (Cindy and Monica) reported their child received services from outside agencies. Monica reported, "Helen Farabee has collaborated very little with the school, not the result of the school. Helen Farabee has not responded to collaboration efforts and TWC [Texas Workforce Commission] is an ongoing collaboration." Cindy disclosed that she meets with "TWC regularly. Every six months they are involved and in his ARD meetings."

When analyzing the data, it was noted that both Monica and Cindy received services in the special education life skills setting for vocational training. Dixie reported she was unsure if she received collaboration from outside agencies, "Currently, I don't know." Lena and Kristen reported their child did not receive services. Overall, when outside service agencies were involved, parent responses indicated a strong level of collaboration between the school and the outside agency.

In summary, parental responses varied in relation to the collaboration efforts of school staff with parents. According to the information collected, based on the majority, Grand ISD demonstrated adequate efforts to involve parents in the transition process. The participants indicated the school has created a positive collaborative environment. Of the responses received, 60% indicated they were satisfied with the collaboration efforts. However, it is important to note the areas of concern that were revealed through the interview process; these were collaboration opportunities in a variety of formats and collaboration efforts from the general education staff. Dixie expressed a desire to have the opportunity to participate through an electronic format: "Email would be easier to do." Kristen expressed the need for better collaboration with the general education staff: "The classroom teacher lacks communication." Also, the data showed that Grand ISD staff included students in the collaboration process.

Explicit teaching/opportunities. The theme of explicit teaching/opportunities relates to the district's ability to provide teaching opportunities to students through exposure to skills, application of skills, and opportunities to a variety of options. According to the responses from parent participants, the overall consensus was the district provided opportunities for explicit teaching to students with high-incidence disabilities served in special education to build transition skills. The subcategories that emerged during the data analysis were the frequency of how often students receive exposure to opportunities, generalization and/or application of the skills, and the desire for more opportunities.

Each parent participant relayed their child received exposure to opportunities to build their transition skills throughout the school day. Lena reported that "the school instructs him and teaches him throughout the day. He has opportunities to make choices. The school guides him." Kristen confirmed her daughter has multiple opportunities to practice self-determination skills

throughout the school day: "She practices this all-day long." Furthermore, Dixie and Cindy said their children received exposure to a variety of skills. Dixie reported, "The school provides opportunities for job exposure." Cindy proclaimed her son received "exposure to a variety of skills and (was) building independence." Overall, the majority of participants determined the school provided a variety of opportunities for exposure to develop new skills.

Second, parental responses revealed that, through the application of explicit teaching opportunities, students were able to generalize and apply skills in a variety of areas. Kristen reported, "It has helped her make decision based on what she wants to do in the future." Cindy supported this claim. Cindy indicated her son "is able to make choices and he has responsibilities." Cindy's response supported the subcategory claim of generalization because her son was able to make decisions based on his exposure to learning new skills.

Finally, the data analysis revealed parents had a desire for more opportunities for their child. A majority of parental respondents indicated the need for more exposure and opportunities in the school setting to build transition skills. Lena reported, **"**I think he can always be exposed more to career exploration and opportunities." Further, Cindy indicated, "[I would] like to have more activities to do and more things for him to be involved in." Their responses remained broad and did not provide a specific area where the parents would like to have additional opportunities even when asked a follow-up question on those specific activities they would like to see. However, Monica made a specific recommendation for additional opportunities: "more direct instruction of self-determination skills." Monica's specific claim is important to note the need of additional self-determination skill teaching and opportunities to practice those skills.

Formatting. The theme of formatting relates to the district's ability to appropriately format information that is user-friendly to students, staff, and parents. The data analysis revealed

there were two areas highlighted the area of formatting: parent resources and communication. All five participants provided feedback regarding the format of the resources received from the school. The interview data indicated a discrepancy within the responses. Lena reported she received the resources in the ARD meeting and she found that "the resources were helpful." Also, Cindy relayed that "we have been guided to these resources by the school staff. These resources were helpful. [Also], given pamphlets." Furthermore, Monica indicated, "They [resources] have been provided by the outside agencies, at school. Not just at the ARD meeting. Different resources at different times like pamphlets, attending workshops. The resources are helpful." These responses indicated Grand ISD provided adequate resources to the parent population. On the other hand, Dixie and Kristen had different experiences. Dixie claimed, "I know the team at school provides supports. That's all. I'm not able to find the information easily within the ARD paperwork, could be made easier to find." Also, Kristen indicated, "The resources are difficult to find within the ARD document, I do not notice where the transition paperwork is at, speak it to me, give me separate pamphlets outside of the ARD document." Kristen indicated she would like the staff to discuss the options in depth with her. Their concerns indicated a need for Grand ISD to consider providing information and/or resources through additional formats outside of the IEP document.

In addition, when asked how the school can better involve the parent in transition planning, participants indicated a concern with the format in which information is communicated. Dixie disclosed a desire to communicate electronically "through email." However, Kristen desired information to be communicated by mail or on the school website: "Mail document would be easier to access. [The school should] post more information on the websites about what is going on." This indicated a need for Grand ISD to review their

procedures for parent communication and provide alternatives. In essence, the data indicated a need to evaluate the format resources and communication are provided to parents.

Training. The theme of training relates to the district's need to provide training for students, staff, and parents. One hundred percent of the parent participants identified the need for additional training. After reviewing the data, the areas of future training included training for students, training for educational staff, and training for parents. All five participants reported a need for training for the student population. Lena expressed the need for training to assist her son in developing skills "to help him understand the importance of career interests and deciding what he wants to do." Also, Cindy reported her son needs further training to develop his transition skills: "He needs help with making decision[s] for his future. Right now, he is not able to make the right decision for himself." Their claims support the need for further training and continued explicit training and opportunities to build independent skills. Parent perspective indicated a need for educational staff training. Kristen indicated the need for general education staff training: "They [classroom teachers] should know more and understand what my child needs and accommodations." Kristen's claims revealed the need for Grand ISD to ensure general education staff are well-trained in implementing accommodations and/or classroom strategies for individuals with disabilities.

Last, parents indicated the need for parent training. The evidence disclosed many of the parent participants reported a need for parent training. Of the respondents, only one interview participant provided a specific training need concern while the other participants' requests were vague. Dixie indicated, "More education for the parents is needed." She did not specify what areas of training were needed. Cindy supported this claim but provided a more specific area of need. She reported that

involvement of special education of the Hispanic communication and training with translators. More collaboration for the Hispanic communities with special populations. The Hispanic community is not very involved, are not involved because the lack of interpretation and communication issues. Finding more help and meetings for the Hispanic community in relation to special populations.

In summary, parent perspectives concluded a need for future training. The results indicated a need for training in the area of students, staff, and parents. The interview outcomes determined a need for student training in the areas of self-awareness and skills building. The district has a need for staff training to ensure the general education staff understand how to implement accommodations and classroom strategies to assist individuals with disabilities in the classroom. One parent identified necessary parent training for the Hispanic community. Grand ISD should review their procedures for student, staff, and parent training and develop a plan of action to address the identified areas of concern.

Summary

In summary, I aimed to gather information from parent participants of students with high-incidence disabilities in the seventh to 12th grades receiving special education services in relation to effective EBTPs in a rural school district. In total, 42 parents were given the opportunity to participate in this research study. Only five total responses were received from parents willing to participate. Of the five parent participants from Grand ISD, one of these students attended at the junior high campus during the 2018-2019 school year, and four students attended the high school campus. An email was sent a total of three times to enlist participation. I used email to schedule the interview. Each participant was the parent of a student with high-incidence disabilities receiving special education services and supports.

The research data collected focused on the effectiveness of evidence-based transition services and programs for students ages 13 to 21 with high-incidence disabilities receiving

special education services and supports in a rural north Texas community. I collected the data

through individual interviews face-to-face and by phone conferences. I used predetermined

interview questions and applied a semi-structured interview process. Throughout the interview

process, I asked follow-up and probing questions to clarify meaning and to help keep the

conversation flowing. The follow-up questions were not the same per each interview. I audio

recorded each interview. Also, I completed field notes at the end of each interview session. For

the data analysis, I used open coding and identified basic themes.

Upon completing the coding analysis, I identified four themes when analyzing parent

perspectives that included collaboration, explicit teaching/opportunities, formatting, and training.

The results indicated Grand ISD provided opportunities for parents and students to collaborate

with school staff during the IEP process. The outcome revealed parent perspectives believed

school staff provided adequate opportunities for parent participation and involvement, but there

were concerns regarding the format of collaboration. Also, collaboration with outside agencies

was determined to be based on the individual student's level of needs and instructional setting.

As determined by the triangulation for the 2018-2019 transition plan supplement review, the

majority of the students did not have outside agency involvement. Student collaboration was

highlighted as a positive strength from the parent perspective. Parent perspectives revealed their

child had opportunities to collaborate with school staff and express their desires for their futures.

Second, explicit teaching opportunities was a theme that emerged from both educational

staff and parents. Explicit teaching opportunities referred to exposure to skills, application of

skills, and opportunities of a variety of options. Overall, parents reported students had multiple

opportunities to build self-determination skills. Parents expressed their child received daily

experiences and opportunities to build their skills. They reported the frequency of explicit

teaching occurred multiple times throughout the day and the students had exposure through a variety of school activities. Also, in this section, they expressed a desire for more opportunities be made available for students.

Third, the results from the parent participants yielded a deficit in formatting in the areas of parent resources and communication. The overall results indicated inconsistent findings in the area of the formatting of parent resources. Some participants expressed the resources provided are helpful, while others expressed the lack of knowledge of transition resources provided throughout the school year and where to locate the resources within the ARD documents. One trend identified in the analysis process revealed parents of students receiving services in the life skills vocational setting were satisfied with the information provided, while other participants with children in the mainstream inclusion setting were not able to identify where the resources were located. Furthermore, respondents reported the need for a variety of formats in the area of communication. The data revealed the need to reevaluate procedures for communicating to parents in a variety of formats. The results indicated communication is needed both electronically and through mail.

Finally, the last theme reported by parent participants was the theme of training. This theme revealed the need for training for students, teachers, and parents. All respondents indicated the need for further training. The data indicated students need additional training in the areas of decision making, self-determination skills, and the importance of career interest inventories and/or career exposure. One respondent petitioned for additional training for the general education staff. The participant's request was directly associated with the need for training of how to implement accommodations and provide classroom strategies. Last, the data exposed the need for parent training. Out of the two respondents, only one specified what areas of parent

training were needed. The evidence reported the need for further parent training for the Hispanic community in the areas of special education and transition skills.

In conclusion, parent perspectives identified areas of improvement in relation to the school's EBTPs. The areas of focus should be to implement more opportunities and/or activities to transition skill development, restructure how parents receive transition resource materials, reevaluate how information is communicated and provided in a variety of formats, and develop training for students, school staff, and parents. Providing training for staff, students, and parents would improve each student's transition skills, the school staff's knowledge base on classroom strategies, and parent awareness. Last, based on parents' perspectives, the school district should explore options to provide additional opportunities to build transition skills. The results will be shared with Grand ISD to determine how the feedback can be used to improve the district's programming.

Results: Self-Determination Theory

The data were collected from a variety of participants from the targeted group of Grand ISD parents of students with high-incidence disabilities in the seventh to 12th grades and selected school staff for the 2018-2019 school year**.** The research data collected focused on the effectiveness of evidence-based transition services and programs for students ages 13 to 21 with high-incidence disabilities receiving special education services and supports in a rural north Texas community.

This section focuses on the following question:

RQ 3. How do the self-determination theory concepts of autonomy, competence, and relatedness influence the perceptions of educational staff and parental stakeholders?

Analysis overview. I implemented coding to assist with the interview data analysis. I used open coding to identify basic themes within the data and created a codebook. Each section disclosed the themes found within the data collection process. I reviewed and coded each transcript and used a color-coding system for each theme identified. I analyzed the responses to these questions based upon the concepts of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. The raw qualitative parent interviews can be found in Appendix E. After identifying participant views based on grouping, I identified consistencies across school staff and parent responses.

Interview Results: Self-Determination Theory

Self-determination theory (SDT) is an evidence-based theory that proposes that an individual's motivation is developed through three basic needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness (O'Brien, 2018). SDT highlights the importance that self-determination skills are a product of both the person and the environment of the person using the skills, knowledge, and beliefs at their disposal to act on the environment with the goal of obtaining valued and desired outcomes (Wehmeyer, 2003). Students acquire transitions skills both from their learning environment and their individual motivation to learn. During the interviews, I asked parents and educational staff participants to provide feedback based on how their perspective of how autonomy, competence, and relatedness affects the individual's views of transition services and skills. I noted participants had a difficult time providing feedback and needed clarification of the question. It is important to note this question was difficult for both groups of participants to answer. I had to reword and rephrase this question multiple times for each participant.

Autonomy is characterized by one's own beliefs. In the area of autonomy, school staff participants indicated they had a strong belief of high expectations and teaching students to be more self-reliant. Sky reported, "Making them (students) be more self-reliant and chase the

dream." Jessica supported this claim: "They need to learn how to be self-sufficient and not be on government support for the rest of their lives, or dependent on their parents the rest of their lives." Also, Rachel revealed individuals should "be realistic." Last, Nicole highlighted the importance of having high expectations: "With the proper amount of support students can access a job. Having high expectations that students can have a job in their interest in some format." Based on the review of parent feedback, the participants reported autonomy is related to their personal experiences. Dixie indicated autonomy is developed through "the Bible and my religion." Lena said her views were developed based on her experiences: "My upbringing helps me make decisions in how I view transition skills and what I want for my child." Last, Kristen highlighted the importance of developing autonomy skills for her daughter: "Instilling a work ethic in her is important." Overall, the respondents indicated a strong need to develop autonomy related to personal beliefs, self-reliance, and establishing realistic high expectations.

Second, competence is characterized as the ability to complete tasks successfully. Educational staff pinpointed the importance of developing competencies across settings and promoting independence skills. Cali reported, "My expectation is to help them (students) generalize across all settings." Furthermore, Nicole addressed the need for likeminded people to provide better more successful outcomes: "More likeminded providers are needed in order to adequately provide services; more hands are always helpful but likeminded people are better." This feedback disclosed the need to ensure selected school staff understand the importance of building competence in the student population. Finally, Georgia followed Nicole's claim with this observation:

> I wonder if our kids really have the necessary skills to be competent. We do not have all the competency because we are a rural area. We could promote independent skills better by providing natural consequences. We can do better to prepare kids for job skills.

This assessment revealed the call for the reevaluation of Grand ISD's programming. Furthermore, parent perspectives indicated a strong desire to build competence in their children. The research noted parent perspectives aligned regardless of the respondent's child's instructional setting. Kristen emphasized that "setting goals for herself is important. I want her to do something so she can take care of herself." Monica reiterated the importance of building competence for her son: "My goal is for him to live independently with minimal assistance and be employable and the transition skills he has had exposure to has aligned with his transition skills and services." In essence, parent and school staff perspectives highlighted the importance of developing competences across settings and promoting independence skills.

Third, relatedness is characterized as one's ability to relate or connect to their environment. The direct responses obtained for relatedness were limited with only two direct responses, one from each participant group. Regardless of the limited response received, I identified a theme in the results. Both parent and educational staff perspectives emphasized the importance of relatedness. Cali said, "My expectations are that they are part of a community, appreciated, and plugged into the community." Her feedback supported the importance of community connections. Also, Cindy disclosed her desires for her son: "My expectations for him are to be a good citizen." Both responses indicated a related connection to the importance of citizenship and community involvement.

In summary, school staff and parent perspectives underlined the importance of developing autonomy, competence, and relatedness. The data indicated strong correlations from educational and parent perspectives in all three areas. The key components identified include the

need to develop self-reliant individuals, the need to build competent individuals, and the need to ensure students are connected to their community and/or environment.

Comparative Analysis

This research gathered data from Grand ISD's selected school staff and parents of students with high-incidence disabilities in the seventh to 12th grades for the 2018-2019 school year. The research data collected focused on the effectiveness of evidence-based transition services and programs for students ages 13 to 21 with high-incidence disabilities receiving special education services and supports in a rural north Texas community. The research focused on the following questions:

RQ 1. How do educational staff perceive the effectiveness of transition practices for students with high-incidence disabilities who receive special education services through person-centered planning, self-determination skills, interagency collaboration, parental involvement, and career exposure/career exploration opportunities?

RQ 2. How do parental stakeholders perceive the effectiveness of transition practices for students with high-incidence disabilities who receive special education services through person-centered planning, self-determination skills, interagency collaboration, parental involvement, and career exposure/career exploration opportunities?

This section focuses on a comparative analysis of educational staff and parent perspectives of the effectiveness of transition practices for students with high-incidence disabilities who receive special education services through person-centered planning, self-determination skills, interagency collaboration, parental involvement, and career exposure/career exploration opportunities. Results from the comparative analysis have been organized according to the themes identified by each participant group.

Collaboration. This theme is focused on the district's ability to collaborate in a variety of formats that enabled opportunities for parent, student, and outside agency involvement. When comparing the groups' responses, I noted similarities in the areas of opportunities to collaborate, parent involvement and positive collaborative environment, student involvement, and lack of outside agency participation. Mostly, the data showed that Grand ISD provided parents' multiple opportunities to participate in their child's transition planning. Educational staff highlighted opportunities are provided in a variety of ways from phone correspondence to mail correspondence. Overall, parent participants agreed they feel they have opportunities to collaborate throughout the school year. Furthermore, respondents from both groups concluded Grand ISD created a positive collaborative environment that encouraged parent participation. Also, participants reported students are involved in their transition process. The student involvement indicated person-centered planning (PCP) is implemented at Grand ISD.

Last, the data pinpointed congruent perspectives related to the lack of outside agency participation. Most educational staff and parent respondents had limited interactions with an outside agency. However, educational staff and parent participants who have experience in the special education instructional life skills setting indicated better collaboration rates with outside agency providers. It is important to note the student's instructional setting could be linked to the amount of involvement from outside agencies. One difference revealed between the groups was the educational staff's concern for the lack of parental involvement in the transition process. Parent participants did not elude to this concern. Only one parent participant stated she would like to be more involved but needed alternate forms of communication due to her working situation.

Explicit teaching. This theme relates to the district's ability to provide teaching opportunities to students through exposure to skills, application of skills, and opportunities to a variety of options. When comparing the groups' responses, I noted similarities in the areas of frequency of exposure to build skills and limited options or desire for more opportunities. Educational staff relayed students have multiple opportunities throughout the school year for exposure to career exploration. Further, school staff reported students are able to practice self-determination skills multiple times throughout the school day. According to the results of parent participants, their perspective aligned with school staff's perspective. Parent participants reported their children receive multiple opportunities for exposure to career exploration and opportunities to build skills. Furthermore, school staff responses highlighted teaching explicit skills often occurs in the moment rather than explicitly taught. It was noted educational staff reported the district does not have a designated curriculum to build self-determination skills. Parent participants reported students are applying and generalizing skills learned across a variety of settings.

Last, both groups identified the need for more opportunities for students in the area of career exposure to build skills. Parent participants identified the need to expose students to a variety of skills in a variety of settings. Also, educational staff indicated more exposure is needed, but the district is limited to resources related to their rural location and access to resources. Overall, both groups' perspectives aligned in the area of explicit teaching.

Format. The theme of formatting relates to the district's ability to appropriately format information that is user-friendly to students, staff, and parents. It was noted both groups identified deficits in areas of the districts' formatting of materials and processes; however, the data disclosed the areas of deficits were different for each group's perspective. Educational staff

results indicated deficits in the areas of specification and individualized transition information forms, accessibility of transition forms for students, and he length of transition information forms. On the other hand, parent perspectives indicated a concern in the area of how parent resources are disseminated and how school staff communicate with parents. Educational staff's main concerns targeted the need for transition forms to be more individualized rather than pre-populated generic forms and the accessibility of the forms for students to complete. Some school staff indicated the generic forms do not allow an in-depth evaluation of the student's desires and skill development needs. Also, the paper-based forms limit the student's ability to complete the forms independently. Further, one staff respondent reported the length of the teacher forms are long and loses its value in the wordiness of the information.

On the other hand, partial parent perspectives identified concerns in how the district presented and documented transition resources and information. These sub-theme area results indicated a split observation regarding the formatting of transition resources. Half of parent participants reported satisfaction with the resources received from the school district, while other participants indicated resources are difficult to locate within the ARD documentation and requested information be provided in separate handouts. Also, parent outlook reported split experiences in the area of communication. Overall, more than half of parent participants did not indicate a concern in this area. On the other hand, the remaining parent participants reported a concern in the area of how the district communicated information. One respondent requested materials be communicated electronically while another requested the materials be communicated through mail. Overall, both participant groups reported that formatting was as an area of concern. The areas of concerns were different based on the data collected from each groups' perspective.

Training: student, staff, and parent. The theme of training relates to the district's need to provide training for students, staff, and parents. When comparing the groups' responses, I noted similarities in the need for training in the areas of school staff training and student training. Both groups identified the need for training in these areas; however, I discovered the areas of training needed for school staff were different based on the comparison of perspectives. Educational staff identified the need for training in the area of transition resources. Parent participants reported a need for staff training for general education staff in the area of how to implement accommodations and strategies specific to student disability. Both groups reported the need for further student training in the area of self-awareness and career development. In addition, parent perspectives reported the need for parent training. Parent participants reported the need for specific training for the Hispanic population. In essence, additional training was emphasized as an area of improvement for Grand ISD.

Summary

In conclusion, in this study I aimed to gather information from school staff and parent perspectives of students with high-incidence disabilities in the seventh to 12th grades receiving special education services in relation to effective evidence-based transition practices in a rural school district. In total, 16 school staff members were given the opportunity to participate in this research study. Only eight total responses were received from school staff willing to participate. Of the eight secondary participants from Grand ISD, three were special education inclusion teachers at the junior high campus; two were special education inclusion teachers at the high school campus, one was a special education life skills teacher at the high school campus, and two were school administrators.

I asked the participants to participate in the research study through a Google form. I used email correspondence to schedule the interview. Each participant had experience with students with high-incidence disabilities receiving special education services and supports. Also, I gave a total of 42 parents the opportunity to participate in this research study. I received only five total parent responses willing to participate. The parent representatives represented the junior high campus and high school campus. I asked the parent participants to participate through an email. The research data collected focused on the effectiveness of evidence-based transition services and programs for students ages 13 to 21 with high-incidence disabilities receiving special education services and supports in a rural north Texas community.

Data collection involved face-to-face and phone conference interview. I used predetermined interview questions and applied a semi-structured interview process. Throughout the interview process, I asked follow-up and probing questions to clarify meaning and to help keep the conversation flowing. The follow-up questions were not the same per each interview. Also, I audio recorded each interview and completed field notes at the end of each interview session. For the data analysis, I applied open coding to identify basic themes.

Upon completing the coding analysis, I identified four themes in both parent and school staff participants that included: a) collaboration, b) explicit teaching, c) formatting, and d) training: student, staff, and parent. The interview respondents indicated that the school district made strong efforts in collaborating with parents. Overall, parent perspectives supported this claim. School staff interview responses indicated that the school provided adequate opportunities for parent participation and involvement, but there was a lack of response to school staff's efforts to collaborate. Parent perspectives disclosed the need for collaboration to be provided in a variety of ways. For example, collaboration should be provided through email correspondence.

Also, school staff reported collaboration with outside agencies was determined to be "sporadic" and "family driven." This observation was split based on parent perspective. Also, outside agency involvement was noted more in students serviced in the special education life skills setting than the mainstream inclusion setting. As determined by the triangulation for the 2018-2019 transition plan supplement review, the majority of the students did not have outside agency involvement. I noted student collaboration was as an area of additional need. Staff reported the need to meet more frequently and/or have additional opportunities to collaborate with students. However, parent feedback indicated they were satisfied with their child's involvement in their plan.

Second, explicit teaching is a theme that emerged from both parent and school staff perspectives. Explicit teaching refers to the direct teaching and building of transition skills through exposure, in-the-moment teaching opportunities, and career exploration strategies. Overall, staff reported there were multiple opportunities to build self-determination skills. Often, these skills are taught through in-the-moment teaching and daily experiences. Staff reported multiple opportunities for career exploration and exposure through a variety of classroom assignments, field trips, and elective courses. I noted there is a variance of opportunities provided between the junior high and high school campuses. Parent feedback aligned with this claim. Also, in this section, school staff and parent participants identified an area of concern with limited opportunities available for students to receive a variety of job skills and/or exposure. I noted this was due to the location in a rural area and lack of access to a variety of options.

Third, I noted a deficit in the formatting of the materials used to gather transition information from students and teachers. Educational staff respondents reported the need for more specific forms that address the individual student needs rather than generic forms used for all

students. Also, educational staff identified the length of the forms used for teachers and how the information is used was determined to be an area that needs to be addressed. Further, the accessibility of the forms for the students was discussed. School staff reported transition forms need to be available in a variety of formats to accommodate reading deficits. On the other hand, parent participants reported a concern in the formatting of transition resource given to parents. Also, parent feedback indicated the need to provide a variety of alternatives for formatting communication of transitional information both electronically and by mail.

Also, the last theme reported was the theme of training, and most parent and staff respondents indicated the need for more training for parents, students, and staff. I discovered students have a lack of self-awareness of realistic goals. I noted a need for discussions with students regarding realistic goals and expectations. Furthermore, there is a need for student training in the area of self-determination and decision-making skills. This can be linked to person-centered planning and self-determination strategies. It is important for students with disabilities to understand their strengths and weaknesses and how they affect their performance in life. Also, staff respondents indicated a need for teacher training as well.

Participants identified the need for teacher training in the areas of knowledge of transition resources and materials, access to transition resources and materials, and how to implement and teach transition skills. Multiple times throughout the data analysis, I discovered teachers had a lack of knowledge of outside agency resources and how to assist parents in accessing services. Also, the campus administrator acknowledged the need for additional staff training to better prepare staff on how to teach students self-determination skills. In addition, I noted parent responses supported the need for staff training for general education teachers in the area of

accommodation implementation and classroom strategies. Also, parent feedback identified the need for Hispanic parent training.

Last, I discovered congruent perspectives related to the implication of SDT. School staff and parent perspectives underlined the importance of developing autonomy, competence, and relatedness. The data indicated strong correlations from educational and parent perspectives in all three areas. In addition, I noted the key components of SDT include the need to develop self-reliant individuals, the need to build competent individuals, and ensure students are connected to their community and/or environment.

In conclusion, school staff and parent participants identified areas of improvement in relation to Grand ISD's EBTPs and procedures for the 2018-2019 school year. The areas of focus should be parent and outside agency involvement initiatives, training for identified needs for students, staff, and parents, and exploring options to provide opportunities for career exploration. The results yielded a high area of concern for the lack of outside agency involvement. Furthermore, parent involvement was an area of concern for school staff. In Chapter 5, I present the summary, conclusions, and recommendations for implementation and further study.

Chapter 5 Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to identify effective evidence-based transition practices (EBTPs) in a rural north Texas school district. This chapter highlights a discussion of the main discoveries as related to the literature of effective EBTPs: person-centered planning (PCP), self-determination skills, interagency collaboration, parental involvement, and career exploration. Also, this chapter reviews the necessary improvements to Grand ISD's transition practices and procedures. Last, this chapter discusses the limitations and future research needed.

This chapter contains discussion and further recommendations to help answer the following research questions:

RQ 1. How do educational staff perceive the effectiveness of transition practices for students with high-incidence disabilities who receive special education services through person-centered planning, self-determination skills, interagency collaboration, parental involvement, and school/work-based programs?

RQ 2. How do parental stakeholders perceive the effectiveness of transition practices for students with high-incidence disabilities who receive special education services through person-centered planning, self-determination skills, interagency collaboration, parental involvement, and school/work-based programs?

RQ 3. How do the self-determination theory concepts of autonomy, competence, and relatedness influence the perceptions of educational staff and parental stakeholders?

Educator and parent participants identified employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities continue to be an area for concern. Employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities are significantly less than their peers. Employment rates for those with disabilities

differ by 20% to 30% from individuals without disabilities (Honeycutt et al., 2015). Furthermore, the lack of success after high school could be due to the lack of effective transition programming (OKeefe & Behan, 2010). According to Bumble, Carter, McMillan, and Manikas (2017), the importance of further research in the area of the design of school transition programs and EBPs is needed.

Discussion

While EBTPs are well-identified within the literature, what remains in dispute is their effectiveness in rural school districts and their impact on employment outcomes for individuals with cognitive disabilities within their community. EBTPs span across a variety of categories: career awareness, interagency collaboration, paid employment experience, parental involvement, self-determination/self-advocacy skills, and vocational rehabilitation supports (Southward & Kyzar, 2017). Furthermore, EBTPs can contribute to positive transitional outcomes (Burke, Shogren, Raley, Wehmeyer, Antosh, & Laplante, 2019). I determined there is a pattern of strengths and weaknesses within each EBTP as implemented in the single case study of this rural north Texas school district. The areas of strength in each of five transition practices were the following:

- PCP: There was appropriate involvement of the student.
- Self-determination skills: Students learned self-advocacy skills.
- Interagency collaboration: Parents received multiple resources.
- Parental involvement: Parents had many opportunities to participate in their child's education.
- Career exploration: Students received career exposure and/or opportunities.

I have identified areas of weakness for Grand ISD based on the data collected. In the areas of weakness, the results indicated the following.

- PCP: Student's lacked awareness and self-determination skills and for

- Self-determination skills: Students lacked explicit teaching and goals.

- Interagency collaboration: The district lacked sufficient collaboration from outside agencies and resources provided.

- Parental involvement: There was insufficient collaboration with parents.

- Career exploration: Students need more exposure to career skills.

Clearly defining transition services can assist schools in better preparing students with disabilities for employment (Collins & Wolter, 2018). Also, parent participants identified the need for parent, general education staff, and student training. Evidence suggests practitioners need to be well aware of how to implement EBPs in order to benefit the students they serve (Russo-Campisi, 2017). Mazzotti and Rowe (2015) emphasized the importance of improving the quality of instruction in secondary transition programs. Overall, the triangulation of the 2018-2019 student IEPs and individual transition plans indicated the need to boost parent attendance rates and improve interagency collaboration to create a more collaborative approach to students' IEP plans.

Recommendations

Grand ISD program improvement. Based on the data reviewed, the school should develop explicit procedures to: a) teach students self-determination skills explicitly through Individual Education Plan (IEP) goals; b) develop better collaborative relationships with outside agencies to facilitate productive transitions and provide adequate resources to staff, parents, and

students; c) provide opportunities for collaboration and training with local community stakeholders, and d) enlist active parental support and involvement.

As indicated in the data, Grand ISD broadly addressed strategies to teach self-determination skills through the use of transition assessments and teacher to student communication. Grand ISD should develop multiple opportunities to teach self-determination concepts explicitly to students with disabilities through the student's IEP. The district should implement a variety of PCP strategies. These strategies are complex interventions that have the potential to impact the individual's quality of life (Ratti et al., 2016). PCP has improved opportunities and increased individual participation in students' future planning process (Kaehne & Beyer, 2014). According to Collier et al. (2017), PCP develops self-determination skills needed for individuals to actively participant in life decisions.

As indicated through this study, the definition for self-determination skills is not clear nor consistent within the literature. According to Wehmeyer (1999), self-determination skills reflect an individual's ability to act autonomously and self-regulate their behaviors. Other researchers define self-determination skills by one's ability to be self-aware, make informed decisions, self-advocate, and set appropriate life goals (Webb et al., 2014). However, Ryan and Deci (2017) identified the three basic needs for self-determination skills are autonomy, competence, and relatedness. In relation to the educational setting, Wehmeyer (1999) emphasized the need for educators to assist in the growth and development of self-determination skills, but first educators must understand how self-determination is defined along with how skills are developed. Twenty years later, the literature continues to be unclear on the true understanding and definition of self-determination skills. However, promoting self-determination skills is an established best practice and enables students to have better transition success to adult life (Gragoudas, 2014). Thus, this

lack of clarity can impact how educators develop programs and activities to target individual

growth and the development of self-determination skills.

Grand ISD should individualize their approach to target individual student's specific

needs when developing self-determination skills based on the information collected from the

individual transition assessments. Further, school staff should provide multiple opportunities

through student consultation by explaining the results of the transition information gathered.

Grand ISD staff should arrange teaching opportunities to explain how the information collected

from transition assessments can impact the student's future, provide additional training sessions

to the student to teach self-advocacy and decision-making strategies for their preferences,

interests, and desires. The student should have awareness of how their choices affect their life

and be given the tools necessary to articulate their strengths and weaknesses in their IEP

meetings and to their future employers. In addition, the district can embed lessons that address

self-determination skills into the daily curriculum. Further, the district can develop an

intervention time for staff to work directly with students with IEPs on self-determination skill

development. Teaching self-determination skills should not be limited to special education staff;

rather, general education staff, school counselors, coaches, career and technology teachers, and

paraprofessionals should be included. All school staff should receive appropriate training in the

areas of effective transition practices.

Second, Grand ISD should develop better collaborative relationships with outside

agencies to facilitate productive transitions and provide adequate resources to staff, parents, and

students. People with disabilities need open and easy access to adult services programs (Rumrill

et al., 2017). Participants from the staff and parents indicated a lack of understanding of the

resources available in the local community. Based on the data reviewed, Grand ISD can improve

their efforts of providing easier access to resources to outside agencies by creating accessible

resources in a variety of formats. The formats should include separate print pamphlets,

information embedded within the IEP documentation, accessible resources on the school website

under transition resources for special populations, and active up-to-date links and contacts to

local agencies. Furthermore, resources should be provided in both Spanish and English. There

should be a high importance focused on transition partnerships between schools and adult

services agencies (Pallisera et al., 2014). The school transition designee should partner with local

agencies to provide opportunities for parents, staff, and students to learn more about local

resources offered through agency network nights throughout the school year.

Third, Grand ISD should provide opportunities for collaboration and training with local

community stakeholders. Collaboration is essential among educators, agency professionals,

community members, potential employers, individuals with disabilities, and their families to

facilitate effective transition into post-school life (Webb et al., 2014). Collaboration and training

efforts should target school staff, community members, potential employers, agencies, students

and parents. The district should adopt the CIRCLES method of building a community network

within the rural Grand community. The CIRCLES method involves three levels of interagency

collaboration efforts that consists of a community level team, school level team, and the IEP

team (Povenmire-Kirk et al., 2018). The district should develop a series of training presentations

to present to the local Chamber of Commerce to enlist community members to serve on the

community team. Also, the district should focus on developing the school level team and

providing explicit training in targeted effective EBTPs along with the IEP team, which should

include the parents and student with disabilities. Each level will be used to develop awareness for

the need to provide more opportunities for employment in the rural community of Grand for

individuals with disabilities and build a community of resources and potential work experience

partnerships for students to access to build job skills.

Finally, Grand ISD should enlist parental support and involvement through a variety of

methods. Parental involvement is positively linked to student achievement (White & Rae, 2016).

According Papay et al. (2015), families need to understand the importance of their involvement

and be motivated to be active participants in their child's planning. According to my findings,

active parental involvement was an area of concern for Grand ISD educational staff. Grand ISD

should create parent networks within the local school district. The networks should be used to

provide specific trainings to parents in the areas of IEP development, importance of active

involvement and collaboration, the transition process, the ARD process, how to advocate for

their child's needs, and how to read and understand the IEP and evaluation documentation. Also,

the district should enlist parent feedback regarding their satisfaction with Grand ISD's special

education procedures. The feedback should then be used to develop better collaborate efforts

with parents and better programming for students.

Another area of concern that my research highlighted is the need for school staff to

communicate in a variety of methods with parents. Diliberto and Brewer (2014) indicated open

communication regularly throughout the year fosters equal team member partnership. Based on

the review of both participant groups, collaboration efforts are made mostly during the IEP

meeting. Parents should be included in the entire transition planning process: student assessment,

evaluation of student's program, IEP planning meetings, and decision making (Kohler et al.,

2016). According to Test, Clark, and Rusher (2018), staff should involve parents by providing

information in a variety of methods, such as written, face-to-face, or community-based training.

It is important for school staff to consider what method works best for each individual parent and

communicate with them at each stage of the transition process. Grand ISD school staff should not limit communication efforts to only mailed notification and email communication; rather, school staff should make multiple attempts through phone contact, parent-square communication system adopted by Grand ISD, face-to-face, and email correspondence. Also, correspondence should be ongoing throughout the year, not limited to the student's annual IEP meeting.

Future study recommendations. I conducted a single case study. Due to the small number of participants, I recommend the replication of this research through a variety of rural school districts to interview school staff, parents, and secondary students with high-incidence disabilities serviced through special education. Also, the research should include the general education staff in future research studies. It is recommended to include outside agencies in the participant sample. Further, this study should be split into two separate studies based on secondary campus level.

Future research is recommended in the areas of: a) targeted parent involvement strategies; b) research that includes the perspective of the general education teacher; c) research that includes the student's perspective regarding transition skills, and d) research that includes the perspective of outside employment services agencies to continue to evaluate EBPs in rural school settings to improve transition outcomes for students with high-incidence disabilities. Furthermore, researchers should conduct studies with a larger participant sample not only focused on a single rural school district case, but multiple rural school districts within a region in Texas or another state or states.

Also, researchers could investigate rural community employer perspectives that ask about the gaps in employment skills for individuals with disabilities, the understanding of employment accommodations, and the understanding of the benefit of job coaching. The employer

perspective would allow the research to provide a broad understanding of areas that schools could target interventions to ensure successful transitions from school to the workforce.

Conclusion

Based on the data reviewed, the school should make changes to their current procedures in these areas: a) Teach students self-determination skills explicitly through IEP goals; b) Develop better collaborative relationships with outside agencies to facilitate productive transitions and provide adequate resources to staff, parents, and students; Provide opportunities for collaboration and training with local community stakeholders; and d) Enlist active parental support and involvement. Enhancing these areas could have a positive impact on the outcomes of effective transition practices for this rural school district and the students it serves.

In conclusion, this research discovered a pattern of strengths and weaknesses within current effective EBTPs for a rural North Texas school district. The research focused on students with high-incidences disabilities serviced through special education ages 13 to 21. I will use the information collected to develop and improve current programing to transition services and programs for Grand ISD. Grand ISD has the opportunity to use this data to improve transition programming and services. This change could create a positive impact for their students and community by increasing successful employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities and establishing a more inclusive community for all citizens.

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Appendix A: IRB Approval

ABILENE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY
Educating Students for Christian Service and Leadership Throughout the World

Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
320 Hardin Administration Building, ACU Box 29103, Abilene, Texas 79699-9103
325-674-2885

September 4, 2019

Kristina Martin

Department of Organizational Leadership

Abilene Christian University

Dear Kristina,

On behalf of the Institutional Review Board, I am pleased to inform you that your project titled "Transition Practices for Students with High Incidence Disabilities in a Rural School",

(IRB# 19-062   )is exempt from review under Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects.

If at any time the details of this project change, please resubmit to the IRB so the committee can determine whether or not the exempt status is still applicable.

I wish you well with your work.

Sincerely,

Megan Roth

Megan Roth, Ph.D.
Director of Research and Sponsored Programs

Appendix B: Interview Protocols

Educational Staff Interview Protocol

Participant Group: Educational Staff

Participant Identification Initials:

Educational Role:

Interview Date:

Interview Time: Begin: Finish:

Briefing: Your responses will be used to identify strengths and weaknesses within current

transition services and programs.

RQ1 - Person-centered planning:

Person-centered planning is focused on the student's preference, interests, and desires.

How is person-centered planning implemented for this population?

1) How do you believe students with cognitive disabilities are able to make appropriate

decisions/determinations on what they desire for their future?

2) What are the strengths and weaknesses of current practices for this strategy?

RQ2 - Self-determination skills:

Self-determination skills are the skills related to self-awareness, decision making, and

self-advocacy.

1) How are self-determination skills taught throughout the school day?

2) How often do students have the opportunity to practice and build self-determination skills

through the school day?

3) What are the strengths and weaknesses of self-determination skill strategies?

RQ3 - Interagency collaboration:

Interagency collaboration is the involvement of government agencies and not-for-profit agencies who provide support to the student. In our local area, the Texas Workforce Commission and Helen Farabee Centers are examples of outside agencies.

1) How often do outside agencies such as Texas Workforce Commission and Helen Farabee Centers collaborate with school personnel to provide services for students?

2) What resources are provided to parents and/or students on how to access services from outside agencies?

RQ 4 - Parental involvement:

Parental involvement is active involvement in the student's IEP meeting and meaningful collaboration to develop appropriate future goals.

1) How often are parents involved in the planning of the student's transition goals?

2) When does collaborations with parents take place?

3) How are parents encouraged to participate in planning for their child's transition goals and future planning?

RQ5 - Community-based/work-based learning:

Career exploration is characterized by the student's exposure to career opportunities and job skills.

1) How is career exploration and/or CBI/WBL implemented currently?

2) How many career exploration/opportunities are the students exposed to throughout the school year?

3) What are the strengths and weaknesses of this practices?

RQ 6 - Self-determination theory:

1) How are your views of transition skills influenced by the concepts of autonomy, competence and relatedness?

Debriefing: Review summary of response for clarification.

Parent Interview Protocol

Participant Group: Parent

Participant Identification Initials:

Role:

Interview Date:

Interview Time: Begin: Finish:

Briefing: Your responses will be used to identify strengths and weaknesses within current transition services and programs.

RQ1 - Person-centered planning:

Person-centered planning is focused on your child's preference, interests, and desires.

1) How is person-centered planning implemented for your child?

2) How do you believe your child is able to make appropriate decisions/determinations on what they desire for their future?

3) What are the positive and negative aspects of person-centered planning practices for your child?

RQ2 - Self-determination skills:

Self-determination skills are the skills related to self-awareness, decision making, and self-advocacy.

1) How are self-determination skills taught at school and home?

2) How often does your child have opportunity to practice and build self-determination skills through the day?

3) What are the positive and negative aspects of self-determination skill practices for your child?

RQ3 - Interagency collaboration:

Interagency collaboration is the involvement of government agencies and not-for-profit agencies who provide support to your child. In our local area, the Texas Workforce Commission and Helen Farabee Centers are examples of outside agencies.

1) How often does the outside agency such as Texas Workforce Solutions and/or Helen Farabee services partner with you and your child to collaborate and/or provide services for your child?

2) What resources are provided to you and/or your student on how to access services from outside agencies? Were these resources helpful?

RQ 4- Parental involvement:

Parental involvement is active involvement in the student's IEP meeting and meaningful collaboration to develop appropriate future goals.

1) How often are you involved in the planning of your child's transition goals?

2) When does collaboration take place with the school planning your child's transition goals?

3) How do you feel you are encouraged or discouraged to participate in your child's planning?

4) How can the school better involve you in transition planning?

RQ5 - Career exploration/work-based learning:

Career exploration is characterized by the student's exposure to career opportunities and job skills.

1) How do you believe exposure to a variety of career exploration/ jobs is helpful to your child?

2) How has participation in career exploration and/or community-based experiences such as stocking at United, cleaning the church, organization at Chicken Express, cleaning the Fire station, and stocking at Tractor Supply impacted your child's growth?

3) How satisfied are you with your child's participation in career exploration and why?

RQ 6 - Self-determination theory:

1) How are your views of transition skills influenced by the concepts of autonomy, competence and relatedness?

Debriefing: Review summary of response for clarification.

Appendix C: Qualitative Transcript Coding Manual

Code	1st Review	2nd Review/Key Theme Categories	Description
Appropriate Format	X		The formatting of questions are relevant to the data being collected.
Inappropriate Format	X		The formatting of questions are not appropriate.
Exposure	X		The frequency students have exposure to skills.
Decision Making	X		The frequency students have exposure to decision making skills.
Frequency (How often taught)	X		The frequency skills are taught.
Building skills (explicit teaching)	X		When skills are directly taught.
Adequate Resources (variety)	X		A variety of transition resources provided.
Participation Opportunities	X		The opportunities for participation from parents, outside agencies, and student.
Opportunities to build skills (application)	X		The opportunities provided to build skills.
Personal Views (values)			The individual's personal views of transition skills and services.
Lack of Awareness (Staff/Parent/Student training)	X		The lack of knowledge of transition skills and service.
Format (information collection)	X		The data collection format for transition information.
Limited options (courses/exposure)	X		Available course/class options to build skills.
Lack of training (Staff/Parent/Student format)	X		The need for training for participants on how to complete transition forms.
Time Constraints (teaching skills/explicit teaching)	X		The lack of time to address targeted skills.
Expectations	X		Alignment of expectations for the student.
Awareness of Resources (lack of knowledge)	X		The awareness of resources available and how to access them.
No Collaboration	X		The lack of collaboration between all participants.
Parent involvement (opportunities for)	X		The frequency of active participation the parent is in the transition process.
Staffing	X		The staff ratio to provide opportunities.

Code	1st Review	2nd Review/Key Theme Categories	Description
Collaboration	X		The participation and communication between all participants.
Exposure (number of work skill opportunities)	X		The number of work skill opportunities provided.
Student Training	X		The opportunities provided for student training.
Collaborative Environment (Encouragement for participation)	X		The school's ability to provide a positive environment to assist with positive communication efforts.
Lack of Communication	X		The lack of correspondence between school and parents.
Lack of Awareness of Resources (format)	X		The format transition resources are given and parent understanding how to access services.
Collaboration		X	The district's ability to collaborate in a variety of formats that enabled opportunities for parent, student, and outside agency involvement.
Explicit Teaching		X	the district's ability to provi teaching opportunities to stu through: a) exposure to skill application of skills, and c) opportunities to a variety of options. The district's ability to appropriately format information that is user friendly to students, staff, and parents.
Format		X	
Training		X	The district's need to provide training for students, staff, and parents.
Appropriate Format	X		The formatting of questions are relevant to the data being collected.
Inappropriate Format	X		The formatting of questions are not appropriate.

Code	1st Review	2nd Review/Key Theme Categories	Description
Exposure	X		The frequency students have exposure to skills.
Decision Making	X		The frequency students have exposure to decision making skills.
Frequency (How often taught)	X		The frequency skills are taught.
Building skills (explicit teaching)	X		When skills are directly taught.
Adequate Resources (variety)	X		A variety of transition resources provided.
Participation Opportunities	X		The opportunities for participation from parents, outside agencies, and student.
Opportunities to build skills (application)	X		The opportunities provided to build skills.
Personal Views (values)			The individual's personal views of transition skills and services.
Lack of Awareness (Staff/Parent/Student training)	X		The lack of knowledge of transition skills and service.
Format (information collection)	X		The data collection format for transition information.
Limited options (courses/exposure)	X		Available course/class options to build skills.
Lack of training (Staff/Parent/Student format)	X		The need for training for participants on how to complete transition forms.
Time Constraints (teaching skills/explicit teaching)	X		The lack of time to address targeted skills.
Expectations	X		Alignment of expectations for the student.
Awareness of Resources (lack of knowledge)	X		The awareness of resources available and how to access them.
No Collaboration	X		The lack of collaboration between all participants.
Parent involvement (opportunities for)	X		The frequency of active participation the parent is in the transition process.
Staffing	X		The staff ratio to provide opportunities.
Collaboration	X		The participation and communication between all participants.

Code	1st Review	2nd Review/Key Theme Categories	Description
Student Training	X		The opportunities provided for student training.
Collaborative Environment (Encouragement for participation)	X		The school's ability to provide a positive environment to assist with positive communication efforts.
Lack of Communication	X		The lack of correspondence between school and parents.
Lack of Awareness of Resources (format)	X		The format transition resources are given and parent understanding how to access services.
Collaboration		X	The district's ability to collaborate in a variety of formats that enabled opportunities for parent, student, and outside agency involvement.
Explicit Teaching		X	the district's ability to prov teaching opportunities to st through: a) exposure to ski application of skills, and c) opportunities to a variety o options. The district's ability to appropriately format information that is user friendly to students, staff, and parents.
Format		X	
Training		X	The district's need to provide training for students, staff, and parents.

Appendix D: Educational Participant Transcripts

Sheena: SPED inclusion teacher junior high 5 years 15 min, had copy of questions

RQ1 - Person-centered planning:

Person-centered planning is focused on the student's preference, interests, and desires.

How is person-centered planning implemented for this population?

3) How do you believe students with cognitive disabilities are able to make appropriate

   decisions/determinations on what they desire for their future?

Right now the process with the questions are appropriate and not real specific. The only thing

they know right now is sports. What are their strengths? Basketball. No academic awareness.

This is all we get from them.

4) What are the strengths and weaknesses of current practices for this strategy?

Strengths: Kids get to tell us what they are thinking and we get to know the kids.

Weaknesses: Not very specific at this time because our kids don't know in depth what they want.

Need to add specificity to the questions.

RQ2 - Self-determination skills:

Self-determination skills are the skills related to self-awareness, decision making, and

self-advocacy.

4) How are self-determination skills taught throughout the school day?

Really self-advocacy is not explicitly taught, the inclusion teachers are guiding the students.

5) How often do students have the opportunity to practice and build self-determination skills

   through the school day?

I think they do during flex period character education start to make those decisions.

6) What are the strengths and weaknesses of self-determination skill strategies?

Strengths: Our kids to learn how to make those decision and learn how to make decisions.

Weaknesses: When do we get to teach those things (time).

RQ3 - Interagency collaboration:

Interagency collaboration is the involvement of government agencies and not-for-profit agencies who provide support to the student. In our local area, the Texas Workforce Commission and Helen Farabee Centers are examples of outside agencies.

3) How often do outside agencies such as Texas Workforce Commission and Helen Farabee Centers collaborate with school personnel to provide services for students?

I have not ever seen that. I have not witnessed this.

4) What resources are provided to parents and/or students on how to access services from outside agencies?

Our diagnostician tries to provide those things. I have not seen those resources myself.

RQ4 - Parental involvement:

Parental involvement is active involvement in the student's IEP meeting and meaningful collaboration to develop appropriate future goals.

4) How often are parents involved in the planning of the student's transition goals?

Last year, maybe half of the parents came to their meeting. Trying to get in touch with the same parents that doesn't happen. Parent collaboration needed.

5) When does collaborations with parents take place?

There is contact with parents before the meeting, for sure during the meeting. I am not sure about follow-up regarding transition. So, before and during.

How are parents encouraged to participate in planning for their child's transition goals and future planning?

They are asked to fill out a transition page prior to the meeting and while during the meeting

questions are asked. Parents are given many opportunities if they are in attendance and involved.

RQ5 - Community-based/work-based learning/Career exposure:

Community/work-based learning is characterized by students working to learn job skills within

the community. Exposure to a variety of job skills and careers.

    4) How is exposure to a variety of job skills and careers implemented currently?

They go to a career fair in October and complete another standardized test regarding careers and

research jobs and pay (attend fairs/job exposure).

    5) How many career opportunities are the students exposed to throughout the school year?

One or two.

    6) What are the strengths and weaknesses of this practices?

Strength: They start thinking about what they want to do when they get older, makes them see

there are other opportunities.

Weaknesses: There is no follow-up or opportunity to work on those job skills.

RQ6 - **Self-determination theory:**

    2) How are your views of transition skills influenced by the concepts of autonomy,

       competence and relatedness?

They need tons of real world applicable skills, all kids. They are not getting this other places.

What are two things if you could change anything in our transition process would impact for the

better?

    1. Opportunity for more than 10 minutes to talk to the kid, maybe do some explaining

       before we ask questions, make it a two-part process, review first then fill out the papers.

2. Not at this time. The transition paperwork the teachers have to fill out don't understand or know that students really well in order to truly complete that section.

Field notes:

More parent collaboration from the parent side needs to happen.

Self-advocacy opportunities to teach within the day, but when and where can this be placed within our school day.

Rachel: SPED teacher 5 years junior high 13:03 min

RQ1 - Person-centered planning:

Person-centered planning is focused on the student's preference, interests, and desires.

How is person-centered planning implemented for this population?

1) How do you believe students with cognitive disabilities are able to make appropriate decisions/determinations on what they desire for their future?

Yes, we implement questions related to interests, strengths and weaknesses and very laid back process and their answers were very honest.

2) What are the strengths and weaknesses of current practices for this strategy?

Strengths: Covered everything: strengths and weaknesses, hobbies, careers, it covered every area.

Weaknesses: I think they would be more open if it was on the computer speech to text versus in an interview format.

RQ2 - Self-determination skills:

Self-determination skills are the skills related to self-awareness, decision making, and self-advocacy.

1) How are self-determination skills taught throughout the school day?

They have to make decisions constantly throughout the day; what assignments to complete, self-advocacy throughout class; let us know if you don't understand something, or need help.

2) How often do students have the opportunity to practice and build self-determination skills through the school day?

Every single class period.

3) What are the strengths and weaknesses of self-determination skill strategies?

Strengths: This is a skill we need in life; they are very important.

Weaknesses: I can't think of any weaknesses; I think we can target through flex how to self-advocate for oneself.

RQ3 - Interagency collaboration:

Interagency collaboration is the involvement of government agencies and not-for-profit agencies who provide support to the student. In our local area Texas Workforce Commission and Helen Farabee Centers are examples of outside agencies.

1) How often do outside agencies such as Texas Workforce Commission and Helen Farabee Centers collaborate with school personnel to provide services for students?

I haven't seen it at the junior high but have at high school.

I have collaborated with Helen farbee a couple of times in ARDS.

2) What resources are provided to parents and/or students on how to access services from outside agencies?

I am not sure of the names, but parents are given multiple resources at ARDs.

RQ4 - Parental involvement:

Parental involvement is active involvement in the student's IEP meeting and meaningful collaboration to develop appropriate future goals.

1) How often are parents involved in the planning of the student's transition goals?

They are involved at the ARD level. The students are involved also in the ARD.

2) When does collaborations with parents take place?

At the ARD meeting:

IEP goals take place at the ARD meeting; they are sent goals a week prior to the meeting; they are asked if they approve of them.

3) How are parents encouraged to participate in planning for their child's transition goals and future planning?

They are a huge part of that planning process. They are given resources when their child graduates from high school and they are given input.

Do we have adequate parent involvement at junior high? We haven't gotten input prior to the ARD.

RQ5 – Community-based/work-based learning/Career exposure:

Community/work-based learning is characterized by students working to learn job skills within the community.

1) How is CBI/WBL/career exploration implemented currently?

In English in the past, they have done a research project to research a career and the strengths and skills needed of that career. Also, a field trip to the local junior college.

2) How many CBI opportunities are the students exposed to throughout the school year?

Probably two times a year.

3) What are the strengths and weaknesses of this practices?

Strengths: What interests them.

Weaknesses: Changes year to year; need yearly exposure not just 8th grade.

RQ6 - Self-determination theory:

1)How are your views of transition skills influenced by the concepts of autonomy, competence and relatedness?

We try to help them understand their future is important and no doors are closed to them. Be realistic and help them get to where they want.

Field notes:

Changes: Implement self-advocacy training during flex time.

More exposure time to career fields.

Parent collaboration.

Sky: SPED teacher 6 years high school inclusion 12:37

RQ1 - Person-centered planning:

Person-centered planning is focused on the student's preference, interests, and desires.

How is person-centered planning implemented for this population?

1) How do you believe students with cognitive disabilities are able to make appropriate decisions/determinations on what they desire for their future?

I find the younger the kid is the more trouble they have in knowing what they want to do. This helps them understand their preferences is important.

2) What are the strengths and weaknesses of current practices for this strategy?

Strengths: We are allowing them to try different things and change as needed.

Weaknesses: Since we don't have welding and or programs our kids can sink their teeth in we need additional opportunities for them.

RQ2 - Self-determination skills:

Self-determination skills are the skills related to self-awareness, decision making, and self-advocacy.

1) How are self-determination skills taught throughout the school day?

Step back and let the kids ask for help and be independent, not being right on top of them all the time. Making them advocate for themselves

2) How often do students have the opportunity to practice and build self-determination skills through the school day?

Multiple times sitting in class being productive; being more independent all day.

3) What are the strengths and weaknesses of self-determination skill strategies?

Strengths: Trying to make them more independent people; pushing them to be more self-reliant than depending on others.

Weaknesses: Sometimes we do still baby some of them when we need to back off.

RQ3 - Interagency collaboration:

Interagency collaboration is the involvement of government agencies and not-for-profit agencies who provide support to the student. In our local area, the Texas Workforce Commission and Helen Farabee Centers are examples of outside agencies.

1) How often do outside agencies such as Texas Workforce Commission and Helen Farabee Centers collaborate with school personnel to provide services for students?

None that I know of.

2) How often do they participate in ARD meetings?

Rarely.

3) What resources are provided to parents and/or students on how to access services from outside agencies?

I think they are made aware and I don't know how often they are talking about it during ARD meeting; including brochures and information.

RQ4 - Parental involvement:

Parental involvement is active involvement in the student's IEP meeting and meaningful collaboration to develop appropriate future goals.

1) How often are parents involved in the planning of the student's transition goals?

Mail them out and they have the opportunity to look over prior to the ARD meetings. We have parents that do attend. I don't know how much they input.

2) When does collaborations with parents take place?

I think we mail them goals, prior to ARD meeting; majority is during the ARD, and if there is ever a problem parents are encouraged to call.

3) How are parents encouraged to participate in planning for their child's transition goals and future planning?

We mail out goals; we send the transitional questionnaires; we ask their input during ARDs what they want for their child

RQ5 – Community-based/work-based learning/Career exposure:

Community/work-based learning is characterized by students working to learn job skills within the community. Participation in CTE courses building job skills

1) How is CBI/WBL implemented currently?

Kids have the option to do various electives, for instance cooking.

2) How many CBI opportunities are the students exposed to throughout the school year?

Some of them have jobs and have jobs outside the school; have electives AG cooking, throughout the year several times a day

3) What are the strengths and weaknesses of these practices?

Strengths: Opening kids to a wide variety of opportunities.

Weaknesses: I don't think we go far enough with some of them.

We need courses on campus that they can have a certification when they graduate.

RQ6 - Self-determination theory:

1) How are your views of transition skills influenced by the concepts of autonomy, competence and relatedness?

I think building a kid's self confidence that they can achieve what they want and making them be more self-reliant and chance the dream.

Field notes:

Strengths: We are communicating with parents and do have good collaboration with most

parents.

Weaknesses: Not only allowing the opportunities but have certification options.

Jessica: SPED 2 years inclusion junior high 18:25

RQ1 - Person-centered planning:

Person-centered planning is focused on the student's preference, interests, and desires.

How is person-centered planning implemented for this population?

1) How do you believe students with cognitive disabilities are able to make appropriate

decisions/determinations on what they desire for their future?

Sometimes their desires are not really in the realm of their abilities and need support to realize

the area more obtainable.

2) What are the strengths and weaknesses of current practices for this strategy?

Strength: Tell them about other options related to their desired program; expose them to other

opportunities.

Weaknesses: I don't know unless we find out about what they like then have an additional

meeting or additional time for transition conversations.

RQ2 - Self-determination skills:

Self-determination skills are the skills related to self-awareness, decision making, and

self-advocacy.

1) How are self-determination skills taught throughout the school day?

I look at what I have done with my students who have been dependent, waiting on them to ask,

still checking on them some, and allowing them to be more independent.

2) How often do students have the opportunity to practice and build self-determination skills

through the school day?

Throughout the day.

3) What are the strengths and weaknesses of self-determination skill strategies?

Strengths: Getting them to be an advocate for themselves.

Weaknesses: Enabling them to do a minimal amount, not holding them accountable, not building responsibility.

RQ3 - Interagency collaboration:

Interagency collaboration is the involvement of government agencies and not-for-profit agencies who provide support to the student. In our local area, the Texas Workforce Commission and Helen Farabee Centers are examples of outside agencies.

1) How often do outside agencies such as the Texas Workforce Commission and Helen Farabee Centers collaborate with school personnel to provide services for students?

I do not know the answer to that. I hear that maybe often. I do not know at all.

I have not had an IEP meeting with them.

2) What resources are provided to parents and/or students on how to access services from outside agencies?

I think parents are given lots of information. I don't know how, from the diagnostician.

RQ4 - Parental involvement:

Parental involvement is active involvement in the student's IEP meeting and meaningful collaboration to develop appropriate future goals.

1) How often are parents involved in the planning of the student's transition goals?

Not involved with the planning; they view them; they have the option to call if they have questions.

2) When does collaborations with parents take place?

Collaboration takes place throughout the year. I can tell the diagnostician has done lots of communication prior to the meetings. We do not have adequate parent collaboration from all parents, at the parent's choice.

3) How are parents encouraged to participate in planning for their child's transition goals and future planning?

Lots of correspondence from parent square, post cards, email. The teacher tries but it is based on how involved the parent wants to be.

RQ5 - Community-based/work-based learning/Career exposure:

Community/work-based learning is characterized by students working to learn job skills within the community. Career exposure and interest.

1) How is CBI/WBL implemented currently? Career skills/exposure?

Field trips to junior college and job exposure.

2) How many CBI opportunities are the students exposed to throughout the school year?

Multiple times throughout the six weeks

3) What are the strengths and weaknesses of these practices?

Strengths: We do provide some, but we can provide more.

Weaknesses: We need to have an assembly to cover job skills, career day things, more exposure to things the better; their path now can prepare them for life after high school.

RQ6 - Self-Determination theory:

1) How are your views of transition skills influenced by the concepts of autonomy, competence, and relatedness?

They need to learn how to be self-sufficient and not be on government support for the rest of their lives, or dependent on their parents the rest of their lives.

Field Notes:

Strengths: We do a good job with self-determination skills and building independence.

Weaknesses: Provide more opportunities and job exposure; provide a guide or path about their decisions today to their future.

Provide more information for parents to have a more collaborative environment.

Georgia: Admin. Principal 4 years Secondary Jr. High 24:28

RQ1 - Person-centered planning:

Person-centered planning is focused on the student's preference, interests, and desires.

How is person-centered planning implemented for this population?

1) How do you believe students with cognitive disabilities are able to make appropriate decisions/determinations on what they desire for their future?

We have ARD meetings and we start asking the students to join us; we ask what are you interested in; what are your likes, and 8th-grade students start to think about what high school classes they would want; the students have the voice in saying what classes they are interested in. It is important for the student to have a voice.

2) What are the strengths and weaknesses of current practices for this strategy?

Strength: Bringing the students in and trying to get a parent there, our team makes every effort to get parents to participate, make phone calls; we don't just put student into classes we reevaluate and ask how they are doing.

Weaknesses: I think we can't offer as many electives because of staff and we are rural; we are lacking in career and technology electives at the junior high. We should be offering students to do things with their hands.

RQ2 - Self-determination skills:

Self-determination skills are the skills related to self-awareness, decision making, and self-advocacy.

1) How are self-determination skills taught throughout the school day?

I do like we have inclusion aides and supports that help with supports. Some students have a hard time redirecting themselves. We do have someone to help them learn how to make better

decisions. The inclusion supports provided build independence if they have been trained. We do offer social skills during flex.

    2) How often do students have the opportunity to practice and build self-determination skills through the school day?

Multiple times during the day; character education is implemented, and we provide school-wide character education.

    3) What are the strengths and weaknesses of self-determination skill strategies?

Strengths: Flex class for building social skills and social awareness.

Weaknesses: Lack of trained staff to truly help students build their self-awareness; we could benefit from training students how to self-advocate appropriately.

RQ3 - Interagency collaboration:

Interagency collaboration is the involvement of government agencies and not-for-profit agencies who provide support to the student. In our local area, the Texas Workforce Commission and Helen Farabee Centers are examples of outside agencies.

    1) How often do outside agencies such as the Texas Workforce Commission and Helen Farabee Centers collaborate with school personnel to provide services for students?

May not have the answer fully to this. Our counselor makes contact to Helen Farabee. We give the parents resources. I heard when I worked at the high school I heard more often from the TWC, but not at the junior high.

    2) What resources are provided to parents and/or students on how to access services from outside agencies?

There are pamphlets given to parents; the resources are mentioned and more pamphlets are outside. We give these adequately.

RQ4 - Parental involvement:

Parental involvement is active involvement in the student's IEP meeting and meaningful collaboration to develop appropriate future goals.

    1) How often are parents involved in the planning of the student's transition goals?

Annually; always invited to the meeting; I hear repeated calls to me; shared personal cell phone number given.

    2) When does collaboration with parents take place?

All three, prior, during, and after collaboration; before, during, and after.

Parents are coming; more than half attend the meeting.

    3) How are parents encouraged to participate in planning for their child's transition goals and future planning?

I heard that parents are asked what do you see for your child. We are always trying to encourage collaboration; talking to the students; we create a positive environment for parent including them into the meeting; we do a good job navigating that.

RQ5 - Community-based/work-based learning/Career exposure:

Community/work-based learning is characterized by students working to learn job skills within the community.

    1) How is CBI/WBL implemented currently? Career focus and career exposure?

I know that we have a group of students that participation in meals on wheels; we take students to NCTC local community college and job fair; limited to human services; we take all 8th graders to a region 9 career fair and has more opportunities. Yes, career interest inventory that happens in the grade, and in 7th grade a career interest is completed in computer application class.

2) How many CBI opportunities are the students exposed to throughout the school year?

A variety/several.

8th grade has more opportunities, but 7th graders do have some exposure with a unit that lasts four weeks

3) What are the strengths and weaknesses of these practices?

Strength: Career exploration through computer class, and a community college that is easily accessible.

Weaknesses: I wonder if we are really are exposing them to enough career fields; we are not providing enough opportunities for technical fields.

RQ6 - Self-determination theory:

1) How are your views of transition skills influenced by the concepts of autonomy, competence, and relatedness?

Our community is very conservative, more so compared to a bigger city around us; we have a tendency of what we expect; it's a delicate balance of autonomy how much are they getting help or doing this on their own. I wonder if our kids really have the necessary skills to be competent. We do not have all the competency because we are a rural area. We could promote independent skills better by providing natural consequences. We can do better to prepare kids for job skills.

Field Notes:

Strengths: Parent involvement opportunities and student involvement.

Weaknesses: Helping kids be more independent, have more opportunities for career exposure, but due to rural area it's difficult.

Christian: High School SPED inclusion 3 years 30:47

RQ1 - Person-centered planning:

Person-centered planning is focused on the student's preference, interests, and desires.

1) How do you believe students with cognitive disabilities are able to make appropriate decisions/determinations on what they desire for their future?

Decision that they make there is a slight learning curve; they have some grounds of decision making abilities; they can't make great decisions at this age; they need everyday training to help them.

2) What are the strengths and weaknesses of current practices for this strategy?

Strengths: Passion for students; heart for our population; we are very strong in that sense; students do know what make them happy.

Weaknesses: Everybody has a different way of wanting to do things; must all get on board to execute that; it's tough when you have strong personalities; we need more information from the student; what drives them to be good, positive reinforcers; they don't have a deep level understanding of their desires.

RQ2 - Self-determination skills:

Self-determination skills are the skills related to self-awareness, decision making, and self-advocacy.

1) How are self-determination skills taught throughout the school day?

We actually do a good job as a district; them seeing where their weaknesses are. They may have a hard time facing it, but we constantly make sure they understand the why they need help. Students learn how to advocate for themselves from their freshman to their senior year. That

helps being in a smaller school. Small town feel. By the end of it, they do a good job at accepting themselves.

2) How often do students have the opportunity to practice and build self-determination skills through the school day?

Depends teacher to teacher; some teachers do a better job at allowing students to advocate for themselves; the tracking teacher can help.

Students get ample opportunity to self-advocate for themselves.

3) What are the strengths and weaknesses of self-determination skill strategies?

Strengths: Trust, we have established a relationship of trust.

Weaknesses: More practice; more reminders; repetitive style of teaching; keep bringing it up; trust is the number one factor.

RQ3 - Interagency collaboration:

Interagency collaboration is the involvement of government agencies and not-for-profit agencies who provide support to the student. In our local area, the Texas Workforce Commission and Helen Farabee Centers are examples of outside agencies.

1) How often do outside agencies such as the Texas Workforce Commission and Helen Farabee Centers collaborate with school personnel to provide services for students?

I haven't noticed them talking with our school personnel. I have heard great things about them, but I don't have any or very little interactions with them.

2) What resources are provided to parents and/or students on how to access services from outside agencies?

In a small community you can find opportunities for kids whether a job or partnerships and bring the resources to the student. The school staff provides the parent the resources needed to reach out.

RQ4 - Parental involvement:

Parental involvement is active involvement in the student's IEP meeting and meaningful collaboration to develop appropriate future goals.

1) How often are parents involved in the planning of the student's transition goals?

Parents are always involved in this process. Seldom you can't get ahold of parent. They are contacted frequently. Parent is sent the information. If the parents haven't seen the goals, then the parent is sending a blind eye.

2) When do collaborations with parents take place?

Before, during, and after the ARD; with follow-up there's quite a bit of collaboration

3) How are parents encouraged to participate in planning for their child's transition goals and future planning?

Paperwork is sent home; during the ARD we able to collaborate more; we break the ice and in a small town we are able to connect and follow-up because we generally care. The parents feel as comfortable as we can make it. The process itself is intimidating. We can make it a little less intimidating. We create trust by keeping the same tracking students for 4 years.

RQ5 - Community-based/work-based learning/Career exposure:

Community/work-based learning is characterized by students working to learn job skills within the community. This can also be CTE programs or the AG program.

1) How is CBI/WBL implemented currently? Career exploration?

Exposure to AG and Culinary program, floral design; athletic teams willing to work with these students. There are many opportunities for authentic learning.

2) How many CBI opportunities are the students exposed to throughout the school year?

Job skills exposure; there are quite a few opportunities; other programs we could offer; we could always offer more; for a rural district we may not have the funding to have staff; we feel stretched thin.

3) What are the strengths and weaknesses of this practices?

Strengths: The authentic nature of what we are try to accomplish; we build important job skills

Weaknesses: We have so many kids; when you have 18 kids in a class and differentiate, there's not enough support, but there are a lot of people in there. We are limited somewhat than a bigger city. There are some limits in our community.

RQ6 - Self-determination theory:

1) How are your views of transition skills influenced by the concepts of autonomy, competence, and relatedness?

Every place has good days and bad days. Our culture is good, not without trials and tribulation, and I think we send our kids out with good standing. I think the department has been good for a long time and stable. Overall, culture-wise we are in a good spot. We are looking for ways to be better.

2) What changes would you make?

One big change would be to find some way for the paperwork to be very easy and manageable, that way we can spend time with our students. In a more precise manner. Instead of 20 questions on a questionnaire, there are three questions. The value is lost in the wordiness.

Knowing what our students are truly motivated by; a focus on what drives the student.

Field notes:

Strengths: Pretty good standing.

Weaknesses: Building trust with parents, students; have more programs if funding were there;

make changes; more time with students and more manageable paperwork; focus on our students.

Cali: SPED Life skills high school 13 years 16:08

RQ1 - Person-centered planning:

Person-centered planning is focused on the student's preference, interests, and desires.

How is person-centered planning implemented for this population?

1) How do you believe students with cognitive disabilities are able to make appropriate decisions/determinations on what they desire for their future?

We had folders that were filled with generic copies that were filled out. Teachers guided that process. It didn't elaborate too much. Teachers had a form to fill out regarding the student's strengths and weaknesses. Parents did the same thing. I think they have their interest levels in an appropriate manner. As far as their capabilities, it isn't always realistic with some of the forms we have.

2) What are the strengths and weaknesses of current practices for this strategy?

Strengths: We get it from a variety of sources: teachers, parents, and students (guided teacher responses)

Weaknesses: Being a smaller community; generic forms don't reflect what was in the form; provide lists for specific job based on local interests and local track; done throughout the school year.

RQ2 - Self-determination skills:

Self-determination skills are the skills related to self-awareness, decision making, and self-advocacy.

1) How are self-determination skills taught throughout the school day?

Self-regulation and self-control are the most important and how they correlate to real life.

2) How often do students have the opportunity to practice and build self-determination skills through the school day?

Off and on throughout the school day; generally throughout the school day.

3) What are the strengths and weaknesses of self-determination skill strategies?

Strengths: We keep the kids busy, learning to practice self-regulation across settings.

Weaknesses: Not based on their interest level, just what is available in our community.

RQ3 - Interagency collaboration:

Interagency collaboration is the involvement of government agencies and not-for-profit agencies who provide support to the student. In our local area, the Texas Workforce Commission and Helen Farabee Centers are examples of outside agencies.

1) How often do outside agencies such as Texas Workforce Commission and Helen Farabee Centers collaborate with school personnel to provide services for students?

I think they do if they have active families to begin with. Family-driven not agency-driven.

2) What resources are provided to parents and/or students on how to access services from outside agencies?

In our ARD meetings, the diagnostician addresses verbally and provides paperwork to the parents as well. Parent initiated.

RQ 4- Parental involvement:

Parental involvement is active involvement in the student's IEP meeting and meaningful collaboration to develop appropriate future goals.

1) How often are parents involved in the planning of the student's transition goals?

Invited to participate every single meeting, through emails, notes; there is only about 2/3 of active participation involvement.

2) When do collaborations with parents take place?

There are multiple opportunities for the parent to participate in multiple formats.

3) How are parents encouraged to participate in planning for their child's transition goals and future planning?

IEP goals are given at least a week in advance; parents are contacted via teacher to discuss goals and go the extra step. It as much as the parents are involved.

RQ5 - Community-based/work-based learning/Career exposure:

Community/work-based learning is characterized by students working to learn job skills within the community.

1) How is CBI/WBL implemented currently?

Work in the community daily; we have five; everyday students have the opportunity to participate in work jobs within the classroom.

2) How many CBI opportunities are the students exposed to throughout the school year?

We have five places. They are exposed to a variety of settings throughout the school year.

3) What are the strengths and weaknesses of this practices?

Strengths: Generalization of skills.

Weaknesses: Not able to provide a variety of options or geared toward their interest because of lack of community resources and staffing.

RQ6 - Self-determination theory:

1) How are your views of transition skills influenced by the concepts of autonomy, competence and relatedness?

My expectations that they are part of a community, appreciated, plugged in to the community.

My expectation is to help them generalize across all settings.

Field notes:

Strengths: Give plenty of opportunities for parents and outside agencies; generalize skills.

Weaknesses: Change what we are doing with our forms; gear toward the needs of the student;

lack of community resources for job exposure in the interest area.

Nicole: Director of special population-admin 2 years, SPED teacher for 8 prior 16:08 time

RQ1 - Person-centered planning:

Person-centered planning is focused on the student's preference, interests, and desires.

How is person-centered planning implemented for this population?

1) How do you believe students with cognitive disabilities are able to make appropriate decisions/determinations on what they desire for their future?

We have a wide variety of programming. We have a functional application of the different careers through electives.

2) What are the strengths and weaknesses of current practices for this strategy?

Strengths: Functional application piece is a broad level.

Weaknesses: We can always provide more opportunities; lack of resources for career and economic development.

RQ2 - Self-determination skills:

Self-determination skills are the skills related to self-awareness, decision making, and self-advocacy.

1) How are self-determination skills taught throughout the school day?

I don't think it's explicating taught; more teaching in the moment; we don't have a curriculum for this.

2) How often do students have the opportunity to practice and build self-determination skills through the school day?

This is a daily occurrence; they can practice this.

3) What are the strengths and weaknesses of self-determination skill strategies?

Strengths: Compassionate staff and patient staff that take time to coach students.

Weaknesses: Not having explicit curriculum or strategies we are implementing; we can improve in the goal-setting meetings to look at self-determination skills.

RQ3 - Interagency collaboration:

Interagency collaboration is the involvement of government agencies and not-for-profit agencies who provide support to the student. In our local area, the Texas Workforce Commission and Helen Farabee Centers are examples of outside agencies.

1) How often do outside agencies such as the Texas Workforce Commission and Helen Farabee Centers collaborate with school personnel to provide services for students?

Sporadic; it's based on individual rather than a systematic approach; driven by the family by being vocal. The more vocal the family, the more likely they will participate.

2) What resources are provided to parents and/or students on how to access services from outside agencies?

Provide pamphlets, numbers, cards; offer to set up meetings at schools; contact them for the parents; provide various trainings for the parent.

RQ4 - Parental involvement:

Parental involvement is active involvement in the student's IEP meeting and meaningful collaboration to develop appropriate future goals.

1) How often are parents involved in the planning of the student's transition goals?

Involved annually.

2) When do collaborations with parents take place?

Collaborations take place all throughout the year; average contacting parents at least quarterly

3) How are parents encouraged to participate in planning for their child's transition goals and future planning?

Parents are given the information about what is available in our area and statewide based on their interests. We create a collaborative environment, but I would like to see what the parents have to say.

RQ5 - Community-based/work-based learning/Career exposure:

Community/work-based learning is characterized by students working to learn job skills within the community. Career exploration.

1) How is CBI/WBL implemented currently?

Done through electives for the most part; given the same opportunities as general education students; they are offered different practicums and internships, and career prep and work program.

2) How many CBI opportunities are the students exposed to throughout the school year?

Junior high to junior college and again as a sophomore; freshman Friday (community jobs come and speak to freshman about their jobs); career prep or practicum; a variety of opportunities.

3) What are the strengths and weaknesses of this practices?

Strengths: We have a supportive community.

Weaknesses: All or nothing; their needs to be bridge between job skills to the workplace.

Not currently providing job shadowing; job coaching is limited due to staffing.

RQ6 - Self-determination theory:

1) How are your views of transition skills influenced by the concepts of autonomy, competence and relatedness?

With the proper amount of support, students can access a job. Having high expectations that students can have a job in their interest in some format; more likeminded providers are needed in order to adequately provide services; more hands are always helpful but likeminded people are

better. I am always looking to increase parental involvement to make it feel like a team. How do you truly collaborate from one side versus another?

Field notes:

Strengths: Functional application of person-centered planning is good; good supportive community.

Weaknesses: Curriculum for self-determination skills; collaborate more with our outside agencies; try to continue to improve parental involvement; have a bridge or job shadowing opportunities for job skills.

Appendix E: Parent Participant Transcripts

Dixie: high school student with SLD 12:37

Parent Interview Questions

RQ1 - Person-centered planning:

Person-centered planning is focused on your child's preference, interests, and desires.

4) How is person-centered planning implemented for your child?

   She is taking classes directly towards her field that she has chosen.

5) How do you believe your child is able to make appropriate decisions/determinations on

   what they desire for their future?

I would say she knows what she wants, but hopefully we can look at getting her hooked up.

6) What are the positive and negative aspects of person-centered planning practices for your

   child?

Strengths: Offer her a variety of choices.

Weaknesses: More communication with parents and the whole team.

RQ2 - Self-determination skills:

Self-determination skills are the skills related to self-awareness, decision making, and

self-advocacy.

4) How are self-determination skills taught at school and home?

School - I don't know. Home - I try to give her certain choices; I try to get her to pick; I don't

demand her things; I give her responsibility.

5) How often does your child have opportunity to practice and build self-determination

   skills through the day?

Several times throughout her day.

6) What are the positive and negative aspects of self-determination skill practices for your child?

Strengths: Number of choices; availability.

Weaknesses: Not good at advocating for herself; I don't know, I have never thought about it.

RQ3 - Interagency collaboration:

Interagency collaboration is the involvement of government agencies and not-for-profit agencies who provide support to your child. In our local area, the Texas Workforce Commission and Helen Farabee Centers are examples of outside agencies.

3) How often does the outside agency such as the Texas Workforce Solutions and/or Helen Farabee services partner with you and your child to collaborate and/or provide services for your child?

Currently, I don't know.

4) What resources are provided to you and/or your student on how to access services from outside agencies? Where these resources helpful?

I know the team at school provides supports. That's all. Not able to find the information easily within the ARD paperwork; could be made easier to find.

RQ4 - Parental involvement:

Parental involvement is active involvement in the student's IEP meeting and meaningful collaboration to develop appropriate future goals.

5) How often are you involved in the planning of your child's transition goals?

Not as much as I would like, but I feel that is my fault because I haven't been able to attend.

Email would be easier to do and use to collaborate.

6) When does collaboration take place with the school planning your child's transition goals?

Not much, not at all. Mostly during the ARD.

7) How do you feel you are encouraged or discouraged to participate in your child's planning?

I feel encouraged, but I am not able to.

8) How can the school better involve you in transition planning?

Maybe by phone conference after working hours would probably encourage me to be more involved. More education for the parents is needed.

RQ5 - Community-based/work-based learning/Career exposure:

Community/work-based learning is characterized by students working to learn job skills within the community. Career exposure.

4) How do you believe exposure to a variety of community jobs is helpful to your child?

That way she can get a small sampling she likes.

5) How has participation in community-based experiences, such as stocking at United, cleaning the church, organization at Chicken Express, cleaning the fire station, and stocking at Tractor Supply, impacted your child's growth? Altered to say classes geared to job skills.

She has learned skills such as cooking; skills guard toward finances.

6) How satisfied are you with your child's participation in community-based instruction and why?

Job exposure; good because it makes her brain start working and thinking about her future.

RQ6 - Self-determination theory:

2) How are your views of transition skills influenced by the concepts of autonomy, competence and relatedness?

The Bible; my religion; proud to be an American. Values.

Field notes:

Strengths: We do a good job at classes providing opportunities for job exposure.

Weaknesses: More collaboration for parents; more readily available to collaborate through email, phone.

Lena: junior high school student with OHI/SLD 18:13

Parent Interview Questions

RQ1 - Person-centered planning:

Person-centered planning is focused on your child's preference, interests, and desires.

7) How is person-centered planning implemented for your child?

The parent is not sure. He will tell what he wants to do. Both.

8) How do you believe your child is able to make appropriate decisions/determinations on what they desire for their future?

He participates and is able to communicate what he likes.

9) What are the positive and negative aspects of person-centered planning practices for your child?

Strengths: Gets helps when he needs it, the school guides him.

Weaknesses: No negatives.

RQ2 - Self-determination skills:

Self-determination skills are the skills related to self-awareness, decision making, and self-advocacy.

7) How are self-determination skills taught at school and home?

Instruct him and teach him throughout the day. He has opportunities to make choices.

8) How often does your child have opportunity to practice and build self-determination skills through the day?

He has good opportunities.

9) What are the positive and negative aspects of self-determination skill practices for your child?

Strengths: Guide him.

Weaknesses: No negatives.

RQ3 - Interagency collaboration:

Interagency collaboration is the involvement of government agencies and not-for-profit agencies who provide support to your child. In our local area Texas Workforce Commission and Helen Farabee Centers are examples of outside agencies.

5) How often does the outside agency such as Texas Workforce Solutions and/or Helen Farabee services partner with you and your child to collaborate and/or provide services for your child?

None at this time.

6) What resources are provided to you and/or your student on how to access services from outside agencies? Where these resources helpful?

In the ARD. Yes, the resources were helpful.

RQ4 - Parental involvement:

Parental involvement is active involvement in the student's IEP meeting and meaningful collaboration to develop appropriate future goals.

9) How often are you involved in the planning of your child's transition goals?

Often.

10) When does collaboration take place with the school planning your child's transition goals?

All year long.

11) How do you feel you are encouraged or discouraged to participate in your child's planning?

I feel encouraged to participate.

12) How can the school better involve you in transition planning?

Help him understand the importance of career interests and deciding what he wants to do.

RQ5 - Community-based/work-based learning/Career exposure:

Community/work-based learning is characterized by students working to learn job skills within the community. Career exposure.

7) How do you believe exposure to a variety of community jobs is helpful to your child?

Teaches responsibility to him.

8) How has exposure to job/career opportunities helped your child?

His trip to NCTC local community college helps him see what is available.

9) How satisfied are you with your child's participation in community-based instruction and why?

I am satisfied. I think he can always be exposed more to career exploration and opportunities.

RQ6 - Self-determination theory:

3) How are your views of transition skills influenced by the concepts of autonomy, competence and relatedness?

My upbringing helps me make decisions in how I view transition skills and what I want for my child.

Field notes:

Strengths: Collaboration is throughout the year; we provide him with guidance; encourage students to do more things within the school life.

Weaknesses: More career exposure opportunities.

Kristen: high school student with SLD 20:01 min

Parent Interview Questions

RQ1 - Person-centered planning:

Person-centered planning is focused on your child's preference, interests, and desires.

10) How is person-centered planning implemented for your child?

Always communication with me. We are given direction.

11) How do you believe your child is able to make appropriate decisions/determinations on what they desire for their future?

I believe she can make the decision. We ask her what she likes now and she is choosing her classes for her future.

12) What are the positive and negative aspects of person-centered planning practices for your child?

Strengths: Providing opportunities; college exposures.

Weaknesses: None at this time.

RQ2 - Self-determination skills:

Self-determination skills are the skills related to self-awareness, decision making, and self-advocacy.

10) How are self-determination skills taught at school and home?

School - she has to reach out for tutoring; she's getting help when she asks for it. Home - I give her the freedom to get her things done; it's in her control to do what she needs to do.

11) How often does your child have opportunity to practice and build self-determination skills through the day?

She practices this all day long.

12) What are the positive and negative aspects of self-determination skill practices for your child?

Strengths: There is really good communication with the SPED side.

Weaknesses: The classroom teacher lacks communication to help with tutorials or communication from the teachers to parents and students; they should know more and understand what my child needs and accommodations.

RQ3 - Interagency collaboration:

Interagency collaboration is the involvement of government agencies and not-for-profit agencies who provide support to your child. In our local area, the Texas Workforce Commission and Helen Farabee Centers are examples of outside agencies.

7) How often does the outside agency such as the Texas Workforce Solutions and/or Helen Farabee services partner with you and your child to collaborate and/or provide services for your child?

None at this time.

8) What resources are provided to you and/or your student on how to access services from outside agencies? Where these resources helpful?

The first I have heard of it. The resources are difficult to find within the ARD document; I do not notice the transition paperwork; speak it to me, give me separate pamphlets outside of the ARD document.

RQ4 - Parental involvement:

Parental involvement is active involvement in the student's IEP meeting and meaningful collaboration to develop appropriate future goals.

13) How often are you involved in the planning of your child's transition goals?

Three times a year; meet at the meeting.

14) When does collaboration take place with the school planning your child's transition

goals?

More during the meeting, not so much during the year.

15) How do you feel you are encouraged or discouraged to participate in your child's

planning?

I feel encouraged to participate. I like to hear what she says to others.

16) How can the school better involve you in transition planning?

I really don't know; I can't think of anything right now. More information on the website. Yes,

prior to the meeting collaboration would be good. The format through mail or print out do as you

go. Mail document would be easier to access.

RQ5 - Community-based/work-based learning/Career exposure:

Community/work-based learning is characterized by students working to learn job skills within

the community. Career Exploration (CATE) and electives career exposure.

10) How do you believe exposure to a variety of community jobs is helpful to your child?

Until you put in practice, she isn't going to know what she likes. She is being exposed to these

opportunities.

11) How has participation and exposure through CATE Class or career exploration

opportunities helped your child?

It has helped her make decisions based on what she wants to do in the future.

12) How satisfied are you with your child's participation in community-based instruction and

why?

I think we are satisfied at this time. She has had to broaden her mind.

RQ6 - Self-determination theory:

4) How are your views of transition skills influenced by the concepts of autonomy,

competence and relatedness?

Setting goals for herself is important. I want her to do something so she can take care of herself.

Instilling a work ethic in her is important.

Field notes:

Strengths: Good collaboration from the SPED side; growth in her skills; pretty satisfied so far.

Weaknesses: Not many negatives; have classroom teachers communicate better and understand

her needs; post more information on the websites about what is going on.

Cindy: high school student with AU 22:00

Parent Interview Questions

RQ1 - Person-centered planning:

Person-centered planning is focused on your child's preference, interests, and desires.

13) How is person-centered planning implemented for your child?

We had conversations about what he wants to do after high school. The school has guided me on different options for him.

14) How do you believe your child is able to make appropriate decisions/determinations on what they desire for their future?

He is not sure how to make decisions on his own. He needs help with making decision for his future. Right now he is not able to make the right decision for himself. He is only able to say if he likes or dislikes it.

15) What are the positive and negative aspects of person-centered planning practices for your child?

Strengths: We have good collaboration; school has been helpful.

Weaknesses: I don't think of anything negative; have individual meetings and what options are available for other students (other parents may not ask).

RQ2 - Self-determination skills:

Self-determination skills are the skills related to self-awareness, decision making, and self-advocacy.

13) How are self-determination skills taught at school and home?

He is able to make choices. He does chores at home. He has responsibilities. He has to wake himself up in the morning. He has to be independent.

We thought he was able to go to work.

14) How often does your child have opportunity to practice and build self-determination skills through the day?

He has lots of opportunities.

15) What are the positive and negative aspects of self-determination skill practices for your child?

Strengths: Focused on independence; the school has done a great job

Weaknesses: No negatives.

RQ3 - Interagency collaboration:

Interagency collaboration is the involvement of government agencies and not-for-profit agencies who provide support to your child. In our local area, the Texas Workforce Commission and Helen Farabee Centers are examples of outside agencies.

9) How often does the outside agency such as the Texas Workforce Solutions and/or Helen Farabee services partner with you and your child to collaborate and/or provide services for your child?

10) What resources are provided to you and/or your student on how to access services from outside agencies? Where these resources helpful?

We have been guided to these resources by the school staff. These resources were helpful. Give pamphlets.

RQ4 - Parental involvement:

Parental involvement is active involvement in the student's IEP meeting and meaningful collaboration to develop appropriate future goals.

17) How often are you involved in the planning of your child's transition goals?

Often.

18) When does collaboration take place with the school planning your child's transition goals?

All year long .

19) How do you feel you are encouraged or discouraged to participate in your child's planning?

Yes, I feel very encouraged to be a part. Invitation to meetings; sent information about upcoming meetings and opportunities. Staying in contact with us.

20) How can the school better involve you in transition planning?

The school has done this. All my questions are always answered and I don't have anything to add.

RQ5 - Community-based/work-based learning/Career exposure:

Community/work-based learning is characterized by students working to learn job skills within the community. Career exploration.

13) How do you believe exposure to a variety of community jobs is helpful to your child?

He has been working and received the supports he needs. The exposure has helped him decide what he likes and doesn't like.

14) How has participation in community-based experiences such as stocking at United, cleaning the church, organization at Chicken Express, cleaning the fire station, and stocking at Tractor Supply impacted your child's growth?

He understands how to act and talk and be independent in those settings.

15) How satisfied are you with your child's participation in community-based instruction and why?

It gives him an idea of the future. I would like to have more activities for him to do and more things for him to be involved in.

RQ6 - Self-determination theory:

    5) How are your views of transition skills influenced by the concepts of autonomy, competence, and relatedness?

My expectations for him are to be a good citizen, have a job, and be responsible in life. More collaboration for the Hispanic communities with special populations. The Hispanic community is not very involved; they are not involved because the lack of interpretation and communication issues. Finding more help and meetings for the Hispanic community in relation to special populations.

Field notes:

Strengths: Many things are going well; exposure to a variety of skills; building independence.

Weaknesses: Involvement of special education of the Hispanic communication and training with translators.

Monica: high school student with ID/OHI 20:04

Parent Interview Questions

RQ1 - Person-centered planning:

Person-centered planning is focused on your child's preference, interests, and desires.

    16) How is person-centered planning implemented for your child?

From school staff interviewing him; job interests; future plans; spending time with him and collaboration with the TWC.

    17) How do you believe your child is able to make appropriate decisions/determinations on what they desire for their future?

He needs supported decision making. He is not able by himself to make decisions. The school is able to guide his feedback.

    18) What are the positive and negative aspects of person-centered planning practices for your child?

Strengths: Working alongside the TWC; helping with placement for work program during the school day.

Weaknesses: I can't necessarily think of anything that needs to be done better. I don't have any complaints.

RQ2 - Self-determination skills:

Self-determination skills are the skills related to self-awareness, decision making, and self-advocacy.

    1) How are self-determination skills taught at school and home?

School: In the classroom in the classroom explicitly, self-regulation and expectations. Decision making has been reinforced through transition planning. Home: talking through future plans and realistic expectations.

16) How often does your child have opportunity to practice and build self-determination skills through the day?

Probably less than half the time, 50% of the time

17) What are the positive and negative aspects of self-determination skill practices for your child?

Strengths: transition services for sure, having him included in the ARD meeting and planning for scheduling and future planning

Weaknesses: More direct instruction of self determination

RQ3 - Interagency collaboration:

Interagency collaboration is the involvement of government agencies and not-for-profit agencies who provide support to your child. In our local area Texas Workforce Commission and Helen Farabee Centers are examples of outside agencies.

12) How often does the outside agency such as Texas Workforce Solutions and/or Helen Farabee services partner with you and your child to collaborate and/or provide services for your child?

TWC is ongoing collaboration. Pretty much constant.

Helen Farabee very little with the school, not the result of the school. Helen Farabee has not responded to collaboration efforts.

13) What resources are provided to you and/or your student on how to access services from outside agencies? Where these resources helpful?

They have been provided by the outside agencies; at school not just at the ARD meeting;

different resources at different times; pamphlets; attending workshops; the resources are helpful.

Weaknesses: Shared a little more at the college such as opportunities for students with

disabilities.

RQ4 - Parental involvement:

Parental involvement is active involvement in the student's IEP meeting and meaningful

collaboration to develop appropriate future goals.

21) How often are you involved in the planning of your child's transition goals?

Twice a year average; goals twice a year.

22) When does collaboration take place with the school planning your child's transition

goals?

Ongoing collaboration; communication with the classroom teacher.

23) How do you feel you are encouraged or discouraged to participate in your child's

planning?

I am very much encouraged. A very receptive environment; openness; a lot of reaching out from

the school to collaborate.

24) How can the school better involve you in transition planning?

At the beginning of the year; assessed his functioning in the home; the more I can offer feedback

based on his skills in the home and make sure the school is accurately getting a clear picture of

his skills. To have a good understanding of his independent living skills.

RQ5 - Community-based/work-based learning/Career exposure:

Community/work-based learning is characterized by students working to learn job skills within

the community. Career exploration.

16) How do you believe exposure to a variety of community jobs is helpful to your child?

He acquires different job skills that are marketable as he transitions out of high school.

17) How has participation in community-based experiences such as stocking at United, cleaning the church, organization at Chicken Express, cleaning the Fire station, and stocking at Tractor Supply impacted your child's growth?

It has allowed him an opportunity to see what he likes and doesn't like; gives teachers a chance to see what environment he works best in; learning team work skills, and the accountability system that his work is checked and coaches him in his job.

18) How satisfied are you with your child's participation in community-based instruction and why?

Pretty satisfied; his situation has improved. Last year, more opportunities to go out. Go to each site and have a variety of skills learned. More frequent.

RQ6 - Self-determination theory:

6) How are your views of transition skills influenced by the concepts of autonomy, competence and relatedness?

My goal is for him to live independently with minimal assistance and be employable and the transition skills he has had exposure to has aligned with his transition skills and services.

Field notes:

Strengths: School and the TWC collaboration has been great.

Weaknesses: Give the kids more opportunities to work outside of the school and make sure he is doing onsite is different and not just sweeping at the same work jobs.