THE ÉPISTÉMÈ OF THE NORMAL BELL CURVE IN POST-SECONDARY TRANSITION

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A dissertation submitted to the faculty at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Division of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy within the Department of Allied Health in the School of Medicine.

Chapel Hill
2020

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# ABSTRACT

Adam R. DePrimo: The Épistémè of the Normal Bell Curve in Post-secondary Transition
(Under the direction of Nancy Bagatell)

Students with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) have been
underrepresented in post-secondary education and employment settings as compared to their
typically developing peers (Grigal et al., 2011). Lack of occupational engagement for these
individuals after high school has been shown to increase the chances of deleterious health
outcomes including depression, anxiety, and other related comorbidities (Corna, 2013; Shattuck
et al., 2012). Scholars have employed critical theoretical approaches to better understand the
processes of disenfranchisement as well as limited social participation and socio-political
representation for students with IDD transitioning to adult life (Kim & Schnieder 2005; Smith &
Routel, 2009; Trainor, 2005; Trainor, 2008). Issues of student involvement and self-
determination skill building have been under academic discussion in regards to their relation to
post-school outcome success (e.g., Smith & Routel, 2009; Wehmeyer & Ward, 1995). However,
there is a significant paucity of literature within the discipline of occupational science (OS) that
employs a critical approach to understanding the socially constructed occupational opportunities
for this specific population.

This dissertation continues the pursuit to increase occupational science scholarship that
utilizes a critical approach (Angell, 2014; Rudman, 2012; Rudman & Huot, 2013). Michel
Foucault's (1972) Archaeology and Genealogy and Norman Fairclough's (2009) Dialectical-
Relational Approach were utilized as methods to analyze the discourse. Federal legislation and

academic and professional journal articles served as data for discursive analysis. Specifically, these artifacts were analyzed to understand how the taken-for-granted occupations in which students with IDD participate during post-secondary transition have been structured to limit participation and broader post-school outcomes. Analysis of these artifacts demonstrates that the transition-related occupations have been shaped by the broader neoliberal rationale of societal discourse that idealize production, independence, and self-efficiency. Issues related to social and occupational justice combatting the inequities of this rationale are discussed for this population Additionally, avenues for creating alternative occupational opportunity for this demographic within professional and academic research are addressed. A critical discourse approach presents a viable and promising endeavor for the discipline of occupational science as well as serving and providing voice for minority populations.

To my parents, Alice Listman and Robert DePrimo, for whom this dream would never have been a reality without their unconditional love and encouragement. I'll never be able to express how much gratitude I feel for the dedication and sacrifices you've provided for my journey to this point in time and beyond. Thank you.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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| | |
|---|---|
| AAIDD | American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities |
| ASD | Autism Spectrum Disorder |
| CDA | Critical Discourse Analysis |
| DID | Disorders of Intellectual Development |
| DRA | Dialectical-Relational Analysis |
| DSM | Diagnostic and Statistical Manual |
| EHA | Education for all Handicapped Children Act |
| HEOA | Higher Education Opportunity Act |
| ICD | International Classification of Disease |
| ICF | International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health |
| IDD | Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities |
| IDEA | Individuals with Disabilities Act |
| IEP | Individualized Education Plan |
| MR | Mental Retardation |
| NLTS-2 | National Longitudinal Transition Survey – 2 |
| PAR | Participatory Action Research |
| PSE | Post-Secondary Education |
| WHO | World Health Organization |

# CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND SIGNIFICANCE

**Introduction**

Over the past 30 years, a lot of attention and research has been dedicated to studying and improving the transitionary process to post-secondary life for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). Discussions have focused on preparation for adulthood responsibilities, creation and growth of self-determination skills, and the general integration to society after secondary school (Arthur & Hiebert, 1996; Grigal, Hart, & Migliore, 2011; Hughes, Banks, & Terras, 2013; Israelshvili, 1997; Kohler & Field, 2003; Roberts, 2010). This focus on the specific societal stage of life can be traced in part back to the legislative milestone, Individual's with Disabilities Act (IDEA) which requires transition planning in addition to general services for students with disabilities (Grigal, Hart, & Migliore, 2011). However, students with IDD remain severely underrepresented in both post-secondary education (PSE) and employment opportunities compared with their "typical" developing peers as reported in the National Longitudinal Transition Survey 2 (NLTS2) (Grigal, Hart, & Migliore, 2011).

I utilized a critical discourse analysis (CDA) for this dissertation to highlight how societal discourse constructs the transition process for high school students moving to post-secondary life. Additionally, my use of a CDA as featured in this dissertation demonstrates an application and contribution to future occupational science research. To situate the discursive practices of high school transition for young adults, I first provide an overview of IDD and the relevant IDEA legislation that defines transition services. This will include a discussion of the concept of "life transitions" from an occupational perspective as it applies to students preparing for post-

school life. Finally, I will discuss the background implications for choosing this specific methodological approach and its many contributions to the currently limited occupational science literature regarding life transitions. Furthermore, this will serve to frame how a critical analysis lends itself to understanding occupation and creating a lens for practicing occupational justice for this given demographic.

**Defining Key Concepts**

*Life Transitions*

Before further dissecting the issues facing transitioning students with IDD, I have provided an overview and define key terms as a foundational tenant to the related discourse. In this study, I utilize Elder's (1994) Life Course Theory to define the concept of "transition." Elder (1998) stated that "transitions make up life trajectories, and they provide developmental change" (p. 7). This change, or "turning point" (Elder, 1998, p. 8), marks a significant progression of one's life course. From an occupational science standpoint, Blair (2000) supported a similar perspective: "through the lifespan, many transitions are experienced which require adjustment and adaptation in terms of role changes, balance of valued occupation and occupational performance" (p. 231). Using a Life Course Theory, Corna (2013) offered three additional components to understanding a life transition: agency, historical time and place, and social interdependence. Therefore, the working definition of *transition* I used to guide this dissertation is as follows, "a life transition is a historically informed, socially situated as well as individualized, temporal experience of change during the life course." The specific *transition* I addressed in this study is the progression from high school student to post-secondary life.

*IDD and IDEA*

**Defining IDD.** In 2010, the World Health Organization (WHO) set out to update their

International Classification of Disease (ICD) from its 10th to 11th version. One of the debated

changes between the two versions was the transformation of the term "mental retardation" to

"intellectual disability" (Salvador-Carulla et al., 2011). Specifically, the ICD working group

decided to define IDD as Intellectual and Developmental Disorders (rather than impairment or

difficulties). This was due to the WHO's International Classification of Functioning, Disability

and Health (ICF) conception of *disorder* as having "utility," focusing on the "existence of

multiple etiologies and comorbidities" rather than strictly a "question of intelligence" (Salvador-

Carulla et al., 2011, p. 177).

Recently, the ICD-11 was approved by WHO (2019) and will come into effect on the first

of January, 2022. Since the time of this dissertation's proposal acceptance, the ICD has

transitioned from the label 'Intellectual and Developmental Disorders' to 'Disorders of

Intellectual Development' (DID). DID is now situated under the broader classification of

Neurodevelopmental Disorders. The ICD defines DID as:

> Disorders of intellectual development are a group of etiologically diverse conditions
> originating during the developmental period characterized by significantly below average
> intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior that are approximately two or more
> standard deviations below the mean (approximately less than the 2/3rd percentile), based
> on appropriately normed, individually administered standardized tests. Where
> appropriately normed and standardized tests are not available, diagnosis of disorders of
> intellectual development requires greater reliance on clinical judgment based on
> appropriate assessment of comparable behavioural indicators (World Health
> Organization, 6A00, 2019).

The ICD further classifies DID in different categories that include markers defined as "mild,"

"moderate," "severe," "profound," and "provisional." Girimaji and Pradeep (2018) discussed the

evolution of the two classification versions and note that the current DID definition aimed to

promote a view that progressed from the "pejorative, negative, and pessimistic connotations" (p. S69). Additional considerations for the use of "disorder" verses "disability" included a foreseen ability to classify DID as a health condition that *could* lead to disability and thus be further assessed under the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) as well as providing a parallel connection to the current definitions for IDD provided under the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders 5 (DSM5). Both publications demonstrate a nod toward the contemporary, professionally accepted understanding and collaborative origin of the concept (Girimaji & Pradeep, 2018).

However, in this dissertation I have refed to IDD as intellectual and developmental *disabilities* and followed a similar yet distinct definition held by the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD), due in part to the higher relevance to local discourse (Western society, and more specifically, within the United States) as well as its definitional adoption that coincides with this dissertation's original propositional acceptance date. Their [AAIDD] definition of ID (disability) states, "Intellectual disability is a disability characterized by significant limitations in both intellectual functioning and in adaptive behavior, which covers many everyday social and practical skills. This disability originates before the age of 18" (AAIDD, 2018, para. 1).

Therefore, within this dissertation, I refer to Intellectual and/*or* Developmental Disabilities (IDD) in relation to the definition provided by the AAIDD above. The addition of the qualifier "or" deviates from AAIDD's definition only for the purpose that this dissertation will include students with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities rather than requiring they have both. This distinction allows for a broader focus to include discourse that addresses students who have disabilities related but not limited to: Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Down

Syndrome, Angelman Syndrome, and Fragile X; essentially, any group of students who receive transition related services under IDEA classification guidelines that specifically relate to disabilities of IDD origin. Developmental disabilities that consist specifically of physical limitations such as cerebral palsy will not be incorporated under the concept of IDD.

**A Brief Background of IDEA.** In 1975, the U.S. adopted and signed into law the Education for all Handicapped Act (EHA) which was amended as the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) in 1990. The EHA legislatively required access and services related to educational opportunities for student with disabilities through the age of 21. According to the U.S. Department of Education (2007), amendments to the EHA in 1984, and to the IDEA in 1990 and 1997 supported and outlined initiatives geared towards providing transition centered services focused on the transition from student to adult. Current IDEA legislation states that transition planning should begin when the student turns 14 years old, however individual states can choose a later time not to exceed the student's 16th birthday (Kohler & Field, 2003).

Transition services as understood under IDEA legislation specifically refer to the "coordinated set of activities designed within an outcome-oriented process which promotes movement from school to a wide range of postschool activities" (Wehmeyer & Ward, 1995, p. 108). Additionally, IDEA stipulates that each student's needs, preferences, and interests must be taken into account when planning these services (Wehmeyer & Ward, 1995). The full and current definition of "transition services" as outlined in IDEA legislation can be found in APPENDIX A. This planning should take place during the student's individualized education program (IEP) meeting and include the input and active participation from the student as it directly pertains to their life after high school (Mazzotti et al., 2009; Wehmeyer & Ward, 1995).

I have revisited and further discussed IDEA legislation in the final three chapters of this dissertation. This brief description serves as a springboard to introduce key terms and definitions that helped guide my study's creation.

**Societal Discourse of Self-Determination**

Even with national and state level legislation addressing transition planning requirements, data continue to report less than ideal levels of participation in post-secondary outcomes such as college and employment as compared to "typically developing" peers (Kohler & Field, 2003). Rusch et al. (2009) argued that transition planning in middle and high school strongly focuses on creating outcome goals without having in-place accountability measures that maintain access to support and resources within the community upon leaving secondary school. Furthermore, Eccles and Roeser (2009) stressed the school setting as being one of the most important developmental contexts for children and adolescents, structuring expectations and skill attainment for life after high school. This becomes problematic after graduation as many students' daily environmental contexts will drastically change. For example, Roberts (2010) presented data that showed many students with autism and their families fail to make a successful transition to adulthood because of the immediate halt in resources, support, and familiar environment of the school setting.

Several strategies have been employed to better understand and build a stronger literature base to support better post-secondary outcomes for youth with IDD. Two of these approaches fall on opposite sides of the spectrum regarding unit of analysis. These include focusing on the individual(s) versus focusing on the societal discourse. The former addresses advocacy specifically geared at collecting and understanding the student's perspective more prominently within transition related research (Butcher & Wilton, 2008; Heah, Case, McGuire, & Law,

2007). Butcher and Wilton (2008) studied "transition spaces" (e.g., the school setting, employment settings) for students with IDD post-high school and found that many of the services received during transition planning did not focus on specific goals and aspirations of the students. Rather, the services focused on the teachers' and parents' expectations (typically, employment and PSE) further illustrating the origin of the dominant discourse guiding transitional expectations.

The latter strategy of understanding the role of societal discourse in structuring transition planning and expectations rests within a critical theoretical approach that has brought to light the social injustices facing specific groups of people. For example, one specific focus area has been that of the societal discourse framing the concept of self-determination. Self-determination is defined as including the skills for employing agency and self-direction for educational, vocational, and overall life participation (Field, Sarver, & Shaw, 2003). Greater levels of exhibited self-determination skill have been shown to increase the likelihood of successful post-secondary transition for students with IDD (Field, Sarver, & Shaw, 2003; Shogren et al., 2015).

However, Smith and Routel (2009) strongly argued that self-determination has been a historically colonized concept that inherently disadvantages many students and parents by measuring them against a societal or cultural norm other than their own. For example, they argued that the researchers, educators, and specialists who publish research, and thus defining and measuring a student's abilities, directly influence and control the perspective of educational success. Additionally, Trainor (2005; 2008) and Kim and Schnieder (2009) utilized Bourdieu's critical theory of *capital* to demonstrate how access to and attainment of social and cultural capital is predicated on numerous variables, including but not limited to, family socio-economic status, parental education level, and teacher and professional awareness of community resources.

Thus, students with IDD often have little agency to deviate from the expectations created by the societal discourse, or norms, of self-determination and associated academic and transitional success.

### *"Épistémè of the Normal Bell Curve"*

The prominent term featured in this dissertation's title, *épistémè,* is a specific concept presented by Michel Foucault in his work, *The Order of Things* first published in 1966. *Épistémè* is used to outline the specific constructs of power relations, the creation and disbursement of knowledge, and the discourse(s) used to maintain societal systems of action, thought, and subjectivity. With the above section serving as an introduction to the discourse(s) that constructs the transition process for students with IDD, I utilize "*épistémè* of the normal bell curve" to refer to the consequences of a neoliberal rationale present within our society. The choice for this title stems from my analysis of the data and discourse analyzed for this dissertation. I will explore and provide a deep discussion and analysis of the neoliberal rationale, discourse, and concepts of *power/knowledge* in successive sections and chapters.

For now, I utilize this section to introduce the dominant productive and restrictive forces found within a neoliberal rationale that guides participation during post-secondary transition. These are related to ideals of independence, production, and societal contribution. These ideals are created and perpetuated via the status quo of "typical" childhood, young adult, and adult life course trajectories (i.e. attaining gainful employment, not being dependent on government and social safety nets, contributing to societal progress, etc.). Therefore, students with IDD are constantly measured against their typically developing peers, falling within the left skew of the normal bell curve, and are only recognized as successfully transitioning if they can achieve "normal distribution" status. This particular status quo of normalcy represents the dominant

voices in society who do not need to worry about physical, social, and other forms of inclusion and participation. The discourse speaks for them and about them. Society's tendency to focus on deficits and a "return-to-normal" thus define the *épistémè* of the normal bell curve and serves as the reasoning behind my choice to implement a Foucauldian styled dissertation title.

A brief note on the concepts of "normal" or "normalcy" as it pertains to my dissertation. These concepts are not a tenant of traditional neoliberal ideals. Its emergence as concepts within this dissertation reflect my own analysis of the discourse collected. I argue that neoliberalism, as the status quo creates the ideal *normal* occupations of transition and adulthood. Yet, I also concede that other societal phenomenon such as eugenics and institutionalization have contributed to this discursive interpretation. I will explore the neoliberal rationale as conceived by Foucault and present within the discourse collected for this dissertation in depth in the sections and chapters to follow as well as a discussion regarding the contributions of eugenic and institutionalization discourse in my final chapter.

**Occupational Justice and Occupational Science Contributions**

*Occupational Justice*

Aside from the dominant societal discourse outlining self-determination, transition planning is utilized to affect outcomes for many students with IDD. Kardos and White (2005) reported that the planning process occupational therapists working with this population most frequently focused on during this time of transition was post-secondary education. However, this is not always the goal or realistic outcome for many students with disabilities. In contrast, they reported that the least frequently addressed areas of post-secondary transition involved vocational training, independent living skills, and overall community participation. Consequently, evidence has shown that low income, low education, and lower access to

employment, results that can stem from the lack of a transition planning focus outside of post-secondary education, has led to poorer outcomes of health and well-being (Corna, 2013; Shattuck et al., 2012).

This becomes an issue of social and occupational justice for many students with IDD. At its core, an occupational justice framework attempts to uncover the injustices related to engagement in occupation (Bailliard, 2016; Wicks, 2012; Wilcock & Hocking, 2015). Specifically, approaches to occupational justice aim to look at equity rather than equality of engagement in daily occupations (Bailliard, 2016). Understanding occupation as incorporating both a socially informed and individually exercised spectrum of action within occupational justice has elicited the need for a critical approach to engagement (Rudman, 2012; Rudman, 2013a; Rudman & Huot, 2013).

For example, IDEA has been constructed and employed within a paradigm of normalization and individualization (Kohler & Field, 2003). In other words, this system of support is guided by the notion that those requiring assistance are viewed as lacking the skills, abilities, drive, and independence that most of their age-related peers demonstrate on their own; this, in essence, privileges ableism. Ableism, similar to other sociological terms such as racism and sexism, denotes discrimination specifically towards disabled individuals (Friedman & Owen, 2017). This practice has been demonstrated in the literature. Arthur and Hiebert (1996) discussed "coping," a notion correlated with independence, with new environments and pressures post-transition as a skill that was lacking for students with disabilities. Furthermore, economists Finnie and Mueller (2009) reported that students with stronger "work ethic" were more likely to succeed in post-secondary life. Each of these examples demonstrates an individual responsibility to one's success and is problematic for students with IDD who require adaptive, social supports.

Understanding the effect of this paradigm of normalization and individualization is even more important considering that the school is often where much of a child's development takes place (Eccles & Roeser, 2011). Therefore, the social relationships and societal expectations are influentially shaped by those experiences gained from kindergarten through the end of high school. While the IDEA dictates transition plans include a focus on creating transition outcome goals, achievement of these goals post-graduation are often not upheld as there are no guidelines for accountability measures (Rusch et al., 2009). This lack of quality control may contribute to the NLTS-2's findings that students with disabilities significantly lack representation in PSE and employment settings.

### Occupational Science

As I have evidenced above, there is a substantial body of literature pertaining to students with IDD as they prepare to or are transitioning to life after high school. However, within the field of occupational science, there is a paucity of work focused on understanding occupational engagement, participation, and opportunity for this demographic at both the micro (individual(s)/group) and macro (societal) levels. A few authors and publications offer succinct yet limited insight into understanding broader high school transition through an occupational perspective. Notable references include Asbjørnslett, Engelsrud, and Helseth's (2015) exploration of Norwegian children with disabilities' experience of transitional phases and occupational engagement. Their study specifically looked at how transitional phases are demarcated by societal expectations and adoption of age-related occupations.

Phelan and Kinsella's (2014) Canadian based study offered a critique of the concept of occupational identity for children with disabilities. Similar to Asbjørnslett et al. (2015), Phelan and Kinsella found that a child's identity is informed through societal pressures and negotiated

individually through social participation, or occupational engagement. Therefore, occupation and identity are concepts that co-constitute themselves yet hold parameters of distinction. Identity is specifically relevant to societal discourse because it relates to how one perceives their relationship to others. I have discussed this further in the methodological and theoretical consideration sections below.

Finally, Crider, Calder, Bunting, and Forwell's (2014) article specifically focused on exploring transition within occupational science. This integrative review highlighted the absence of a universally defined concept for transition within the occupational science literature. Moreover, a critical theoretical approach within occupational science has also witnessed limited employment by a select few researchers (e.g., Angell, 2014; Rudman, 2012; Rudman, 2013a; Rudman, 2013b; Rudman & Huot, 2013) with populations other than children with IDD. Therefore, for this project, I aimed to further the applicability and compatibility of a critical theoretical approach within occupational science, addressing among other concepts, an occupational science perspective of discourse, transition, and justice.

**Dissertation Aims and Objectives**

This dissertation is a critical discourse analysis (CDA) of the professional and academic literature that focuses on issues concerning transition and self-determination for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Federal legislation including IDEA and the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA) will also be assessed. During this study, I analyzed the discourse to better understand the neoliberal processes and agents involved in how occupations are constructed for the transitioning high school student. This research was guided by five main questions.

1. How does the literature inform the discourse of high school transition for U.S. students with intellectual and developmental disabilities?

2. How is the discourse of self-determination constructed within U.S. based professional and academic journals?

3. How is the discourse and process of transition constructed within federal policy?

4. What occupations are privileged within the discourse of transition?

5. What occupations are not privileged during and after transition?

Additionally, I will have demonstrated the numerous beneficial contributions a CDA can provide for occupational science research endeavors and have discussed avenues for enacting justice through the creation of alternative discourse(s) of occupational opportunities for youth with IDD.

**CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK**

**Introduction**

A firm grounding of the philosophical background is needed to define terms and researcher perspective in order to conduct a research study that employs a critical discourse analysis (Cheek, 2004; Rudman, 2013b). The researcher must also disclose how they have been situated within the research and the discourse they are studying (Rudman, 2013b; Wodak & Meyer, 2009). This necessitates the researcher to be continuously reflective and transparent during the course of the study. Cheek (2004) refers to this as the "decision trail," the detailed mapping of each process starting with the philosophical foundation to data collection and analysis. In the following discussion, I will highlight the theoretical foundation for the concept of discourse, methodological approach to conducting the CDA, and disclose my cultural biases as the researcher.

**Theoretical Foundation**

For the purpose of this dissertation, the concept of discourse is informed through the philosophies of Michel Foucault (1972; 1980). Foucault's (1980) foundational of discourse begins with an understanding of the relational force that is *power/knowledge*. Foucault (1980) viewed *power* not as a capital to be exchanged or consumed but rather as a force that is exercised and thus permeates all human action. To clarify the difference between capital and a relational force, Foucault states, "the individual/subject [is] only the vehicle of power, not its points of application" (p. 98). Foucault did not explicitly define *knowledge*; he referred to its influence through the production of "truths" and the "subject" (how and what a person acts upon). These

two terms are not distinct concepts but rather one singular, co-constitutive phenomenon. This relationship both constructs and wills the subject to "truths" (Blair 1987; Foucault, 1980).

Discourse is any form of symbol that constructs social reality (Blair 1987; Foucault 1972; Wodak & Meyer 2009). The relationship between discourse and power is symbiotic as it represents the mode for which power is evoked (Ainsworth & Hardy, 2004). Additionally, Foucault (1972) theorized that discourse, through society, was organized in "discursive formations," or the rules and modes of dispersion for specific *power/knowledge* relational forces (i.e., the production of certain truths). Therefore, discourse is in and of itself social action. To further understand discourse as a social action, Foucault (1972) outlined its main building block, the statement.

The statement is any utterance or transcription of language use that constructs social reality (Blair 1987; Foucault 1972). For Foucault, the statement *was* the atom of discourse. However, Foucault claimed caution between a discursive statement and a linguistic act. A sentence in and of itself is not a statement. It becomes a statement when its structural function is in relation to the broader discursive formations and *power/knowledge* forces within society. It is not about who is speaking or what is being said, but rather how it came to be said as a function of society's structures (Blair, 1987; Foucault 1972). Foucault further went on to describe statements as having three specific qualities. These are rarity, exteriority, and accumulation.

Rarity refers to the possibility of an uttered statement in relation to everything that is not said (Blair, 1987; Foucault, 1972). In other words, rarity provides the possibility of specific utterances to be made over those that can't, thus perpetuating the dominant *power/knowledge* structure. Historical trajectories of discourse privilege specific ideals and modes of action. Alternative opportunities for social action, or those from minority and underserved populations,

often go unheard and underrepresented throughout historical record. Exteriority refers to a statement's relationship to other statements, how unique discursive formations relate to one another and allow for neighboring statements to be made (Blair, 1987; Foucault, 1972). Not to be confused with interiority (the relationship between statement and author), exteriority juxtaposes structural difference in *power/knowledge* relations in order to provide meaning, a way of knowing through contrast. Finally, accumulation refers to the mode of preservation and dissemination of statements (e.g., books, newspaper, journal articles) (Blair, 1987; Foucault, 1972).

Foucault's later work (1994) explored the concepts of biopolitics and governmentality. In *Power/Knowledge*, Foucault (1980) argued power had shifted from a sovereign model to that of a local disciplinary model during industrial and post-industrial times. Through biopolitics, Foucault (1994) understood the government and its institutions as structuring disciplinary control through "technologies" such as the body (e.g., appropriate behaviors, conceptions of health). Furthermore, governmentality was the rationalization of government, a paradoxically liberal resistance from too much governance. Neoliberalism represents the concept of governmentality as forms of discursive formations and technologies of the body that include power forces of liberty, independence, and productivity (Rudman, 2013a).

The concepts of governmentality and technology provide an approach to understanding the relationship between subject and discourse. Foucault (1980) saw power as both a repressive and productive force. The subject, while structured through discourse, still had the ability to be creative in action. Ainsworth and Hardy (2004) discussed interdiscursivity as the various formations of *power/knowledge* force through multiple discursive structures allowing for broader possibility of action. This form of a "will to truths" is what Blair (1987) referred to as ethics, or

the relation of the self to thy self. Thus, the subject/object relationship is created through societal action and discourse, each is co-constitutive and necessary for understanding the other.

**Critical Discourse Analysis Approach**

I employed a critical social science perspective and interpretive analysis to collect, analyze, and discuss its data and findings. I used Foucault's (1984) Archaeological and Genealogical method to structure analysis of the inherent, broader power/knowledge force relations constructing the social reality of those related to transition and IDD. Building from Foucault, I incorporated tools and concepts from Norman Fairclough's (2009) Dialectical-Relational Approach (DRA) to inform this project's CDA processes, in more explicit a-priori measures. Fairclough's (1992) approach stemmed from a Foucauldian school of thought in relation to understanding the concept of discourse (Wodak & Meyer, 2009) and therefore provides a fertile landscape for both approaches (Archaeology/Genealogy and DRA) to coexist and inform each other in critical analysis.

*Analytical Framework*

**Archaeology and Genealogy.** Foucault's (1972) method of Archaeology originated from an immersion of the structural schools of thought of the time (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982). Foucault's intention for utilizing an Archaeology was to study and dissect at its deepest levels the structural and systemic practices of discourse pervasive in society (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982). However, in his later works he began to adopt and use in parallel with Archaeology a method of Genealogy (a word and approach born from Neitzsche). Foucault's intention to utilize a Genealogical approach was to acknowledge and actively consider the perspective of the researcher and their influence on the resulting analysis. This provided a subjective, reflexive

analysis in addition to Archaeology's objective endeavor (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982). For

Foucault,

> [genealogy] is to identify the accidents, the minute deviations… the errors, the false appraisals, and the faulty calculations that gave birth to those things that continue to exist and have value for us; it is to discover that truth or being does not lie at the root of what we know and what we are, but the exteriority of accidents" (1972, p. 81).

Summarized, Dreyfus and Rabinow (1982) state, "Genealogy avoids the search for depth… The

interpreter as Genealogist sees things from afar" (pp. 106-107); in other words, it uncovers

themes of power, knowledge, and the body (i.e., biopower). Commenting on the progress of

methodological transition for Foucault as Archaeologist to Genealogist in *Discipline and Punish*,

Dreyfus and Rabinow (1982) confirmed Foucault's notion that Archaeology is still an integral

process for understanding power relations. As such, I used both analytical approaches

(Archaeology and Genealogy) as one method for critically reflecting and presenting my findings.

What follows are the explicit concepts of measurable data points provided by Fairclough's

compatible method of DRA.

**Dialectical-Relational Approach.** Via Foucault, discourse is seen first and foremost as a

social practice represented through language and semiosis of a society. According to Fairclough

(1992), "discourse is a practice not just of representing the world, but of signifying the world,

constituting and constructing the world in meaning" (p. 64). Like Foucault, Fairclough viewed

discourse as a social mode of action that guides, dialectically, how social structures and social

practices are adopted and utilized by and through individuals (Fairclough, 1992). Three specific

functions of language, and discourse in general, are what Fairclough refers to as *identity*,

*relational*, and *ideational*. These functions that are found in all discursive practices related to the

constitutive and constructive nature of understanding the self and subject-hood, relationships

between subjects, and of truths and systems of knowledge (Fairclough, 1992).

With a background of how discourse is understood and how it both constitutes and constructs social reality, Fairclough (1992) created a three-dimensional framework to analyzing the processes of discourse. Each of the three levels is in constant negotiation with the other. At the "micro" level is the *text*, followed by *discursive practice*, and finally, *social practice* at the "macro" level (Fairclough, 1992; Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002; Titscher, Meyer, Wodak, & Vetter, 2000). Each dimension offers a specific focus to understanding discourse as social action. However, the analysis can only be truly enacted when a dialectical approach is employed and thus the relationship between the three dimensions is observed (Fairclough, 1992; Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002).

While Fairclough (1992) deviated from Foucault in terms of textual analysis from a linguistic perspective, I focused more on the relationship between the dimensions of *discursive practice* (production, distribution, consumption) and *social practice* (situational, institutional, societal). Jørgensen and Phillips (2002) defended the possibility of only focusing on these two dimensions based on each research project's specific objectives for analysis and interpretation.

***Methodology***

With a supplement of Fairclough's (2009) conceptual approach to understanding *discourse* and its relation to Foucault, I will now discuss the process of conducting a CDA for this specific dissertation. Similar to Foucault's Archaeological and Genealogical approach to analysis of historical trends and power/knowledge relations, Fairclough's (2009) Dialectical-Relational Approach (DRA) contains four steps to assessing social practices, "1) Focus upon a social wrong, in its semiotic aspect; 2) Identify obstacles to addressing the social wrong; 3) Consider whether the social order 'needs' the social wrong; and 4) Identify possible ways past the obstacles" (p. 167). This dissertation's guiding research objective qualifies as the first step,

understanding that discourse of self-determination and transition are constructed and perpetuated within a neoliberal expectation of post-high school outcomes. The second step refers to the specific research questions through an understanding of Foucauldian discourse analysis (analyzing the rarity, exteriority, and accumulation) of the literature. The third step involves analyzing the necessity of the specific construction that discourse of "self-determination" and "transition" provide for the broader societal expectation of students entering post-high school life. Finally, the fourth step witnesses the potential for positive social change based on a critical perspective. I will explore this fourth objective in relation to the avenues for social and occupational justice related to research and outcomes for students with IDD in Chapters 4 and 5.

**Researcher Position**

Rudman (2013b) and Cheek (2004) strongly argued that CDAs must be transparent in their theoretical background and offer clear reasoning behind chosen methods of data collection. In addition to the steps outlined above that discuss this theoretical background, Rudman (2013b) and Wodak and Meyer (2009) contend that a researcher is also inherently situated within the discourse they study, thus research is often a reflection of the researcher's bias. Therefore, the researcher must take special care to continuously remain reflexive and ever transparent in approach. Cheek (2004) refers to this need as part of a "decision trail."

I first became interested in high school transition during my undergraduate involvement with a federally funded Transition and Postsecondary Program for Students with Intellectual Disabilities (TPSID) as a peer-mentor. As an occupational therapist, I have worked in both clinical and school settings to provide evaluation and intervention for students preparing to graduate from high school within the state of North Carolina. As a U.S. citizen, English speaker, and consumer of American educational organizations, I have been exposed to the various

systems that support and represent this IDD community. These experiences have structured how I have viewed outcomes for students with IDD. Specifically, I have found that most students both have personal goals and goals heavily influenced by their parents, teachers, and therapists that represent outcomes of productivity and independence in life after high school.

As an occupational scientist, these issues also echo the need to consider the broader social and occupational inequality for students with IDD. However, I believe that the discourse surrounding high school transition presents a nuanced dilemma facing students, their parents, and therapists. For example, while I believe that a neoliberal construction of self-determination and transition discourse limits the occupational possibilities for many students with IDD, I also believe that the discourse has been constructed to match the best possibility for inclusion and participation in society. In other words, while the discourse is constructed to not privilege the abilities of the disabled, the strategies and research geared towards transition planning offer beneficial opportunities towards gaining access. Therefore, as an occupational scientist, I see the potential for not only an occupational therapist being able to help an individual student adapt to the pressures of adulthood, but for occupational science as a discipline to explore alternative occupational opportunities based on the aspirations and strengths of minority (e.g. students with IDD) populations.

The purpose for conducting a CDA is therefore to understand, in Foucauldian terms, how the status quo is created and perpetuated thus limiting the voices and participation of students with IDD during post-secondary transition. Through self-determination as a predictor of successful transition outcomes, I am critical of the discursive formations and overall *power/knowledge* force that constructs and guides the decision-making process for students with IDD.

I have also journaled my reflexive evolution during the process of analysis in order to discern my perspective from an understanding of the voices that have not been heard (students with IDD) and the discursive formations that are not privileged from their perspective. These journal entries are not considered primary data (such as artifacts of academic and professional journal articles or legislation), but rather served to reflect on the themes present from the data collected and were used to inform the creation of the final chapters of discussion in this dissertation. These personal journals were recorded digitally within a continuous Microsoft OneNote file with smaller, infrequent Google Keep Notes, and physical journaling (pen and notepad) when access to OneNote was limited.

**Methods**

*Selection Criteria*

By enacting critical social research, the discourse that makes up the data should come from a transdisciplinary pool of text and semiosis (Fairclough, 2009). What follows is a description of inclusion and exclusion criteria for the data required to address this study's purpose. Fairclough (1992) argued that at the start of a CDA, how much data that will need to be collected in order to address the objectives is unknown. As research progresses, criteria may evolve and be adapted to reflect the available resources in order to provide sufficient data to address this dissertation's objective. Initially, I proposed to collect and analyze popular news media discourse. However, due to a combination of an inadequate amount of resources found within popular media and the disparity between rhetoric and focus of journal and popular media articles, the latter data field was not included in this analysis.

Originally, I proposed to include news articles and general media from widely recognized sources (e.g., The New York Times, Washington Post, The LA Times, NPR/PBS, The

Associated Press). The following inclusion criteria were to apply: these texts must also be published since 1990. These articles must discuss transition or graduation preparation/outcomes for students with IDD. Self-determination as a keyword or topic is not necessary for this stage in research as the news media will represent the juxtaposition of social rather than professional discourse and perception of successful transition outcomes. It is with this last consideration that a decision was made to proceed without this data field of articles. While both arenas of publication (journal and popular media) present topics of transition, the lack of self-determination and related concepts proved too wide of a conceptual gap to critically analyze within the same discursive formation. Additionally, it proved too difficult to digitally search for and obtain articles prior to the 2000s. However, popular media does present a fertile field for future CDA projects as they provide a source of discourse shaping perspectives of students with IDD.

I queried professional and academic peer-reviewed journal articles from the fields of education (including special education), developmental disabilities, childhood and adolescent development, and occupational therapy/science, among others disciplines. Articles published starting in 1990 (date of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act name change from Education for all Handicapped Children) to 2019 were considered. For inclusion, articles must have addressed self-determination *and* transition. Searchable keywords for databases included: "transition," "self-determination," "self-advocate/cy," "vocational training," "postsecondary education," "graduation," and "independent living." Exclusion criteria for these articles included topics that did not directly address self-determination (or related terms relevant to discourse concerning adult responsibilities of independence, autonomy, agency, etc.) in regards to transition. Specific journal articles that addressed transition outcomes explicitly included self-determination (and related concepts) within the text. All articles must have been published in

English. Articles published in English but featuring non-U.S. based authors or research were included but distinguished from U.S. based articles.

*Data Collection*

I consulted a university librarian to create search terms for electronic databases of professional and academic journal articles. I ultimately used three databases to search for artifacts. These included ERIC, Web of Science, and PsycINFO. ERIC, an acronym for Education Resources Information Center, is a database that indexes education and literature resources and is sponsored by the Institute of Educational Sciences of the U.S. Department of Education. Web of Science is a "publisher-independent global citation database" that is owned and operated by parent company, Clarivate Analytics (Web of Science, n.d.). PsycINFO indexes publications that directly address interdisciplinary behavioral and social sciences, and is sponsored by the American Psychological Association. The Boolean/Phrase search terms used for each respective database were:

> (TI transition* OR AB transition* OR self-determinat* OR TI advoca* OR AB advoca* OR TI autonomy OR AB autonomy OR DE "Self advocacy")   AND (TI iep OR AB iep OR TI idea OR AB idea OR TI education* OR AB education* OR TI vocation*  OR AB vocation* OR "high school" OR TI college* OR AB college* OR TI universit* OR AB universit* OR post-secondary OR "secondary school" OR "secondary schools" OR  DE "High School Students" OR DE "High Schools" )   AND (TI idd OR AB idd OR "mental retardation" OR "intellectual disabilit*" OR "mental disabilit*" OR "developmental disabilit*" OR "intellectual deficien*" OR "mental deficien*" OR "developmental deficien*" OR DE "developmental disabilities" OR DE "Intellectual Disability")

> (transition* OR self-determinat* OR advoca* OR autonomy) AND (iep OR idea OR education* OR vocation* OR "high school" OR college* OR universit* OR universities OR post-secondary OR "secondary school" OR "secondary schools") AND (idd OR "mental retardation" OR ((intellectual OR development* OR mental) AND (disabil* OR deficien*)) OR "developmental disabilities" OR "intellectual disability")

> (TI transition* OR AB transition* OR self-determinat* OR TI advoca* OR AB advoca* OR TI autonomy OR AB autonomy OR DE "Self advocacy" OR DE "self-determation") AND (TI iep OR AB iep OR TI idea OR AB idea OR TI education* OR AB education* OR TI vocation*  OR AB vocation* OR "high school" OR TI college* OR AB college*

OR TI universit* OR AB universit* OR post-secondary OR "secondary school" OR "secondary schools" OR  DE "High School Students" OR DE "High Schools" )   AND (TI idd OR AB idd OR "mental retardation" OR "intellectual disabilit*" OR "mental disabilit*" OR "developmental disabilit*" OR "intellectual deficien*" OR "mental deficien*" OR "developmental deficien*" OR DE "developmental disabilities" OR DE "Intellectual development disorder")

ERIC yielded a total 919 articles, Web of Science a total of 1,824 articles, and PscyINFO a total of 794 articles for a combined total of 3,537 journal articles. Duplication of articles produced from each database was observed; however, I was unable to record an exact number of articles that overlapped among each of the three databases used. Of the 3,537 articles queried and filtered for duplicates, a total of 411 met the inclusion criteria for data analysis (365 U.S.-based and 46 international-based publications). See **Figure 1** for an illustration of this process.

**Figure 1**

Academic and Professional Journal Article Collection Process

| Search Results | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Eric<br>919 Articles | Web of Science<br>1,824 Articles | PsycINFO<br>794 Articles |

⬇

| Total of 3,537 Articles<br>(Including Duplicates) |
| --- |

⬇

| 411 Articles Matched Inclusion Criteria | |
| --- | --- |
| 365 Domestic Articles | 46 International Articles |
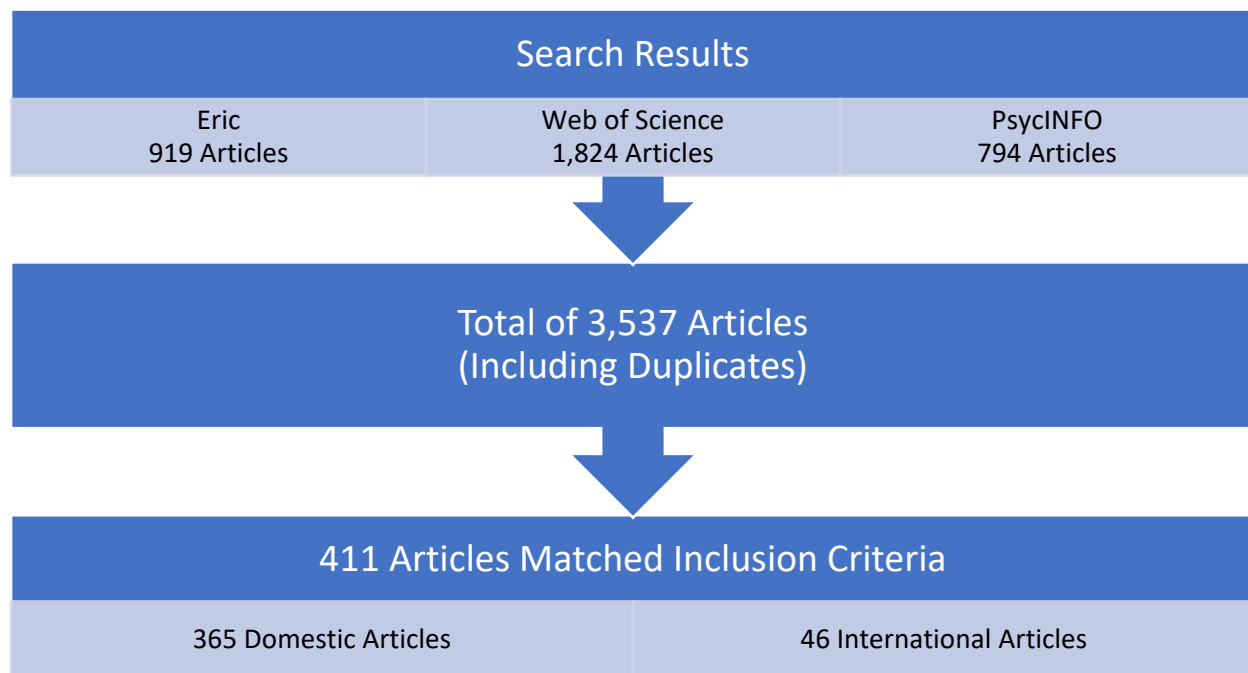
*Note.* An illustration of data collection process during search and inclusion criteria analysis.

These 411 articles were selected based on combination of Title, Abstract, Key-Terms, and Body Text that contained the above listed search terms. While this dissertation focused specifically on

the transition process for U.S. based students with IDD, I included international articles published in English in data analysis as they met selection criteria highlighting Western concepts of transition and self-determination.

Federal legislation influencing and outlining transition planning was analyzed as well. This includes the 1990 reauthorization and renaming of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) that introduced specific transition planning as part of a student's individualized education plan (IEP). The Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA) of 2008 was also reviewed and analyzed. As these are static documents, they are included as benchmarks of legislative time periods bookended by the journal articles that cite, reflect, critique, and supported their ratification.

### *Data Analysis*

All of the 411 articles and variations of the legislative artifacts included in this study's data pool were recorded and organized using Microsoft Excel and Zotero, an open-source referencing tool. I then read each artifact individually in publication date succession (i.e., articles published in 1990 were read first, then 1991, etc.). I made notes in each of the articles; underlining, highlighting, and adding comments, thoughts and analytic ideas or future reference. After I had read each article, I used the adapted form from Fairclough (1992) and Rudman (2003) to analyze each artifact (see APPENDIX B). Analysis guided by the completion of this form was entered into a single Microsoft Excel sheet for all artifacts (See APPENDIX C for an example of these data entries). Fairclough's (1992) three identified functions of discourse structured the analysis (identity, relational, ideational). I provided each function with an independent column of data entry in Microsoft Excel and included analysis that addresses the creation of the subject, classification of the societal/individual "problem," and the representation

of the relational *power* that underpins the specific text. As a whole, this completed document (APPENDIX B) addressed the statement/statements made within the text document with specific concern to its rarity, exteriority, and accumulation relative to the overall discursive formation. Bibliographic data was compiled and organized in Zotero. See APPENDIX D for bibliographic data pertaining to the 365 U.S.-based publications, APPENDIX E for the remaining 46 international-based artifacts.

For data representation and discussion, I utilized the artifacts and adapted form (APPENDIX B) that were collected and organized in Excel (APPENDIX C) to contribute to an Archaeological perspective while grander discussions and critical appraisals of power, knowledge, and body are presented from a Genealogical approach. This proved to be the best approach to data discussion as it mirrored the chronological progression of data analysis, a historical reading of artifacts first starting with publications from 1990 leading to 2019. I used the Excel file with complied information to quickly search for terms and compare and contrast historical trajectories of discourse. Additionally, I often referred back to the linked article to revisit my notes/marks to analyze and eventually utilize specific quotes for the discussion portion of this dissertation. In the following chapters, I respectively discuss the discursive and social practices (and power/knowledge forces) that shape the social concepts of transition and self-determination for students with IDD as well as the contributions towards understanding the concept of occupation and progressing occupational opportunities (justice) for this demographic from a critical perspective. Even though I had analyzed all articles using the process described above before writing the following chapters, active analysis and continued development of my arguments occurred throughout the completion of this dissertation, from data collection to the final submission.

# CHAPTER 3: ARCHAEOLOGY AND GENEALOGY

**Introduction**

Congruent with the two guiding objectives for this project, my results have been divided into two main pillars of analysis. In this chapter I explore and present the specific concepts of discourse related to transition and how they are societally framed from an Archaeological and Genealogical approach. This includes two main themes: Neoliberal Ideals and Identity. For the second pillar, I discuss this study's CDA application and contributions to the world of occupational science, including how a critical approach can highlight concepts of occupation and enact occupational justice in Chapter 4.

A brief note on the discussions presented in these two chapters: this critical analysis of the discourse that constructs the social phenomenon of post-secondary transition should not be conflated with negative critique. The references and authors cited below throughout the nearly 30 years of transition-related publication demonstrate an invaluable contribution to the furthering of opportunity and resources for a very underserved community. This CDA is meant only to highlight the discursive formations and the power/knowledge forces that have structured the past 3 decades of professional and academic discussions and thus expose the progress yet to be made and voices/discourse that still go under- or un-heard.

**Neoliberal Ideals**

As I discussed in Chapter 2, the concept of *neoliberalism* that I employ in this dissertation stems from Foucault's (1994) concepts of governmentality that conceive a power/knowledge force on the construction and restriction of the subject through technologies

such as the body. Neoliberalism as a system asserts a rationality of limited government reliance and privileges independent, individual efficiency and reliance on the self (Rudman, 2005; Rudman & Molke, 2009).

When connected to the secondary transition process for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities, the neoliberal ideal of independence and self-reliance creates a paradox of societal inclusion for a population that has historically been reliant on services and community resources to overcome the barriers faced during everyday living. The need for the creation and existence of federal (and state legislation where applicable) illustrate this point, demonstrating that students with disabilities needed to be protected and granted certain rights under federal law in order to achieve outcomes associated with their typically developing peers. The two most relevant forms of legislation that address secondary transition are the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) and the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA).

*Policy and Legislation*

**Individuals with Disabilities Act.** When discussing legislation that affects and provides services for students with disabilities, it is worth referencing the American's with Disabilities Act (ADA) as well. While not the direct focus of this study's analysis, the ADA as a law provides a perfect model in which to juxtapose IDEA's intentions for people with disabilities. The ADA's main focus is directed towards *access* of physical and otherwise systemic features of society; to reduce the barriers that limit participation within the community. The IDEA takes this approach one step further, providing not only the *access* to educational opportunities for school-age students with disabilities, but supporting *success* of educational outcomes.

We can see this objective in the definitional clause of the IDEA: "Transitional services means a coordinated set of activities for a child with a disability that… is focused on *improving*

the academic and functional *achievement* of the child with a disability to facilitate the child's movement from school to post-school activities…" (1401.34, 2004, emphasis added). While this aspect allows for students with disabilities to not only gain access but to be supported to achieve success, it also implies a benchmark to measure success. This success is thus being defined by the outcomes celebrated by students without disabilities as they transition to post-secondary life (i.e., independent living, vocational opportunities, and post-secondary education).

This definition (and IDEA as a whole document) perfectly illustrates the neoliberal rationalization of governmentality and charts the basic tenants of Foucault's concept of discourse and the statement. Terms and phrases such as "…is based on the individual child's needs…" and "…is designed to be within a results-orientated process" (IDEA, 1401.34, 2004) as well as those quoted above explicitly reflect individualization, independence, and efficient/productive contribution to society. As I discussed earlier, the National Longitudinal Transition Survey-2 (NLTS-2) suggests that these ideals don't match the realities many students with disabilities live within after high school (Grigal, Hart, & Migliore, 2011) thus creating sentiments of failure and inadequacy within the large scope of societal inclusion for those with disabilities.

**Higher Education Opportunity Act.** While the IDEA serves as the impetus for secondary transition planning for school aged children for this project, the HEOA also provides a window in which to address post-secondary outcomes within this neoliberal rationale. Like IDEA, the HEOA exists to provide not only access, but successful opportunities within post-secondary education for students with disabilities. Part D, section 760 provides the most succinct representation of the neoliberal ideal: "comprehensive transition and postsecondary programs for students with intellectual disabilities are…designed to support students…who are seeking to continue academic, career and technical, and independent living instruction at an institution of

higher education in order to prepare for gainful employment" (HEOA, 2008). Here again, we can see the emphasis on outcomes that underscore ideals of independence and production within society (i.e., employment) that will ultimately lead to a decrease in local and social assistance but government assistance as well.

Section 760.D also explicitly makes inclusion a defined outcome of the higher education opportunity. Namely, that students must be included in higher educational opportunities alongside "non-disabled students" (2008). A deeper critical analysis of the discourse that constructs the societal concept of *inclusion* will be addressed in the following section, *Secondary Transition*. However, relative to the analysis of policy, inclusion as represented in Section 760.D runs parallel to the student eligibility and requirements stated in Section 485.(s)(A-B) where,

> …a student with an intellectual disability shall – (A) be enrolled or accepted for enrollment in a comprehensive transition and postsecondary program for students with intellectual disabilities at an institution of higher education; (B) be maintaining satisfactory progress in the program as determined by the institution, in accordance with standards established by the institution (HEOA, 2008).

Here, we can see loosely outlined parameters for acceptance and requirement standards for enrollment and program completion. These standards are on an individual basis, set and monitored by the institutions and their related governing bodies of accreditation. The measurements for enrollment and success are often guided by systemic functions of typically developing, non-disabled students (i.e., GPA, standardized assessments such as SAT, ACT). Therefore, this perpetuates the ideals of normalization and production based on a standard not normed to the abilities and strengths of a disabled cohort while continuing to emphasize the ability to independently engage and participate within higher education.

Finally, pieces of legislation like these represent a meta-paradox of the governmentality power forces prevalent in our society. On the one hand, their mere existence acknowledges the

barriers to educational success for many students with disabilities. Yet while they provide

supports and demonstrate the existence for a possibility of state-supported assistance, the

discourse within represents statements that are still geared towards an eventual outcome of

individualized, independent success measured by the ability to succeed with limited assistance.

This phenomenon will be analyzed in following sections, especially as it comes to considering

sustainable supports within the community while negotiating the neoliberal outcomes of eventual

independence. For now, it is sufficient to identify within my analysis that a system providing

supports with the goal to ultimately become independent creates a discourse of failure for those

with disabilities as they traverse the secondary transition planning landscape with structured

supports.

### *Secondary Transition*

Before the creation of IDEA, there was the Education for Handicapped Children Act and

along with it, no dedicated language directing funding or attention to the achievement for

students with disabilities as they plan for secondary transition (Wehman, 1992). Wehman (1992)

reported that many advocacy groups in the 1980's began to support universally mandated

transition planning. As the movement gained steam, it garnered attention of elected officials and

transition related legislation began to be drafted and defined.

**Transition Defined, Its Evolution and Expected Outcomes.**

*Defined.* The IDEA first defined transition services as,

> a coordinated set of activities for a student, designed within an outcome oriented process,
> which promotes movement from school to postschool activities, including postsecondary
> education, vocational training, integrated employment, including supported employment,
> continuing adult education, adult services, independent living or community
> participation. The coordinated set of activities shall be based upon the individual
> student's needs taking into account the student's preferences and interests and shall
> include instruction, community experience, the development of employment and other

postschool adult living objectives, and when appropriate acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation (1990).

The most current version of the law doesn't deviate from the above quoted definition, however now labels the student as a "child" and replaces "outcome oriented" with "results based." The use of *child* discursively reflects the government's strategy when faced with providing supports in contradiction to the neoliberal rationality. As a child, an individual is deemed a dependent, the same classification for many who also have disabilities.

Much of the early literature collected for this study represents this discourse of the paternal state of those with disabilities, structurally situating children with disabilities and their families within the passive role of receiving services the state and other organizations of power have deemed necessary (Zirpoli et al., 1994). However, this discourse has maintained a structural foothold throughout the transition literature. For example: "The term transition has been commonly used to describe the crucial task of moving from the *protected* life of a child to the *autonomous* and *independent* life of an adult" (Foley et al., 2012, p. 1747) is a statement used to define transition as recently as 2012, four years after the last substantial amendment of IDEA. Social roles and titles (i.e., child, adult, youth, etc.) will again be addressed in more detail in Chapter 4. For this analysis, I focus the discussion on the entities defining transition and their situation of power within society, namely the government and those within the various academic and professional circles.

The working definition of transition I used for this study, however, assumes an inherent change in life processes. During data analysis I found that the majority of the discourse relied on an implied understanding of transition (especially within the context to the specific transition planning to post-secondary life or IDEA mandate) unless otherwise explicitly utilized formal theories to strengthen the authors' arguments were present. This latter approach highlighted uses

of a Life Course Theory (e.g., Hafner et al., 2011; Seltzer et al., 2009; Thoma et al., 2002) and Ecological Theories (e.g. Shogren et al., 2007; Trainor et al., 2008; Walker et al., 2011). Both of these theories utilize a highly social and systems-based platform to address the phenomenon of transition whereas IDEA relies on a simplistic, outcomes/results-based definition.

Here we can see the implementation of the neoliberal ideals and expectations for students transitioning to become adults juxtaposed with a critical exploration into how to incorporate a longitudinal preparation within different areas of social placement (i.e., the family, community, school). However, even with a critical lens developing within the post-secondary transition discourse, the pervasive governmentality rationale remains. Outcomes for this transition are still measured upon a metric of "success" within this systems-based theoretical perspective. Here we also begin to see a fundamental contradiction in the discourse, namely that even with robust support and social networks, an individual is still the ultimate focus and expected to develop and assert independence and contribute back to society.

***Transition Outcomes: Vocation, Independent Living, & PSE.*** Returning to Wehman's (1992) article, we can see an early justification for IDEA's purpose stemming from a focus on the industry and private production/consumption metrics. The other primary goals, aside from vocational placement, were mainly independent living and post-secondary education opportunity. However even early on, post-secondary education wasn't viewed in the lens of personal growth and education but rather another supported opportunity to build skills that would ultimately lead to gainful employment. Wehman (1992) demonstrates this dynamic relationship between the goals of IDEA and the pressures of the private sector within transition planning of his publication's time: "functional skill training which is consistent with those skills that are required for success in business and industry" (p. 117).

This paradigm is pervasive in the years that follow. For examples, consider the following excerpts from five publications through the past 30 years: "the four primary outcomes for students with mild mental retardation are *productive* employment, self-sufficiency and independence, life skills *competence*, and opportunity to participate successfully within the school and community" (Patton et al., 1996, p. 75, emphasis added). Frank and Sitlington (2000) outline four out of five of their major recommendations for continued transition planning to continue to focus on employment outcomes (with the fifth focusing on post-secondary education that specifically addresses job training). "Individuals with disabilities have been encouraged to pursue education that will lead to *appropriate adult normalization* and full participation in life…However, the success of individuals with disabilities in gaining meaningful and *financially sufficient* employment and also maintaining their independence in the community remains a *problem*" (Luftig & Muthert, 2005, p. 317-18, emphasis added). "transition programs… can successfully prepare individuals with ID/DD to become *productive* members of society who will live independently and participate in civic, social, and communal activities" (Ross et al., 2013, p. 348, emphasis added). Finally, while demonstrating a consideration to the benefit to all parties (disabled and non-), Green et al. (2017) still emphasize the benefit to a consumer-driven, production-based society: "The university student who sits alongside the [disabled] student will be the future employer who makes decisions about hiring people with disabilities" (p. 291).

In critically analyzing the discourse surrounding the three main goals prevalent in the last 30 years of transition planning conversation, it is evident that the neoliberal ideal is not just concerned with the contribution of its society's members but also views the individual as a product itself; a product that fails the test of societal inclusion if it requires more financial support than it produces. Therefore, if one is dependent or reliant on others for life skills (e.g.,

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personal care and sustenance) as well as continued support within vocational settings that outweigh the financial income of their own efforts, they are deemed a failure based on the standards of "normal" or "typical" adulthood expectation. For example, if the resources required to train for successful transition "cost" more to society than the gainful employment or decrease in social supports achieved in its outcome, the "product" fails the neoliberal ideal of inclusion. Coupled with the pervasive paternal attitudes towards children and those with disabilities, this standard becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy of failure when an individual's strengths don't meet the needs/interests of a society and are viewed as a commodity with minimal return of investment. Here, issues of empowerment and self-determination skills become imperative when explaining the continued progress and supports evident within society in spite of this disproportionate support-to-production ratio. Recent dialogue concerning issues of guardianship and quality of life help to highlight this phenomenon and serve as a segue for a deeper discussion of self-determination in the sections below.

### *Guardianship*

A critical analysis of the concept of guardianship within transition-relevant literature yielded few artifacts and of those collected for this study, the majority were written by the same authors. Millar and Renzaglia (2002) argued that their study was the first of its kind to address the disconnect between independent adulthood transition goals and imposed guardianship for young adults with disabilities. As I discussed above, one of the leading consequences of the neoliberal rationale is that of the paternal state. Millar and Renzaglia demonstrated this from findings of their own study:

> To some parents, service providers, and members of the judicial system, any type of disability may be equated with poor decision-making abilities and the need for continued protection. In their eyes, perhaps, development of higher order decision-making skills cannot be acquired. The bias is evident from the statements such as '*He is Downs*

*syndrome. He will always be Downs syndrome. His condition will not change*' (2002, p. 479, emphasis added).

Millar and Renzaglia (2002) went on to discuss that many parents and families were often persuaded to consider institutionalization before IDEA and during the early years of its implementation. This can explain the stigma immediately associated with disabilities, especially those of cognitive origin, to assume that independence, self-care, and important life decision-making skills will not be achieved. What is most striking about the above dialogue is the association of the person as the disability (i.e. "he is Downs Syndrome") reducing the person to a medically classified developmental condition. I will address both self-determination and concepts related to identity in later sections, especially as they relates to guardianship; however, for the present discussion, the power relations within society controlling the outcomes for many youth with disabilities have been clearly held by the government, professionals, and to some extent, their parents rather than those with disabilities themselves.

Of the few artifacts that qualified for data inclusion, Rood et al. (2014) offered one of the most recent accounts of the progression of the concept of guardianship and transition planning for youth with disabilities. Similar to Millar and Renzaglia (2002), Rood et al. (2014) asserted that the power dynamic is still held by parents, officials, and professionals working with this demographic. For example:

> Families and professionals must be aware of and continue to develop alternatives to guardianship that ensure personal autonomy, so that young people with disabilities will learn and be supported to make their own decisions. Through a presumption of competence, we can begin to engineer a paradigm shift, committed to recognizing the potential of all individuals to achieve independence and provide them with both access to and legitimization of their capacity to make decisions about their own lives (Rood et al., 2004, p. 324-25).

Through this statement of discourse, we can see that a "presumption of competence" holds qualities of power expressed through the rarity of discursive statement for professionals and

families of those with disabilities. While not yet a shift in power for those with disabilities (this is an article being written by and for other professionals), it does offer an example of critical reflexivity, offering for the opportunity for those traditionally without a voice in society to have one during secondary transition planning.

### *Health and Quality of Life*

Similar to concepts of guardianship, issues regarding health and quality of life for youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities have been a debated topic within the literature pertaining to secondary transition. Throughout the artifacts I collected for this study, those that explicitly addressed quality of life focused on its outcome in relation to the transition goals discussed above, namely work and independent living. However, self-awareness of "success" has been measured in relation to gainful employment for youth with disabilities within the last 20 years of publications (Kraemer et al., 2003). Kraemer and colleagues (2003) utilized the standardized assessment, *Quality of Life Questionnaire* (Schalock & Keith, 1993). This assessment is a 40-item measure completed by the caregiver that assesses the quality of life in four different domains including satisfaction, competence-productivity, empowerment-independence, and social belonging-community integration (Kraemer et al., 2003; Schalock & Keith, 1993). Kraemer et al (2003) discovered that while many youths are measured for success and higher levels of quality of life based on "productivity and competence" subscales, this feature may ultimately relate only to the work dimension of one's life and represents an artificially low ceiling for overall quality of life. This finding demonstrates an emphasis towards productive contributions to society while minimizing the effect of other three domains has on quality of life for adults.

Through the concept and focus on quality of life for individuals with disabilities, we can see how the neoliberal rationale as a force of power both constructs and restricts possibilities for adult outcomes. It places societal expectations on youth to both find and engage in meaningful and productive lives (through employment) which when not achieved can inherently affect an individual's health when measured against the dominant ideals of societal "success." However, not all publications retrieved for this study discussed quality of life as a representation of achieved skills and success in work and independent living.

One study (Orsmond et al., 2013) discussed an alternative approach to the typical discourse perpetuating productivity and conceptualized quality of life through a measurement of social participation:

> The high rates of social isolation in young adults with an [Autism Spectrum Disorder] are concerning. Our findings have important implications for quality of life and service delivery in this growing population. Young adulthood is a high-risk development period for the onset of mental health conditions, particularly depression and anxiety, in this population (Orsmond et al., 2013, p. 2717).

Here we can see social participation as an adult outcome that does not explicitly match the prescribed neoliberal rationale. However, many outcomes that involve working and living independently require people to interact and engage with others. This is even more evident when we look at the outcomes for individuals who are not able to meet those goals. As the quote above argues, social isolation can foster depression and anxiety. Staying at home, dependent for their needs as an adult both financially and for personal care, reflects the limited supports available and a system that continues to privilege the ability for societal contribution. Both these examples of discourse continue to demonstrate an overall representation of neoliberal societal expectations. However, in addition to the "productive citizen" parameter demonstrated throughout the discourse discussing transition outcomes, guardianship, and quality of life, the following section

*Self-determination* will address the independent and personal liberty aspect of our society's governmentality power relation.

### Self-Determination

The impetus for identifying self-determination as a dominant construct within secondary transition planning discourse and thus an avenue for critical analysis first began when I was reflexively considering my role as a clinician. Self-determination as a concept relates to one's ability to make decisions based on personal preferences and goals. As a clinician, I found myself treating "self-determination" as a skill, teaching aspects such as exercising and communicating choice with others. I found this to be a paradox within transition-based practice. In essence, we were telling students that they needed to begin to make their own decisions and not rely on their parents or teachers/other professionals (i.e., myself) to make life decisions for them rather than assessing the parameters that have restricted their ability to exercise self-determination in their own way. Curious about this phenomenon, I searched the literature and found a publication that initiated the intent for the whole of this present study demonstrated via this argument:

> …at the personal level, the notion that self-determination [as a skill versus a human right] can be taught to others strikes us a uniquely colonialist ideal – some in-group (teachers, people who describe themselves as not having disabilities, as being normal) has it, and can teach the out-group (students, people with disabilities, people who are by definition not-normal) how to get it. If such an out-group can be said to not have self-determination, it is because they have been actively denied access to processes enabling them to express their self-determination by the in-group (Smith & Routel, 2009, p. 8).

Viewing self-determination in this manner as a colonial construct demonstrates just how engrained the neoliberal ideals are within our society. Furthermore, it illustrates how those with disabilities are part of a group that does not belong to the dominant structures of power and are constantly measured against those who are (i.e., "normal" individuals without disability). Smith and Routel (2009) argued that self-determination acts as a repressive tool not just for the

disability community but for other minority communities including but not limited to cultural and ethnic populations. Ultimately, independence and personal liberty, as expressed through the concept of self-determination as a skill is created by and measured against white, able-bodied populations.

It bears repeating here that the discussion I present below, while critically reflexive of the discourse surrounding self-determination and secondary transition over the past 30 years, does not represent a moral critique of those authors and the progress they encouraged for this population working towards exercising self-determination. It does however offer an analysis that shines a spotlight on the dominant societal formations of self-determination and its conceptual progression. Thus, this analysis demonstrates how it both perpetuates a neoliberal, colonial ideal while also providing avenues for success and opportunity in an area not celebrated by most with disabilities before 1990.

**Discursive Evolution of "Self-Determination."** While Smith and Routel (2009) offer an explicit critical analysis of the concept of self-determination, Michael Wehmeyer, one of the most prominent and prolific scholars on the concept in relation to secondary transition, also considered the broader societal implications for the phenomenon. He wrote: "The opportunities to make choices, express preferences, experience control over outcomes, take risks and assume responsibility for personal actions are *highly prized by most people*. Perceptions of adulthood are linked directly to these '*adult roles*'" (Wehmeyer, 1992, p. 302). Even though his reflections were not critical in nature, they reflect a discourse that regards personal liberty and responsibility for one's actions very highly. Assessing this statement's quality of rarity, we can see that social action does not allow, or views negatively, reliance and dependence on others to make one's own life-affecting decisions.

Wehmeyer's 1992 article served as a springboard for most of the self-determination

literature collected for this study. As such, his definition of self-determination is based on a

literature review he conducted,

> To sum, [self-determination] refers to the attitudes and abilities required to act as the primary causal agent in one's life and to make choices regarding one's actions free from undue external influence or interference. It involves autonomy (acting according to one's own priorities or principles), self-actualization (the full development of one's unique talents and potentials) and self-regulation (cognitive or self-controlled mediation of one's behavior) (Wehmeyer, 1992, p. 305).

This definition clearly highlights a neoliberal construction governing the ideal actions of an

individual within our society, namely those that demonstrate independence. Autonomy as a

concept assumes that a person can make their own decisions devoid of contextual influence.

While this publication's age and definition of self-determination betrays its dated views, it is

interesting when juxtaposed to the Life Course (e.g., Hafner et al., 2011; Seltzer et al., 2009;

Thoma et al., 2002) and Ecological Theories used in later publications (e.g., Shogren et al., 2007;

Trainor et al., 2008; Walker et al., 2011) and discussed in the introduction to the transition

section above as it demonstrates a historical transition of thought within the discourse.

Even when earlier publications considered the contextual issues concerning self-

determination, the discourse still represents the existence of a paternal state that controls the

opportunities within society for students with disabilities. For example Field et al. (1992)

acknowledged, "The label of disability often is associated with lower expectation or perception

that the student's performance will be diminished" (p. 931). Yet, while their definition for self-

determination is not as descriptive as Wehmeyer's (1992), it still places significance on one's

ability to be agentic if not autonomous: "[Self-determination] is one's ability to define and

achieve goals based on a foundation of knowing and valuing oneself" (Field et al., 1992, p. 931).

What is most poignant about both of these definitions is that when self-determination is viewed

as a skill rather than as a human right, the discourse suggests that people with disabilities cannot know themselves and are unable to act on their own aspirations due to the incompatibility of the dominant societal discourse structuring opportunity. In other words, when viewed as a skill, self-determination is absent in an individual until taught or provided in their education. Viewed as a human right, it demonstrates that those in the "in-group" have taken this ability away and/or have failed to recognize a disabled individual's ability to do/act from a diverse perspective. This former perspective dominates the discourse illustrating the rarity of self-determination to not be seen as a right for all to be able to exercise.

In addition to being linked with the ability to make choices and exercise personal responsibility for one's actions, self-determination is also linked with an outcome itself, often a requisite for the transitional goals addressed in the sections above. For example, Wehmeyer and Schwartz (1997) reported this finding in a study of pre-transition, self-determination assessment data to measure self-determination, "Members of the high self-determination group were more likely to have expressed a preference to live outside the family home, have a savings or checking account, and be employed for pay" (p. 253). Therefore, self-determination is seen as a skill central to an individual's ability to lead productive lives and aligns with a neoliberal rationale. Even when the expectation to live independently is voided due to institutionalization, attainment of self-determination skills was deemed important yet lacking: "Historically, institutionalized persons with mental retardation have been afforded very few opportunities to *exercise choice* in matters that directly affect them" (Faw et al., 1996, p. 173, emphasis added). Here however, we can see friction between an acknowledgement that individuals are often not allowed to exercise their choice-making capabilities while the study's own main objective was to "increase the self-determination *skills* of people with mental retardation in the residential selection process" (p.

175, emphasis added). This is a perfect illustration of how the discourse perpetuates the

normalization of people with disabilities, even when it is assumed that the environment restricts

choice, the onus is on the disabled person to improve skills that match the environmental

demand.

> This tension can be seen in successive publications. Field and Hoffman (2002) argued:
>
> If persons with disabilities are going to have meaningful opportunities to exercise self-determination, it is imperative that schools provide students with the opportunity to develop the knowledge, skills, and beliefs that will help them capitalize on and create opportunities to be self-determined. In order to promote self-determination competencies for students, schools need to create an environment that both explicitly and implicitly teaches the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that lead to increased self-determination (p. 115).

Here the responsibility lies with the school to foster an environment that allows for students with

disabilities to build self-determination skills. Yet the assumed ideal of self-determination is still a

concept defined by the dominant players of the discourse (i.e., the teachers and professionals).

Following this discursive evolution, Branding et al. (2009) reported that their study results

> demonstrate that self-determination can be enabled to some degree by simply placing individuals in more powerful roles (i.e., self-directing an IEP meeting) and supporting them in these roles through prompting and other assistance. Self-determining behavior needs to be enabled on a daily, individualized basis with students and adults who have intellectual disabilities (p. 761).

While this excerpt demonstrates a greater responsibility of the school and professionals to

provide personalized opportunities for students with disabilities to exercise control, especially

through the use of "enabling," their article continues to address self-determination as a skill that

should be taught. Additionally, enabling the ability for control still asserts that the environments

created to allow for successful outcomes are designed by those (professionals, teachers,

employees of institutions) that hold the dominant relational power dynamic.

Returning to Wehmeyer's vast contribution to developing the concept of self-determination across the historical record, he appears in publications ranging from a secondary- to last-author, often serving roles from lead to consultant contributor. This role change from first and main author demonstrates the evolution and diversity of additional researchers discussing self-determination and issues of transition through the past 30 years. None of the publications address self-determination with the level of critical analysis that Smith and Routel (2009) offered; however, the data demonstrate an evolution to consider the multiple, contextual factors that affect the expression of self-determination for students with disabilities. Shogren et al. (2018) reflected this contemporary trend, "researchers acknowledge that the development and expression of self-determination is influenced by one's personal culture, which is shaped by multiple intersecting factors, including age, gender, disability, family background, and race-ethnicity" (p. 10). Yet, this statement still reflects a system that identifies the minority population as underachieving to the dominant standard of societal participation (self-determination expression). Shogren and colleagues (2018) did address this issue:

> Access to opportunities to develop self-determination is influenced by multiple environmental factors, including the availability of culturally responsive supports for the development and expression of self-determination, administrator and teacher perceptions regarding the importance of self-determination instruction, and the availability of resources of schools and communities for supporting the use of research-based interventions to support self-determination (2018, p. 10).

This excerpt demonstrates the adoption of understanding that contextual factors inform self-determination expression. Yet, the publication still regards self-determination as a skill, congruent with the discourse present in the data collected overall. A skill that is measurable (based on scales created by the dominant players within the system), for which higher levels are still associated with the privileged neoliberal outcomes of gainful employment, independent living, and personal responsibility of one's actions.

**Identity**

  This section pertains to a critical analysis of the specific language used within the artifacts collected. However, unlike Fairclough's (2009) analytic method, I will not assess the specific uses of rhetoric, sentence structure, etc., but rather highlight how the titles and labels used throughout the discourse situate the individuals within the systems of power. This includes discussions that will focus on the evolution of the umbrella diagnosis of mental retardation to intellectual and developmental disabilities. Critical analysis of person- versus identity-first language and societal role placement (e.g., child versus student versus young adult) in relation to secondary transition planning will be discussed in Chapter 4 as it pertains to occupational justice. Additionally, Chapter 4 will also present an analysis of the methodological representation (methods used to conduct research within the publications) featured most prominently throughout the discourse of the artifacts collected for this study.

*Diagnoses and Labels*

  As I have demonstrated up to this point, the data collected for this study represent the various structures of power influencing post-secondary transition outcomes throughout the discourse. The relationships that I have discussed thus far have featured federal education legislation and U.S. based academic and professional publications. However, the discourse has also shaped the evolutionary use of labels to refer to people with disabilities. The first major piece of legislation is referred to as *Rosa's Law* (Public Law 111-256) signed into effect by President Obama in October of 2010. This law was a revolutionary accomplishment for disability advocates as its main purpose established a sweeping legislative adoption to retire "mental retardation" (MR) and replace with "intellectual disability" (ID).

This study's data reflects a much earlier adoption of intellectual (and developmental) disabilities, witnessing one of the earliest references in 1999 (Cole, 1999). However, this article does not directly address the distinction between MR and ID. It was however, published in the journal titled *Journal of Intellectual & Developmental Disability*, a novel step for its time amongst a sea of dialogue that referred to the disability as MR. On the reverse end of the spectrum, most references to MR cease in the publication year of 2013, unless specifically referencing historical record. One such article is Wehmeyer et al.'s (2013) study that looked at interventions aimed towards promoting self-determination for students. While not critically analyzed for the purposes of this study, the publication year of 2013 correlates with the release of the Diagnostic Statistical Manual-5 (DSM-5) which replaced MR with ID and related labels. As the American Psychological Association produces the DSM-5 and is responsible for medical diagnoses and labels related to mental health, articles for this study needed to reference current literature when discussing transition and ID.

The impetus for Rosa's Law and the domino effect it had within the medical and psychological communities that followed represents a repositioning of structural power. Retardation as it refers to cognitive ability had been colloquially associated as the "r-word," a derogatory reference to people with intellectual disabilities. While I would agree, I would also argue that ID, specifically *intellectual* incurs its own power dynamic that also disenfranchises those who qualify for the label. *Intellectual* can refer to one's intelligence and thus their "level" of "smart-ness." When paired with the word "disability," it assumes that those with ID are not/not as intelligent as their "typically" developing peers and only furthers to perpetuate the stigma that youth with disabilities are unable to achieve the same level of skill. This stigma demonstrates the rationale of normalization, measuring youth with disabilities as "less than."

This critical analysis best reflects the language of any given time-frame and demonstrates Foucault's (2000) assertion that power cannot be destroyed, but rather co-opted by other groups under different monikers to reproduce the same relational systems. Furthermore, the use of a Genealogical analysis continually uncovers and questions the relational power forces, ultimately affecting change. Issues related to change, and more broadly, justice as it is concerned with language use and conceptions of identity will be discussed and analyzed further in the following chapter.

# CHAPTER 4: CONTRIBUTIONS TO OCCUPATIONAL SCIENCE

**Introduction**

In the first chapter of this dissertation, I introduced the origins of critical theoretical approaches to understanding a concept of occupation and contributing to the methodological opportunities for use within the discipline of occupational science. During this time in our discipline's history, those who initiated the dialogue were most concerned about conceptual reflexivity as professionals and researchers. Hammell (2009) and Rudman et al. (2008) believed that occupational science had employed an imperialistic research approach to understanding occupation through the dominant Western ideals. Reed, Smythe, and Hocking (2013) as well as Kantartzis and Molineux (2012) further connected occupational science to its occupational therapy origins by critiquing how "occupation" had been originally understood and thus perpetuated as a Western, individualistic concept that included ideals of liberty, production, and independence. Furthermore, while not founded from a critical theoretical approach, Dickie, Cutchin, and Humphrey (2006) utilized Dewey's theories of transaction to assess the contextual nature of occupation. These scholars and those advocating for critical theory to inform occupational science thus wanted to evolve the discipline towards a trajectory that shed its autonomous, individualistic approach. In its place, they advocated for a focus on the situational and contextual structures of the social domain that inform an understanding of occupation.

While this study does not revolutionize a critical theoretical approach for the discipline of occupational science, it does demonstrate its timeless applicability that Rudman (2005) argued for nearly fifteen years ago. Whereas Rudman (2005) highlighted the political and discursive

constructs of occupations surrounding aging and older adults, this study presents a similar

methodology that uncovers not only the occupations of a vastly different demographic (young

adults with IDD) during the societally marked phase of secondary transition, but also the broader

societal discourse that shapes the professional, academic, and social approaches to working with

and understanding this population. Namely, as I have argued in Chapter 3, the neoliberal

rationale that privileges independence and productivity, as well as the hegemony of normalcy for

human development and ability.

### *Theoretical Lens and Methodological Approach*

**Occupation as Discourse.** The concept of *occupation* has been heavily debated and the

term has been defined numerous ways across the discipline of occupational science, profession

of occupational therapy, and cross-culturally. In 2014, Njelesani et al. argued for a cessation of

effort to discover a universally accepted definition. Rather than construct an all-encompassing

term, their argument was to view the endeavor as defining the "occupational perspective," to

understand all aspects of human doing. As such, the scope of "humans doing" would be

structured via the research perspectives chosen by the discipline and individual research projects.

For this dissertation, Foucault's (1972) concept of discourse and perspectives of critical analysis

offer a foundation for defining a specific occupational perspective.

As I noted in Chapter 2, discourse is any form of symbol that constructs social reality

(Blair 1987; Foucault 1972; Wodak & Meyer 2009). Discourse perpetuates the power/knowledge

relational force, a force that is both restrictive and productive of human action. Through this

dissertation, I demonstrate a viable perspective for occupation as a form of discourse. It

highlights and analyzes the "doing" as human beings (students with IDD, family members,

professionals, and researchers, etc.) within the context and situation of post-secondary transition.

Thus, I argue that occupation can be conceptualized as any action negotiated through the complex web of power/knowledge relations within our social systems.

**Critical Discourse Analysis as a Method in Occupational Science.** As stated above, Rudman's (2005) paper helped introduce CDA as a methodology within the discipline of occupational science as well as serving as the skeleton for this project's approach. As the results from Chapter 3 demonstrate, a critical discourse analysis, and specifically one that utilizes an Archaeological/Genealogical and Dialectical-Relation approach, can highlight the occupations guiding human action across demographics and societal networks. When using Foucault's three main concepts of the statement (*rarity, accumulation,* and *exteriority*) we can begin to deconstruct the tacit political, social, and cultural scripts prevalent within any given system of social action. The power/knowledge forces guiding occupational engagement, especially in relation to understanding the *rarity* of a statement, specifically highlight the driving productive and repressive qualities of human endeavor.

For example, as I demonstrated in Chapter 3, the neoliberal rationale prevalent within the post-secondary literature privileges individuality, independence, and utility through contribution of ideal societal products. Furthermore, disability is often measured against the normal, dominant model of human development and functioning (i.e., deficits based). Creating an occupational perspective through the use of a CDA is essential to uncovering these paradigms in order to understand the "what," "why," and "how" of human doing within society.

For this study, I used a CDA to historically chart the evolution of occupational possibilities through the pervasive discourses within the publication record. Heal, Rubin, and Rusch's (1998) article represents independent living as a function of successfully transitioning to adulthood; Farley, Johnson, and Parkerson's (1999) article represents another dominant outcome

of its time for students with IDD transitioning out of high school: career planning and placement. Both of these artifacts demonstrate the neoliberal rationale for independence and societal contribution. However, not only do these articles reflect a need at the time to direct more attention to successfully preparing students with IDD to engage in these occupations (independent living and employment) as adults, but they also reify the notion that an inability to achieve said occupations results in a perspective of a failed transition to adulthood.

In 2013, Orsmond and colleagues discussed the importance of social participation for students with autism, thus broadening the discourse to include another aspect of successful adulthood transition. Qualities of social participation are inferred when considering the pervasive discourse focused on vocational and independent living training. In other words, the occupations related to these forms of social participation include creating relationships with co-workers and participating in conversations while negotiating instrumental activities of living, such as using public transport or going to the grocery store. However, an Archaeological/Genealogical crafted CDA demonstrates how the discourse has evolved to allow for a focus on social participation for its own sake (i.e., having friends, leisure engagement) in pursuit of post-secondary life as an adult by challenging truths and power dynamics in play. At the same time, the discourse is still situated within the broader discourse of self-determination, a privileging of independence, and a measurement of success based on the "normal" avenues of participation (e.g., face to face interaction versus other modes).

Use of a CDA such as the one in this dissertation supports the argument that the discipline of occupational science would greatly benefit from a widely adopted use of the method for research. Furthermore, I echo Rudman's (2005) plea that a critical analysis of discourse allows for occupational scientists to potentially contribute to new, alternative forms of

occupation and discursive possibility. The results and discussion of this dissertation juxtaposed with that of its data create a conversation, illuminating both societal progress as well as the relational forces still contributing to injustices and missed opportunities for specific populations. Issues and contributions related specifically to social and occupational justice will be discussed further in a section below.

### *Revisiting Role Theory in Occupational Science*

The methodological employment of a CDA for this dissertation evoked a theoretical exploration of how occupational opportunities exist and are created within a societally pervasive neoliberal rationale as evidenced in Chapter 3. These themes of independence and productivity as well as normalcy can be expanded to think about how societal discourse shapes human action and occupation across populations and cultures. A critical analysis of Rudman's (2005) results pertaining to retirement for older adults in Canada as well as this dissertation's data pertaining to students with IDD transitioning to post-secondary life recall a specific debate within the occupational science community. This debate centers on the utility of role theory as a viable theoretical lens for which to understand occupational engagement (Jackson, 1998a; Jackson 1998b) which I will discuss further below.

Viewed from the aspect of discourse and discursive statements, the literature is abundant with qualifying descriptors labelling their subjective focus, words including but not limited to, child, student, adult, and ward. The rarity and exteriority of these statements suggest a societally informed situating of subjects. In other words, when using the qualifier "child" to identify a subject, discourse could create a perception of the person as a minor, a dependent individual under the care of a parent, a young person typically under the age of 18, and/or not an adult within our society. The qualifier of "student" can refer to a discourse that identifies the subject as

a learner, a consumer (neoliberal) of education, a novice, and/or not a teacher (in relation to *knowledge* creation) within our society. Throughout the data I collected for this dissertation, the most commonly used terms of identity included: student, child, youth, young adult, adult, parent, professional, and teacher. What makes this relevant to a revisiting of role theory within occupational science is that the use of these terms within the data was rarely explicitly defined or defended and often times was arbitrarily interchanged (for example, student, child, and youth are interchangeably used to refer to a subject that has not yet achieved adult status). This requires the reader to infer using their own experiences of discursive definitions; the discourse of which is impregnated with occupational expectations for those considered to be qualified by such an identity.

Articles of legislation such as IDEA (2004) and HEOA (2008) feature language that specifically situates the subject as a child and/or student and outlines the resources and objectives that are requirements for a successful transition to post-secondary life. Legislation such as IDEA and HEOA are specifically focused on providing resources in one context, the school. However, research and academic articles that use the term "student" do so in a much more fluid context (as individuals who attend school but are simultaneously fulfilling other roles such as child, sibling, and employee, etc. in their communities and homes). Therefore, the use of the term "student" in legislation is much more straight forward whereas academic publications require specification which is usually inferred and assumes specific expectations of occupational engagement (see below). Additionally, from a legal standpoint, the age of majority defines the line between that of a child and an adult, outlining an objective distinction between roles. Literature that has been tasked to outline and report on a demographic participating in secondary school often utilizes societal labels defined not by age, but rather by either graduation, completion, or cessation (due

to aging out) of high school and location within their community context. An early example of this in the data can be found in Gallivan-Fenlon's (1994, p. 11) article when defining transition for this population:

> Put simply, transition can be defined as "moving from one status in life to another" (Aslanian & Brickell, 1980, p. 3 in-text citation). The change in status from school to adult for people with disabilities, or "transition" as it is commonly referred to, was initially defined as an "outcome oriented process encompassing a broad array of services and experiences that lead to employment…" and on which "requires sound preparation in the secondary school and secure opportunities and services if needed in adult situations" (Will, 1984, p. 6, in-text citation).

In this situation, Gallivan-Fenlon explicitly draws upon literature that defines a transition as a change or progression of "status," specifically that of the difference between young adulthood and school (rather than "student") to adult life. This implies that adulthood is not achieved until completion of school and echoes federal legislation.

Other examples within the data represent more explicitly identified subjects as "students," reflecting a setting-specific strategy of recognition. For example, Wehmeyer and Schwartz's (1997) article discusses the effect of higher levels of self-determination on adult outcomes for *students* transitioning. Here, the use of "student" is contingent with the location of the subject as one physically still attending school. Yet, when the alternative possibility for role or status in society is identified as adulthood or adult life, the discourse creates a binary perspective outlining a marked division between "student" and "adult." The data mirrors this trend in successive publication years. Kim and Turnbull (2004) utilize "child," "student," and "young adults" as indicators of status and role preceding "adulthood." Here, transition isn't defined just as the progression from grade school to adult life, but also the specific markers of adulthood roles, specifically, community integration and self-determination skills that result in typical outcomes such as those associated with the neoliberal and other ideals. Articles from Van

Naarden Braun, Yeargin-Allsopp, and Lollar (2006) and Rehm, Fisher, Fuentes-Afflick, and Chelsa (2013) present more recent examples of discourse that perpetuates a marked transition from "childhood" to "adult" life as the specific stage in life related to the end of school. These articles demonstrate the breadth of discourse present in the simplistic use of role or status identifiers. In other words when the discourse situates the subject as either a child, student, or young adult, it infers that neoliberal outcomes (i.e. independent living, self-determination, and greater community integration) have not yet been achieved in order to be identified as an adult. Thus, these role identities are associated with specific occupations and activity engagement.

Returning to Jackson's (1998a; 1998b) proposed argument, they present a complex debate that contrasts the standpoints of role theory and an occupational perspective as competing perspectives versus role theory as a necessary perspective to inform an understanding of occupation. Utilizing critical and feminist theorists to defend their stance, Jackson (1998a) argues that role theory creates compartmentalized, rigid, and universal definitions of societal roles and thus occupational engagement that limits and restricts human agency and complexity. When applied to this dissertation's data discussed above, role theory would assume that the subject identified as a "student" would limit the potential for highlighting the intersectionality of other identities (including but not limited to sibling, child, part-time worker, disabled) thus creating restrictive parameters for occupation. As I illustrated in the previous paragraph, when role theory is analyzed through a critical perspective of discourse, role and occupational engagement are co-constitutive elements of action and understanding.

Jackson (1998a; 1998b) and Hocking (2009) argue that role theory perpetuates a limited exploration of occupational engagement. Hocking (2009) specifically addresses the risk of the normative tendency associated with role theory within an occupational perspective. However,

from a critical approach that specifically outlines discourse and discursive formations, exploring

societally defined roles (and thus questioning the "normative tendency") can offer a lens of

exploration that uncovers not just the restrictive forces of occupation, but also supports the

potential for productive forces related to and emanating from societal roles. Coster and Khetani

(2008) echo this argument through their use of the example of disabled mothers: "women with

physical disabilities adapt to and change their environments and expectations to redefine rather

than conform to normative expectations of motherhood" (p. 642) thus illustrating the productive

forces of power/knowledge in discourse. Bonsall (2019) discusses fatherhood and the use of

Erikson's generativity concept as an alternative to role theory to illustrate productive forces in

play:

> Generativity has been used to describe the meaning and motivation of fatherhood and has
> been used in fatherhood research as an alternative to role theory, which is a framework
> that emphasizes inadequacies of men who do not fulfill idealistic social roles while
> missing the work they are doing for the next generation (Bonsall, 2019, p. 2).

Therefore, I contend that Jackson's (1998b) argument for the use of role theory within

occupational science provides a necessary yet incomplete perspective to understanding

occupation. The benefits of looking at and understanding the use of societal roles to outline

occupational possibilities outweigh the exclusion of role theory when a critical discourse analysis

affords an exploration of both the restrictive (i.e., normative conformity) *and* productive forces

of the power/knowledge paradigm. To not address societal role and status excludes a perspective

of occupation of societal expectation. While I agree with Jackson (1998b), Hocking (2009), and

Bonsall (2019) that roles should not be prescriptive, they are necessary in understanding the

socio-historical trajectory of occupational potential, especially within a neoliberal rationale that

identifies and measures "successful" adulthood outcomes and occupations. Thus, role theory

offers a necessary component to the holistic occupational perspective (Njelesani et al., 2014) for

this dissertation's demographic and beyond. The question of who and how roles come to be defined and held within dominant modes of societal discourse lends itself to a broader discussion of social and occupational justice.

**Occupational Justice**

Simply put, "justice is tricky" (Bailliard, 2016, p. 7) especially when enacting a critical assessment of societal discourse. Since discourse is situated within the structures of society perpetuating distinctive power/knowledge forces, it is difficult to assert a concept of justice for anyone other than the perspective of the authors writing the publication. In other words, their position of power rather than the individual person, utilizes specific discursive constructions of justice from a mostly dominant perspective. Concepts of participation, inclusion, accessibility, and disability can all be problematic and colonialized terms reflecting neoliberal (among other) rationales despite a professional or academic's best intentions to the contrary. The discourse I have discussed from the data thus far represents a mainly ableist approach. As introduced in Chapter 1, ableism is a sociological concept referring to the tacit and explicit discrimination towards those with disabilities (Bogart & Dunn, 2019; Friedman & Owen, 2017). The neoliberal rationale that privileges independence and contribution to society views those as disabled as "less than" and thus restrict the occupational engagement for students with disabilities. Perspectives of occupational justice have focused on equity over equality for occupational engagement (Bailliard 2016) and have featured aspects of an activist framework (Balliard et al., 2020; Hocking 2017; Whiteford, Jones, Rahal, & Suleman, 2018) that does not just reflect on injustices within research but aims to promote change with the communities studied.

In this section I present occupational justice issues specifically related to the discursive quality of *rarity* as it pertains to dominant voices of justice preventing alternative voices to be

heard, highlighting two major themes pervasive throughout the data collected: identity expression and colonial methodologies. I did not incur direct human interaction during this dissertation; thus, an activist approach resides within my presentation (as a white male, able-bodied researcher) of alternative discourses of disability and transition planning for occupational scientists engaging in related research. Therefore, I cannot claim to speak for any given individual or population in relation to justice and equitable participation in recognition of my own power within society as researcher, practitioner, and/or other identifiers.

### *Identity: Person- Versus Identity-First Language*

The issue and debate of person-first versus identity-first language has been evident in the broader societal discourse for nearly 50 years (e.g., since 1970) (Lynch, Thuli, & Groombridge, 1994). The basic concept of person- versus identity- (or, disability-) first language is that when writing for or about an individual or group with a disability, their identity be represented as "person with a [disability]" rather than "disabled person." In the early 1990s, the American Psychological Association (1992) began advocating for the sole use of person-first language for publication guidelines. This transition to person-first language was an attempt to address the stigma associated with disability and to resituate defining an individual as a person who happens to have a disability rather than being defined by one quality of their character (APA, 1992; Lynch, Thuli, & Groombridge, 1994). However, there has been a relatively recent shift indicating that identity-first, rather than person-first language be the preferred discourse found in publications and casual conversation, a movement being championed from the disability community.

Dunn and Andrews's (2015) seminal article discusses this debate of discourse and addresses the many models and paradigms that have helped to structure discursive identification

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for people and disability. They chart the evolution of the language as following the "Moral, Medical, and Rehabilitative Model" which utilizes a classification system based on religious and medical origin or belief, not taking into account the specific personhood of the individual. The "Social Model" (person-first) represents a movement to consider the person before any other characteristic versus the "Minority Model" which champions the voice, ownership, and agency of the disabled to refer to their identity on their own terms. Finally, the "WHO/ICF (World Health Organization / International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health) Model" addresses the complex, multicultural influence of the three previous models as well as situating a person within their environment to understand the interplay of functional ability, environmental access, and requirement of the activity to define participatory social identity. Dunn and Andrews (2015) contend that the disability, multicultural, and academic communities (in and of themselves, nondistinctive and overlapping) do not always agree on the correct use of identity terms and thus their use can vary among individuals and large cultural groups. The main issue is that those with disabilities should be consulted first and those writing for or about the disabled community need to be reflexive about their positionality and power.

The discourse present in this project's data represents one that overwhelmingly utilizes the person-first syntax throughout the literature. Lichtenstein and Michaelides (1993) employ the use of person-first language to describe "students or youth with disabilities" but also demonstrate the pervasive medical model still evident nearly 20 years ago by adding "young adults labelled mentally retarded." This article represents a unique perspective as its narrative follows APA guidelines of the time but still cannot escape the function of medical labelling to classify people based on contemporary medical terminology. There is a clearer depiction of the evolution of

specific terms (e.g., mental retardation versus IDD, ward versus dependent) as discussed in

Chapter 3 than there are for the evolution of syntax relating to this issue of identity language.

Practices and perceptions that champion the person-first language as being the

universally accepted form of identification throughout scientific communities and publications

are pervasive. Flink (2019) stated:

> The scientific and medical communities have adopted the use of person-first language, thus promoting its use among the general public. Given the positive, supportive nature of person-first language, it is imperative that such language is used within the college environment. While there are some contradictions with the use of person-first language, the positives outweigh the negatives. Identity-first language may be preferred by some individuals and students, but the general consensus remains that person-first language is the language of choice…Person-first language is not only what is currently being used, but it is the linguistic style that is accepted by numerous *scientific communities* (p. 6, emphasis added)

This excerpt perfectly encapsulates the power/knowledge relation forces in action, specifically

through the defense of person-first language via "it is accepted by numerous scientific

communities." This exhibits the predilection for a body of knowledge that knows better than

those who may actually live with a disability. The data from this dissertation echoes this

argument from the most recent years of collected publications. For example, Rast, Roux, and

Shattuck (2019) utilize "youth on the autism spectrum," Sauer and Lalvani (2017) employ

"people" and "individuals with disabilities," and Chou et al. (2017) use "students with autism

spectrum disorders" as the preferred syntax.

However, to their credit (Flink, 2019) and others (Garland-Thomson, 2019; Gernsbacher,

2017) agree with Dunn and Andrews (2015) that the common denominator can always come

down to the individual person's preferences. Yet their acceptance and use of colonialized terms

such as person-first language can often run the gamut from full acceptance and promotion to

overt critical rejection and it is still a contentious subject, today. If one were to replicate this

study and independently retrieve the data, it would be difficult, if impossible, to find specific use of the identity-first language not written within the context of the medical (classification) model. However, as an occupational therapist and user of social media, the discourse that I have been exposed to via my clients and Twitter connections suggests that the discursive quality of *accumulation* between person- and identity-first syntax usage differs between modalities (e.g., traditional publications versus social media platforms). Disability advocates on Twitter actively take ownership of identity-first language, promoting its use among even "ableds" to demonstrate that there is nothing negative with disability. Being "disabled" is a unique experience and part of one's identity and should be celebrated rather than being viewed from "normalized" rationale. The variation in *accumulation* of discourse suggests that different voices, or truths and subjectivities, can exist in power where traditionally they could not.

These experiences coupled with the homogeneity of syntax use (person-first) within the data suggest that justice for minority voices is not being addressed as quickly as those in the disabled community have argued in other avenues of discourse production. Furthermore, this topic presents the first major concept of analysis within this dissertation that required explicit researcher reflection on my behalf to discover the rarity of discourse being presented; namely, the absence of identity-first language demonstrating the lack of voice and presence of a minority population who also happens to be the specific focus of the publication material. However, even if the community of authors and journal publications were cognizant of the contemporary movement to include syntax-diverse representation of identity, society often seems resistant to wide-scale change. Garland-Thomson (2019) discussed this in relation to the concept of "political correctness" and segmentation of the liberal arts and humanities disciplines from the traditionally hard sciences,

The corrosive and cynical application of *politically correct* is all too easily thrown at both the pervasive resistance to professional change and the conservative suspicion of change itself with the redistribution of resources and status it inevitably brings. Nonetheless, the undertaking of bioethics as a knowledge-making enterprise that aspires toward the moral tradition of considering what constitutes justice, good, harm, and proper deliberation about what it means to practice medicine and be a patient should fully recognize and include the disciplinary contributions of the humanities - particularly the arts, literature, and cultural narrative broadly considered - as an epistemological guide and valid form of evidence (p. 92, emphasis added).

In concluding this section, it is imperative to call back on Rudman's (2005) assertion that a critical analysis of discourse can allow for alternative occupational possibilities, not just for the community of focus but also for the researchers with access to participants and traditional avenues of knowledge dispersal (publications). Furthermore, Bailliard's (2016) argument that justice can be conceived differently depending on the socio-political and cultural backgrounds of those included (and more often, not) during power perpetuation and knowledge creation supports the opportunity to explore alternative ways of doing, researching, and publishing to allow for voices to be heard, a discussion that will follow in the following section.

### *Visibility, Voice, and Decolonizing Methodologies*

The Participatory Occupational Justice Framework (Townsend & Whiteford, 2005; Whiteford, Jones, Rahal, & Suleman, 2018) is an approach created from and used throughout the occupational science discipline to enable greater levels of occupational participation and inclusion through critical epistemologies that explore power relations within society. The Framework's intention was that "collaborative dialogue underpin *all* aspects of *all* the processes, *all* of the time" (Whiteford, Jones, Rahal, & Suleman, 2018, emphasis added). In other words, occupational scientists, through research and participation within a given community, should utilize critical philosophies to not just understand the power relations at play, but to actively and collaboratively deconstruct the barriers to inclusion and participation with groups of people with

less voice and power. Much of this dissertation has critically assessed a reality constructed from the discourse present in the data, namely, the neoliberal rationale constructing the occupational opportunities for disabled students transitioning to post-secondary life. However, another layer of discursive deconstruction exists which attends to an occupational justice perspective of not only addressing the needs during transition for students, but to enable students to have a voice present with the research that guides transition planning.

"Nothing about us without us" is the disabilities rights movement slogan that Frantis (2005) cites as likely originating from South Africa and emanating to worldwide adoption. It is a simple expression that perfectly summarizes the discourse evident in this dissertation. Namely, those with disabilities have often lacked the voice and exposure to discuss their own lived experiences in contribution to the development and adoption of strategies aimed at providing successful interventions for post-secondary transition. The data represent a body of work that is written by and for professionals and academics *about* disabled students. Occasionally, parents and siblings are provided the rare quote or case study to present the lived experiences of family members (for example, Gallivan-Fenlon, 1994; Field & Hoffman, 1999; Chambers, Hughes, Carter, 2004; Childre & Chambers, 2005; and Dyke, Bourke, Llewellyn, & Leonard, 2013). Even rarer are students' perspectives (for example, Ashton-Shaeffer, Shelton, & Johnson, 1995; Thoma, Rogan, & Baker, 2001; & Trainor, 2007).

The data I analyzed for this project demonstrate a paradigm of "everything about us, *barely* with us." While there has been a progression in student involvement throughout their transition process, especially within an IEP meeting, further work must be done to address the power forces still present in academic spaces to provide opportunity not just for expression but ownership of knowledge for students with disabilities. Throughout the past 20 years, projects and

publications have stressed the growing importance and adoption of student voices making their way into mainstream publications and research (Flynn, 2014; Taylor & Robinson, 2009; Webster, 2004; Cook-Sather, 2014; Bragg, 2007). In addition to the common denominator focusing on student (not just those with disabilities) involvement in research focused specifically on their demographic, all of these publications focus on a critical uptake of power relations. As Bailliard (2016) stated, "justice is tricky" and a Foucauldian perspective of critical analyses creates dilemmas for achieving justice in research and representation, as Bragg (2007) argues. Attempts to include student voices in research (and authorship) thus inserting discourses created by and for demographics they are about have been made but they are still situated within a neoliberal rational of production and contribution (Bragg, 2007).

This dilemma is at the crux of a critical analysis project as prescriptions for justice, change, and participation are still subject to the rationales in which they were created. An example of this phenomenon existing within the data is that of the creation and evolution of the ARC Self-Determination Scale (Wehmeyer & Kelchner, 1996). This norm referenced scale was created to measure a student's level of self-determination and help provide areas of strength and improvement for skills related to successful post-school transition outcomes. Throughout its evolution in development, use, and publication (Wehmeyer, 1996; Agran, Blanchard, & Whemeyer, 2000; Shogren et al., 2008; Chou, Whemeyer, Shogren, Palmer, & Lee, 2017) it has grown to utilize student and professional voices to inform its implementation and contributions to affect transition outcomes. However, it still remains a methodology created, administered, and interpreted by professionals and researchers regarding the concept of self-determination; a concept that is considered highly colonial (Smith & Routel, 2009, as I discussed in Chapter 3) and from a neoliberal rationale.

The critical analysis I conducted for this dissertation demonstrates a clear contributory path for the discipline of occupational science and justice via the adoption and exploration of de-colonized methodologies. As their genre would suggest, de-colonized methodologies focus on creating a more democratic and participatory avenue for the voices, agendas, and goals of local demographics (Lincoln & Gonzalez y Gonzalez, 2008). Initially, the movement for de-colonizing methodologies focused on a critical reflection of the Western, English informed research and data dissemination as the pedestal for all forms of science. The movement then actively utilized alternative methods (e.g., non-English language publications, methodological and theoretical epistemologies and ontologies) as viable research endeavors and knowledge creation. Beneath the global scale of accessibility (i.e., language, ontology), de-colonizing methodologies are about reflecting on and compromising aspects of the neoliberal rationale. Research and dissemination may still be categorized as the result of pressures to contribute to society but decolonization adopts a strengths-based (i.e., methods and representation that are accessible for disabled students) approach rather than maintaining that research participants (now seen as co-authors/researchers) adhere to the dominant modes of research production.

The discourse within these data I collected for this dissertation reifies an ableist attitude towards students, children, and young adults with disabilities. Stafford (2017) sums this up eloquently:

> barriers leading to children with disabilities being overlooked as legitimate research participants include research approaches underpinned by homogenization of childhood, and assumptions about their capacity to contribute to research, reinforced by Ableist and Adultist thinking" (p. 601).

They contend that allowing for more student and youth involvement in research via diverse data collection methods (such as art, participant ethnography, photo-voice) enables a broader exploration of the lived experience of disability as a student and child (Stafford, 2017). Thoma,

Rogan, and Baker (2001) brought attention to the gaps still present within transition planning that missed, lacked, and completely ignored the voices of students. A critical analysis as conducted for this dissertation contributes to the discipline of occupational science not only as an opportunity to be reflexive of and progress outcomes for students with disabilities during the transition process, but argues for an introspective analysis of our methodological use as well. For example, Francis, Stride, and Reed (2018) present research findings related to interviews of college students with disabilities about their recent transition using a collaborative approach yet still fail to include student authorship or a sense of "doing with" in the publication process. Critical approaches such as this project can help instill a disciplinary habit of asking ourselves, "When researching and interacting with participants, does the research fulfill the slogan 'nothing about us without us'?". If not, aspects of occupational justice and alternatives for occupational possibility have not been fully realized or achieved.

**CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS**

**Critically Analyzing Discourse, Occupation, Transition, and Self-Determination**

I argue this study demonstrates the research applicability, efficacy, as well as methodological and theoretical fit of a critical discourse analysis within the discipline of occupational science. As I described in Chapter 4, a Foucauldian-informed foundation of discourse presents a viable foundation for understanding a concept of *occupation*. Discourse is viewed as any symbol that constructs a social reality and guides action through the various omnipresent power/knowledge relations within our social systems (Blair 1987; Foucault 1972; Wodak & Meyer, 2004). This relational force both produces and restricts the potential avenues of social action, or occupation, that people within society engage. This study's use of an Archaeological, Genealogical, and Dialectical-Relational approach to analysis successfully addressed the five questions outlined in Chapter 1: 1) How does the literature inform the broader discourse of high school transition for U.S. students with intellectual and developmental disabilities?, 2) How is the discourse of self-determination constructed within U.S. based professional and academic journals?, 3) How is the discourse and process of transition constructed within federal policy?, 4) What occupations are privileged within the discourse of transition?, and 5) What occupations are not privileged during and after transition?

The omnipresent relational force guiding the productive and restrictive opportunities of social action is best addressed by this study's analysis of the neoliberal rationale (Rudman, 2013b) throughout these data. For students with IDD preparing for the transition to post-secondary life, the neoliberal rationale guided occupational engagement and future opportunities

through the discursive construction of successful adulthood outcomes. Students with IDD as the

"subjects" (Blair 1987; Foucault, 1980) within a neoliberal rationale of productive and restrictive

forces act within a societal system that privileges independence, productivity, and contribution.

Therefore, in order for a student with an IDD to "successfully" transition to another societally

defined "subject" (i.e., an adult), the occupations in which they must engage include independent

living, employment, post-secondary education, as well as occupations associated with self-

determination. The measure of success for each of these outcomes is based upon the trajectory of

normal or typical development. In other words, the expectations for a successful transition is

contingent on the reality and experiences of the non-disabled student who achieves independence

and contributes to society as an adult.

Federal policy such as the IDEA and HEOA are constructed via discourse that supports

this rationale. Supports and resources are provided to students with disabilities (based on medical

diagnosis or through specific school-based assessment and diagnostic criteria) in order for them

to achieve a level of success similar to their non-disabled peers. As I discussed in Chapter 3, this

leaves out the possibility for constructing outcomes that rely on interdependence, or full

dependence after leaving high school. The academic and professional literature collected for this

dissertation expand upon this sentiment. From early on in this study's publication data pool,

Wehman (1992) demonstrated a discourse discussing the transition process for students with

IDD as being a time focused on building skills necessary for business and industry environments.

In 2017, this neoliberal rationale could still be seen with a continued focus on competitive

employment and contribution to society (Southward & Kyzar, 2017). Overall, the discourse

situates the subjects (students with IDD transitioning to post-school outcomes) as products

themselves. Products, that if not beneficial to societal as a whole, become a burden through dependence and continued social supports.

The concept of self-determination features the same discursive constructions throughout the 30 years of literature collected. Smith and Routel (2009) discussed the colonial aspects of self-determination emanating from a rationale that requires our society to produce self-reliant, independent subjects. Throughout the articles collected, higher levels of the expression of self-determination have been associated with greater levels of successful transitional outcomes for students with IDD (Konrad et al., 2007; Shogren et al., 2017; Wehmeyer et al., 2012; Wehmeyer & Schwartz, 2008). While authors such as Shogren et al. (2018) have addressed the multifaceted factors influencing the ability and level of self-determination attainment for students with IDD (e.g., culture, race, ethnicity, nationality), the discourse continues to represent a deficits-based approach to self-determination ability attainment.

### A "Brief Note," Revisited

As discussed in the beginning of Chapter 3, my objective for this dissertation was to present a critical analysis of the discourse; to highlight the power/knowledge relational forces at play and shine light on the subjects and voices that often go under-represented within society rather than critique the nearly three decades of authors' intent and research. The articles featured within this dissertation's data pool represent invaluable progress and improvement for the research and societal outcomes for students with IDD transitioning to post-secondary life. The neoliberal rationale exists throughout, privileging and producing subjects that fit within a normal bell-curve of independent, productive, and contributory citizens. This "normal bell curve *épistémè*" represents not only typical development and life-course trajectory, but also the context with the most opportunity for all students (disabled and non-) to successfully transition within

our society's current systems. It is not my intention for this dissertation to imply that the neoliberal rationale is an inherently negative quality of society. Rather, I intend to argue that a neoliberal rationale can often be expressed in the discourse related to negative outcomes for students with IDD. The analysis I present here demonstrates a recursive phenomenon. In other words, while the discourse has limited the voices of students with disabilities excluding, for example, opportunities of co-dependent living, it has also provided research and strategies for inclusion in the dominant modes of societal engagement (e.g., vocation, post-secondary education). Therefore, I do not prescribe moral judgements on certain forms of discourse or occupations, or even that of historical or contemporary authors' views. It is a dissertation that advocates for justice through a specific theoretical and methodological lens, illustrating the ability to achieve alternative occupational possibility. Ideals such as production and contribution can still be achieved if compromises are made in regards to reconceptualizing independence through a highly interconnected social environment.

### *Occupational Justice, Revisited*

Throughout this dissertation, I have argued for the contributions a CDA has towards achieving occupational justice for minority populations and underserved communities. However, up to this point, I have not explicitly defined the concept of *occupational justice.* This was in part a strategic decision due to the nature of the concept and tensions it incurs in disciplinary discussions. For clarity, I will now briefly address the implicit ambiguity of the term as I have referenced in my dissertation juxtaposed with its historical connotation feature in the occupational science literature.

Occupational Justice is a concept first discussed in the works of Wilcock and Townsend (Durocher, Gibson, & Rappolt, 2014). Wilcock and Townsend had conducted extensive work

related to social justice but ultimately found that the term and resulting phenomenon lacked the specificity to explicitly address occupational engagement within society (Durocher, Gibson, & Rappolt, 2014, Townsend & Wilcock, 2004; Wilcock & Townsend, 2009). While not explicitly defining occupational justice, Townsend and Wilcock (2004) defend their use of the term,

> We believe that people are occupational as well as social beings. We recognize that, individually or as members of particular communities, we have differing occupational needs, strengths, and potential which require differing forms of enablement to flourish. With an acknowledged, Western view of individual autonomy exerted within an environment or context, we support the principle that occupations are the practical means through which humans exert citizen empowerment, choice, and control. It seems that various forms of participation – doing, being, or becoming through occupations – is essential in promoting health, well-being, and social inclusion in various cultural, economic, institutional, social and political contexts. Occupational determinants, forms and outcomes, such as unemployment and poverty, create or limit possibilities for occupational justice (p. 80).

In essence, they seem to be conflating the need and existence of a more specific term to include a focus on occupation within social justice theory as well as advocating for an occupational perspective (similar to the discussion I present in Chapter 4). I believe this conflation of theory and perspective is the crux of the tensions behind the concept and its relationship with *social justice*.

Social justice as a concept has been studied and theorized throughout numerous philosophical and disciplinary channels over the years (Jost, & Kay, 2010). Based on a thorough exploration of the literature, Jost and Kay (2010) define social justice as:

> a state of affairs (either actual or ideal) in which (a) benefits and burdens in society are dispersed in accordance with some allocation principle (or set of principles); (b) procedures, norms, and rules that govern political and other forms of decision making that preserve the basic rights, liberties, and entitlements of individuals and groups; and (c) human beings (and perhaps other species) are treated with dignity and respect not only by authorities but also by other relevant social actors, including fellow citizens (p. 1122).

With this definition, we can see that social justice is an inherently political phenomenon that affects specific populations, groups, and communities differently in regards to participation and

engagement. As I stated in Chapter 4, discourse and thus occupation can be seen as any social action. Therefore, I have conceived *social justice* and *occupational justice* to be fairly interchangeable for this dissertation while also acknowledging that an occupational justice *perspective* (Wilcock & Hocking, 2015) honors Townsend and Wilcock's (2004) concern to explicitly address occupations in both rhetoric and concept.

**Study Limitations**

Strategies to mitigate limitations and provide a scoping critical analysis of the data were employed. I now discuss the study limitations that persisted throughout this dissertation. Three distinct databases were used based on their self-defined parameters for publication type, namely that of educational, disability, human subjects, and psychological content. Satisfactory saturation and duplication of articles collected was reached with the three databases used, however, the use of other databases may have yielded additional resources related to this dissertation's inclusion criteria. Data collection was also limited to the availability and access to digital resources from this author's home institution (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill) and its intra-institutional contracts. Articles that met inclusion criteria but could not be acquired through legal channels were not included in the analysis of data. Similarly, the Boolean/Phrase search terms created via librarian collaboration may have also yielded and excluded specific sets of data and discourse. Finally, my positionality as author also presents an inherent yet necessary biased lens of analysis and presentation of the data and critical discussion. An author with a critical disability, educational, and/or disabled background, for example, would present an alternative critical assessment of the same data collected.

### *The Neoliberal Rationale as Just One Discursive Formation*

As I eluded to in this dissertation's title and discussion in the first chapter, the paradigm of "normalcy" is not an inherent feature of the neoliberal rationale. Rather, it is a result of my analysis of the artifacts collected during this dissertation. As such, neoliberalism, while at times the most relevant discursive formation evident during my critical analysis, is not the sole rationale present. Therefore, as an additional study limitation, I present here a brief exploration of two major historical phenomenon of American culture that had and continue to have an effect on occupational opportunities for the disabled. Namely, that of the eugenics and institutionalization histories. I believe these histories lend a viable defense for my organic analysis of "normalcy" within the artifacts collected for this dissertation, but also to a discursivity of "state control." Neoliberalism does not exist in a vacuum and the actions created from its "ideal" power forces have also been influenced from ideals of normalcy and control (eugenics and institutionalization), a peripheral focus to the main analysis I conducted for this dissertation.

> Wheeler (2017) discussed the history of American Eugenics:
>
> This semiotic system of eugenics transforms signs into markers of difference to designate the boundaries between normal and abnormal, desirable and undesirable. And because of its biological implications, it worries the line between intention (an aim) and agency (the capacity to act)… Ultimately, if we understand eugenics, biology, law and language as semiotic systems, the varying manifestations of power and control can be revealed; specific to this project, then, if we consider the language of the 1891 Immigration Act, the 'ugly laws,' and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) as semiotic, then we can trace a pattern of eugenic power and control that continues to shape our understandings of disability: it manipulates the biological aim of reproduction (intention) into an act of nativism (the illusion of agency) (pp. 379-380).

Effectively, Wheeler argued that these laws were created under a discursive formation that idealized normal functioning, or an ability to achieve normalcy, and control over the bodies that failed this test through the eugenic practices of the "Ugly Act" (2017) via: "we can understand

eugenics as an intervention into semiotic system for the purposes of improvement" (2017, p. 380). Therefore, while eugenics (in the sense that they refer to reproduction rights) are not an explicit tenant of the ADA in any way or form, Wheeler argues that the law's intention is to provide access based on a normal, typical, or idealized functional capacity to social participation. In essence, the ADA achieves societal "access" based on providing supports to an individual to engage in normal participation rather than adapting society and the physical environment to fit the disabled individual's strengths. This runs parallel to my assertation that while the IDEA was a beneficial landmark legislative victory for students with disabilities during post-secondary transition, the neoliberal rationale maintains its focus on outcomes of production, just as the ideals of normalcy and control pervade the discursive formations of the ADA.

Appleman (2018) echoes this discursive analysis via an interpretation of the U.S.'s long incarceration and institutionalization histories. They argue that contemporary rates and statistics of currently incarcerated populations demonstrates inherent racial and disabled disenfranchisement (2018). Ultimately, this disproportionate racial representation of incarceration and the institutionalization of disabled persons represents our society's prerogative to actively control the ideal, normal subject and mitigate the "other." The ideal, normal subject typically referring to a white and able-bodied (while also heavily favoring the male gender) subject (Appleman, 2018).

When joined with the ideals of neoliberalism such as production, independence, and societal contribution, we can see that the ideals that structured eugenics and institutionalization such as control and normalization play an important role in understanding the social realities and occupational opportunities of students and people with disabilities. In sum, while not the explicit focus intended for this CDA, I concede that a broader socio-historical analysis can always

highlight contemporary social discourses. For this specific project, I argue that they present one aspect of future research aimed at uncovering the "why" and "how" certain voices remain under- or unrepresented.

**Future Endeavors**

In Chapter 4 of this dissertation, I discussed the specific contributions of a CDA to the discipline of occupational science. These contributions included the compatibility between a Foucauldian informed CDA and occupational science perspectives as well as understanding and advocating for using an occupational justice lens in service of students with IDD. Both of these critical assessments yielded future prospects for research. The first, is a continued exploration and analysis of intersectional factors contributing to power/knowledge inequity in post-secondary transition and the second is peer-reviewed examples of methodologies for potentially working with participants to create discourses of occupational opportunity.

*Intersectional Social Determinants of Transition*

Within these data collected for this dissertation, very few articles (the few that did: Landmark & Zhang, 2013; Shapiro et al., 2004; Shogren et al., 2018) addressed social identifiers outside of disability. Social determinants of transition such as race, gender, ethnicity, and socio-economic status were rarely taken into consideration for the development and implementation of strategies addressing post-secondary transition outcomes. Mumbardo´-Adam et al. (2017) reported on this issue within the data, confirming the paucity of research and analysis for social determinants of health related to other personal factors outside of disability. Those that do address its impact utilize data presented from the NLTS-2 (Carter et al., 2010; Cavendish, 2017; Scott & Havercamp, 2014; Shogren et al., 2014). This data set (NLTS-2) in addition to paucity of research dedicated specifically to other social factors presents potential for exploration within the

discipline of occupational science. Just as I have highlighted the potential for alternative occupational possibilities (Rudman, 2005) for students specifically with IDD, the intersectional identities held by individuals and groups must be acknowledged in order to further produce a realistic representation of discourse and occupation within our society. For example, Mumbardo´-Adam et al. (2017) report that research continues to be inconclusive on whether there is a significant relationship between race and self-determination. Yet, Cavendish (2017) reports that gender is a significant contributor while race was not. These inconsistences warrant future exploration, especially within occupational science, to determine the power/knowledge forces and discourse discrepancies among students with IDD and diverse cultural, gender, and social backgrounds.

### *Research Methodologies*

In addition to exploring the various social determinants of health and transition discussed above, this study offers a fertile springboard to utilize participatory methods of research to collaborate with youth, professionals, families, and other key social networks involved during the post-secondary transition. Phelan and Kinsella (2013, 2014) have utilized a photoelicitation methodology to demonstrate the benefits of creating a space for greater voice and equitable power dynamics during the research process for children and their families. Their work was not without ethical concerns related to participation (i.e., relationships between researcher and vulnerable participant) (Phelan & Kinsella, 2014. However, they reported that a critical approach, combined with reflexivity from the standpoint of the traditional researcher (i.e., the academic), promotes an ethical and rich opportunity for others to exercise voice and ownership to some capacity in research.

Participatory research methods such as photovoice have been used in the past to demonstrate critical progression of empowering research methodologies for underserved and minority populations outside of the occupational science discipline. Harrison et al. (2001) utilized photovoice to conduct research addressing sexual education and safe practices for youth with IDD. Jurkowski (2008) discussed the power and justice photovoice methods can have for people with IDD:

> Photovoice fosters the active participation of people with intellectual disabilities in research while at the same time providing them with almost immediate benefit from participating in the research process because they are able to take and keep pictures for their own use. This active participation in the research process is especially important because *they traditionally have been treated more as research subjects than as research partners or collaborators* (p. 9, emphasis added).

The last sentence in this excerpt offers a succinct summation of most of the literature I collected for this dissertation's data set and harkens back to the justice slogan "nothing about us without us" (Frantis, 2005; Harrison, 2001). For too long, people, and especially youth with disabilities have been the subject of research to be used for the benefit of other researchers, professionals, and family members rather than for themselves.

Participatory Action Research (PAR) also presents a viable avenue to enact social and occupational justice. PAR is a methodological approach that relies on the participation and collaboration of minority groups to identify and actively work towards addressing problems they face (Garcia-Iriarte et al. 2009). However, advocacy can be tricky for youth with IDD, as demonstrated during the discussion on self-determination in Chapter 3. Often youth with IDD have not been afforded (i.e., during research design, article publication, and legislative advocacy) the space to express self-determination and have not been able to build the relevant skills of self-advocacy thus requiring external supports from professionals and others. Garcia-Iriarte et al.

(2009) utilized PAR and acted as supports to be used during active collaborative group sessions

for youth with IDD. They found:

> participation is necessary to exercise control because participation entails sharing ideas, giving input and actively engaging. However, participation may or may not result in control. Control occurred when members led the decision-making process and influenced group outcomes (p. 19).

Participation, or the occupation of doing with while "doing" advocacy as shown in the above

excerpt demonstrates a natural fit for PAR methodology to elicit self-determination expression

and enact occupational justice. However, Garcia-Iriarte et al.'s (2009) study also demonstrates

the intricate connection still required via the academic researcher to provide supports when

necessary to promote action. The study supports the notion that while youth with IDD can

express self-determination and achieve control over situations, they are still participating within

the dominant discourse of research and general social inclusion ideals of society. Collaboration

among the traditional researcher and youth is the key to creating alternative occupational

possibilities in research.

Kramer et al. (2011) discussed the importance of participation and inclusion not just

during data collection but also during analysis and interpretation. They asserted that

brainstorming and including diverse and alternative ways for collecting and analyzing data

provides inclusive opportunities for youth with IDD to exercise a sense of control over the

research and knowledge they create. This in turn creates a heightened sense of self-advocacy and

ownership of lived experiences and their representation within the research consumer world.

Garcia-Iriarte et al. (2009) and Kramer et al. (2011) reported that power dynamics within PAR

methodology continue to exist including but not limited to divergent perceptions and expression

of methodological processes and data analysis.

However, I believe that methodologies like PAR and photoelicitation create a dialogue that has been mostly non-existent between researchers and youth with IDD; both supporting self-determination expression and creating occupational possibilities outside of research. The literature has posited a direct correlation between self-determination and successful post-school outcomes. Therefore, it is time that more researchers explore and utilize participatory methods. Providing space for youth with disabilities to hone their self-determination skills while discussing obstacles, strategies to improve, and contexts in which they engage in post-secondary transition both benefits participants and the overall body of knowledge.

**Occupational Therapy**

As an occupational therapist, I would be remiss if I didn't apply these critical reflections to the practice of occupational therapy for youth with IDD. Occupational therapists can be great resources for students with IDD transitioning to post-secondary life. However, our professional paradigm as health care and educational professionals often assumes approaching wellbeing, rehabilitation, and habilitation from the viewpoint of disabilities as being remedial or accommodational (Phelan, 2011). Furthermore, Phelan emphasizes, "the notion of normalcy and standardized/nonstandardized norms is an issue to consider" (p. 169). In my practice I've been faced with creating and working on intervention goals deemed important by the caregiver or educator to match functioning or abilities of typically developing youth. These experiences have mirrored Phelan's (2011) claims and the discourse evident in this study's data that students with IDD are impaired and continuously measured against the bell curve. The *épistémè* of this normal curve is inescapable. While I cannot offer prescriptions for practice, I can only echo Rudman's (2005; 2013), Phelan's (2011), and Njelesani et al.'s (2015) claims that critical reflexivity of the

discourses prevalent within our disciplines and professions will lead to avenues of occupational possibility, greater empowerment for minority groups, and general occupational justice.

**Final Thoughts**

Transition services, self-determination expression, and societal expectations for "appropriate" occupational engagement have evolved over the past three decades to include many possibilities for youth with IDD in post-secondary life. Legislation such as EHA, its successor IDEA, HEOA and the numerous research and theoretical articles that have been published before and since have demonstrated the discursive quality of accumulation, creating a lasting historical record of the neoliberal rationales guiding occupational engagement. The subjectivities created during the post-secondary transition process such as promoting independence, productivity, and normalcy reify the lack of voice, control, and ability to effectively chart alternate realities within a dominant societal system.

Ultimately, this neoliberal rationale (among others), coupled with the data-driven support of self-determination skill building creates a "catch-22" situation for youth with IDD. These youth are expected to exercise greater levels of self-determination, yet are being told which occupations are ideal and not, both explicitly and through the tacit power relations of societal discourse. Therefore, I argue this dissertation best serves to demonstrate a call to remain reflexive as researchers, especially as individuals who do not have a disability or identify as being disabled. The discipline of occupational science, through a critical discourse approach can answer this call thus providing social and occupational justice via collaborating with disabled youth to continuously create alternative occupational possibilities within our social worlds.

## APPENDIX A: IDEA DEFINITION OF TRANSITION SERVICES

Individuals with Disabilities Act of 2004, 20 USC § 1401(34).

(34) TRANSITION SERVICES
The term 'transition services' means a coordinated set of activities for a child with a disability that-

(A) is designed to be within a results-oriented process, that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child with a disability to facilitate the child's movement from school to post-school activities, including post-secondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation;

(B) is based on the individual child's needs, taking into account the child's strengths, preferences, and interests; and

(C) includes instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and, when appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.

**APPENDIX B: DATA COLLECTION & ANALYSIS FORM**

[Adapted from Rudman (2003) and Fairclough (1992)]

**Journal Article**
**Title:**
**Date of Publication:**
**Name of Journal:**

Summary/Synthesis of Article:

Functions of Discourse:

*Identity*
- Who is writing the article?
- What is their background?
- Who is the article being written/published for? Who is the audience?
- Are students with IDD interviewed/directly quoted in the article?

*Relational*
- How are students with IDD being represented?
- Who is likely to benefit from the discourse?
- What is the 'problem' and who is defining the problem?
- Where is the 'problem' located? (i.e. at the individual and/or societal level)

*Ideational*
- What types of occupations related to transition are being presented; what is omitted?
- What transition outcomes are being presented as ideal?
- What transition outcomes are being presented as non-ideal?
- What general *power/knowledge* force is being perpetuated? What is viewed as constructive? What does it restrict?

# APPENDIX C: MICROSOFT EXCEL DATA ENTRY EXAMPLE

## Example entry for two artifacts:

| Author(s) | Summary / Synthesis of Article | Identity | Relational | Ideational |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Brotherson, M. J., Cook, C., Cunconan-Lahr, R., & Wehmeyer, M. | This is an article that specifically addresses the physical environments (which I believe includes the social environments as well) and how it supports transition planning (or lack there of) for students with IDD. It address the IDEA, AD, FHA, and RA as policy documents that allow for environments to be adapted to support transition for students with disabilities. | This article is being written by educators, researchers, and professionals. It is written for policy makers and consumers who use the policy to address and create avenues of support specifically in the physical environments when working with students with IDD. Students with IDD are not directly quoted or interviewed BUT a quote from an individual with a disability is quoted from another article discussing SD as just another 10$ word for freedom. | Person first language with students with disabilities. Professionals are most likely to benefit as they are the direct audience. But ultimately students with IDD will benefit. The problem is located within the physical environments and is being defined by the professionals working with this population and their experiences. The problem is that environments, even with policy, does not often support transitional needs and must be adapted to help benefit them. | Occupations related to article are adulthood roles, participation, independence, freedom, and ability to make one's own choices that usually come from work/vocation, and community mobility. Ideal = freedom, responsibility, equitable access. Nonideal = opposite. PK force is the policy that defines necessary adaptations and the researchers/professionals who give/empower students to be able to participate in their various physical environments. |
| Page, B. & Chadsey-Rusch, J. | Finally an article that quotes students with MR! And this is the first that discusses PSE outcomes. A qualitative study that follows 4 males, 2 with dis and 2 without from the same community college and asks them about their experiences leading up to, druing, and goals after college. | The authors are researchers and this is being written for other researchers, educators, transition planners, and even students considering transition planning that includes PSE. Students with MR ARE INTERVIEWED AND QUOTED! | Person first language, but MR is used. Students, researchers, and transition planners are best suited to benefit. The problem is located in the system that doesn't allow for PSE to be an outcome post high school. Researchers are defining the problem but also the students corroberate it in their interviews. | Occupations are PSE, social participation and vocation. Ideal are adult roles of career placement. Non ideal is the opposite - no work, no goal, no future. PK force is in the social stigma of labels - before grants and other policy initiatives, PSE wasn't expected of students with IDD. Now, it can show that it has positive outcomes associated and must be reconsidered as a possiblity for students with IDD. |

## Entry Magnified for:

Brotherson, M. J., Cunconan-Lahr, R., Cook, C. C., & Wehmeyer, M. L. (1995). Policy supporting self- determination in the environments of children with disabilities. *Education and Training in Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities*, *30*(1), 3–14.

| Summary / Synthesis of Article | Identity |
|---|---|
| This is an article that specifically addresses the physical environments (which I believe includes the social environments as well) and how it supports transition planning (or lack there of) for students with IDD. It address the IDEA, AD, FHA, and RA as policy documents that allow for environments to be adapted to support transition for students with disabilities. | This article is being written by educators, researchers, and professionals. It is written for policy makers and consumers who use the policy to address and create avenues of support specifically in the physical environments when working with students with IDD. Students with IDD are not directly quoted or interviewed BUT a quote from an individual with a disability is quoted from another article discussing SD as just another 10$ word for freedom. |

| Relational | Ideational |
|---|---|
| Person first language with students with disabilities. Professionals are most likely to benefit as they are the direct audience. But ultimately students with IDD will benefit. The problem is located within the physical environments and is being defined by the professionals working with this population and their experiences. The problem is that environments, even with policy, does not often support transitional needs and must be adapted to help benefit them. | Occupations related to article are adulthood roles, participation, independence, freedom, and ability to make one's own choices that usually come from work/vocation, and community mobility. Ideal = freedom, responsibility, equitable access. Nonideal = opposite. PK force is the policy that defines necessary adaptations and the researchers/professionals who give/empower students to be able to participate in their various physical environments. |

**Entry magnified for:**

Page, B., & Chadsey-Rusch, J. (1995). The community college experience for students with and without disabilities: A viable transition outcome? *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals*, *18*(2), 85–96. https://doi.org/10.1177/088572889501800203

| Summary / Synthesis of Article | Identity |
|---|---|
| Finally an article that quotes students with MR! And this is the first that discusses PSE outcomes. A qualitative study that follows 4 males, 2 with dis and 2 without from the same community college and asks them about their experiences leading up to, druing, and goals after college. | The authors are researchers and this is being written for other researchers, educators, transition planners, and even students considering transition planning that includes PSE. Students with MR ARE INTERVIEWED AND QUOTED! |

| Relational | Ideational |
|---|---|
| Person first language, but MR is used. Students, researchers, and transition planners are best suited to benefit. The problem is located in the system that doesn't allow for PSE to be an outcome post high school. Researchers are defining the problem but also the students corroberate it in their interviews. | Occupations are PSE, social participation and vocation. Ideal are adult roles of career placement. Non ideal is the opposite - no work, no goal, no future. PK force is in the social stigma of labels - before grants and other policy initiatives, PSE wasn't expected of students with IDD. Now, it can show that it has positive outcomes associated and must be reconsidered as a possiblity for students with IDD. |

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# APPENDIX E: DATA – INTERNATIONAL ARTICLES

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