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### Preparing Students with Disabilities for Adulthood

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**Preparing Students with Disabilities for Adulthood**

by

Catherine Moos

A Starred Paper

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of

St. Cloud State University

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree

Master of Science in

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## Table of Contents

Chapter	Page
1. Introduction.....	3
Historical Background .....	3
Research Question .....	5
The Focus of the Paper .....	5
Importance of the Topic.....	5
2. Review of Literature .....	7
Self-Determination.....	7
Predictor of Completing Postsecondary Education .....	12
Supports and Accommodation.....	16
3. Conclusions and Recommendations .....	21
Conclusion .....	21
Recommendations for Future Research .....	22
Implications for Practice.....	23
Summary.....	24
References.....	26

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

Students with learning disabilities in secondary education can have trouble transitioning to adulthood, especially with the challenges of attending post-secondary education. According to Rabren, Eaves, Dunn, and Darch (2013, p. 14), despite the challenges faced by youth with disabilities, those students still have high aspirations for their post-secondary success. The importance of planning early in high school and creating a transition plan can make the difference for many students as they move on to adulthood and attend post-secondary education. Effective high school transition teams, preparing students with learning disabilities for college have been studied from both viewpoints of the students with disabilities and college and university staff. The two viewpoints are to find essential components to ensure a successful post-secondary transition for success. The supports mandated by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in high school are not the same in college, and the student must request assistance for help as required by The Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Students need to know the support available to them when attending a college or university must be sought out by themselves. Earning a college degree can be more challenging for these students if they are not aware of what support is available to help them succeed.

### **Historical Background**

Special education laws varied from state to state before 1970. Then the federal government began to pass laws regarding educational services for an individual with disabilities Murdick, Gartin, and Crabtree, (2007). Three laws that support a student with a disability as they transition from high school to college: The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (P.L. 93-112),

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1990 (P.L. 101-476), and The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (P.L. 93-112) (Murdick et al., 2007), provided civil rights to persons with disabilities, ensuring their right to participate in federally funded programs. This law created a section (504) that covers all students in public schools from discrimination of limited access to services based on disability (Murdick et al., 2007). Section 504 provides accommodations for students to access the curriculum.

The passing of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1990 (P.L. 101-476), which implemented a name change of Education for All Handicapped Children Act to IDEA, makes it easier for students with a learning disability to attend college or university. IDEA reauthorized in 1997 and 2006 which added the Individual Transition Plan (ITP) for students as early as 14 years and no later than 16 years old to have a plan in place for when the student transition to adulthood. This required public schools to provide an Individualized Education Program (IEP) that includes current services and post-secondary goals, allowing the IEP team will create a plan with the student and their parents.

The Americans with Disability Act of 1990 protect all persons with disabilities from discrimination. This act requires the individual to initiate the process, and they are not entitled to protection if the school is not informed of the disability. Upon self-identifying that one has a disability, they are eligible to receive accommodations that enable the students with disabilities to engage in activities at the same level as their peers without a limitation. The benefits of these three laws allow for planning in high school and the ability to have accommodation in the college setting, such as extended time on a test, quiet rooms, and elevators.

**Research Question**

What are the post-secondary education opportunities for students with learning disabilities as they transition from high school into adulthood?

**The Focus of the Paper**

The review of the literature in Chapter 2 includes studies with participants identified as having a learning disability and are a part of the special education program during their high school year. These studies include support needed to succeed in college or university, the relationship between career and technical education, inclusion in the general education setting in high school, and identifying variables that facilitate academic success in the post-secondary setting.

The Academic Search Premier from ERIC (EBSCO) and ERIC (ProQuest) was used for finding articles for my literature review of peer-reviewed studies relating to transitioning from high school to adulthood. Keywords used and combinations of keywords to locate relevant studies: transition, learning disabilities, post-secondary education, accommodations, college, and universities.

**Importance of the Topic**

I am a special education teacher for elementary and previously secondary students. Also, I am a small business owner that employs two former special education students. Each employee has had different experiences for their career path and to obtaining post-secondary education. One employee was guided with a transition plan that allowed for career and technical in the high school with a pathway for a technical college, and the other employee did not have a plan for post-secondary education. I see the need to be part of a team that develops a transition plan for

students with disabilities into adulthood. The transition process should start early to help build the interpersonal skills needed for the transition process and continue throughout the adolescent years. Students should be encouraged first to make choices, ask questions, helping them learn to self-advocate for when they are adults.

With the number of students with learning disabilities attending post-secondary education is on the rise, it is imperative to be a part of a team to develop a robust transition plan for students. This transition program can make a difference in an individual's life, providing education, employment, and independent living to foster a better quality of life. Students who have proper positive role models at home tend to have more success in adulthood than those who do not. The role of a special education teacher is to guide and prepare students with disabilities to succeed in education and employment. Therefore, they should be knowledgeable of the resources available to help guide the student as they make decisions plan for their future, using transition programming. Knowing the student's ambitions and goals for their life will make it easier for the team to make the correct decisions as they guide the students through the process of selecting a college if they choose a career path that involves post-secondary schooling.

## **Chapter 2: Review of Literature**

This literature reviews the post-secondary educational opportunities for students with learning disabilities as they transition from high school to post-secondary education. The organization of this chapter is divided into three different sections: a) self-determination b) predictors, and c) accommodations and supports that are necessary to succeed while attending post-secondary education. This chapter reviews articles in chronological order, beginning with the oldest studies first.

### **Self-Determination**

This section reviews of two different articles about self-determination. Self-determination is when a student with a learning disability has control to make decisions for their own life; for example, attending college, requesting accommodation along with setting and attending appointments.

Skinner (2004) reported that college-bound students with learning disabilities are frequently unprepared for the challenges presented by higher education (p. 91). Students with learning disabilities take longer to graduate from college. Five years after graduating from high school, 20% of students with learning disabilities have graduated from college compared to their nondisabled peers of 44% graduating from college.

Students' learning disabilities do not change from high school to college. The students who learn to navigate and advocate for themselves in high school have a better chance of succeeding in college. Students who ask for accommodations in college contributes to their success. However, students also need to recognize that they need to have an internal drive and be able to complete their goal of secondary education, be persistent, know their strengths and



weakness, and self-advocate when needing help by contacting the Office of Disability. Skinner (2004) referred to the study of Vogel, Hruby, and Adelman (1993) that concluded reasons for success in college included being less likely to be in a self-contained classroom, completing twice as many English courses, and having a private tutor (p. 93). Skinner also referred to a study conducted by Greenbaum, Graham, and Scales (1995), finding essential reasons for the success of college students was mild learning problems, above-average IQ, higher than average socioeconomic status, awareness of disability, support and guidance from others (p. 93). Skinner cited a study conducted by Raskind, Goldberg, Higgins, and Herman (1999) found six personal attitudes and behaviors that were good indicators of success: self-awareness, perseverance, proactive, emotionally stable, goal orientated, and using support systems (p. 93). These studies still left Skinner wanted to add to identify variables that facilitate the academic success of college students with learning disabilities.

Skinner's (2004) study disclosed a common theme for success at the post-secondary level; knowledge of disability and concomitant accommodations: students knew and identified strategies to help them learn. Explanation of psycho-education evaluation: students had an awareness of their disability based on the results of a psycho-education evaluation. Only a few of the participants could recall but could not remember any details of the assessment. Knowledge of disability law, none of the students were aware of their rights under the 504 section of the American Disability Act. Self-advocacy: students were identified as being able to self-advocate. Accommodations and course alternatives: students all had positive experiences. Support System: all students in the study emphasized the importance of a good support group. Perseverance: students stated that hard work and long hours were needed to complete the course

of study. Goal setting: students reported that goal setting helps them to accomplish hard challenges.

Students knew of their disability but did not know much about the disability itself. Nor did the students know their right under section 504. All the participants found the accommodations and course alternative was extremely beneficial to their ability to complete their course of study. Other useful systems were the support system, perseverance, self-advocacy, and goal setting. High schools should identify college-bound students and provide preparatory instructions to help them facilitate the importance of their rights, offer learning strategies, and build social skills to work with peers and professors to assist in transitioning to post-secondary education.

Limitations of the study include a small sample from a mid-sized liberal arts college with a low student to teacher ratio. The results of this study should be generalized with caution to students in other settings. Larger sample size should be conducted, with a randomized sample group even though the purpose of this study was an in-depth investigation of students with learning disabilities. The data analysis could improve by adding additional readers of the transcripts for more universal themes. Lastly, several questions did not provide any information that benefited the study.

The second article about self-determination is about the students making appointments and getting help in a learning resource center so that they can be successful in college, Academic Support and College Success for Postsecondary Students with Learning disabilities by Troiano, Liefeld, and Trachtenberg (2010). The number of students with learning disabilities attending college is growing. These students will face challenges differently than in high school. In high

school, students who experience modification, and accommodations in the general education setting, and may have had a less rigorous curriculum. As students with learning disabilities, they will have to find a higher level of diligence, self-control, decision-making, goal setting, and self-evaluation within themselves to find success. They are requesting the necessary supports to find academic success, such as test accommodations, note-taking, and writing support. Most often, these supports are in an academic skills center and are available to all students though this can vary from college to college.

Troiano et al. (2010) hypothesized that college students with learning disabilities who consistently attend academic support centers would have higher academic success than those who attend less often or who do not attend at all. They have defined college success as: a) graduation from the college, and b) high-grade point average (GPA). The learning supports, provided in the Learning Resource Center (LRC) with three different levels: a) Comprehensive Support—4 hours of individual and small group work each week, with an assigned learning specialist and writing specialist, b) Enhanced—2 hours of individual and small group work each week, with an assigned learning specialist and writing, and c) Entitled—student-initiated appointments with a member of the staff on an "as needed" basis Troiano et al. (2010, p. 37). The students can move freely from one level of support to another.

The researchers found a positive correlation between the time spent in academic support centers and graduation. The choice to solicit learning support from support centers and the concomitant time invested at such centers predict both grade point average good predictor of graduation from college.

The students with learning disabilities who get learning support is a good predictor of graduation from college. The learning resource center was a predictor of 68% of the case studies and had a higher grade point average. The student that had less than 50% of the scheduled appointment had a lower grade point average. This study demonstrates a relationship between the learning resource center and the academic success and support they received.

The individual abilities to navigate university systems and to understand support services are critical for success in post-secondary education. McGregor, Langenfeld, Van Horne, Oleson, Anson, and Jacobson (2016) reported disconnections among the services students receive in K-12 schools and the services provided in post-secondary settings. They also noted that students might choose not to report a disability to academic resource centers upon entering college. Student success requires understanding and accessing such supports.

The student with a learning disability who pursues post-secondary education is twice as likely to attend a community college or vocational school and half as likely to participate in a 4-year college or university than their peers. Students who graduate attribute their success in graduation to knowing their strengths and weakness and to social supports McGregor et al. (2016). Often, these factors are tied to self-reporting a disability, and the likelihood reporting follows social and developmental patterns. First, students who self-report learning disabilities are older. Second, among first-year students and sophomores, self-reporting is associated with having a declared major. Transfer students also exhibit higher levels of self-report. Students living with a roommate or family had the lowest rate of reporting.

Environmental factors also affect graduation rates McGregor et al. (2016). Biases within a college and skills-based obstacles have the most significant effects. Other factors that affect

graduation rates include faculty contact, difficulties with assignments, and engagement in classes. The student with learning disabilities reports more financial obstacles compared to their nondisabled peers. Younger students with a learning disability and nondisabled peers spend an equal amount of time on academics. However, as the learning disability students get older, they spend more time on academics. When comparing nonacademic pursuits, the younger student spends more time than their nondisabled peers, but this is not true as they get older.

Accommodations were not associated with the satisfaction with the university nor grade point average. Some students found frustration that when getting accommodations, they did not attain higher grades. A comparison of achievement score of students with a learning disability conducted those who receive accommodations had lower achievement score than the students with a learning disability that did not use the accommodations.

### **Predictor of Completing Postsecondary Education**

The literature in this section focuses on the predictor of the completion of post-secondary education. It looks at the individual fortitude to attend a college or a university along with the type of support students need to be successful in completing college or a university.

Pingry, O'Neill, Markward, and French (2012) predicted the accommodation needed to be successful in completing college or a university. Students with disabilities have difficulty competing for employment due to a minimal education, therefore creating higher interest in a college education. College can support students with a learning disability by providing appropriate accommodation to deliver a positive learning environment for completing courses for graduation. Overall, enrollment in the United States for students with disabilities continues

to increase since 1960, with more colleges and universities providing accommodations to meet students' needs to provide equal access to education.

In 2006, 11% of public college and university students with a disability had reported their disability to the post-secondary institution. These students face barriers such as poor study or test skills, note-taking skills, organizational skills, listening comprehension, low self-esteem, and reading and writing deficits. Students with strong self-advocacy skills and self-determination skills often find success in obtaining accommodations. Pingry et al. (2012) found the most common services that students qualified for were accommodation for extended time on tests, note-taking, distraction reduced tests, learning strategies, assistive technology, and flexibility in due dates.

Pingry et al. (2012, p. 29) explored the graduation rate of students registered at the disability office at public, 4-year colleges, and universities for students with a disability. They found females are 1.5 times as likely to graduate than males that have the same characteristics and disability services. Students who were between the ages of 23-30 are 5.4 times likely to graduate than students between the ages of 15-22. Students older than 30 had a likelihood of 2.9 times graduating from college or university. Students with a cognitive disability are half as likely to graduate than students with a physical disability. Students who used accommodation had higher predictability of graduation based on the accommodations; testing and assignment accommodation are 1.8 times higher, distraction-reduced testing 4.2 times higher, flexible assignments and examination dates 2.5 times higher, and learning strategies 2.4 times higher to graduate. It is essential to teach students with disabilities to self-report their disability, knowing

the graduation rates are higher when accessing accommodation. Self-report will benefit students as they pursue a career.

There have been several studies researching the predictors of students with disabilities, attending post-secondary education. Joshi and Bouck (2017) noted that post-secondary education for students with a learning disability is a gateway to having a successful life providing security and independence. These students can earn more money and have higher job satisfaction, similar to or the same as their nondisabled peers.

Joshi and Bouck's (2017) research included inclusion in the general education classes revealed that there was only a significant predictor for attending post-secondary education. Students with disabilities who participated in general education classes were two to four times as favorable to attending post-secondary education, but none that have directly related to students with a learning disability.

The study from Joshi and Bouck (2017) assessed related transition services received by students with a learning disability and their post-secondary outcomes. The study revealed that less than half of the students with a learning disability receive the core content in the general education setting, and 60% got career technical education instruction. Slightly more than one-third of students with learning disabilities attended post-secondary within 2 years of exiting high school, with a majority attending a 2-year college. The relationship between core content instruction in high school indicates the likelihood of the student attending a college or university within 2 years of leaving high school. Transition services become essential for post-secondary outcomes. The longer a student is out of school, the less likely they are to attend a college or university.

Theobald, Goldhaber, Gratz, and Holden (2019) investigated students with a learning disability and the relationship of career and technical education (CTE) and the inclusion in a general education class in high school and post-secondary education. They noted that students with learning disabilities are behind their peers in attending college. Few small studies demonstrate enrollment of students with a learning disability in general education, and the CTE course improves the outcomes along with taking CTE courses is a predictor of employment success. Theobald et al. (2019) found the downfalls of these studies; the studies did not have a baseline to measure student achievements and other factors. They wanted to build on the information they learned from previous reviews but realized that a baseline was needed. Creating a baseline of learning disability student's achievement from administrative data of public-school students in Washington state along with post-secondary education and employment, CTE enrollment, in addition to general education, outcomes Theobald et al. (2019). The study followed the students who are on track for graduation as well as one year after their expected graduation date.

The result of this study shows that students with a learning disability are likely to be male students and receiving free and reduced lunch. The baseline for students with a learning disability is considerably lower than their nondisabled peers. Seventy-three percent of students with a learning disability in high school enrolled in a CTE course in 12th grade, higher than their nondisabled peers. Students with a learning disability spend 80% of their school day in the general education setting and had more unexcused absences than their peers. Students with a learning disability enrollment to 2-year community college rates and on-time graduates were



similar to their general education students. The employment rates 6-month graduation was lower for students with a learning disability than their nondisabled peers.

The inclusion of students with a learning disability in CTE in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade was not a predictor of graduation on time compared to inclusion in the general education courses and was on time for graduation and likely to enroll in post-secondary education. The students with a learning disability enrolled in CTE classes in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade had fewer absences than their peers. In the 12<sup>th</sup> grade, enrollment in CTE courses and inclusion in the general education class is a predictor of on-time graduation for students with a learning disability. Overall, the inclusion in general education classes for students with a learning disability shows a positive relationship for success and enrollment in college. Also, registration of CTE courses for students with a learning disability is a predictor of post-secondary outcomes.

This study may display some bias for several reasons. First, students could have participated in more CTE courses. Second, the offering of CTE courses could also differ between local school districts. Lastly, the parent's preference for school choice could show bias.

### **Supports and Accommodation**

In this section, the literature review focuses on the supports and accommodation needed to have success in post-secondary education with students having a learning disability. The Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires students to become active participants in transition planning, including post-secondary education, teaching the students about their disability. Although the law may require students to be at the IEP meeting, the reality is that students are not interested in attending the meetings, causing a lack of preparedness for college life. American with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (section 504)

mandate that colleges provide an equal opportunity to learn and accommodations for learning. The barriers of the accommodations are a student with a learning disability must advocate for themselves and ask for the accommodations.

According to Cawthon and Cole (2010) of the University of Texas at Austin, they looked at how students with learning disabilities access the services once in the college or university setting. Including the student's level of knowledge about their disability, transition services provided by their high school programs, skills to advocate for themselves in a college setting, and their experiences with peer, faculty, and administration at the post-secondary level.

The result for accommodation and services found nine out of 16 accommodations to be similar between high school and the university. Seven out of 16 accommodations indicated no difference between the number of students who received accommodations in high school compared to the university. The students were likely to use assistive technology, alternate testing, tutoring, and physical therapy in high school. In the post-secondary setting, students used accommodations of classroom assistants, extended time, a separate environment for testing, and counseling.

When comparing the results for opportunities and barriers, there was a low level of interactions between the student with learning disabilities and the university staff. About one-third of students connected with the university staff for a letter of recommendation, 42% contacted the Office of Students with Disability, to obtain accommodations needed to have success. Of those who received accommodations, 21% found it challenging to receive the accommodation due to unwilling staff or difficulty scheduling a time for test-taking.

Students' knowledge of their disability was much higher, with 84% of the students knew when they were diagnosed and where able to identify their disability. When asked how they were diagnosed, 71% were unsure. The students recalled something related to their transition plan, but mostly (91%) do not remember having an Individual Education Program meeting at all, even though they had accommodation.

A limitation of the study included a small-time frame of the study. Also, participants had to participate in a required course to be a part of the survey. The research could have missed students who chose not to participate in accommodations from the university. However, the student's ability, environmental factors, and characteristics have a significant role in the students' success in college.

Newman, Madaus, and Javitz (2016) reviewed many studies of students with disabilities attending post-secondary. Many studies had small samples or relied on self-reporting of the disability to the post-secondary institution; this overlooked many students who did not self-report their disability. Newman et al. (2016) investigated the rates of self-disclosure and accommodation while attending post-secondary education, finding only 35% of the students who received special education services their disability. They continued to perform more studies and found that students who received more transition planning in high school were likely to self-disclose their disability and have higher grades. Noting that other studies found rigorous courses in the general education setting also were predictors had an impact on high school graduation, attending post-secondary education and graduation, and were predictors college completion. Transition planning allowed for supports for post-secondary education.

The results revealed that 70% of the students with a disability attending post-secondary education were students with a learning disability. The high school transition planning did not vary significantly across the three types of post-secondary education. About 60% or more had transition plans that included accommodations and support needed for post-secondary education. The rates of receiving the supports did not vary significantly. About 25% got disability-specific help at the post-secondary institution, and 50% have accessed the general support for the entire student population. The study shows that transition planning in high school having post-secondary accommodation specified on a high school transition plan increases the chance of receiving the disability support needed. The students who attended the transition planning and the transition education were more likely to get general supports.

Students with a learning disability who disclose their disability can receive many benefits. While attending college, students need to learn about the accommodation available for them, both the disability-related supports and the support for the general population. The Guidepost for Success is an organizational tool that can have a positive effect on the student's life and post-secondary success. Providing this tool to a family of a student with a learning disability would likely be a great asset.

Newman, Madaus, Lalor, and Javitz (2019) reported that students with learning disabilities had increased enrollment to post-secondary education, but the rates of graduation remained stagnant and low. Students who had transition planning and self-reported, and used the accommodation and support, are most likely to persevere and have a positive experience during their post-secondary experience. The most used support is quiet testing and study skills. Newman et al. (2019, p. 42) asked: "To what extent did students with a learning disability access

support services at their 2-year or 4-year college, and how did that rate of receipt compare with a receipt during high school?” Additionally, they wanted to know, “What was the effect of support receipt on post-secondary persistence and completion for students with LD at 2-year and 4-year college?”

After 8 years of completing high school, 44% of students with a learning disability had attended a 2-year or 4-year college. Of the students who attended post-secondary education, 56% did not access any support available to them. The study found that only 25% of the students choose to disclose their disability, and of those, only 11% had disability-specific supports and were more likely to access universal supports. These rates are in sharp contrast to when the students with a learning disability were in high school, where 98% received support. The study found that students with a learning disability that received support in college continued with their education or complete college at 77% compared to those who did not receive support had only 50%. Students were more likely to access both disability-specific at the rate of 26% and universal support at the rate of 56%. This study confirms the importance of students with a learning disability accessing support.

During the transition process, it is essential to stress the importance of disclosing the student’s disability and utilizing the support available to have success and helping students to be able to persevere in the completion of college for students with a disability. This information is critical to relay to the student who is planning on attending post-secondary education.

### **Chapter 3: Conclusions and Recommendations**

The purpose of this research paper was to evaluate the readiness of students with a learning disability for adulthood. The focus is on students with a learning disability attending post-secondary education for a career. Chapter 1 provided background information on special education and the focus of the paper, and Chapter 2 presented a review of the research literature of students with a learning disability attending post-secondary education. Chapter 3 has four subsections: conclusion, discussing the findings, recommendations, and implications of the research.

#### **Conclusion**

I reviewed 10 different articles on the effects students with learning disabilities attending post-secondary education and the outcomes. There is mounting evidence demonstrating that students with disabilities continue to lag behind their peers in terms of college attendance, Theobald et al. (2019, p. 51). Students with learning disabilities are more likely to attend a 2-year college or vocational program than a 4-year college.

All the articles referred to reasons for increasing enrollment in college for students with a learning disability. Increasing enrollment to post-secondary education is due to the passing of section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the reauthorization of IDEA, and increased use of technologies. When students with learning disabilities get involved with their transition IEP, they are more likely to be prepared for post-secondary education with knowledge about their disability.

A student with a learning disability should recognize that they need to have an internal drive, ability to complete goals, know their strengths and weakness, and be a self-advocate. The

challenges these students face in college, will be different than the challenges faced in high school. In high school, students frequently received support in study skills, organization, and social skills. In college, students with a learning disability will have to request help on their own by knowing the disability laws to access supports. Skinner (2004) found that the accommodations they needed in high school continue to the post-secondary setting. However, the ability to navigate the college a system with the knowledge of learning resource center, common supports are test accommodations, note-taking, and writing support can be simpler.

Another predictor of completion of post-secondary education is the type of courses a student takes in high school. Students with a learning disability often are in career and technical training courses; they enjoy hands-on learning. Also, students with a learning disability may have taken more rigorous general education courses in high school with support. Joshi and Bouck (2017, p. 50) commented on a relationship between core content instruction in high school indicates the likelihood of the student attending post-secondary education within 2 years of leaving high school. Overall, the inclusion in general education classes for students with a learning disability shows a positive relationship for success and enrollment in college. Also, registration of CTE courses for students with a learning disability is a positive predictor of post-secondary outcomes.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

Recommendation for future research of students entering post-secondary education should include larger sample sizes, less use of convenience samples, and the use of standardized instruments with reliability and validity.

The limitation of some studies is the limited sample size; for example, Skinner (2004) has the smallest study with 20 participants. Skinner (2004) stated that only successful students were interviewed. Also, Rabren et al. (2013) had participants from a single state (Washington state). When the sample is low, it is harder to generalize it to the entire population. Skinner (2004) recommended that studies should be conducted that are more quantitative and use randomized procedures for sample selection.

The reliance on self-reporting of a learning disability is a limitation—the studies relying on only the students who are willing to identify their disability. Newman et al. (2016) noted that students were self-reporting, and the receipt of supports could not be confirmed. The supports could have been under-reported due to not knowing the supports received or available.

The last recommendation is to use standardized instruments with established reliability and validity. Troiano et al. (2010) reported that regular data collection from the Learning Support Center was weak. The study relied on the university learning resource center to collect the data. Having a standardized data collection in place would have increased the reliability and validity.

### **Implications for Practice**

As a special education teacher, it is my job to provide a transition IEP that meets the needs of the diverse student population—having the student involved in the transition process very important. The more the students understand their disability, the better off they will be. High school students should learn about disability, which will benefit them as they become an adult and transition to post-secondary education. Teaching students to advocate for themselves is imperative because they are responsible for requesting the services they require to be



successful. It is also essential to build the student's character to include diligence, persistence, awareness of their strengths and weaknesses, along with goal setting. These skill sets will not only help them in post-secondary education but in a career.

When students with a learning disability are in general education courses, they can experience the rigor needed to succeed—encouraging students to explore the CTE course in high school to support their interests. Since only one-third of the population of students with a learning disability go on to secondary education, it is vital to have a clear understanding of what the expectations are. Teaching students in high school about their future could change their lives and allow them to have the satisfaction of an income that could support themselves and a family.

### **Summary**

Joshi and Bouck (2017) noted that students with disabilities have a difficult time competing for employment due to poor education. Post-secondary education for students with a learning disability is a gateway to having a successful life providing security and independence, with the ability to earn more money and have higher job satisfaction. The special education teacher should write detailed transition IEPs that involve the student, including post-secondary education. Their transitional IEP can help guide them with class in high school, by taking career and technical training and is an introduction to a career path. In addition to more rigorous general education classes that will prepare them for college. Students must demonstrate knowledge of their disability and disability laws to know their rights as an individual with disabilities when they enter the post-secondary setting. Students with a learning disability will need to advocate their needs and to request the accommodation needed for success. It is also vital to teach students their strengths and weaknesses so that they know what type of

accommodation will benefit them. Students with a learning disability will need to learn social and organizational skills to navigate in a post-secondary education setting. As a special education teacher knowing this information can make a difference in a person's life.

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