

A COMPARISON OF PERCEIVED ROLES AND COMPETENCIES OF
PARTIES INVOLVED IN INDIVIDUAL TRANSITION PLANNING
FOR SECONDARY STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

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ABSTRACT

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The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 1990) as amended in 1997 by Public Law 105-17 requires an Individual Transition Plan as a component of the already mandated Individual Education Plan. In those areas which do not have a transition specialist on staff, school district personnel, related service providers, outside agencies and parents find themselves unaware or confused about the roles and responsibilities of each party in the Individual Transition Plan process.

The purpose of this proposed project was to determine if there is a significant difference in the perceived roles and competencies of members of the transition planning team between rural and non-rural communities. An instrument containing 40 tasks germane to the Individual Transition Plan process was developed to query 400 participants on their perceived level of responsibility and competence.

The sample was selected from school districts in the Region 2 Education Service Center in the Coastal Bend area of Texas, divided between rural and non-rural local education agencies and dispersed among team roles (e.g., parents, teachers, administrators, etc.) The instrument was mailed to the 42 districts in the region. The parent population was chosen without regard for category of exceptionality. The data were entered and analyzed to test the hypotheses using Statistical Package for Social Sciences, Version 8.0 for Windows 95. Analysis of Variance revealed no significant difference between rural and non-rural districts in perceived roles/responsibilities or perceived competence as reflected by training. However, significance was found in perceptions of responsibility between parents and professionals. Finally, bivariate correlation analysis revealed a significant relationship between participants' global perception of competence, as reflected by training, and their perception when faced with specific tasks.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The coordination of school-based transition services for students in special education requires the participation of a diverse group of people in order to bring about a successful post-school adjustment for the student. Inadequate planning and follow-up training can have a drastic impact on the individual. There is evidence that participation is a problem on an international scale. Reiter and Palnizky (1996) reported that one third of special school graduates in Israel were not working, nor enrolled in formal training 6 months after graduation. The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (1983) reported that between 50 and 80% of all people with disabilities in this country were unemployed. More recently, Coelho (1998) reported that only 26% of working-age people with severe disabilities are employed. This contrasts with the overall 82% employment rate for the general population.

Additionally, a national longitudinal study of special education students (Wagner & Blackorby, 1996) suggested that there is a high relationship between transition training and employment success. A reason for poor planning and follow-up training may stem from lack of knowledge concerning transition in general, a misunderstanding of the

responsibilities expected of transition team members, and poor training in preparation of assuming those responsibilities.

Transition and Legislation

The transition concept is not a new development. The term transition was first introduced in the 1970s (Kochhar & West, 1995). The focus of the 1965 Manpower Development and Training Act (MDTA), the 1973 Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA), and the 1977 Youth Employment Demonstration Act was to ease the transition process for all youth with disabilities. The 1983 Amendments to the Education for the Handicapped Act (P.L. 98-199) resulted in many states and local education agencies (LEAs) voluntarily developing transition supports and services for youth with disabilities (e.g., vocational assessment, vocational exploration in the classroom, and post-secondary follow up). As a result of these voluntary efforts, there has been great variation in transition services delivered at the local level. (West, Taymans, Corbey, & Dodge, 1994).

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, P.L. 101-476, 1990) mandated that the Individual Transition Plan (ITP) be an integral part of the student's Individual Education Program (IEP). That IEP must include a statement of needed transition services for students beginning no later than age 16, or earlier if deemed necessary, and annually thereafter. This statement, when appropriate, should include

interagency responsibilities. The post-secondary areas of concern include post-secondary education, vocational training, integrated employment, continuing education, adult services, independent living, or community participation. Additionally, IDEA called for the set of activities to be based upon the student's individual needs. These activities would include "instruction, community experiences, the development of other post school adult living objectives and when appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional evaluation" (Sec.626).

The 1997 amendments of IDEA (P.L. 105-17) further elaborated on the transition planning process by calling for a statement of transition service needs that focus on student's existing educational program or courses beginning at age 14 and updated annually. Additionally, beginning at age 16, specific transition services, including interagency responsibilities, is to be provided. Furthermore, beginning at least 1 year before the student reaches the age of majority, the student is to be informed of his or her rights.

Statement of Problem

While mandates may outline the services that must be provided in the transition process, they do not define how the services should be provided and who should provide them. This results in many different interpretations and confusion in assignment of tasks to responsible parties. Therefore, the major problem lies in a duplication of tasks by some

members of the transition planning team, or in many cases, a tendency for some tasks to “fall through the cracks,” thus resulting in an incomplete planning and training process for the transitioning student.

Barriers to Successful Transition

Gallivan-Fenlon (1994) reported major traits that inhibit successful transition from school to adult life. Among them were differing future expectations for young adults with disabilities, a lack of transition related knowledge, hastily and poorly coordinated transition planning, and low levels of family participation.

The findings of a recent parent focus group conducted in South Texas (Nolan, 1997) concurred with Gallivan-Fenlon. In many cases, the Individual Transition Planning meeting was presented as something that “had to be done” to meet a requirement, rather than a meeting to formulate a plan of action for a young person’s transition to adult life. There is a tendency for school districts to offer available services and to attempt to fit the student to available programs rather than conducting inventories of student’s strengths and providing matching programs. In addition, a dichotomy that exists when one has to sacrifice essential transition training and services to be fully included in regular education classes.

Recent interviews with urban and rural special education directors (Nolan, 1997) in South Texas indicated that the privatization of social service agencies (e.g., Texas

Mental Health/Mental Retardation and Texas Rehabilitation Commission) has resulted in less responsive organizations. One example cited was an unwillingness on the part of TRC personnel to attend ITP meetings since they were not obligated to take on cases until the student actually graduated. Furthermore, the need for more parent training and employer cultivation is evident, especially in rural areas. Another problem facing individuals involved in the transition planning process is the lack of grant-sponsored transition information programs in the state. The Texas Transition Task Force (TTTF), the only grant-sponsored transition training and awareness program in the state, ceased to exist in 1995.

There are several reasons for poor transition planning. First, many of the responsible parties (parents, school personnel, outside agencies, and students) are not sure of their role in transition planning. Second, they are unaware of what information to provide (or be provided) Finally, once the plan is written, few guidelines exist for implementation and follow-up.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the difference in perceptions of the roles and perceived competency levels of the parties concerned in the transition process and to compare those perceptions between rural and non-rural communities. The identification of

this information will result in more participation of the various parties in transition; thus resulting in collaborative efforts for planning, training, and implementation.

Definition of Terms

The following terms were defined for use in this study:

Individualized Education Program (IEP). A management tool used to identify and organize individualized educational and related services for students (Smith, 1998).

Individualized Transition Plan (ITP). A statement of the transition services required for coordination and delivery of services as the student moves into adulthood (Smith, 1998).

Non-rural School District. A school district located in a community with a population of 5,000 or more or having a University Interscholastic League (UIL) designation of III- A, IV-A or V-A.

Outside Agency. Any education outside the school district (e. g., State agencies, Community resources, and advocacy groups).

Post-secondary. The world of work, community living, or education after high school.

Rural School District. A school district located in a community with a population of less than 5,000 people and having a University Interscholastic League (UIL) designation of not higher than III-A.

School Leaver. A student who exits high school either by graduation, or dropping out (Spruill & Cohen, 1991).

Limitations

This study was subject to the following limitations:

1. This study was limited to 42 districts (26 rural, 16 non-rural) in the state of Texas.
2. Many of the rural districts were serviced by cooperatives; therefore, special education personnel were located at the cooperative and not at the districts. This resulted in a non-response by 19 districts.
3. The sample was limited to those who consented to participate in the survey.
4. Mailed surveys resulted in a non-randomized selection of subjects in each district.
5. The age of the students and their relationship to the stage of the ITP process. Different ages would be receiving different levels of services thus causing respondent bias.
6. The time of the year in which the study was conducted. Respondents may answer differently at various points throughout the school year.

Hypotheses

1. There will be no significant difference in the mean scores indicating the perceived responsibilities of parties involved in transition planning between rural and non-rural school districts.
2. There will be no significant difference in the mean scores indicating the perceived competencies as reflected by training of parties involved in transition planning between rural and non-rural school districts.
3. There will be no significant difference in the mean scores of perceived responsibilities between positions.
4. There will be no significant relationship between parties' overall perceptions and their perceptions when faced with specific tasks.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this study was to examine the difference in perceptions of the roles/responsibilities and perceived competency levels, as reflected by training, of the parties concerned in the transition process, and to compare those perceptions between rural and non-rural communities. This review of the literature included the years 1989-1998 and is presented in chronological order under the following headings: (a) General transition research, (b) Evaluations of the transition process, (c) Roles of parties involved in transition planning, (d) Rural perspectives, (e) Transition training, (f) Vocational training, and (g) Related literature.

General Transition Research

Fairweather (1989) conducted a survey of special education administrators in 1,450 local education agencies (LEAs) to obtain information on the use of four traditional vocational preparation programs (counseling, vocational education, Occupational/Physical Therapy, and vocational rehabilitation staff assigned to local education agency). The author indicated that these programs were cited in previous research as being related to successful transition in that they provide job preparation and training. Additionally, Fairweather gathered data on the availability of two nontraditional programs that also

were believed to be successful (transition program and staff assigned to find jobs for students with disabilities). The results indicated that more than 50% of all secondary LEAs provide at least one of the four traditional programs. He also reported that smaller LEAs were less likely to have vocational education or OT/PT services. The OT/PT services were considered an integral part of the transition process because of the relationship of fine and gross motor skills to jobs requiring manual dexterity. The smaller districts, mostly located in rural areas, were less likely to have the financial resources or accessibility to related services such as OT/PT. Less than half of the LEAs nationwide stated that they offered OT/PT. The transition-oriented programs were also less prevalent in small, rural areas. Less than half of the LEAs nationwide reported that they offered transition programs and only about one-third responded as employing personnel to assist special education students to find jobs. His findings indicated that the combination of LEA size and community wealth affects the availability of vocationally related services for students with disabilities. Finally, he concluded that the LEAs with the most comprehensive programs were less likely to be located in a rural setting.

Focusing on providing direction for future research, Johnson and Rusch (1993) conducted a literature review of 24 follow-up studies reported since 1984. They studied pre- and post-exit adjustment factors evaluating best practices, and policy research. Thus, the recommendations for future research were to:

1. Assess the extent and impact of student and parent participation and involvement in the transition process;
2. Evaluate the effectiveness and quality of transition planning services in terms of expected and achieved post-school outcomes;
3. Delineate transition outcomes that are referenced to local communities and demographic factors; and
4. Initiate efforts to define, develop, and evaluate greater community involvement in the successful transition of students and adults with disabilities.

Thomson and Ward (1995) focused on the outcomes in transition. This study draws upon data gathered in the United Kingdom from 360 students. The research addressed three major themes. First, how was successful transition to adult status determined? Second, how was independence defined? Finally, what were the transition pathways for the population under study? The researchers theorized that successful employment was the primary indicator of successful transition. However, the researchers stressed the idea that individuals could achieve reasonable status in society even if unemployed. However, their idea did not gain widespread acceptance in British society. Personal independence, according to the researchers, embraced six key aspects: self-care; independence in the home; handling money; ability to shop independently; social competence; and access to and use of public transportation. Pathways were explored in 10 different placements for the 360 students at the point of leaving school, and 3 and 6 years

later. The placements with the most significant outcomes were in employment and at home. Participants who were placed in settings without supports after transition training reported increases in employment and independent living at the 3- and 6-year intervals. The authors concluded that the majority of the students were found to require no help in meeting the indicators of independence, if they were adequately trained during the transition phase.

Comparably, Wagner and Blackorby (1996) reported the results from the National Longitudinal Transition Study of Special Education Students. This study sampled more than 8,000 students in 300 school districts in the United States. Among the most significant results reported were that employment success was strongly related to an enrollment concentrating in vocational education. Additionally, the relationship of category of disability to success was addressed. For example, youths with learning disabilities and speech impairments were most likely to be employed as compared to their peers with cognitive disabilities. Finally, the issue of inclusion was addressed from the perspective of post-school outcomes. The researchers found that those with sensory or motor disabilities appeared to benefit from regular education placement. The opposite effect was found with many students with cognitive disabilities in regular classes. The results indicated that they had a higher likelihood of course failure and subsequently dropping out of school.

Another perspective on transition was provided by Anderson and Asselin (1996). They surveyed 135 school districts in the state of Virginia. A mail survey was sent to special education administrators, teachers, general administrators, counselors and school psychologists. The respondents were requested to respond to a listing of best practices in four categories of transition: social integration, functional academics, coordinated planning, and support systems delineated by a range of four to eight indicators. For each indicator, the respondents circled the degree to which the indicator occurred in their school district. The results indicated high percentages in all indicators with the exception of the following: procedures to improve peer attitudes, leisure skills, linkage to employment/further education upon school exit, business and industry involvement in planning, community representative involved in planning. They summarized that only 61% of those surveyed used predetermined procedures for coordination of planning or for a continuum of services encompassing assessment, programs, individualized planning, and support services. Less than half of the respondents conveyed that in-service was provided to personnel responsible for transition services. Finally, the researchers stressed that successful transition service delivery was directly linked to the level of cooperation between vocational and special education.

Baer, Simmons, and Flexer (1996) presented another state's view. The authors' surveyed 277 secondary special educators in Ohio. The survey instrument was composed of questions related to best practices and four general areas determined to be factors that

were considered good predictors of transition policy. Those predictors were: the respondent's professional role, transition training, school setting, and student characteristics. The results were presented in a breakdown of transition policy.

Implementation of transition was ranked into 14 major categorical areas. The areas of policy receiving the highest rankings were as follow: the attendance of special education representatives (other than the teacher) at IEP/transition meetings (75.4%), documented efforts to invite parents to the IEP/transition meeting (72.7%), provision of a procedure for input if parents do not attend the meeting (64.2%), and provision of a procedure to obtain input from adult services who cannot attend a meeting for a student they fund or serve (64.2%). The areas of policy that were found to suggest the least emphasis were as follow: parents given the IEP on request and/or helped to understand the IEP/transition meeting (60.8%), community experiences provided unless it is specified that it is not needed (44.8%), a policy regarding who is to monitor transition services (40.8%), and a procedure for calling together the IEP/transition team if adult services cannot provide services planned in the IEP (22.7%). The most significant finding of this study was that more than 30% of the respondents reported they were provided less than 2 hours of transition training. The authors concluded suggesting that there is a complex relationship between practice and policy. They also concluded that further research was needed to determine how interagency teams, parent and student involvement, employer involvement, and the availability of vocational programs and adult services interact and to identify

points of intervention that will foster training to insure positive development of transition services.

Expanding on the viewpoint from the student perspective, Heal, Khoju, and Rusch (1997) canvassed 713 students from across the United States. The authors used a questionnaire with 17 variables. The researchers determined that quality of life was the dependent variable encompassing three domains of esteem, independence and support. Their results implied that quality of life for young adults with disabilities can be defined best by one dimension: competence. The more competent the student felt in the area of functioning within each domain, the higher the quality of life.

Finally, in a literature review of follow-up studies of post-secondary adjustment for individuals with learning disabilities, Levine and Nourse (1998) examined 13 frequently referenced follow up studies. The variables were in the areas of post-school outcomes, post-secondary education, and employment. The researchers found there was disagreement on what constituted an appropriate outcome for students with learning disabilities and wide variation in expectations or parameters of success for these students. They called for further study of the relationship between poverty and disability, and the effects of welfare reform (specifically, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, P.L. 104-193) on the long-term quality of life for individuals with disabilities.

Evaluation of the Transition Planning Process

An examination of parent's perceptions of transition programs for youth with severe disabilities was conducted by Alper (1990). Parents of high school students labeled severely handicapped in the state of Missouri were surveyed about their perceived needs for themselves and their children. A 35-item questionnaire measured needs, parental participation, and communication with the school, and satisfaction with the program. Of the 103 participants, 33.5% lived in urban areas, 23% in suburban, and 43.5% in rural areas. Parents indicated the greatest need for more information was related to work options for their children (45%) and adult service agencies (44%). Approximately 39% indicated a great need for information on community living options. The parents felt they had received adequate training in IEPs (47%), advocacy (44%), and behavior management (42%). Parents indicated satisfaction with the skill of their teacher (60%), their child's IEP (60%) and communication with the school (57%). The parents tended not to participate in the job search for their children (15%) and were not involved in parent groups (15%). The researchers concluded by calling for future research to address the questions of whether or not there is any discrepancy between parents' and professionals' perceptions of the needs of persons with severe disabilities as they exit school. Furthermore, they suggested alternatives to facilitate active involvement of parents in transition activities due to parents' tendency to feel intimidated by a roomful of professionals.

A perspective of another state's program was presented by Spruill and Cohen (1991). A series of three research studies were conducted examining the process in Maine. The studies consisted of: (a) a statewide survey of school districts that examined implementation of the transition process; (b) an interview study of educators in three rural school districts in southern Maine; and (c) a follow-up study of special education school leavers in two of the rural school districts. In the first study, 98% of the respondents reported that special education students had access to regular vocational education programs, 75 % indicated special education students had access to special vocational education programs, and 50% reported that there were community-based programs available to special needs students. The study also indicated a lack of transition training for professionals. Of those responding, 36% indicated that they had no pre-service or in-service courses in transition. Approximately 47% of counselors, 59% of special education directors, and 40% of high school special education department chairpersons reported taking no secondary special education courses at all. In conclusion, many professionals indicated that they were unfamiliar with federal requirements for transition services, and basically had a lack of working knowledge about the law. In the second study in the series, the authors interviewed 12 professionals. When asked what the main barriers to vocational education were, they responded with the following: lack of staff, facilities, funds, program direction, and limited training opportunities for staff. The interviewees indicated support for community based vocational programs, integrating students with severe disabilities into

the high school as priorities. Finally, when asked what the barriers were in their districts, interviewees listed inadequate facilities, high school competitiveness, limited peer opportunities, limited program options and lack of social acceptance. In the third and final study of the series, Spruill and Cohen examined employment outcomes. Data were collected via a telephone survey of 23 graduates from a secondary special education program 3 years before the study. Of the respondents, 7 indicated they were married and 15 were employed (11 full time, 4 part time). Most important, only 17% reported community-based jobs and most students were receiving minimum wage. Suggestions for additional research included the following questions: What types of transition policies, practices, and curricula are the most effective? What types of training will be most beneficial to assist students? and How can families and schools best support students as they proceed through the transition process?

A survey of transition personnel in 25 states was conducted by Bullock, Maddy-Bernstein, and Matias (1994) in an effort to define effective technical assistance. Using a 4 point Likert-like scale, 175 participants were asked to rate each of 20 components of an exemplary program as it applied to their program. A rank ordering of the results indicated that academic and vocational education integration received the highest ranking with staff development training ranked second. The lowest ranked means were administrative leadership and budget information. The authors suggested that the results be used as a tool in disseminating information with the higher ranking components being given the widest

dissemination and that the lower ranked components should be disseminated less frequently.

In a similar study, Roessler (1996) surveyed 84 school and agency professionals in eight demonstration school districts in Arkansas. Nearly half of the sample consisted of resource and self-contained classroom teachers (49%). The other school professionals included counselors, school administrators, regular education teachers, special education administrators and a vocational education teacher. The survey was administered to the participants after 18 months of project operation. In addition to background information, the survey addressed: topics discussed in transition planning; individuals attending the IEP/transition planning sessions; additional individuals to include in transition planning; respondent satisfaction with the activities of the transition planning teams; and the participants evaluation of the amount of progress that had occurred in increasing interagency cooperation to implement students' IEP and transition plans. The results indicated that the participants did not discuss transition issues significantly more now than in the beginning of the project. Most of the educators (73%) reported that the appropriate people attended the IEP/TP sessions. Additionally, the population sample rated the effectiveness of school teams in working with individual students positively. However, classroom special education teachers tended to report lower satisfaction levels with team functioning than did other school professionals. The group also reported a slight increase in interagency cooperation. Recommendations for improvement of transition programs,

based upon the research, included: improving the articulation of formal adult agency service planning with transition planning; increasing the emphasis on identifying and discussing student needs for advocacy services, adaptive equipment, case management, and medical/dental services during TP sessions; working with school counselors to determine their role in advocacy and case management; and developing materials and implementing training programs that increase the discussion of transition topics and adult outcomes in school planning.

A more direct perspective was taken by Grigal, Test, Beattie, and Wood (1997) to evaluate the IEP transition component for 94 high school students between 15 and 21 years of age with learning disabilities, mild or moderate mental retardation, and emotional/behavioral disorders. The survey compared the IEP transition components for compliance with IDEA mandates and best practices. Using a survey instrument of 25 questions, organized into four sections, demographics, transition component format, compliance with IDEA mandate, and reflection of best practices; the findings indicated that of the transition components listed, vocational training appeared most often (81.9%). In contrast, residential (60.6%) and recreation (45.7%) goals were rated as minimal. School interdisciplinary team involvement for developing the transition component was also examined. The authors reported the education teacher was the most consistent member of the team (90.4%), followed by the family and student (both 62.5%). Conversely, transition specialists, vocational education teachers, or community based

instruction coordinators were present at less than 10% of the meetings. The study concluded by recommending increased training in IDEA mandates on transition planning for teachers and other transition planning professionals.

Finally, another perspective was presented by Love and Malian, (1997). The Arizona Follow-Along Project assessed the impact of special education on the post-school outcomes of students with disabilities. The project attempted to answer six major research questions. However, only three in this article pertained to students with disabilities who leave special education programs: First, what kinds of post-school outcomes are achieved; Second, what types of post-school services are needed; and Third, what are the quality of life indicators? Of the 1285 students selected as participants, the majority of students reported that they were working full time, earning a minimal wage, in jobs that relatives or friends had assisted in procuring. In comparing those who completed high school with those who dropped out, a pattern emerged with both students and parents reporting, that students who had completed their high school programs were favored in terms of receiving needed post-school services. In fact, once a student was identified as likely to complete the program, remedial services were planned and continued after the student had completed school. Conversely, once a student was identified as a potential dropout, follow-up remedial services were not planned and not accessible. Thus, it was implied that potential dropouts were “written off” by school personnel. Other areas included family relations and independence. One explanation may be that students who

completed high school may have received effective social and interpersonal skills training, whereas those who dropped out did not. The recommendations included additional follow-along studies to provide data on the sustainability of results. Finally, comparison studies with non-disabled populations were recommended to assess possible differences in post-school outcomes.

Roles of Parties Involved in the Transition Process

The development and field testing of transition planning procedures was the focus of a project by Miller, LaFollette, and Greene (1990). Under a 3-year grant from the Iowa Department of Education, the researchers developed a Transition Planning Procedure (TPP). The key elements of the TPP were: transition planning as part of each student's IEP; transition planning beginning 3 to 5 years before graduation; transition planning including goals and objectives in the areas of vocational or post-secondary education options for the student; and transition planning including the completion of a parent/guardian/student inventory describing post-high school plans and needs in the identified goal areas. Data collection of the field test was completed by telephone with 24 of the 30 parents involved in the TPP. Parental comments yielded the following results: 91% of the participants indicated that the TPP was helpful in planning post-high school services for their special education student; 95% were satisfied with the objectives developed at the planning meeting; 83% indicated the informational materials provided by teachers were

helpful in transition planning. Although the parents were pleased with the developed objective, only 39% of the respondents completed all the objectives by graduation. After the field test, 30% of the parents still felt uncertain or ill-prepared to assume a leadership role in transition planning. The study concluded by recommending that students be taught skills of self-advocacy, and that parents and students must take a leadership role in the process; for no one will seek them out to offer the services to which they are entitled.

A comparable study in parental involvement was conducted by McNair and Rusch (1991). In a survey of 85 parents from nine regions of the country, parents were queried as to expected and desired post-school outcomes for their children. In 63% of the cases, parents had a plan detailing their expectations of their children's adult life. While 50% of parents expected their child to live at home after graduation, significantly fewer indicated that they desired this arrangement. Only 50% imagined their child to have a job in the community, but significantly more hoped for this outcome. Of the parents, 40% indicated that they would like more information about their child's skills, 66% desired more information about work options, 37% wanted more information about community living options; and 56% desired more information about adult service agencies. Parental involvement in the transition program was also addressed. Parents were not as involved in transition programs as they desired. Almost 70% of the parents desired involvement while only 30% experienced involvement. The respondents also indicated that they wanted an equal role in decision making on a more frequent basis. When offered a transition training

program, 21% of the parents indicated that they desired involvement in such a program. Those who took part in these programs were significantly more aware of adult services, and the students of the parents in this group had a significantly higher rate of employment. The last area explored inquired as to what parents would be willing to do in order to be involved with the transition team. The majority indicated that they would attend monthly meetings (but not weekly meetings), take transition training, train other parents, and participate in parent support groups. The study concluded by suggesting more research in the area of the influence of parental involvement on outcomes.

Another comparison of parent and student responses was examined by Bullis, Bull, Johnson, and Peters (1994). Interviews were conducted with 394 participants with various degrees of hearing impairment and their parents. Three domains were explored: high school work experience, community adjustment, and agency assistance. There were 10 questions related to these domains asked of both the students and parents. The answers were then compared for consistency. The results indicated high agreement between parents and students in all three domains with agency assistance being the most consistent. The article concluded by recommending that this study be expanded to other categories of disability.

The perspectives of both family and service providers was obtained by Gallivan-Fenlon (1994) in a qualitative study which collected and analyzed data on 11 participants with moderate or severe disabilities over a 16-month period. The techniques used semi-

structured interviews, participant observation, and document examination throughout the study. The researchers found that there were differing expectations for young adult life by the various parties. Young adults envisioned themselves as working in a paid job, living independently and participating in the community, while families, school personnel, and service providers held more restrictive views. Additionally, common themes across programs and among participants included: lack of family participation, lack of knowledge and collaboration among transition teams and tardy transition planning. These themes were also frequently mentioned by participants in the preliminary parent focus group and special education director interviews conducted by Nolan (1997). Finally, the study revealed that the role of transition coordinator was the driving force in the process. Yet, the transition coordinator's role was not readily accepted by those personnel fulfilling it. Hence, the transition rhetoric often did not translate into reality for the students in the study.

Finally, in an evaluation of teachers of students with Emotional/ Behavioral Disorders, Feldman and Gordon (1996) administered the transitions subscales of the E/BD Knowledge Competency Rating Scale (KCRS) and the E/BD Skill Competency Rating Scale (SCRS) (Institute for Adolescents with Behavioral Disorders, 1994) to 75 experienced teachers. The results suggested that the teachers felt that teaching daily living skills, teaching skills for finding jobs, and teaching home and family management as the three most important skill competencies. Conversely, selecting community based

instruction sites, and providing career information were considered the least important. The lowest ranked competency was that of administering vocational aptitude and interest instruments. These results suggested that the teacher must work closely with the vocational rehabilitation personnel to facilitate working for the common goal to enhance the student's transition from school to work.

Rural Perspectives

In a study of the demonstration site strategy, Schriner, Bellini, and Williams (1995) compared IEP development pertaining to transition planning at three demonstration sites with three non-demonstration sites by using a structured interview approach. This approach employed a 38 question form for professionals combined with a modified 9 question form for students. The interview was conducted with previously identified key informants in each community. Those key informants were special education resource teachers, school special education coordinators, vocational education teachers, rehabilitation counselors, resource room students, and parents. The components of the interview included circumstances; authority and participation; service options; best practices criteria; incentives; and barriers. The results indicated that there were more individuals attending IEP meetings at the demonstration sites than non-demonstration sites. In most cases at both sites, the special educator assumed responsibility for scheduling the actual IEP meeting. Parents at both sites responded that they had adequate

notice of the meeting. Concerns were raised with monitoring of progress in the IEP and in ensuring that the student's desires reflected adequate planning. A difference in incentives for improving transition services was shown between both sites. Demonstration sites utilized media exposure; training for teachers, service providers, and families; assistance with grant and service development; and more resources for schools. The non-demonstration sites used a transition letter; job opportunities for students; and lending and sharing resources across agencies as effective strategies. The largest barrier encountered by demonstration sites was resistance to change on the part of school personnel. Whereas, the non-demonstration sites identified lack of information regarding services, inadequate funding of adult services, lack of teacher training, and lack of experience in community based instruction as substantial barriers. The researchers concluded that the demonstration site strategy is an effective method for promoting full implementation of IDEA in transition planning.

Additionally, a survey of parents of high school students with disabilities in urban and rural areas of Arkansas was presented by Roessler and Peterson (1996). There were 41 parents who participated in a structured interview containing 25 items. The questions assessed perceptions of programming in the schools and satisfaction with school transition services. Additional areas included student's levels of participation, student histories of paid and unpaid employment, and queries on the type of professionals who participated in the IEP meetings. The majority of the parents (60%) indicated they were satisfied with the

transition planning program and that 82% were doing what they said they would do.

However, when specific domains were addressed, the results were quite different. For example, 40 to 45% indicated that school programs did not address vocational and post-secondary educational planning. Almost 70% reported that the schools did not prepare the student to deal with transportation needs, while 50% indicated that the schools failed to provide instruction in community, domestic, and recreational activities. About 60% of the parents claimed that their children did not learn how to keep house or raise children.

Unfortunately, the data were not broken down to give comparisons between urban and rural schools. Conclusions reached by the researchers were that parents of children who were not receiving instruction in critical life skills tended to be less satisfied with school programming. They recommended formative evaluation by the parents of the program; an investigation of availability of student support groups; increased participation by adult agencies, and post-secondary training institutions; and collaboration between agency and school personnel to provide reliable transportation alternatives.

Transition Training

The area of leisure/recreation, although included under the community domain, is rarely addressed in the literature. This was affirmed by Bedini, Bullock, and Driscoll, (1993) in a study of a model program in the public schools of Wake County, North Carolina. A total of 45 students with mental retardation were selected as subjects. The

experimental group ($n=24$) received leisure education and training using a 10 unit curriculum consisting of the following components: leisure awareness, self-awareness in leisure, leisure opportunities, community resource awareness, barriers, personal resources and responsibility, planning, planning an outing, the outing, and outing evaluation for future plans. The comparison group ($n=14$) received no intervention. After intervention, the subjects demonstrated ability to apply critical concepts such as independent planning and initiation skills, but no statistically significant difference was shown overall. The results also indicated that although parents and teachers thought that leisure education was a good idea, greater emphasis was placed on work and not leisure by teachers and caregivers. Furthermore, the importance as perceived by teachers, parents, and caregivers was only supported verbally but rarely supported by actions. Since leisure education programs are seldom implemented within school settings, the authors suggested that several approaches to address attitudes of teachers and parents toward leisure wellness should be undertaken.

In a study of the teacher competencies for transition programs, Bull, Montgomery, and Beard (1994) queried the state directors of Special Education for information about transition definition, populations served, and personnel competencies. Out of the 36 states and 4 territories that responded, most responded that over half of the school districts had transition programs. Only two states reported that less than 10% of their districts had transition programs, and three states indicated that 99% of their districts had transition

programs. The skills recommended for integration into Special Education training were job development, management of community planning teams, counseling, public relations, first aid and health, parent relations, and interagency coordination. The study also recommended the following areas of knowledge: rules and regulations; IDEA; and other state and federal laws related to transition services. There also should be knowledge of employment development procedures, job coaching, contracts and grants procedures, and career/community assessment. The researcher called for more training citing that slightly more than 50% of the time it is unlikely that the teacher will be fully competent to conduct appropriate transition activities without further training.

Focusing on members of the Association for Retarded Citizens (ARC), Campbell and Essex (1994) interviewed adult caregivers ($N=32$) in a small Midwestern community on planning in three major areas: decision making, financial, and community living. Over half of those surveyed indicated that they had completed some planning activities in each of the three areas, although the percentage was considerably higher for financial planning. The primary barriers inhibiting planning regarding decision making capabilities included lack of information in the community, and differing opinions among professionals involved on what should be done. Finally, a lack of community information also was identified. This, associated with high costs, lack of understanding by professionals and difficulty in accessing services were reported as the most frequently cited barriers. Given these data,

the researchers concluded that in the areas of planning for decision making and financial planning, educational efforts need to include professionals as well as families.

Finally, DeFur and Taymans (1995) attempted to identify the competencies required by transition specialists in vocational rehabilitation, vocational education, and special education. From a list of 135 identified competencies within 12 domains, a panel of 149 transition experts listed the top 20 competencies. Additionally, they ranked the 12 domains in terms of importance. The top three domains according to the respondents were: knowledge of agencies and systems change; development and management of individualized plans; and working with others in the transition process. The researcher concluded that more study was needed to measure how the competencies were addressed in transition specialist training programs in higher education, discipline-specific training programs, and in-service programs at the state and local level.

Vocational Training

In a study of four special education schools in Israel, Reiter and Palnizky (1996) conducted a follow-up activity on 72 students and surveyed 53 related professionals. The questionnaire covered three major areas: the students' work program experience; teacher's final year ratings of student's academic studies, social behavior, independence and vocational skills; and the teachers' recommendations. The major reported finding was that 6 months after graduation, one third of the graduates were either not working nor

enrolled in any formal program; but were idle at home. The results of the professional survey indicated a high correlation of work program experience, high teacher ratings, and favorable teacher recommendations with successful post school outcomes. Further, the authors reported a direct relationship between parent involvement and socioeconomic status. The middle- to upper-class families showed the most involvement. Finally, involvement also had a high correlation to successful post school outcomes. Another interesting finding concerned leisure time. The researchers noted that leisure time lost its significance when all their time became free time due to unemployment. The authors recommended that teachers should make a special effort to approach all parents, especially those who tend not to initiate contact with the school.

A study which focused on the effect of mentoring versus job coach instruction as related to integration in supported employment was conducted by Lee, Storey, Anderson, Goetz, and Zivolich (1997). Employees (30) at a Pizza Hut restaurant were observed to examine the effects of three training strategies on social integration. These social integration strategies were: the traditional job coach model, a mentoring model, and the use of management and coworkers to train new employees without disabilities. The findings indicated that employees with severe disabilities responded best to the mentoring model and had more interactions with non-disabled coworkers than those who trained under the job coach model. The results also indicated that the non-disabled group had more social interaction than the other two groups. The study concluded by suggesting

more research into mentorship and the idea of natural supports in job training for individuals with disabilities.

Finally, in a related study, Doren and Benz (1998) examined predictors of better employment outcomes for young women with disabilities. The sample included 212 subjects from Oregon and Nevada who were identified as either in their last year of high school or who had dropped out sometime during the last year. The sample was chosen to include an equal number of low and high incidence disabilities. The researchers then set out to identify the predictor variables that were uniquely associated with better employment outcomes for young women with disabilities. The results indicated that substantially fewer young females in the study were competitively employed than males 1 year after leaving school. The strongest predictors for women for successful post school outcomes were: participation in two or more jobs while in high school; use of a self-family-friend network to find a job; and family income, self-esteem, and their interaction. The study concluded by urging a prioritization of the equalization of women with disabilities in transition related special education and employment.

Related Literature

A study of current transition assessment practices was conducted by Agran and Morgan (1991). This research included two studies using a 7-page survey containing three major sections: demographics, information on the various assessment procedures used,

and information on the decisions made based on the assessment data. In the first study, the results indicated that most respondents were special educators located in small communities. The most frequently used form of assessment was direct observation (60%). The use of these data was primarily for checking student/worker progress over time (68%), setting training priorities (63%) and for providing information on the level of assistance needed for training (56%). The second study using the same questionnaire involved staff from adult employment training programs in seven states (Utah, Arizona, Wyoming, Montana, Idaho, Nevada, and Oregon). The respondents were primarily administrators of work activity centers or sheltered workshops. The other results were similar to study one. Most programs used direct observation and self-developed tests for assessment (78% of work activity centers and 40% of sheltered workshops). However, when using assessment for decision making, the majority of respondents revealed that the assessment results were used to identify needed services, predict success in future employment and communicating with parents/guardians. The second study concluded by suggesting that professionals use a variety of assessment practices in their decision-making activities.

Finally, a parental perspective was employed by Lehmann and Roberto (1996) in comparing factors which influence mothers' perceptions about their adolescent children's future. This study compared the perceptions of 40 mothers. The population included 20 students with severe disabilities and 20 vocational education students without disabilities.

Tape-recorded interviews were conducted and converted into transcripts. The findings indicated that mothers of the nondisabled students were more worried about the futures of their children and the mothers of the disabled students appeared more optimistic. The mothers of the nondisabled students tended to pick out their child's faults rather than skills. Lack of motivation was a trait that imposed a barrier to their children's future. The parents of the children with disabilities addressed characteristics that were not positive as problems to be overcome. The mothers of the students in vocational education felt that school did not offer adequate support services and that the job market was extremely limited for their children. Conversely, the parents of the children with disabilities felt that education played a vital role in their children's future. One key benefit was the building of relationships that occurred in school expanding to the community. One negative point brought up was the schools' apparent failure to successfully integrate their children into regular classes. However, the majority of the parents indicated that the schools are making positive changes in this area. The study concluded by emphasizing that parent collaboration is an important element in futures planning for individuals with disabilities.

Summary

Successful post-school outcomes are greatly dependent on transition programs that involve a great deal of planning, collaboration and follow up training. The need for more in-service training for professionals has been substantiated in almost all of the literature. Also well-documented is the need for more parent involvement and training. If parents are to take a leadership role in their child's IEP meeting and overcome a feeling of intimidation in the presence of professionals, they need the confidence that training can provide.

The emphasis in the literature on collaboration included recommendations for increased community involvement, the strengthening of support networks, enhancing the relationship between vocational education and special education, and more interagency cooperation. Additionally, a number of studies indicated a need for role definition in transition planning and training. This role definition requires set procedures for coordination of planning, monitoring of services according to the IEP, and deciding who calls a meeting if the IEP is not being met. Finally, training should be conducted to minimize the variation in expectations among team members, brainstorm the possible need for additional team members; and to increase attendance at IEP meetings by transition specialists, thus relieving the special education teacher of much of the responsibility for the administrative functions in the process.

Finally, although the literature did address rural issues and transition practices, there was no perspective presented comparing rural and non-rural districts' role definition and training issues. It is toward this end that this study is being conducted.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

The purpose of this study was to examine the differences in perceptions of the roles and levels of competency of the parties concerned in the transition process, and to compare those perceptions between rural and non-rural communities. This investigation was conducted in two parts. First, a field study was conducted to validate the questions contained in the survey instrument. Second, the survey instrument was administered to a selective sample of participants.

Selection of Participants

Pilot Study

The purpose of the pilot study was to examine the effectiveness of a survey based upon a model developed by Baer, Simmons, Flexer, and Izzo, (1993). The initial recruitment of subjects occurred during transition planning workshops in the South Texas area. Parents who attended the workshops were asked to complete the questionnaire as part of the workshop. Correspondingly, a series of in-service cluster meetings were conducted where professionals were recruited from four regional locations in the South Texas area. It was these parents and professionals who served as the participants in the pilot study. The pilot survey instrument was administered to 25 participants, consisting

of parents and the professionals represented as parties in the ITP process (Administrator, Special Education Teacher, Vocational personnel, and others). No subjects refused to participate in the survey. The researcher and a representative of the regional service center were the facilitators of the workshops where the surveys were administered. During the first hour of the workshop, volunteers were asked to participate in the study by completing the questionnaire. Those participating in the survey were first asked to provide the demographic information. They, then, were instructed to read the survey items, starting with the Likert scale on the left ("I am primarily responsible for . . .") and answer accordingly. They, then, were instructed to read the survey items relating to the Likert scale on the right ("I am adequately trained for . . .") and answer in the same manner. The results of the pilot study indicated the survey questions were easy to read and could be completed. The participants also indicated no difficulty responding to the double Likert format.

Instrumentation

The original survey instrument was developed by Baer, Simmons, Flexer, and Izzo (1993), in Ohio. The original survey instrument was modified to correspond to Texas roles and responsibilities. A model developed by Roessler (1996) came closest to achieving that requirement. The position titles were then slightly modified to encompass both rural and non-rural school districts in Texas and to facilitate ease of classification (see Table 1 for

Table 1

Transition Team Members

Baer Model	Roessler Model	Modified Roessler Model
Parents/Guardians	Family	Family/Guardians
Student	Student	Student
Special Education Teacher or Transition Planning Specialist	Special Education Teacher	Special Education Teacher
Vocational: Job Training Coordinator Work Study Coordinator Vocational Evaluator	School Counselor	Vocational Specialist
Administrative: Vocational Special Education Coordinator	LEA Superintendent	School Administrator Transition Specialist Diagnostician
In School Rehabilitation Counselor	Outside Rehabilitation Counselor	Outside Social Service Agency Personnel

the comparison of models). The instrument, then, was converted to double Likert format by adding the question pertaining to perceived competence. Open-ended questions were added to provide additional information on the relationship between the parties' global perceptions of their responsibilities and competencies and perceptions concerning those responsibilities and competencies when faced with specific tasks. The final instrument

(located at Appendix A) consisted of 40 questions. A double Likert format was designed to elicit responses for each item. The first Likert scale measured, the participant's perceived measure of responsibility, e.g., "I am primarily responsible for" (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = No opinion or not sure, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree). The second scale measured, the participant's perceived level of competency, as reflected by training, e.g., "I am adequately trained for" (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = No opinion or not sure, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree).

Sample

Surveys (400) were mailed to the 42 school districts in the Region 2 Education Service Center area of South Texas. The sample was based on an estimate of 10 special education personnel per district. The researcher later discovered that an overestimation of personnel was made for the 42 school districts. This overestimation resulted in 187 undelivered surveys, thus yielding a potential 213 subjects in the study. Written instructions were addressed to the Directors of Special Education asking them to distribute the surveys to volunteer participants among parents, teachers, vocational specialists, administrators, transition specialists, and educational diagnosticians on a separate instruction sheet contained with the cover letter in each package.

Each participant was presented with directions for completion of the survey based on information acquired during the pilot administration. Parents were recruited without regard to their children's category of disability nor level of severity. The researcher conducted a follow up telephone survey of non-responding school districts approximately 30 days after the initial mailing. It was during the telephone follow-up that the overestimation of personnel was detected.

Data Collection

A rate of return was determined for this survey. To calculate the response rate, the following formula was used (Babbie, 1973, p. 22):

$$"RR = [q/(N-U)] \times 100$$

With RR = Response Rate

q = Number of returned questionnaires

N = Number of initial questionnaires mailed

U = Number of undeliverable questionnaires"

The needed response rate was calculated as follows:

$$56.3 = [120/(400-187)] \times 100$$

Translated, this means that 400 initial surveys were mailed, 187 were determined undeliverable; 120 actual returns; all equalling a response rate of 56.3%. According to Babbie (1973), 56.3% was an adequate response rate.

The information from the survey was coded according to demographic variables. The school districts were coded for data input purposes as 1 = rural and 2 = non-rural. The position variables were coded after all surveys were received by using the modified Roessler (1996) model of Transition Team members (see Table 1). They were coded 1 = Family/Guardian, 2 = Special Education Teacher, 3 = Vocational Specialist, 4 = School Administrator, Transition Specialist, or Diagnostician, 5 = Other. Age, gender and ethnicity were also coded. Finally, the student's category of disability and the teacher's class setting were coded. The data were entered for computer analysis using the SPSS statistical software package for Windows 95 (version 8.0). During data entry, the researcher determined that 8 surveys were either incomplete or incorrectly filled out. They were eliminated from the study, leaving 112 usable surveys.

Design and Analysis

The study was cross-sectional survey research (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1993) using a mixed design based on a general linear model. The independent variables were positions (parents, teachers, vocational personnel, administrators, and other); and districts (rural and non-rural school districts), the dependent variables were the perceptions of responsibility and perceptions of competence. It should be noted that 9 subjects classified as "other" were dropped from analysis because their functions were not related to the secondary

transition process. The independent and criterion variables used in this project are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2

Independent and Criterion Variables

Independent Variables	Criterion Variables
District	Responsibility Index
Position	Competency Index
	SPOR Score
	SPOC Score

Within and between groups scores were used to test Hypotheses 1, 2, and 3 by conducting two 4x2 ANOVAS. The first ANOVA analyzed the difference between rural and non-rural school districts when compared with the perceived responsibilities of the subjects and for comparing roles/responsibilities with the role/responsibility perceptions (Hypothesis 3) (see Table 3). Hypothesis 2 was tested by ANOVA by analyzing the difference between rural and non-rural districts when compared with the perceived competence of the subjects. Hypothesis 4 was tested by conducting a bivariate correlation which compared grouping of subjective question responses with the associated dependent variables (see Table 4).

Table 3

Role Responsibility Comparison(by Survey Item number)

Team Member	Survey Item Numbers
Parent	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11
Special Education Teacher	12,13,14,15,16,17,18,19
Job Training Coordinator	20,21,22,23,24,25,26
Work Study Coordinator	27,28
Rehabilitation Counselor	29,30,31,32
Vocational Evaluator	33,34,35
Vocational Special Education Coordinator	36,37,38,39,40

Table 4

Association of Subjective Groupings

<u>SPOR* Score</u>	<u>Instrument Score</u>
Parents	Parent Responsibility Index
Teachers	Teacher Responsibility Index
Vocational Personnel	Vocation Responsibility Index
Administrators	Admin Responsibility Index
<u>SPOC+ Score</u>	<u>Instrument Score</u>
Parents	Parent Competency Index
Teachers	Teacher Competency Index
Vocational Personnel	Vocational Competency Index
Administrators	Administrator Competency Index

* = Subjective Perception of Responsibility

+ = Subjective Perception of Competency (as reflected by training)

The multivariate and bivariate analyses, then, were used to answer the following research questions:

1. Is there a significant difference between the mean scores indicating perceived roles of parties involved in transition planning between rural and non-rural school districts?
2. Is there a significant difference between the mean scores indicating perceived competence of parties involved in transition planning between rural and non-rural school districts?
3. Is there a significant difference between parties' mean scores of perceived roles between positions?
4. Is there a relationship between parties' overall perceptions and their perceptions when faced with specific tasks?

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to examine the differences in perceptions of the roles/responsibilities and levels of competency, as reflected by training, of the parties involved in the transition process and to compare those perceptions between rural and non-rural communities. The subjects for the study were 112 parents and professionals representing 20 school districts in South Texas (see Table 5 for composition of groups).

Table 5

Total Number of Subjects

Position	Rural	Non-Rural	Total
Parents	7 19%	13 17%	20 18%
Teachers	13 36%	35 46%	48 43%
Vocational	6 17%	12 16%	18 16%
Administrators	8 22%	9 12%	17 15%
Other	2 6%	7 9%	98%
Total	36 100%	76 100%	112 100%

Note: Percentages are columnar percentages.

Table 6 displays information concerning the parties' age when compared with position. It was observed that 27% of the sample were teachers over the age of 40.

Table 6

Crosstabulation of Age and Position

Age	Par.	Tea.	Voc.	Adm.	Other	Total
20-25	1 .9%	3 2.8%	1 .9%	0 .0%	0 .0%	5 4.7%
26-30	0 .0%	5 4.7%	2 1.9%	1 .9%	0 .0%	8 7.5%
31-35	2 1.9%	6 5.6%	3 2.8%	1 .9%	0 .0%	12 11.2%
36-40	5 4.7%	4 3.7%	2 1.9%	2 1.9%	3 2.8%	16 15.0%
41-45	4 3.7%	11 10.3%	2 1.9%	3 2.8%	1 .9%	21 19.6%
46-50	3 2.8%	11 10.3%	8 7.5%	4 3.7%	2 1.9%	28 26.2%
51+	2 1.9%	7 6.5%	1 .9%	5 4.7%	3 1.9%	17 15.9%
Column Total	17 15.9%	47 43.9%	19 17.8%	16 15.0%	8 7.5%	107 100.0%

Table 7 displays information concerning the parties' gender when compared with their position. It was observed that over 73% of the population was female.

Table 7

Crosstabulation of Gender and Position

Position	Male	Female	Total
Parent	2 1.8%	17 15.2%	19 17.0%
Teacher	15 13.4%	33 29.5%	48 42.9%
Vocational	8 7.2%	11 9.8%	19 17.0%
Administrator	5 4.5%	12 10.7%	17 15.2%
Other	0 .0%	9 8.0%	9 8.0%
Column Total	30 26.8%	82 73.2%	112 100%

Table 8 displays information concerning the parties' ethnicity when compared with Position. It was observed that 59% of the professional population was Anglo-American and 23% were Hispanic. It should be noted that some percentages differ from table-to-table due to omissions from respondents.

Table 8

Crosstabulation of Ethnicity and Position

Category	Anglo	African-Am.	Hispanic	Asian	Total
Parent	9 8.4%	0 .0%	7 6.7%	1 .9%	17 15.9%
Teacher	29 27.1%	4 3.7%	14 13.1%	0 .0%	47 43.9%
Vocation.	16 15.0%	0 .0%	3 2.8%	0 .0%	19 17.8%
Admin.	13 12.1%	0 .0%	4 3.7%	0 .0%	17 15.9%
Other	3 12.1%	0 .0%	4 3.7%	0 .0%	7 6.5%
Column Total	70 65.4%	4 3.7%	32 29.8%	1 .9%	107 100.0%

Parents who participated in the study were requested to indicate their child's category of disability. These data are portrayed in Table 9. It was noted that over 44% of the participants were parents of students with Learning Disabilities.

Teachers and vocational personnel who taught classes were requested to indicate the type of special education class they taught. These data are presented in Table 10. It was observed that 40% indicated "other" while 32% taught resource classes.

Table 9

Categories of Disabilities Reported by Parents

Category	Frequency	% of Responses	Cumulative %
Mental Retardation	4	22.2%	22.2%
Learning Disability	8	44.4%	66.7%
Emotional Disturbance/ Behavioral Disorder	1	5.6%	72.2%
Multiple Disabilities	3	16.7%	88.9%
Other Health Impairment	2	11.1%	100.0%
Column Totals	18	100.0%	

Table 10

Type of Class Taught as Reported by Professionals

Class	Frequency	% of Responses	Cumulative %
Severe & Profound*	1	1.6%	1.6%
L.I.F.E.*+	3	4.8%	6.5%
Emotional Disturbed/ Behavioral Disorders*	2	3.2%	9.7%
Learning Disabilities*	1	1.6%	11.3%
Resource	20	32.3%	43.5%
Content Mastery	5	8.1%	51.6%
Inclusive	5	8.1%	59.7%
Other	25	40.3%	100.0%
Column Total	62	100.0%	

Note: * = Self-contained

+ = Learning in a Functional Environment

Hypothesis Testing

Independent variables used in testing the hypotheses included Position (Parent, Teacher, Vocational, and Administrator), and District (Rural and Non-rural). Criterion variables included Responsibility Index (Parent, Teacher, Vocational and Administrator), Competency Index (Parent, Teacher, Vocational and Administrator), Subjective

Perception of Responsibility (SPOR) Score, and Subjective Perception of Competency (SPOC) Score. Descriptive data for independent and criterion variables is displayed in Table 11. All hypotheses were tested at the .05 level of significance.

Table 11

Descriptive Data: Independent (A) and Criterion (B) Variables

A. Independent Variables	<u>X</u>	<u>Mo</u>	<u>SD</u>
1. Position	2.526	2	1.176
2. District	1.684	2	.467
B. Criterion Variables	<u>X</u>	<u>Mo</u>	<u>SD</u>
Responsibility Index	108.283	79	33.330
Competency Index	104.375	39	36.141
SPOR Score	1.596	2	.493
SPOC Score	1.663	2	.475

Note: N = 112

A 1 = Position (Parent, Teacher, Vocational, Administrator)

A 2 = District (Rural, Non-rural)

Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1 stated that there will be no significant difference between the mean scores indicating perceived responsibilities of parties involved in transition planning between rural and non-rural districts. Analysis of variance was conducted to test the

hypothesis of perceived roles between rural and non-rural participants. Descriptive data for the variables tested in the first ANOVA (Hypothesis 1) are displayed in Table 12.

Table 12

Descriptive Data: Independent (A) and Criterion (B) Variables

A. Independent Variables	<u>X</u>	<u>Mo</u>	<u>SD</u>
Position	2.526	2	1.176
District	1.684	2	.467
B. Criterion Variables	<u>X</u>	<u>Mo</u>	<u>SD</u>
Parent responsibility index	31.274	28	11.847
Teacher responsibility index	23.363	32	8.431
Vocational responsibility index	29.929	12	11.775
Administrator responsibility index	14.161	16	5.340

Note: N =112

Table 13 displays the results of a 4 x 2 Analysis of Variance entering Position (Parent, Teacher, Vocational, and Administration) compared with District (Rural, and Non-rural) with the Responsibility index (Parent, Teacher, Vocational, and Administration) as the criterion variable. The results were not significant at ($p > .05$). Based on the insignificant results from the Analysis of Variance on Hypothesis 1, the null hypothesis was accepted.

Table 13

Summary Table for ANOVA (A) Parent Responsibility Compared with District, (B)Teacher Responsibility Compared with District, (C) Vocational Responsibility Compared with District, and (D) Administrator Responsibility Compared with District

A. Parent	<u>SS</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>
Between	6.759	1	6.759	.048
<u>Within</u>	<u>15713.737</u>	<u>111</u>	141.565	
Total	15720.496	112		NS
B. Teacher	<u>SS</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>
Between	65.426	1	65.426	1.266
<u>Within</u>	<u>7896.698</u>	<u>111</u>	71.141	
Total	796.124	112		NS
C. Vocational	<u>SS</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>
Between	175.151	1	175.151	1.266
<u>Within</u>	<u>15354.282</u>	<u>111</u>	138.327	
Total	15529.434	112		NS
D. Administrator	<u>SS</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>
Between	59.780	1	59.780	2.118
<u>Within</u>	<u>3105.327</u>	<u>110</u>	28.240	
Total	3165.107	111		NS

Note: N =112

Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2 stated that there will be no significant difference in the mean scores indicating perceived competence, as reflected by training, of parties involved in transition planning between rural and non-rural school districts. Analysis of variance was used to test the hypothesis of perceived competence between rural and non-rural school districts.

Descriptive data for the variables tested in the second ANOVA (Hypothesis 2) are displayed in Table 14.

Table 14

Descriptive Data: Independent (A) and Criterion (B) Variables

A. Independent Variables	<u>X</u>	<u>Mo</u>	<u>SD</u>
Position	2.526	2	1.176
District	1.684	2	.467
B. Criterion Variables	<u>X</u>	<u>Mo</u>	<u>SD</u>
Parent Competency Index	29.170	11	12.143
Teacher Competency Index	22.450	24	8.486
Vocational Competency Index	29.589	12	12.615
Administrator Competency Index	14.000	5	5.634

Note: N = 112

Table 15 displays the results of a 4 x 2 Analysis of Variance entering Position (Parent, Teacher, Vocational, Administration) compared with District (Rural, and Non-rural) with the Competency index, as reflected by training (Parent, Teacher, Vocational,

and Administration) as the criterion variable. The results were not significant ($p > .05$).

Based on the nonsignificant results from the Analysis of Variance on Hypothesis 2, the null hypothesis was accepted.

Table 15

Summary Table for ANOVA (A) Parent Competency Compared with District, (B)

Teacher Competency Compared with District, (C) Vocational Competency Compared
with District, and (D) Administrator Competency Compared with District

A. Parent	<u>SS</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>
Between	203.048	1	203.048	1.382
<u>Within</u>	<u>16165.380</u>	<u>110</u>	146.958	
Total	16368.429	111		NS
B. Teacher	<u>SS</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>
Between	154.061	1	154.061	2.162
<u>Within</u>	<u>7767.380</u>	<u>109</u>	71.261	
Total	7921.477	110		NS
C. Vocational	<u>SS</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>
Between	.587	1	.587	.004
<u>Within</u>	<u>17662.520</u>	<u>110</u>	160.568	
Total	17663.107	111		NS
D. Administrator	<u>SS</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>
Between	39.508	1	39.508	1.247
<u>Within</u>	<u>3452.492</u>	<u>109</u>	31.674	
Total	3492.000	110		NS

Note: N = 112

Hypothesis 3

Hypothesis 3 stated there will be no significant difference between parties' mean scores of perceived responsibilities between positions. Analysis of variance was used to test the hypothesis of perceived responsibilities among positions.

Table 16 displays the results of a 4 x 2 Analysis of Variance entering Position (Parent, Teacher, Vocational, and Administration) compared with District (Rural, and Non-rural) with the Responsibility Index (Parent, Teacher, Vocational, and Administration) as the criterion variable. The results were significant, $F(4,108) = 11.676$, $p = .01$, a Tukey Post Hoc analysis was conducted to confirm the significance at Parent Responsibility Index and between the Parent position and the remaining positions (Teacher, Vocational, Administrator). The remaining variables were nonsignificant in the post hoc analysis at ($p > .05$). Based on the significant results from the Analysis of Variance on Hypothesis 3, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Table 16

Summary Table for ANOVA (A) Parent Responsibility Compared with Position, (B)

Teacher Responsibility Compared with Position, (C) Vocational Responsibility Compared
with Position, and (D) Administrator Responsibility Compared with Position

A. Parent	<u>SS</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>
Between	4795.995	4	1186.499	11.676
Within	<u>10974.501</u>	<u>108</u>	101.616	
Total	15720.496	112		S
B. Teacher	<u>SS</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>
Between	440.953	4	110.238	1.583
Within	<u>7521.171</u>	<u>108</u>	69.640	
Total	7962.124	112		NS
C. Vocational	<u>SS</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>
Between	1109.370	4	277.342	2.077
Within	<u>14420.064</u>	<u>108</u>	133.519	
Total	15529.434	112		NS
D. Administrator	<u>SS</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>
Between	1109.370	4	277.342	2.077
Within	<u>13320.064</u>	<u>108</u>	133.519	
Total	15529.434	112		

Note: N = 112

Hypothesis 4

Hypothesis 4 stated that there will be no significant relationship between the parties' overall perceptions and their perceptions when faced with specific tasks. Pearson R Bivariate Correlation analysis was conducted to test the hypothesis for a relationship between overall perceptions and the perceptions indicated on specific tasks.

Table 17 displays the results of a Pearson R Bivariate Correlation Analysis entering the criterion variables of the Subjective Perception of Responsibility (SPOR) Score with the criterion variables of the Responsibility Index. The table also displays the results of the same Analysis entering the criterion variables of the Subjective Perception of Competency (SPOC) score with the criterion variables of the Competency Index. The results were significant, $r = -.608$, $p = .016$, $p < .05$. The significance was found at Administrator SPOC and Administrator Competence. Based upon the significant results from one test of hypothesis 4, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Summary

This study examined the differences in perceptions of the roles/responsibilities and levels of competency, as reflected by training, of the parties involved in the transition process and compare those perceptions between rural and non-rural communities. ANOVAs were used to test Hypotheses 1, 2, and 3 using two 4x2 analyses. A bivariate correlation was used to test Hypothesis 4.

The test of hypothesis 1 (Perceived responsibilities between rural and non-rural districts) resulted in no significant difference between the mean scores. The null hypothesis was accepted.

The test of hypothesis 2 (Perceived competencies between rural and non-rural districts) resulted in no significant difference between the mean scores. The null hypothesis was accepted.

The test of hypothesis 3 (Perceived responsibilities among Positions) resulted in significant differences between the Parent position and each of the other positions. The null hypothesis was rejected.

Of the two tests of hypothesis 4 (subjective perceptions and responsibility/competency indexes), the first, which used Subjective Perception of Responsibility (SPOR) scores and Perceived Responsibility Indexes as the criterion variables, was insignificant. The second analysis, which used Subjective Perception of Competency (SPOC) scores and Perceived Competency Indexes as criterion variables, identified a single significant correlation. Based upon significant findings, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Table 17

Summary Table for Pearson R Correlations: Perceived Responsibilities (A) and Perceived Competencies* (B)

A. Perceived Responsibility	Corr.	Sig.	<u>N</u>
Parent SPOR and Parent Responsibility	.153	.533	19
Teacher SPOR and Teacher Responsibility	.001	.996	45
Vocational SPOR and Vocational Responsibility	-.389	.137	16
Administrator SPOR and Administrator Responsibility	.016	.955	15
B. Perceived Competency	Corr.	Sig.	<u>N</u>
Parent SPOC and Parent Competency	-.328	.184	18
Teacher SPOC and Teacher Competency	-.022	.887	46
Vocational SPOC and Vocational Competency	.243	.364	16
Administrator SPOC and Administrator Competency	-.608	** .016	15

* - As reflected by training

** - Significant ($p < .05$)

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussion

There is an old adage that “nothing succeeds like success.” Success in employment for individuals with disabilities is closely related to transition training (Reiter & Palmizky, 1996; U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1983; Wagner & Blackorby, 1996). School-based transition services for students in special education require the participation of a diverse group of people in order to bring about a successful post-school adjustment. Mandates outline the services that must be provided in the transition process. However, these mandates do not define the services that should be provided or who should provide them. This omission has resulted in many different interpretations and confusion in the assignment of tasks. This confusion greatly diminishes training and planning efforts. In response to these omissions, the present study investigated the differences in perceptions of the responsibilities and levels of competency as reflected in training for those parties concerned in the transition process, and provided a comparison of those perceptions between rural and non-rural communities.

A total of 112 subjects participated in this study. The perceptions of the parents and education professionals were measured on an instrument designed to assess roles and competencies as reflected by training.

Perception of Responsibilities as reported by Parents and Professionals in Rural and Non-Rural Districts

The first research question (Hypothesis 1) was to determine if there was a difference between the perceptions of the parents and professionals in rural and non-rural school districts as to their responsibilities under the transition process. Researchers have reported great variation at the local level related to the duties and perceptions that encompass the transition process (West, Taymans, Corbey, & Dodge, 1994). Further, researchers have observed that smaller Local Education Agencies (LEAs) were less likely to provide vocational education and that most comprehensive programs were less likely to be in a rural setting (Fairweather, 1989). Therefore, this study attempted to use perceived responsibilities of various parties involved in the transition process and compare rural and non-rural settings. The use of the same instrument for both rural and non-rural participants was intended to confirm or rebut the prior research results. The investigation and analysis of Research Question 1 revealed that role confusion existed, thus hindering effective transition planning and training. However, there were no significant differences to indicate that perceptions of transition responsibilities differed between rural and non-rural districts.

Table 18

Comparison of Subjective Competency Responses with Grand Means of CompetencyIndex by Position

Position	Competency		Grand Mean of Competency Index			
	Yes	No	Low	Low Average	High Average	High
Parents	4	15	2	6	6	5
Teachers	12	34	8	18	17	6
Vocational	5	11	5	7	3	4
Admin.	9	6	2	1	8	6
Total	30	66	17	32	34	21

Note: $N = 96$ Sample profile

The 112 participants completed a survey describing their demographic characteristics, perceptions of their responsibilities, and perceptions of their competence for those responsibilities. In order to determine common interactions between select variables and characteristics, the data were crosstabulated in a series of two-way tables. The data revealed several observations of interest.

Observations were made regarding the age of the participants by position. The results indicated that approximately 14.6% of the professionals were under the age of 30. If one were to make the assumption that these professionals graduated at an average age of 22, then only 14.6% were in a preservice program after the passage of the Individuals

with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 1990). This could be a possible insight as to why so few professionals report having received transition training (Spruill & Cohen, 1991).

Observations regarding the gender and ethnicity of the professionals were also of interest. According to the demographic reports, the professionals were 73% female and 65% were of Anglo-American ethnicity. The majority of special education students are male. The Region 2 area is predominately Hispanic. These figures raise questions for possible future study as to the compatibility of transition training in cross cultural situations.

Perceptions of Competency reflected by training as reported by Parents and Professionals

The second research question (Hypothesis 2) attempted to determine if there was a difference between the perceptions of the parents and professionals in rural and non-rural school districts as to their competencies as reflected by training under the transition process. Researchers have observed transition training to be lacking in many cases for both parents and professionals (Bull, Montgomery, & Beard, 1994; Gallivan & Fenlon, 1991; Schriener, Bellini, & Williams, 1995; Spruill & Cohen, 1991). This became evident in the acceptance of null Hypothesis 2. While these observations were confirmed, the problem of inadequate training appears to be a universal one.

Perceived Responsibilities of Parents and Professionals

The third research question (Hypothesis 3) was to determine if there was a significant difference between parties' perceived responsibilities among positions. The

research literature indicated differing opinions among transition team members as to their specific responsibilities (Campbell & Essex, 1994; Roessler, 1996) indicated role determination as one of the primary barriers facing teams. Baer, Simmons, Flexer, and Izzo (1993) delineated the responsibilities attributable to each party in the transition process. It was this model that became the basis for the survey used in this study. The examination of these roles indicated a significant difference existed among the parties as to their perceptions of the parents' responsibility in the transition process. This difference suggested that parents were highly aware of their responsibilities, however the education professionals had a different viewpoint of what those parents' responsibilities were.

Relationship of Global Perceptions with Perceptions when Faced with Specific Tasks

The fourth research question (Hypothesis 4) examined the relationship between answers to subjective questions pertaining to parties' responsibilities and competencies and the responses given to the survey tasks. The instrument included two subjective questions which queried the respondents on their responsibilities in the transition planning process and their opinion as to whether they felt adequately trained to fulfill those responsibilities. The first test entered the SPOR scores with the criterion variables of the Responsibility Index. The analysis revealed no significant relationship. The second analysis which compared the SPOC scores with the criterion variables of the competency index, resulted in a significant difference. This significance was found between Administrator SPOC and Administrator Competence. While a relationship was established, further

analysis was required to determine the value of such a relationship. Table 18 displays the individual responses comparing the Subjective and Task referenced sections of the instrument by position. Table 16 presents the relationship for the administrator to be a inverse one, that is, there was disagreement between the subjective responses and the grand means of the competency index. This disagreement indicated that only 60% felt they were competent subjectively while 82% responded high average to high range on the competency index. Thus, most administrators indicated they were competent when answering the subjective question while the competency index indicated they were more highly qualified than their original perception. Finally, it should be noted that even though there was no significant difference between rural and non-rural in perceived competencies as reflected by training. The perceived shortcomings become apparent when analyzing responses (see Table 18).

Conclusions

This study attained three specific goals. First, it broadened the research base of special education as associated with perceptions of parents and professionals in the transition process. Second, it compared those perceptions between rural and non-rural communities. Third, it provided an awareness for both parents and professionals of the tasks inherent in the transition process, thus fostering dialogue to enhance collaborative efforts in planning, training, and implementation. Data were collected on 112 parents and

professionals using an instrument designed to measure the participants' perceptions as to their responsibilities in the transition process and their perceptions of their competency to fulfill those responsibilities.

The first research question (Hypothesis 1) stated that there was no significant difference in the mean scores indicating perceived responsibilities of parties involved in transition planning between rural and non-rural school districts. A 4x2 Analysis of Variance was conducted to test the hypothesis of perceived responsibilities between rural and non-rural participants entering Position (Parent, Teacher, Vocational, and Administration) compared with District (Rural and Non-Rural) with the Responsibility index (Parent, Teacher, Vocational, and Administration) as the criterion variable. The results were not significant at ($p > .05$). Based on the nonsignificance, Hypothesis 1 was accepted. These results indicated that while different personnel may be performing different tasks in rural and non-rural school districts, the structure of transition planning and training is basically the same.

The second research question (Hypothesis 2) stated there would be no significant difference in the mean scores indicating perceived competence, as reflected by training, of parties involved in transition planning between rural and non-rural school districts. A 4x2 Analysis of Variance was conducted entering Position (Parent, Teacher, Vocational, and Administration) compared with District (Rural and Non-rural) with the Competency Index (Parent, Teacher, Vocational, and Administration) as the criterion variable. The analysis

was not significant. Based on the nonsignificant results, the null Hypothesis 2 was accepted. These results indicated that rural and non-rural personnel were provided approximately the same levels of training. This is surprising, since the literature portrays non-rural districts as providing more training in transition related issues than rural districts.

The third research question (Hypothesis 3) stated there was no significant difference between parties' mean score of perceived responsibilities between positions. A 4x2 Analysis of Variance entering Position (Parent, Teacher, Vocational, and Administration) compared with District (Rural and Non-Rural) with the Responsibility Index (Parent, Teacher, Vocational, and Administration) as the criterion variable. The analysis was significant. These results suggested that professionals had differing opinions of parents' responsibilities than parents. The remaining variables were nonsignificant.

The fourth research question (Hypothesis 4) stated there would be no relationship between the parties' overall perceptions and their perceptions when faced with specific tasks. The first test of the hypothesis was by Pearson 'R' Bivariate Correlation Analysis and was nonsignificant. The second test of the hypothesis was a Pearson 'R' Bivariate Correlation Analysis and was significant with a correlation of $-.608$. The significance was found at Administrator SPOC and Administrator Competence. These results indicated that the administrators, when faced with specific tasks on the instrument, were found to be more competent than they opined on the general question.

Multivariate analysis revealed a significant difference among the various parties as to the perceived responsibility of the parent in transition planning and training. These results indicated the parents were most aware of their responsibilities in the transition process, but the other parties were unsure as to the extent of the parent's responsibilities. Bivariate analysis revealed a relationship between the administrator's perceived competence in the transition process overall and their perceptions of competence as portrayed by the tasks in the instrument. Finally, the results indicated that only administrators report that they are adequately trained to fulfill their role in the transition process. The other parties feel that increased training is necessary before they will reach a level where they are comfortable with the ability to fulfill their responsibilities to the secondary student in need of the services provided through the transition process.

Implications for Practice

Based on the findings of significant differences between parties perceptions of responsibility and significant relationships surrounding perceived competence as reflected by training, the following implications are relevant:

1. This study confirmed there is variation in transition services delivered at the local level as reported by West, Taymans, Corbey, and Dodge, 1994. Anderson and Asselin (1996) reported that only 61% of transition teams used predetermined procedures. This research suggests professionals are often doing more or less than what they are

responsible for, thus diminishing the quality of the work. Therefore, publication of a transition guide, based on this and other similar studies, outlining the responsibilities of each member of the transition planning team would have a great impact on the effectiveness of the process and the individuals it serves.

2. A greater awareness on the part of professionals and legislators of the transition process would greatly enhance the process at the local level. One way to increase that awareness would be for the state education agency to apply for a State Improvement Grant from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) to provide incentives for school districts to develop innovative transition program. For example, the Oklahoma GAINS project could serve as a model and use data from this study and others to support the application.

3. The results of this study and others (Alper, 1990; Reiter & Palnizky, 1996; Grigal, Test, Beattie, & Wood, 1997) indicate that parent support is high and that the parent is the most consistent member of the transition planning team. Unfortunately, there are many students, whose parents do not get involved in their children's transition planning for a multitude of reasons. McNair and Rusch (1991) called for increased parent training as method of enhancing the transition experience for students. While this makes sense, one problem which remains is that we have to motivate the seemingly uninterested parent to participate in the training. This effort could be aided by an outreach program similar to "Child-Find." This "Parent-find" program would provide everything needed to

bring the parent to transition training by using the more involved parents as mentors and teachers. This effort could also be supported by OSERS Parent Outreach grant. This grant could offer stipends to mentors and to parents who would complete the training in addition to defraying costs of transportation, child-care, and training materials.

4. There is a great need for increased training of professionals through pre-service transition courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels and a need for increased in-service training. This is especially true for those in the vocational fields who may not have received pre-service special education training. This recommendation was indicated by the results of this study and supported in the literature (Alper, 1990; Spruill & Cohen, 1991; Schriener, Bellini, & Williams, 1995; Lehman & Roberto, 1996).

Recommendations for Future Research

1. The value of any research project lies in its ability to be replicated. There is a need for future studies examining the relationships described in this study. One method of widening the scope and to increase participation would be to compartmentalize the study according to the involved parties and design designated "role-unique" surveys so that participants are only answering questions which would pertain to them, thus making the survey shorter and less cumbersome to complete. This would result in greater participants and decrease the possibility of Type I error.

2. Additional studies including roles not covered by the Baer model (1993) are encouraged. It would be particularly noteworthy to include students, social service professionals, related service providers and paraprofessionals to examine their perceptions as to their responsibilities and competencies in the transition planning process.

3. The effect of training on parents and professionals could be documented in an experimental study of perceptions before and after training. The need for this training could be supported by replication of this study for parents comparing the perceptions of parents with children who have moderate to severe disabilities to parents with children who have mild disabilities.

4. Employment success has been linked to Vocational Education participation (Wagner & Blackorby, 1996). Future studies on the prevalence of pre-service and in-service training to vocational personnel would be greatly enhanced if they include a transition component.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Transition Inventory of Perceived Roles and Competencies

Transition Inventory of Perceived Roles and Competencies

Instructions: Please answer the entire survey using the beginning of the sentence from the left side first and then answer the entire survey using the beginning of the sentence from the right side..

I am primarily responsible for (circle one only)	1=Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree 3= No opinion or not sure, 4= Agree 5= Strongly Agree	I am adequately trained for (circle one only)
1 2 3 4 5	1.) providing information to the transition team about family expectations for the student after leaving high school.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	2.) making and/or following up on referrals made to community services or programs	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	3.) assisting the student in working with community services for adults with disabilities	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	4.) assisting the student in obtaining documents such as social security numbers, identification cards, or transportation passes	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	5.) providing opportunities for the student to develop work, independent living and leisure skills at home.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	6.) supporting transportation training	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	7.) planning for long-term financial support for the student through Supplemental Security Income and/or wills or trust funds.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	8.) informing the transition team of any changes at home which would affect the student's transition plan.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	9.) monitoring the student's transition plan.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	10.) assisting, during the year before graduation, in identifying the person who will coordinate the student's services he/she will need as an adult.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	11.) contributing information about the student's preferences about jobs, living arrangements and leisure activities.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	12.) collaborating with parents on making decisions about his/her post-secondary services and job or residential	1 2 3 4 5

Transition Inventory of Perceived Roles and Competencies

Instructions: Please answer the entire survey using the beginning of the sentence from the left side first and then answer the entire survey using the beginning of the sentence from the right side..

**I am primarily
responsible for**
(circle one only)

**1=Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree
3= No opinion or not sure, 4= Agree
5= Strongly Agree**

**I am adequately
trained for**
(circle one only)

placements.

- | | | |
|-----------|--|-----------|
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 13.) coordinating the development of individual transition plans for the students for whom they write IEPs. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 14.) determining the appropriate school or community agency personnel to be included on a student's transition team. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 15.) assisting parents in monitoring the completion of transition plan activities specified by their son's/daughter's ITPs. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 16.) providing referral information to parent's regarding school and community services related to employment, long-term residential, community participation, long-range financial planning and transportation. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 17.) collecting and monitoring information about student progress toward ITP goals. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 18.) conducting the review of students' ITPs and assisting in their revision according to students' progress and changing needs. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 19.) providing educational experiences which will teach that can be used in work, living, and leisure activities outside of school. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 20.) providing information to a student's transition team about vocational services provided by the school district. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 21.) developing job placements for special education students | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 22.) assisting students in job placement activities such as interviews, employer incentive programs, etc. | 1 2 3 4 5 |

Transition Inventory of Perceived Roles and Competencies

Instructions: Please answer the entire survey using the beginning of the sentence from the left side first and then answer the entire survey using the beginning of the sentence from the right side..

I am primarily responsible for (circle one only)	1=Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree 3= No opinion or not sure, 4= Agree 5= Strongly Agree	I am adequately trained for (circle one only)
1 2 3 4 5	23.) providing or arranging for provision of job coaches for on the job training.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	24.) providing travel training to students place on jobs.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	25.) assisting in the arrangement of placement/follow along services to students who are graduating from high school with community agencies.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	26.) providing information to transition team/or the team team coordinator regarding student employment status and training progress for students.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	27.) providing information to a student's transition team about work study services provided by the school district.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	28.) providing periodic follow-up of placed students and their employers to determine student progress	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	29.) assisting the transition team in identifying student career interests and preferences.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	30.)assisting the transition team in identifying vocational training and employment options for the student.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	31.) assisting the transition team in evaluating the student's preparation for employment, postsecondary education, independent living and community participation.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	32.) assisting the student through individual or group sessions in career development, employment preparation, and achieving independence and integration.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	33.) conducting formal assessments of students' vocational and occupational interests and abilities.	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	34.) providing the transition team with information	1 2 3 4 5

Transition Inventory of Perceived Roles and Competencies

Instructions: Please answer the entire survey using the beginning of the sentence from the left side first and then answer the entire survey using the beginning of the sentence from the right side..

**I am primarily
responsible for**
(circle one only)

**1=Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree
3= No opinion or not sure, 4= Agree
5= Strongly Agree**

**I am adequately
trained for**
(circle one only)

regarding various vocational training or employment
placement options for evaluated students.

1 2 3 4 5

35.) providing suggestions for modifying work
environments or vocational training programs for students
with disabilities as needed.

1 2 3 4 5

1 2 3 4 5

36.) providing information to a student's transition team
about vocational education programs and vocational support
services available in the school district.

1 2 3 4 5

1 2 3 4 5

37.) assisting students enrolled in special education
programs to enroll in vocational education programs
provided in the school district.

1 2 3 4 5

1 2 3 4 5

38.) assisting vocational educators in modifying vocational
education programs for special education students.

1 2 3 4 5

1 2 3 4 5

39.) determining the need for and coordinating the
provision of tutoring of special education students enrolled in
vocational education.

1 2 3 4 5

1 2 3 4 5

40.) following up on the employment status of special
education students completing vocational education
programs.

1 2 3 4 5

Appendix B

Human Subjects Review Committee Letter

TEXAS WOMAN'S
UNIVERSITY
DENTON/DALLAS/HOUSTON

HUMAN SUBJECTS
REVIEW COMMITTEE
P.O. Box 425619
Denton, TX 76204-5619
Phone: 940/898-3377
Fax: 940/898-3416

April 20, 1998

Mr. Joseph Nolan
4443 Ocean Dr. Apt. 231
Corpus Christi, TX 78412

Dear Mr. Nolan:

Your study entitled "A Comparison of Perceived Roles and Competencies of Members of the Transition Planning Team" has been reviewed by a committee of the Human Subjects Review Committee and appears to meet our requirements in regard to protection of individuals' rights.

Be reminded that both the University and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) regulations typically require that agency approval letters and signatures indicating informed consent be obtained from all human subjects in your study. **These consent forms and agency approval letters are to be filed with the Human Subjects Review Committee at the completion of the study. However, because you do not utilize a signed consent form for your study, the filing of signatures of subjects with the Human Subjects Review Committee is not required.**

Your study was determined to be exempt from further TWU HSRC review. However, another review by the Committee is required if your project changes. If you have any questions, please feel free to call the Human Subjects Review Committee at the phone number listed above.

Sincerely,



Chair
Human Subjects Review Committee

cc. Graduate School
Dr. Lloyd Kinnison, Department of Early Childhood & Special Education



Appendix C

Permission Letter from Region 2 Education Service Center



Ernest Zamora, Ph.D
Executive Director

EDUCATION SERVICE CENTER
209 NORTH WATER
CORPUS CHRISTI, TX 78401-2599

Phone: (512) 883-9288
Fax: (512) 883-3442

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Patricia Waltek

August 11, 1998

Joe Nolan, M. Ed.
Assistant Professor of Special Education
School of Education
Southwestern Oklahoma State University
100 Campus Dr.
Weatherford, OK 73096

Dear Joe:

I am writing this letter in support of the Research Project, which will be addressing issues regarding transition services for students with disabilities in both urban and rural areas within the Region 2 area. It is our understanding that you will be mailing surveys to the districts in Region 2 as a major part of this project.

As we have discussed, Region 2 has been looking at the difference aspects of the transition process and in collaboration with your project will be able to identify more specific areas of concerns within the identified areas.

This will definitely assist in planning for future workshops in order to provide better training to those individuals (staff, parents, students) dealing with the many aspects of the transition process. This will in turn provide more equitable transition services for any student within Region 2.

Looking forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Twinkle Morgan
Consultant for Region 2