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**A CASE STUDY OF COMMUNICATION AND ENACTMENT
OF TRANSITION SERVICES AMONG KEY STAKEHOLDERS
IN THE TRANSITION PROCESS FOR HIGH SCHOOL
STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES**

presented by

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has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for the

Ph. D. degree in CEPSE

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**A CASE STUDY OF COMMUNICATION AND ENACTMENT OF TRANSITION
SERVICES AMONG KEY STAKEHOLDERS IN THE TRANSITION PROCESS
FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES**

VOLUME I

By

Joyce Burgener

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ABSTRACT

A CASE STUDY OF THE COMMUNICATION AND ENACTMENT OF TRANSITION SERVICES AMONG KEY STAKEHOLDERS IN THE TRANSITION PROCESS FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

By

Joyce Burgener

The purpose of this case study was to investigate how the communication and enactment of transition services took place among critical stakeholders for students in high school with learning disabilities. Sociocultural theory provided the framework for the study.

Data were collected using both qualitative and quantitative methods. The data sources consisted of observations and field notes, structured and unstructured interviews, survey, communication logs, and an extensive review of students' records. The data were analyzed using frequencies and means for quantitative data. For qualitative data, transcripts were read and reread, coded, and themes and patterns identified. Triangulation was achieved through the use of multiple data sources.

The study found that transition services were enacted within the transition class along four themes that are embedded in sociocultural theory: distributed learning in a community of practice; transfer of power from the teacher to the student; problem solving as a way of knowing; and creating places and spaces for giving students voice and experience.

The study also found that transition services enacted in the classroom were impacted by systems outside the classroom. This systemic approach to transition

involved policy at multiple levels, critical stakeholders, and technology that supported a coordinated set of activities.

This study has implications for research, policy, teacher preparation, and practice. It will add to the body of transition literature and contribute to evidence-based research on what constitutes an exemplary transition program in high school for students with learning disabilities.

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It is difficult to express the great appreciation I have for all the individuals that provided continued support during my time at Michigan State University and especially during the time spent on my dissertation. I have been fortunate to have had dedicated faculty members working with me and apprenticing the research and writing that goes with dissertation work. I would specifically like to recognize and thank my advisor, Troy Mariage, who gave freely of his time and expertise to further my endeavors. I thank him for his understanding and patience, for his valuable and concise feedback, for his probing and insightful questions, and our quality time working together.

I would also like to recognize and thank my dissertation committee members Cindy Okolo, Carol Sue Englert, and Susan Peters. It was their continued support and gentle pushing that improved the work and raised my level of competence. This dissertation is a task that was not accomplished alone or in isolation. It was accomplished with the combined effort of many. It is with this thought in mind that I extend grateful thanks to my dedicated advisor and committee members.

Finally, I would like to extend my eternal appreciation to my family and especially my husband Frank. Without their love, encouragement, and constant support this would not have been possible.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This was a case study of the communication and enactment of transition services among key stakeholders in the transition process for high school students with learning disabilities. Sociocultural theory provided the lens through which this study was conducted and served as the theoretical framework. An exemplary high school transition program that included a coordinated set of activities in transition was identified for the purpose of this study using multiple criteria

This case study examined the enactment of transition and the social construction of transition knowledge by the special education teacher and students in the focal classroom. The communication among critical stakeholders was examined both within and outside the classroom setting. This research study emerged from the questions generated by two previous studies by the researcher of transition stakeholders (transition coordinators and secondary special education teachers). Second, there is a call for more research that examines the communication that takes place outside the IEP/ITP in the transition literature (Martin, 2005).

This chapter includes the following sections: (1) the historical perspective of the transition process and outcomes for youth with disabilities; (2) the statement of the research problem; (3) the purpose of the research; and (4) the research questions. Next the introduction will define and discuss specific terms used through out the study. Finally, the significance of the study will be discussed and the researcher's perspective stated.

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Historical Perspective

Transition from high school to post secondary settings is an important process for all youth. However, it is especially important and many times more difficult for youth with disabilities transitioning from high school to employment or postsecondary education. Historically, students with disabilities have had bleak outcomes in postsecondary settings compared to their non-disabled peers (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996). The federal government has recognized the importance of transition processes and services. The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) of 1990, 1997, and IDEA 2004 define transition services as “a coordinated set of activities for a student with disabilities.” Transition was further defined and discussed in the President’s Commission on Excellence in Special Education and the re-authorizations of IDEA. Specific domains of transition were identified in IDEA and transition literature including: education, employment, independent living, community participation, and leisure activities.

The literature suggests that communication is a key component of transition programming and that there are multiple key stakeholders included (IDEA, 2004; Kohler, 1996; Brolin & Loyd, 2004). These stakeholders include: the student, the parent(s)/guardian(s), the special education teacher, general education teacher, school representative, and other appropriate individuals that may contribute to the student’s transition plans. Transition is a complex and complicated process that involves many stakeholders and multiple levels of involvement. One of the key elements in the transition process is communication. Ultimately, it is through communication that youth with disabilities will experience a planned appropriate, and unduplicated set of services (Brolin & Loyd, 2004).

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Extensive longitudinal research has been conducted on postsecondary outcomes for students with disabilities (NLTS, 1997; NLTS2, 2004). This study attempts to build on the transition literature by studying, in depth what works in an exemplary transition program in one high school through a sociocultural theory lens.

Statement of the Research Problem

Despite the continuing studies, legislation, and focus on the outcomes for youth with disabilities, the research suggests that outcomes continue to be bleak (NLTS2, 2004). There is a need to continue to interrogate and deepen our understanding of the transition process and how it impacts student outcomes. It is through the study of communication among key stakeholders and the enactment of transition in an exemplary transition program that the field might gain an understanding of what constitutes best practices in transition. This study will provide insight into the communication process and the enactment of transition services for secondary students with learning disabilities in their fourth or senior year of high school.

Purpose of the Research

The purpose for the study was to explore the communication that takes place among critical stakeholders in the transition process and the enactment of transition for students with learning disabilities who were in an exemplary high school transition program. The goal of the study was to deepen the understanding and to extend the knowledge base in the field of transition by studying the communication and enactment of transition services among key stakeholders to improve the postsecondary outcomes of youth with disabilities.

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The rationale of the study was four pronged. First, two previous studies suggested a disconnect in the process of providing transition services for students with disabilities (Burgener, 2003, 2004). Second, transition services are defined as “a coordinated set of activities.” There is a need to look in depth at the communication that takes place in the context of the classroom and among specific stakeholders that facilitates this set of activities. Third, there is a need to know how transition goals for students with learning disabilities in high school are enacted. Finally, there is a suggested need in the literature for research that addresses the communication that occurs outside the IEP/ITP.

Research in transition has historically been “a theoretical.” The use of a learning theory, sociocultural theory in this case, may provide a basis in the future for evidence-based data that documents best practices in transition.

Research Questions

This case study was designed with four original research questions driving the study. However, as data collection began it became evident that the following research question was primary to the study and the other three were subsumed in this question. “How are transition services communicated and enacted within the transition related classroom setting among key stakeholders and impacted by the systems outside the classroom for secondary students with learning disabilities in an exemplary program? The purpose of this question was to guide the study of how transition was socially constructed in the context of the transition classroom, as mediated by the teacher or other knowledgeable others. This question shed light on how communication served to facilitate the construction of what counted as transition for secondary students with learning disabilities. This question along with the interviews of the students and other

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study participants highlighted any student's participation in this construction of transition.

The three other questions that became sub questions to the primary question will be discussed. The first of these questions was: "How are transition services and best practices, identified in the research literature, communicated to key stakeholders in the transition process for youth in high school?" This question sought to achieve an understanding of how best practices in the domain of transition are communicated to and among the students, parents, general education teacher and the special education teacher. Best practices, as identified in the literature include: self-determination and self-advocacy training (Field & Hoffman, 1998); the inclusion of vocational classes as a part of students' high school studies ((Haszsi, Gordon, & Roe, 1085; Shapiro & Lentz, 1991; Evers, 1996; Harvey, 2005); job experiences during high school, especially during the junior or senior year (Evers, 1996); student participation in high school extra curricular activities (Malian & Love, 1998; NLTS, 1993); the development of problem solving skills (Field & Hoffman, 1998); active student participation in the development of transition goals and the achievement of those goals and the students' active participation in their IEP/ITP meetings (Blalock et al., 2003; Williams & O'Leary, 2001; Martin, 2004,.2005).

The second question that was subsumed in the primary questions was: "Is there a difference in the frequency and content/quality of communication among key stakeholders?" The content/quality of the communication relates to the domains and best practices in transition literature. This question explored through the use of communication logs and interviews how often students, parents, general education

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teachers, and special education teachers talked about transition issues between and among themselves. This question may reveal other topics related to transition issues that may be unexpected or as yet undocumented in the literature.

The final research question that became included in the focal questions was:

“How is technology used in the transition process and what role does technology play in facilitating communication among key stakeholders in the transition process?”

Technology and the consideration of assistive technology for students with disabilities is mandated and may play an important role in the transition process. The intent of the question is two fold. First, is technology used in facilitating communication in the transition process: If technology is used what technology is used and does this vary depending on the stakeholder involved in the process? Second, the question was designed to explore what types of technology are used, how they are used, and by whom to construct transition in the contest of the classroom.

Definition of Terms

In this study there were a number of specific terms that were used though out the study that needed to be operationally defined (See Glossary of Terms in Appendix A).

Significance

There is little known about how communication takes place in the facilitation of special education transition services. The literature has documented taxonomies of transition (Kohler, 1996) and transition models (Will, 1984; Halpern, 1985; Kohler, 1996), and numerous studies have been conducted on the outcomes of youth with disabilities (NLTS; NLTS2). This literature also documents “best practices” for transition. However, there is a need to gain a deeper understanding of what counts as

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best practices and how these are enacted. There is little research on the communication that occurs in the transition process. Some studies have located the Individual Education Program meeting as the context for studying communication in the process (Martin, 2004, 2005). Researchers have acknowledged that little is known about the communication that takes place outside the IEP meeting to prepare students to become self-determined and to advocate for themselves (Martin; Field & Hoffman, 1998). It has been suggested that this is an area in need of study (Martin).

More specifically, there have been few, if any, case studies of enactment that have examined enactment as occurring situationally or on a moment-to-moment basis between teachers and students, and though a careful examination of the various sociocultural influences that impact any institutional setting.

Researcher's Perspective

I am acutely aware of the limited places and spaces secondary special education teachers have for the delivery of transition services for youth in high school due to a number of factors. These teachers are faced with numerous responsibilities in the area of transition for their students. Transition services are often added on to an already full time teaching load, the copious amounts of paper work required for special education and the networking and communication with general education teachers and the others directly involved in the youth's education.

My perspective is that of a teacher. My initial training was in elementary education. I taught for several years in elementary general education setting, specifically first grade and kindergarten. I became interested in special education and taught an early elementary special education class. I also have taught in the high school setting and

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continued to work with students in special education. For the most part, I worked with students with learning disabilities, emotional impairments, and traumatic brain injury, and students with other health impairments. During my high school teaching experiences I was surprised by the lack of direction of secondary special education for this population of students. For those who had a goal that went beyond the current day, it was graduation from high school. Typically little thought was given to what they would do after graduation. It was at this point in time that I became aware of the critical need for transition services for high school youth

I believe that all students can be successful. I believe that all students should have dreams of what the future will look like and develop goals that will move them toward that future. I am biased, because I believe there is a critical need for communication, coordination, and collaboration to take place in the transition process to facilitate positive outcomes for all youth but especially youth with disabilities. One of the goals for this study is to ultimately improve postsecondary outcomes for students by studying the communication and enactment of transition services and what works in an exemplary transition program.

Overview of the Study

This was is a case study of the communication and enactment of transition services among key stakeholders in the transition process for high school students with learning disabilities and how systems outside the classroom impacted the enactment of transition services. The study was designed to explore the communication that occurred during the transition process for this population and the enactment of transition in the classroom setting, but quickly spilled beyond the classroom to include other key factors

that impacted the local enactment. The study used both qualitative and quantitative methods. The procedures included classroom observations and field notes, a review of student records, stakeholder interviews and surveys, and the use of communication logs. The study took place during the months of September, October, November, December, and January 2006.

The study was situated in one special education teacher's English/transition class for seniors in special education. This class would be considered a hybrid class in which the transition services and curriculum were deeply embedded in the every day class, while English content was addressed. Transition services and curriculum were in reality not limited to what took place in the English/transition classroom, but included what occurred in vocational classes, work experiences, other classes, and the home and community environment. For the purposes of this study, however, transition services and curriculum were documented primarily through observation and field notes from the focal class and a review of students' records, interviews with the students, teachers, guidance counselor, and parent(s)/guardian(s). Again for the purpose of this study the enactment of transition in the classroom setting was the focus and students were not observed in other classes or during work experiences.

The class observed was one for which students received an English credit toward graduation and students were required to read a book during the course. Although the class covered both English and transition topics there was no formal written curriculum for the course. The only apparent requirement related to English content was the book, Call of the Wild, by Jack London, which was the chosen book for the semester. Individual students' IEP goals related to reading and writing were covered during class.

Curriculum is a defined course of study (Browder, 2001). It provides a blueprint for instruction and learning. However, in special education there is rarely an established curriculum that meets the needs of all students and ensures instruction that will achieve the desired life outcomes for individual students (Browder, 2001). Transition curriculum for the course was based on the individual student's transition plan and their Educational Development Plan and what was considered best practices in transition as suggested in the transition literature as practices that will improve student postsecondary outcomes. These practices included: (1) taking a vocational class during the student's junior or senior year of high school; (2) participating in a work experience during the student's junior or senior year of high school; (3) learning and practicing problem solving skill; (4) learning and practicing self-determination and self-advocacy skills; (5) learning basic academic skill; (6) having agency connections; and (7) completing transition goals.

Chapter two is a comprehensive literature review that includes: (1) an historical perspective of student outcomes; (2) the legislative framework for transition; (3) models and communication in the transition process; (4) technology and assistive technology in special education, (5) systemic factors that impact enactment, and (6) current studies that support this study as a needed area of study. Chapter three will discuss the methods used to conduct the study. Chapters four and five will present the findings and Chapter six will discuss the findings, limitations, and implications of the study.

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CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

This chapter provides a conceptual and theoretical framework for the study of communication and enactment of transition services among key stakeholders in the transition process for high school students with learning disabilities. This chapter reviews critical literatures that led to the examination of the communication and enactment in the transition process for students with disabilities. To provide a road map for the literature review, the sections of the chapter are outlined. The literature review begins by setting the framework for the study in sociocultural theory. As the study progressed it became evident that system factors and their influence on enactment had to be addressed. The third section includes an historical and legal overview. The fourth and fifth sections cover the current system in place for transition, and discuss postsecondary outcomes and factors that have an impact on these outcomes. The next section discusses the National longitudinal transition studies, the most comprehensive studies ever conducted on post secondary outcomes for students with disabilities. The seventh section covers self-determination, transition programming and models of transition. The eighth section addresses communication in the transition process. Technology is the focus of the next section, and the final section covers the need for further study.

Sociocultural Theory

The study of the communication and enactment of transition services among key stakeholders in the transition process for high school students with learning disabilities was positioned in a sociocultural theoretical framework. Within this framework the

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research focused on unpacking how social, cultural, and communicative factors influence the enactment of transition in the classroom for this population. In this study sociocultural theory initially related to how transition and transition services and learning were socially constructed in the context of a single transition classroom for students with learning disabilities in high school. However, as the study progressed it extended beyond the classroom setting. Enactment demands a theoretical orientation that could help explain the construction of meaning at multiple levels.

Sociocultural theory is a learning theory that looks at human development as taking place in a social context. Knowledge is socially constructed and reconstructed with the mediation of a knowledgeable other. Students work within their zones of proximal development. The knowledgeable other scaffolds work that students would not otherwise be able to do independently.

Vygotsky examined how mental functions such as memory, attention, perception, and thinking developed in two stages: elementary and higher mental functions (Wertsch, 1985). Memory, attention, perception, and thinking first appear in elementary form and then are changed into a higher form. Natural development produces functions in their elementary forms, whereas cultural development converts elementary into higher mental processes (Wertsch). These higher mental functions, that is the internalization of the processes of knowing and the capacity to share with other humans that understanding and experience (Vygotsky, 1978) are considered a direct product of the “sociocultural milieu” (Wertsch, p. 24). Vygotsky advocated four major criteria that separated the elementary and higher mental functions: (1) the change in control from environment to the individual, that is or voluntary or self-regulation; (2) the beginnings of conscious

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realization of mental processes; (3) the social origins and social nature of the higher mental function, and (4) the use of signs to mediate (Wertsch).

Vygotsky viewed higher mental functions as products of mediated activity (Vygotsky, 1988). According to Vygotsky, speech and communication were considered as tools for this mediated activity. He specifically addresses adolescence as the time when this process reaches its full development (Vygotsky):

“Thinking and behavior of adolescents are prompted not from within but from without, by the social milieu. The tasks with which society confronts an adolescent as he enters the cultural, professional, and civic world of adults undoubtedly become an important factor in the emergence of conceptual thinking. If the milieu presents no such tasks to the adolescent, makes no new demands on him, and does not stimulate his intellect by providing a sequence of new goals, his thinking fails to reach the highest stages, or reaches them with great delay” (Vygotsky, p. 108).

Community of practice. The idea that learning is social and involves participation in a community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 2006) stems from sociocultural theory. Sociocultural theory positions the social context as the place for the development of student competence (Englert & Mariage, 2003; Vygotsky, 1978). School and the classroom may serve as a community of practice as well as other locations, such as the home and community. Participants in a community of practice are involved in a set of relationships over time and are organized around a specific area of knowledge (Lave & Wenger, 1998). There is the concept that through this social interaction one is able to address more complex activities that one could do alone. Achievement is through cooperation, relationships and trust (Lave & Wenger, 2005). Communities of practice and situated learning are important concepts for the relationship that may develop between transition stakeholders involved in the transition process, specifically the special

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education teacher and the youth. The concept of social construction of knowledge related to the intent of the transition process: the preparation of youth to become adults that are employed, living independently, and participating the their community.

Another aspect of socialcultural theory is the idea of activity as an approach to learning. Students need opportunities to “participate in the way of knowing” specific content that is needed by the student (Englert & Mariage, 2003, pg. 451). It is through activities that are meaningful to the student and authentic that will facilitate student learning of higher order thinking and problem solving skills (Englert & Mariage, 2003)

Problem solving. Collaborative problem solving can optimize learning opportunities for students with disabilities (Englert & Mariage, 2003). Biemiller & Miechenbaum (1998), advocated that teachers need to create settings in which students are allocated leadership roles and have the opportunity to use self-regulatory metacognitive skills associated with skill performance (Biemiller & Miechenbaum in Englert & Mariage, 2003). It is through this process that students will learn problem solving skills.

Transfer of control. Socialcultural theory places the teacher or knowledgeable other in the role of apprenticing students in learning. Apprenticeship is the work of the knowledgeable other (expert) and the student (novice) side by side to accomplish a task. This task is one that the student could not complete independently. However, with the mediation of the knowledgeable other the task is accomplished. Students are allowed to work within their zone of proximal development (ZPD); the difference or distance between the level of performance at the independent level and the performance level achieved through collaborative effort. Scaffolding provides a means for achievement.

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Thinking aloud is another tool used by the knowledgeable other to “make visible their inner thoughts in a more conscious way” (Englert & Mariage, 1996 as found in Englert & Mariage, 2003, pg.451). It is through apprenticeship that the students increasingly take responsibility and are gradually able to work independently.

Transition for adolescents or youth with learning disabilities is constructed in the context of the transition classroom. The teacher and other students serve as the knowledgeable other in the process of the social construction of knowledge. The teacher used multiple scaffolds to mediate learning. A transfer of control from the knowledgeable other to the students is a goal of transition and therefore well situated in sociocultural theory. This transfer of control is imperative for youth in the transition process in which self-determination and advocacy is valued. This theory aligns the best practices of transition with a learning theory. It positions learning in the student’s zone of proximal development.

Historical and Legal Overview

The literature review’s second section discusses the historical perspective and legal overview of transition for youth with disabilities. The first part of this section follows studies on student postsecondary outcomes and the second part takes a journey through the history of legal policy that has influenced special education and more specifically transition from high school to post secondary settings for youth with disabilities.

Transition from high school to postsecondary life is a passage from a relatively nurturing, educating, and supervising environment to a life that is controlled by the decisions that the individual makes, for the most part on their own, and not directed by

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parents, teachers or mandated services. This transition of students from school to adulthood has emerged as one of the most important aspects of special education (Patton, Blalock, Dowdy, & Smith in Patton & Dunn, 1998). Three of the factors that compose the background and rationale for transition planning are: (1) data from studies on adult outcomes for individuals with disabilities; (2) the high dropout rates for this population, and (3) curricular issues (Patton & Dunn, 1998). Federal legislation has provided the vehicle for transition services to become a reality.

Transition, according to Webster's Dictionary, is defined as a passing from one condition, form, stage, activity, place, etc. to another (Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 1946). The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1990, 1997, and 2004 Amendments define transition services as "a coordinated set of activities for a student with a disability." This set of activities is now considered a results-oriented process (IDEA, 2004) and promotes movement from school to post-school activities. IDEA requires that the "coordinated set of activities" must be based on the individual students' preferences and interests. It includes post-secondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation (IDEA, 1997, Sec. 602(a)(20).

The legislation mandates that specific individuals participate in the transition planning, including the student and a representative of any agency that is likely to be responsible for providing or paying for transition services. If the student does not attend the meeting, steps must be taken to ensure the student's preferences, interests and needs are considered. If an agency representative does not attend the meeting other steps must

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be taken to obtain the participation of the agency in the planning of transition services.

The parent must be informed as to the purpose of the meeting and the agency or agencies invited (Kohler et al., 1998).

The Division on Career Development and Transition of the Council for Exceptional Children (DCDT-CEC) used the definition proposed by Halpern in 1994 and emphasized transition from school to adult life as a process. DCDT defined transition as follows:

“Transition refers to a change in status from behaving primarily as a student to assuming emergent adult roles in the community. These roles include employment, participating in post-secondary education, maintaining a home, becoming appropriately involved in the community, and experiencing satisfactory personal and social relationships. The process of enhancing transition involves the participation and coordination of school programs, adult agency services, and natural supports within the community. The foundations for transition should be laid during the elementary and middle school years, guided by the broad concept of career development. Transition planning should begin no later than age 14, and students should be encouraged, to the full extent of their capabilities, to assume a maximum amount of responsibility for such planning” (Sitlington, 2000, p. 20).

Thirteen guiding principles have been identified as necessary in the process of transition for students with disabilities, based on professional literature and practice (Patton & Dunn, 1998). These guiding principles are:

1. Transition efforts should start early
2. Planning must be comprehensive
3. Planning process must balance what is ideal with what is possible
4. Student's participation is essential
5. Family involvement is crucial
6. The transition planning process must be sensitive to diversity
7. Everyone uses supports and services
8. Community-based activities are important
9. Interagency commitment, cooperation and coordination must be improved
10. Timing is crucial if certain linkages are to be made and a seamless transition to life after high school is to be achieved.

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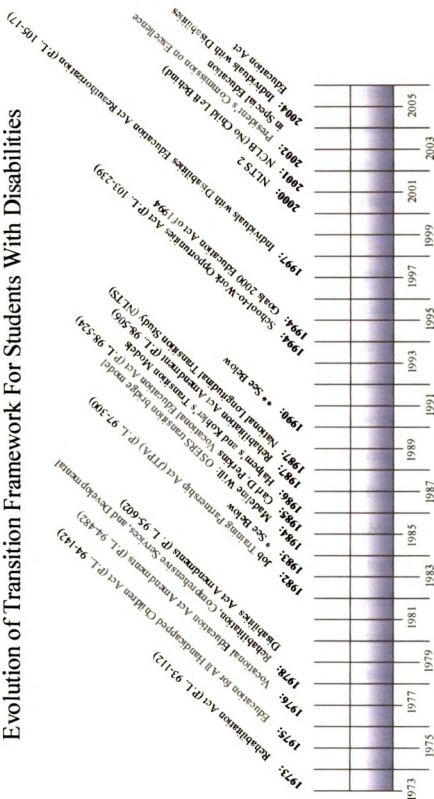
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11. The transition planning process should be considered a capacity-building activity
12. Ranking of transition needs must occur
13. Transition planning is beneficial to all students
(Patton & Dunn, 1998, p. 14-19)

Legalization has been one of the primary means for achieving transition services for individuals with disabilities in the United States. It is important to look at the timeline developed by Burgener for the evolution of transition events that have had a direct impact on transition for students with disabilities (see Figure 1 Evolution of Transition Framework For Students With Disabilities). This timeline positions the critical legislation (e.g., the Rehabilitation Act and amendments, the Education for All Handicapped Children, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and amendments, and the American Disabilities Act), milestones (e.g., models of transition and the President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education), and studies (e.g., the National Longitudinal Transition Studies 1 and 2) that have taken place over the past thirty-one years. It is important to view transition in special education from an historical perspective. This provides a sense of where individuals with disabilities were positioned historically, what has been done to address the improvement of conditions for this population, what has actually been accomplished over the years, and provides the foundation upon which to build future improvements in the postsecondary outcomes for youth with disabilities. It is through this historical perspective that we have a roadmap for the future that will guide future policy and research and will have a positive impact on the postsecondary outcomes for this population.

Evolution of Transition Framework For Students With Disabilities



- 1983: A Nation At Risk National Conference On Excellence in Education
- 1983: Education of Handicapped Act Amendments (P.L. 98-199)

- 1990: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (P.L. 101-476)
- 1990: American with Disabilities Act (ADA) (P.L. 101-336)
- 1990: Rehabilitation Act Reauthorization (P.L. 102-569)
- 1990: Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act (P.L. 101-392)

Figure 1 Evolution of Transition Framework For Students With Disabilities

An historical perspective is an important framework to use when looking at how individuals with disabilities have been treated and viewed in the past, how much progress has been made to date, and how to continue making progress toward positive postsecondary outcomes. Historically individuals with disabilities have been treated with varying degrees of cruelty and disrespect. They have been labeled, called idiots, imbeciles, and “bad babies.” Individuals with disabilities have been institutionalized, segregated, and sterilized (Patton & Dunn, 1998).

War has played a key role in our attitudes toward people with disabilities. With the advent of World War I we found the development and widespread use of IQ tests indicating a focus on the concept of normal and not normal. Through the use of IQ tests many individuals did not score what was considered “normal” (Sitlington, 2000). Wars, both World War I and World War II had an impact on how individuals with disabilities were treated medically and in the context of society. Individuals with disabilities were now more visible as veterans of the wars returned home. Progress was made in treating injuries and disabilities during this time. The Civil Rights Movement had an impact not only on the civil rights of African Americans, but also on the rights of persons with disabilities. The Normalization Concept established the goal for all people with disabilities to have the right to a normal existence (Sitlington, 2000; Wolfensberger, 1974). During this time, we found education movements emerging in the area of work-study and career education.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) of 2004 defined disability as “a natural part of the human experience and in no way diminishes

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the right of individuals to participate in or contribute to society. Improving educational results for children with disabilities is an essential element of our national policy of ensuring equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency for individuals with disabilities” (IDEA, 1990, 1997, and 2004).

Directly related to the efforts to improve self -determination and self-advocacy and to improve the postsecondary outcomes for this population, IDEA 2004 added (H) supporting the development and use of technology, including assistive technology devices and assistive technology services, to maximize accessibility for children with disabilities.

IDEA 2004 has kept the integrity of the transition services that were previously mandated for youth with disabilities and strengthens transition planning by requiring measurable postsecondary goals. However, one change was made that could have a negative impact on the outcomes for this population. Transition services are now mandated for youth with disabilities beginning at age 16. In IDEA 1997, transition services were to be addressed beginning at the age of 14. Shortly after IDEA 2004 was signed into law The Division on Career Development & Transition (DCDT) Council for Exceptional Children addressed this issue in their Comments on Regulations for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act. “Waiting until after a student has entered high school to begin the transition assessment process limits the opportunities for effective transition planning during the high school years, diminishing the likelihood of graduation, entering postsecondary education, and obtaining employment” (Division on Career Development & Transition, 2005, p. 5).

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Key elements of successful transitions include comprehensive planning, implementation of the plan, and communication and coordination (Patton & Dunn, 1998). Transition from school to adulthood is not an individual endeavor; it is a shared responsibility that includes the student, family, school, and adult services (Patton & Dunn, 1998; Luckasson et al, 1992). Coordinated, comprehensive, and collaborative transition services are linked to more positive post-secondary outcomes for students with disabilities (Kohler, 1998). In the next section, the literature review will explore the models of transition services that have evolved over the years and progressively have become more comprehensive and complex to address the communication that occurs in the transition process for youth with disabilities.

Current System

The federal government has recognized the importance of transition processes and services and has addressed those transition issues through legislation. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was passed in 1990 and mandated transition services for students with disabilities. The federal government has continued to address the issue of transition services for students with disabilities through IDEA amendments to further define and expand the mandate of transition services. The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) has awarded grants to every state to improve transition at the state level (Blalock, Kleinhammer-Tramill, Morningstar, & Wehmeyer, 2003).

Many states have a multi-level system in place for the implementation and evaluation of transition services. In Michigan, the levels consist of a state, regional, school district, and local school level (See Multi-level heuristic of transition system in Appendix B). The state mandates how transition services look at the regional and local

level. They provide monitoring standards and monitor compliance with the federal law and provide funds to the Intermediate School District (ISD) for transition purposes. The state also provides a model for the Individual Education Program and the Individual Transition Plan to be used at the local level when working with students in special education.

At the regional level an Intermediate School District (ISD) or a Regional Educational Service Agency (RESA) serves as a bridge between state policy and local implementation. Many ISD/RESAs cover a single county, but in more sparsely populated areas, such as the upper part of the lower peninsula and the upper peninsula the ISD/RESA may cover more than one county. This explains why there are 57 ISD/RESAs serving 83 counties in Michigan. The purpose of the regional level is to provide services and support for the local school districts and schools. The ISDs and RESAs each have at least one transition coordinator. Transition coordinators, who typically serve at a regional level, work collaboratively with secondary special education teachers in the local school districts within their jurisdiction to coordinate and/or provide services.

Secondary special education teachers fulfill many roles and have diversified responsibilities in the area of transition (Conderman & Katsiyannis, 2002). The literature documents that transition is one of the roles and responsibilities of secondary special education teachers. Asselin, Todd-Allen and deFur (1998) agreed that secondary special education teachers, in many settings, are taking on a new role, namely the role of a transition coordinator. Conderman and Katsiyannis raised the question as to whether secondary special educators are being adequately prepared for this responsibility. Lack of teacher preparation for transition has been implicated as one of the reasons why

students with disabilities do not achieve post-school outcomes comparable to their peers without disabilities (Razeghi, 1996; Kleinhammer-Tramill et al., 2003).

Given the multiple levels and multiple stakeholders (See Heuristic of Communication in Appendix C) involved in the transition process, models of transition have been developed over the years depicting the complexity of providing transition services to youth with disabilities.

Models of Transition

The representation of transition services through the use of models began with Madeline Will in 1984. She was the director of the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) and initiated the movement toward transition and the responsibility of multiple sources or stakeholders for students with special needs. Will was instrumental in defining transition as “an outcome oriented process” that involved multiple services that would lead to employment (Patton & Dunn, 1998). The OSERS’ bridge model of transition was developed by Will (Will, 1984) and portrayed the move from high school to employment with either no special services, time-limited services, or ongoing services (Patton & Dun, 1998).

In 1985, Halpern’s transition model included the concept of transition from high school via the same array of services. This model extended the postsecondary settings for this population to include a broader view of settings. Instead of transition from school to work it included social and interpersonal networks and residential environment as well. In the 1990’s, transition research continued and included the development of Kohler’s (1996) model for planning, organizing, and evaluating transition education services, and programs. This model or taxonomy for transition programming was more complex than

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the previous models. The Kohler taxonomy included: student-focused planning, student development, interagency collaboration, program structures, and family involvement (Kohler, 1996). One thread that is consistent throughout the Kohler taxonomy is the idea of communication, coordination, and collaboration. Student-focused planning includes student participation in IEP development and planning strategies (Kohler). Student development encompasses instruction (life skills, employment, career and vocational), support services, assessment, and structured work experience (Kohler). Family involvement includes family participation in all aspects of transition, family empowerment, and family training (Kohler).

Over the years transition services have been influenced and changed by many forces. So far the literature review has looked at the theory in which this study is positioned, the historical and legal perspectives, and the models of transition that have evolved over the years. The literature review will now explore some of the seminal research studies of students with disabilities and their postsecondary outcomes.

Postsecondary Outcomes

During the 1980s, seminal research studies of students with disabilities and their postsecondary outcomes were beginning to take place and later in the 1990s large-scale studies with rigorous methods, such as the studies by Sitlington and colleagues and the SRI National Longitudinal Transition Study and its numerous analysis reports by Wagner and colleagues were conducted (Sitlington, 2000; Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; Wagner, 1993). Among the classic articles deriving from this line of research that shaped the field of special education from 1960 to 1996 were four articles associated with transition in special education (McLeskey, 2003): Edgar, 1987; Hasazi, Gordon, and Roe, 1986;

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Madeline Will, 1986; and Blackorby and Wagner, 1996. These studies and articles revealed the postsecondary outcomes for youth with disabilities.

Historically, students with disabilities have exhibited bleak outcomes in the areas of graduation, employment, post-secondary education, and independent living compared to the outcomes of their peers with no disabilities (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; Dunn, 1996; Anderson et. al., 2003). They experience higher dropout rates (Levin, Zigmond, & Birch, 1985; Blackorby & Wagner; Dunn, 1996; Conderman & Katsiyannis, 2002) and higher delinquency rates (Doren, Bullis, & Benz, 1996; Dunn; Conderman & Katsiyannis). Students with disabilities do not go on to postsecondary education as often as their non-disabled peers (Kochhar-Bryant & Bassett, 2002). They are employed less often, and have less satisfaction with their adult lives (Blackorby & Wagner; Dunn; Conderman & Katsiyannis). For example, Edgar (1998) found that 30% of the students with learning disabilities who entered secondary programs never finished. For students, one year out of high school, less than 40% were living independently (Sitlington, 1996).

The National Longitudinal Transition Studies have been the most comprehensive studies to date. They provide information in three areas that inform this study. Both the NLTS and NLTS2 are the primary and most comprehensive for the study of postsecondary outcomes for youth with disabilities. These studies provide a comprehensive profile of students with disabilities nationally. The findings of these studies are directly tied to what is considered best practices in special education transition to promote more positive postsecondary outcomes. This section will provide an in-depth look at the two studies.

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The National Longitudinal Transition Studies

The National Longitudinal Transition Study (NLTS) and the National Longitudinal Transition Study 2 (NLTS2) represent the most comprehensive research in the area of special education transition. First this section will look at the result of each of the studies and how they were conducted. Then we will explore the strengths and potential weaknesses of the research.

The National Longitudinal Transition Study (NLTS). The NLTS was conducted by SRI (from 1987 through 1993) under contract with the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). It was the first nationally representative study on students with disabilities. The participants consisted of more than 8,000 youth with disabilities. There were 300 school districts nationwide involved. All of the students involved in the study were in secondary special education in 1985. Telephone interviews were conducted with the parent of the student participants. There were surveys of the student's teachers and administrators and school records were examined (SRI, 2005).

The key findings related to these topics are summarized as follows:

1. "Students with disabilities were more likely than students in the general population to experience poverty and related factors." (SRI, 2005, p. 2). 68% of the students in the study compared to 40% in the general population.
 - a. Students in the study were more likely to have single-parent families (37% vs. 25%).
 - b. Students in the study were more likely to have parents without high school diplomas (41% vs. less than 25%).
 - c. Students in the study had a higher rate of absenteeism if they were from low-income homes and from single-parent families. African-Americans in the study were more likely than white peers to be absent from school and fail.
2. Few students with disabilities (8%) attended special schools only for students with disabilities

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3. Academic courses dominated the participant's school programs, however, most had some vocational education. The participants earned fewer credits than their non-disabled peers.
4. Inclusion in general education occurred for most of the students in the study. The study found that African-American and Hispanic students were included less.
5. "A sizable minority of students with disabilities had markedly poor school performance" (SRI, 2005, p. 6).
 - a. Students were absent an average of three weeks each school year.
 - b. Students had a GPA of 2.3 compared to a 2.6 for the general population.
 - c. About 66% of the students had failed at least one course.
6. More students with disabilities dropped out of school, 38% compared to 25% in the general population.
7. School experiences were a strong influence on school performance. Students involved in extracurricular activities tended to achieve better academically, had a lower absenteeism rate, less failure, and a lower drop out rate.
8. Few youth in the study went on to postsecondary school.
9. Youth in the study did not achieve living independence as much as the general population.
10. Socialization in high school was difficult.
11. "School factors contributed to greater success for some youth with disabilities in their post school years." (SRI, 2005, p. 15)
12. Adult services were needed.
 (<http://www.sri.com/policy/cehs/publications/dispub/ntls/nltssum.html>.)

Also found in the NLTS was that 30% of the youth with disabilities were arrested at least one time by three years out of school (Patton & Dunn, 1998).

The National Longitudinal Transition Study 2 (NLTS2). The NLTS2 is currently being conducted and will continue until 2010 (a period of ten years). This study has the same focus as the NLTS with a larger sample of students (n = 11,272), a larger number of schools districts (n = 501), and includes 38 special schools. Both studies are a national representative random sample of students in special education and are stratified by key factors such as geographic region, district enrollment, and district/community wealth.

The findings, to date, of the NLTS2, as presented by Lynn A. Newman, 2004 are from Wave I only. The results are as follows:

1. The findings show that 99% of the students in the study are taking academic courses as opposed to 100% of the general student population. There was a decline in the percent of students with disabilities who had taken vocational education. Since this is considered a factor for postsecondary success, this is a concerning finding. However, there were significant increases in the percent of students taking math, science, social studies, foreign language, fine arts/performing arts, and life skills/study skills courses.
2. When considering the average percentage of courses taken in the general education classes by disability category we find that the greatest percent are taken by students with speech impairment, then students with learning disabilities, then other health impairment, visual impairment, hearing impairment, orthopedic impairment, then emotional disturbance, TBI, autism, mental retardation, deaf/blind, and finally multiple disabilities.
 - a. The study found that 96% of the teachers were certified to teach their classes, and the average number of years teaching was 14.
 - b. The average number of years teaching students with disabilities was 10.
 - c. Only 68% of the teachers felt that they had been adequately trained to teach students with disabilities.
3. The percentage of students whose teachers reported they were receiving support was 95%. However, only 61% reported they had information about their student's needs and/or abilities.
4. The percent of students receiving accommodations in the general education academic classes was 93%. The most frequent accommodations were more time taking tests (75%), and additional time to complete assignments (66%).
5. The study looked at the perceptions of teachers in regard to the appropriateness of students with disabilities and their placement in general education academic classes: 66%, very appropriate, 26% somewhat appropriate, and 8% not appropriate
6. Overall, the study found that the more time students with disabilities spent in the general education classroom, the lower their overall grades. However, on a positive note the study found that students who spent more time in general education classes had fewer days absent, were academically closer to grade-level on standardized reading and math tests, have fewer disciplinary problems, and participated in more extracurricular activities (Newman, 2004).

A profile of students in special education following the NLTS2 data was developed (Burgener, 2004).

Profile of students in special education that directly relates to this study include:

- *25% of students in special education have attended 5 or more schools
- *Over 1/3 of the students in special education have repeated at least one grade
- *44% of students with disabilities go to schools that require them to meet the same standards and follow the same procedures as students in the general population.
- *57% of students with disabilities graduate from high school, nationally.
- *Additionally 10% exit high school with a special diploma or certificate of completion.
- *61% of students with disabilities take vocational education courses (Students with disabilities are less likely than students in the general population to take vocational education.)
- *Students with disabilities are taking more academic courses than in the past (7% decrease in vocational classes)

Both of these studies are longitudinal, each takes place over a ten-year period, and both have large stratified random samples ($n = 8,000$ and $n = \text{almost } 12,000$). The two studies were both funded and contracted by OSEP, conducted by SRI, and Mary Wagner was involved in analyzing data and writing reports. Both studies followed rigorous protocols that allow for comparisons along multiple categories and factors. These studies provide a picture of what is taking place in special education, in general and in transition, specifically. They allow policy makers, researchers, educators, and parents to evaluate

special education and the outcomes of students with disabilities and take appropriate action to facilitate positive changes in policy, curriculum, and services for students with disabilities.

These studies, however, tell us little to nothing about possible causes or variables nor have they led to more positive outcomes. The studies give us no information about how “a coordinated set of activities” takes place, if it indeed does. The studies did not look at how communication and collaboration take place in the transition process. We know nothing about the stakeholders who participated to provide transition services. These are very valuable studies that shed light on transition and student outcomes, however, there is a need for more research that looks deep into this process for youth with disabilities. We need more research on student involvement in the process. We need more research on how to communicate, coordinate, and collaborate in the future. This becomes increasingly important in light of IDEA 2004 that promotes inclusion in the general classroom, high expectations for all students (which includes high stakes testing), the need for students to stay in school to earn a diploma and learn skills that will promote employment, independent living, community involvement, and quality of life for students with disabilities. With this in mind, the review of literature moves to what is considered best practices in transition and what the transition literature indicates may have an impact on post secondary outcomes for youth with disabilities.

Best Practices in Transition

According to Grigal and colleagues (1997) and Blalock et al. (2003), two of the most critical competencies required for transition are the knowledge of the laws that mandate transition services and the IEP requirements relative to transition planning. The

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Transition Coalition has identified a checklist of best practices in planning for the transition IEP. Before the transition IEP meeting is to take place: (1) teachers, families, and students should become aware of community resources and services that are available; (2) determine the present level of performance; (3) transition planning meeting participants need to be identified and receive written notification of the meeting; (4) the best dates and times need to be agreed upon by all participants; and (5) ensuring that the student is familiar with their role in the meeting and is in possession of the skills necessary to participate fully (Transition Coalition, 2003). Educators also must know “best practices” in transition, such as the importance of student involvement in transition planning (Blalock et. al.; Williams & O’Leary, 2001; Martin, 2004) and self-determination (Field, 1998; Martin, 2004; Patton & Dunn, 1998). Research has shown that not all students are involved in their transition planning (Blalock et. al.; Williams & O’Leary; Martin, 2004, 2005). The IEP process is a key site for developing a comprehensive and coordinated transition program to facilitate appropriate post-secondary outcomes for students with disabilities (Storms, O’Leary, & Williams, 2000; Martin; Patton & Dunn, 1998)

The literature indicated there are key factors that promote post-secondary success for students with disabilities. Employment during high school (Evers, 1996), vocational training during high school (Hasazi, Gordon, & Roe, 1985; Shapiro & Lents, 1991; Evers, 1996; Harvey, 2005), and competence in reading, math, writing, problem solving, and self-advocacy (Benz, Lindstrom, & Yovanoff, 2000) have a positive impact on postsecondary outcomes. Student involvement in school extra curricular activities has a positive impact on student success in the areas of: academic performance, attending

school, fewer classes failed, and staying in school (Malian & Love, 1998; NLTS, 1993). Career-related work experience and completion of transition goals were also found to be highly associated with improved graduation rates and employment outcomes (Benz, Lindstrom, & Yovanoff). The facilitation of post secondary agency and community connections is identified with post secondary success (Kohler, 1993; Benz et. al., 2000). These factors are considered to be a part of the “best practices” in transition services. However, best practices in transition services, as identified in the literature as being associated with better postsecondary outcomes for students with disabilities, have come under question and criticism due to the lack of research that documents these as effective practices (Greene & Albright, 1995; Kohler, 1993, Sitlington, 2000). Specifically these researchers call for more rigorous quantitative and qualitative studies to unpack the underlying factors that might lead to more carefully crafted empirical studies.

Conversely, Benz, Lindstrom, and Yovanoff (2000) have identified factors that have a negative association with high school completion, including being identified as emotionally disturbed, a history of absenteeism or course failure, and three or more years behind grade level in reading and math. “The strongest predictor of whether students will drop out of school is whether they have been retained in grade” (Kochhar-Bryant & Bassett, 2002, p.192). The National Longitudinal Transition Study 2 (NLTS2) found that students with disabilities were an average of more than 3 years behind grade level in both reading and math (Wagner, 2003). The NLTS2 also found absenteeism had increased significantly from 15 days per school year to 23 days per school year, from 1991 – 2001 (Wagner).

Self-advocacy and self-determination have been included in the list of best practices for transition from high school to postsecondary settings. Self-determination is considered important for all individuals, but is considered critical for individuals with disabilities. The next section will explore self-determination.

Self-Determination

Definitions of self-determination. Self-determination has been defined in multiple ways over the years. The American Heritage Dictionary defines self-determination as “one’s own fate or course of action without compulsion; free will.” Deci & Ryan (2000) define it as “the capacity to choose and to have those choices be the determinants of one’s actions.” Field & Hoffman, (1998) defined it as “one’s ability to define and achieve goals based on a foundation of knowing and valuing oneself.” “A person who is self-determined chooses and enacts his or her choices in persistent pursuit of his or her best interests” (Mithaug, 1994 in Martin, Marshall, Huber, 1995).

Aspects of self-determination. The U.S. Department of Special Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services has supported self-determination through grants to develop and study self-determination curriculum (Martin, Marshall, Huber, 1995). Various curricula that have been developed will be discussed further in the transition curriculum and models section.

Self-determination skills are a key factor in the success of youth transitioning from high school to the post-secondary setting (Field, Hoffman & Spezia, 1998; Pocock, Lambros, Karvonen, Test, Algozzine, Wood, & Martin, 2002). The self-determination model, as developed by Field & Hoffman (1994), incorporates five basic components: (1) Know Yourself, (2) Value Yourself, (3) Plan, (4) Act, and (5) Experience Outcomes and

Learn. The characteristics that youth with self-determination possess are: choice making, decision making, problem solving, goal setting and attainment, self-observation skills, self-evaluation skills, self-reinforcement skills, internal locus of control, positive attribution of efficacy and outcome expectancy, self-awareness, and self-knowledge (Field & Hoffman, & Spezia, 1989; Wehmeyer, 1997; Sitlington, 2000).

Self-determination and legislation. The federal government has extended their support beyond the funding of grants and has addressed the importance of self-determination through legislation. While they have not expressly used the word self-determination, they allude to key components of self-determination. The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 amendments require individuals with disabilities to be active participants in the development of their Individualized Written Rehabilitation Plan (HEATH Resource Center, 2002). The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was passed in 1990 and mandated transition services for students with disabilities. Amendments to IDEA continue to shape and define the transition process. IDEA requires that students' preferences and interests be considered when developing the Individualized Education Program (IEP). IDEA also mandates that the student be invited to attend and participate in the IEP when transition is a part of the meeting. The purpose of IDEA is to prepare students with disabilities "for employment and independent living" (Kochhar-Bryant, 2002). Involvement of the student in the planning and goal setting process reflects the values of self-determination (National Center for Secondary Education and Transition, 2002).

The National Center for Secondary Education and Transition (NCSET) identified five primary issues as critical in the improvement of secondary education transition

services for students with disabilities. These challenges are facing secondary education and transition services nationally and must be addressed immediately. One of the five primary issues was self-determination and self-advocacy. NCSET refers to research (Wehmeyer & Schwartz, 1997) that reports, “Students who have self-determination skills are more likely to be successful in making the transition to adulthood, including employment and community independence.” They go on to say, students who exhibit self-determination skills lead more positive adult lives (Bremer, Kachgal, & Schoeller, 2003) including educational and employment outcomes (higher rate of employment and earning more per hour compared to peers who were not self-determined).

Wood, (2001), in the NCSET report, recommended that self-determination begin early for students and can start well before the high school years. His recommendations included: (1) provide opportunities for decision making starting in early childhood, (2) provide self-determination instruction early in elementary grades, (3) intensify instruction of specific self-determination skills during high school, (4) help students develop and use their internal locus of control, (5) make work-based learning, self-directed learning and career exploration opportunities available to all students, (6) incorporate self-determination and career development skills in the education curriculum, and (7) promote and support student centered and student-run IEP meetings.

The President’s Commission on Excellence in Special Education A New Era: Revitalizing Special Education for Children and Their Families (Branstad, 2002) looked at transition services. They reported that transition services are not being implemented to the fullest extent possible and that appropriate outcomes for students with disabilities are not being achieved. They advocated that skills such as self-determination, self-advocacy,

social skills, organization skills etc. must be included in the transition process (Branstad, 2002).

Summary of self-determination. Why is self-determination so important in the transition process? If student's transition plans reflect their interests, needs, and preferences they will be more appropriate and individualized for the youth. If the youth is involved in the development of the transition plan and their goals, they are more likely to achieve those goals. Self-determination has been associated with a greater quality of life (Wehmeyer & Schwartz, 1998; Pocock, Lambros, Karvonen, Test, Algozzine, Wood, & Martin, 2002) and more positive adult outcomes (Wehmeyer & Schwartz, 1997; Wehmeyer et al., 2000). The characteristics of youth with self-determination are life skills that will serve the individual throughout their life span and not just during the transition process from high school to the post-secondary setting.

Students with learning disabilities, in many cases, need to be taught skills that will prepare them for life after high school and among these skills are those included in the domain of self-determination and self-advocacy (Pocock et al., 2002). Wehmeyer et al. compared the goals of self-determination of individuals with disabilities to Sarason's purpose of the education process, to "produce responsible, self-sufficient citizens who possess the self-esteem, initiative, skills and wisdom to continue individual growth and pursue knowledge" (Sarason, 1990, p. 163 cited in Wehmeyer, 2000, p. 439). Often included in self-advocacy instruction for youth in school are: knowledge about the individuals rights and responsibilities, effective communication, problem solving and negotiation skills, requesting accommodations and modifications, and how to participate ones own IEP (Pocock et al.). Self-determination can be increased through the use of

contracts to teach students to regulate their plans, work, evaluations and to adjust in academic and behavioral domains (Martin, Mithaug, Cox, Peterson, Van Dycke, & Cash, 2003).

One must be careful and thoughtful when working with youth and parents in developing self-determination. This is a multicultural, multilingual society and as educators collaborate with parents there must exist sensitivity to the idea that transition planning must reflect a cultural and economic lifestyle that is meaningful to the student and family (Sitlington, 2000).

Transition has been mandated and self-determination has been identified in the literature as a best practice. The next section will look at transition curriculum.

Transition Curriculum

Curriculum is a defined course of study (Browder, 2001). It provides a blueprint for instruction and learning. However, in special education there is rarely an established curriculum that meets the needs of all students and ensures instruction that will achieve the desired life outcomes for individual students (Browder, 2001).

Transition has become a “hot topic” in the field of special education in recent years. Kohler states that transition programming includes student focused planning, student development, interagency collaboration, program structure, and family involvement (Kohler, 1996). Student involvement is a key component in the transition model developed by Kohler. According to Blalock et. al. (2003) two of the critical competencies required by educators and transition stakeholders include the knowledge of IDEA’s transition planning requirements and the skills to involve students in the IEP process.

The purpose of transition, including planning, curriculum, enactment, and outcomes is to prepare students with disabilities to move from a high school setting to adulthood. It is hoped that students will have an enhanced quality of life. According to the position statements on School-to-Work and Self-Determination by the DCDT, there needs to be a commitment to a comprehensive transition curriculum. The following is a list of some of the curricula for students in school going through the transition process:

- *ChoiceMaker Self-Determination Curriculum: Self-Directed IEP, by Martin, Marshall, Maxson, & Jerman, 1996.
- *Next S.T.E.P, by Halpern, Herr, Wolf, Doren, Johnson, & Lawson, 1997.
- *Self-Advocacy Strategy for Education and Transition Planning, by VanReusen, Bos, Schumaker, & Seshler, 1994.
- *Whose Future Is It, Anyway?: A Student-Directed Transition Planning Process, by Wehmeyer & Kelchner, 1995.

The above curricula may be considered narrow, in that they addressed only some aspects of the transition process: self-determination, self-advocacy, and students hopes and dreams. However, they do address some of the most important aspects of self-determination. It is a team of people who work closely with the individual student that may be in a position to achieve the development of a personalized curriculum for each student (Browder. 2001).

Communication in the Transition Process

In this study of the communication and enactment of transition services among key stakeholders in the transition process for high school students with learning disabilities, it is important to understand what constitutes communication. In the

transition process, communication is occurring among multiple stakeholders including students, parents, special education teachers, and general education teachers. Each of them complicate the communication process because each stakeholder in the process has a unique perspective and background they bring to the conversation.

With IDEA 1997 amendments, communication became a virtual necessity to carry out the mandates of the law. This law promoted the inclusion of many students with disabilities into the general education classroom and the use of the general education curriculum (Pugach & Johnson, 2002). It became crucial that general and special education teachers communicate to meet the needs of their students.

IDEA 2004 promotes general education first and inclusive settings for students with special needs (IDEA, 2004). The family, family participation, and family satisfaction are stressed in the new mandate (IDEA, 2004). Research studies have indicated that family involvement in the education of students with disabilities has a positive effect on school attendance, dropout rates, assessment scores, and student attitudes (Wehmeyer, Morningstar, & Husted, 1999). With family involvement in the student's education and effective communication between school and family there is a more comprehensive team working for student success (Wehmeyer, Morningstar, & Husted). Wehmeyer and colleagues noted that it is the student and family that remain consistent in the transition process and other stakeholders may change during the process (Wehmeyer et al., 1999; Wehmeyer & Davis, 1995); Michigan Transition Services Project, 2002). Thus, for stakeholders in special education and the transition process, it is critical to practice good communication skills to assure appropriate support for the student and family.

When discussing communication in the transition process, there is a need to understand what communication entails. In the communication process there is a sender of information, a message to be sent, and a receiver of the information (Pugach & Johnson, 2002). Communication is cyclical and requires all of the individuals participating to understand the message (Pugach & Johnson, p. 49).

Effective listening skills are a key to communication. They are especially important when so many individuals from differing backgrounds and perspectives are involved in the process. The effective listening skills involved the transition process include: offering support, general openings, reflecting, stating the implied, clarifying, silence, placing the event in time or sequence, and summarizing (Pugach & Johnson, p. 61).

Transition is an ongoing and complex process and cannot be viewed as simplistic or as a checklist during an IEP/ITP meeting. It is a continuing process of communication that takes place in multiple settings, with multiple professionals and non- professionals involved. It concerns issues that are academic and social, current and future issues, and needs to be student driven (Field, Hoffman, Sepzia, 1998).

In this study, the researcher will focus on four aspects of communication in the transition process: (1) the content of the communication; (2) the participants or stakeholders in the communication process; (3) the social construction of what counts as transition; and (4) communication using technology (See Elements of Communication graphic, Appendix D). The first part of communication that is considered and represented is the content of the communication between and among stakeholders. The content may consist of and include the students' transition goals, best practices in

transition, and transition curriculum as prescribed by the setting. The second part of communication is the identification of the participants or stakeholders involved in the transition process. These participants may include the student, the parent(s), the special education teacher, and the general education teacher or other individuals directly involved in the process for a particular student. The social construction of what counts as transition is the third component of communication in this study. The study will look at how transition is constructed in the classroom setting as mediated by the teacher or other knowledgeable adult, students, and systems. The researcher will explore who decided the topics for discussion, who participated in the discourse, the duration of the discussion, and the relation of the communication to best practices, transition goals and curriculum. The final aspect of communication the study will explore is the role of technology in the transition process.

Transition planning and services have their roots in communication. This concept of “a set of coordinated activities” is nested in a multi level system of education and transition for the student with disabilities.

Enactment of transition

Transition is an enacted construction of content that does not exist apriori. According to Ball and Cohen, (1996) there are several reasons why curricula have not played a consistent role in practice. First, the role of the teachers in the process failed to be considered (Sarason, 1982; Schwille et al., 1983 as in Ball & Cohen, 1996. Second, “individual teachers shape the curriculum in fundamental ways” (Ball & Cohen, 1996. p. 6). Teachers were found to vary the content and difficulty of skills from the written curriculum to the enacted curriculum on a daily basis (Rowan, Camburn, Correnti, 2002).

“Consequently, teachers’ understanding of the material, their beliefs about what is important, and their ideas about students and the teacher’s role all strongly shape their practice” (Ball & Cohen, 1996, p. 6). The enactment of transition is the social construction and reconstruction of the meaning of transition in the classroom for each student with disabilities. This adds an additional dimension of individualization to the enactment of curriculum. This study will explore what is happening in the transition classroom of one special education teacher working in a school that is considered to have an exemplary transition program in place for students with disabilities, based on the criteria set forth for the study. The researcher will observe the teacher and class to ascertain what domains the teacher or mediator is drawing from in the field of special education transition when working with students to determine if what occurs in the classroom has its foundation in special education and transition law, litigation, curriculum, professional development or is based on information and communication with the Intermediate School District Transition Coordinator. What influences the enactment of transition in the classroom will be explored in regards to the levels or layers of transition services, whether it be federal mandates, state guidelines, regional regulations and professional development, or located in the local school district curriculum. Why is the teacher choosing to do what he/she is doing in the classroom? Special education teachers bring a history: materials, knowledge, and experience, as do the students participating in the construction of transition.

Technology

The support of technology in the United States for individuals with disabilities has a long history. This support dates back to 1879 with support for the production of Braille

materials for the blind (Blackhurst & Edyburn, 2000). Assistive technology was addressed in federal policy with the passage of the Technology-Related Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities Act of 1988. The “Tech Act” defined assistive devices and services, supported state planning, and the use of assistive technology (Blackhurst & Edyburn).

The term “assistive technology” in this study and according to the Individuals with Disabilities Improvement Act, 2004 (P. L. 108-446) will mean, “any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of a child with a disability” (Sec. 602, A). Now, and beginning with IDEA, assistive technology must be considered for every student who has and Individual Education Program (IEP). The literature has documented the complexity and necessity for collaboration, communication, and understanding in assistive technology (Zabala et al., 2000).

One of the barriers to effective assistive technology is the different perspectives between the school and the family/student. Hutinger et al, (1996) found a lack of alignment of goals and expectations and a lack of collaboration. Recommendations included more proactive, collaborative planning and more parental support (Hutinger et al., 1996 as reported in Zabala et al.,2000). The stakeholders involved in providing effective assistive technology need to communicate and work collaboratively if there is to be an effective service provided (Zabala et al.).

The U. S. Department of Education report “Computer and Internet Use by Children and Adolescents” (National Center on Educational Statistics, 2001) as reported

by Wehmeyer, Smith, Palmer, & Davies, 2004 found that over 90% of individuals between the ages of 13 and 17 use computers. They use the computers more at school (81%) than they do at home (65%). Individuals without a disability were significantly more likely to use a computer than their peers with disabilities (Wehmeyer et al., 2004). Technology and the use of technology have become important skills for everyone. There are models of technology that facilitate integrating technology in inclusive settings.

There have been seven areas identified in which students with disabilities may have issues, including communication. Assistive technology can aid in students' communication problems (Blackhurst & Edyburn, 2000) and therefore may improve their ability to communicate, participate in community activities, and self-advocate. There is a fast growing interest in and study of technology in special education. Multiple models, theories, and frameworks are beginning to contribute to the understanding of special education technology (Edyburn, 2002; Watts, O'Brian, & Wojcik, 2004). There are four specific models that aid in the consideration of the use of assistive technology in special education in schools (Edyburn, Watts, O'Brian, & Wojcik): (1) The SETT Framework, that was designed to aid in informing collaborative decision making process regarding assistive technology for students with disabilities; (2) Education Tech Points Model, created to help in the decision-making process regarding assistive technology; (3) has technology been considered model, helps document the process of decision making process in meeting the mandate; (4) the AT Co-Planner Model, helps to promote communication for collaborative planning. Not included in the frameworks and models used in consideration of assistive technology is the ABC Model, which recognized the

individual and their specific needs in regards to technology. This model says technology can Augment abilities and Bypass or Compensate for disabilities (Edyburn, 2002)

The National Council on Disabilities (Morris, 1992 in Sitlington, 2000, p. 311) concluded that “with the assistance of technology, almost three-quarters of school age children were able to remain in a regular classroom. . .and 45 percent of school-age children were able to reduce school-related services.” Sitlington associated this statement with Malan & Love, 1998 that with the added transition services goal of graduation from high school and inclusion in a general education setting it appears that with this combination more positive outcomes can be achieved with youth with disabilities (Sitlington, 2000).

In transition, assistive technology must be considered not just in the classroom, but in the postsecondary education classroom and in employment. Is assistive technology necessary for the individual to achieve employment and independent living (Fisher, 1999 in Sitlington, 2000)? In a recent study of 173 participants in a technology-based exemplary transition program Do-It (Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking, and Technology) researchers identified “ the importance of technology skills for academic and career success” (Kim-Rupnow & Burgstahler, 2004, p. 53). The results suggested that, with the use of technology and support students with disabilities would improve the skills and characteristics that are associated with positive postsecondary outcomes (Kim-Rupnow & Burgstahler). There is a need for future research in the technology consideration process and how communication and collaboration takes place in this process (Watts, O’Brian, & Wojcik, 2004).

Technology can serve as a means for communication between various

stakeholders in the transition process (Burgener, 2003; Burgener, 2004). Communication between the transition coordinator at the regional level and the secondary special education teacher at the local level presents communication issues that technology helps to solve. It was found that these two key stakeholders in the transition process for youth with disabilities used the telephone and email in many cases to stay connected (Burgener, 2004).

The Need for Further Study

Current literature discusses the need to look at the communication that occurs before the IEP meetings that addresses transition issues. A recent three year study of middle, junior high, and high school IEP meetings by Martin, Huber Marshall, and Sale explored the perceptions of IEP team members and found that special education teachers were the most frequent members of the IEP team to talk during the meeting. Students reported not knowing the reasons for the meeting or what their role was during the meeting. In many cases students have not been invited to their IEP meetings (Williams and O'Leary, 2001). Martin et al. found that only 70% of the students in the study had been invited to their IEP meeting. It was also found that although this 70% attended the IEP meeting, their participation was very minimal. Martin et al. suggest that students need prior preparation and instruction in how to meaningfully participate in their IEP meetings. "Educators and parents need to explain the IEP process to students, facilitate student understanding of their disability, teach students IEP terminology...and provide students with skills to actively participate in their own meetings..." (Martin et al., 2004, p. 269). There are now research reports that suggest students need instruction on IEP meetings and their role in their meetings (Martin, Huber Marshall, & Sale, 2004).

Five themes emerged from a recent qualitative study of diverse students with learning disabilities during the transition planning process. First, the study suggested that there was a mismatch or missing connections between the stated exit or postsecondary goals for youth and the ITPs, both in the domains of employment and independent living (Trainor, 2005). In two-thirds of the ITPs, the domain of independent living was not even addressed. Second, students were typically uninvolved in their transition planning process. Fourteen of the 15 students could not describe the transition meeting or talk about the plans in the ITP. They did not consider themselves participants in the process. Third, students considered themselves and their families to be the key stakeholders in the transition process and did not communicate with school personnel about transition issues. Fourth, students were engaged in some self-determination skills, but they perceived home and parents the key individual to promote self-determination and the teachers were not considered important stakeholders in self-determination. Finally, students were only self-determined during transition planning when prompted by adults and only when and how they suggested (Trainor, 2005).

With the growing population in the United States that is culturally and linguistically diverse (Valenzuela, & Martin, 2005) communication needs to occur before the IEP meeting focused on transition due to the differing perceptions of independence and the development of postsecondary goals. Stakeholders involved in the transition process need to be cognizant of cultural differences and how they relate to the domains of transition, education, employment, independent living. Communication needs to occur before the IEP meeting to help students, parents, and transition personnel work towards collaboration (Valenzuela, & Martin, 2005).

In 2003 the United States Accounting Office (GAO) identified problems occurring in providing transition services by various stakeholders in the transition process. Students reported a lack of self-advocacy training that facilitates communication and empowers them with critical skills necessary for the postsecondary environment (Frieden, 2004). Parents reported a lack of information and support, and teachers had problems with linkages to opportunities and services (Frieden).

More in depth research is needed in the area of certain practices in transition (Zhang, et al., 2005). We know little about how parents, students, and school communicate transition issues, if these issues are a part of the transition discourse, and the frequency of communication. With the signing of IDEA, 2004 the federal government has emphasized greater communication alignment between postsecondary goals and transition services (Powers et al., 2005). Improving collaboration was among the recommendations for improving transition services (Powers et al.).

Future issues in the delivery of transition education and services include a need for a foundation of research in regards to what works (Sitlington, Clark, Kolstoe, 2000). “One of the most important facilitators of a youth’s transition from school to adult community participation is collaboration” (Rusch & Chadsey, p. 49 from Benz et al, 1995). Sitlington listed eleven future issues in the delivery of transition education and services. They included the idea that transition education and services, in many cases, are still viewed as add-on parts of an IEP, formal training in self-determination for the students is often not provided, and a firm research base is needed for transition in terms of what works and whether transition education and services are making a difference (Sitlington, Clark, Kolstoe). NCSET also addressed current challenges facing the future

of secondary education and transition services for youth with disabilities and similarly listed challenges, all of which were related to issues of communication, coordination, and collaboration of transition issues and services. For example: promoting students' self-determination and self-advocacy, insuring access to inclusive settings, participation and involvement of parent(s) in planning and decision making, and improving collaboration and system linkages at all levels (NCSET, 2004).

The literature suggests a lack of curriculum and or training that prepares students with disabilities to meaningfully participate in the transition process. The literature also suggests a lack of training and understanding on the part of the student in regards to the nature of their disability, special education terminology, and the skills they need to actively participate in the transition process and beyond. There is also a suggestion that there is a lack of knowledge of what works in the transition process to adequately prepare students with disabilities for adulthood. There are transition curricula available on the market. However, these curricula or defined courses of study are often limited to specific areas of transition and do not cover the entire range of transition issues. This study focuses on an exemplary transition program to learn more about how transition curriculum is enacted and impacted by systems outside the classroom. This case study of communication and enactment of transition services among key stakeholders in the transition process for high school students with learning disabilities data was conducted using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Chapter three will discuss the design of the study, the location, participants and procedures of the study. Finally, the next chapter will elaborate on how data will be analyzed.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

Introduction

This chapter discusses the research methods used to conduct the study of communication and enactment of transition services among key stakeholders in the transition process of high school students with learning disabilities. A sociocultural theoretical framework was used for this study. Data sources used included: observations and field notes; structured and unstructured interviews of all the participants; and an extensive review of the records. This chapter is divided into four sections: (1) the design of the study; (2) the location and participants, (3) procedures and measures, and (4) data analysis.

Design of the study

The purpose of the study was first, to explore the communication that took place in the transition process for students with learning disabilities who were currently in high school. Second, to study the enactment of transition goals both within the classroom setting and outside the classroom. The study went on to encompass the exploration of how policy, critical stakeholders and technology impacted the enactment of transition goals. This case study was designed to deepen the understanding and extend the knowledge base by studying the communication and enactment of transition services among key stakeholders and to improve the postsecondary outcomes of youth with disabilities.

Research Questions

There were four research questions that defined the study:

- (1) How are transition services and best practices that are identified in the research literature communicated to key stakeholders in the transition process for youth in high school?
- (2) Is there a difference, and if so what is the difference in the frequency and content of communication among the key stakeholders?
- (3) How are transition services, as set forth in student's transition goals on their Individual Education Program (IEP) and Individual Transition Plan (ITP), communicated and enacted both within and outside the classroom (transition or transition related class) setting among key stakeholders, for students with learning disabilities and how are they impacted by forces outside the classroom?
- (4) How is technology used in the process of transition and what role does technology play in facilitating communication among key stakeholders in the transition process?

During the study and subsequently during data analysis it became apparent that the third research question took center stage and the other three questions were subsumed in question three. The primary research question became: How are transition services communicated and enacted within the transition related classroom setting among key stakeholders and impacted by systems outside the classroom for secondary students with learning disabilities in an exemplary program? The findings will be presented in two chapters. First, in chapter 4, the enactment of transition within the classroom will be presented and in chapter 5 the communication and enactment of transition outside the

classroom will be discussed. Chapter 5 is a systemic view of how transition within a classroom is impacted by the systems in place at multiple levels.

Rationale

The rationale of the study was four pronged: (1) Two previous studies suggested a disconnect in the process of providing transition services to students with disabilities; (2) Transition services are defined as “a coordinated set of activities.” There is a need to explore in depth the communication that takes place among key stakeholders in the school setting and what is in place to achieve this coordinated set of activities; (3) There is a need to know how transition goals for students with learning disabilities in high school are enacted; and (4) there is a suggested need in the literature for research that addresses the communication and enactment of transition prior to the Individual Education Program involving transition meeting (Martin, 2006). A case study approach was used in this study. To achieve the goals of the study, both quantitative and qualitative research methods were used.

Case Study

The case study approach offered the researcher the opportunity to look at the complexities of communication among multiple stakeholders in the context of the high school transition program. It offered the means to gain insights and the opportunity of illuminating meanings that will help to build a better knowledge base (Merriam, 1988). Using a bounded system (Smith, 1978; Merriam, 1988) allowed the researcher to focus on one individual classroom and how transition was communicated and enacted in what had been identified as an exemplary program. Within this case there were multiple individuals who participated in the study: four focal students with learning disabilities, a

special education teacher, five general education teachers, two parents/guardians, and a guidance counselor. The researcher had the means to gain a “holistic description” (Merriam, p. 10) and in-depth explanation of the communication and enactment of transition services in the context of the identified high school through qualitative and descriptive methods. The outcome of these methods is a rich, or thick description of the communication and enactment of transition services in the location chosen.

For this case study the researcher selected the location using specific criteria. The researcher gained knowledge and understanding of the process of communication and enactment in transition by identifying and examining an exemplary transition program. The criteria will be further discussed in the procedures and methods section.

Location and Participants

Location

The study was conducted at one Midwest public high school. Charter Schools were not considered for this study, for several reasons. First, most charter schools were elementary schools and only a high school was used in the study. Second, about half of all charter schools had no students that received special educational services (Horn & Miron, 2000). Third, the Michigan Association of Public School Academies (2004) reported that about 9% of students in charter schools were students in special education, compared to the state average of 14% (MAPSA, 2004). Fourth, while charter schools were not exempt from IDEA and transition mandates, these services varied and looked different from the traditional public school (www.bridger4kids.org, 2004). Finally, Charter Schools were considered a relatively new phenomenon in the State of Michigan and consequently had many unresolved issues (Hill et al., 2001).

The high school in the study was chosen based on specific criteria. First, the high school had a high graduation rate for students compared to the state average. The graduation rate for this high school (2004 – 2005) was 97.92% (Annual report, 2005). This is much higher than the state average of 84.8% in 2002-03 (www.michigan.gov). Second, it was highly recommended by one of the Intermediate School District (ISD) Transition Coordinators, as an exemplary transition program. This recommendation was based on personal experience gained from working with multiple schools in the Intermediate School District. The criteria used for this recommendation included: (1) an existing transition or transition related class in place for at least one year; (2) a relatively high graduation rate for students with disabilities as compared to the state average; (3) the willingness of the high school to work with students and families in providing the services and experiences that satisfied the family; (4) the willingness and follow through on the part of the high school personnel to provide services and experiences that truly fit the needs of the student and not just work with what is in place (they do not claim to have a one size fits all mentality). Finally, consideration was given to the location of the high school. The proximity to the researcher's location was a factor in identifying the school.

The school district was positioned in a suburban community with a mixture of light industry, agriculture, and subdivisions (School district annual report, October 2005). It is fully accredited by the University of Michigan and the North Central Association of Schools. The Missions Statement included the following: "to ensure that each student pursues his or her potential through a student-centered educational system characterized by the development of each student's uniqueness with full community participation in

experience based learning and the optimal use of technology in a caring environment.”
(School district’s annual report).

The superintendent of schools for this district stated they are committed to becoming better every day. He wrote that the school district had two guiding principles: “Moving from good to great” and “every child every day” (school district annual report, October, 2005). “We are working constantly to demonstrate to students that we care.” School district annual report, October 2005 p. 4).

This district had one high school with 1,046 students. This school would not be considered a diverse high school, given that about 96% of the student population was white, about 2% were African American, and 1% were Hispanic (Greatschools.net, 2.18.06). The school had consistently met Annual Yearly Progress, both as a district and as a high school. The Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) scores for 2005 were: English Language Arts, 86.6; Mathematics, 86.4; Science, 90; and Social Studies, 90. These scores were well above the state averages.

The community was proud of the school district and supported it financially. The school had a community auditorium, updated sports facilities and teams that were successful in competition, and excellent band and music programs. It was a physically attractive and updated building that was welcoming to the public and its students and staff. The school had high academic standards and offered excellent academic programs. It had an array of in house vocational education classes for all students that included: auto mechanics, welding architectural drafting, computer assisted manufacturing and design, theatre technology, music theory, and beginning and advanced dance. The school

also participated with the ISD in the shared-time-programs (PA 56 Vocational Consortium).

When entering the high school you encountered a clean, well kept, and welcoming environment. Both the administrative and guidance offices were just inside the door and easy to find. A television monitor was also just inside the door that welcomed one to the school and provided information for the public and students about lunch, agendas for the day, and points of interest that were in the near future.

Participants

The participants in this study included: (1) a special education teacher who was currently teaching a transition related class in the identified high school; (2) four focal students with learning disabilities currently in high school enrolled in the transition related class; (3) the students' parent(s)/guardians; (4) five general education teachers who were identified by the special education teacher as being important in the transition process for the students and through the IEP record review; and (5) a guidance counselor who was continually referred to during observations and interviews, by both teachers and students.

Special education teacher. The special education teacher that participated in the study was identified and recommended by the high school principal. Initially two other special education teachers had been identified, however, they did not meet the needs of the study. The focus in their transition classrooms was mainly the transition from Middle School to High School and not the transition from high school to postsecondary settings. Also, there was a lack of history of transition services for the students just beginning their high school experience in those two classes. The special education teacher, ultimately

identified, was teaching the transition class that focused on preparing students to enter postsecondary settings and who had students with learning disabilities. This teacher's participation in the study involved: (1) observations of the transition class by the researcher; (2) a structured interview; (3) unstructured interviews and many conversations before and after classes; and (4) a communication log that was discussed orally.

Four focal students. The special education teacher and the researcher jointly identified the students who participated in the study. The basis for student participation in the study was; first, they needed to be a student in special education with a documented learning disability and second, the student had to be enrolled in the transition related class. The four students selected had different post secondary goals. One student planned to go directly from high school to employment, another student would either go to the military or to employment, the third student's goal was to graduate and attend either a two year community college or a four year local university, and the fourth student hoped to attend college in the future but needed to work first to help her mother financially and to save money for school. The identification and inclusion of students with a range of postsecondary goals resulted in a more complete understanding of the transition process for all students with learning disabilities in this setting.

General education teachers. The general education teachers who participated in the study were either identified through documentation on the student's Individual Education Program (IEP) and/or student's Individual Transition Plan (ITP), or by being directly involved in the transition process for the student participants, or as identified by the special education teacher as an important individual to the individual student.

Guidance counselor. The guidance counselor was included as the study progressed. Participants reported the counselor (Student interviews, special education teacher interview) as having a critical role in the transition process. Also, during observations the guidance counselor emerged as one who should be included in the study. Informed written consent was provided and the counselor was interviewed. The interview protocol for the general education teachers provided the basis for the interview.

Procedures and Measures

Prior to data collection the proposed study was submitted to the University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (UCRIHS) for approval (See UCRIHS application in Appendix E). The study was approved. The participating school principal gave consent for the study to be located in the district high school (See Administrator letter in Appendix F). The high school principal then indicated which special education teachers to contact. The two identified special education teachers were contacted, but did not meet the criteria for the study. The principal then suggested the special education teacher who ultimately participated, contact was made, and informed written consent granted.

After informed written consent (See Consent forms in Appendix G) was granted from all participants including, the four focal students, five general education teachers, parent(s)/guardians, and the ultimately the guidance counselor) data collection began.

Data collection took place during the months of September, October, November, December, and January 2006. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected. Multiple data sources were used in this study: (1) a review of student's records, (2) interviews, (3) communication logs, and (4) observations and field notes.

A methodology table was constructed to align research questions and the data sources that were used in the study (See methodology table in Appendix H). Research question one: How are transition services and best practices that are identified in the research literature communicated to key stakeholders in the transition process for youth in high school? The primary data sources for this question included the communication logs and observations/field notes. The secondary data sources were the stakeholder interviews.

Research question two: Is there a difference in the frequency and content of communication among key stakeholders? Included in the primary data sources were, again, the communication logs and the stakeholder interviews. The secondary data sources were observations and field notes. The third research question: How are transition services, as set forth in student's transition goals on their IEP/ITP enacted within the classroom setting among key stakeholders for students with learning disabilities? For this question the primary data sources were the document review and observations/field notes and the secondary data sources were the communication logs, parent interviews, student interviews, counselor interview, and teacher interviews.. The final research question was: How is technology used in the process of transition and what role does technology play in facilitating communication among key stakeholders in the transition process? The primary data sources for this question were the interviews and observations/field notes. The secondary sources were the communication logs and document reviews.

Review of Records

The records reviewed included: (1) the student's Individual Education Program (IEP); (2) the Individual Transition Plan (ITP); (3) the Educational Development Plan (EDP); the students IQ scores and achievement scores in reading and math; (4) the information on retention, school attendance, and tardiness; (5) Student placement in general and special education classes; and (6) high school classes both previously and currently enrolled in. The student's IEP provided information on the type of learning disability, the time spent with non-disabled peers, the student's present level of performance, and the adaptations and modifications needed for the students. It helped the researcher gain an understanding of the degree of academic and social functioning of the student.

A review of the ITP shed light on the transition goals for the students. These goals addressed a plan for high school courses, future education, employment, community involvement, and independent living issues. These goals provided the framework for classroom observations and participant interviews. They provided the basis for interpreting student's communication and the enactment of transition services. Student's achievement in reading and math (Benz, Lindstrom, Yovanoff, 2000), their retention during school (Kochhar-Bryant, & Bassett, 2002), and school attendance (Benz, Lindstrom, Yovannoff) have all been documented in the transition literature as having an impact on postsecondary success for students with disabilities. A review of student portfolios was also conducted.

Interviews

Interviews were conducted with each of the participants, including the students, their parents/guardians, the special education teacher, five general education teachers, and a guidance counselor that was directly involved in the transition process (See Interview protocols in Appendix I). It should be noted that only two of the four student's parents/guardians actually participated in the study. One of the student's parents withdrew from the study in November and the grandparents of one student were unable to complete the interview process due to health issues.

Four interview protocols were developed based on Sitlington's key transition stakeholder responsibility table (Sitlington, 2000). These interview protocols were also based on protocols used in two previous studies: one for regional transition coordinators and the other for secondary special education teachers (Burgener, 2003, 2004). An attempt was made to keep the sections in all of the interview protocols, both across and within studies, similar. Each interview protocol asked questions about demographic information, communication, and technology (See attached interview protocols, Appendix I). The interviews shed light on the individual's perceptions of the transition process and the communication that took place within this process. All of the interviews were digitally audio recorded to ensure accurate transcription. Transcriptions were completed following interview sessions. The interviews lasted from approximately one to three hours.

All of the participants were assigned code numbers during data collection. In this document the participants have been assigned pseudo names to protect their identity.

Communication Logs

Communication logs were designed to capture the communication that occurred between and among stakeholders. The study participants received communication log forms during ten weeks of the study. They were asked to record transition related communications that they either initiated or participated in each time they occurred. There were a total of ten communication logs distributed for each participant. Each participant received a log form at the beginning of the week in their school mailbox, with instructions attached. The types of information requested included: (1) the type of communication, for example a phone call, e-mail, or meeting; (2) Who initiates the communication (teacher, parent, student); (3) when, where, or the time and date of the communication; (4) what is the communication about (transition goals, attendance, or job related problems); and (5) what is the result of the communication (a meeting scheduled, a decision to follow up on an experience) (See communication log form appendix J).

During the study the communication logs became problematic. Participants reported that no communication was occurring and they preferred to report verbally. They reported that most of the communication occurred twice: first, during the IEP/ITP meeting and second through an accommodation/modification form from the special education teacher to the general education teachers.

Observations and Field Notes

Observations were situated in the high school's transition related classroom. The class was observed three times per week for the duration of the study (September, October, November, and December). There were thirty-one class periods observed. Detailed field notes were taken during class observations. Audio recording was ruled out

as a method, due to the special education teacher's concern about impacting student's comfort level and participation during class discussion. There was a concern that students would participate differently if they were being audio recorded.

Of particular interest, were the topics discussed and if and how they were related to best practices in transition. Also of interest was, whether discussions were related to the transition goals of the study participants. The researcher was exploring how transition was being socially constructed and reconstructed in this setting.

Field notes were taken during observations, interviews, and document reviews to facilitate the accurate analysis of data. Templates were used to facilitate the quick and accurate recording of details. Included in the field notes during observations were: (1) the topics or content constructed/discussed, (2) principles of instruction used by the special education teacher, (3) who participated in the discourse; and (4) the use of technology (See field note template in Appendix K).

Data Analysis

The data collected were analyzed using both quantitatively and qualitatively methods. Having multiple data sources provided triangulation and a more comprehensive picture of the communication and enactment of transition services. All numerical data were analyzed descriptively, including frequencies and means. Numerical data collected included data from the review of student records, the transition stakeholder survey protocol, and observations and field notes.

Survey

The survey of all the stakeholders was completed during the structured interviews. It included a total of fifteen questions that rated the participants' perspective of each

question asked. The participants were asked to rate each statement or questions from 1 to 5. In the survey, a rating of 5 equaled excellent; 4 was very good; 3 was satisfactory, 2 was poor, 1 was very poor and 0 was either no communication or not applicable.

The survey was divided into four sections: (1) Best Practices, had eight questions; (2) Knowledge and satisfaction with the transition process, had two questions; (3) Frequency/content/quality of communication in the transition process, had three questions; and (4) Technology in the transition process, had two questions. The best practices section was composed of eight questions covering self-determination, self-advocacy, vocational classes and vocational training opportunities, job experiences and job shadowing participation in extra curricular activities, graduation, problem solving training and experiences, and postsecondary educational opportunities (See survey protocol in Appendix L).

The numerical data from the survey were analyzed in multiple ways. First, the results were recorded and analyzed by individual participant. It was interesting to note that there was variability in the responses. The range of responses for a specific question was found to be from 1 – 5 across questions and stakeholders. This would indicate that participants were considering their answers and did not just circle the middle or average number on the survey. Second, analysis was done by groups of stakeholders, for example, the ratings, frequencies and means for general education teachers, students, and parents. The ratings, frequency of ratings, and the mean scores were then compared. This comparison was completed for each stakeholder, by groups of stakeholders, by question, and by category of question, such as in the best practices section of the survey (See Survey data tables in Appendix M). Next, responses of stakeholders to individual

questions were ranked overall and then rank ordered again by groups of stakeholders (See Survey data tables in Appendix M).

Review of Records

The data from the review of records were recorded according to the individual records reviewed for each student. Once this was accomplished a table was constructed that examined specific data points across student stakeholders (See table of student record data in Appendix N). Initially the date of review, date of birth of the student, student age, and disability and qualifying areas were recorded. Frequency data on attendance, tardiness, and grade point average were then examined by year in high school (Freshman, Sophomore, and Junior year). Means were calculated across stakeholders and years in high school for each category.

A review of multiple records revealed vocational classes taken by each student. Again, frequencies and means were calculated. There was a range from two to seven vocational classes taken by the participating students. The study also examined the records to determine if other transition classes had been taken during the student's high school years, since some students in special education also took a transition course their freshman year. Only one of the participants had taken a second transition course.

Records were reviewed and data examined on retentions during school years and when students qualified for special education services. None of the students in the study had been retained, due to a school policy in place that did not allow for this population to be retained in either elementary or Middle School. However, this policy did not apply to high school. During the high school years, students could remain a freshman, sophomore, junior, or senior longer than one year, due to insufficient credits accrued.

There was a range in grades for when students qualified for special education from 2nd grade to 9th grade. As per the study criteria all students were labeled learning disabled. All of the students qualified in at least one reading category. In addition, 75% or three of the students qualified in written expression, 25% or one student in math reasoning and math computation.

All of the students in the study had transition plans on file, had attended their IEP/ITP meetings, and had a current IEP/ITP on file dated after August 29, 2005. All of the students were living with various family members. Two students were living with both of their parents, one student was living with her mother, and the fourth student was living with his grandparents.

A review of the MET Evaluation revealed the functioning level of the students. The data found during the review and analysis varied widely. Three of the four student's records showed either intelligence score from WISC-II or WISC-IV. These were recorded either as an average, as in the case of one student, or by actual score for the other two (73 and 78). In the domain of achievement, for three of the students the WIAT-II was used and in the case of the third student Cambridge was used to assess grade level of reading (See table of student record data). Analyses were done to compare achievement levels of the students in the study.

Educational Development Plans

Individual Educational Development Plans (EDPs) were on file for each student that attended the participating high school, including students in special education. This plan is developed and stored electronically. It was the guidance counselor that provided this information for my review. A review and analysis of the EDP was completed using

frequencies and means for the following areas: (1) my greatest employability skills or strengths, (2) things I need to do to improve my employability skills, (3) my interests and activities, (4) my long-term career goal, (5) other interesting careers I am presently investigating, (6) immediately after high school I plan to, (7) postsecondary education and training choice, and (8) my major academic achievements, awards, and honors are (See review of EDP in Appendix O).

Both transition plans and student portfolios were reviewed. (except for the one student who's portfolio could not be located). A summary of each student's transition plans was developed. Commonalities and differences were examined in the domains of postsecondary goals, daily living skills, functional vocational evaluation/employment, community experiences, related services in the community, and further education (See Summary of transition plans in Appendix P).

Observations and field notes

During observations qualitative data were collected. The data were analyzed using discourse analysis techniques outlined by Miles and Huberman (1994), including category generation and coding. Patterns and themes were identified and analyzed. Questions in the survey were designed to check the internal reliability of the survey instrument. A content analysis was conducted for the interviews and observations/field notes. Questions were analyzed separately and also grouped by common categories. Answers to groups of questions were compared for consistency and reliability. Multiple data sources were compared and contrasted for triangulation.

To gain a better understanding of the transcriptions of the interviews and the observation field notes the researcher read and reread the text multiple times looking for

themes and patterns in the data. The data was then color-coded according these themes for all observations and interviews.

A summary of interview questions was completed for each of the stakeholder groups; students, general education teachers, and parents. This aided in looking at the common responses and the comparison of the different responses given by specific stakeholders and across groups of stakeholders. Different perspectives emerged for this analysis.

A table was then constructed that looked at the date of the observation, the content or topics covered that day, the instructional principles used by the teacher, who of the four focal students participated that day, and the technology used. This table helped provide clarity regarding the themes presenting themselves. It also helped to draw attention to which students participated and in particular to a negative case of a student who seldom orally participated in the construction of transition in the classroom setting.

To facilitate analysis of stakeholder interviews, records, and observation/field notes, a table of milestones in the transition process was constructed and analyzed (See table of the Milestones of the Coordinated Set of Activities in Appendix Q). This table was designed to shed light on what constituted a set of coordinated activities. It was an instrument that explored who was responsible for a set of activities and coordinated transition services.

The data from the observations/field notes were analyzed by teasing out specific information that pertained to the special education teacher. The researcher looked at her pace of delivery, and how she related to students and built a safe community in the classroom. A second theme that became salient in the data was how the teacher

emphasized student responsibility. Also, the researcher looked at how the teacher was consistently weaving a web of skills needed not only for the classroom, but also for life.

Validity and reliability

The internal validity of the study was addressed through the use of three strategies: triangulation, member checks, and peer examinations. Triangulation was achieved through the use of multiple sources of data to check the findings. Methods and data sources used in this study were: (1) observations/field notes; (2) interviews, both structured and unstructured; (3) survey; and (4) a review of records. Member checks were conducted with the special education teacher through out the study and after data analysis to insure that the results were accurate.

A formal member check with the special education teacher was conducted after the completion of data collection. Prior to the member check the researcher constructed an outline of the findings and an overall plan for presenting the findings (See appendix R). The special education teacher was provided with a copy of the outline and a two-hour block of time was set aside to review the outline together. It was the researcher's intention to check with the teacher on all points of the outline to determine if data was presented accurately. During this time the teacher shared her lack of knowledge of sociocultural theory. We briefly talked about the theory and I provided her with references. Another concern on the part of the teacher was the retention policy I presented. She was unaware of any school policy that did not allow for the retention of special education students in grades K – 8. The rest of the outline was in keeping with the teacher's perceptions. Data and interpretations of the data were shared and feedback was solicited in the following areas: (1) transition best practices observed; (2) instructional

principles of teaching observed; major themes that emerged during observations; and (3) the position of the study within a layered system involving policy, critical stakeholders, and technology. Throughout the study, from inception to completion, fellow peers were involved in the process and data analysis.

The reliability of the study could be considered problematic, since it would be difficult to replicate this exact study given the students would be different as well as the teacher, school, and classroom. Therefore different results might be expected. This was a case study that looked deeply into an exemplary transition program. The researcher used several techniques to ensure the results were dependable: (1) explanation of the theoretical framework underlying the study; (2) triangulation of data; and (3) construction of an audit trail (Merriam, 1988). Sociocultural Theory was identified as the theory providing the framework for the case study. It provided a learning theory through which to study the social construction and reconstruction of transition knowledge. It provided a specific lens through which to study the communication and enactment of transition services. Triangulation was used, as discussed above, and therefore “strengthens reliability as well as internal validity” (Merriam, 1988, p. 172). It was hoped that an audit trail was achieved. The researcher had made every attempt to describe in detail how data were collected, patterns and themes identified, and how conclusions were reached.

This chapter has discussed the design of the study, where it was located, the participants, and the procedures and measures. Data analysis and validity and reliability were also discussed. In the next two chapters the findings will be reported. Chapter four looks at the enactment within the classroom and Chapter five explores the findings from a systemic viewpoint. This chapter goes beyond the classroom setting and studies how the

enactment of transition services within the classroom was impacted by multiple levels of policy, critical stakeholders, and technology. Additionally, Chapter six covers the conclusions and discussion, the limitations of the study, and the implications for future research, policy, teacher preparation and practice.

CHAPTER 4

THE ENACTMENT OF MEANING WITHIN THE ENGLISH/TRANSITION CLASSROOM

Introduction

The study of the communication and enactment of transition services was initially designed to answer the following four research questions:

1. How are transition services and best practices that are identified in the research literature communicated to key stakeholders in the transition process for youth in high school?
2. Is there a difference, and if so, what is the difference in the frequency and content of communication among the key stakeholders?
3. How are transition services communicated and enacted within the transition related classroom setting among key stakeholders and impacted by systems outside the classroom for secondary students with learning disabilities in an exemplary program?
4. How is technology used in the process of transition and what role does technology play in facilitating communication among key stakeholders in the transition process?

However, as data collection progressed question three became the primary focus of the study and the other three questions became secondary or subsumed by the primary question. Also, as the study developed question three expanded to include factors outside the classroom that impacted the enactment of transition services within the classroom. These factors included: (1) multiple levels of policy (federal, state, regional, and the school district and building level policy and culture); (2) critical stakeholders, and (3) technology. Question three became: How are transition services, as set forth in student's transition goals on their Individual Education Program (IEP) and their Individual Transition Plan (ITP), communicated and enacted within the transition classroom setting

among key stakeholders, for students with learning disabilities and how enactment was impacted by forces outside the classroom.

Chapter 4 will explore the enactment of transition within the classroom setting. First, the key stakeholders, who participated in the study, will be introduced. Within the classroom environment there were two key stakeholder groups involved in the transition process: the four focal students and the secondary special education teacher. Second, this chapter will provide a physical description of the classroom. Finally, four themes that emerged from the data will be discussed: (1) Distributed learning in the community of practice; (2) Transfer of control; (3) Problem solving as a way of knowing; and (4) Creating places and spaces for giving students voice and experience.

Formally, the class in which this study was situated was listed as a senior English class for individuals with disabilities. Informally, the class was a transition class for seniors with disabilities. The most accurate description of the course was as a dual content class: English and transition. This class provided the places and spaces for the teacher and students to socially construct knowledge related to English and transition. It provided a safe environment in which students were afforded opportunities to learn about themselves, learn how they as individuals could best learn, and work toward achieving their IEP/ITP goals.

Stakeholders

The Student Participants

The student participants all had some of the same backgrounds and experiences. All were fourth year high school students with learning disabilities. None of these students had a history of retention, either during elementary or middle school. Three of

the students were on track to graduate at the end of the year the study took place. The fourth student was scheduled to graduate at the end of his fifth year. All four of the students had spent their entire time at this specific high school. As the study progressed, information was gathered about these students through observations in the Senior English/transition classroom, interviews, unstructured interviews, and an extensive review of their records. It was interesting to note that as the data from the various sources were analyzed it was consistent across all sources and very little variation was found.

All four focal students in the study attended their Individual Education Program (IEP) meetings during their high school years. They had all developed an Educational Development Plan (EDP) their freshman year and had continued to update that original plan. Each of the students had a portfolio they constructed and maintained, although during the study time frame, Bruce, one of the focal students, was unable to locate his portfolio. As required, all of the students had transition plans as a part of their IEP. Each of the four students had participated in the development of their transition plans. The records indicated that these transition plans had been reviewed each year.

The transition literature indicates best practices in transition for students with disabilities in high school should include vocational classes and job experiences, especially during their junior and senior years. In the area of employment and pre employment experiences it was found that all of the participating students had at least one job during their high school years. All of the students took at least two vocational classes, with a range of from two to seven. In addition to the required computer course and the vocational classes, all of the students had job shadowing experiences beginning in

the eighth grade (this is required for all students in the Middle School) and then at least one during their high school years. The participating high school required a job shadowing experience for all students during their junior year and special education students were included in this requirement. In addition to the required job shadowing experiences there was additional support for students in special education. The Intermediate School District (ISD) provided the opportunity for extensive job shadowing experiences for those that qualified. It needs to be noted that this service, through the ISD, limited the number of students from each high school in the ISD's area. One of the students in the study, Cathy, qualified for and participated in this intensive experience.

When consideration for postsecondary education was addressed all of the students had participated in a connection with Lake Michigan College (LMC). Lake Michigan College was a local, two-year community college. The participation for these students included: (1) attending a presentation about LMC and the opportunities that exist for them as students; (2) taking the entrance exam; (3) applying to the college; and (4) reviewing information on financial assistance that was available to them as perspective students. The students received some feedback on their test scores and how the scores impacted the courses available to them at the college. Although, as indicated during student interviews and in their records, not all of the four focal students planned to attend college, they all had the experience of filling out an application and had a community (agency) connection with the college for future use.

Through observations and interviews, it was determined that all of the students participated in the use of technology, not only for school, but also during their leisure and work time. Technology was used in the English/transition class as a tool for students to

gain control over their learning. A computer applications course was required for graduation and all of the four focal students had successfully completed this requirement.

All of the students that participated in the study had both inclusive (“out classes,” as they referred to them) and special education classes. When asked about their classes, the four focal students all responded that they thought they learned more in the special education classroom setting than in the inclusive setting. They also unanimously indicated that they actually preferred taking classes in the special education classroom for a variety of reasons, which included: (1) “Because the classes are smaller;” (2) “I can get more help in the special education classroom;” (3) “Feel more comfortable asking questions in the special education classroom;” (4) “The teacher goes at a slower pace;” (5) “The teacher breaks down the information, so it is easier to understand;” and (6) “It is easier to concentrate” (Student interviews, 9/1/05 – 12/15/05). When the students were asked, all of the students responded that they learned best visually. The students could all list at least some of their documented accommodations and modifications.

This brief general introduction to the students who participated provides some background information for a deeper look at these students and who they are. Caution must be exercised, of course, because the study took place over a brief period of time during their high school career. This glimpse of the students was gained through the interview process, observations, and a review of records.

Sally: The first focal student. Sally was a 17-year-old female who was on track for graduation during the year of the study. She lived with her parents. She considered math as her strength in school and said she was good with kids (Student interview, 11/3/05). On her Educational Development Plan (EDP) she listed as her greatest

employability skills or strengths: responsibility, creativity, organization, and being a good worker.

When asked about her weaknesses, she replied, “I need to work on the one thing is my reading skills. I am not very good at talking to people, both students and adults. I really get nervous. I am always thinking that someone is judging me” (Student interview, 11/3/05). Her qualifying areas for special education were basic reading skills, reading comprehension, and written expression. The MET evaluation report indicated she was in the average range of intelligence (WISC-II) and was in the 5th percentile for reading and the 3rd percentile for writing (WIAT). This was consistent with the EDP information about areas that needed improvement, where she had listed reading, spelling, and comprehension. This indicated that Sally was aware of her strengths and weaknesses and could write about them. In her leisure time she reported enjoying hunting and fishing with her family, riding four wheelers, and just being outside. Her least favorite classes in school were English and history, because of the reading involved in these classes.

After asking the student a series of questions, the researcher asked if there was anything else she wanted to tell me.

Sally: (Her only reply was) “I have one sister now and she wasn’t in special ed. She was very smart, but she dropped out her senior year. Both of my parents went to college and are very smart. So I really don’t know where I get my disability from” (Student interview, 11/3/05).

Sally: (When asked about school) “I like school kinda, but not really. I like to learn and I like my agriculture class. I don’t like the people. They always judge people. If you’re different they won’t talk to you” (Student

interview, 11/3/05).

Sally shared the following information when probed about her experiences during high school.

Sally: “It’s just that I’m in special ed and there are some people that treat us like we are stupid. Some people that always make fun of people because they are in special ed or they can’t read well. They know who we are because we are in a different English class or teachers co-teach and they mostly help us. It hasn’t been a good experience” (Student interview, 11/3/05)!

Sally started special education in second grade. During the interview, students were asked about special education, including questions about why they were in special education, what this has meant to them, and how it impacted their learning and leisure time. Sally explained that she was in special education because of a problem in reading and writing. She went on to add, without prompting, that she thought, “special education has helped me a lot.”

Sally: “I know how to help myself when reading” (Student interview, 11/3/05). Sally reported it impacted her learning; because she needed pictures to help her understand and it also impacted her leisure time because of the length of time it took her to do homework (Student interview, 11/3/05).

When asked to talk about her future dreams, she discussed going to college for agriculture or photography, living independently, and spending time hunting and fishing. This was consistent across sources (Student interview, EDP, and transition plans). She said that no one had helped her prepare for college; however, she had taken the LMC admissions test and visited two different colleges. Then, she went on to talk about help in

preparing, applying and financing college from her parents, guidance counselor and the special education teacher (Student interview, 11/3/05).

This student explained little about her IEP and her transition plan. During the student interview she shared that her transition plan and her future goals did impact what experiences she had in high school, such as the vocational classes, job shadowing, and work experiences. She had taken two vocational classes prior to the semester of the study: Basic Meals and Advanced Foods. At the time of the study she was taking an Agri-Science class through the Shared Time Program (this class was located in a Charter School outside the home school district). She had also taken a transition class her freshman year and was enrolled in a transition /Senior English class. When asked about how she thought the transition process could be improved she responded, “there should be more talking about getting seniors ready to go to college” (Student interview).

Sam: The second focal student. Sam was an 18year-old male who was on track for graduation during the time of the study. He lived with his parents. Sam considered running one of his strengths and said he was a hard worker. In school he considered himself most successful in vocational classes.

Sam: “I’m more hands on and I like to get out and do stuff. As you can see I can’t sit very long at school” (Student interview, 11/0/05).

On his EDP he considered his greatest employability skills and/or strengths, in addition to working hard, as being good with people and being on time to work. In his leisure time he liked to race dirt bikes and hang out with friends. This was consistent with his list of interests and activities on his EDP.

During the parent interview, his parents described their son.

Parents: “Terrific person. Good behavior. Positive person, likes people and has a few friends. Teachers always talk about his good behavior. As a student, he struggles. Sensitive about jokes and about ”dumb”. Has little confidence in his ability to read...Outdoors person. Compassionate, understands people and likes talking to people” (Parent interview, 10/24/05).

When the student was asked about his weaknesses he talked about how difficult it was to stay focused in school and could not think of any others. He reported that he was the least successful in school in the area of math. On his EDP he listed the following as skills to improve: reading, spelling, and math. Sam knew what his weaknesses were and could list them on paper.

His qualifying areas in learning disabilities were basic reading skills, reading comprehension, written expression, math computation, and math reasoning. The MET evaluation report indicated a score of 73 on WISC-II. On the Wechsler Individual Achievement Test (WIAT) he had a score of 74 in reading comprehension, 67 in math calculation and 76 in writing.

Sam was asked whether or not he liked school.

Sam: “Not really. I like attending school but I just don’t like being there long. I would like a shorter day. Welding and co-op help” (Student interview 11/3/05).

One of the interview questions asked about the student’s high school experience and what it was like for him. He said that high school was going by quickly and was a good experience for him.

Sam had been in special education since the third grade. Previously he had attended a private school and entered the public system for special education services. The parents had indicated during the parent interview that they knew there was a problem from the time he entered school. The student was asked why he was in special education.

Sam: "I got dyslexia. I write things backwards sometimes." (He continued on to say that his disability was difficulty comprehending what people were saying). "I have to read it three or four times to understand" (Student interview, 11/3/05).

His disability impacts his learning because:

Sam: "They only say it once when they are teaching and I can't get it the first time. I have to ask questions over and over again. I don't do it in my out (general education) classes" (Student interview, 11/3/05).

However, this student did not think that his disability affected his leisure time.

Sam's dream future included getting into the United States Marine Corps, working with heavy equipment, living in an apartment, and spending time racing dirt bikes, running, and hanging out with friends. This was consistent across all the sources explored. Sam did not plan to attend college, however, he expected to receive on the job training for working with heavy equipment. He talked about the help he had received planning and working toward his future from his dad.

Sam reported that the purpose of the IEP meeting was to talk about what you needed, how you were doing, if classes were ok, and to talk about the classes needed for graduation. He did not think that he had a transition plan, although he had attended the meeting and signed the IEP/ITP form. Sam had taken seven vocational classes prior to

the semester of the study: Basic Meals, Advanced Foods, Auto 1 and Auto 2 (these were taken two different times), Beginning Welding, and he was enrolled in Welding and Cutting during the time of the study. This student also participated in co-op, which meant he had a paid job during school hours and got credit toward graduation for the work.

Bruce: The third focal student. Bruce was an 18 year-old male who lived with his grandparents during the study. He planned to take a 5th year to graduate from high school. He counted interacting with people as his greatest strength. On his EDP he listed his employability skills and/or strengths as: working with people, math, talking, always being on time, great attendance, and honesty. Sam described himself as a person who liked athletics and competition. He seemed very aware of the skills necessary for a successful future; especially team work and knowing how to work together.

When asked about his weaknesses:

Bruce: “Actually I have no idea. Probably it has to do with stress. I get too stressed out too fast. Not taking hold of the situation calmly” (Student interview, 11/9/05).

The employment skills he counted as needing improvement were homework, writing, and spelling. His qualifying areas for learning disabilities were written expression and reading comprehension.

Bruce did not enter special education until 9th grade. The MET evaluation report indicated he was borderline learning disabled, with a WISC-IV of 78. On the WIAT-II he placed in the 1st percentile in word reading, comprehension, and decoding skills. The writing score was in the 0.5 percentile in spelling and written expression.

Bruce was asked if he liked school.

Bruce: "I do. It seems nice to come here. It gives me something to do.

Sometimes it is nice because teachers you know say hi and how are you doing. It's nice. Makes me feel good" (Student interview, 11/9/05).

When asked about his experiences during high school he talked about it being hard to make new friends and that he started making friends and going to dances and football games. "It's actually not that bad" (Student interview, 11/9/05).

During the interview, students were asked about special education, including questions about why they were in special education, what it meant to them and how it impacted their learning and leisure time.

Bruce: "I have a problem concentrating. Things distract me. Reading is too much work and I don't want to do it. Overwhelming. This is what the stress is about" (Student interview, 11/9/05).

When asked about the impact special education had on his learning he reported:

Bruce: "It made me want to work harder" (Student interview, 11/0/05).

He reported the following was his dream future.

Bruce: "I want to run my own business: Car customizing. Wife and kids, I need a house I like a lot of room you know how it is with kids. I would like a garden or something. Probably start working on my hobbies, my car" (Student interview, 11/9/05).

The student responded to questions about the IEP.

Bruce: "They go over my grades and how I am doing. They ask if I have any questions or concerns. What kind of classes I should be taking" (Student interview, 11/9/05).

He shared that most transition issues were talked about informally. The special education teacher asked about college and plans for the future. He said that the special education teacher was responsible for his transition plan but he did talk to her, his grandparents, the principal, the guidance counselor, and other managers at work about his transition plan.

Bruce reported the transition plan impacted his experiences but did not impact his high school classes. However, he had taken two vocational classes: Basic Meals and the computer applications class. He also was taking co-op during the year of the study. This meant he worked during school, got paid, and received high school credit for the work. This student also worked after school as a manager at a local food chain franchise. He had worked at the same restaurant since 7th grade and reported with obvious pride that he was the youngest worker hired. His sister helped him get the job originally.

Bruce reported he had completed a transition goal.

Bruce: “Yah, staying in school. There was a time when I wanted to drop out. And then like some people said you might not really want to do that. I wanted to and it seemed like it was getting tougher and tougher and I was like well there’s not that many people that graduated from my family. My sister quit high school, so that made me want to finish. It’s like a big goal for my grandparents and my girlfriend. I will be the first” (Student interview, 11/9/05).

During an unstructured interview, Bruce said that the high school principal periodically talked to him in the hall and asked him how things were going and that it meant a lot to him. When asked about how the transition process could be improved he

responded that transition should be talked about with more people. Transition should be a part of class discussions and not just conversations between the teacher and the students.

Cathy: The fourth focal student. Cathy was an 18 year-old female who was on track for graduation during the year of the study. She lived with her mother and she considered herself a go-getter, an organized person who was usually on time. Her best subject in school was math. She enjoyed hanging out with friends and her boyfriend, rollerblading and outdoor things. On her EDP she listed her greatest employability skills and/or strengths as: good math skills, always being on time, liked to be around people, organized, a good listener, and responsible. She also added that she liked to work around animals and elderly people.

When asked about her weaknesses she reported reading (said she needed to hear it out loud), speaking in front of people, her grammar, and writing. She qualified as learning disabled in both basic reading skills and reading comprehension. The MET evaluation reported her basic reading skills at the 9th grade level (9.2 level in context and 8.9 isolated). On the Cambridge test, she scored at the 10.6th grade level in reading comprehension. Cathy seemed to have a good understanding of her strengths and weaknesses and could record them on paper and explain them verbally.

Cathy said that gym was one of her favorite classes.

Cathy: “I am really active. I always have too much energy. It comes out of nowhere and like I could just like wake up and I like burst with energy and ...I don’t have to worry about homework all the time” (Student interview, 11/18/05).

Another favorite class was Art, because she considered herself a “good drawer.” (At the time, the art teacher had displayed, on one of the hall bulletin boards, a caricature of this student she had drawn of herself). Cathy’s least favorite class was Civics.

Cathy: “Because, “you have to read a lot and read out loud in class” (Student interview).

Another of her least favorite classes was Social Problems

Cathy: “Because,” he makes me stand up in class and talk about things” (Student interview).

This student qualified for special education services in the first grade.

Cathy talked about school experiences and said she liked school sometimes.

Cathy: “But, I don’t like to listen to the teacher lecture all hour or the homework after school. She shared that she gets teased a lot. I get picked on a lot about my gap (the student is referring to a space between her two front teeth). Like my speaking is like not perfect”

(She talked about the impact of her disability on her learning.)

Cathy: “I am a person that will ask a lot of questions. I usually ask the teacher but if I’m home I can’t go to the teachers and like my mom can’t really help me” (Student interview, 11/18/05).

When asked about her dream future, during the interview, Cathy said she had always wanted to be a nurse and to work with elderly people or animals. She planed to be out of her mom’s house before the age of 23. She wanted to have a good paying job and wanted to go to college.

Cathy: “So I can be more educated” (Student EDP).

She also wanted to get a car so there would be more independence. This student had taken several vocational classes: Basic Meals, Advanced Foods, Computer Literacy and the required Computer Applications class. At the time of the study she was working as an office aide.

Cathy had been recommended for the ISD program of extensive job shadowing experiences and qualified. Instead of the usual single experience during the junior year she had three job shadowing experiences that included extensive preparation and closure activities. As part of the program, transportation to and from the job locations was provided by the ISD. All of the experiences were based on her desire to work with children or elderly individuals (the YMCA, a day care facility, and a continuing care facility for the elderly) (Review of records).

Cathy had attended her IEP/ITP meetings and participated fully. She understood her learning style preferences and her accommodation and modifications as demonstrated during the student interview. When asked how the transition process could be improved she shared this philosophy: “ I don’t think you can decide, it just comes to you” (Student interview, 11/18/05). There seemed to be an underlying thread during the student’s and parent’s interview that transition preparation was ok, but when the time came it would just happen.

All four focal students that participated in the study were able to express their postsecondary goals in the following domains: (1) postsecondary education; (2) employment; (3) independent living, and (4) community participation/leisure activities. It was the student’s expressed transition goals that were used as the basis for designing their transition services and curriculum both within and outside of the observed

English/transition class. The focal students used the English/transition class period to work with the special education teacher on transition plans. These discussions and plans were then shared at the IEP/ITP meetings and enacted either within or outside the class.

Observations, interviews, and a review of the records indicated that the four focal students had different abilities, weaknesses, and transition goals. In keeping with transition best practices that are linked to successful postsecondary outcomes all of the four focal students were planning on graduating from high school and had considered postsecondary education as an option. They had all taken vocational classes and had employment experiences. All of the students had attended and participated in their IEP/ITP meetings during their high school years. They could communicate their needs for accommodations and modifications and could express how they learn. These four students all indicated that they could advocate for themselves. Agency connections were in place with at least one agency according to the expressed needs of the student.

The next section will explore the beliefs and expectations of the participating special education teacher.

Beth: The special education teacher.

Beth was the special education teacher that participated in the study. Her training was originally in elementary education with an emphasis in science. She had endorsements in the areas of Learning Disabilities and Hearing Impaired and a Masters degree in Administration. Her teaching experiences included 18 years of teaching special education, 11 of which had been at the high school where the study was conducted. Beth provided the opportunity for her students to gain experiences such as: (1) Job shadowing (one was required for all students attending the high school and when needed she

connected the student with the ISD for more intensive experiences, as in the case of Cathy), (2) Shared time programs, (3) Vocational classes, and (4) Co-op.

This special education teacher expressed her belief that students should not only be invited to their IEP/ITP but should attend the meetings. Her students did not lead the IEP/ITP meetings. However, she said that most of them would be able to do so. Beth shared a story about Cathy. It was during the student's last IEP/ITP meeting. The School Psychologist began the meeting and stated, "We are here today to decide if you need special education services." In response to this introduction to the meeting and comment, Cathy came right out and said, "Are you kidding? Of course I do" (Special education teacher interview, 11/3/05).

As a part of the transition process this teacher required her students to develop a list of both formal and informal resources. The formal connections or resources were a required component of the transition process and might include such agency connections as Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS), Planned Parenthood, Birthright, a library, or Family Independent Agency. The informal network was above and beyond what was mandated by law and was a network of individuals, places, and things that might help these students in the future. It was more informal than agency connections and might include friends, family, teachers, or anyone this individual considered important either now or in the future.

One of the improvements Beth wanted to see in special education and more specifically the transition process was to involve the parents more.

Beth: "That is probably one area that I am not happy with. I try to get as many people involved. There is one student for whom I have not met the

grandparents (the student's guardians)" (Special education teacher interview, 11/3/05).

The special education teacher believed in setting high expectations and giving students a chance:

Beth: "I have actually had people say no they couldn't take that because they wouldn't be able to do it. Well, that bothers me. We talk about things that they are expected to not do well on because traditionally we didn't have expectations for them, but if we raise that bar they can usually meet it. So it is you and the students that make those decisions" (Special education teacher interview, 11/3/05).

Beth believed it was important for students to be able to advocate for themselves.

Beth: "The real world is out there. I will not tell them it is ok, when it is not. I will give them alternatives and will give them my time. I worry about them with all their 'isms' and their issues and I try not to, but then they are seniors and they are leaving..." (Special education teacher interview (12/2/05).

Beth seemed to really care about preparing her students for life after high school and the "real world".

Beth was asked about her approach to teaching or her teaching style

Beth: "Well, I guess if I look at it because it is different and there are some people that don't deal with it good and you know I get people that think it is way too relaxed, way too unstructured, but I call it organized chaos, somewhat organized, but my plan is I don't want to remediate any more

they are not there for that any more. We have beaten our heads against the wall now for how many years to drill, drill, and drill. I will never accept the word stupid. I show them the bell shaped curve and I tell them they are all here. There are a few; there is nobody that is out down here. Everybody is normal. And they are like, we are? They don't know. They don't have any clue, nothing was ever said down there, they never told them, here is your IEP or why you are here, and it appalls me I just want them to know they haveAll they ever know is the deficit. It is time to start looking at what they can do and how they are going to be individuals and citizens and a part of the community when they leave here. My huge concern is that they are not going to have what they need then. I want to fire them up. I want them to want to learn and I ask those big questions and I don't know the answers to them so we have to find them together. And that's what I want to do. I want to set up situations where they kind of get pulled along to find the answers and it might not always be remediation. They are beyond that" (Special education teacher interview, 12/2/05).

During the member check, the researcher clarified Beth's beliefs about remediation and her role in her student's high school education:

Beth: "At this point there has been subject remediation using many strategies and I have to think that previous teachers have done the best they can. What they really need to have now is metacognitive awareness that they will struggle. They need to know how they tick and why they struggle.

These students must know how they learn best. They need help to understand that knowledge comes with practice and maturity. Some of what they have been taught will click with use out there. It doesn't happen until they see a purpose and application" (Special education teacher member check, 2/21/06).

Beth: (She went on to say). "What I provide in this class is the opportunity to practice and learn within this structured environment of the AED project. It is an opportunity for them to work and learn together, before they exit high school. It scares me to think of them leaving this place. I try to keep in touch with my students. I want to know what they are doing and how they are making it in the real world. They also seem to want to stay in touch and share accomplishments and trials" (Special education teacher member check, 2/21/06).

During observations there was no talk about the classroom rules nor did I notice any rules and consequences posted. It was during the member check with the special education teacher that this emerged as an issue. The rules, were indeed, posted on the front wall in small print (12 font). The teacher responded that the size of the posting should give me an indication of the importance of these rules in her class. It was mandatory that teachers post the rules and consequences for behavior in their classroom. I had not observed her teach the rules and consequences to the class. I asked her if she had reviewed and taught the rules prior to observations.

Beth: "No, because they do not play an important part in this class" (Member check, 2/21/06).

The teacher and the researcher talked about how few behavior issues had to be addressed during observations and how and why she thought that came about.

Beth: “I treat them like young adults. We are a team, a family. There are natural consequences for behaviors” (Special education teacher member check, 2/21/06). (She continued). “For example, I do not make a habit of referring students because of behavior issues. I deal with the issues myself. I let them learn from their choices. I try to facilitate active, meaningful learning and don’t have behavior problems” (Special education teacher member check, 2/21/06).

Beth continued to talk about her role as a special education teacher. She shared that there were students from another class period who were problematic in other classes, but not in her class. She was asked why she thought that was the case.

Beth: “I care, you (students) are here for a reason, you mean something to me. “I am lucky, I get to have a relationship with students that other teachers don’t get to have. I get to be real: they know me, I know them and we all get to know each other” (Member check, 2/21/06). She shared that other teachers may be afraid to cross the line and become viewed more as a buddy and less as a teacher. “I don’t have that problem” (Member check).

Beth has provided a lens through which to observe and understand her teaching and interactions with students. Her stated perspectives and beliefs shed light on how she, as a special education teacher, provided transition services for her students and attempted to prepare them for adulthood. It was her goal to expose the students to activities and

experiences that would promote transition from the high school setting adulthood, given that all four of the focal students had individualized goals and dreams for the future.

The first part of this chapter provided background information about the key participants in the study. The second part of chapter 4 will discuss the four themes that emerged from the data analysis in the enactment of transition within the classroom setting. Theme one, distributed learning in the community of practice will be discussed first. Then the transfer of control the teacher facilitated in the classroom setting will be addressed. The third theme, problem solving as a way of knowing, and finally, the last theme, creating places and spaces for giving students voice and experiences will be discussed. The four themes are distinct and yet interwoven and overlap. The examples given for each theme could be used as examples of other themes as well.

Theme One: Distributed Learning in a Community of Practice

Classroom. The physical arrangement of the classroom immediately spoke to theme one. At first glance the classroom appeared to be a normal high school classroom, with a white board and bulletin boards across the front of the room. There was a television monitor and VCR mounted in the top front, southwest corner of the room. Underneath this were three file cabinets. Along the entire west side of the room were windows over looking a courtyard. A shelf ran the length of the room under the windows, punctuated with an assortment of plants and belongings. The east wall contained many features: the classroom door, sets of bookshelves, a box for collecting cans, and emergency directions for tornado and fire emergencies. Also, along this wall were shelves and storage units where the students kept their portfolios, other papers, and belongings. In the back of the room a wall of blackboards extended most of the width of

the room with bulletin boards on both ends. These spaces were covered with information for the students, including a large poster for the United States Marine Corps. Located in the back east corner of the room was a row of bookshelves filled with books. In the opposite back corner was the teacher's desk, file drawers, and a computer; all in an L-shaped arrangement. It was a room Beth used in the morning to teach classes and shared with another special education teacher in the afternoon, while she was co-teaching classes in the general education classrooms (see Figure 2 Beth's Classroom).

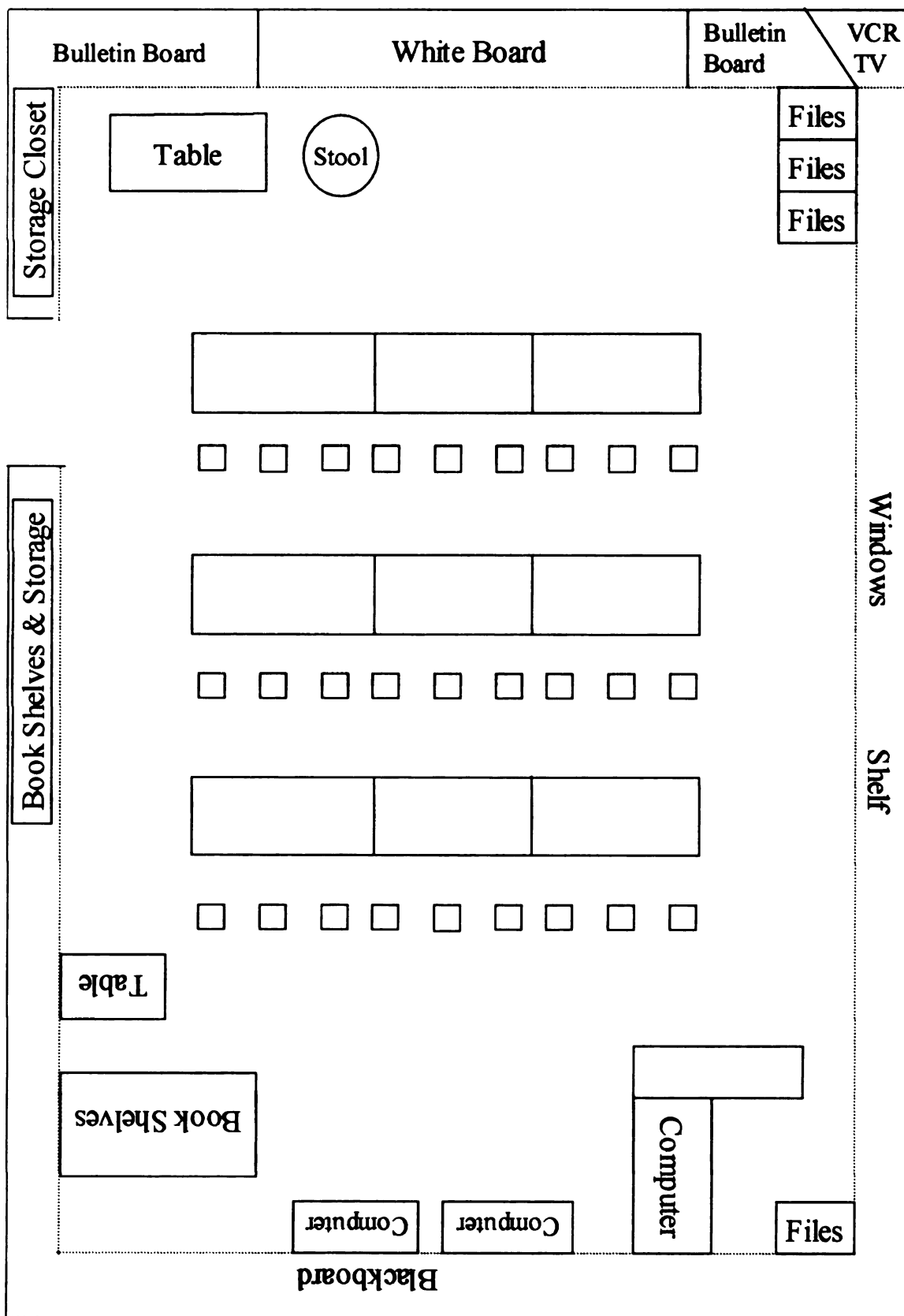


Figure 2 Beth's Classroom

The room arrangement suggested that there was a distribution of learning and a sharing of control between the teacher and the students. First, the teacher's desk was at the back of the room and students were allowed to use her desk and computer as part of their working space, when necessary. The use of the computer provided access to technology in the classroom for students. During the first observations the teacher's computer was the only one in the room, until mid-way through the study, when she purchased two older computers for the students' use.

Second, students worked at long tables instead of individual desks. The room was completely set up for cooperative work. Students were allowed to choose where they wanted to sit and with whom. There was no assigned seating. Many times students would sit in the same place; however, they were free to move about the room, as needed. For example, Sam talked about how hard it was for him to put in a full day at school and how difficult it was for him to sit for a period of time (Student interview, 11/3/05). Everyday, during class, Sam would get up from his seat (he chose to sit at the front table and in the seat closest to the door), walk over to the door, and stand quietly leaning against the doorjamb and listen. Eventually he would go back to his seat.

Typical class period. This "typical classroom" was transformed when both the teacher and students entered. In this class there were eleven students with learning disabilities, physical disabilities, and other health impairments. The classroom environment was welcoming where all were valued, listened to, and participated in the social construction of knowledge. The class period was divided into sections, which provided time for getting ready to learn, construction of knowledge, and closure. As

students entered the room they talked to each other and to the teacher, who was always available to them. They aired their joys and their issues during this transition period between when they entered the room and the time instruction began. However, I would argue that instruction or the construction of knowledge began the moment these students entered the room. Some examples of topics that were discussed during the beginning of class were: (1) the death of a former student that these students had known; (2) the death of the special education director over the summer; (3) a fight that occurred in the previous class period; (4) the pregnancy of a student; (5) several of the students having to take a test in the previous class period without their documented accommodations; and (6) teacher's and students' family issues. In the beginning, during the early observations, there was a concern, on my part, about the "waste of time" or the issue of "not starting class on time," or "time on task" and what the task really was at the beginning of the class period.

What became apparent after observations continued was, this really was a planned time and for the most part the teacher was not in a hurry to begin formal instruction. This was a time spent building community and trust. It was a time for the students to shift gears from outside considerations and issues to the task at hand: learning and constructing knowledge in this Senior English/Transition class. There was a reason (Special education teacher unstructured interview, 12/2/05) for using this time in this manner. It was a time during which the teacher and students talked about ways to handle situations and resolve problem. During this time the teacher would think aloud and model ways to appropriately problem solve. Students participated in discussions and expressed opinions. This was a time that apprenticed students into life skills that would

be needed in adulthood. We will look at this in more depth under the theme of problem solving as a way of knowing theme.

Once the students were ready to work or begin class, the teacher verbally presented the agenda or work for the day. Students were introduced to the topic of the day and what they were expected to accomplish during that class period. Sometimes it was an update or review of what took place during the previous class. Sometimes it included information that was new since the last class, as in the case of the AED project. During observations the “content” of the classes centered around four major topics: (1) updating of and writing for their Educational Development Plan (EDP), (2) working on the Automated Electronic Defibrillation (AED) Project, (3) preparing and testing for Michigan Education Assessment Program (MEAP), and (4) reading a book, which is a required component of the class. This was the formal curriculum. There were no textbooks used in this class, except the trade book the students read during the last part of observations.

There was, in reality, much more going on in this classroom. Work took place on transition content including: self-determination, self-advocacy, problem solving, and the opportunity to practice these skills. In addition, transition content was directly related to the specific individual IEP/ITP goals of the students. Transition curriculum was also related to transition practices such as: vocational classes, employment issues and experiences, and reading and writing skills (See summary of transition plans in Appendix P).

At the end of class, the teacher brought closure to the period by summarizing what was accomplished that day, stating what they needed to accomplish before the next

class period, or by connecting to what they would be working on during the next time they met. During most of the observation days, students stayed after class and into their lunch period to talk with the teacher. Beth, in turn, seemed to enjoy interacting with them, even though it cut into her lunchtime, as well. The students who stayed most frequently were three of the four focal students (Sally, Bruce, and Cathy). Sam left immediately after class for co-op. The only exceptions were on days when class was interrupted for Homecoming meetings, voting, or graduation meetings.

The stage was now set for the enactment of meaning in this English/transition class. The teacher's beliefs, the physical organization of the room for cooperative work, and the teaching style of the special education teacher made it possible to socially construct knowledge. Her teaching style lent itself to distributed learning. Rarely did Beth convey information through a lecture type delivery or direct instruction. Every day, time was spent in discussion between the teacher and the students. Sometimes Beth would present the topics for discourse and sometimes the students would. All four of the focal students participated to some extent, although Sam rarely participated. He would typically answer questions, when directly asked, and occasionally asked a question to clarify what he was to be working on. Bruce was sometimes off task and exhibited a degree of immaturity. At times he appeared tired, however, he was usually actively engaged in the discourse. Both Sally and Cathy actively participated during class: they asked questions, shared their thinking and knowledge, and clarified what was transpiring.

Connections to students' lived experiences. In this community of practice, the special education teacher consistently used instructional practices that made connections to the lives of the students. On the first day of observation Beth introduced me as a new

student. In the process of my introduction she talked about how, when they go to college, they will earn a Bachelor's Degree. The next level would be a Masters, and then a Doctorate degree. They talked about my Ph.D. and how it was not a medical doctor's degree, which would be an MD. The teacher then connected herself to the discourse and said: "I have a masters plus 18 credits" (Observation/field notes, 9/14/05).

During the next observation, Beth read the letter that informed their parents that I would be observing the transition class. She stopped to explain the word postsecondary. They discussed the letter and how important it was to make a good first impression. "This is important, the first time someone meets you may be you on paper and what you present is the first person they see" (Observation/field notes, 9/15/05). They talked about their experiences with first impressions. Some of the discourse was about: going to a job interview, preparing a resume, and a creating a business card. The class discussed the importance of presenting yourself in the best light; the importance of correct spelling, and the part writing plays in first impressions. The experience of getting a job was shared by all of the students. The students discussed what they had experienced and learned from, not only their experiences, but also the shared experiences of others. This was an example of construction of knowledge in a cooperative community.

A major manufacturing corporation's world headquarters was located in the area and many of the students' parents worked for the company. The teacher talked about how important it was for employees of Whirlpool to write and speak correctly when conducting business. Would they present a proposal to Maytag with incorrect spelling and poor grammar? (This was local news at the time of the study and very much a topic of discussion in the area).

The next connection, made by the teacher, was to high school teachers in the building and the principal. One of the students said that one of his teachers was always spelling words incorrectly. Beth immediately connected this to individual strengths and weaknesses. “Many of you have problems with spelling, so what do you do to make sure that you did not send out writing or turn in writing that has incorrectly spelled words?” Students said they could use spell check. Another suggested the dictionary. One said that thing you hold (Franklin Speller). They constructed a list of ideas of ways to help themselves when writing and trying to spell correctly.

Teacher’s personal narratives. An example of one way the special education teacher worked to distribute learning and power was to set up her life and experiences as lessons for the students. Beth often presented a problem in her life or the students asked her about things going on in her life, such as problems with her children, the divorce she went through, and ongoing custody issues (the teacher lived in the local community, her children attended the school district in which she taught, and many of the students knew the family). During observations, all of these topics became life lessons that were constructed in class. No issue seemed to be too personal or too off task.

One example of a topic the students brought up in class, related to the teacher’s son. The students knew that he had been injured and required surgery. The students knew the father did not want his son to go to the doctor initially. This seemed to bother the students and they wondered why. They wanted to know why he did not want his son to visit the doctor. They thought he did not love his son enough to take care of him. The students said he was mean. He was stupid. The teacher talked about some of their background history and that it really wasn’t that he didn’t want to care for his son but that

it had more to do with power and the relationship between the two adults. She talked about priorities and beliefs with the students.

The conversation then continued when one of the students asked where the surgery was to be done. The teacher replied that it would be done locally. The students said she was stupid, that the hospital had a bad reputation and her son would die. Instead of shutting down the conversation or telling them they were inappropriate in their comments, she talked about how she had made the decision. Discourse took place about her awareness of the hospital's reputation. She talked with them about what went into making the decisions: Listening to the doctor, trusting in the doctor, past experiences with this particular physician, health insurance, and proximity to home and the other children.

This became more than a distraction or tangent during class, it became a lesson in problem solving and life skills. The class constructed knowledge about how to deal with problems that occur in life. This was accomplished as a group of individuals, as equals. As the discourse unfolded, one could easily forget that there was a teacher and a room of students. There were no questions or comments that were disregarded as too unimportant and there were no apparent issues of power. Participants were observed to be of equal importance during this lesson.

Students were free to share their experiences, problems, questions, and comments during class, although, at times they were "off task" and didn't seem to relate to the topic at hand. Students' questions and ideas were valued as learning experiences. Moment- to- moment teaching and learning was evident in this classroom. Beth created a safe

environment for learning from mistakes. They were considered as tools for learning and discussed openly.

Instructional principles. Instructional principles of the teacher, evident during observations, helped to build a community of practice. Instructional principles of teaching observed during the study were numerous (See table of Best Practices for transition and instruction in Appendix S). Among the many teaching practices used by the teacher was cooperative learning, and in particular, partner work. The following example of partner work took place during the reading of Call of the Wild, by Jack London. Call of the Wild was chosen as the book to read during the semester of the study by the students and teacher together. The method used to identify this particular book for reading is discussed in the sections: Transfer of control and Creating places and spaces for giving students voice and experiences.

The students and teacher had just finished reading the first chapter of Call of the Wild. The activity, presented by the teacher, was to construct a time line of events that took place in the first chapter of the book. In the following transcript, the teacher utilizes several instructional principles that are illustrative of seeing her students as members of a community of practice where learning is distributed and shared among students. One of the most salient principles in the classroom was a cultural norm of students supporting one another through specific and positive praise. Throughout the observation period, student-to-student support was frequent, spontaneous, and usually unprompted by the teacher. Additionally students were encouraged to seek clarification of unclear terminology, participate in the joint and shared construction of meaning in a public

discourse, and have participation structures that encouraged one another to turn to each other for feedback on their work.

Teacher: “Let’s do a timeline, a sequential list of what has taken place in the book, so far”

Sally: “What does the word sequential mean?”

Teacher: “That means to put it in order” (brief discussion about brainstorming ensues). . “it isn’t in a certain order or number. So think of everything from the beginning to now. We have actually moved quite a distance.”

(The teacher is now at the white board modeling how students are to complete their assignment).

Teacher: “Just jot down ideas. Manuel was a traitor. I am going to give you seven minutes to write down everything you can think of” (Observation/field notes, 11/0/05).

Sam: (Got up and asked another student if they had to be in order). (Sam got up again and went back to the same student and asked if he had enough events).

Student # 1: “If that is all you can remember, ok, but see if you can think of more. Write something.”

Sam: (Sam went back to his seat and the student followed him and sat down and continued to support his work).

Student # 1: “You have the right idea” (Observation/field notes).

Even though students were provided with multiple chances to construct meaning within the whole group and with partners in the above exchange, students continued to

have a difficult time coming up with events from the chapter. The teacher provided an additional scaffold by presenting them with the option to use their chapter guide to help them continue work on the events for the timeline. Bruce was unable to generate any ideas, except the one the teacher modeled at the beginning of the period. Now that the students were using their chapter guide, all four of the focal students were able to generate a list of events. Sally, with the use of the guide had completed a list of events and had almost a page of ideas.

Next, Beth identified the second step for the timeline activity.

Teacher: "Partner up with somebody. I will not choose for you unless I have to"
(Observation/ field notes).

A student moved to sit with Sally. The student that had previously supported Sam's work moved back to partner with him. Bruce and Cathy did not have partners and Cathy began to work again on her ideas independently. After a few minutes these students decided to work together and Bruce moved over to work with Cathy.

Teacher: "When you get with your partner you will cut up your paper into strips of ideas and combine them on your desk in order. You can be adding to what you have. You are going to turn in a combined paper. The teacher passes out scissors to the partners. You will not glue them yet. Why are we working together? You are going to combine all your ideas and you may have different strengths" (Observation/field notes, 11/9/05).

Sally: "I can't cut. I can't cut straight" (Observation/field notes, 11/9/05).

Bruce and Cathy worked together and shared their ideas. Bruce, answered questions but didn't initiate the talk and did none of the cutting and arranging of idea

strips. Cathy did all of that work. Even though Cathy did the lion's share of the work, she gave Bruce credit for five of the ideas, when the teacher checked on the progress of their work.

Sam and his partner worked together. When they finished working with the ideas they had they went to the book and continued to generate ideas to add to their timeline. Sally and her partner continued to talk about the ideas and the timeline and her partner recorded the information. Cooperatively they had ten ideas or events on the paper. At the end of the period, the focal students had completed their generation of ideas or events for the timeline, cut them into strips, and organized them in sequence. The only exception was Sam and his partner; they had not done the cutting stage.

Work continued into another day. At this point, students, in partnership, were using the timeline to write an abstract or summary of the chapter. Sam and his partner could not find the work they had completed the previous period. Beth talked to them about their responsibility for their work. The students explained that they had put their work in the file drawer and now it was missing. There was a high level of frustration on the part of the two students. Beth simply said, "So redo it." Sam and his partner choose to write the paragraph from memory. They did not reconstruct the timeline, but began to write the summary.

Sam wrote while his partner told him what to write. They worked cooperatively and supported each other. By the end of the period they had a rough draft finished. As the period came to a close the teacher asked who was finished.

Sam: "We have a second paragraph."

Sally: "We have only one."

Teacher: "It is quality and not quantity that she is interested in. Did you edit?"

Sally& partner: "We edited for each other." (Observation/filed notes, 11/9/05)

(The three partnerships that contain the focal students had completed a rough draft to turn in).

Another indication of the distribution of power in this community, was the continual use of the word "we" instead of "I" or "you". For example, "We are going to the lab." or "We will be updating our EDPs." "We will be in charge of writing a grant proposal and training the staff of the buildings. "We will search for information today on the Automatic Electronic Defibrillator." (Observation/Field notes, 9/15/05). "What is our goal?" instead of what is my goal. (Observation/field notes 9/16/05). "We can work on that." (Observations/field notes, 11/1/05). "We need to keep going." "We have to be patient." (Observations/field notes, 12/5/05). These are just samplings of the inclusive language used during class.

Summary

In the first section we have listened to the voices of the teacher and the students who socially constructed both English and transition knowledge in a community of practice that valued voice and experiences of all individuals in the classroom. The teacher had created an environment in which learning was distributed among the members of the class. Students were safe to work together and support each other in construction of knowledge. In the student interviews all four of the focal students had reported a preference for the special education class setting for learning. The transition content that was embedded included: (1) choice making; (2) communication skills; (3) problem

solving; (4) academic skills as identified in student IEPs; and (5) work on transition goals. The next theme addresses problem solving as a way of knowing.

Theme Two: Problem solving as a way of knowing

Problem solving as a way of knowing was apparent throughout class periods. It was a thread that continued from the first day of observation to the last day. All content, both formal and informal, was set up as a problem to be worked out and solved cooperatively. As theme one addressed, the teacher provided an environment or community that was conducive to the construction of knowledge in a cooperative setting.

Thinking aloud. One of the strategies the teacher modeled was thinking aloud as a strategy for problem solving. Some examples of problem solving as a way of knowing included the AED project, MEAP work, the Call of the Wild reading, and student presented content.

As discussed in the previous theme, when students entered the classroom there was time for them to gather their thoughts, express their issues, and in general prepare themselves for the work that would follow. Beth was providing a time for students to share and work out cooperatively some of their issues. It was a time used to infuse transition curriculum and transition best practices into the work of the day.

Shared discourse. Beth apprenticed students in the way of solving problems. An example of problem solving as a way of knowing occurred the first day I was in class. This was shortly after Hurricane Katrina and during this time many were seeking ways in which to help the victims. This school was no exception. A student (not a member of the class) came to talk to the class about donating money to the cause ("1 and 10" was the

name of the project). Students were being asked to donate one dollar every day for ten days. They were reminded that they only had to give up buying a coke each day.

After the student left the discourse turned to other ways of providing assistance to those in need. The class talked about giving cash and how you are not sure it will get to the people who are in need. The solution they came up with was to give to an organization that would over see the monies.

The students and teacher talked about giving clothing and the issues surrounding that mode of assistance. Organizations, at the time, were saying individuals should not donate clothing. The students decided this was because clothing was too bulky and maybe not the sizes needed or in the condition needed. There would be the problem of no place to store the clothes or clean and prepare the clothes for those in need. The students thought that there was, however, an immediate need for underwear. Discourse continued about how this would be less problematic than most clothing and more of an immediate need.

The students thought that gift cards to places such as Wal-Mart, Lowe's, and fast food places might be a good idea. Also, consideration was given to large items that were needed, such as chainsaws, washers and dryers. It was at this point the teacher directed the discourse to, "What are some other things you would need if your home were destroyed?" (Observation/field notes, 9/14/05). The discourse now became a discussion of what one needed to exist on a day-to-day basis. The discussion was also connected to the local community, as one of the firemen from the community was down in New Orleans helping out. Not fighting fires but doing what needed to be done.

Motto: “The percept is the product”. In this section Beth creates metamessages for students about her belief in the writing process and the effort that goes into creating quality work. Problem solving as a way of knowing was also extended to student writing. This special education teacher had a motto: “The percept is the product.” This motto was connected to student’s life experiences and to their written work. Writing in her class was a process: not a matter of writing for a grade. Students never just turned in a paper for a grade and then moved on to the next assignment. Students turned in a rough draft of a paper for correction and then worked on perfecting it. This final copy was “perfect”.

One day during observations the teacher was going through the papers to be sure everyone had turned in a paper. A student had turned in a rough draft but not a final copy (a copy without errors). “We do power writing, why?” (Observation/field notes 10/18/05). She asked me if I could turn in my dissertation with errors. Between the rough draft of a paper and the final draft students usually participated in the process of discovering both what needed to be corrected and how to correct the errors. Previously used strategies were brought into play as well as strategies such as thinking aloud and partnering with a knowledgeable other.

An example of construction of knowledge, in this case, was learning to create a piece of writing with no errors. During observations, students were continually working on writing goals, either through writing for their EDPs, working on the AED project, preparing for the MEAP test, or working on a summary for Call of the Wild. On a few occasions the teacher would hand back a corrected rough draft, however, the more common scenario was for the teacher and student to work together to correct the rough draft.

The following vignette highlights Sam's struggle to construct a quality piece of written work. During one of the last observation periods, this student brought in his floppy disk and said that it saved only one paragraph of his writing. He took his disk to the computer and began to work on his paper. The students had recently taken assessments that measured their learning styles and multiple intelligence profiles. The students were asked to write a paper that summarized this information. The transcript allows the reader to experience how difficult it was for Sam to construct this work and how the teacher scaffolded and mediated the work for this student. The teacher joined Sam at the computer and helped him to double space his work.

Teacher: "Have you spell checked the work?"

Sam: "Yes."

The teacher read his work out loud. The student corrected and she helped him.

Teacher: "Body intelligence." (the teacher had to spell "intelligence" three times before the student entered it correctly).

They came to a word with a red line and she directed him to right click on the word to see what the computer said.

Teacher: "Trying this out is a good way for me to learn." (She continued to read) "...because of working with it helps me most of all."

(Beth questioned him about words that would work better)

Teacher: "Don't use pronouns so much." (Using this process, they completed correcting of the existing paragraph).

Now the student needed to write a second paragraph about another way he learns.

Sam: "Oh, alright my second most number 2 way of learning is..."

Teacher: "Here is a strategy, type it and when the computer gives you a red line, right click and see what the computer says. You are wrong, now see what it says and it gives you two choices and you can choose."

Writing continued. Together they worked on the word, information.

Teacher: "You are missing a sound. You have "inform and now add "tion".
"Perfect. Perfect. You need to write out the numbers and not put the actual number. Read on, does that make sense?"

Sam: "No."

Teacher: "All right, now you go to self-smart. If you want to add another strength or idea you have to add a new paragraph." (He continued to work on his paper).

(The teacher read his work).

Teacher: "I don't like the maturity of saying smarts. Let's use another word. I learn and...I guess what you need to do is think about why you are talking about this. You could put this as your conclusion instead."

Sam: "Working with other people and using my hands and using pictures are all things that I can use to learn. It is good for me to be alone and think".

Teacher: "Mention this and this and this and use this sentence and write a final sentence. These are effective ways for me to learn."

Teacher instructed him to highlight the section he no longer wanted and if you type it will wipe all this out. Work on the student's paper continued most of the class period.

Teacher: "This is the unveiling."

(The student printed and turned in his paper).

Teacher: "It is a full page. It is beautiful. I need two copies, one for your portfolio. Go grab your portfolio and we are going to put this in."

As a result of this co-construction of the paper the student had raised his grade from an F to a C+. This was important, because he needed this class for graduation. The student was smiling.

Summary

This section discussed the second theme, problem solving as a way of knowing. It highlights how Beth situated the social construction of knowledge in a problem-solving format. Beth taught her students how to problem solve using multiple instructional practices that are tenants of sociocultural theory. She used think-alouds, modeling, presented and used issues and problems that were important to the students including but not exclusive to narratives and problems from her own life. The problem solving in Beth's class ranged from situations that arise in everyday life to how to construct a correctly written piece of work for others to read. The use of issues that were meaningful to the students as either brought forward by the students themselves or presented by the teacher provided the experience that the transition literature reports as one factor that may promote more successful adult outcomes (Field & Hoffman, 1998). The ability to successfully problem solve is a skill that is linked to successful postsecondary outcomes for youth with learning disabilities. Beth continually facilitated student experiences that might promote successful problem solving independently.

The transition content in this section consisted primarily of problem solving. Students also learned and practiced self-determination and self-advocacy skills. They used communication skills during cooperative problem solving and class discourse that

would serve them in adulthood. During the process of cooperative problem solving the special education teacher apprenticed the students in how to appropriately react to situations and issues that will confront them in the future as adults and work through their problems.

Theme Three: Transfer of Control

The third theme to emerge from the study was the transfer of control from the teacher to the students. As discussed prior to this section the themes are interwoven. This section will discuss some examples of how the special education teacher accomplished the transfer of control.

Student responsibility to academic and behavioral standards. Student responsibility was valued in this community of practice. There were several examples of transfer of control from the teacher to the students during observations. One example, was actually so embedded in Beth's teaching style and philosophy that it did not present itself until the end of the study. It surfaced during the final member check with the special education teacher when the subject of classroom management and rules was discussed. The special education teacher and the researcher talked about the lack of behavior problems with the focal students in the class. Beth stated that the rules for the classroom were posted in the front of the classroom, as required. However, they were on a single sheet of computer paper and in 12 font. She said that the size and space the rules took up were an indication of how important they were in her class. They did not play an important part in this class. "I treat them like young adults. We are a team, a family. There are natural consequences for behaviors" (Special education teacher member check, 2/21/06). The responsibility for student behaviors was effectively transferred from the

teacher to the student. Student choices were their responsibility as well as the consequences.

Another example of students being held accountable or responsible was during the Automatic Electronic Defibrillator (AED) project. During the project, students were accountable for information pertinent to the project. They spent time in the computer lab and the media center and searched for information that facilitated the AED project. All of the students in the class were given yellow folders and were responsible for them. Not only were students held accountable for the project information, they were responsible for searching for, organizing, and disseminating this information. The AED project was truly in their hands. The teacher initially suggested the project then apprenticed the work. The AED project will be covered in greater detail in theme four: creating places and spaces for giving students voice and experience.

Role of technology in supporting learning. As a means of transferring control, students were given tools to accomplish their goals. One of the most important and most used tool for these students was technology. Students used technology as a means to take control over their learning. During the thirty-one observations conducted during this study, technology was use by students to either aide in the process of writing, search for information for the AED project, or to search book reviews. It was found that students were actively engaged in the use of technology during twenty-two of the thirty-one class periods or 70% of the periods observed. Students also used technology; in the form of the parent viewer (student viewer) to self- monitor their assignment completion, grades on assignments and tests, and attendance.

Students participated in inventories and assessments that allowed them to better understand their learning styles and how they could facilitate learning for themselves.

All of the students, during the interview sessions, could explain their learning styles.

Sally: "I need visual to understand what they are talking about" (Student interview, 11/3/05).

She could also express her need to work on her reading skills (Student interview, 11/3/05).

Sam would talk about being a visual learner, but also more of a hands-on person.

Sam: "I like to get out and do stuff. I can't sit very long at school" (Student interview, 11/3/05).

Bruce mentioned visual learning as his best way of learning and the need to participate in a way that would allow him to get up and do something rather than just listening to a teacher lecture (Student interview 11/3/05).

Another example of transfer of control from the teacher to the students took place when it was time to choose a book to read for the semester. Students in this class, as laid out in the curriculum, were required to read a book sometime during the semester.

Instead of assigning a book to read, the teacher chose an alternative approach. The announcement was made:

Teacher: "In the next nine weeks we have to read a novel. We have this novel that we read every year about the holocaust. It is a dark and true-life horror. It is like watching Schindler's List over and over again. In our library, in the classroom, we have a series of books." (Observation/field notes, 11/1/05 p. 90).

(The teacher starts pulling books off the shelves and sharing what has been read in the past and giving a short synopsis of the books)

Teacher: “There are so many books, I wanted to find one we would enjoy”.

Sally: “I don’t read books. I read little books when I do” (Observation/field notes p. 90).

Bruce: “We could read Moby Dick.”

Teacher: “I have a unit all ready for that book, it would be easy to pull together.”

Students are now suggesting books they are interested in or have already read:

Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea, The Crucible, The Old Man and the Sea, The Pearl, and The Lord of the Flies.

Teacher: “What we are going to do is read book reviews and choose three books and then decide which book to read. I will buy the book we decide on.”

Student: One student suggests they go to the Media Center to search for reader reviews on line.

The teacher checks to see if the Media Center has room for them.

Teacher: “ Let’s take our stuff to the library and search IRA and Amazon.com”
(Observation/field notes, p. 90).

The remainder of that class period was spent on book review searches. All of the students were actively engaged in searching the web sites designated, sharing their findings with the teacher and other students, and printing materials to share at a later time. As students were working the teacher modeled how to search. During this time, the teacher was alternately talking with students and searching for book reviews to share.

During the next observation, students were sharing with the class their suggestions and short reviews of the books in which they were interested. There was not a consensus of what to read. The teacher tried another strategy and asked students to write down topics they were interested in reading about. Given the book reviews and the kinds of books they were interested in (adventure, outdoors, reality or survival, and animals) the book Call of the Wild was chosen.

The final example of transfer of control, involved Bruce. He wanted to drop a class and said he had not wanted to take the class in the first place. According to Bruce, the teacher was driving him crazy and always picked on him.

He asked the special education teacher to help him.

Bruce: "Will you get me out of the class?"

Teacher: "No, but you can and I will sign off. Talk to the guidance counselor and explain why you want to drop the class. Tell her what is going wrong in the class. Be sure to check with her on whether you can afford to drop the class. Work out what you will replace the class with"

(Observation/field notes, 9/19/05)

On September 21st, Bruce was called out of class and later returned excited. He was out of the class and had replaced it with a better choice. He had accomplished his goal. He used the right channels and approached the task in an appropriate, mature manner and was successful. The teacher could have done it for him, but instead transferred control and responsibility to him. This was a life lesson for Bruce in how to accomplish change in an appropriate way.

Beth achieved a transfer of control in this setting from the teacher to the students. She seemed secure in her teaching style. She was comfortable sharing power and control with her students. She understood that students made mistakes and set up an environment where those mistakes became instructive. This setting was not defined by the physical attributes of the room itself, but defined by an environment that allowed for the social construction of knowledge, and more specifically transition knowledge. Students were provided authentic learning activities that were meaningful to them. By using this structure that allowed for the participation of students and transfer of control of the discourse and social practices to others, students were able to manage their own learning (Englert, Berry, Dunsmore, 2001). During an interview, Sally said, "I know how to help myself in reading" (Student interview, 11/3/05).

Summary

In this section on the transfer of control we discussed how Beth, the special education teacher, achieved what could be considered a balance of power within the classroom. Sociocultural theory includes the issue of a balance of power between the knowledgeable others and those they are apprenticing into cultural practices. Beth worked within students' zone of proximal development (ZPDs). She was particularly careful not to over scaffold and only provide enough support necessary to allow the students to assume control of their learning. This is equally important in the transition process. Students needed to know and experience self-determination skills. The skills that are inherent in dealing with control as an adult include: knowing and valuing themselves as individuals. They will need to know how to plan and act on their plans and goals. Ultimately these individuals will need to know and have experience dealing with

the consequences of acting on their plans and evaluating those consequences (Field & Hoffman, 1998). Beth, set up opportunities for her students to learn and experience having control over decisions in the classroom, which could then serve as concrete exemplars for developing these skills and their use as they became increasingly independent adults.

Theme Four: Creating Places and Spaces for Giving Students Voice and Experience

The transition literature says that youth should be self-determined and self-advocate for themselves. A self-determined individual is one who could be defined as: One's own fate or course of action is in their hands, free will (The American Heritage Dictionary, 1992), or "The capacity to choose and to have those choices be the determinants of one's actions" (Deci & Ryan, 1985), or "One's ability to define and achieve goals based on a foundation of knowing and valuing oneself" (Field & Hoffman, 1998), or finally, "Making our own decisions" (Sitlington, Clark, Kolstoe, 2000). For students to be able to do this, according to Field, they must know themselves and value themselves, plan, act, and experience outcomes and learn from those outcomes (Field & Hoffman, 1998).

Both the school and the teacher had created a place and space for student voice and experience through the Senior English/Transition class. This class met multiple needs. It served as another English credit for high school students with disabilities and it served to provide a setting for transition planning and work to take place. Both IEP and transition goals were addressed through the curriculum in this dual content class.

Students constructed and developed their own Educational Development Plan, they participated in the generation of transition goals along with other key stakeholders,

and the four focal students participated in assessments that revealed their strengths, interests, needs, and learning styles. The focal students were not only invited to their IEP/ITP meetings they actively participated to varying degrees (Special education teacher interview, student interviews, IEP/ITP forms).

Authentic learning project: Automatic Electronic Defibrillator (AED) Project

During the time frame of the study the special education teacher provided an opportunity for her students to construct and participate in an authentic learning/service project. This project provided places and spaces for giving students voice and experience. It also afforded an opportunity for students to address their IEP/ITP goals in a meaningful way. Students constructed knowledge in a cooperative environment that was not only imperative for the project, but also for the postsecondary settings they would enter at the end of the year.

Teacher: “We are going to start a project that will use and link community resources. It is going to demand that you give it your full effort.”
(Special education teacher, observation/field notes, 9/15/05).

The project proposed to the class was to get AEDs for all the buildings in the school district.

Student: “Why”?

Teacher: “I am going to read a story that will tell more.” (The teacher read the story about AEDs). “We will be in charge of writing a grant proposal and training staff” (Observations/field notes, 9/15/05).

Students were already demonstrating interest by asking questions about where they will locate the units, how many they will need, etc.

The teacher talked about the need to search for information on AEDs.

Teacher: "I do not want to be the one to organize this. I want you to be involved and responsible. Everyone will play a part and will rely on each other" (Observation/field notes, 9/15/05).

The teacher wrote down ideas students generated. There was a sense of excitement in the room. Everyone seemed to be talking at once. Beth writes on the board:

Searches: cases or actual situations and communities that have implemented programs.

Need to consider: networking, training, money.

Funding: our school has an excellence foundation.

It is important to note that during the past summer this school's special education director died of a heart attack at the age of 35. He was well respected by both students and others. He was known and liked by the students. He was very hands on and was often in the classroom. This project was a meaningful endeavor to the students partly because of this recent incident.

Teacher: "This is our project."

Sally: "They think we are stupid. Will they trust us?"

Teacher: "Of course they will trust us. Power writing, why do I do this with you? In this proposal they will see perfect writing" (Observation/field notes, 9/15/05).

The class left for the computer lab. Some students continued their work on the EDPs and some searched for information on AEDs. Examples of information found on

AEDs included a grant found by Bruce. Another student found information on survival rates (there was a 80% survival rate, if it was used right away). The teacher had distributed yellow folders for students to keep printed materials for the project to be shared and used at a later time.

Teacher: "We will collect and share information, then synthesize and make decisions in a group meeting. We will decide as a group what we need and what we don't."

The teacher moved around the room and helped students think through how they searched and understood the importance of what they had found.

Teacher: "At this point we can't discount anything. This is a step-by-step process."

(While students searched there was ongoing discourse).

Teacher: "It won't cost anything to apply for the grant."

Student: "What would happen if used on a person who wasn't in cardiac arrest?"

Teacher: "It won't work." Also, while students are searching, there was teaching going on in the area of technology.

Teacher: "You understand, if you put it in quotations, it means it will look for just that" (Observation/filed notes, 9/15/05).

(The next class period that was observed:

Teacher: "I was doing some thinking as I was driving into work, driving past the soccer field; I spend most of my life at the field (she is the girls soccer coach). I have a habit of starting something and letting it go. This is a bad habit. This we will see through." We are going to brainstorm in a few

minutes. What does it mean to implement something? That means to get it out there and start it up.” “What is our goal?” “What is our mission?”

(Discourse took place on mission statements for the school and for places of business where various students worked.

Teacher: “What will be our mission statement? We need to establish our goal.

Write on your paper: mission statement or goal. What do we want to do?”

Student’s discourse continued and the teacher was writing on the board. Now they had a statement: “We want to provide automatic external defibrillators to each school in the school district”.

Teacher: “Now somebody tell me why”.

Sally: “One student (from another school in the area) died during a basketball game.”

Teacher: “What did you read in your materials?”

Bruce: “There was an 80% number” and then reads: “In most cases of defibrillator therapy 80-90% of the victims, within two minutes survive.”
(Observation/field notes. 9/21/05).

As this period continued students asked questions, clarified their understanding, and cooperatively reviewed information found in their searches. There was discourse about how many AEDs would be needed. The class talked about for whom they were doing the project. Not one student said it was for a grade. The theme of the discourse was that the class was doing the project for the school, but their project would impact the entire community.

Student: “We are doing it for the kids, we have a good idea.”

Student: “ It will help all the people that come to the school.” It will set an example for schools.

The students and teacher came to a consensus that it was in reality a community project. Consensus was a word the students were not familiar with.

Teacher: “What does this mean? Consensus is total agreement. A majority is not a consensus.”

Discourse about voting in elections and jury duty and verdicts continued. This again related to current student knowledge and extended their knowledge of the world in a meaningful way. The teacher concluded that consensus was rare.

As discourse continued, some of the topics discussed were the Good Samaritan Law, No Fault Insurance, and personal feelings about treating and helping people. Ethical questions that surrounded providing assistance to individuals in need was addressed.

Teacher: “Think out loud with me. We need to get a letter to companies. Here is what I would like you to do. Take home the packet and look it over”

We need to set a timeline, immediate goals and ultimate goals.

(Observation/field notes).

Sally took notes and had become the secretary for the project. The class cooperatively constructed groups of workers and listed their responsibilities. These were the committees generated:

Legal Directions Leader: focal student one

1. Good Samaritan Law
2. School Law – District policy

Medical Direction and Training Leader: non-focal student

1. Letters to Fire Dept, Police, Nurse and Dr. (specific contacts were listed).
2. Arrange for training of task force members and staff.

Budget Leader: Cathy

1. Proposed cost
2. Secure grant monies
3. Purchase

Equipment Leader: Cathy

1. Choose vendor
2. Compatibility with local EMS
3. Criteria for Selection
 - a. Compatible
 - b. Suggested-used in the area
 - c. Ease of use-clear prompts
 - d. Pre connected electrodes
 - e. Maintenance free batteries
 - f. Repair? Training included?

Biological Leader: Non focal student

1. Information on cardiac arrest, fibrillation
2. How the AEDs work

Case Studies Leader: Bruce and a non focal student

1. Find public schools using AEDs
2. Research and collect data on “saves” using AEDs
3. Report on findings

As students worked on this list, the teacher recorded their work on the board. Later, posters for each group were made and displayed around the room for future reference.

Teacher: “We will celebrate what we have accomplished. We need to think about our timelines.”

Students asked if they were now going to have to drop the project and move to something else for the semester. They decided that they were moving quickly and should be organized by Thanksgiving.

Teacher: “Then, hopefully, purchase the units in the spring and then begin training.”

Cooperatively they decided that a year’s goal had been established. The students wanted to put this project in the local newspaper and start contacting police, fire, etc. They also

needed to get permission for the project from the superintendent of schools. Also, they needed permission from the school board. A distinction was made between telling the superintendent and school board and asking permission in an adult/professional manner.

It was decided that the adult/professional approach to ask for permission to conduct the project was to write a letter of introduction and include information about the project. The students wanted to know what would happen if they said no.

Teacher: "I can't imagine they would say no, but we need to do this before we put too much work into this. Let's jot down ideas for the letter."

It was decided that the letter would include the name of their organization, explain the goal, outline the plan/timeline, and ask for assistance. The students and teacher also decided that the letter should first go to the superintendent of the school district and then to the list of other individuals they had compiled.

Teacher: "Perhaps I should erase the board, has everyone taken notes, and someone should come up and write on the board."

They asked if Cathy would come up and record on the board for the class.

Cathy: "I don't know how to spell."

Teacher: "We will all help"

There were questions about the group name, what to say, and a lot of discourse took place, but not much actually got written down. Students were to take home the ideas and come back to work on the letter.

The class had two responses to their project. The superintendent was interested and wanted them to refine their ideas, make an appointment with his secretary, and he would listen to their presentation of the project. They had also had a response to verbal

discussion of the project from a local doctor who said it was a big waste of money. The teacher asked why this kind of response from the doctor was good for the project.

Bruce: (Wanted to know if the teacher asked him (the doctor), why he thought the project was a waste of money.)

Teacher: “He said, ‘How many students have had a heart attack at the school?’
He set up a perfect opportunity to prove to him this was important. We need to come up with proof that they are effective.”

They talked about the case studies they found that would serve as proof.

Teacher: “We need to come up with pros and cons.”

Students wanted to know what that meant. This became a lesson for the students in how to negotiate and argue a point. Students learned how to turn a negative into a positive situation.

Teacher: “We can either sway him or dump him.”

The students chose to take up the challenge and sway the doctor. It was decided to go back to the computer lab and do searches for cons so they would know what they were talking about. Work began on constructing a folder of pros and cons to present. They already had a good start on the pros or positive cases and information.

This was where the students were when observations were completed, due to MEAP and the course requirements. However, when I returned to do a member check with the teacher, she reported that the project had been picked up again and was well on its way. The superintendent’s only concern was with liability and research was being done with the school lawyers.

The AED project described above helped create places and spaces for giving students voice and experiences in the classroom, the school, the school district, and the community. During this project, this community of practice incorporated transition content including: self-determination, problem solving, and community connections. The project also addressed student IEP goals, such as: basic reading skills, reading comprehension, writing, and math skills. Technology played a huge role in the construction of the project and students' knowledge. As the project emerged, the teacher used multiple instructional practices: (1) to engage students in constructing meaningful knowledge; (2) to transfer the control of the project from the teacher to the students; (3) to set up problems that would be a way of knowing; and (4) to distribute learning in a community of practice.

During the AED project there was a sense of growing student competency and pride in their work that could be heard in student discourse. The special education teacher apprenticed these students in real life decision-making, communication, team-work, and how to identify a problem, gather information, and use the information to reach completion of a task. This was a project that afforded the students the opportunity to feel valued and important in the context of their school and community. At the beginning students expressed a lack of confidence in words like, "will they trust us", "they think we are stupid." However, by the end of observations students had achieved a mission statement for the project, contacted school and community personnel, gathered information relative to the AED project, and gained acceptance for the project. Students were exhibiting confidence in their work.

Places and spaces for student voice and experience. During observations there were multiple times students were provided with places and spaces for voice and experience. We have already talked about many of those: experiences problem-solving related to daily issues, the process of choosing the required book to read, and the AED project. Now we will look at the experience of reading a book in this English/Transition class. During student interviews, the four focal students reported that they preferred to be in a special education class instead of a general education class. Not only did they prefer to be in this setting but also they felt they learned more in this setting. Most would consider the special education classroom more restrictive, but according to these students it was just the opposite. They felt freer to ask questions and participate in the learning process. It seemed, that in this setting, it was the special education classroom that was the least restrictive environment for this group of focal students.

Once Call of the Wild was chosen jointly, by the students and the teacher, work began. From the very beginning, student work was scaffolded by the knowledgeable other, which in most cases was the teacher. Before reading started, the teacher passed out a reading “handout”. This handout or guide consisted of vocabulary words and questions for the students to use while reading the first chapter.

Teacher: “These are what I want you to look for. First, we start with the vocabulary words” (Observation/field notes, 11/4/05).

The teacher read the list of words. Then she came to one she said did not know.

Beth: (She said to the students): “This word I can’t pronounce, hey I don’t know what it is (artesian well)” (Observation/ field notes, 11/4/05).

After reading the entire list, she told the students to circle the ones that they knew and underline the words they had heard of but didn't know the meaning. As the teachers re-read the words, students followed directions. Sally asked for clarification of the directions.

Reading began with the teacher reading out loud to the students the summary of the story. They then talked about the title of the story and why it was so important. They next located the Puget Sound (location of the story) on a map and talked about the names of the characters in the story (they are difficult to pronounce, some are French, and not names we commonly hear today).

The rules for reading were explained by the teacher.

Teacher: "I will get us started into this and then you will read. When you are reading no one interrupts or says anything. It is your responsibility to figure it out. This is in your IEP objective. We all have trouble. That is why I told you about my word that I do not know" (Observations/field notes, 11/4/05).

Cathy was an example of one focal student's work. She started reading and struggled over a word.

Teacher: "Look at your vowel".

Student gets the word and continues to read the sentence.

Cathy: "What does "shrewd" mean?"

The student continued to read and encountered another word she had to work out, this time the teacher told her to look at the ending. The student figured out the word. The student then reached another word and laughed.

Cathy: "I am not going to try that word" (enthusiastically).

Teacher: "How would you find out the meaning of the word?"

Student: "Skip it."

Teacher: "No, what can we do? This is a huge word. You can still figure out what it means. Let's predict here. We can't read 'enthusiastically,' is it positive or negative? We can put some meaning to it."

The student now encounters an especially difficult section and the teacher took over reading. What made this section more difficult was the use of "dialect" and words put together or combined words. They talked about the meaning of "druthers" and "woodav."

Teacher: "Take over" (to Cathy) (Observation/filed notes)

Cathy read another sentence and another without error. She was reading slightly less than fluently. She stumbled over a word again (consignment), worked on it two times and got it herself. The class talked about the meaning and Cathy clarified the meaning and reading continued. At no time did students in the class provide help or cause the student any reason for discomfort. Students were allowed to struggle, up to a point, and received support was negotiated between the teacher and the student. Students and the teacher were allowed to make mistakes and these mistakes were used as teachable moments to advance the learning of the individual student, while also reinforcing a larger group norm that mistakes were simply problems to be solved (rather than denied or avoided). They were allowed to work at solving their reading problems with support: encouragement, reminders of which strategies to use for the specific problem, and the

freedom to experience success. Students thought aloud, a strategy that had consistently been modeled by the teacher.

This theme, creating places and spaces for giving students voice and experience, gave examples of how this special education teacher allowed students to have a voice in and experience their learning. “Students with learning disabilities should be involved in complex discourses and literacy processes While being supported in the areas in which they needed assistance” (Englert, 1992, as cited in Englert, Berry, & Dunsmore, 1992). In this case the teacher had allowed students to “co-participate in literacy practices and see practice-related principles in action” (Englert, Berry, & Dunsmore, 2001). Even though, the students did not read without error or fluently, these students were not exempt from participation in the “learning-to-learn process and the cultural work of the classroom” (Englert, 2001).

Summary

Distributed learning in a community of practice, creating places and spaces for giving students a voice and experience, transference of control by the teacher to the student, and problem solving as a way of knowing were interwoven in the environment of the observed classroom. They were all important aspects of the social construction of knowledge that was found in this classroom. It was a safe and comfortable place for learning to take place with the apprenticeship of knowledgeable others (teacher and students). Students, as reported during their interviews, unanimously preferred the special education class to the general education classroom. They reported that they learned more in the special education setting. Some of the reasons given for the reasoning

was that they could progress at a slower pace or at their own pace, they felt comfortable asking questions and receiving answers, and they could get help when needed.

The teacher's beliefs and teaching practices were an important factor in this environment that allowed for the social construction of knowledge and maximizing learning. So often, especially in special education, remediation is still taking place at the high school level. Students are often provided with a very narrow curriculum that is taught out of context and therefore has little meaning to the students. Transition curriculum not only addressed the present, but also allowed students to prepare for a future in a meaningful manner. Learning became connected to their dreams and goals as stated on their transition plans, their EDPs, and during interviews. With mediated learning and technology, students gained control over and could monitor their learning.

Beth privileged activity in her classroom. Meaningful activities were continually provided for students with a focus on gaining skills that would promote successful transition to adulthood for students. Transition content was deeply embedded in the activities and textbooks, worksheets, and tests were not used in the class. However, linkages between what occurred in the classroom and what skills students needed after high school were seldom addressed. The major exception was in writing. Beth continually connected the need for good writing and how it might impact their employment in the future. Although skills in problem solving, self-determination, and self-advocacy were promoted in the classroom linkages were not made to their importance for postsecondary setting for these students.

If society must be considered the determining factor in human behavior (Wertsch, 1985) and transition laws mandate "a coordinated set of activities" be in place for

students with disabilities (IDEA, 2004), there seems to be agreement that society plays a crucial role in the construction of knowledge and the preparation for postsecondary settings. The crux of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, is that learning is situated in social relations: "social relations or relations among people genetically underlie all higher functions and their relationships (Wertsch, 1981 as cited in Wertsch, 1985).

Transition for youth with disabilities in high school is all about preparing them for their postsecondary life and the zone of proximal development is primarily about "predicting future growth" (Wertsch, 1985, p. 67). In transition, students are guided to develop goals in areas of: education, employment, independent living, community, and daily living skills. Vygotsky, or Soviet research, was distinguished from American research in the following quote:

"American researchers are constantly seeking to discover how the child came to be what he is; we in the USSR are striving to discover not how the child came to be what he is, but how he can become what he not yet is" (Leont'ev, 1977, as cited in Wertsch, 1985, p. 67)

In this English/Transition classroom there was not only a blending of transition and English content there was a marriage of transition best practices and best practices in instructional principles that set the stage and facilitated the construction of knowledge. The transition goals for the four focal students were embedded in these best practices and became the guidelines for instruction. Although this special education teacher did not know of Vygotsky or sociocultural theory, she was using critical teaching strategies that have come to be associated with them: scaffolding, apprenticeship, modeling, cooperative and partner work, transfer of control, and using the zone of proximity.

She gave the students tools to aide in their construction of knowledge: knowledge

of their learning styles and modes of learning, strategies to help them to tackle problems, and technology.

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**A CASE STUDY OF COMMUNICATION AND ENACTMENT OF TRANSITION
SERVICES AMONG KEY STAKEHOLDERS IN THE TRANSITION PROCESS
FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES**

VOLUME II

By

Joyce Burgener

A DISSERTATION

**Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of**

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Counseling, Educational Psychology, and Special Education

2006

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CHAPTER 5

A SYSTEMIC VIEW OF THE COMMUNICATION AND ENACTMENT OF TRANSITION

Introduction

Chapter 4 explored the communication and enactment of transition from an inside perspective. The two groups of stakeholders involved in this view were the special education teacher and four focal students in an English/transition classroom. Now, in chapter 5, the view of transition will extend to take a broader perspective outside the classroom and study transition as it is positioned in a layered system including: (1) the federal level, (2) the state level, (3) the regional, (4) the district, and (5) the building level.

While the inside view of the classroom and two of the key stakeholder groups provided some answers to the research questions, the data indicated a systemic look at transition was necessary. During observations, interviews, and the review of records a much broader picture of transition emerged. It became evident, that in this case, the communication and enactment of transition not only occurred within the classroom setting but was also situated within a system that contributed to a coordinated set of transition activities (See heuristic of multiple levels and stakeholders in the transition process in Appendix B). This systemic approach brought into play additional levels at which transition issues were addressed for students with disabilities. This case was impacted by: (1) policy at all levels; (2) critical stakeholders, that went beyond the walls of the classroom; and (3) technology.

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This chapter will explore how this case worked toward achieving a coordinated set of activities for the four focal students who participated in the study. It will also explore a number of gaps and challenges to providing a coherent and coordinated set of transition services, especially in relation to the role that national and state policies have in positioning special education teachers to participate in high stakes testing.

Chapter 5 is divided into three major sections. Section one looks at how federal and state policy and its intended and unintended consequences impacted transition. Two specific federal policies and a state policy are addressed, including: the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and subsequent amendments (IDEA), No Child Left Behind (NCLB), and the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP). Two regional policies/services are then, explored, including the role of Educational Development Plans (EDP's) and Shared Time Programs. Section one concludes with a look at district and local building policy and culture.

Section two of the chapter will look at the critical stakeholders involved in the transition process outside the classroom. Originally, as the study was designed, these stakeholders included general education teachers and parents. However, as the study progressed additional stakeholders were included. Those added to the study included a guidance counselor (interviewed), the administrator and other stakeholders (not interviewed).

The third section takes a more in-depth look at the role and support of technology and how it impacted transition. Technology was found to be an integral part of instruction in the special education classroom. It was also found to play a major role in the school mission and was valued and supported by the administration and policy.

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The chapter concludes with a summary of the systems in place for the communication and enactment of transition for this focal group of students with learning disabilities as they complete their high school years.

Section One: Policy

Federal Level Policy

At the federal level, the policies that directly impacted transition services in this study were NCLB and IDEA. No Child Left Behind mandated, among other things, that teachers be highly qualified and that students and schools make Annual Yearly Progress (AYP). The effect of these two particular requirements was felt in the setting studied. They were directly responsible for state initiatives and requirements, which in turn impacted local school districts, teachers, students, and perhaps narrowed the curriculum in the form of high stakes testing.

IDEA. The Individuals with Disabilities Act mandated an individual education program (IEP) for all students with disabilities. All of the students participating in the study had been invited to their IEP meetings, attended the meetings (at least during their high school years), and had at least participated in the meeting (review of IEP records, student interviews, and special education teacher interview). No students in the study facilitated their IEP meetings (Special education teacher interview, 11/3/05). Additionally, IDEA mandated transition services for this population beginning at age 16 (IDEA, 2004). This law addressed further education as well as meeting a student's unique needs, employment and independent living (IDEA, 2004 [601(d)(1)(A)]). IDEA, 2004 changed the definition of "transition services" to a coordinated set of activities for a child with a disability that:

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

Is based on the individual child’s needs, taking into account the child’s strengths, preferences, and interests; and

Includes instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives and when appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation” [602(34)].

The students who participated in the study were all in their fourth year of high school and had multiple transition plans on file. Prior to IDEA, 2004, transition services were addressed beginning at age 14. The four focal students who participated in the study had transition plans on file that included the following areas: post-secondary goals, adult living skills, daily living skills, community experiences, related services in the community, and further education (See summary of transition plans in Appendix P). The transition plans were unique to each student and were consistent with the postsecondary futures these students included in their EDP and those stated during student interviews. All of the students planned to live independently as adults, they all planned to be employed in various fields and careers, and two planned to move directly from school to work and two anticipated postsecondary education.

When interviewed, students said they worked with the special education teacher to develop their transition plans. These students said they talked about their future during class. They reported that most of what occurred during the IEP/ITP meetings was a sharing of work that had already taken place. Some of the students also reported that they talked to other individuals about transition issues, such as their parents and other

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relatives, friends, the high school principal, co-workers, and the guidance counselors. Three of the four students (Bruce, Sally, and Cathy) had documented connections with Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) and for Sam there was no information found on the transition plan for related services in the community.

NCLB. In the case of this study, NCLB had an effect on the scheduling of classes and teachers. The special education teacher involved in the study was among those who had to take and pass the Michigan Test for Teacher Certification (MTTC) to be considered highly qualified for her position. During observations, this became a moment-to-moment teaching opportunity for the class. Students in the class were complaining that they had to retake the MEAP. They were negative about their ability to pass the test.

Teacher: "I have to go take the elementary teachers test to be highly qualified."

Students: "That is BS."

Teacher: "I need to be highly qualified. They cannot give me every content area and expect me to pass. If I am going to teacher at the high school I need to have a well-rounded background. I have 18 years teaching experience and a master's degree plus 15 more hours. That is a lot of stuff and they say that I am not highly qualified" (observation/ field notes, 9/27/05).

An indication of the pressure to meet AYP was demonstrated when the teacher explained to the students that their MEAP test scores were being scrutinized by administrators in the district. According to the special education teacher, during a staff meeting the issue of MEAP scores for students in special education became an issue on the agenda. A discussion ensued about the low scores and the low number of special education students who passed the MEAP. The teacher shared with the class that when

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questioned about how these scores were going to be improved, she reported: “all of my kids got a 3 in writing and the year before they had fours. We have improved our MEAP scores” (Observation and field/notes, 9/27/05). She talked with the students about how they had focused on writing strategies and it produced good results and that continued work would help them to increase their MEAP scores and improve their writing skills.

In the case of this study policy had a positive impact on the students and the transition program. NCLB has ensured that “highly qualified” teachers were in place, or would be shortly, for the students in this high school. No Child Left Behind, that included a focus on high stakes testing and AYP, may have had an impact on students in this high school setting. These students had raised their scores on the MEAP test and their writing skills had improved over the past year.

The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) 2004, has also had positive consequences. All four of the focal students in the study had addressed the domains of transition that were included in the law: postsecondary education, employment, independent living, and community participation and leisure activities. Transition plans were on file that indicated students had been invited to their IEP/ITP meetings and had actually attended. EDPs, transition plans, and interviews with stakeholders indicated that students had been involved in the transition process.

There was evidence of unintended consequences of policy in the form of a narrowing of the English/transition curriculum, due to the time taken by MEAP issues. In addition to the time devoted to MEAP there were issues of how this process impacted students emotionally.

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State Level Policy

High stakes tests: Intended and unintended consequences. The Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) was an example of state policy. The MEAP test was an intrusive policy for the English/transition class observed. All four of the focal students in the study had to retake all of the MEAP sections. The testing took place on October 25 – 28. There was no school scheduled for Monday of that week, so the entire week was devoted to the retaking of the MEAP for this group of students, as well as others who were not study participants. It could be argued that the intended consequences of the test, was to insure that all students had access to the general education curriculum. It could also be argued that the unintended consequences of the test were: (1) class or instructional time spent on a narrowed curriculum: (2) a lack of focus on transition needs; and (3) a negative impact on the self-esteem of this population of students.

On the four MEAP days, students not only missed their English/transition class but also missed their other classes, shared time programs, and co-op. This proved to be problematic for the four focal students. Students in the English/transition class often expressed their frustration with the MEAP.

Out of the 31 observation days over 60% of the class periods were at least partially devoted to MEAP issues. These days did not include the actual test days or the day that was devoted to the MEAP review for science. The first observation day that MEAP became a part of class discourse was September 27, about a month before testing. There was only one observed class period from that time until MEAP that it was not a

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part of the MEAP discourse or content. This constituted nine of the ten observations during the month preceding MEAP or 90% of the classes observed.

Examples of discourse surrounding MEAP. The following paragraphs will explore the discourse involving MEAP issues for the special education teacher and her students. The actual dialogue is provided so that the voice of the participants is heard. It is evident that there was a level of frustration on the part of these stakeholders.

Teacher: “Let’s talk about the MEAP. I need to give you Kudos. Your scores are close to the cutoff numbers...Remember the response questions have a lot of points and some of you chose not to answer. . .All of you got 3 on the writing. That says a lot for the work we put into it. The interventions we did helped. So let me go through...” (Observation/field notes, 9/27/05).

At this point the teacher shared the scores for each student adding encouragement for each one.

Teacher: “You are close for reading and writing... For social studies only 40% of the kids in the whole school passed it and you were above the average. . .You are so close for all of them, only 7 points in science and 12 in writing” (observation/field notes, 9/27/05).

One student wanted to know why they did not curve the MEAP. Another student wanted to know what would happen if he took the test again and did not pass.

Teacher: “One is the best and 2 passes. You all have the possibility to pass the tests. You have a chance. You can do this. If you have a negative attitude you won’t do it. This is what I would like you to think. I want

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(Observation/field notes, 9/27/05).

The students and teacher constructed a calendar of MEAP days. The students then had a plan including the dates of the tests and reviews, the time of the tests, and the location for each test. The next day students were talking about not taking the MEAP and just not coming to school that day. Again, the teacher encouraged them and asked/discussed how close they were to passing the MEAP.

Discourse surrounding the MEAP took place again. This was the third time during this week of observations that MEAP was on the agenda.

Teacher: "We are going to take a break today (from the AED Project). We are going to do a quick review. You need a sheet of paper. We are going to take a few minutes and review for MEAP. It is not an option. It is not me" (observation/field notes, 10/7/05).

Teacher: "We are going to review for the writing. Most of you are on the verge of passing. Everyone was close. If you are not we will get you to that point" (observation/field notes, 10/7/05).

There was frustration on both sides. This was a negative case of this teacher's style: "It's not me." Students continued to talk about not wanting to take the test.

Student: "It makes me feel stupid" (observation/field notes, 10/7/05)

Work on the review progressed. Discourse was about what the MEAP was looking for: power writing format, clarity of writing, position statements, and supported and connected points.

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After discussion and clarification the teacher connected feedback from the previous writing MEAP with what each individual needed to work on to raise their score and improve their writing.

Teacher: "Most of you are right on the bubble."

Students were assigned to do a power writing exercise to, "get into the swing of things" on the AED project. The topic assigned was: AEDs are important to the school system for several reasons. This was connected to a meaningful project they were already working on, and had a great deal of knowledge of the subject. This endeavor was scaffolded by a knowledgeable other (teacher). Students were reminded of strategies they had used in the past, such as foursquare and outline format for organization.

Work on the paper continued into other class periods. The teacher and others (peer assisted/partner work) continued to support their writing. Editing was accomplished through a strategy this teacher consistently used throughout observations; the teacher read the work aloud and the student and teacher edited the piece together. Students also used the computer to support their writing work.

MEAP as a strong positioning agent. The week before MEAPs the class reviewed the MEAP schedule. Students were heard saying:

Student: "What happens if we don't come?"

Student: "It is so stressful."

Student: "They push so much for us to be perfect."

Student: "We haven't learned it."

Again, the teacher attempted to support and encourage students in preparation for the MEAP.

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Teacher: “It is a piece of paper with words on it. . . Look for the best answer, guess. You have a one in four shot. You can get points by just writing something on the paper” (observation/ field notes, 10/18/05).

The next day the teacher and students reviewed the MEAP schedule again and reviewed the accommodations that each student would receive. The teacher suggested that if they did a good job, “the best you can,” then they would go out for breakfast (observation/field notes).

There were some concerns expressed by the students the last day they met before starting MEAP week. One student wanted to know if they could bring in food. Bruce wanted to know if he really had to come, due to still being considered a junior. Sally was concerned about being excused from the shared time program class. She had been told that they would not grant her an excused absence for MEAP. She had also been told she would have to start the test after the others, when she arrived back to her home school. Bruce had an additional issue. What was he to do about co-op (work) during MEAP testing? These were all issues that the teacher had to make arrangements for. These students had attempted to take responsibility for these issues, however, were unable to complete the necessary arrangements without the special education teacher’s involvement.

Implications of MEAP. MEAP issues did not end the week of testing. The teacher began the first class period after MEAP with praise for their work.

Teacher: “You guys worked so hard last week.”

She passed out treats to all the students. There was concern expressed by the students about grades and what they had missed during MEAP retesting. Cathy was

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given an F in Algebra for each assignment missed during MEAPs. Sam was marked absent and was told he had to serve detention. All of the students in the class expressed frustration with the system; saying that they were behind in their classes and they were overwhelmed with make-up work.

During the interview with the guidance counselor she reported that MEAP retakes took three weeks of her time in the fall. It took one week out of class time for students plus the time spent reviewing and dealing with MEAP related problems. As discussed earlier, during the 16 class observations conducted before and immediately following MEAP, ten of the sixteen classes were MEAP related (63% of the class periods), plus one entire class period when another teacher came in to conduct a MEAP review for the science test. During the month prior to the MEAP test, 90% of the English/transition classes pertained at least in part to MEAP preparation.

It is important to understand that the consequences of MEAP in this case were: (1) a narrowing of the English/transition curriculum; (2) a focus on high stakes testing of academic content that may have compromised what was important for students with learning disabilities; and (3) an emotional impact on this population that included negative feelings of worth and accomplishment. The MEAP also had consequences that impacted students' other classes, due to time taken away from these classes. Students experienced problems with missed assignments and unexcused absences.

Regional Level Policy/Services

At the regional level, policy or services were provided or promoted by the Intermediate School District (ISD). The ISD was an educational service agency that served 29,000 students, 16 public school districts, 30 parochial schools, and three public

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school academies in the area (<http://www.remc11.k12.mi.us/bcisd>, 3/13/06). They were designed “to provide programs and services to our constituent school districts which enhance learning opportunities for all students” (Reaching Out, 2006). The regional policy/services that impacted the study included shared time programs and educational development plans. The ISD also had three transition coordinators who provided information on transition services to teachers, parents, and students. These services were either provided and/or coordinated at the ISD level.

Shared time programs. Shared time programs that were available to all students attending the school districts within the Intermediate School District (ISD) area were many and varied and were designed to address a wide range of interests and skills. A shared time program accepted students from participating schools and a portion of the student’s funding left the home school district and went to the host school.

Some examples, from the study, included Sally who participated in the Agri-Science shared time program. This meant that for a portion of her school day she traveled to a Charter School within the ISD that taught the course. This class fit with the student’s postsecondary goals. Another example of shared time program use was for Sam, who participated in a welding class. This class happened to be housed at his home school district, so he did not need to travel to another school, however, in the class were students from multiple school districts.

Educational Development Plans. All of the students (special education students were not exempt) at this high school had an Educational Development Plan (EDP). An EDP was constructed by students and kept on file electronically with the ISD. Students had a password that enabled them to access their work and update it when appropriate.

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During the first observations, students in the observed class were in the process of updating their EDPs (observations/filed notes, 9/05). The student's EDP included the following sections:

1. Personal information
2. My Greatest Employability skills or strengths
3. Things I need to do to improve my employability skills
4. My interests and activities are
5. Career goals:
 - A. My long-term career goal is
 - B. My short-term jobs I might enjoy while pursuing my career goal are
 - C. Other interesting careers I am presently investigating
6. Educational Goals
 - A. My high school career pathway choice is
 - B. My career major is
7. Immediately after high school I plan to
8. Post-secondary education and training choice
 - A. Education
 - B. Work
 - C. Military
9. High school career/technical education: The following classes are key to obtaining my career goal
10. My major academic achievements, awards, and honors
11. Career Assessment
 - A. ACT Explore
 - B. Career interests
 - C. Career areas from World of Work Map
 - D. ACT Plan Test
 - E. Career Interests
12. Career explorations
 - A. Job shadowing experiences and locations
 - B. Volunteer experience and locations
 - C. Regular paid employment
13. College preparation plans and activities
(See Table of EDP Summary)

All four focal students who participated in the study had an EDP on file. Their EDP information was aligned with their transition plans (See Summary of transition Plans in Appendix P) and consistent with student reported information during student interviews. An EDP contained information that required the student to fit into a model of

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self-determination. This model consisted of five areas that students needed to address in order to achieve a level of self-determination: (1) Know yourself, (2) Value yourself, (3) Plan, (4) Act, and (5) Experience Outcomes and Learn (Field & Hoffman, 1998). Both the process of completing an EDP and participating in shared time programs allowed students to build important skills that would aid them in the transition from high school to postsecondary settings. Students who have self-determination skills are more likely to be successful in adult life (Wehmeyer & Schwartz, 1997) and lead more positive adult lives including educational and employment outcomes (Wehmeyer & Schwartz).

Summary. The regional level of policy/services played a critical role in providing opportunities for the four focal students. Shared time programs coordinated by the regional level facilitated the vocational experiences for students with disabilities that the transition literature and research report is crucial for postsecondary success (NLTS2, 2005). The regional level also facilitated the participation in the transition process for all students, including students with disabilities, in the form of Educational Developmental Plans. These plans helped students think about their future, develop a plan for meeting their goals, and a process for evaluating and revising their future plans and goals.

District Level Policy

The school district, in which the high school that participated in the study was located, had in place a policy that did not allow for students in special education to be retained during their elementary or middle school years (Review of records). Therefore, none of the four focal students had been retained. However, this policy did not extend to high school. For example, Bruce who was in his fourth year of high school was scheduled to take five years to graduate instead of the typical four. In this school district, students

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could take six credits per year while in high school. Bruce earned three credits his freshman year, with a GPA of 1.0. His sophomore year he earned 3.5 credits with a GPA of 1.14, and his junior year he earned 5 credits and a GPA of 1.5. He did not have the required number of credits to be a senior and graduate (See Table of Student Record Data in Appendix N). Students needed twenty-two credits to graduate.

The other students who participated in the study had accrued the required number of credits to progress from freshman status to senior status. Sally earned 6 credits during each of the first three years of high school and her freshman GPA was 2.75, her sophomore GPA was 2.72 and her junior GPA was 2.89. Sam earned 5.5, 6, and 5.5 credits, respectively and had GPAs of 1.44, 1.17, and 1.56, respectively. Finally, Cathy earned five credits, 6 credits, and 6 credits, respectively. Her GPAs were 2.11, 2.69, and 2.83, respectively. All three of these students were on track for graduation at the end of the school year.

In this school district, communication took place across buildings and grade levels from elementary to high school. All guidance personnel in the school district met twice a month to go over their K-12 curriculum. Each grade had its own component of the curriculum based on Michigan's benchmarks for counseling. This school district was one of the few schools that really followed the curriculum (Guidance counselor interview, 12/1/05).

The school district played an important role in the development and implementation of curricular coherence for the counseling curriculum.

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Building Level Policy and Culture

The high school building was described earlier in the paper as: a clean, updated, and inviting school building. This was a school that provided an educational and nurturing setting for all students. Students in special education were found in the general education classes, or out classes, for most of the day. During the semester that observations took place the four focal students were pulled out for only their English/transition class.

General education teacher: “General education students first.” General education teacher reported during interviews that all students were considered general education students first. Although all of the general education teachers received an accommodations and modifications form for each of their students in special education, the general education teachers reported that they preferred to not read the form in the beginning, as it would color their way of thinking about a student. Two of the general education teachers (physical education and vocational education) were more interested in medical and severe behavior issues, due to safety issues in their classes (general education teacher interviews). When asked how many special education students they had in their classes, one of the teachers said, “I don’t pay a lot of attention to that. To some degree I would rather not know.”

Another general education teacher responded:

“A lot of kids will not let you know if they are and they don’t want to show that they are special education. There is not a sign on their forehead; ‘I am special ed.’ We work in the class in ways that help all students. We read the questions and find the answers in the chapter. They must write the answer in a sentence

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and then use this as a study guide for the test.A lot of interacting” (General education teacher, GB, 10/24/05).

School Culture: “Good to Great”. The guidance counselor talked about the inclusion of all students in school opportunities. One such opportunity was the construction of EDPs. Guidance included the entire high school population in the discourse on further education after high school. All students were required to complete a job shadowing experience during their junior year. Every student in the high school, including all special education students (with the appropriate accommodations and modifications) was included in the ACT PLAN Test (Interview of guidance counselor, 12/1/05).

It was evident in this school that there was a push to move the school from what was considered “good, to great”. The Mission of the school district was:

“ To ensure that each student pursues his or her potential through a student-centered educational system, characterized by the development of each student’s uniqueness, with full community participation in experience-based learning, and the optimal use of technology in a caring environment” (Annual Report, 2004 – 2005).

Additionally, the superintendent stated there were two guiding principles that directed their thinking. First, Moving from “Good to Great” and second, “Every Child Every Day” (Annual Report). “We are working constantly to demonstrate to students that we care” (Annual Report). Graduation rates at the school during the 2004 – 2005 school year were 97.92% (Annual Report).

Beyond the district’s mission statement and the underlying philosophy of the superintendent there was evidence of the high school teachers striving to improve their teaching practice. “We are currently looking at the Professional Learning Communities

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(PLC). I am a part of that committee. PLC is set up to get teachers out of the closed-door situation and begin to collaborate together on technique, and best practices. It's not meant to change what a teacher does in the room, but rather, to use a common assessment to gauge what is best practice"(General education teacher interview, 11/10/05).

Summary

Section one of this chapter discussed the multiple levels involved in the transition process. All of the levels discussed played a role in the provision of a coordinated set of activities in the transition process for the four focal students. In the school district that participated in the study communication not only took place within the high school building but across buildings and grade levels. The study suggested that it was the guidance counselor who was the glue that held together a cohesive curriculum for the four focal students, although all of the teachers in the study suggested that they worked together and supported each other and their work for the good of the student and the program. This coordination of services provided the intended consequences of the various levels including: (1) access to the general curriculum; (2) highly qualified secondary special education teachers; (3) improvement in MEAP scores, (4) student involvement in the transition process, and (5) a coordinated set of transition services for the focal students.

Negative consequences emanating from the policy also emerged in the study. The first negative case occurred when Beth, the special education teacher, was working with her students in preparation for the MEAP. She deviated from her typical instructional principles and allowed frustration to emerge. This took place when dealing with the students' feelings and annoyance with retaking the MEAP. The second negative case

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was a deviation from the curriculum in place to address the MEAP review. The consequence was a narrowed curriculum (English/transition) as a result of time spent on MEAP issues.

In section two we move from a study of the policies in place that directly impacted transition services to a look at the key stakeholders outside of Beth's English/transition classroom that were involved in the process of meeting the transition goals of the focal students in this study.

Section Two: Critical Stakeholders

In chapter four, two groups of stakeholders, the four focal students and the special education teacher, were already explored. In this chapter the remaining stakeholders, who were located outside the special education classroom, are addressed, including: five general education teachers, a guidance counselor, parents, the high school principal, and other stakeholders who played a role in providing transition services to the four focal students in the study. The five general education teachers who participated in the study were identified through review of IEP/ITP records and the recommendation of the special education teacher. It was determined that these teachers played a vital role in the education of the four students in this high school. Three of the four focal students (Bruce, Sally, and Cathy) had two general education teachers and Sam had one general education teacher who was identified, due to the fact that he was only taking one general education class that semester. The rest of the time he was either in the English/transition class or co-op.

General Education Teachers

Two of the five general education teachers held Masters Degrees. The highest degree for the other three was a Bachelors Degree. All had at least seven years of teaching experience and the range was from seven years to thirty-three years teaching experience (7, 11, 11, 33, and 33, respectively). The high school that participated in the study had six class periods per day. All of the general education teachers had one preparation period per day and taught five class periods. All of the teachers reported they had participated in professional development during the past year, however, none pf the professional development was specifically directed to either special education or transition. The general education teachers who participated in the study taught in the following areas: physical education, art, vocational, social studies, and business (See daily schedule of classes below).

Table 1
Daily Teaching Schedule for General Education Teachers Participating in the Study

Teacher	1st Hour	2nd Hour	3rd Hour	4th Hour	5th Hour	6th Hour
Physical Education	Advanced PE	Personal Fitness	Weight Training	Team Sports	Personal Fitness	Prep
Art	No class	Painting	Art 1 and Design	Drawing	Prep	Art 1 and Design
Social Studies	Psychology	Prep	Social Problems	Civics	Civics	Social Problems
Business	Prep	Law 1	Personal Finance	Law 1	Accounting 1	Law 1
Vocational	Welding and Cutting	Welding and Cutting	Welding and Cutting	Welding and Cutting	Prep	Beginning welding

(Information on daily schedules is from the general education teacher interviews)

All of the general education teachers in the study reported they attended the IEP/ITP meetings for the focal students, however, only one of them reported staying for the entire meeting. This teacher felt that if he signed the form he wanted to be sure he had knowledge of what he agreed to. The other teachers reported that they left the meetings after contributing their information. It was interesting to note that all of the general education teachers reported during the interviews that they felt they had a good relationship with kids. The participating general education teachers had some of the following comments about the IEP/ITP meetings:

Teacher # 1: "I am in them a lot. It's a plan to get them through to graduate. I don't often agree with them. I don't feel the same as the special education teachers. I kind of bite my lip and be quiet.... They use my classes as a dumping ground. This is new to me and I don't know what transition is all about" (Art teacher interview, 11/10/05)

Teacher # 2: "Honestly what it is, is a rubber stamp is what it is. My input is simply how they are doing in my class. There is not much I do for transition. I sign it and that is it. I don't want to know about their deficits" (Social studies teacher interview, 11/10/05).

Teacher # 3: "I go to the IEP and I think it is conducted properly. Basically I bring their assignments and scores. I bring a grade sheet or talk about problems if there are any. A lot of times I don't really understand why general education teachers are there. In a sense you feel like you really you don't have the professional expertise of the knowledge to make any suggestions only through observation in lay-mans terms" (Business teacher interview,

10/24/05).

Teacher # 4: “How he is doing in my class and most of the time I can say wonderful things. I He work well with special education kids so they put them in my classes. My role is to tell them how they are doing in my class and sign the paper as the general education teacher. We talk about what the next step is for the student” (Vocational teacher interview, 11/14/05).

The attitude expressed by the general education teachers seemed to be that the IEP/ITP was a formal process that was required and that what happened informally or outside the meetings was what really mattered or counted for students. For example, all of the teachers considered their personal relationship with the student as being most important. The teachers talked about knowing their students. They referred to high expectations and not deficits. Consistently, the general education teachers referred to the communication that took place directly between the student and themselves. That seemed to be their priority. They reported that it was their way of treating students as young adults and preparing them to enter the postsecondary setting.

The general education teachers talked about a lack of communication between the special education teachers and themselves. There seemed to be a level of frustration on the part of two of the general education teachers (physical education and vocational) surrounding this lack of communication and knowledge about students medical and severe emotional issues that they felt was imperative, due to safety issues in their classes. They reported that this was considered confidential information and apparently not communicated (this did not relate to the focal students). However, it was reported that

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most of the formal communication took place during the IEP/ITP meetings and informal communication took place as needed.

The focal general education teachers taught the four focal students in the general education classrooms and did not co-teach the class these students were enrolled in. Each of the teachers had the focal students in class five times per week except Sam's who was with him for two hours per day. Again, all of the general education teachers stressed their good relationships with students. When these general education teachers were asked if their students had any accommodations or modifications that were used in their classrooms, all of the teachers responded that the four focal students had a form that specified what they needed in the way of accommodations and modifications. Beyond that, responses varied. Teacher one reported that she did not make any accommodations in the area of grading.

Teacher # 1: "Eventually they're going to be in the real world and people are not going to make exceptions for them. However, she did report giving extra time on assignments and encouraged her students to use all of their resources. I teach to their learning styles" (general education art teacher interview, 11/10/05).

Another general education teacher acknowledged the form but said:

Teacher # 2: "I don't always look at them. I want to expect them to do their best and don't want to presuppose things about our kids. I adjust expectations, I teach visually. I may expect less work, but I expect quality work. Students know that no matter what the grade it does not equate to me

liking them as a student. There is a relationship” (General education social studies teacher interview, 11/10/05).

During the general education teacher interviews many questions were asked about the communication that took place and with whom in the following areas: student accommodations and modifications, student transition goals, teaching styles, preferred learning styles, grading options available, attendance, and test scores and grades. An informal interview with the physical education teacher provided a picture of his role as general education teacher. The following perspective or information was volunteered before any questions were asked. This is information he wanted me to know before the interview started. He talked about his emphasis on life skills:

Teacher # 5: “My classes are about much more than physical education, although good physical condition is important throughout life. If you are more physically fit you will have a better outlook on life. It’s much more than team sports” (the class two of the focal students were taking). I emphasizes sportsmanship, cooperation, working with people, dealing with frustration, and how to deal with both winning and losing. There is a method to my madness”. His hope, he said, was “for all students, again, to get out of this class: sportsmanship, cooperation, working with people, dealing with frustration and how to deal with this and working with those you may not enjoy or like, and how to win and lose. Team sports is, working as a team, which you will have to do throughout life. Find a way to coexist. This class will not get you into the U of M, but it will help

you with stress relief and life long physical fitness. The ability to play team sports is secondary, knowing how to play is important” (general physical education teacher informal interview, 10/27/05).

The general education teachers that participated in the study viewed the four focal students as general education students first. Although a formal process for the communication of accommodations and modification was found to be in place these general education teachers preferred to continue to educate their special education students as general education students, except when problems in their classrooms emerged. As a group they suggested that the instructional principles they used were good for all students.

The communication that was found outside the formal process was in keeping with transition best practices; specifically self-determination and self-advocacy curriculum. These general education teachers communicated initially and directly with their students instead of with parents and other stakeholders. These teachers reported they considered their students as young adults that should be included in the problem solving process.

Guidance Counselor

The guidance counselor emerged as an important stakeholder as the study progressed. The participant high school had three guidance counselors. The guidance counselor interviewed was chosen because she was identified as being a key stakeholder. This counselor was uniquely positioned to serve the four focal students. Her training consisted of: a teaching certification in Social Studies and a license in counseling in grades 7 – 12, a Bachelors Degree in secondary education and a Masters in counseling.

and over five years experience at two different area community colleges. It was her fifth year in this setting.

The guidance personnel worked closely together and met two times per month (K-12). There was a cohesive and coherent curriculum in place that spanned across school buildings and grades. The curriculum used was based on Michigan's benchmarks for the counseling program (guidance counselor interview, 12/1/05). This curriculum was considered a career and guidance curriculum. Each grade had its own component of the curriculum. At the high school, "We primarily teach careers. We would like to do more 'emotional counseling' but that is more K-8 and then once they get up here (9-12) its more the career and college transition programs" (Guidance counselor interview, 12/1/05). She reported that part of her work included teaching. The guidance counselors developed their own book of formal written curriculum to help ensure coordination and coherence in delivering the counseling curriculum.

When asked about a typical day the counselor asked if she could "chunk the year" instead of talking about a typical day, because there was no such thing as a typical day in her job (Guidance counselor interview, 12/1/05). As a result of the "chunking", the Milestones Table was developed (See Milestones Table in Appendix Q). This table provided a picture of a coordinated set of activities for all students in this high school. Students with disabilities, and specifically the four focal students, were no exception. They were included in every aspect of the services, activities, and presentations.

It was interesting that during the interview (the protocol for general education teachers was used as a guide during the interview) the counselor wanted to make the point that although they are not thought of as teachers, they did teach. Guidance was

responsible for presentations to students in multiple areas, including: College searches, college funding, career planning, and testing. When this discussion of teaching took place, she said, "...and then I have to do the MEAP testing. That took me three weeks in October and that was just seniors" (Guidance counselor interview, 12/1/05)

There were two reasons given by the counselor for the successful program in place at the school district. The first reason given was the support of the administration and the second was the coordination and monthly meetings to go over the K-12 curriculum. In addition to the two reasons given, the counselor reported that she attended IEP meetings and so did the other guidance personnel for students in special education that were on their case load. She had attended IEP/ITP meetings for three of the four focal students, again related to those on her caseload. The counselor indicated that the communication and coordination across schools and grade levels among counselors allowed them to better know the students (there was a history in place).

The counselor reported that all sources were important when they worked with students. It provided a more complete picture of the strengths and needs of the students. Scheduling was an example she gave.

Counselor: "I know from talking to their parents, and talking to them, and the IEP and when we come in here to schedule we will pull them in separately, just like everyone else. . I know which teachers will work with them and which ones won't. . . Just for an example, you've got some kids that have to be pulled out for their English, we are matching up teaching styles with what is appropriate for students. We have to figure out what they need, we look at teaching and learning styles. We look at graduation

requirements and their grades. We pull up the EDP. There are outside issues to look at. I look at the vocational and I look at those first. That sometimes keeps them here. Then I will plug in the academics” (Guidance counselor interview, 12/1/05).

During the interview, parent communication was discussed. It was reported that most of the communication with parents occurred during the IEP/ITP meetings.

Counselor: “We will contact them if there was a need. Sometimes, parents and I email back and forth. “Once they meet us in the IEP that opens the door. It is not a problem for them to pick up the phone and call or pop in. I probably know more than half of them pretty well and know what their expectations are” (Guidance counselor interview, 12/1/05).

The interview with the guidance counselor suggested that a coordinated coherent curriculum was in place for all students and specifically for the four focal students in the study. Her interview revealed a communication system in place that addressed transition issues as well as the counseling curriculum. The guidance counselor seemed to be the individual that coordinated the activities and stakeholders in the transition process. All of the stakeholders in the high school that participated in the study played important roles in the transition process, but the study suggested it was this one person that pulled it all together.

Administrator

Although neither the school district superintendent nor the high school principal participated in the interview process, both appeared to have a distinct impact on the school environment and culture. Learning by all seemed to be valued. The

superintendent was housed in the high school building that participated in the study. During the interviews, the general education teachers talked about his vision of a school that moved from “Good to Great.” The Mission Statement and the superintendent’s introduction found in the Annual Report, 2004 – 2005, referred to “Good to Great” and “Every Child Every Day.” These ideas seemed to permeate the school culture.

The impact of the administration and the support of the high school principal were reported by the guidance counselor, general education teachers, and Bruce. The guidance counselor and special education teacher reported, during interviews, that the administration provided support in the areas of shared time programs and co-op for all students, including students in special education. This high school had a Career and Technology staff person who worked only on vocational classes, shared time, and co-op issues. This meant that there was both a time commitment on the part of administration, and a financial commitment by the administration.

The principal at the participating high school attended and facilitated all IEP/ITP meetings (review of records and teacher, student, and parent interviews). The principal participated in high school scheduling and programming (guidance counselor interview, 12/1/05). This represented formal participation on the part of the principal. Informally, the principal apparently played a role in the lives of the students. During observation days the principal was found in the student lunchroom during lunch periods. Bruce shared during the interview that the principal often stopped him in the hall to say hi and to ask about his job and how things were going for him. This student reported that this was something that he looked forward to and had an impact on his choice to stay in high school, even though he was having to take an extra year (Student interview, 11/9/05).

Parents

There were two parents who participated in the study. Sally lived with her mother and father and after agreeing to fully participate in the study, declined to be interviewed as the study was closing. Bruce lived with his grandparents who were designated guardians. They did not complete the study due to extreme health conditions. Sam's parents and Cathy's mother fully participated in the study and reported that no communication occurred between them and the school during the study.

Home/school communication. General education teachers reported that they did not initiate communication with parents unless there were behavior issues that could not be resolved between them and the student. In the case of the four focal students, no communication was reported during the time frame of the study. The general education teachers had a formal structure for communication with parents, that was set by the high school for all students (except the IEP/ITP): High school open house, conferences, IEP/ITP meetings, and parent viewer. The parent viewer provided parents access to students assignments, assignment grades, test grades, attendance and tardy information in each class the student was taking. Parents were assigned a password that gave them access to a database on the school's server where information could be found. During the interviews with the guidance counselor and general education teachers they were asked about the training that parents received for parent viewer use and whether or not most parents had computer access.

It was reported that parent viewer training, for the parents in the study, took place via a letter to parents that explained how to use the viewer and their password (guidance interview, 12/1/05). One of the general education teachers reported it was the parent's

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responsibility to communicate with the school (general education teacher interview, 10/24/05) and that even if the parents did not have a computer in their home there were computers available for their use at work and the public library (general education teacher interview, 10/24/05). The four focal students in the study talked about the lack of computers at home during an observation, when the special education teacher asked them how many were able to do Internet searches from home. Only about one third of the students in the class raised their hands and none of the focal students responded. Sending a letter home to parents may not have been an adequate method to train parents in the use of the parent viewer, for several reasons: (1) it is not experiential (reading is not the same as being able to do; (2) the lack of a format to ask questions; and (3) the parents reading level may not have allowed them to read a technical letter and understand the content of the letter. For example, Cathy's mother could not read the interview questions and had to have most of the vocabulary simplified for her understanding.

The parents confirmed what the general education teachers reported: a lack of communication beyond the formal structures in place. There were no phone calls, emails, notes home, or meetings to discuss school, special education, or transition issues for the students during the time frame of the study (parent interviews and communication logs). The only exception to this was the required notification of IEP/ITP meetings that took place. In addition to communication between parents and school the parents discussed their background, knowledge of special education and transition, and communication that occurs between parents and student.

Parental Background and Experiences. Cathy's mother reported that she had never graduated from high school and the oldest brother in the family was in special

education. When we talked about information that she gets from the school, she reported that there was no information from the school. However, she felt she knew enough and did not attend conferences. When asked about IEP attendance, she did not understand “IEP” and I had to explain.

Cathy’s mother: “Yah, I go them. I go to everyone of those”

(Communication between the parent and student was reported.)

Cathy’s mother: “We talk every day. We argue a lot. Oh, yes”

(She was asked if she participated in the IEP/ITP meetings).

Cathy’s mother: “Yes” and when probed further about how she participates she said, “Sit and listen and sign my name. I’m not much of a question asker” (parent interview, 12/7/05).

She reported not knowing anything about transition even after extensive probes.

Sam’s parents had both graduated from high school. His mother had some college and his father had some apprenticeship training. Sam’s older sister was not in special education and was attending college at the time of the study. The parents reported that when the focal student started school there were immediate problems. At first the school said it was a “maturity thing” (parent interview 10/24/05). The parents took him to a university for outside testing and were told, yes, there is a problem, but maturity might help. It was in third grade that this student was transferred from a private school to the public school and qualified for special education. The parents talked about how the participating school district had a great inclusion program and he was pulled out only for tests, so they could be given orally.

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The parents talked about the lack of communication from the school and how difficult it was to get information. The mother reported that she joined a PAC.

Sam's mother: "This helped a lot. There was a lot of talk. ...I learned from them and we could talk about what should be done. The school answered questions when I asked, but I had to be the one to ask. It was tough in the beginning" (Parent interview 10/24/05).

These parents talked about how the child's learning disabilities had impacted them.

Sam's parents: "Makes it harder for us. We have to sit and help with homework and never had to do that with the older sister. Both of them realize this. Not sure how the older daughter feels about it but realizes that we sit with him and did not sit with her when she worked on homework" (parent interview, 10/24/05).

They reported that they discussed transition issues with their youth and supported what he wanted to do after high school. They talked about finances and independent living and about how college was not what he should or wanted to do. They also reported networking and agency connections had taken place and that Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) had already been contacted.

The parents that participated in the study alluded to the issues of how educators communicated. A huge implication that came out of the parent interviews was for being more sensitive to the needs as parents of youth with learning disabilities. In the case of Sam's parents, they needed more information outside the IEP/ITP meetings that fit the goals of their child. Cathy's mother needed communication from the school that did not

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have to be read and could be explained at her level. The study suggested that the school made some assumptions about parent's needs and functioning levels that might not have been accurate. There appears to be a need for alternative communication that fits parent's needs.

Other stakeholders

The importance of other stakeholders both within the school and without became apparent during the study. Among those who emerged as playing significant role were the Career and Tech Coordinator, the ISD transition coordinator assigned to this high school, the office of special populations at the local community college (Lake Michigan College, LMC), the community, and MRS.

The Career and Tech Coordinator was a full time employee of the school district who was responsible for the vocational, shared time programs, and co-op. She facilitated placements for students, when required, played an administrative role that included: completing documentation for the school and state, monitoring student progress, and following up on any problematic situations.

The ISD transition coordinator emerged as an important resource for the participating transition program. She made regular scheduled visits to the school, provided resources, and worked directly with students. It was reported by the special education teacher that the transition coordinator was developing and providing critical resources for secondary special education teachers.

The representative from the Office of Special Populations from the local community college was considered an agency connection. This representative had played a role in administering and accommodating the college entrance exam. All four of the

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focal students had taken the test and had met with the representative to fill out an application form. The representative provided information on the college, financial support information, and application procedures.

Michigan Rehabilitation Services is an agency that was documented in the students Transition plans. The full extent of MRS's participation in the transition process is yet to come, however, the contact had been made. This provides an agency connection for future student use.

Although not directly a part of this study it was evident that the school made an effort to bring to bear the full resources available, not only in the school district itself, but resources from the surrounding areas.

Future studies will want to explore the role of these additional stakeholders. This research will add to the field of transition a better picture of the role they play in the transition process.

Summary

The critical stakeholders in this study all communicated with each other, some more than others. It would seem that the parent's needs for more and alternative methods of communication was important to the study. These parents reported they were interested in what pertained to their youth both in school and outside the school setting. They seemed to want what was best for their families, including the youth. Any lack of participation of these parents in the communication process, the study suggested might be due to a lack of sensitivity to parents needs in the area of communication.

In the study the key stakeholders reported a value for all students, including the four focal students with learning disabilities. The high school and the stakeholders

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provided an environment in which all students in the study had access to the general education curriculum, participated in the preparation for postsecondary settings that matched their documented goals, and were afforded vocational classes and employment preparation and experiences that was a part of transition best practices.

Technology

Technology was evident as a high priority for this school district, high school building, and for the special education teacher who participated in the study. The mission statement of this public school acknowledged, “the optimal use of technology” (Annual Report, 2004 –2005) as a mission for the entire school system. In the 2004 – 2005 Annual Report under “Points of Pride” the district had listed many (13 in all) accomplishments they were especially proud of, including: Academic accomplishments, vocational opportunities for students, Professional Learning Communities at the high school, Band and Sport accomplishments, and the implementation of the Parent Internet Viewer to improve communication regarding student progress during the 2004 – 2005 school year” (Annual Report, 2004- 2005).

The consistent use of technology in the specific special education classroom was already discussed in Chapter 4. Technology played a major role during the observations in 70% of the class periods observed (observations/field notes). Students were involved in the use of technology to write and edit papers, construct and update EDPs, search and support the AED Project, and in searching book reviews.

Outside of the participating classroom the administrative support of technology was also evident. The school had a computer lab and a media center for student use. The computer lab was a classroom of computers that was open for teachers to use for

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instruction and student work. The Media Center was more flexible. Students could come down on their own and work or teachers could bring their classes in to work on projects or searches. During observations the teacher had access to one of these computer centers for her students every time there was need.

As a part of the high school curriculum, all students were required to take a Computer Applications Class for graduation. All of the students in the study had taken and successfully completed this requirement. When the four focal students were asked about their computer use, all of the students reported using technology in their daily life for such things as typing papers, looking for information, and email (student interviews). Three of the students also reported using technology in their high school classes. Sam reported not using technology, but during observations he was observed using the computer for writing and editing, searches, and project work. Both Sally and Bruce reported they used computers at work (student interviews). There was no reported use of computers as a part of the IEP/ITP meetings or preparation for the meetings.

The role of assistive technology, as reported by the students, was mixed. Sally said, "I have to use a calculator. I am allowed to use a Franklin Speller and the computer spell check" (Student interview, 11/3/05). Sam said he had tried the Alpha Smart and the Franklin Speller, "but not really. It worked all right. I don't use it any more. It was easier to guess or use a dictionary" (student interview 11/3/05). Bruce didn't know about assistive technology and Cathy said no. Only one of the general education teachers reported participating in the discussion about the need for assistive technology and two different teachers reported that any of the four focal students used assistive technology for their classes. The special education teacher responded, "Most of the students

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wouldn't need that box particularly to be checked. I generally don't check a box that they need assistive technology" (special education teacher interview 11/3/05). She also went on to talk about how she specifies that the student use a computer to aid them.

The parent viewer was cited as a major accomplishment for the school to aid in the communication for all parents. Students could use the viewer to access information about their class assignments, grades, absences, and tardy information.

Stakeholder Survey

A survey instrument was included in the interview protocols for all stakeholders participating in the study. The purpose of the survey was to have the participants rate multiple areas of the transition process to shed light on their perceptions of what was done well and what needed to be improved. The survey contained 15 questions in the following areas: Best practices (8 questions), Knowledge and satisfaction with the transition process (2 questions), Frequency/content/quality of communication (3 questions), and technology (2 questions) (See survey instrument). Participants were instructed to circle the number corresponding to the most accurate statement of each question: 5 = excellent; 4 = Very Good; 3 = Satisfactory; 2 = Poor; 1 = Very Poor; and 0 = not applicable or no communication. Overall the stakeholders ranked best practices the highest (Mean, 3.8); Technology second (Mean, 3.6); and finally, Knowledge and satisfaction with transition process and frequency/content/and quality of communication was tied for the lowest (Mean, 3.4) (See Summary of Likert Scale Data by Respondent Table).

Among the stakeholders participating in the survey (parents, students, general education teachers, special education teacher, and guidance counselor) in the area of best

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practices the counselor ranked best practices the highest and the special education teacher ranked it the lowest across stakeholders (Range was 3.6 to 4.5). Question three: When asked to rate the communication, how would you rate the communication about what vocational classes and vocational training opportunities are available and their importance (e.g., shared time programs, technology classes, cosmetology, auto classes), who had the most variation in responses. Parents rated it the lowest and the guidance counselor rated it the highest.

In the area of knowledge and satisfaction, again, the guidance counselor rated this section the highest and the parents rated it the lowest among the stakeholders (Range 3.0 to 5.0) (guidance counselor, special education teacher, students, general education teachers, and parents, respectively). In the area of frequency/content and quality of communication again the guidance counselor rated it the highest of the stakeholders and the parents the lowest. It was interesting that although parents rated communication frequency and quality of content between poor and satisfactory they rated the participation in the transition process as an equal partner between satisfactory and very good (3.5). The stakeholders rated the use of technology in the transition process second (3.6) overall. The guidance counselor rated it the highest and the parents rated it the lowest (5.0 and 2.0 respectively).

The survey questions were then ranked in order from the highest to the lowest. The findings were consistent with the Summary of Likert Scale Data by Respondent. In the top six rankings were found the communication of best practices. Ranked seven and eight was the use of technology. Ranked in the ninth position was self-determination, the only one of the best practice questions that was not ranked in the top six positions. The

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remaining rankings pertained to stakeholder knowledge, satisfaction, and participation in communication.

Summary

The enactment of transition systemically involved policy, critical stakeholders, and technology. Policy, at the federal and state level, was found to impact transition services for the four focal students in the study. The specific policies addressed in the study included: IDEA, NCLB, and MEAP. These policies were found to directly impact all stakeholders participating in the study. The Individuals with Disabilities Act had consequences for: (1) IEP/ITP meetings; (2) transition requirements for the four focal students; (3) highly qualified issues for the teachers and particularly for the special education teacher; (4) Annual Yearly Progress (AYP); and (5) high stakes testing or MEAP.

These policies had both intended and unintended consequences for the stakeholders participating in the study. IDEA and transition sections of IDEA have changed to a “results-oriented set of coordinated activities.” Also, IDEA, 2004, mandates transition services begin no later than age 16, whereas it was previously by age 14. For the students in the study, by age 16, meant that they already had a history of transition services and plans in place and they were continually working toward completing transition goals. Completing transition goals is one indication that students will be successful in postsecondary settings.

The Michigan Educational Assessment Program or MEAP had a direct impact on students, teachers, and the guidance counselor. Although, the special education teacher reported that MEAP scores for special education students had improved in the past year

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and they were improving their writing skills (intended consequence) there were also unintended consequences of the MEAP. Students were reporting feelings of less self-esteem and greater frustration. Students missed classes during review and testing that had an impact on attendance, assignments and grades. The special education teacher spent a significant amount of time in preparation for the MEAP test instead of time on the English and transition curriculum. The special education teacher also had to spend time facilitating excused status for her students (in other classes), addressing missed assignments and tests, and grading. The guidance counselor reported that the MEAP took three weeks of her time away from other tasks.

In this study, there was found to be coordination between the regional Intermediate School District and the local school district and specifically the high school in the form of the development and implication of EDPs and shared time programs. The district and high school policy and culture encouraged the idea that: all students were valued, included, and were considered general education students first. These values were supported consistently from the Mission Statement to the enactment of transition services in the high school.

All of the critical stakeholders in the study attended IEP/ITP meetings for students and communicated with each other (at least through formal structures). However, the parents reported that communication between the school and parents did not take place. All of the stakeholders supported the specific needs of each of the individual students participating in the study. This was a caring environment, in many ways, for the focal students in the study. General education teachers talked about and were proud of their relationships with the students. The principal in the study was visible in the school and

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took time to talk to students informally. He also attended and facilitated IEP/ITP meetings. Other stakeholders were supported and in place to facilitate the places and spaces needed to ensure the specific needs of the focal students were met.

In this setting the communication of transition services was viewed as either formal or informal by the general education teachers. Formal communication took place during IEP/ITP meetings, conferences, high school open house evenings, and via the parent viewer. Informal communication took place “moment to moment” and as needed and took place in such settings as the classroom, after class, and while passing in the hall. The informal communication was what seemed to be valued the most (General and special education teacher interviews and student interviews). Communication between the school and parents was considered to be non-existent from the parents’ perspective, except for the IEP/ITP invitation and meetings, conferences, and open house (formal). From the general education teachers’ perspective there was communication between the school and parents in the form of formal communication, including the parent viewer. General education teachers, however, said they did not regularly communicate informally with parents. Most of the general education teachers reported that they communicated issues and problems directly with their students, as they were considered young adults.

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CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Summary and Discussion

Chapter six will summarize and discuss the study from two perspectives: First from the perspective of sociocultural theory and second, from a systemic view of transition in an exemplary program. The system wide look will include multiple levels: (1) the classroom; (2) the school building; (3) the school district; (4) the regional level; and (5) the state and federal level. Next, the chapter will explore the limitations of the study and finally the implications for further research, policy, teacher preparation, and practice.

This was a case study of the communication and enactment of transition services for students with learning disabilities in their senior year of high school. The study was designed to look at how transition services, as set forth in student's transition goals on their Individual Education Programs and Individual Transition Plans, were enacted within the classroom setting among key stakeholders. Further, the study looked at the best practices that were identified in the transition research literature, such as vocational training during the junior and senior year of high school, work experiences during that same period of time, problem solving experiences, self-determination knowledge, and the opportunities to practice self-determination skills. How this knowledge was communicated to the key stakeholders in this transition process was also addressed. Also, the study explored how technology was used in the process of providing transition services and communicating with stakeholders. The stakeholders included were the four

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focal students (Sally, Sam, Bruce, and Cathy), Beth, the special education teacher, five general education teachers, the students' parent(s)/guardian(s), and the high school guidance counselor.

It is imperative that the enactment and communication of transition services be studied given the importance placed on a shift from a process-oriented view of transition to a results-oriented view in IDEA 2004. This is an Era of Accountability in which all students are expected to transition from high school to postsecondary settings successfully including further participation in education, employment, independent living, and community participation. This leads to a quality of life that may have previously been out of reach.

Transition is a complex process that involves multiple stakeholders and multiple layers of support, as well as communication, coordination, and collaboration among these many stakeholders and the layers of support. Each stakeholder in the transition process had his or her own perception of what was best for the student and how it should be communicated and enacted. The multiple layers involved in the transition process all impacted what occurred in the transition classroom. Some of the consequences were intended and some were unintended consequences that had a great impact on the students and how and when transition services were enacted.

In this study, the choice was made to examine an exemplary program. The identified program met explicit criteria set up ahead of time that included: (1) a program that had a high graduation rate compared to the state average; (2) a program that was identified by the intermediate school district transition coordinator as a program that fit the needs of the students and not a program where the students had to fit the program.

This program was believed to work “outside the box.” in other words this school was willing to explore options that fit the needs of each individual student and the expectations of the parents; (3) a program that either had a transition or transition related class already in place; and (4) a program that was relatively close to the researcher’s locality.

Another decision that was made apriori was to study students that were in their senior year of high school so that there would be transition history available to study. As seniors or fourth year high school students, they all had at least: (1) three previous years of high school classes and experiences; (2) at least three years of transition plans and Individual Education Programs (IEP) on file; and (3) they all had Educational Development Plans (EDP) that had been developed and updated during their high school years.

As the study progressed and data began to indicate patterns and themes, a second focus of the study emerged. It became evident that the systems in place beyond the identified class period were having an impact on what occurred in the classroom setting. Therefore, the findings were analyzed not only from the point of view that was identified at the beginning of the study: The enactment and communication of transition services within the classroom setting, but also from a systemic view, or transition services outside the classroom setting.

Sociocultural Theory

In this study, students in the English/transition class were apprenticed into a community of practice with distributed learning that furthered their knowledge of transition and what was required to move from the high school setting to a postsecondary

setting of their choice. In the English/transition class the four focal students participated in the construction of transition knowledge and were apprenticed by a knowledgeable other, the teacher, who used what would be considered best instructional practices.

Cognitive apprenticeship without a strong learning theory leaves the field with a sense of loss. Historically, transition has been largely “a-theoretical”. This study looked at transition from a sociocultural theory perspective: a learning theory. What was valued and believed, was based on the theory that knowledge was socially constructed and that work was scaffolded and mediated by knowledgeable others. This framework provided a lens for looking at how meaning was constructed and reconstructed in the observed classroom. It was this theoretical framework that provided the bases for the instructional principles of teaching that prepared and helped students construct transition knowledge with the guidance and mediation of the teacher. Those instructional practices included: (1) Scaffolds that were used by the teacher, to address students’ zones of proximity; (2) transference of control from the teacher to the students; (3) thinking aloud; (4) modeling; and (5) graphic organizers, such as study guides and writing strategies (Englert & Mariage, 2003). This theory shed light on what worked for student learning and helped us understand what methods teachers should use in the field. Sociocultural theory is a natural conduit for understanding the social production of knowledge and experiences for students working toward self-determination and self-advocacy in their journey toward adulthood.

Beth, the special education teacher who participated in the study, was observed employing the instructional best practices valued and embedded in socio cultural theory: (1) Distributed learning in a community of practice; (2) Transfer of control; (3) Problem

solving as a way of knowing; and (4) Creating places and spaces for giving students voice and experience.

Systemic View of Transition: An Exemplary Program

In this case I would argue that a coordinated set of activities was achieved in the transition process (See Table of Milestones in Appendix Q). Communication did occur across grades and school buildings regarding counseling and career preparation. There was a coherent and cohesive curriculum for students in the district. This was communicated to students, parents, and teachers. All students participated in the assessments, presentations, and activities designed apprentice the development of knowledge and experiences necessary for all students to move from the high school setting to life after high school.

Classroom. The teacher and students worked on goals as laid out in the students' transition plans (See Summary of Transition Plans in Appendix P) and EDPs (See summary of EDPs in Appendix O). The teacher used instructional teaching practices that were considered best practices: direct teaching, cooperative learning, shared inquiry, problem solving, and authentic projects. The students were apprenticed in the work toward gaining knowledge and the teacher used instructional tools, such as partner work, graphic organizers, and experiences with practicing self-determination and self-advocacy. Students participated in multiple vocational classes, they had multiple work experiences including at least two job shadowing experiences and all of the students had been employed at one time.

School building. A culture was promoted that valued all students and considered them general education students first. This was a nurturing culture that included students

with disabilities in the general education classes and only educated these students in a special education class for English and / or transition class when the IEP team agreed it was a placement that would address the students' needs more appropriately. It was an environment where individual students' success was celebrated, even when it was as "simple" as staying in school instead of dropping out as in the case of Bruce.

This was a building culture where both general education teachers and guidance counselors actively participated in nurturing, education, and setting high expectations for students with learning disabilities. An example was the guidance counselor's promotion of further education. "You are not done yet." There was an awareness that not all students with learning disabilities wanted to go to college, but there was the expectation that they would pursue some type of education after high school that may have included a community college, apprenticeship, or on the job training.

School district. There was support for vocational classes, shared time programs, and coop that promoted the kind of learning that is research based best practices in transition. In addition there was a pervasive value for technology throughout this school district. Technology was addressed as a source of pride in the Annual Report for the district as in the case of the Parent Viewer. It was included in the superintendent's address in the Annual Report. Technology and its importance was evident in the high school where there were two rooms or areas in the school for teachers and students to work with computers.

Regional level. Support was provided through the regional or ISD transition coordinator. The regional transition coordinator was responsible for special education teacher training in the area of transition. The coordinator provided extensive job

shadowing experiences for Cathy and other students outside the study that qualified. Shared time programs were coordinated through the ISD for schools who wished to participate. The school in the study was a part of that program and all of the focal students, during their high school experience, had taken part in at least one of the programs offered. In addition transition resources were available through the ISD.

State and federal levels. The ramifications of No Child Left Behind and the Individuals with Disabilities Act 2004 were felt in the enactment of transition programming. Issues of highly qualified teachers intruded into the observed classroom as the special education teacher who participated in the study was in the process of taking the state mandated test that would certify her as highly qualified if she passed. This was a teacher who had extensive teacher training: a Master's Degree plus 15 additional credits and two endorsements. She had been teaching for 18 years and yet was not considered highly qualified as a high school special education teacher.

Principles and System's Approach to Learning

The Michigan Educational Assessment Program was very intrusive during the study. During the month of the MEAP testing, 90% of the class periods addressed MEAP issues, not including the actual testing time. These issues included test preparation time, planning schedules and accommodations, problem solving after the test for failing grades, unfinished assignments, unexcused absences, and student's self-esteem and feelings.

The Office of Special Education and Early Intervention Services (OSE/EIS) placed great emphasis on meeting the needs of students with disabilities (Focus on Results, Michigan Department of Education, 2005, p. 5). This report listed the following

principles that focus on outcome-based decision-making and can lead to successful post-school outcomes:

1. Effective systems prepare students for post-school outcomes such as advanced education, job training, or employment.
 2. Effective systems contain student-focused planning that ensures students and all IEP Team participants are engaged in a process that results in individualized student programs focused on the student's post-school vision.
 3. Effective systems provide a preplanned course of study that provides diverse and flexible opportunities that are inclusive of academic preparation and/or functional skill development that results in the attainment of post-school goals.
 4. Effective systems identify and establish community connections that build student, family, and staff capacity to access and utilize needed resources.
- (Focus on Results, September 2005, p. 5-7)

Taking a systemic look at how student and school outcomes can be improved, Mariage and Patriarca developed a model that included five sub-systems. These five systems included: Leadership System, Curriculum System, Pedagogical Improvement System, Data Management System, and Organizational System. If these systems were in place, coordinated, and supported a set of core values (e.g., continuous improvement, capacity building, disciplined inquire, distributed learning in communities of practice), schools would be better positioned to serve as a “learning organization for faculty and students” (Mariage & Patriarca, 2005; Mariage and Patriarca, 2006). These systemic principles and models seemed to relate to the participating school. The findings from this study suggested that the school was working systemically toward a system that supported learning for all students. A systemic exploration of the school that participated in the study revealed all five sub-systems in place. Some of the sub-systems were more developed than others as indicated from the data collected.

Leadership system. The superintendent and principal had provided the leadership required to provide the places and spaces for transition services to be developed and implemented for the four focal students in the study. They also supported transition best practices in the form of vocational classes, work experiences, financial support, technology, and the personnel needed to support a comprehensive transition program. In this setting, the school leadership fostered a culture of general education first, continuous improvement, and “every child every day”.

Curriculum development system. Sub-system two was also in place. This school worked in partnership with the Intermediate School District to provide shared time programs that allowed students to participate in vocational classes that might not otherwise have been available to them. Second, the guidance counselors were engaged in a K-12 curriculum program that followed state benchmarks. A communication system was in place: all guidance personnel met twice a month. Third, the high school was exploring Professional Learning Communities that allowed teachers to collaborate and develop best practices in the field to promote student achievement in content areas.

Pedagogical improvement system. This sub-system addressed best practices, in this case, the provision for transition services and instructional teaching practices. Best practices identified in transition literature that have been identified as making a difference in student postsecondary outcomes were: (1) vocational training during the junior and senior year of high school was found to be in place and all of the students had at least one vocational course during this period of time; (2) the opportunity to experience employment during the junior and senior year of high school - all of the focal students who participated in the study had been employed either after school, during school hours,

or both; (3) paid work experience opportunities - two of the four focal students, Bruce and Sam, were working in paid work experiences both during and after school hours, while Sally and Cathy were both involved in non-paid work experiences within the school as office aids during the time of the study and both had paid work experiences during their high school years.

Best practices suggest that students have knowledge and experience in problem solving, self-determination, and self-advocacy. During class observations the special education teacher continually provided opportunities for students to socially construct knowledge of problem solving, self-determination, and self-advocacy. She apprenticed their experiences and mediated their development of these skills.

The completion of transition goals was an indicator of future successful outcomes for students with disabilities. The transition goals were developed and worked on cooperatively in the context of the English/transition course. Bruce, at the time of the study, was the only participant who reported having achieved one of his transition goals. He reported that staying in school was a goal and he was still in school even though he had considered dropping out in the past. He attributed this success to various stakeholders, including the high school principal. It was, in part, due to the school culture that was welcoming and caring that kept him in school. In addition, plans for his fifth year included the courses he needed to graduate, as well as vocational and work experiences that addressed his transition goals for the future. The other students in the study continued to work toward goal completion.

Data management system. This system was evident during the study. Data were collected and utilized in regard to the Michigan Educational Assessment Program

(MEAP). This data provided an indication of student improvement in the content areas assessed by the MEAP. The special education teacher used data to show her students' progress toward passing the MEAP when questioned by the administration. The data helped address problems surrounding special education and its role in meeting Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) issues.

Data collected from previous MEAP tests was also used to address specific skills that students needed to improve for the next round of MEAPs. This data guided the MEAP review sessions conducted by the special education teacher and others at this high school. In the context of the English/transition classroom the special education teacher also used the data to encourage her students, saying that they were close to passing a specific section of the MEAP, including identifying the number of points needed to gain to pass the test.

Data were also managed in a way that provided access for parents to information regarding their child's course grades, assignments, attendance, and tardiness. This system was not perfect, due to that fact that many parents, especially those who participated in the study did not use the parent viewer technology. This was in part due to the lack of computers and the Internet at home. Students also had access to the viewer so they could check on their course information. However, again, there were issues of actual access as evident during class observations. Only Cathy was able to access her information during one class observation, the other three students had to elicit her help to work on the viewer.

Data on transition plans and Educational Development Plans were on the computer and the EDPs were updated on the computer annually. The school had an

extensive web site that provided information on assessments, college information, career information, and opportunities for students.

Organizational system. This system addressed the coordination and communication of information to key stakeholders (Mariage & Patriarca, 2006). In this case study, a communication system was in place, both formally and informally. However, the negative case in the communication system was the parent(s)/guardian(s). The parents who participated in the study reported no communication from the school to them, as parents, other than the required notification of IEP/ITP meetings. These parents did not use the parent viewer that was in place as a means of communicating course and student information. Within the school, there was both a formal and informal communication system at work. The formal system was considered less important in the eyes of the general education teachers. It was the informal communication between teachers and students and among teachers that was considered the most important. In the case of all of the general education teachers, the formal means of communicating students' accommodations and modifications was considered less important and often neglected by the general education teachers. It was the informal or day-to-day communication of what was important and impacting their students and their teaching that was considered a priority.

Organizational beliefs that permeated the school included the consideration of all students as general education first. All students who participated in the study were included in general education classes, except for English/transition classes. It was this class that provided the places and spaces for individualization of their program and meeting their needs. It was this placement that all four of the students who participated

in the study reported as less restrictive than the general education class when it came to their participation and achievement. These students reported that it was the special education class that allowed for their learning styles, afforded the opportunities to ask questions until satisfied, and were scaffolded for their ability levels. This was just the opposite of what the literature reports as constituting the least restrictive environment.

Teacher Relationship

The relationship of the teacher and her students was one of the most important factors in student success (Bender, 2002). In this study, it was the special education teacher's relationship that she developed and nurtured with her students that set the stage for the social construction and reconstruction of knowledge in the English/transition classroom. She continually used moment-to-moment teaching opportunities to address life skills and transition goals. Time, at the beginning of the class period, was devoted to students' transition from other issues to the formal curriculum of this course. She developed a safe environment where students were comfortable discussing and solving their problems cooperatively. The teacher continually modeled appropriate problem solving and self-advocacy behaviors for her students. There was little evidence of power struggles or issues during observations.

The enactment of transition in this case was the moment-to-moment construction and reconstruction of transition curriculum in the classroom. The special education teacher and the students in this case, determined the enactment of the curriculum jointly. However, it was also impacted by far reaching policies and other critical and engaged stakeholders.

The special education teacher participating in the study made visible, to her students, the day-to-day issues and problems she was experiencing. It was this willingness to open her life and share her experiences that provided some of the moment-to-moment teaching in the participating classroom. The other half of the equation was the willingness on the part of the students to discuss and make visible to the teacher and their fellow classmates their issues and problems. I would argue that what made this possible was the community of practice that was created in the classroom. It provided a safe and secure venue for working out problems and learning from this work.

The Elements of Communication in Transition

In this study, communication involved four elements: Transition content, stakeholders, enactment, and technology (See communication graphic).

Communication of transition content. The communication of transition content that was found in this study included the communication that took place among the stakeholders around students' transition goals. Most of this communication was found to take place during the English/transition class periods. Additionally, transition goal discourse took place during IEP/ITP meetings, as reported by stakeholders during interviews. Self-determination content was modeled by the teacher and constructed and practiced by the students. Opportunities were presented in the form of an authentic project. The AED project was designed, organized, and carried out by the community of practice that was the classroom, jointly by the teacher and the students. Students brainstormed, communicated with key individuals in the school and community, wrote a grant, and learned appropriate ways to deal with problems they encountered.

Opportunities to take vocational classes were communicated to students and parents through presentations, open houses, and via the Internet. Both vocational classes and employment opportunities were communicated to parents and students. The school culture was that of providing for the needs of all students. One way this was accomplished was through the provision of these opportunities. All of the students in the study had taken vocational classes and participated in job shadowing experiences and were either currently employed or employed during high school. The findings of the survey instrument indicated that all stakeholders felt the school did an above average job of communicating the transition best practices.

Communication among stakeholders. This type of communication was the second element of the communication heuristic. The places and spaces had been provided for the communication between the special education teacher and the student in the form of the English/transition class that met every day. It was during this class that most of the communication and enactment of transition took place. The communication between the special education teacher and the general education teachers had a formal process in place. The accommodations and modifications form was filled out for each student with disabilities and given to each of their general education teachers. However, as reported by these teachers, they preferred to not use the form unless the students were having a problem. Of particular importance to these teachers was the opportunity to work with their students as general education students first and not have a preconceived notion or information about their student's deficits.

The general education teachers suggested that it was important to know if there were health or severe emotional issues. They expressed the need to know this

information, which was not being conveyed to them. Again, most of the general education teachers believed that their expertise in teaching (using multiple modalities and learning styles and providing scaffolds) made the accommodations and modification sheet unimportant.

It is when we address the communication between the school and parents that problems emerge. The two parents who participated in the study reported no communication between them and the school, except for the required notice of IEP/ITP meetings. One parent reported that if they needed information they had to approach the school and not the other way around. Neither used the parent viewer. Although one set of parents attended open houses and conferences they still did not think that communication took place around their child. It was difficult to get the information they needed from the school.

The secondary stakeholders (guidance counselor, support services, administrators, and adult service providers) were considered as possible stakeholders that might emerge during the study. Indeed the guidance counselor was identified as important in the setting and was interviewed. She was, in this case, responsible for a majority of the communication surrounding future education, employment opportunities, and other possible connections. She was the stakeholder who was responsible for communicating information regarding MEAPs, PLAN testing, college connections and funding, and did a majority of the work that went into scheduling of courses for students each year.

The communication in which administrators participated was formal and informal. The formal communication was the facilitation of all IEP/ITP meetings and information disseminated through newsletters, etc. from the school. However, as reported

by Bruce, it was the informal communication that helped keep him in high school and working toward graduation

Enactment of transition services. The enactment of transition services was explored in the context of an English/transition classroom. The four focal students and the special education teacher were involved in the construction of English and transition curriculum in an environment that students considered conducive to learning. It was in this special education class that students reported they preferred to out classes because it afforded them the best opportunity to learn.

Transition as defined in IDEA 1990, 1997, and 2004 Amendments is “a coordinated set of activities for a student with a disability.” This set of activities is now considered a results-oriented process (IDEA, 2004) and promotes movement from school to post-school activities. IDEA requires that the “coordinated set of activities” must be based on the individual students’ preferences and interests. It includes post-secondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation (IDEA, 1997, Sec. 602(a)(20). The Division on Career Development and Transition of the Council for Exceptional Children (DCDT-CEC) includes in its definition:

“a change in status from behaving primarily as a student to assuming emergent adult roles in the community. These roles include employment, participating in post-secondary education, maintaining a home, becoming appropriately involved in the community, and experiencing satisfactory personal and social relationships. The process of enhancing transition involves the participation and coordination of school programs, adult agency services, and natural supports within the community.

Beth provided a set of activities within the classroom setting that was designed to meet both the IDEA and DCDDT definitions of transition services. Although transition was not solely situated within the English/transition classroom, Beth provided activities within the classroom that facilitated student experiences outside the classroom. Beth privileged activities within the classroom as she attempted to provide a curriculum, constructed cooperatively that met the individual needs of a diverse group of students with a range of abilities and goals for the future. There was no written curriculum for transition used in this classroom. Authentic real life projects and activities were used to apprentice students self-determination and problem solving. However, there were few connections to how these skills would be used in postsecondary settings. The teacher seldom talked about generalizing or transferring what was being learned to the world beyond school.

Technology. Technology was integrated into every aspect of communication and enactment. Technology was used consistently for writing, reading, transition, and communication among stakeholders. The students and the teacher, together, edited writing, conducted Internet searches for information pertaining to the AED Project and book reviews to aid in their exploration of books to read in class. Technology was found to be a source of pride and valued by the school district.

Summary

The case study of the communication and enactment of transition services for youth with learning disabilities in the senior or 4th year of high school found that a coordinated set of activities was in place for the four focal students who participated in the study. There were four elements of communication in transition that were explored

and found to constitute what was defined as communication in this study. The study found a suggested break down in the communication system between the school and parent.

The study also found that the assessment system for the state was problematic within the classroom setting for the focal students, special education teacher, and for the English/transition curriculum. MEAP took extensive time from the English/transition curriculum and interrupted the typical instructional methods used in the class. It also disrupted the environment that had been constructed by the teacher and students.

The communication between parents and the MEAP were two negative cases to what seemed to be a community of practice were the students and teacher socially constructed and reconstructed transition knowledge and had the opportunity to experience success and learn from failures.

Limitations

Case Study

As with all case studies this study had limitations. This study took an in depth look at the transition services for four youth with learning disabilities. The stakeholders included in the study were limited to: (1) the special education teacher who taught the English/transition course in one suburban high school; (2) five general education teachers; (3) one guidance counselor; (4) two student's parent(s); and the four focal students.

Lack of Generalization

Given that this study took place in one high school and in one special education classroom, the findings cannot be generalized to all schools, courses, or stakeholders.

This is one study that looked at an exemplary program in one mid-western state. The time frame of the study consisted of four months toward the beginning of the school year for senior or 4th year students with learning disabilities. An attempt was made to identify four students who had a range of abilities and transition goals, however, the findings can in no way say this program could be duplicated in other schools.

Suburban School District

This study took place in one suburban school district with limited diversity. It was located in a community in which it had the support of the community. There was a mixture of suburban housing and small businesses. The school was updated and appealing. It supported multiple extra curricular activities, fine arts programs, and sports opportunities for its students. This school seemed to value the community as a valuable resource and communicated with the public on a regular basis.

Parent Participation

Although parent communication through the parent viewer was considered a point of pride by the school, it could be considered a negative case. Parents who participated in the study reported no communication from the school. Many of the students in the English/transition class did not have access to the system at home, as indicated during observations. Cathy's mother was unable to read at a level that would have allowed her to access the communication from the school, either via newsletter or the parent viewer instructional letter. She reported not knowing anything about technology. This parent was unable to read the interview protocol or understand most of the questions without reducing them to very simple language.

Sam's parents reported calling the school when they required information about Sam's progress and status. They did have a computer and Internet access at home, as we did communicate via the Internet several times to set up interview dates and answer questions they had, in the beginning, about the study. Sam only had one academic class during the study; that was the special education English/transition course.

Curriculum

In this case study observations were situated in an English/transition class. This was a hybrid class where two subjects were addressed. In this class there was not written curriculum. The special education teacher constructed her curriculum in an attempt to meet the individual needs of the students. The basis for this constructed curriculum was the student's IEP/ITP goals and what is identified in transition literature as skills and experiences that promote successful adulthood outcomes. These included opportunities for vocational classes and work experiences during high school (these were discussed during this class. Self-determination and self-advocacy skills and opportunities to use these skills were a part of the curriculum that was embedded in every day work. Students IEP goals in the areas of reading and writing were included in all of the content for this class from the work on their EDPs to the AED project. Future research will want to look at the use of a formal written curriculum for all aspects of transition.

Implications

Implications for Research

In this study, two sets of principles were used as tools to aid in the understanding of the construction of meaning in face-to-face encounters and the interaction of complex systems at play in the transition process. In the classroom,

sociocultural theory was particularly helpful as a lens for understanding how meaning was socially constructed and reconstructed in the classroom

A second set of principles that helped in the understanding of the process was the five subsystems identified in the organizational systems heuristic by Mariage and Patrairca (2006). This systems approach would be helpful when thinking about program development, program implementation, and program evaluation. This approach might offer a means of evidence-based research in the area of transition.

Sociocultural theory and transition. It is important to note that, as stated earlier, transition has historically been a-theoretical. Sociocultural theory is a powerful tool for the study of the transition process and transition services. Since transition is all about learning the skills required for the achievement of student's transition goals for adult life, there is a need to have an appropriate learning theory in place. In this study of an identified exemplary program, sociocultural theory provided a lens to explore the transition process. As the study progressed, four themes emerged from the data: (1) distributed learning in a community of practice; (2) transfer of control; (3) problem solving as a way of knowing; and (4) creating places and spaces for giving students voice and experience.

Englert and Dunsmore outlined four learning principles that are the essence of sociocultural theory:

- *cognitive apprenticeships support novices in the participation and performance of a discipline, including the acquisition of the discourses, tools, and action.
- *Collaborative arrangements and activity spaces are created to allow students to develop greater mastery, control, and ownership of the conventions, discourses, and practices of the community
- *Scaffolds and mediational tools that support learners in advance of independent performance while allowing students to outgrow the supports over time

*Explicit instruction and modeling of reasoning and metacognition in the situated problem-solving context of a content area subject
(Englert & Dunsmore, 2002).

Further study is required to explore whether or not this case study that largely supported the major tenets of socioculture theory was unique or a major component of what constitutes exemplary transition programs. It may be that these four categories or themes provide a starting point to explore or construct other transition programs and serve as a tool for the evaluation of transitions programs as constructed in the classroom setting. These categories may also help define the differences between exemplary programs and non-exemplary programs.

Generalization or transference of what was learned. There was little evidence in this study that the teacher addressed the issue of student generalization or transference of what was learned in the context of the classroom to postsecondary settings. For the most part connections were not made to future experiences for students in the study. Future research should address how generalization can be achieved for this population. How do we help our students to understand what they are learning in the classroom will increase the likelihood for them to successfully participate in future settings and experiences? Evidence based practices that promote generalization need to be researched and become a part of teaching and transition best practices to promote improvement in postsecondary outcomes for youth with disabilities.

Systems. Systems in place outside the English/transition classroom had a significant impact on what occurred within the classroom. This study indicated that transition was more than the communication among stakeholders. The findings suggested, that it was an entire system in place that impacted this exemplary transition

program and resulted in a coordinated set of activities. This system included such sub-systems as researched by Mariage & Patriarca. A system that included five sub-systems: (1) leadership, (2) curriculum, (3) pedagogical improvement, (4) data management, and (5) organizational systems. More research is needed to examine how these systems enhance an exemplary transition program.

The study explored transition services as enacted in a classroom setting and how systems in place impacted what transpired in that setting. It would seem that the findings suggest that there is a marriage of sociocultural theory and the organizational systems heuristic. How these two work together and interact in the transition process needs to be explored further in other settings. These setting might include schools of varying size and diversity.

Communication. The communication among stakeholders in the study was investigated. Historically stakeholder involvement in the transition process had been explored in the transition literature. Kohler (1986) developed taxonomy of transition that identified stakeholders who should be involved in the transition process. IDEA and reauthorization have indicated that critical stakeholders must be invited to the IEP meetings. Martin (2005) studied the communication that occurred among stakeholders attending IEP meetings. However, as Martin has indicated, there is a need for more research involving the communication that takes place prior to IEP meetings.

This study of an exemplary transition program suggested there was extensive communication that occurred between the special education teacher and her students. Communication was reported among the stakeholders in the high school setting through both a formal structure and informal discourse. However, there was a suggested

breakdown in the communication between the school personnel and the parents who participated in the study. Although, this school district had a formal means of communication with parents in place (e.g., the parent viewer, open houses, parent night conferences, and IEP/ITP meetings) parents still reported no communication between the school and the parents. There seemed to be a disparity between the perceptions of school participants and the parents in the communication that was taking place.

Research is still needed in the area of parent communication and involvement in the transition process. All of the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the four focal students had attended their child's IEP/ITP. It was outside the IEP that the breakdown in communication seemed to occur. Further research should shed light on best practices in communication between the parents of special education students and school.

Implications for Policy

Policy matters. In this study policy was found at multiple levels: (1) the federal level; (2) the state level; (3) the regional level; (4) the local level, which had two levels of its own including district and building level. Federal policy directly impacted the delivery of content for the four focal students that participated in the study. The impact of No Child Left Behind on the enactment of transition services needs to be explored. NCLB addresses the requirement that teachers must be highly qualified. However, more research is needed on how to measure what constitutes a highly qualified secondary special education teacher. In this state a teacher is certified as highly qualified if he/she passes the Michigan Test for Teacher Certification (MTTC). We need to explore evidence-based methods for assessing teachers.

The Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) had an impact on what occurred in the classroom in this study. Research needs to explore the implications. As this study suggests the teachers and students were impacted by policy decisions. With all policies there are intended and unintended consequences. Research needs to look critically at the unintended consequences of MEAPs on students with learning disabilities. We need to explore its impact on curriculum and in particular transition curriculum. Research suggest transition best practices that include vocational classes and job experiences for this population during their junior and senior years in high school, however, with high stakes testing there becomes more of a focus on academics and what is tested. We need to research how this impacts opportunities to participate in vocational classes and job experiences. We need to explore what is valued in schools and if the impact of the nature of this policy results in a narrowing of the curriculum for students with learning disabilities and a decrease in opportunities for students. Research needs to look at how, in this era of accountability a focus on academic curriculum does or does not promote transition goals. Future research will want to study the impact of this policy with student outcomes.

Research needs to be conducted that links the impact of high stakes testing and graduation rates for youth with learning disabilities. We also need to look at how high stakes testing impacts students more broadly. The field needs to know what percentage of students with disabilities that retake the MEAP eventually pass the test. The field should also know more about what impact the process has on student's future employment, education, graduation, and quality of life.

If, through quality research, we have data that identifies evidence based exemplary transition programs and interventions that promote the transition for youth with learning disabilities to a quality of life that includes employment, independent living and community involvement then the field will be better prepared to work with this population in an affective manner. This database would provide the basis for developing, implementing and evaluating exemplary transition programs that ultimately result in improved results for adult life.

Implications for Teacher Preparation

The transition literature suggests that knowledge of transition best practices and transition law is important for teachers and suggests that it may affect the outcomes for students. In most institutions of teacher preparation transition content is integrated into already existing courses. Research is necessary to determine if taking a transition course during teacher preparation impacts student outcomes. If teacher preparation programs are counting on already existing courses to cover transition knowledge, are important transition areas covered in that class, such as: special education and transition law; (2) transition best practices; (3) self-determination and self-advocacy; and (4) communication and collaborative skills.

This case has raised an implication for teacher preparation. We need to ascertain if higher education includes in their programs the knowledge that secondary special educators need for their work with high school students. Second, do they afford the opportunities for teacher candidates to understand and experience holistically, the components of a comprehensive and coordinated transition system at the high school

level? The field needs to carefully address the issue of how we prepare teacher candidates for their work with children k –12.

This study has implications for teacher practice. This school setting provided the places and spaces for the social construction and reconstruction of transition knowledge. There was a strong indication that, at least in the area of guidance curriculum, there was a vertical and horizontal coherence in the program. However, a strong vertical and horizontal coherent transition program becomes problematic with the number of stakeholders and levels of policy involved in a comprehensive program. We need more research on how to develop, implement and evaluate a comprehensive exemplary transition program. Addition research would provide data on the systems that impact exemplary transition programs, such as the organization system advocated by Mariage and Patriarca. Again, research would shed light on the best way to provide places and spaces, are they the English/transition class, as in the case study? Or maybe there are other spaces that can be provided for transition work.

The field of special education and transition, needs to look critically at how to develop, implement, and evaluate a vertical and horizontal cohesive transition program. This is a complex task. Transition services are mandated at age 16, however, in reality we need to explore transition from birth to adult life. The skills needed to transition from high school to adult life do not “magically develop or appear” at age 16. They are skills that are learned, applied, and honed throughout childhood. We need to have evidence-based research on what works to promote transition from high school to adult life that promotes quality of life for individuals with learning disabilities. This research needs to

address skills (e.g., problem solving, self-determination, and self-advocacy) that are learned throughout life, not just what occurs at age 16 and beyond.

An interesting implication of this study is the marriage of sociocultural theory and the organizational systems approach discussed. Research and work on developing a evaluation tool, perhaps a check list of sorts, for transition programs that consists of the major principles of sociocultural theory and the major sub-systems could provide an interesting study the validity and reliability for the development, implementation and evaluation of comprehensive, coordinated, and exemplary transition programs.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study of the communication and enactment of transition services for students with learning disabilities in their senior or 4th year of high school consisted of a coordinated set of activities designed to move the four focal students from high school to a postsecondary setting of their choosing. There was a system in place for the social construction and reconstruction of what constituted transition for this population. The system provided for the development and achievement of transition goals for these students: an environment that nurtured the concept that all students were of value and respected; and expressed high expectations for all students. It was this school culture that seemed to be an important key to the success of the program. Technology was a tool used consistently to achieve those high expectations. It is hoped; that this study shed light on the importance of socially constructed transition knowledge and experiences and adds to the body of knowledge in the field of special education and transition, but also opens new domains for further research.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

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Specific Learning Disability

Specific learning disability is defined in IDEA, 2004 as; "a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which disorder may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations." (Sec. 602, 30).

Transition

Webster's Dictionary defines transition as; "a passing from one condition, form, stage, activity, place, etc. to another" (IDEA, 2004). For the purposes of this study transition will be considered the preparation during high school and passing from the high school setting to post-secondary settings for youth with learning disabilities who are in grades 9 – 12. These students will be between the ages of 14 and 21.

Transition Services

According to IDEA, 2004, transition services are: " a coordinated set of activities for a child with a disability that:

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

- B) is based on the individual child's needs, taking into account the child's strengths, preferences, and interests; and
- C) includes instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and when appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation." (Sec. 602, 34)

High School

In this study the high school or secondary school will constitute a public, non-profit institution that provides secondary education, as determined under State law. This institution will include grades 9 – 12. It will not include a charter or private school, or academy.

Intermediate School District (ISD)

The Intermediate School District is a regional unit in the state of Michigan that provides educational services to school districts and personnel within their specified area. There are 57 such units in Michigan, many serving more than one county and more than one school district (Burgener, 2003).

Intermediate School District Transition Coordinator

The Intermediate School District Transition Coordinator will be defined as an individual specifically trained to deliver and facilitate transition services for youth with disabilities. The transition coordinator will be employed by the Intermediate School District and work with multiple school districts in providing these services

Assistive Technology

The term “assistive technology” in this study and according to P. L. 108-446 will mean, “any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of a child with a disability” (Sec. 602, A).

Secondary Special Education Teacher

A teacher who “has obtained full State certification as a special education teacher (including certification obtained through alternate routes to certification) or passed the State special education teacher licensing examination and holds a license to teach in the State as a special education teacher” (Sec. 602, B, i). The special education teacher has at least a bachelor’s degree (Sec. 602, B, iii).

General Education Teacher:

In this study the general education teacher is a teacher who has obtained full State certification as a general education teacher at the secondary level. This teacher has passed the State teacher licensing examination and holds a license to teach at the secondary level in the State. The general education teacher has at least a bachelor’s degree.

Enactment

Enactment is the process of transforming written curriculum into a part of the teaching process. It is a process of communicating the written into the oral or participatory curriculum and includes more than one person.

Communication:

In this study communication will be operationally defined as a process that involves a sender of information, a message to be sent, and a receiver of the information (Pugach & Johnson, 2002). The communication cycle is composed of four components: a sender, a channel (audio or visual), an environment, and a receiver (Pugach & Johnson, p. 47). This is a cyclical process, not just sending a message. It requires all of the individuals participating to understand the message (Pugach & Johnson, p. 49).

In this study communication consisted of four elements: (1) Content, including best practices in transition; (2) stakeholders, both primary and secondary; (3) enactment and the social construction of transition including student involvement and teacher mediation; and (4) technology both for the communication and enactment of transition services (See Elements of Communication in Transition graphic).

Coordination

“Service coordination assists in the selection and scheduling of services. In coordination, people arrange for a student with disabilities to receive specific services from different agencies” (NICHCY, 2002).

Stakeholder

The term stakeholder in this study will mean any individual who is directly involved in the transition process for students with disabilities. This may include the following individuals: the student with disabilities, their parent(s)/guardian(s), the special education teacher, general education teachers, administrators, school guidance

personnel, support services personnel, adult service providers, and Intermediate School District transition coordinators. This study will focus directly on the four focal students, their parent(s), one special education teacher, five general education teachers, and a guidance counselor. However, the study may indirectly include any other stakeholders that become directly involved in the transition classroom setting during the study.

APPENDIX B

MULTI-LEVEL MODEL OF TRANSITION SYSTEM

Multi-level Model of Transition System

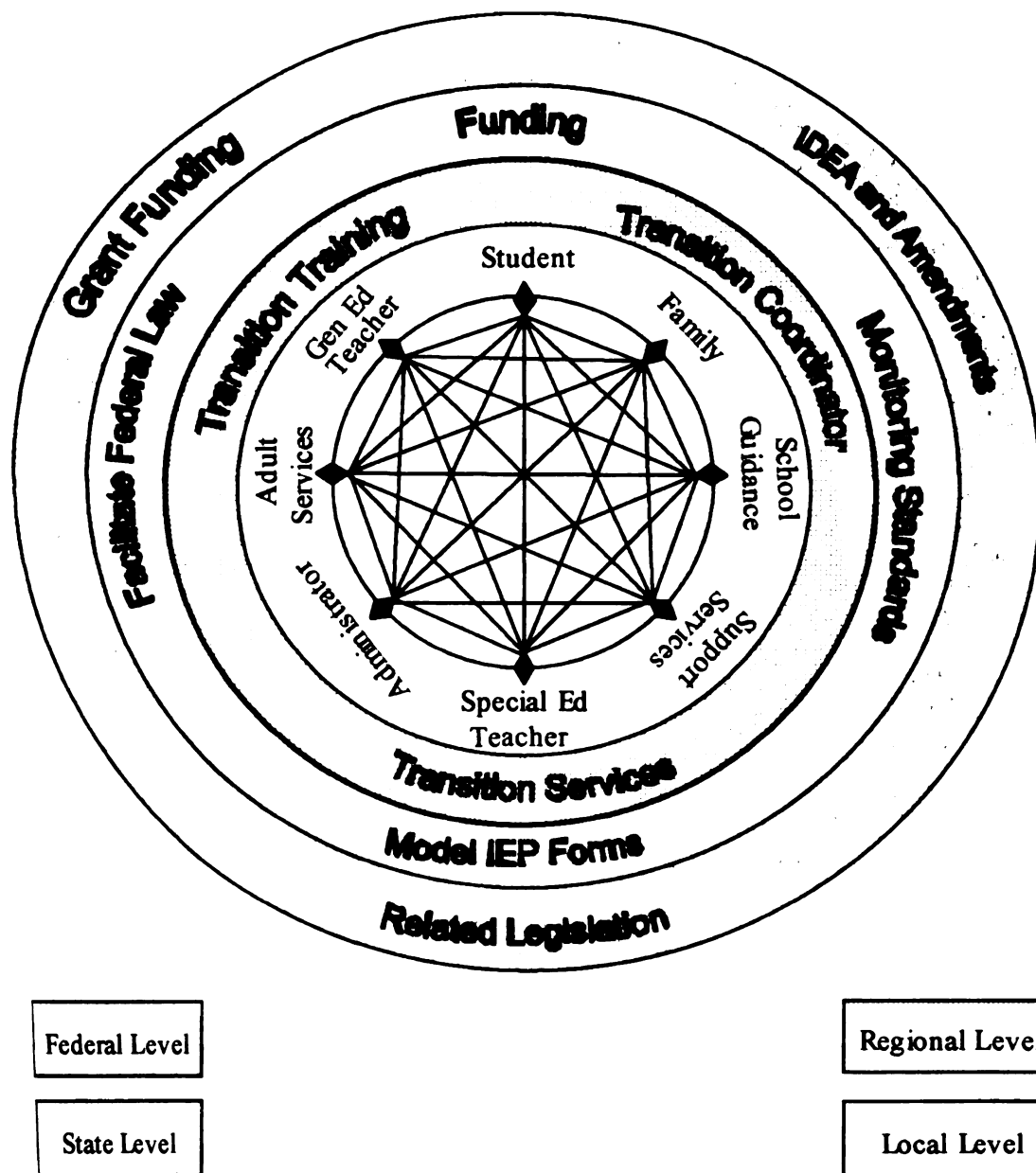


Figure 3 Multi-level Model of Transition System

Burgener, 2005

APPENDIX C

HEURISTIC OF COMMUNICATION

Heuristic of Communication in the Transition Process

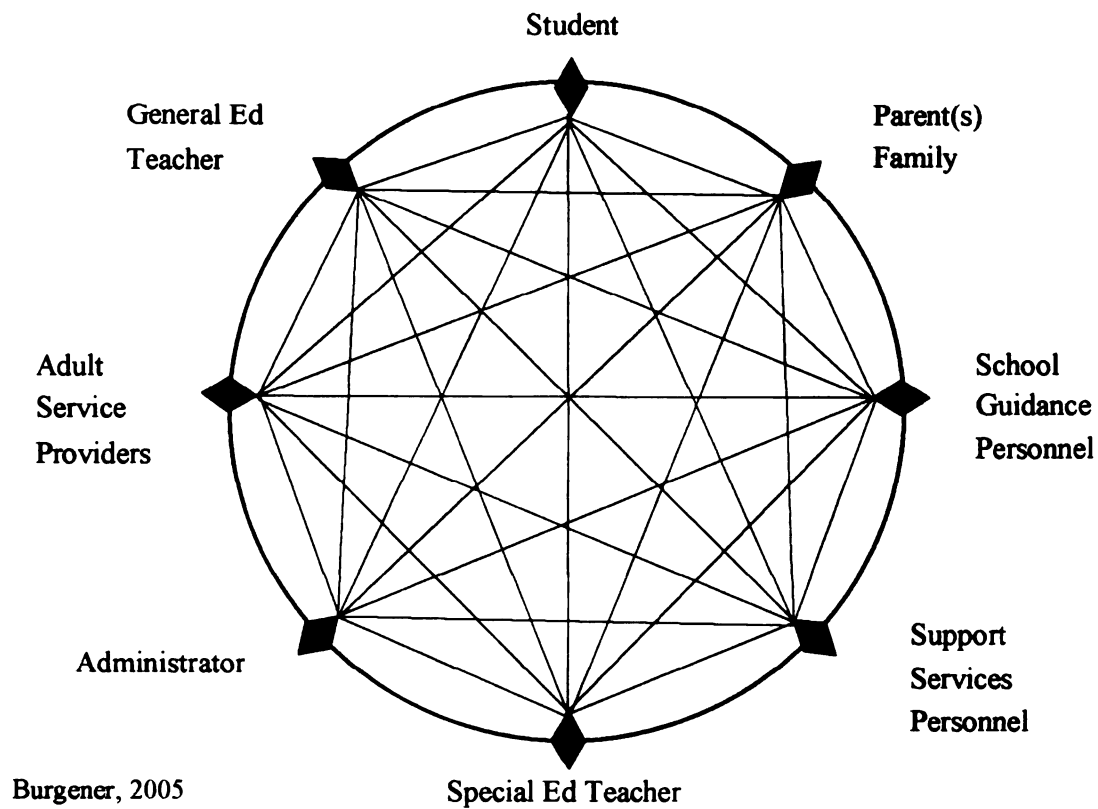


Figure 4 Heuristic of Communication in the Transition Process

APPENDIX D

ELEMENTS OF COMMUNICATION IN TRANSITION

Elements of Communication in Transition

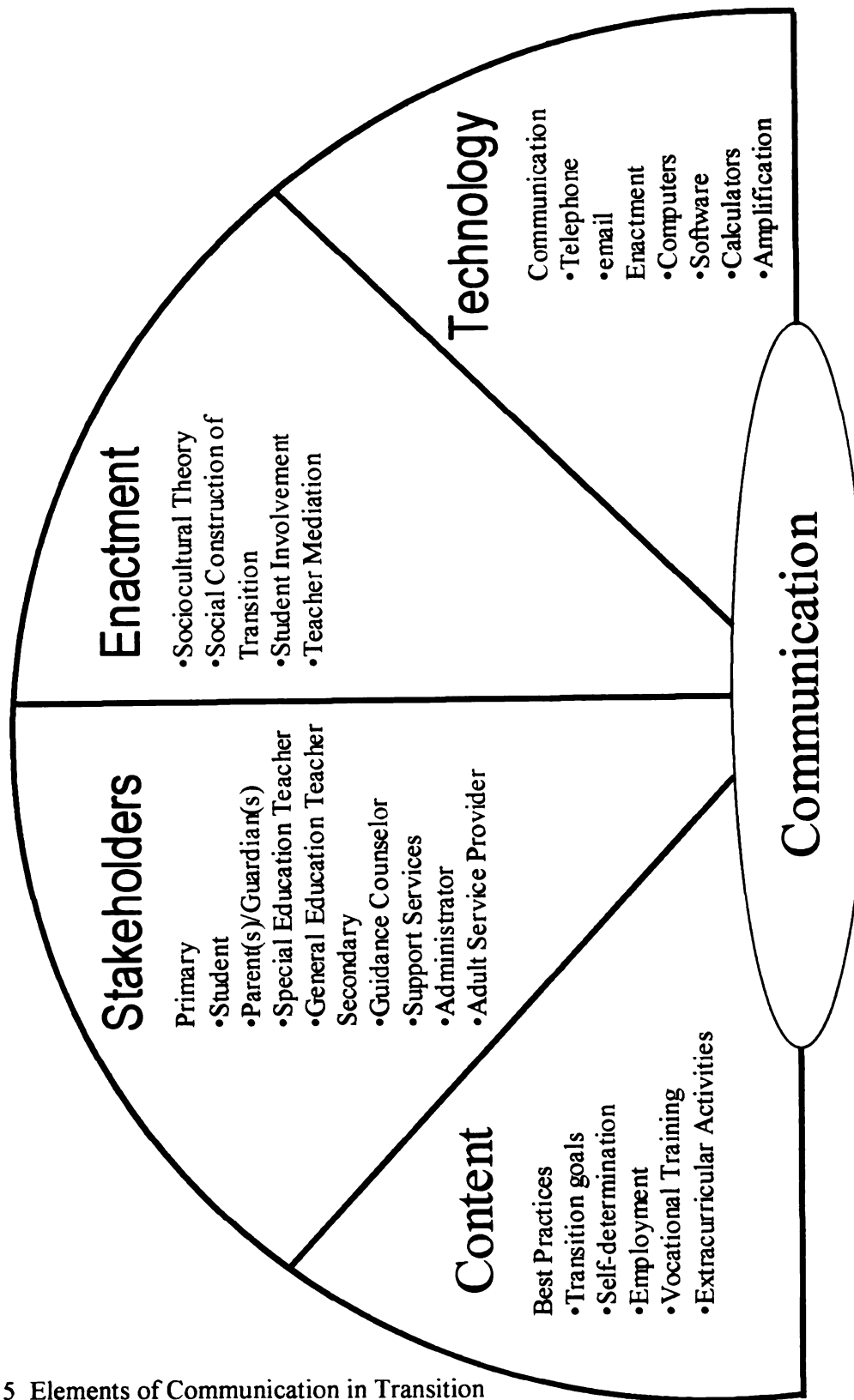


Figure 5 Elements of Communication in Transition

APPENDIX E

UCRIHS APPLICATION

APPLICATION FOR INITIAL REVIEW
APPROVAL OF A PROJECT INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS
 University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (UCRIHS)
 Peter Vasilenko, Ph.D., Chair
 202 Olds Hall, Michigan State University
 East Lansing, MI 48824-1047
 Phone: (517) 355-2180
 Fax: (517) 432-4503
 E-mail: ucrihs@msu.edu
 Office Hours: M-F (8:00 A.M.-5:00 P.M.)

IRB#: 05-488

ID# i022684

1a.	Responsible Project Investigator:	
	Name:	Troy MARIAGE
	ID#:	XXX-XX-4967
	Department:	CEPSE
	College:	EDUCATION
	Academic Rank:	Associate Professor
	Mailing Address:	339 Erickson Hall
	Phone:	5-1837
	Fax:	3-6393
	Email:	mariaget@msu.edu
1b.	Secondary Investigator:	
	Name:	Joyce Burgener
	ID#:	XXX-XX-0738
	Department:	CEPSE
	College:	EDUCATION
	Academic Rank:	
	Mailing Address:	1512 Lupine Dr. St. Joseph, MI 49085
	Phone:	269-428-1426
	Fax:	
	Email:	burgene2@msu.edu
1c.	Additional Investigators:	

2.	Study Coordinator: Name: Troy MARIAGE ID#: XXX-XX-4967 Department: CEPSE College: EDUCATION Academic Rank: Associate Professor Mailing Address: 339 Erickson Hall Phone: 5-1837 Fax: 3-6393 Email: mariaget@msu.edu	
3.	Title of Project: A Case Study: Study of Communication and Enactment of Transition Services Among Key Stakeholders in the Transition Process for High School Students with Learning Disabilities	
4.	Have you ever received Preliminary Approval for this project?	NO
5.	Category of Review	2-6 EXPEDITED
6.	Is this project being conducted to fulfill the requirements of an education/training program?	Ph.D. Dissertation
7a.	Funding:	Project is not funded
7b.	The protection of human subjects often requires resources be dedicated for things such as the consent process (space, personnel), the performance of the research (trained personnel interacting with subjects), care of subject issues or injuries (counseling, medical care), confidentiality of data (space, equipment) and other monetary and non-monetary resources. Describe the resources that are available for this project for the protection of human subjects. None	
8a.	List all sites where this research will be conducted. Public High School in Southwestern Michigan	
8b.	Do any of these sites have their own IRB?	NO
9.	Do you have any related project that were approved by UCRIHS? (a) IRB Numbers: 04-1444, 03-317	YES
10.	Have you submitted this to another IRB(s)?	NO
11.	Is another institution(s) relying on UCRIHS as the IRB of record? (a) Name of institution(s): Public School selected from	YES

	Southwest Michigan		
12.	Are you using an FDA approved drug/device/diagnostic test?		NO
13.	Are you using an FDA approved drug/device/diagnostic test for a non-FDA approved indication?		NO
14.	Has this protocol been submitted to the FDA or are there plans to submit it to the FDA?		NO
15.	Does this project involve the use of Materials of Human Origin (e.g. human blood or tissue)?		NO
16.	Research Category		
	Education Research	☐ Yes ☒ Yes	Gene Transfer Research ☐ Yes ☒ Yes
	Survey/Interview	☐ Yes ☒ Yes	Fetal Research ☐ Yes ☒ Yes
	Audio/Video Recording	☐ Yes ☒ Yes	Medical Records ☐ Yes ☒ Yes
	Oral History	☐ Yes ☒ Yes	Stem Cell Research ☐ Yes ☒ Yes
	Internet-based	☐ Yes ☒ Yes	Medical Imaging ☐ Yes ☒ Yes
	Analysis of Existing Data	☐ Yes ☒ Yes	Oncology ☐ Yes ☒ Yes
	International Research	☐ Yes ☒ Yes	Clinical Trial (specify below) ☐ Surgical ☒ Surgical ☐ Therapeutic ☒ Therapeutic ☐ Prevention ☒ Prevention ☐ Other ☒ Other ☐ NO ☒ NO
17.	Project Description (Abstract) Historically, students with disabilities have had bleak outcomes in post secondary settings compared to their non-disabled peers. The federal government has recognized the importance of transition processes and services. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1990, 1997, and IDEIA 2004 define transition services as "a coordinated set of activities for a student with a disability." The literature suggests that communication is a key component of transition programming and there are multiple key stakeholders involved. Two previous studies suggested a disconnect in this communication process. The purpose of this study is to explore communication in the transition process for students in high school with leaning disabilities. The research questions are: (1) How are transition services communicated to the key stakeholders? (2) Is there a difference, and if so what is the difference in the frequency and content of		

	communication among the key stakeholders? (3) How are transition services as set forth in students Individual Education Program and Transition Plan (IEPT) enacted within the classroom (transition or transition related class) setting among key stakeholders? (4) How is technology used in the process of transition and what role does technology play in facilitating communication among key stakeholders in the transition process?
18.	Procedures Procedures This is a case study of communication and enactment of transition services among key stakeholders in the transition process for high school students with learning disabilities. The purpose of the study is to explore the communication that occurs in the transition process for students with learning disabilities that are currently in high school. The rationale of the study is three pronged: (1) Two previous studies suggested a disconnect in the process of providing transition services to students with disabilities. (2) Transition services are defined as "a coordinated set of activities." There is a need to look in depth at the communication that takes place in the field. (3) We need to know how transition goals for students with learning disabilities in high school are enacted. The research questions for the study are: (1) How are transition services communicated to the key stakeholders? (2) Is there a difference, and if so what is the difference in the frequency and content of communication among the key stakeholders? (3) How are transition services as set forth in students Individual Education Program and Transition Plan (IEPT) enacted within the classroom (transition or transition related class) setting among key stakeholders? (4) How is technology used in the process of transition and what role does technology play in facilitating communication among key stakeholders in the transition process? Methodology: This is a case study that will involve collecting both qualitative and quantitative data. Data will be collected through a review of student records, interviews, communication logs, and observations. Consent forms for the participants have been designed and are included. Interview protocols have been specifically designed for this study based on the current research in the field and are included. The records to be reviewed will include: (1) The student's Individual Education Program (IEP); (2) The student's Individual Transition Plan (ITP); (3) The student's Educational Development Plan (EDP); (4) The student's achievement scores in reading and math; (5) The student's retention information; (6) The student's attendance information; and (6) The student's high school classes and grades. Interviews will be conducted with all of the study participants. The participants include: (1) Four students currently in high school with documented learning disabilities; (2) The student's special education teacher; (3) Regular education teachers that attend the student's IEPT any other regular education teachers that are directly involved in the student's transition goals; (4) The student's parent(s) or guardian. (See the interview instruments). These interviews will be audio recorded to ensure accurate transcription.

	The Communication logs will be completed by all of the study participants (students, parents, special education teacher, and all participating regular education teachers). (See the communication log). Participants are asked to document the type of transition communication (telephone, e-mail, note or letter, meetings), with whom they are communicating, who initiated the communication, the purpose of the communication, and the results of the communication. Observations will be conducted three times per week during the months of September, October, and the first two weeks in November 2005 in the special education teacher's transition or transition related class in which the participating students are members. The purpose of the observations is to determine, the topics discussed and their relation to best practices and the student's transition goals as documented on their IPT, the frequency of the discussions, who initiates the talk, who participated, and the duration. Field notes will be taken during these observations. These observations will be audio recorded to ensure accurate transcription. Location of the study: This study will be located in one public high school in the state of Michigan that meets the following criteria: (1) a high graduation rate for students compared to the state average; (2) a transition program for students with disabilities that is recommended by the Intermediate School District (ISD) Transition Coordinator as a quality program (this program will include a transition or transition related class that is currently a part of the curriculum in the high school); (3) is in close proximity to my location. This study will have the approval of the high school principal before any contact is made with perspective participants. Participants: The participants in this study will include one (1) special education teacher (recommended by the ISD transition coordinator and the high school principal) who is currently teaching a transition or transition related course that includes students with learning disabilities and voluntarily agrees to participate in this study; four (4) students that are currently attending high school that have documented learning disabilities and are currently taking the transition or transition related course taught by the designated special education teacher and who voluntarily agree to participate in this study; regular education teachers or personnel that are directly involved in the transition process for the four participating students and agree to participate in this study; and the parent(s) or guardians of the four participating students. Data analysis: The data collected will be analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. All numerical data will be analyzed descriptively and inferentially through statistical analysis using SPSS. Qualitative data will be analyzed using discourse analysis techniques including category generation and coding.	
19.	Does your investigation involve incomplete disclosure of the research purpose or deception of the subjects?	NO
20 a.	Subject Population 20. Subject Population: The participants in this study will include one (1) special education teacher (recommended by the ISD transition coordinator and the high school principal) who is currently teaching a transition or transition related course that includes students with learning disabilities and voluntarily agrees to participate in this study; four (4) students that are currently attending high school that have documented learning disabilities and are currently taking the transition or transition related course taught by the designated	

	special education teacher and who voluntarily agree to participate in this study; regular education teachers that are directly involved in the transition process for the four participating students and agree to participate in this study; and the parent(s) or guardians of the four participating students.																																																								
20 b.	Age range of subjects:	14 to 20																																																							
20 c.	The study population may include:																																																								
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">Target Population:</th> <th colspan="2">Incidental Inclusion:</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Minors</td><td>Minors</td> <td>Minors</td><td>Minors</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pregnant</td><td>Pregnant Women</td> <td>Pregnant</td><td>Pregnant Women</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Women of</td><td>Women of Childbearing Age</td> <td>Women of</td><td>Women of</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Institutionalize</td><td>Institutionalized Persons</td> <td>Childbearing Age</td><td>Childbearing Age</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Students</td><td>Students</td> <td>Institutionalize</td><td>Institutionalized</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Low Income</td><td>Low Income Persons</td> <td>Persons</td><td>Persons</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Minorities</td><td>Minorities</td> <td>Students</td><td>Students</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Prisoners</td><td>Prisoners</td> <td>Low Income</td><td>Low Income Persons</td> </tr> <tr> <td>HIV/AIDS</td><td>HIV/AIDS Individuals</td> <td>Minorities</td><td>Minorities</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Psychiatric</td><td>Psychiatric Patients</td> <td>Prisoners</td><td>Prisoners</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Incompetent</td><td>Incompetent Persons</td> <td>HIV/AIDS</td><td>HIV/AIDS Individuals</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td><td></td> <td>Psychiatric</td><td>Psychiatric Patients</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td><td></td> <td>Incompetent</td><td>Incompetent Persons</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Target Population:		Incidental Inclusion:		Minors	Minors	Minors	Minors	Pregnant	Pregnant Women	Pregnant	Pregnant Women	Women of	Women of Childbearing Age	Women of	Women of	Institutionalize	Institutionalized Persons	Childbearing Age	Childbearing Age	Students	Students	Institutionalize	Institutionalized	Low Income	Low Income Persons	Persons	Persons	Minorities	Minorities	Students	Students	Prisoners	Prisoners	Low Income	Low Income Persons	HIV/AIDS	HIV/AIDS Individuals	Minorities	Minorities	Psychiatric	Psychiatric Patients	Prisoners	Prisoners	Incompetent	Incompetent Persons	HIV/AIDS	HIV/AIDS Individuals			Psychiatric	Psychiatric Patients			Incompetent	Incompetent Persons
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20 d.	Expected number of subjects (including controls):	13-20																																																							
20 e.	Justify your sample size: Sample Size: This study will include 4 students, one special education teacher, from 4 to 8 parents or guardians (depending on the family structure and the participation consent of the parents/guardians), and approximately four regular education teachers (this will depend on the students participating in the study and the participation of regular education teachers in their transition process and the consent of the regular education teachers).																																																								
20f	Describe the criteria for the inclusion of subjects: Participants: The participants in this study will include one (1) special education teacher (recommended by the ISD transition coordinator and the high school principal) who is currently teaching a transition or transition related course that includes students with learning disabilities and voluntarily agrees to participate in this study; four (4) students that are currently attending high school that have documented learning disabilities and are currently taking the transition or transition related course taught by the designated special education teacher and who voluntarily agree to participate in this study; regular education teachers or personnel that are directly involved in the transition process for the four participating students and agree to participate in this study; and the parent(s) or guardians of the four participating																																																								

	students.		
20 g.	Describe the criteria for the exclusion of subjects: Subjects who do not meet the criteria in 20f would not be included in the study. Participation in the study is voluntary and requires written, informed consent (adult participants) and assent (for minor participants) from all participants in the study.		
20 h(1).	How will the subjects be recruited? Recruitment of Subjects: (how identified and who will make initial contact). The participating special education teacher will be identified by the Intermediate School District (ISD) Transition Coordinator and/or the high school principal. The initial contact will be made by the either high school principal or the investigator depending on the preference of the consenting high school principal. The four (4) students will be identified by the special education teacher, as students who meet the criteria for the study. The initial contact will be made by the investigator. The parents/guardians will be initially contacted by the investigator. Minors will not be contacted before parental consent. The regular education teachers will be identified through document review and the recommendation of students, parents, and the special education teacher.		
20 h(2).	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Will an advertisement be used?</td><td>NO</td></tr> </table>	Will an advertisement be used?	NO
Will an advertisement be used?	NO		
20 i.	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Are you associated with the subjects?</td><td>NO</td></tr> </table>	Are you associated with the subjects?	NO
Are you associated with the subjects?	NO		
20 j.	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Will someone receive payment for recruiting the subjects?</td><td>NO</td></tr> </table>	Will someone receive payment for recruiting the subjects?	NO
Will someone receive payment for recruiting the subjects?	NO		
20 k.	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Will the research subjects be compensated?</td><td>NO</td></tr> </table>	Will the research subjects be compensated?	NO
Will the research subjects be compensated?	NO		
20 l.	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Will the subjects incur additional financial costs as a result of their participation in this study?</td><td>NO</td></tr> </table>	Will the subjects incur additional financial costs as a result of their participation in this study?	NO
Will the subjects incur additional financial costs as a result of their participation in this study?	NO		
20 m.	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Will this research be conducted with subjects in another country?</td><td>NO</td></tr> </table>	Will this research be conducted with subjects in another country?	NO
Will this research be conducted with subjects in another country?	NO		
20 n.	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Will this research be conducted with subjects in the U.S. from an ethnic group or sub-group or other non-mainstream minorities (including non-English speakers)?</td><td>NO</td></tr> </table>	Will this research be conducted with subjects in the U.S. from an ethnic group or sub-group or other non-mainstream minorities (including non-English speakers)?	NO
Will this research be conducted with subjects in the U.S. from an ethnic group or sub-group or other non-mainstream minorities (including non-English speakers)?	NO		
21 a.	Risks and Benefits for subjects: Describe and assess any potential risks (physical, psychological, social, legal, economic) and assess the likelihood and seriousness of such risks. Risks: The researcher does not foresee any risks for participants involved in this study. However, this study could promote thoughts and questions about the student's transition process that had not previously been raised by any or all of the participants.		
21 b.	Describe procedures for protecting against or minimizing potential risks and provide an assessment of their likely effectiveness. Participation in the study is voluntary. Adult participants will complete a written, informed consent process that (1) describes the nature of the study and its requirements, (2) any potential risks involved in the study, (3) potential benefits of participation, and (4) discussions of privacy and confidentiality procedures used in the study. Minor participation is also voluntary. Minor participants will also participate in a written informed assent procedure that includes the identical processes outlined in 1-4 above.		

21 c.	Assess the potential benefits (if any) to be gained by the subjects in this study, as well as benefits which may accrue to society in general as a result of the planned work. Benefits: The anticipated benefits to the subjects themselves will be an increased awareness of the transition process for the participating stakeholders. This could have a positive effect on the quality of transition services for the participating students and future students . This could have the benefit of more involvement on the part of the key transition process stakeholders, which could in turn have a positive effect on the quality of the program and outcomes of the student. It is anticipated that the information gathered from this study can be used by the State, Intermediate School District, and local school districts to plan and provide high quality transition programs for students with disabilities. It is also anticipated that the information gathered from this study will contribute to the current literature on transition services for this population.
22 a.	How will the subject's privacy be protected? Include a description of who will be interacting with the subjects or accessing and abstracting data from the subject's records (academic, medical, etc.) and where the study will take place. For example, will individuals not associated with the research study be present during the consent process and the conduct of the study? Subject Privacy: Confidentiality for all participants will be insured through the following procedures: (1) Neither the name of the Intermediate School District, the Transition Coordinator, the school district, the high school, or any participants will be used in reports of research findings. (2) Participants will be assigned a code to replace their name. (3) Only the code will be used as identifying information on data sources and documents. (4) Audio recordings will be stored in a password-protected computer. (5) All other data sources/documents will be secured in a safe place, accessible only to project researchers. (6) Audio recording will be destroyed after the completion of the study and data analysis.
22 b.	Where will the data be stored and for how long? Data will be stored in a password protected computer. Audio recordings, transcripts, communication logs, interview protocols, and fieldnotes will all be in a digitized format, allowing for their storage on the investigator's password-protected computer. Any hard copies of artifacts (e.g., communication logs, classroom artifacts) will be stored in the investigator's locked file cabinet.
22 c.	Who will have access to the research data? The Responsible Project Investigator and the secondary investigator listed on the UCHRIS protocol.
22 d.	How will you ensure the confidentiality and/or anonymity of the research data? Include a description of the procedures and safeguards you will use, including if identifying information will be stored with the data. Subject Privacy: Confidentiality for all participants will be insured through the following procedures: (1) Neither the name of the Intermediate School District, the Transition Coordinator, the school district, the high school, or any participants will be used in reports of research findings. (2) Participants will be assigned a code to replace their name. (3) Only the code will be used as identifying information on data sources and documents. (4) Audio recordings will be stored in a password-protected computer. (5) All other data sources/documents will be secured in a safe place, accessible only to project researchers. (6) Audio recording will be destroyed after the completion of the study

23.

24.

25
a.

25
b.

25
c.

26
a.

26
b.

Es

ADDITIONAL

01. 6/3/2

	and data analysis.	
23.	Does this project involve protected health information as defined by HIPAA?	NO
24.	(a) Select appropriate consent option.	Approval of a consent form and process
	(b) Consent Procedures: The investigator will make an initial contact with the Transition Coordinator at the Butte County Intermediate School District. The Transition Coordinator will identify a high school within the Butte County Intermediate School District that she feels is an exemplary program. Having identified this school, the investigator will then make a phone contact with the building administrator. Approval for the study by the Building Administrator will be secured prior to seeking consent of study participants. Once approval by the administrator has been granted, the investigator will make a personal contact with the building's special education teacher responsible for providing transition services. The investigator will explain the nature of the study, including a full description of the informed consent process and procedures. If the special education teacher provides written, informed consent, the investigator will then work with the special education teacher to identify students on her caseload who meet the criteria for selection in the study (i.e., have a documented learning disability; are in grades 9-12; enrolled in a transition course with the participating teacher, and; students will be chosen based upon their having a variety of transition goals). Students meeting these criteria will be identified. Parents of these students will be contacted by the investigator to seek their written, informed consent to participate in the study. If written, informed consent is granted, the investigator will then seek written informed assent from the student. Regular education teachers and/or personnel who deliver transition-related services to students will be identified by the special education teacher. The investigator will then contact the regular education teacher and/or personnel who deliver transition-related services to seek their informed, written consent (See attached consent forms).	
25 a.	Have you or will you or a member of your immediate family receive, from the sponsor of the research, financial or other forms of compensation?	NO
25 b.	Do or will you or a member of your immediate family have a significant financial interest in the company/agency/firm that is to sponsor the research?	NO
25 c.	Are you submitting FDA form 3454 or 3455 (Conflict of Interest)?	NO
26 a.	When would you prefer to begin this project?	6/15/2005
26 b.	Estimated duration of project:	1 year
ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS/ATTACHMENTS		
01. 6/3/2005 <u>Consent Form</u> (i022684_06-03-05_Regular_Ed_Consent_formB84.pdf)		

12-1-17

12-1-17

- 02. 6/3/2005 Consent Form (i022684_06-03-05_Studentst_consent_form_7D9.pdf)
- 03. 6/3/2005 Survey Instrument (i022684_06-03-05_Interview_Protocol_for_21A.pdf)
- 04. 6/3/2005 Survey Instrument (i022684_06-03-05_Interview_Protocol_for_5B7.pdf)
- 05. 6/3/2005 Consent Form (i022684_06-03-05_SPED_Teacher_consent_409.pdf)
- 06. 6/3/2005 Survey Instrument (i022684_06-03-05_Interview_Protocol_for_A3.pdf)
- 07. 6/3/2005 Survey Instrument (i022684_06-03-05_Interview_Protocol_for_E0F.pdf)
- 08. 6/3/2005 Consent Form (i022684_06-3-05_Parent_consent_form_a_B65.pdf)
- 09. 6/13/2005 Consent Form (i022684_06-13-05_Parent_consent_form_a_cB65.pdf)
- 10. 6/13/2005 Consent Form (i022684_06-13-05_Regular_Ed_Consent_formB84.pdf)
- 11. 6-13-2005 Assent Form (i022684_06-13-05_SPED_Teacher_consent_fo409.pdf)
- 12. 6-13-2005 Consent Form (i022684_06-13-05_Studentst_consent_form_7D9.pdf)
- 13. 6-21-2005 Consent Form (i022684_06-21-05_Parent_consent_form_for_a_minor_child.pdf)

APPENDIX F

ADMINISTRATOR LETTER

Request to Conduct Research

A Case Study: A Study of Communication and Enactment of Transition Services Among Key Stakeholders in the Transition Process for High School Students with Learning Disabilities

Dear Administrator:

I am a doctoral student in the College of Education at Michigan State University. I am working on my dissertation research, which explores the communication and enactment of transition services among key stakeholders in the transition process for students with learning disabilities currently enrolled in high school.

Your high school has been chosen based on the following criteria: (1) a high graduation rate for students with disabilities compared to the state average; (2) the size of the high school (3) a transition class as a part of the high school curriculum for students with disabilities; and (4) the recommendation of the Intermediate School District transition coordinator as a high quality transition program for students with learning disabilities.

The participants in the study will include: (1) four high school students with learning disabilities currently in special education; (2) the participating students' parents; (3) regular education teachers who are directly involved in the participating students' transition goals; and (4) a secondary special education teacher.

The study will specifically examine the following: (1) how transition services and best practices that are identified in the research literature are communicated to key stakeholders; (2) the frequency and content of communication among these key stakeholders; (3) how transition goals are enacted within the classroom setting among key stakeholders, for students with learning disabilities; and (4) how technology is used in the transition process and what role it plays in facilitating communication and enactment of student goals.

The procedures included in the study are: (1) a review of student records; (2) interviews of the study participants; (3) communication logs to be completed by the study participants; and (4) transition or transition related class observations.

1. A Review of student records includes the following documents:
 - * students' current and past Individual Education Programs and Individual Transition Plans (IEP/ITP), beginning at age 14
 - * students' Educational Development Plan (EDP),
 - * students' achievement scores in reading and math,
 - * students' retention, attendance and class placements found in the CA60.

2. Interviews of the special education teacher and the regular education teacher will take place during the month of September 2005 and the interviews of the students and parents will take place during the month of October 2005. All interviews will be audio recorded. These interviews will take approximately one to three hours.
3. Communication logs will be kept by all participants and will be collected each week of the study. These logs document communication that occurs as a part of the transition process and includes information on the individuals involved in the discourse (special education teacher, student, etc.), with whom they talk to about transition issues, the frequency of communication, the purpose and results of the communication. Filling out this form should take only a few minutes each time it is completed.
4. Transition class observations will take place three times per week for the duration of the study and will be audio recorded.

The purpose of audio recording the transition class and the interviews is to allow for accurate transcription of the data. The audio recording of the interview will be stored in a locked file drawer and will be destroyed at the end of the study.

I need your permission in order to conduct this study at your high school. The participation in this study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate in this study. If you choose to participate in this study your privacy and the privacy of all participants will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law. All of the information will be treated with strict confidence. The name of your school or the name of any participants will not be identifiable in any report of research findings. There are no foreseeable significant risks or consequences for any of the participants in this study.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact the responsible project investigator: Dr. Troy Mariage, 339 Erickson Hall, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI 48824-1034. The telephone number is 517 355-1837. The e-mail address is mariaget@msu.edu. If you have questions or concerns regarding your rights as a study participant, or are dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of this study, you may contact-anonymously, if you wish: Peter Vasilenko, Ph.D., Chair of the University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (UCRIHS) by phone (517) 355-2180, fax: (517) 432-4503, e-mail: ucrihs@msu.edu, or regular mail: 202 Olds Hall, East Lansing, MI 48824.

I voluntarily agree to allow this study to take place at Lakeshore High School.

Date: _____ Signature: _____

I voluntarily agree to the audio recording of interviews and class observations.

Date: _____ Signature: _____

APPENDIX G

CONSENT FORMS

**A Case Study: A Study of Communication and Enactment of Transition Services Among
Key Stakeholders in the Transition Process for High School Students with Learning
Disabilities**

Parent Consent Form for A Minor Child
June 14, 2005

You are being asked to allow your child to participate in a study that is designed to look at communication and enactment in the transition process for high school students with learning disabilities. The study will specifically examine the following: (1) how transition services and best practices that are identified in the research literature are communicated to key stakeholders (the individuals that are directly involved in your transition from high school to post-secondary settings); (2) the frequency and content of communication among these key stakeholders; (3) how transition goals are enacted within the classroom setting among key stakeholders, for students with learning disabilities; and (4) how technology is used in the transition process and what role it plays in facilitating communication and enactment of student goals.

The participants in the study will include: four high school students with learning disabilities currently in special education, the students' parents, the appropriate regular secondary education teachers, and a secondary special education teacher.

The procedures included in the study are: (1) a review of student records (Individual Education Program, Individual Transition Plan, Educational Development Plan, Student Achievement scores in reading and math, student retention information, attendance information, and placement in high school classes); (2) interviews of the study participants, (3) communication logs to be completed by the study participants; and (4) class observations.

If you choose to allow your child to participate in this study it will involve the following:

5. A Review the following documents by the investigator:
 - * your child's current and any past Individual Education Programs and Individual Transition Plans (IEP/ITP),
 - * your child's Educational Development Plan (EDP),
 - * your child's achievement scores in reading and math,
 - * your child's information on retention, attendance and class placements found in the CA60.
6. The investigator observing in your child's transition or transition related class and audio recording the class. This observation will be of the entire class and will not involve any additional time on the part of your child.
7. An interview of your child during the month of October 2005 and audio record the interview. This interview will take approximately two to three hours and will be completed during a study period(s) or other time that is appropriate.
8. Your child to keep a communication log that documents with whom they

talk to about transition issues, the frequency of communication, the purpose and results of the communication with regards to transition issues. The communication log will be collected each week. Filling out this form should take only take a few minutes each time it is completed.

The purpose of audio recording the transition class and the interview is to allow for accurate transcription. The audio recording of the interview will be stored in a locked file drawer and will be destroyed at the end of the study.

The participation of your child and your consent of the participation of your child in this study is voluntary. You may choose not to have your child participate in this study. If you choose to have your child participate in this study your privacy and their privacy will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law. The child may refuse to answer any individual questions during the interview. They may discontinue their participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits or grades. All of the information will be treated with strict confidence. Their name, the name of their school, or the name of any participants will not be identifiable in any report of research findings. There are no foreseeable significant risks or consequences for your child as a participant in this study.

If you choose to allow your child to participate, please sign the consent form.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact the responsible project investigator: Dr. Troy Mariage, 339 Erickson Hall, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI 48824-1034. The telephone number is 517 355-1837. The e-mail address is mariager@msu.edu. If you have questions or concerns regarding your rights as a study participant, or are dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of this study, you may contact-anonymously, if you wish: Peter Vasilenko, Ph.D., Chair of the University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (UCRIHS) by phone (517) 355-2180, fax: (517) 432-4503, e-mail: ucrihs@msu.edu, or regular mail: 202 Olds Hall, East Lansing, MI 48824.

I, as parent or guardian, voluntarily agree to the participation of my child in this study.

Date: _____ Signature: _____

I, as parent or guardian, voluntarily agree to the audio recording of the interview and class observations of my child.

Date: _____ Signature: _____

**A Case Study: A Study of Communication and Enactment of Transition Services Among
Key Stakeholders in the Transition Process for High School Students with Learning
Disabilities**

**Parent Consent Form
May 18, 2005**

You are being asked to participate in a study that is designed to take close look at communication and enactment in the transition process for high school students with learning disabilities. The study will specifically examine the following: (1) how transition services and best practices that are identified in the research literature are communicated to key stakeholders; (2) the frequency and content of communication among these key stakeholders; (3) how transition goals are enacted within the classroom setting among key stakeholders, for students with learning disabilities; and (4) how technology is used in the transition process and what role it plays in facilitating communication and enactment of student goals.

The participants in the study will include: four high school students with learning disabilities currently in special education, the students' parents, the appropriate regular secondary education teachers, and a secondary special education teacher.

The procedures included in the study are: (1) a review of student records (Individual Education Program, Individual Transition Plan, Educational Development Plan, Student Achievement scores in reading and math, student retention information, attendance information, and placement in high school classes); (2) interviews of the study participants, (3) communication logs to be completed by the study participants; and (4) class observations

Your student's high school has been chosen based on the following criteria: (1) a high graduation rate for students with disabilities compared to the state average; (2) a high school population that fits into the Michigan High School Athletic Association code of school size classification for class B; (3) a high school that currently has a transition class as a part of the high school curriculum for students with disabilities; and (4) the recommendation of the Intermediate School District transition coordinator as a high quality transition program for students with learning disabilities.

You are being asked to keep a communication log that documents with whom you communicate, the frequency of communication, the purpose and results of the communication with regards to transition issues for your student. The communication log form will be collected each week. Filling out this form should only take a few minutes each time it is completed.

You are also being asked to allow the investigator to interview you sometime during the month of September 2005. The interview will take place at a time and location that is

convenient for you. It will take about one to two hours to complete the interview. This interview session will be audio recorded to allow for accurate transcription. The audio recording of the interview will be stored in a pass-word protected computer and will be destroyed at the end of the study.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate in this study. If you choose to participate in this study your privacy will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law. You may refuse to answer any individual questions in the interview. You may discontinue your participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits. All of the information will be treated with strict confidence. Your name, the name of the school, or the name of any participants will not be identifiable in any report of research findings. There are no foreseeable significant risks or consequences for you as a participant in this study.

If you choose to participate, please sign the consent form.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact the responsible project investigator: Dr. Troy Mariage, 339 Erickson Hall, Michigan State University, East Lansing MI 48824-1034. The telephone number is 517 355-1837. The e-mail address is mariaget@msu.edu. If you have questions or concerns regarding your rights as a study participant, or are dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of this study, you may contact-anonymously, if you wish: Peter Vasilenko, Ph.D., Chair of the University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (UCRIHS) by phone (517) 355-2180, fax: (517) 432-4503, e-mail: ucrihs@msu.edu, or regular mail: 202 Olds Hall, East Lansing, MI 48824.

I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

Date:_____ Signature:_____

I voluntarily agree to the audio recording of the interview and class observations.

Date:_____ Signature:_____

A Case Study: A Study of Communication and Enactment of Transition Services Among Key Stakeholders in the Transition Process for High School Students with Learning Disabilities

**Regular Education Teacher Consent Form
May 18, 2005**

You are being asked to participate in a study that is designed to take a close look at communication and enactment in the transition process for high school students with learning disabilities. The study will specifically examine the following: (1) how transition services and best practices that are identified in the research literature are communicated to key stakeholders; (2) the frequency and content of communication among these key stakeholders; (3) how transition goals are enacted within the classroom setting among key stakeholders, for students with learning disabilities; and (4) how technology is used in the transition process and what role it plays in facilitating communication and enactment of student goals.

The participants in the study will include: a secondary special education teacher, four high school students with learning disabilities currently in special education, regular secondary education teachers, and the students' parents.

The procedures included in the study are: (1) a review of student records (Individual Education Program, Individual Transition Plan, Educational Development Plan, Student Achievement scores in reading and math, student retention information, attendance information, and placement in high school classes); (2) interviews of the study participants, (3) communication logs to be completed by the study participants; and (4) class observations

Your high school has been chosen based on the following criteria: (1) a high graduation rate for students with disabilities compared to the state average; (2) a high school population that fits into the Michigan High School Athletic Association code of school size classification for class B; (3) a high school that currently has a transition class as a part of the high school curriculum for students with disabilities; and (4) the recommendation of the Intermediate School District transition coordinator as a high quality transition program for students with learning disabilities.

You are being asked to keep a communication log that documents with whom you communicate, the frequency of communication, the purpose and results of the communication with regards to transition issues for up to four specific students. The communication log form will be collected each week. Filling out this form should only take a few minutes each time it is completed.

You are also being asked to allow the investigator to interview you sometime during the month of September 2005. The interview will take place at a time and location that is

convenient for you. This interview should take about one to two hours. This interview session will be audio recorded to allow for accurate transcription. The audio recording of the interview will be stored in a pass-word protected computer and will be destroyed at the end of the study.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate in this study. If you choose to participate in this study your privacy will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law. You may refuse to answer any individual questions on the survey or refuse to allow me to observe the classroom, or to audio tape any class observation on any given day(s). You may discontinue your participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits. All of the information will be treated with strict confidence. Your name, the name of your school, or the name of any participants will not be identifiable in any report of research findings. There are no foreseeable significant risks or consequences for you as a participant in this study.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact the responsible project investigator: Dr. Troy Mariage, 339 Erickson Hall, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI 48824-1034. The telephone number is 517 355-1837. The e-mail address is mariaget@msu.edu. If you have questions or concerns regarding your rights as a study participant, or are dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of this study, you may contact-anonymously, if you wish: Peter Vasilenko, Ph.D., Chair of the University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (UCRIHS) by phone (517) 355-2180, fax: (517) 432-4503, e-mail: ucrihs@msu.edu, or regular mail: 202 Olds Hall, East Lansing, MI 48824.

I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

Date: _____ Signature: _____

I voluntarily agree to the audio recording of the interview.

Date: _____ Signature: _____

**A Case Study: A Study of Communication and Enactment of Transition Services Among
Key Stakeholders in the Transition Process for High School Students with Learning
Disabilities**

**Special Education Teacher Consent Form
May 18, 2005**

You are being asked to participate in a study that is designed to take a close look at communication and enactment in the transition process for high school students with learning disabilities. The study will specifically examine the following: (1) how transition services and best practices that are identified in the research literature are communicated to key stakeholders; (2) the frequency and content of communication among these key stakeholders; (3) how transition goals are enacted within the classroom setting among key stakeholders, for students with learning disabilities; and (4) how technology is used in the transition process and what role it plays in facilitating communication and enactment of the goals.

The participants in the study will include: a secondary special education teacher, four high school students with learning disabilities currently in special education, regular secondary education teachers, and the students' parents.

The procedures included in the study are a review of student records (Individual Education Program, Individual Transition Plan, Educational Development Plan, Student Achievement scores in reading and math, student retention information, attendance information, and placement in high school classes), interviews of the study participants, communication logs to be completed by the study participants, and class observations

Your high school has been chosen based on the following criteria: (1) a high graduation rate for students with disabilities compared to the state average; (2) the high school population fits into the Michigan High School Athletic Association code of school size classification for class B; (3) you currently have a transition class as a part of the high school curriculum for students with disabilities; and you have the recommendation of the Intermediate School District transition coordinator as a high quality transition program for students with learning disabilities.

You are being asked to allow the investigator to come into your transition class three days a week for the months of September, October, and the first two weeks of November, during the 2005 school year and observe the class. This would amount to about 30 hours of observations. During observations I will be audio recording the class for the purpose of accurate transcription of the data.

You are being asked to keep a communication log that documents with whom you communicate in regards to transition issues for four specific students. The

communication log form will be collected each week. Filling out this form should only take a few minutes each time it is completed.

You are also being asked to allow me to interview you sometime during the designated time frame stated above. The interview will take place at a time and location that is convenient for you. This interview will take from one to two hours. This interview session will be audio recorded to allow for accurate transcription.

The audio-recordings of both the class and the interview will be stored in a password protected computer and will be destroyed at the end of the study.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate in this study. If you choose to participate in this study your privacy will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law. You may refuse to answer any individual questions on the survey or refuse to allow me to observe the classroom, or to audio tape any class observation on any given day(s). You may discontinue your participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits. All of the information will be treated with strict confidence. Your name, the name of your school, or the name of any participants will not be identifiable in any report of research findings. There are no foreseeable significant risks or consequences for you as a participant in this study.

If you choose to participate, please sign the consent form.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact the responsible project investigator: Dr. Troy Mariage, 339 Erickson Hall, Michigan State University, East Lansing MI 48824-1034. The telephone number is 517 355-1837. The e-mail address is mariaget@msu.edu. If you have questions or concerns regarding your rights as a study participant, or are dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of this study, you may contact-anonymously, if you wish: Peter Vasilenko, Ph.D., Chair of the University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (UCRIHS) by phone (517) 355-2180, fax: (517) 432-4503, e-mail: ucrihs@msu.edu, or regular mail: 202 Olds Hall, East Lansing, MI 48824.

I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

Date: _____ Signature: _____

I voluntarily agree to the audio recording of the interview and class observations.

Date: _____ Signature: _____

A Case Study: A Study of Communication and Enactment of Transition Services Among Key Stakeholders in the Transition Process for High School Students with Learning Disabilities

**Student Assent Form
May 18, 2005**

You are being asked to participate in a study that is designed to look at communication and enactment in the transition process for high school students with learning disabilities. The study will specifically examine the following: (1) how transition services and best practices that are identified in the research literature are communicated to key stakeholders (the individuals that are directly involved in your transition from high school to post-secondary settings); (2) the frequency and content of communication among these key stakeholders; (3) how transition goals are enacted within the classroom setting among key stakeholders, for students with learning disabilities; and (4) how technology is used in the transition process and what role it plays in facilitating communication and enactment of student goals.

The participants in the study will include: four high school students with learning disabilities currently in special education, the students' parents, the appropriate regular secondary education teachers, and a secondary special education teacher.

The procedures included in the study are: (1) a review of student records (Individual Education Program, Individual Transition Plan, Educational Development Plan, Student Achievement scores in reading and math, student retention information, attendance information, and placement in high school classes); (2) interviews of the study participants, (3) communication logs to be completed by the study participants; and (4) class observations.

Your high school has been chosen based on the following criteria: (1) a high graduation rate for students with disabilities compared to the state average; (2) a high school population that fits into the Michigan High School Athletic Association code of school size classification for class B; (3) a high school that currently has a transition class as a part of the high school curriculum for students with disabilities; and (4) the recommendation of the Intermediate School District transition coordinator as a high quality transition program for students with learning disabilities.

If you choose to participate in this study you will be asked to allow the investigator to:

9. Review your high school records, including your current and past IEP/ITP, your EDP or Educational Development Plan, your achievement scores in reading and math, and retention, attendance and class placements.
10. Observe in your transition or transition related class and audio recording that class.

11. Interview you during the month of September 2005 and audio record the interview.
12. Ask you to keep a communication log that documents with whom you communicate, the frequency of communication, the purpose and results of the communication with regards to transition issues. The communication log form will be collected each week. Filling out this form should only take a few minutes each time it is completed.

If you choose to participate the time involved will be about two to three hours during the study period.

The purpose of audio recording the transition class and the interview is to allow for accurate transcription. The audio recording of the interview will be stored in a locked file drawer and will be destroyed at the end of the study.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate in this study. If you choose to participate in this study your privacy will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law. You may refuse to answer any individual questions during the interview. You may discontinue your participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits or grades. All of the information will be treated with strict confidence. Your name, the name of your school, or the name of any participants will not be identifiable in any report of research findings. There are no foreseeable significant risks or consequences for you as a participant in this study.

If you choose to participate, please sign the consent form.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact the responsible project investigator: Dr. Troy Mariage, 339 Erickson Hall, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI 48824-1034. The telephone number is 517 355-1837. The e-mail address is mariaget@msu.edu. If you have questions or concerns regarding your rights as a study participant, or are dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of this study, you may contact-anonymously, if you wish: Peter Vasilenko, Ph.D., Chair of the University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (UCRIHS) by phone (517) 355-2180, fax: (517) 432-4503, e-mail: ucrihs@msu.edu, or regular mail: 202 Olds Hall, East Lansing, MI 48824.

I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

Date: _____ Signature: _____

I voluntarily agree to the audio recording of the interview and class observations.

Date: _____ Signature: _____

I, as parent or guardian, voluntarily agree to the participation of my student in this study.

Date: _____ Signature: _____

I, as parent or guardian, voluntarily agree to the audio recording of the interview and class observations of my students.

Date: _____ Signature: _____

APPENDIX H

METHODOLOGY TABLE

Table 2 Methodology Table

1. How are transition services and best practices that are identified in the research literature communicated to key stakeholders in the transition process for youth in high school?	Communication Logs Observations/Field Notes	Interviews	Model of communication List of best practices
2. Is there a difference in the frequency and content of communication among key stakeholders?	Communication Logs Interviews	Observations/ Field Notes	Communication Logs
3. How are transition services as set forth in student's transition goals on their (IEP)/(ITP) enacted within the classroom (transition or transition related class) setting among key stakeholders, for students with learning disabilities?	Document Review Observations/Field Notes	Communication Logs	Transition goals Syllabus Best Practices Discourse Transition services
4. How is technology used in the process of transition and what role does technology play in facilitating communication among key stakeholders in the transition process?	Interviews Observations/Field Notes	Communication Logs Document Review	Communication: Examples email, phone call, meeting Enactment: Example: technology, training, assessment.

APPENDIX I

INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

Interview Protocol for Parent(s)/Family Members
A Case Study of Transition
Joyce Burgener
March-May, 2005

Demographics:

In this section I would like to learn more about your students parents and family members to help me understand more about your students transition process from high school to life after high school and how this process works and is communicated from your viewpoint as a parent.

1. How many parents are actively participating in the raising of this youth?
2. How many brothers or sisters does your student have?
3. If he/she has brothers and sisters where in the birth order is this student?
4. Does your student take free or reduced lunch?
5. Did you graduate from high school?
6. If yes, have you had any further education?
7. If yes, please describe.
8. Are you currently employed?
9. Do you or any other member of the family have a documented disability?
10. If yes, please talk about who and what disabilities are in the family?
11. When did you first learn about your youth's disability?
12. How did you learn about the disability and who communicated that information to you?
13. At what grade level did your youth enter the special education program?

14. Can you please talk about your youth's inclusion in the regular education program and which classes he/she participated in fully?
15. Historically or in the past how did communication between the school, teacher and you as a family, take place?
16. How often did you usually communicate with the school?
17. Would you say that you have been an actively participating parent in the education process for you child? Please talk about this.

Information about your student:

18. Tell me about your student.
Probes:
 - a). What does he/she enjoy doing?
 - b). What are your student's interests?
 - c). What are his/her strengths?
 - d). What are his/her weaknesses or needs?
 - e). Does he/she spend most of the time at home with the family?
 - f). Does he/she spend most of the time at home and by himself/herself?
 - g). Does he/she spend time with friends?
 - h). Is he/she employed?
19. Describe the nature of communication among your family members.
Probes:
 - a). Do you talk every day, several times/day?
 - b). Give my some examples of topics of discussion?
 - c). Who usually initiates the discussion?
20. Does your students have responsibilities at home? If yes, please describe what they are and how much time is spent accomplishing the tasks?
21. Does your student complete these responsibilities? If yes, does he need to be reminded? If so, how often?
22. Does your student complete these responsibilities independently or does he/she need assistance?
23. How does your student feel about these tasks? Pride, burden, or just something to be done?

24. Do you talk about what your goals are for your students following high school? What are they?
25. Do you talk about what your student's dreams are for the future? If so, what are they?
26. Discuss the realities of your student's dreams for the future and describe how you as a family are supporting the efforts toward accomplishing these goals or dreams.
27. Describe how you, your family and student engage in community life?
28. Are you as a family participating in leisure activities jointly and/or independently?
29. Does your student enjoy attending school?
30. Does he/she plan to graduate?
31. If not, how does he/she plan to exit high school?
32. Has he/she talked about what it is like at school? If so, please describe.

Probes: ___Friends ___Homework ___Teachers

33. Your student is in special education. Can you describe why he/she qualifies, what impact the special education label has had on the family, and what impact it has had on the quality of the school experience for your student.

Participation and Communication in the Transition Process:

34. Do you attend and participate in IEP/transition meetings for your student?
35. If yes, can you please describe these meetings?
36. If yes, describe how you participate and what you contribute to the meeting.
37. If yes, how do you prepare for these meetings?
38. Is there communication from the school/teacher prior to the meetings?

39. Describe the nature of pre meeting communications and preparations for transition issues particularly between you and the special education teacher, general education teacher, vocational teacher, or any other individuals at school or in the community.
40. Do you have pre IEP/ITP meetings to talk about transition?
41. If yes, please describe.
42. If yes, do you feel like you are an equal partner in the meetings? Explain.
43. Does your youth attend the IEP/ITP meetings?
44. If yes, does your student actively participate in these meetings?
45. If yes, describe how he/she participates and what he/she contributes to the meeting.
46. If yes, how does he/she prepare for the meeting?
47. Does your student work with the teacher to develop transition goals and plans prior to the meetings?
48. Does your student talk to you or other family members about either developing or ongoing transition goals, before the meeting? Describe these conversations.
49. Do you feel like your student is an equal partner in the meetings? Explain.
50. What transition plans are in place for your student?
51. Describe how they address school classes, employment issues, independent living issues, community involvement, leisure/recreation.
52. Do you talk about these transition areas of school classes, employment, independent living, community involvement, and leisure/recreation at home?
53. How did you and your student prepare for the IEP/transition meetings?
54. How has your student been encouraged to think about independent living following high school?

55. How do you envision your student's life following high school?
56. Does this match with your student's vision?
57. If not, would you please talk about this?
58. Are you satisfied with the communication between you, as a parent, and the school/special education teacher in regards to transition issues for your student?
59. If you are satisfied, name at least one thing that you think has especially aided the transition process?
60. If you are not satisfied, explain why not.
61. If you are not satisfied, please talk about how you think it could be improved?
62. There are typically many stakeholders involved in the transition process for youth. Other than the special education teacher, who has been involved in the communication and discussion about your student's transition issues?

Prompt: This could include the general education teacher, the guidance counselor, agency representatives, the transition coordinator, or others.

63. What kinds of communication have taken place and about how many times?
64. What has been the result of each of these communications?
48. What is the primary method of communication with the school?: ☐ telephone ☐ notes or letters home ☐ personal visits ☐ e-mail ☐ other, please describe.
49. Have you been satisfied with your communication and connections with other stakeholders? Please explain.

The Role of Technology in Transition:

50. Is technology used in the communication between you and the school/teacher in regards to transition issues? Technology could include the telephone or e-mail.
51. If yes, what technology is used and how does it help with communication between you and the school/teacher?

52. Is technology used during the IEP/ITP meeting?
 Prompt: Computer, power point, video, audio, or digital recording, etc.
53. If yes, please explain?
54. Do you, your student, or the teacher use technology during any pre-meeting preparation?
55. If yes, please explain.
56. As a part of the IEP we need to consider the use of assistive technology for your student. Is the use of assistive technology discussed?
57. What assistive technology was considered?
58. What assistive technology was decided upon?
59. If yes, are you an active part of the discussion?
60. If yes, is your student an active part of the discussion?
61. How is this addressed on the IEP?

Interview Protocol for Regular Education Teachers
A Case Study of Transition
Joyce Burgener
May, 2005

Demographics:

1. In what areas are you certified to teach in Michigan?

☐ Secondary Education, specify content area _____
☐ Other, please specify _____

2. What degrees do you hold, what subject area are then in, and when did you receive them?

☐ Bachelors	Major _____	Year _____
☐ Masters	Major _____	Year _____
☐ Doctorate	Major _____	Year _____

3. How many years have you been teaching?

4. How many years have you been teaching at this high school?

5. What grade levels do you currently teach? 9 10 11 12

6. What courses do you currently teach?

First Period _____
Second Period _____
Third Period _____
Fourth Period _____
Fifth Period _____
Sixth Period _____
Seventh Period _____
Eighth Period _____

7. How often do you see your students with learning disabilities?

☐ One time per week	☐ Four times per week
☐ Two times per week	☐ Five times per week
☐ Three times per week	☐ More than five times per week

8. Have you participated in any professional development in the last two (2) years?

☐ Yes ☐ No

9. If yes, please describe.

10. Have you had any special education training? ☐ Yes ☐ No
11. Have you had any training specifically in transition services for students with disabilities? ☐ Yes ☐ No
12. How many students in your classes are in special education?
13. Do any of these students have accommodations?
14. If yes, please describe.
15. Do any of these students have assistive technology?
16. If yes, please describe.

Knowledge of Special Education:

17. Do you know about Individual Education Programs (IEP)?
18. If yes, please tell me what you know.
19. Do you know about Individual Education Programs involving transition planning (ITP) or (IEPT)?
20. If yes, please tell me what you know.
21. Have you ever attended and IEP/ITP?
22. If yes, please talk about your role during the meeting(s).
23. Did you stay for the entire meeting(s)?
24. If no, please explain.

Regular Education and Special Education Communication:

25. Please describe how you work and communicate with the special education teacher in regards to students in special education that are in your classroom.
26. Do you have access to your special education student's IEP/ITP?

27. If yes, have you examined it and know your student's present level of performance, the goals, their accommodations and modifications, and their future plans?
28. 23. Please discuss how this impacts your class and your teaching for these students.
29. 24. Have you communicated with anyone about your special education student's accommodations and modifications? ☐ Special Education Teacher
30. ☐ Student ☐ Parent(s) ☐ Administrator ☐ Guidance Counselor
☐ Other
31. Have you communicated with anyone about your special education student's transition goals and how to address them in your class?
32. 26. If yes, with whom? ☐ Special Education Teacher ☐ Students
☐ Parent
33. ☐ Administrator ☐ Guidance Counselor ☐ Other
34. 26. Do you communicate information on your teaching style to: ☐ Special
35. Education Teacher ☐ Student ☐ Parents ☐ Guidance Counselor
36. ☐ Administrator
37. Do you discuss with students their preferred learning styles?
38. With whom do you communicate information about your courses and how they might or might not be appropriate for individual students?
39. With whom do you communicate information on evaluations and grading options available in your courses?
40. With whom do you communicate the attendance issues of students in your classes?
41. How is this communicated?
42. With whom do you communicate student performance on tests, quizzes, and projects?
43. How is this communicated?

44. Does the special education teacher communicate with you in regards to students in your classes who are in special education?
45. If yes, when and how often does he/she communicate with you?
46. If yes, what are the typical topics of this communication?
47. If yes, what is the means of communication, personal contact, email, etc?
48. When you are scheduled to attend an IEP/ITP meeting, how do you prepare for the meeting?
49. Does anyone communicate with you before the meetings about their expectations for your contribution during the meeting?
50. Who leads the IEP/ITP meeting?
51. Do you feel that you are an equal participant during IEP/ITP meetings?
52. Do you feel that you make contributions to the transition portion of the meeting?
53. Describe how you and your teaching relate to the transition goals of students in your classes that are in special education?
54. Do you and your students in special education talk about their post secondary goals and how high school and more specifically your classes will help them to achieve their goals?
55. How often do you communicate with parents in regards to students in special education in your classes?
56. How does this communication take place?
57. Are you satisfied with the communication process in regards to students in special education?
58. What suggestions do you have for improving the communication process?

The Role of Technology in the Transition Process

59. What kinds of technology do you use in the process of communicating with others in regards to students in your classes that are in special education?

60. Do you use different kinds of technology based on the person you are communicating with? Please explain.
61. What impacts your decisions to either use technology or the specific type of technology in the communication process? For example, the availability, the knowledge of how to use the technology, etc.
62. Do you use technology when working with your students?
63. If yes, please describe both the specific types of technology and the manner in which it is used.
64. Do your students use technology in your classes?
65. If yes, please describe both the specific types of technology and the manner in which it is used.
66. Do any of the students in your classes use assistive technology?
67. If yes, please explain.
68. Do you participate in the discussion of the need for assistive technology either before, during, or after the IEP/ITP meetings?
69. If yes, please explain.

Interview Protocol for students
A Case Study of Transition
March, 2005 Updated May, 2005

I am a student trying to learn more about students in high school and what they do to prepare for their life after high school. You can help me to understand more about your high school years by participating in this interview. As we talked about before you can choose not to answer any or all of the questions I am about to ask. If you do not understand the question, please ask me more about it and I will attempt to explain. Since I have been out of the high school setting for a while I may not have asked the question in a way that is meaningful to you. Everything that you talk to me about will be kept confidential and will never be used with your name.

I am interested in what you have to say about your experiences during the high school years. Your experiences may include academic classes, such as English, math, and science. I would also like to hear about any vocational classes taken during high school. If you have held any jobs during high school I would like to know about what jobs you have worked at, how many jobs you have had, and what they were like. For some students extra curricular activities are a part of the high school experience and I am wondering if you have participated in extra curricular activities, such as sports, clubs, or working on special projects like homecoming. I am also interested in outside of school activities that you are a part of and what you do in your free time.

I am asking you to share this information with me, so that I can learn more about how high school students prepare for what they want to do after high school. By talking with me you may provide information that will help future students get ready for exiting high school.

Demographics:

1. Please tell me about yourself.
2. How many years have you been in this high school?
3. Have you attended any other high schools?
4. If yes, how many?
5. What year of high school are you currently in?
6. How old are you?
7. Please tell me about the classes you are taking this year.
8. What other classes have you taken while in high school?

- 9. Which classes do you enjoy the most? Why?**
- 10. Which classes do you like the least? Why?**
- 11. In which classes were you the most successful?**
- 12. In which classes were you the least successful?**
- 13. Who decided which classes you took during high school?**
- 14. Why were those classes chosen?**
- 15. Were they required for graduation?**
- 16. Please tell me what you consider your strengths or what you are good at?**
- 17. What do you enjoy doing the most?**
- 18. Please describe what you think are your weaknesses?**
- 19. What do you like to do during after school hours?**
- 20. Do you like attending school?**
- 21. Can you tell me about your experiences during high school?**
- 22. I understand that you are in special education and have an Individual Education Program or IEP. Can you tell me why are you in special education?**
- 23. Can you tell me what your disability is?**
- 24. If yes, how does your disability impact your learning and what you do or do not do in high school classes?**
- 25. If yes, how does your disability impact work?**
- 26. If yes, how does your disability impact leisure time?**

Future Plans:

27. Do you plan to graduate with a high school diploma?
28. If no, can you tell me how you plan to exit high school?
29. For a minute think of your future. What would your dream be like if you were to dream about life after high school?
30. What would you be doing, for example, would you have a job?
31. Where would you be living after high school? For example, with your parents or family or with someone else, or would you wish to live alone?
32. Can you describe what your living needs will be after high school?
33. How will you support yourself?
34. What kinds of leisure activities do you enjoy and how would they fit into you life plans for after high school?
35. Do you have goals for when you leave high school?
36. How have you prepared for this dream or do you have a plan in place for accomplishing this? Can you explain?
37. If yes, what are they?
38. How do these goals fit with your dreams of your future?
39. Do you plan on participating in any post secondary training or education?
40. If yes, describe.
41. With whom do you talk to about how to prepare, apply, and finance this education?
42. Who helps you with this preparation?

Academics:

- 43. Can you explain your learning style preferences? Do you learn more from listening to information, from seeing information or by doing?
- 44. What accommodations and/or modifications do you receive from your teachers?
- 45. Do you take classes in the regular classroom?
- 46. If yes, which classes do you take in the regular classroom?
- 47. Do you take classes in the special education classroom?
- 48. If yes, which classes do you take in the special education classroom?
- 49. Do you think that you learn more in the regular classroom or in the special education classroom?
- 50. Which classroom setting do you prefer?
- 51. How do you think your high school classes will help you to achieve your after high school plans?

Transition participation and communication:

- 52. Can you tell me what an Individual Education Program (IEP) is?
- 53. Can you tell me about Transition Plans or about the transition process from high school to post secondary settings?
- 54. Have you attended your IEP meetings?
- 55. If yes, please tell me about your IEP.
- 56. Do you have a Transition Plan?
- 57. If yes, please tell me about it.
- 58. Do you participate during your IEP and/or ITP meetings?
- 59. Are there any people who attend your IEP/ITP meetings that you only see and/or talk to at these meetings? Please explain.
- 60. Please describe your participation?

- 61. How do you get ready for the meetings?
- 62. Who developed your transition plan?
- 63. Who do you talk to about your transition plan? (Parents, friends, special education teacher, other teachers, guidance counselor, or any other person)
- 64. Who do you talk to the most about your transition goals? The least?
- 65. When do you work on developing your transition goals?
- 66. When do you work on achieving your transition goals?
- 67. What are you doing to move toward achieving your transition goals?
- 68. Who is helping you?
- 69. Do your transition goals impact what classes you take during high school?
- 70. If yes, how?
- 71. Do your transition goals impact what experiences you have in the area of employment, such as job shadowing, unpaid job experiences, and paid job experiences?
- 72. Do you work during school hours?
- 73. If yes, do you get high school credit for the work?
- 74. If yes, how did you get this job?
- 75. Do you work after school hours?
- 76. How does this relate to your transition goals?
- 77. Have you met or completed any transition goals? Please explain.
- 78. What additional training will you need to accomplish your goals?
- 79. How do you think that your transition process could be improved?

The Role of Technology in Transition for Youth in High School with Disabilities:

- 80. Have you taken any classes in high school that teach the use of technology, such as a computer class?

81. If yes, please tell me about the class.
82. Do you use technology in your daily life?
83. If yes, what technology and how do you use it?
84. Do you use technology in your classes?
85. If yes, describe the technology and how you use it in your classes?
86. If you are employed, do you use any technology at work?
87. If yes, describe the technology and how you use it in your work.
88. Have you ever used computer-based assessments?
89. If yes, what assessments?
90. Have you ever used computer-based interest inventories?
91. If yes, did they help you think about what you are interested in?
92. Do you use technology as a tool during your **IRP/ITP** meetings?
93. Do you use technology to prepare for you **IEP/ITP** meetings?
94. As a part of the **IRP** we need to consider the use of assistive technology. Do you use any assistive technology?
95. Have you talked about using assistive technology during your **IEP** meeting?

Interview Protocol for the Special Education Teacher
A Case Study of Transition
Joyce Burgener
May, 2005

Describe a typical day in school in regards to your students and transition issues. What are your responsibilities? Would this differ from day to day? How.

Demographics:

1. In what areas are you certified to teach in Michigan?
☐ Elementary Education ☐ Secondary Education
☐ Special Education ☐ Other, please specify _____
2. In what categories of special education are you fully endorsed?
☐ Learning Disabilities ☐ Physical Impairments
☐ Emotional Impairment ☐ Other Health Impairment
☐ Hearing Impaired ☐ Severe Multiple Impairment
☐ Visual Impaired ☐ Severe Language Impairment
☐ Cognitive Impairment ☐ Autism
3. What is the highest college/university degree do you currently hold?
4. What was your major?
5. When did you receive your highest degree?
6. How many years have you been teaching special education? _____
7. How many years have you taught special education at the high school level (9 – 12)? _____
8. How many years have you taught special education at this school? _____
9. What grade levels do you currently teach? 9 10 11 12
10. Have you received training in transition services? ☐ Yes ☐ No
11. If yes, I would like to probe a little deeper into the kinds of training that you have received in providing transition services. Have you participated in:
 - a. Transition Service Project Training? ☐ Yes ☐ No
 - b. Michigan Transition Services Association (MTSA)
 - c. Transition Inservice Training (speakers, etc.)

- d. IEP Training with regard to Transition
- e. Other, please specify

Job Responsibilities:

12. What courses do you currently teach?

First Period _____
Second Period _____
Third Period _____
Fourth Period _____
Fifth Period _____
Sixth Period _____
Seventh Period _____
Eighth Period _____

13. Please describe a typical school day.

14. Describe the nature of the transition process at your school.

15. Tell me about the students you work with in providing transition services. ** (I plan to have a chart with the student names and spaces for specific answers during the interview).

- Probes:
- a). How many students are on your caseload and are they all students with learning disabilities? If not, what other student categories do you work with?
 - b). What grade level students do you work with?
 - c). Are all of your students working toward attaining a high school diploma?
 - d). If not, how will they exit from high school?
 - e). How long does it take your students to complete high school, is it in the typical four years?
 - f). Do they take any vocational classes? If yes, please name the specific classes. Is the class designed for students in special education only or is it considered a regular education class?
 - g). Are the vocational classes provided on site? If not, please describe.
 - h). What is involved in the decision process and gaining access process

to these vocational classes?

- i). Do your students participate in job shadowing experiences during high school? If so please describe.
- j). Are your students employed during high school? If yes, please give as many examples of the kinds of employment as you can.
- k). How do these employed students find their jobs?
- l). Are the employed during any school hours, as a part of their high school credits or experience? If yes, please describe.
- j). Do these students attend their IEP/IEPT meetings?
- k). How do they participate during these meetings?
- l). How are your students involved in the transition process other than attending the IEP/ITP meetings?

Communication, coordination and collaboration:

- 16.** With whom do you work in this process of providing transition services to your students?
- 17.** Please describe how you work together to provide transition services to your students?
- 18.** Given the number of stakeholders that could be involved in the transition process, please describe the nature of communication, coordination, and collaboration that is an important part of this process for you and your student.
- 19.** Does this occur daily, weekly, monthly, by marking period, or annually?
- 20.** How do you learn/know about the resources available to you and your students? Please give an example. Probe: Do you have in house resources, such as lists of local agencies?
- 21.** When do you work on transition issues? Probe: During school hours, after school hours?
- 22.** Do you have a planning period that is devoted to transition work?

23. I am especially interested in how you communicate and work with individuals involved in the transition process who are not housed within your particular school building. Could you please talk about that?
24. What would you suggest could be done to improve communication among stakeholders?

Communication and work with the student:

25. Please describe how a transition plan comes into being for a student?
26. What is the role of the student?
27. Do you discuss with the student the dreams of a future life?
28. How do these discussions relate or impact the student's transition goals?
29. What is the role of the parent?
- Probes:
- a). Do the parents of your students play an active role in the transition process?
 - b). Do they attend the IEP/ITP meetings?
 - c). Do they participate during these meetings? How do they contribute to the process?
30. What is the role of the ISD Transition Coordinator in the transition process?
31. What are the places and spaces for transition planning?
32. Have you and the student talked about their future dreams?
33. If yes, when and where do these conversations take place?
34. Are the students given any inventories to help them identify their strengths, weaknesses? If yes, please describe.
35. Are the students given any inventories to help them think about and identify their interests? If yes, please describe.
36. Is self-determination or self-advocacy a part of your curriculum for students with disabilities?
37. Is there a specific class where these issues are covered?

38. Do you use a specific curriculum?
 39. If yes, which curriculum do you currently use and why?
 40. Who determines which curriculum you use with your students?
 41. Do students attend their IEP/transition meetings?
 42. If yes, what pre meeting preparation takes place to facilitate their participation in/ or lead the meetings?
 43. Describe the student's roles during their IEP/ transition meetings.
 44. Please describe how appropriate classes, training/experiences, and assessments are decided on for students.
 45. Do you and the student discuss assessment issues and results? If so, when and where?
 46. How are IEP/transition goals developed?
- Probes:
- a). Who is involved?
 - b). What preparation is done before the meetings?
 - c). When is this accomplished?
47. What process is in place to ensure communication coordination, and collaboration among the stakeholders in the transition process? Describe.

The Role of Technology in Transition for youth in High School with Disabilities:

48. What kinds of technology do you use in the process of communicating with others in the transition process? For example, do you use email, telephones, messaging, or other kinds of technology?
49. Do you use different kinds of technology based on the person you are communicating with?
50. What impacts your decisions to either use technology or the specific type of technology in the communication process? For example, the availability, the knowledge of how to use the technology, the lack of software?

51. Do you use technology when working with your students?
52. If yes, please describe both the specific types of technology and the manner in which it is used.
53. Do your students take any technology courses as a part of their high school curriculum?
54. If yes, please share the name of the specific course and what kinds of skills that are covered in the class.
55. Is the use of technology a part of the transition process for your students?

Probes:

- a). Do they use the computer-based assessments?
 - b). Do they use computer-based interest inventories?
 - c). Do they use power-point or any other programs to aid in their course work?
 - d). Do they use calculators to aid in the course work?
 - e). Do they use power-point or any other specific computer programs to aid in preparation for job placement?
 - f). Do they use technology as a tool during their IEP/ITP meetings?
 - g). Do they use technology to prepare for their IEP/ITP meetings?
56. As a part of the IEP we need to consider the use of assistive technology. What is the process for making this decision for individual students?
 57. What specific types of assistive technology do your students use?

APPENDIX J

COMMUNICATION LOG AND DIRECTIONS

Dear study participants,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study of communication and enactment in the transition process

The purpose of the communication log is to find out what kind of talk goes on between you and others who might be involved in this transition process.

***Who fills out the communication logs?**

All of the study participants will complete the logs, including the student, parent(s)/guardian(s), special education teacher, and general education teachers.

***How often do you have to fill in the communication logs?**

You will do this once a week, for the next ten (10) weeks. You will receive a log on Monday of each week and return it on that Friday.

***How do you fill out the communication logs?**

Each time you talk to an individual or organization about transition, as related to either you or your student, enter the information on the communication log. The following are step-by-step directions for completing the communication log.

1. Write down the date of the “talk” and the time of day. For example, 9/2/05 at noon.
2. Write down the method of communication: This means, did you talk on the phone? Did you have a meeting? Did you have a conference?
3. Write down who initiated the communication or made the contact. If you called the teacher then you would write your name and title (parent, student).
4. Write down who was a part of the talk. For example, if it was a face-to-face talk between the student and teacher you would write the student’s name and the teacher’s name.
5. Write down what was the purpose of the talk. For example, Did you talk about grades? Did you talk about attendance? Did you talk about job shadowing?
6. Write down in the results column what happened as a result of the talk. For example, did the student finish their homework? Did the teacher provide more information about a topic? Did the parent attend a meeting?

Thank you for helping with this research. If you have any question please contact me at:
Joyce Burgener

428-1426 burgene2@msu.edu

Communication Log

Date Time	Method of Communi- cation	Who Initiated Communi- cation	Who Took Part	Purpose (Person or Subject)	Results

***Examples of individuals that could either initiated or take part in communication around transition issues: parent, student, agency representative, guidance personnel, regular education teacher, special education teacher, special education coordinator, high school principal, transition coordinator, student's employer, related services personnel, etc.**

****Examples of methods of communication: face to face or personal visit, telephone call, e-mail, newsletter, meeting, conference, etc**

APPENDIX K

TEMPLATE FOR FIELD NOTES

Day of Week: _____
Date: _____
Time: _____
Observation # _____

Field Notes for Observations

Time & Events	Speaker & Discourse	Reflection & Comments

APPENDIX L

SURVEY PROTOCOL

Survey Instrument for Dissertation

Directions: This is the last section of the interview. For this section please circle the number corresponding to the most accurate statement for each question.

Excellent = 5; Very Good = 4; Satisfactory = 3; Poor = 2; Very Poor = 1;
No communication. = 0

Best practices

1. How would you rate the communication of the self-determination curriculum or strategies (e.g., how to develop goals, the steps it takes to accomplish these goals, planning for the future, and evaluating goals and re-planning)?

Excellent	Very Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Very Poor	No communication
5	4	3	2	1	0

2. How would you rate the communication of the self-advocacy curriculum or strategies (e.g., how to speak for yourself, how to make sure teachers, employers, and other understand your needs)?

Excellent	Very Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Very Poor	No communication
5	4	3	2	1	0

3. How would you rate the communication about what vocational classes and vocational training opportunities are available and their importance (e.g., shared time programs, technology classes, cosmetology auto classes)?

Excellent	Very Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Very Poor	No communication
5	4	3	2	1	0

4. How would you rate the communication about job experiences and their importance (e.g., job shadowing opportunities, unpaid work experiences, paid work experiences)?

Excellent	Very Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Very Poor	No communication
5	4	3	2	1	0

5. How would you rate the communication about the participation in extra curricular activities and their importance (e.g., school sports teams, school clubs, participation in homecoming activities)?

Excellent	Very Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Very Poor	No communication
5	4	3	2	1	0

6. How would you rate the communication about graduation from high school and how it relates to your future needs (or those of the student)?

Excellent	Very Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Very Poor	No communication
5	4	3	2	1	0

7. How would you rate the communication about problem solving training and experiences (e.g., do I (student) know how to deal with a problem when one arises, problem solving strategies or plans, do I have the chance to practice problem solving techniques)?

Excellent	Very Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Very Poor	No communication
5	4	3	2	1	0

8. How would you rate the communication about educational opportunities that are available after high school?

Excellent	Very Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Very Poor	No communication
5	4	3	2	1	0

Knowledge and Satisfaction with the transition process

9. How would you rate your knowledge of the transition process?

Excellent	Very Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Very Poor	No communication
5	4	3	2	1	0

10. How would you rate your satisfaction with the transition process in your school/classroom setting?

Excellent	Very Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Very Poor	No communication
5	4	3	2	1	0

Frequency/Content/Quality of communication in the transition process

11. How would you rate the frequency of communication among transition stakeholders (student, parent, special education teacher, and general education teacher)?

Excellent	Very Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Very Poor	No communication
5	4	3	2	1	0

12. How would you rate the content/quality of communication among the transition stakeholders (student, parent, special education teacher, and general education teacher)?

Excellent	Very Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Very Poor	No communication
5	4	3	2	1	0

13. How would you rate your participation in the transition process as an equal partner (your voice is welcomed and respected)?

Excellent	Very Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Very Poor	No communication
5	4	3	2	1	0

Technology in the transition process

14. How would you rate the use of technology in the transition process for teaching, students, teacher presentations, or IEP/ITP meetings?

Excellent	Very Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Very Poor	No communication
5	4	3	2	1	0

15. How would you rate the use of technology in the communication process (e.g., email) with other stakeholders in the transition process?

Excellent	Very Good	Satisfactory	Poor	Very Poor	No communication
5	4	3	2	1	0

APPENDIX M

SURVEY DATA AND ANALYSIS

Table 3 Mean Scores for Students

Questions	Likert Score	Likert Score	Likert Score	Likert Score	Mean Likert Score	Rank Order
1	3	4	4	3	3.50	8
2	4	4	5	4	4.25	1
3	4	5	4	3	4.00	3
4	4	5	5	2	4.00	3
5	4	3	3	3	3.25	12
6	3	5	5	4	4.25	1
7	3	5	4	2	3.50	8
8	4	4	5	3	4.00	3
9	3	4	4	3	3.50	8
10	3	4	4	2	3.25	12
11	3	4	4	3	3.50	8
12	4	4	5	2	3.75	7
13	4	5	5	2	4.00	3
14	4	4	3	1	3.00	14
15	3	3	4	2	3.00	14
Average	3.53	4.20	4.27	2.60	3.65	

Table 4 Mean Scores for General Education

	#2	#1	#4	#3	#5		
Question	Likert Score	Likert Score	Likert Score	Likert Score	Likert Score	Mean Likert Score	Rank Order
1	3	3	2	4	4	3.20	9
2	2	4	1	3	5	3.00	14
3	4	2	4	4	5	3.80	6
4	NA	5	3	4	5	4.25	2
5	5	5	4	4	5	4.60	1
6	4	4	3	4	5	4.00	3
7	4	4	NA	3	5	4.00	3
8	4	4	1	3	5	3.40	8
9	3	3	2	3	5	3.20	9
10	3	2	3	3	5	3.20	9
11	3	3	2	4	4	3.20	9
12	2	4	2	4	3	3.00	14
13	2	2	4	4	4	3.20	9
14	3	5	NA	3	4	3.75	7
15	4	5	NA	3	4	4.00	3
Average	3.29	3.67	2.58	3.53	4.53	3.59	

Table 5 Mean Scores for Parents

Questions	Sam's		Cathy's	
	Likert Score	Likert Score	Mean Likert Score	Rank Order
1	3	5	4.00	3
2	4	4	4.00	3
3	2	NA	2.00	12
4	3	5	4.00	3
5	3	NA	3.00	8
6	4	5	4.50	2
7	NA	5	5.00	1
8	3	4	3.50	6
9	2	4	3.00	8
10	2	4	3.00	8
11	1	4	2.50	11
12	1	3	2.00	12
13	3	4	3.50	6
14	NA	NA		
15	2	NA	2.00	12

Average	2.54	4.27	3.07
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Table 6 Scores for Guidance Counselor

Questions	Likert Score	Rank Order
1	NA	
2	NA	
3	5	1
4	5	1
5	4	8
6	5	1
7	4	8
8	4	8
9	5	1
10	NA	
11	3	12
12	5	1
13	4	8
14	5	1
15	5	1

Average	4.50
---------	------

Table 7 Scores for Special Education Teacher

Questions	Likert Score	Rank Order
1	4	1
2	4	1
3	4	1
4	4	1
5	3	12
6	4	1
7	3	12
8	3	12
9	4	1
10	4	1
11	3	12
12	4	1
13	4	1
14	4	1
15	4	1

Average	3.73
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Table 8 Average Scores for All Participants

Questions	Average Likert Score	Rank Order
1	3.50	11
2	3.67	6
3	3.83	3
4	4.17	2
5	3.83	3
6	4.23	1
7	3.82	5
8	3.62	7
9	3.46	12
10	3.25	14
11	3.15	15
12	3.31	13
13	3.62	7
14	3.60	9
15	3.55	10

Average	3.64
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Table 9 Table of Survey Questions in Rank Order

Q #	Survey Questions	O	S	GET	SPED	GC	P
6	How would you rate the communication about graduation from high school and how it relates to your future needs (or those of the student)?	1 4.23	1 4.25	3 4.00	1 4.00	1 5.00	2 4.50
4	How would you rate the communication about job experiences and their importance (e.g., job shadowing opportunities, unpaid work experiences, paid work experiences)?	2 4.17	2 4.00	2 4.30	1 4.00	1 5.00	3 4.00
3	How would you rate the communication about what vocational classes and vocational training opportunities are available and their importance (e.g., shared time programs, technology classes, cosmetology auto classes)?	3 3.83	2 4.00	4 3.80	1 4.00	1 5.00	12 2.00

Q #	Survey Questions	O	S	GET	SPED	GC	P
5	How would you rate the communication about the participation in extra curricular activities and their importance (e.g., school sports teams, school clubs, participation in homecoming activities)?	3 3.83	5 3.25	1 4.60	2 3.00	2 4.00	8 3.00
7	How would you rate the communication about problem solving training and experiences (e.g., do I (student) know how to deal with a problem when one arises, problem solving strategies or plans, do I have the chance to practice problem solving techniques)?	4 3.82	4 3.50	3 4.00	2 3.00	2 4.00	1 5.00
2	How would you rate the communication of the self-advocacy curriculum or strategies (e. g., how to speak for yourself, how to make sure teachers, employers, and other understand your needs)?	5 3.67	1 4.25	8 3.00	1 4.00	na	3 4.00

Q #	Survey Questions	O	S	GET	SPED	GC	P
8	How would you rate the communication about educational opportunities that are available after high school?	6 3.62	2 4.00	6 3.40	2 3.00	2 4.00	6 3.50
13	How would you rate your participation in the transition process as an equal partner (your voice is welcomed and respected)?	6 3.62	2 4.00	7 3.20	1 4.00	2 4.00	6 3.50
14	How would you rate the use of technology in the transition process for teaching, students, teacher presentations, or IEP/ITP meetings?	7 3.60	6 3.00	5 3.75	1 4.00	1 5.00	na
15	How would you rate the use of technology in the communication process (e.g., email) with other stakeholders in the transition process?	8 3.55	6 3.00	3 4.00	1 4.00	1 5.00	12 2.00

Q #	Survey Questions	O	S	GET	SPED	GC	P
1	How would you rate the communication of the self-determination curriculum or strategies (e.g., how to develop goals, the steps it takes to accomplish these goals, planning for the future, and evaluating goals and re-planning)?	9 3.50	4 3.50	7 3.20	1 4.00	na	3 4.00
9	How would you rate your knowledge of the transition process?	10 3.46	4 3.50	7 3.20	1 4.00	1 5.00	8 3.00
12	How would you rate the content/quality of communication among the transition stakeholders (student, parent, special education teacher, and general education teacher)?	11 3.31	3 3.75	8 3.00	1 4.00	1 5.00	12 2.00
10	How would you rate your satisfaction with the transition process in your school/classroom setting?	12 3.25	5 3.25	7 3.20	1 4.00	na	8 3.00

Q #	Survey Questions	O	S	GET	SPED	GC	P
11	How would you rate the frequency of communication among transition stakeholders (student, parent, special education teacher, and general education teacher)?	13	4	7	2	3	11
		3.15	3.50	3.20	3.00	3.00	2.50

Key:

O =	Overall ranking
S =	Students' ranking
GET =	General education teachers' ranking
SPED =	Special Education teacher's ranking
GC =	Guidance Counselor's ranking
P =	Parents' ranking

APPENDIX N

STUDENT RECORDS DATA

Table 10 Table of Student Record Data

	Sally	Sam	Bruce	Cathy
Date of Review	10/6/05	10/7/05	10/12/05	10/17/05
Birthdate	4/20/88	10/12/87	5/28/87	9/30/87
Gender	Female	Male	Male	Female
Age	17	18	18	18
Disability	LD	LD	LD	LD
Qualifying areas	Basic reading skills, Reading comprehension, Written expression	Basic reading skills, reading comprehension, written expression, math computation and math reasoning	Written expressions and reading comprehension	Basic reading skills and reading comprehension
Freshman Yr. GPA	2.75	1.44	1.00	2.11
Freshman Yr. Days absent	2	.5	4.5	13.5
Freshman Yr. Days Tardy	1	0	16	1
Freshman Yr. Credits Earned	6	5.5	3.0	5

Sophomore Yr. GPA	2.72	1.17	1.14	2.69
Soph. Yr. Days absent	4	1	8	8
Sophomore Yr. Days Tardy	14	4	28	4
Sophomore Yr. Credits Earned	6	6	3.5	6
Jr. Yr. GPA	2.89	1.56	1.5	2.83
Jr. Yr. Days Absent	2	4.5	3	5
Jr. Yr. Days Tardy	8	3	14	3
Jr. Yr. Credits Earned	6	5.5	5	6
Vocational Classes Taken	Basic Meals Adv. Foods	Basic Meals Adv. Foods Voc. 1 Auto Voc. 2 Auto Voc Auto 1 Voc Auto 2 Beg. Welding	Basic Meals Computer Applica- tions	Basic Meals Computer Applica- tions Adv. Foods Computer Literacy

Transition Class	9 th grade 11 th grade 12 th grade (Senior English)	12 th grade Senior English)	12 th grade (Senior English)	12 th grade (Senior English)
Retention	none	none	none	none
Date started special education	2/21/96 grade 2 Qualified as LD in reading comprehension	6/10/96 Initial IEP Qualified as LD c,f,g, writing and math 3 rd grade	3/16/00 504 Plan Qualified as LD in 9th grade	2/17/95 Initial IEP LD basic reading skills first grade
Parent/Guardian	Parents	Parents	Grand-parents	Mother
Transition Plan	yes	yes	yes	yes
Student Attended IEPT Meeting(s)	yes	yes	yes	yes
Current IEP	8/30/05	8/31/05	10/25/05	11/10/05
Assistive Technology	Assistive technology services is not checked as needed	Assistive technology services not checked as needed.	No assistive technology services checked as needed.	No needs in assistive technology are checked.

Supplementary Aids and Services		Oral testing, modified assignment, extended time on assignments.	Oral testing, more time on assignments and tests, use of a calculator	More time on tests. Oral testing.
MET Evaluation	Waived the 3 year eval. 1999 is most current. WISC – II Average range. Wechsler Individual Achievement Test (WIAT) Total reading = SS=76 5thile. Total Math 71 3rdile Total Writing SS=71 3rdile.	WISC-II 73 WIAT Reading comp.=74. Math calculation 67. Written = 76.	(WISC-IV) SS 78 1stile Borderline Wechsler Individual Achievement Test-Second Edition (WIAT-II) 1stile in word reading comprehension and decoding skills. Writing scores in borderline (0.5ile) range in spelling and written expression	Basic reading skills: Presently reading at 9th grade: 9.2 grade level in contest and 8.9 isolated Cambridge Reading Comprehension: 10.6 grade level Cambridge

APPENDIX O

SUMMARY OF EDPS

Summary of EDP Information
Dissertation
Joyce Burgener

Personal Information

Sally:

Grade: 12
Expected Graduation date: 2006

Sam:

Grade: 12
Expected Graduation date: 2006

Bruce:

Grade: 11
Expected Graduation date: 2007

Cathy

Grade: 12
Expected Graduation date: 2006

My Greatest Employability Skills or Strengths:

Sally:

1. Responsible
2. Creative
3. Organization
4. Good Worker

Sam:

1. Hard worker
2. Good with people
3. On time to work

Bruce:

1. Work with people
2. Math
3. Talking
4. Always on time
5. Great attendance
6. Honest

Cathy:

1. I have good skills in math

2. I'm always on time.
3. I like to be around people
4. I'm organized
5. Good at listening to people
6. Responsible

Things I need to do to improve my Employability Skills:

Sally:

1. Reading
2. Spelling
3. Comprehending

Sam:

1. Reading
2. Spelling
3. Math

Bruce:

1. Homework
2. Writing
3. Spelling

Cathy:

1. Talking in front of people.
2. I need to improve my reading.
3. I need to improve grammar.
4. I need to improve my writing.

My Interests and activities are:

Sally:

1. Hunting or Fishing
2. Ride four wheeler
3. Do things outside

Sam:

1. Racing moto cross
2. Running cross country
3. Being with people that I like

Bruce:

1. Hakeysack
2. Soccer
3. Skating

Cathy:

1. I like to rollerblading with friends.
2. I love to play sports with friends.
3. I like to work around animals and elderly people.

Career Goals

My long-term career goal is:

Sally:

To have a job that has to do with animals and the outdoors.

Sam:

I see myself going to work with Hollerback.

Bruce:

I would like to have a great job.

Cathy:

I want to be out of my mom's house before I'm 23.

I want to have a good paying job.

I want to go to college, so I can be more educated.

Short-term jobs I might enjoy while pursuing my career goal are:

Sally:

1. Working at a state park.
2. To have a job to do with Nature.

Sam:

1. Working on small gas engines
2. Farming
3. Construction

Bruce:

1. I already have a job.
2. Finish high school.

Cathy:

1. I want to get a job.
2. I want to go to college around here.
3. I want to get a car, so I can be independent.

Other interesting careers I am presently investigating:

Sally:

1. Be a teacher.
2. Be a forester
3. Be a farmer

Sam:

1. Construction
2. Farming
3. USMC
4. Welding

Bruce:

1. Auto

Cathy:

1. Work around elderly people
2. Work around animals.

Educational Goals

My high school Career Pathway choice is:

Sally:

Professional

Sam:

Technical

Bruce:

Technical

Cathy:

Technical

My Career Major is:

Sally:

AG-Natural Resources and Agriscience

Sam:

EI-Engineering/Manufacturing and Industrial Technology

Bruce:

BS-Business Management, Marketing, and Technology

Cathy:
HH-Health Sciences

Immediately after high school, I plan to:

Sally:
I plan to go to college.
I plan to have a good job.

Sam:
I would like to be a heavy equipment operator.

Bruce:
Own my own car shop.

Cathy:
Go to College
To go to college around here around my brothers

Post-secondary education and training choice:

Education:

Sally: 2 year college

Sam: Voc-Tech School

Bruce: 2 year college

Cathy: 2 year college

Work:

Sally: On the job training

Sam: Apprenticeship

Student #003: On the job training

Military:

Sam: National Guard

Bruce: National Guard

High School Career/Technical Education:**The following classes are key to obtaining my career goal:**

Sally:

Environmental science
Biology
Math

Sam:

Tractor safety
Driver Training
Voc auto
Welding

Bruce:

Auto

Cathy:

Geometry
Physical Science

My major academic achievements, awards, and honors:

Sally:

Student of the month.
Student of the year.

Sam:

Varsity letter in cross country (18:46)
Varsity letter in track (5:15)

Bruce:

Student of the month

Cathy:

Student of the month 2004-2005, 2003-2004.

Career Assessment**ACT Explore:**

Student:	Sally	Sam	Bruce	Cathy
Date:	11/01/2001	na	10/16/04	absent
Academic Scores:				
Reading:	11		11	
Math:	10		30	

English	11	22
Science:	13	8

Career Interests:

Sally:

1. Ideas & Things

Bruce:

1. Community services

Cathy:

Working with animals

Career Areas from World of Work Map:

Sally:

1. Technical Career Cluster
2. Science & Technology

ACT Plan:

Student	Sally	Sam	Bruce	Cathy
Date:	10/16/03	na	10/16/04	10/16/03
Academic Scores:				
Reading:	13		11	12
Math:	12		25	17
English:	10		22	07
Science	15		8	19

Career Interests:

Sally:

Education

Bruce:

Community Service

Career Areas from World of Work Map:

Sally:

Agriculture, forestry, related

Career Exploration

Job Shadowing Experience and Location(s):

Sally:
Grade 11: Sarrett Nature Center

Sam: B and Z construction

Cathy:
Grade 11: Nursing Care Center in St. Joseph
Grade 11: Nursing Care Center in St. Joseph

Volunteer Experience and Location(s):

Sally:
Grade 8: To baby sit
Grade 12: Organ Donation

Cathy:
Grade 9: at the Nursing Care Center in St. Joseph

Regular Paid Employment

Bruce: McDonalds

College Preparation Plans and Activities:

Colleges I want to visit:

Sally:
1. Grand Valley
2. Lake Michigan College

Sam:
1. On the job training

Bruce:
None

Cathy:
1. Lake Michigan College
2. University of Michigan

APPENDIX P

SUMMARY OF TRANSITION PLANS

Post-Secondary Goals

Sam

Wants to live on his own as an adult without supervision.
Wants to be independently employed in construction trades.
Wants to be independently mobile in the community and services.
Wants to move directly to the workforce and receive on the job training.

Sally

Wants to live independently as an adult.
Wants to be independently employed in the field of agriculture.
Wants to be independently mobile within the community.
Wants to continue her education in the field of argi-science.

Cathy

Anticipates living independently without supervision.
Would like to work independently in her career.
Would like to be able to be independently mobile.
Anticipates attending a 2-4 year college after graduation.

Bruce

Anticipates living independently.
Would like to have a career and be employed.
Is independently mobile.
Is interested in a career in auto customizing and management.

Course of Study

Sam An EDP is on file.

Sally An EDP is on file

Cathy An EDP is on file

Bruce An EDP is on file.

Adult Living Skills

Sam

By the next transition review he will have investigated the cost of purchasing and maintaining a vehicle.

Sally

Will have current information on housing options in our area.

Cathy

Will investigate housing options in our area.

Bruce

Will take a course in CPR/AED and become certified.

Daily Living Skills

Sam

Will demonstrate understanding of housing options reading utility bills and handling a complaint.

Sally

Will list a network of community assistance agencies.

Cathy

Will develop a list of informal supports for her if needed.

Bruce

Will prepare a list of emerging phone numbers for use at home.

Functional Vocational Evaluation/Employment

Sam

Will obtain a part time job in the construction trade.

Sally

Will update her portfolio and prepare for presentation.

Cathy

Will complete job-shadowing experience.

Bruce

Will investigate college programs offered locally in auto body and management.

Community Experiences

Sam

Will identify the eligibility or processes for heavy equipment assistance.

Sally

Will participate in a grant writing project to benefit the school district.

Cathy

Will participate in age appropriate recreational activities in the community.

Bruce

Will participate in age appropriate community activities.

Related Services in the Community

Sally

Will meet with and open a file with MRS

Cathy

Will meet with MRS representative to assist in planning for post HS college.

Bruce

Will meet with MRS representative to learn additional resources available.

Further Education

Sam

Will collect information on desired employment.

Sally

Will apply to post-secondary training or college for study in agri-science.

Cathy

Will apply for LMC and retake the ASSET test sections she needs to

Bruce

Will look into dual enrollment for second semester school year (2006-2007).

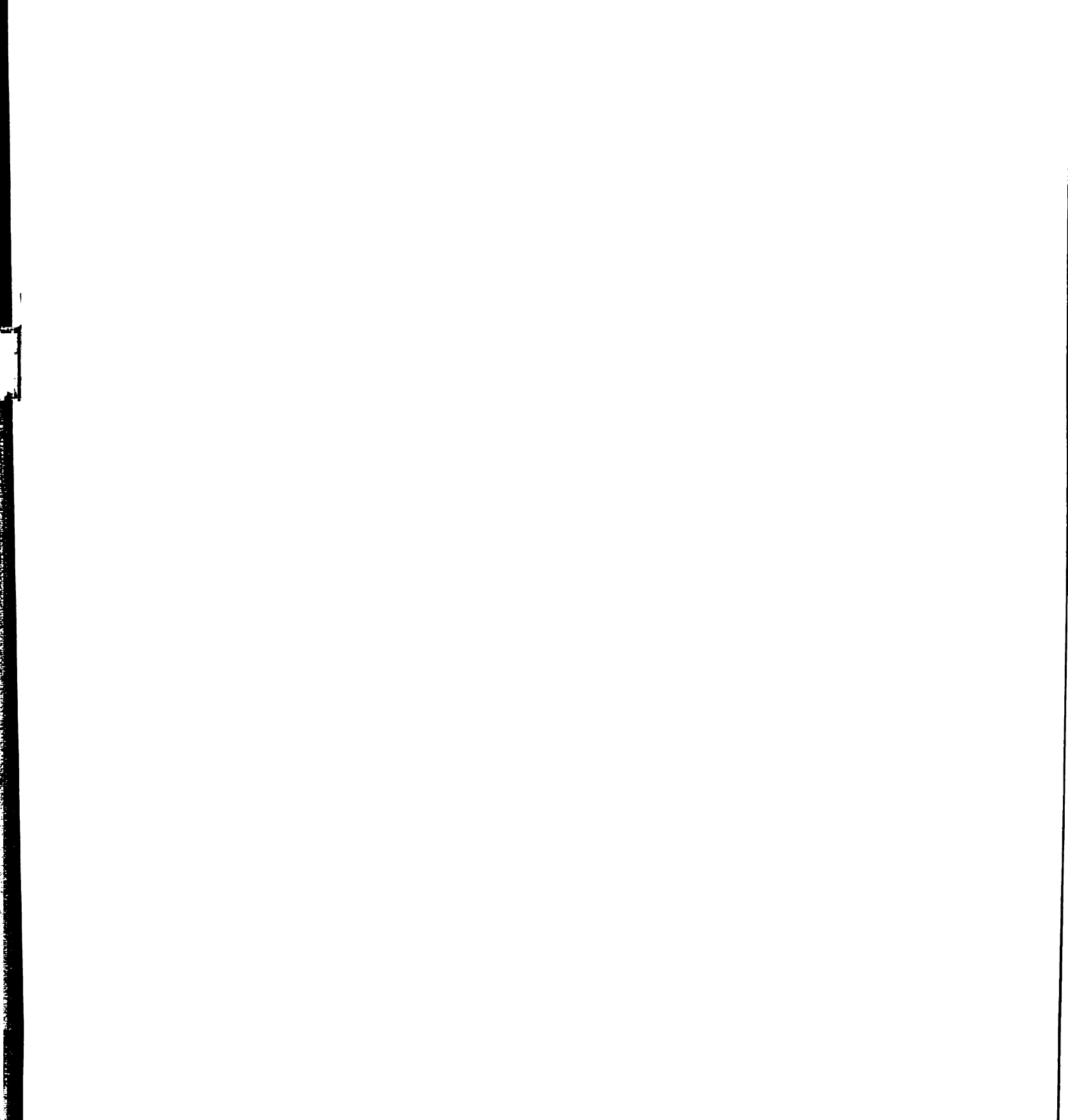
APPENDIX Q

MILESTONES OF THE COORDINATED SET OF ACTIVITIES

Table 11 Milestones of the Coordinated Set of Activities

8th Grade	9th Grade Freshman Year	10th Grade Sophomore Year	11th Grade Junior Year	12th Grade Senior Year
February: Meet with students and parents. By 1st week of May all schedules gone so they can reviewed. Files sent over so we are familiar with the students before they arrive. K-12 Curriculum, based on the Michigan's benchmarks for the counseling program. Meetings 2xs/month. High school focus is a career and college transition program for all students.	October: Education Development Plan (EDP) for all students. January: Exams January: Grade and schedule check IEP/ITP Meetings occur when necessary and not just in the spring. Guidance counselor attends IEP/ITP meetings. Scheduling: Meet with the kids, look at grades, IEP, learning styles, EDP. Retune because of teachers, NCLB, shared time programs.	October/ November: Resumes Goals and objectives November: PLAN test January: Exams January: Grade and schedule check. IEP/ITP Meetings occur when necessary and not just in the spring. Guidance counselor attends IEP/ITP Scheduling: Meet with the kids, look at grades, IEP, learning styles, EDP. Retune because of teachers, NCLB, shared time programs. Look at band,	October/November: Resumes Goals and objectives. Job shadowing experience. November: Talk about college and get read to do their college search. With special education students college as per MI. but more vocational focus. (Still need more education.) January: Exams January: Grade and schedule check. February: SPED teacher checks on classes, credits, and shared time programs. February: SPED teacher urges students to do coop. February:	September: Guidance checks their credits for graduation. September: Talk about college applications and ask where they need help in the process. October (3 weeks): MEAP testing December: Financial Planning December: talk to "bubble students" Graduation issues. IEP/ITP Meetings occur when necessary and not just in the spring. Guidance counselor attends IEP/ITP

	Look at band, vocational issues first.	vocational issues first.	Check on all job shadowing. February: Check on how students are doing with their college searches IEP/ITP Meetings occur when necessary and not just in the spring. Guidance counselor attends IEP/ITP Students meet with Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) Scheduling: Meet with the kids, look at grades, IEP, learning styles, EDP. Retune because of teachers, NCLB, shared time programs. Look at band, vocational issues first.	Students meet with Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) Scheduling: Meet with the kids, look at grades, IEP, learning styles, EDP. Retune because of teachers, NCLB, shared time programs. Look at band, vocational issues first.
Classes Taken	Sally	Sally	Sally	Sally
	BasicBio.1 C BasicBio.2 C Civics C	Gen Sci. C+ Gen Sci. C+ US Hist 1 C+	Int Algebra B- Int Algebra A- WT Training B+	Agri-Sci. 1 Sr. Eng. 1A TeamSports 1



Health C Fitness B ChildDev.C+ Comp Lit A English 1 B English 2 B- PreAlgebra B PreAlgebra B Transition A Sam Basic Bio.1C B. Bio.2 D+ Civics D- Health F Pers. Fit. A- Bas.MealsD+ Adv.FoodsD- Comp Lit C English 1 C English 2 D- PreAlgebraC PreAlgebra D Bruce English 1 F English 2 D- PreAlg. D+ PreAlgebra D Basic Bio.1D BasicBio. 2 F Civics F Health F Pers. Fit. A TeamSportsA Basic MealsF Comp App. F Cathy Int Alg. 1 B- Int Alg. 2 B+ Biology 1 B+ Biology. 2 C-	US History 2 C WT Train B+ TeamSports A- Basic Meals C Adv. Foods B+ Am Lit 1A B+ Am Lit 2B B CareerMath B- CareerMath C+ Sam Gen. Sci D- US History 1 D Voc Auto 1 D (1 cr.) Voc Auto 2 D (1 cr.) Am Lit 1 A C+ Am Lit 2 B C- Career Math D- Career Math D- US Hist 2 D+ Health B C- Bruce English 1 F Int. Algebra D Int Algebra D- Gen. Science F Gen. Science F US History 1 F Civics D Health F Health C- WT Train. B+ Am Lit 2B C Cathy Int Algebra B+ Int Algebra B Gen. Sci. B- Gen. Sci. C-	Team Sports B- Law 1 C Art 1 B Jewelry B+ Cont Lit/WR C- Cont Lit/WR B Transitions A Economics B Global St A B- Sam Gen Science C- Voc Auto 1 C (1 cr.) Voc Auto 2 D (1 cr.) Beg Welding C+ Life.Sports A Law 1 D Cont Lit/WR C Cont Lit/WR F Economics B D- Global St A D Bruce Gen. Science D- Gen. ScienceD+ Global Studies F WT Training B Team Sports A Law 1 C Comp App. D- Cont Lit/WR F Cont Lit/WR C- Am Lit 1A C US History 1 C- US History 2 D Cathy Geometry 1 B- Geometry 2 C WT Training B+ Team Sports B+	IS OfficeAide Social Prob. Agri-Sci. 2 Sr. Eng. 2B Law 2 IS HS Aide 2 Life Mangt. Sam Weld./Cut. 1 Sr. Eng. 1A Co-op 1-3 hr. Weld/Cut 2 Sr. Eng. 2B Soc Problems WK Exp. 2 hr. Bruce Global Stud. Law Sr. English Team Sports (Incomplete list-this is what he could remember. Portfolio missing) Cathy Algebra 3 Law 1 Sr. English 1A Drawing
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	Civics D+ Health F Per. Fit. A Bas Meals B- Comp App. F Art 2 B- English 1 D- English 2 C+	US Hist. 1 C- US Hist. 2 C- Health C Team Sports A Adv. Foods A- Comp Lit. A Am Lit 1A C+ Am Lit 2B C+	Fam. Living B- Child Dev B Art 1 B Jewelry B+ Cont Lit/WR B Cont Lit/WR B- Economics B C Global Stud. A	IS MS Aide 1 Team sports 1 Algebra 4 Adv Art Sr. Eng. 2B Soc Problems IS Off.Aide 2 Life Mgmt.
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APPENDIX R

MEMBER CHECK

Member Check: Tuesday
Joyce and Special Education Teacher

Sociocultural Theoretical Framework

Overall plan for presenting the findings

Enactment of transition within the classroom
Enactment: A systemic View

Inside the onion: Enactment of transition within the classroom

Participants: Special education teacher and 4 focal students

Best Practices: Transition and Instructional Principles

Transition Best Practices

- Self-determination
- Self-advocacy
- Problems solving skills
- Reading skills
- Opportunity to practice these skills
- Vocational classes
- Employment opportunities

Instructional Principles of teaching

- Building community
- Direct instruction
- Cooperative learning
- Partnering
- Scaffolding
- Modeling
- Thinking aloud
- Strategy instruction
- Apprenticeship
- Zone of Proximity
- Transfer of control
- Teacher/student discussion
- Use of technology

Major Themes

1. Distributes learning in a community of practice
2. Problem solving as a way of knowing
3. Creating places and spaces for giving students voice and experiences

4. Transfer of control

Outside the onion: A systemic View

Study is positioned within a layered system: Federal, state, regional, district, building, and classroom.

Policy: Federal, state, regional, district, and local

No Child Left Behind (NCLB)

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), 2004

Individual Education Program

Individual Transition Plan

Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP)

Three weeks of work

Week plus of student time

Consequences in other classes

Students missing classes

Students getting behind and missing assignments

Student issues with attendance, absence

Student receives failing grades

Impact on student perceptions of self/feelings

Shared time programs

Educational Development Plan (EDP)

District Policy:

No retention

All students considered regular education first

Communication across schools and disciplines

Places and spaces for work

Transition class

Local Building and school culture and policy

All students treated the same

Formal and informal curriculum

Critical Stakeholders

Regular Education Teachers

Attend IEP/ITP meetings

Teach students in the regular education classroom

Communicate with parents: Open house, conference, parent view

Talk to students is ongoing

Provide adaptations/modifications as needed

Guidance Counselors

Curriculum
Communication with k-12 counselors
Presentations for students and individual meetings

Administrator

Support
Attend and facilitate IEP/ITP meetings
Schedules

Other stakeholders in place

Coop coordinator
Job shadow support: Local and regional

Parents

Attend IEP/ITP meetings
Talk to their youth about the future

Technology:

High priority in the school system and with the special education teacher
Computer lab
Media Center
Parent and student viewer: Communication of grades,
assignments, attendance, and tardiness
Use of computer for project, EDP, and book review search

APPENDIX S

TABLE OF INSTRUCTIONAL PRINCIPLES

Instructional Principles and Content Observed

Date: 9/14/05 (Wed.)
Content: Introductions. Project: Katrina (aid to school in south) Daily living skills and knowledge and community participation Local fireman is down there. "Doing what needs to be done, not just fighting fires." Daily living and community participation. Update EDP
Instructional Principles Used: Teacher made connections to college, BA, MA, doctorate. Not a medical doctor. (Transition goals)Teacher makes connections to student's lives. Teacher/student discussion of cash donations, receipts, donations such as clothing, large items. "What are some other things you would need if your home were destroyed?" Problem solving. Probing to get student to think and connect. Real life problems.
Participation of Focal Students:
Other: Use of technology for EDP update.

Date: 9/15/05 (Thurs.)
Content Writing: Both my letter to their parents and their writing for the EDP. Project that will use and link community resources. AEDs for all the buildings in the district. Will be writing a grant proposal and training staff. EDP work. For students that still need to make corrections. AED searches for the rest of the students:
Instructional Principles Used: Reads my letter to their parents. Discussion of words used, explain what the letter means and connects to their writing: correctness and what they will write after HS. First impressions. In many cases this will be you on paper. Motto: "The precept is the product." Job interview and talk about what is looked for. (Transition goals) AED (expectations) will demand you full effort and it will be their responsibility and not just hers. Everyone will be a part of this project. Reads a story about what a deliberator does. Teacher had the students plan how many AEDs would be needed. (Counted buildings and areas that would need one.) As they construct the project the teacher writes on the board their ideas combined with hers. "This is our project." Power writing: "Why do I do this? In this proposal they will see perfect writing." Computer work on EDP. Computer searches for information on AEDs. Students are given yellow folders to help them organize and keep the information they find for the project. You are responsible for your information. Teacher is moving around the lab to help students thin through their searches. Teacher and student interaction. Questioning and answering. Teacher directs search by saying: "You understand, if you put it in quotations, it means it will look for just that."
Participation of Focal Students: Sally: asked if this project was just for sped. "They will think we are stupid. Will they trust us?" Bruce:: Do we have the things necessary to have AEDs?
Other: Use of the computer for AED searches and EDP. Students print the EDP work.

Date: 9/16/05 (Friday)
Content: Social Skills: Being aware of what is going on around you. Pragmatic Seeing something to completion. Vocabulary: implementation, goal, mission statement. AED Project Laws
Instructional Principles Used: Teacher student talk about the meanings of words and how they impact work. Teacher and student develop a goal for the project. Talk about why it is important. Teacher records on the board what they are brainstorming. Asks about who this impacts: school, community. Using the folders teacher reads and students highlight important information. Consensus and majority vocabulary. Discussion of Samaritan Law and how that will impact the AED project. Insurance: No Fault and what that means in MI Talk about student concerns and questions. Think out loud with me. Closure, review of who is doing what.
Participation of Focal Students: Sally: 8 Bruce: 8 Cathy: 1 Sam: 0 Bruce: takes notes on the board, while teacher leaves the room.
Other:

Date: 9/19/05 (Monday)
Content: Self-determination: dropping a class. Setting time lines, goals, and needs. AED project Setting a timeline for project. Making goals for project. Listing needs for the project. Risk taking: without taking risks there is no progress. Correct channels and ways to move forward.
Instructional Principles Used: Teacher stepping back. Allowing the students to take responsibility for various parts of the project. Teacher working to engage all students. Students reporting on their progress. Thinking aloud and allowing the students to participate in the process. Models how to write the letter. Then has the students take over and finish the work. Cooperatively compiled a list of who should receive letters. Uses inclusive language: our letter
Participation of Focal Students: Sally: 2 Bruce: 1 Cathy: 11 Sam: 1 (response to direct question) Bruce: will head up histories. Sally: will head up legal issues. Cathy: will work on a recommendation for a company and help design a logo. Sam: will not head up he wants to help, but not be responsible.
Other:

Date: 9/21/05 (Wednesday)
Content: Writing (ongoing work on letter) Laws: Federal, State and local. Community issues: police, fire dept. emergency services. Consequences for setting off a fire alarm. Vocabulary: questions about the language used in the reading. Edit letter together
Instructional Principles Used: Teacher reading from the materials found by student searches, students highlight important information. Discuss what the information means. When asked about a word. Teacher said the word, explained what vital means and says "use it three times today and you will own it." Closure: tomorrow we will go to the lab and do more research and make phone contacts. Bruce: brings up teacher that died and teacher connects accurately to project.
Participation of Focal Students: Sally: Taking notes for the class. Sally: 2 Bruce: 2
Other: Use of technology. Cleaning up the letter.

Date: 9/27/05 (Tuesday)
Content: MEAP AED Project Writing skills Life Skills: MEAP
Instructional Principles Used: Praise for scores and cutoff numbers. When through all the students in class and said how close they were to passing each section. "That says a lot for the work we put into it. The interventions we did helped." Looked at the strengths, "Your best one was..." MEAP testing is Oct. 25-28 (note almost a month away). Shared with the class a discussion with the assistant superintendent about special education scores on the MEAPs. Pointed out that the year before students had 4 on their tests and this year they are up to three. That is progress. Shared how they will prepare for the writing test. Did a calendar of MEAP and preparation strategies. Discussed the consequences of not passing in response to student concerns. "You can only take it again. You all have a chance. You can do this. How can we make it better for you." You need to think that you can do it. Connects to her having to take the elementary test to be Highly Qualified. Brainstormed the title of their group(Senior Students Saving Lives) Work on cleaning up the letter. "A little awkward." Reads while they listen. How can we fix it up?
Participation of Focal Students: S: is working on fixing the letter on the computer after class work and teacher's notes on the hard copy. Students are working on finding phone numbers. Sally and Bruce make phone calls to police and fire depts. For information. Participation by Sally, Bruce, and Cathy.
Other: Use of technology: computer and phone. Class cut short for advisory to vote for homecoming

Date: 10/3/05 (Monday)

Content:

AED Project

Life Skills

How to deal with a negative response to the project.

Problem solving.

Negotiation skills

MEAP

Instructional Principles Used:

Discuss reply from the superintendent.

Discussion around a negative response from a Dr.

“Why would this be good, some one who is not for it? He set up a perfect opportunity to prove to him this is important. We need to come up with proof, case studies, but not from manufacturers.”

Talked about pros and cons.

Teacher explains what pros and cons are.

From the research they have done and the talk in class the students generate a list of pros and cons for the project. The teacher records the ideas on the board and guides them in their thinking. Probes and questions along the way.

As students are searching the teacher circulates around the room talking with students about what they have found and sharing with the whole class. “This is good stuff.”

Participation of Focal Students:

Bruce: Did you ask why?

Sam: is the only one that did not participate in the discussion

Other:

Use of the computer lab to search the pros and cons for the project. Need more evidence to support the project.

Students are free to make copies of the information they find and add to their folders to be shared with the class later.

Date: 10/4/05 (Tuesday)
Content: AED Project Teen Read Week Grant Application Organization skills MEAP Vocabulary
Instructional Principles Used: Teacher has students get out their folders. Be ready to discuss the negatives. Teacher reads an add for teen read week. Updates and reminds students where they are on project. We need to make some progress before we can put information out. Need permission from superintendent. Talk about posters. Teacher talks about how this helps her because she is a visual person and it helps her to organize if she sees it. Students suggest a power point for their presentations. Discuss negatives. Teacher gives an example of a call for cardiac arrest and how long it will take for them to arrive. The whole reason for AED is immediate assistance. Students talked about a student from the MS who died. Discuss if AED would have helped this student. Discuss the diversity of people who survive. Students are challenged to make their pros and cons relevant to their community. Class is working on putting together a notebook of cases and making copies for each student. Teacher reads about liability and says this is the kind of stuff we need to be talking about. Talk about CPR and basic life support. MEAP discussion. Student talks about not taking the MEAP and teacher responds by talking about how close to passing. Students now work on what they have and what they still need to search for. Teacher corrects incorrect English in spoken language.
Participation of Focal Students: Cathy: records on the board what they have and what they still need to find. Cathy and Sally stay and finish putting together the notebook and clear up.
Other:

Date: 10/7/05 (Friday)
Content: News: Check on the reported bomb threat in NY MEAP Grades Community participation Transition plan and MRS and the assistance you can get. He will be coming in. and job shadowing. A quick check with students
Instructional Principles Used: Teacher short with students. (out of character.) "It is not an option. It is not me." Student comments: Talk about not wanting to take it. "It makes me feel stupid." We are going to review for the writing. Most of you are on the verge of passing. Everyone was close. If you are not we will get you to the point. Review of this MEAP looks at. Strategies: Power writing format. Overall thesis. Writing needs to be clear. Position stated in the thesis. Support is evident and connected. Use evidence from the reading without plagiarizing. Used the AED project as the topic for writing since they know so much about the topic. Scaffolding. AEDs are important to the School System for several reasons. 1,233,233,233. Four Square Outline form. Teacher writes on the board: AEDs are vital for several reasons. Start with your notes. Teacher provides a handout of a 4 square for students who want it. Teacher scaffolds more: reasons why students and staff need these: sports, injury, undiagnosed heart problems. Teacher moves around the room. Helps S: she asked for help. Teacher is working with the students on writing, but also checking on their knowledge of the AED project Teacher add and talks about both during this time. Ongoing editing with the students.
Participation of Focal Students: Sam: Has been out of the room for the first part of the MEAP writing. Returns and doesn't know what to do. Cathy: leaves to make copies for the teacher and class. Sally: request help from the teacher in her writing. Makes a lot of use and not opposed to asking for help frequently. They talk and work together. It is a back and forth. Teacher reads aloud and they both make corrections. Sally: clarifies.
Other: Use of TV for update on the news. Use of the computer to check grades. Use of phone to find out how many students in the district and in specific schools.

Date: 10/12/05 (Thursday)
Content: EDP AED Organization
Instructional Principles Used: Teacher helping students to organize and ease an uneasiness that seems to permeate the students today. Teacher works with students. Teacher work with Cathy. Teacher reads aloud, makes comments about tense and awkwardness. It becomes evident to Cathy and she is able to make changes aloud. Sometimes the teacher makes suggestions for change. Teacher works with Sam: Reads what is written and allows Sam to hear and help edit. "I think that sounds juvenile." and they work together to improve the writing. Sam" nods approval as teacher makes suggestions and makes changes. Teacher questions the use of a question mark and he changes it to a period. Teacher is actually making the changes on the computer as they work together.
Participation of Focal Students: Bruce: I feel so overwhelmed. Cathy: talks to teacher about another class project. Needs transparencies and copies, she thinks, but is confused by teacher's instructions. Sam: talked to me about coop and how it isn't what he really wants to do: too much math and jerks he is working with. Says he has a job lined up for after HS
Other: Use of computer for work on what the students needed to finish. Transparencies for an overhead student presentation. After class Sam, Sally, Cathy and Bruce all stay after and talk with the teacher. Sally talks about taking pictures of nature and animals.

Date: 10/13/05 (Thursday)
Content: MEAP AED Papers
Instructional Principles Used: Teacher works with students individually on their writing. Sally: finds and article about animals and the teacher allows her to read it to the class. She reads fluently and with only a few hesitations and one mistaken pronunciation. Sam: Teacher reads and works on the computer. The make corrections together to achieve sentences. Teacher's pattern for writing work: reads aloud, connects their writing to her life, the school, or events in their life. She models how to read the work, she thinks aloud and helps them construct good writing. She is continually talking and so are they. She listens and does not lecture. Models how to work out problems and difficult work.
Participation of Focal Students: Sam: asks for help with his paper. Says he is sinking. This doesn't seem to be what they worked on the other day. He has worked all period and has two short paragraphs. No complete sentences. Disconnected thoughts. After two days of work he has three paragraphs about 2/3 of a page.
Other: Use of computer for AED papers

Date: 10/17/05 (Monday)
Content: MEAP AED Papers
Instructional Principles Used:
Participation of Focal Students: Many students today are off task. Sam: has deleted most of his work. Is looking on with Bruce on car sites. Bruce: is searching car sites. Sally: is working on her rough draft. Cathy is off and on in Yahoo, email, and working.
Other: Using computer lab

Date: 10/18/05 (Tuesday)
Content: Life skills and knowledge. Self-determination. Know yourself. MEAP schedule.
Instructional Principles Used: Teacher collecting and checking to be sure she has all the papers. Talking about final copies of the papers. Some only have their rough drafts to turn in. Talks about how they will have to be sure their communication is perfect on the job. Examples: business cards. Connects to each student's plans for a job in the future. "What you see is what you get. The percept is the product." Relates to my dissertation. Relates to business and their work. Students share stories about their parents and how they are not good at certain things. Gardner's 7 intelligences and how we are good at different things. Discussion about all the ways people learn. Relates to their learning styles. Talk about how much of the brain we use (10%). Conversation about serenity: the serenity to accept and courage to change and the knowledge to know which. Teacher gives examples of her life. MEAP conversations. Teacher is reassuring the student. "You have a one in four shot. It is only a piece of paper with words on it." "You can get points by just writing something on the paper." "We have a purpose in this school and it is to help you guys." Discussion of teacher experience with divorce and family. Students offer solutions and comments. Share their experiences of difficult times. Work on some of the papers. Teacher reads some aloud. And comments about examples of the good parts and makes a few suggestions for changes.
Participation of Focal Students: Students ask what happens if we don't come. "It is so stressful." "We haven't learned it."
Other: Students use the teacher's computer to enter their papers.

Date: 10/21/05 (Friday)
Content: AED Project MEAP
Instructional Principles Used: Teacher shares with the students a packet that came about their project. From Children's Hospital and Project Adam. A packet of information and a video. Shares the timeline given in the packet. Watch video and after they talk about what they saw and thought about the video and the information. Discuss the cons of the project. Return to students sharing experiences when AED might have or might not have made a difference. MEAP schedule reviewed. Discussed accommodations that will be provided. Concern about S not being excused from her shared time program. Teacher has to contact school and make arrangements. The school would not allow the student to make the arrangements.
Participation of Focal Students: Bruce: expresses concerns about actually being a Jr. Sally: has concerns because they will not excuse her for MEAPs Bruce: talking about not wanting to go to work today. "I have to ge in at 5:00am and I leave at 1:00am. Talks to teacher about: "It is all about working with people and learning how. It is all in how you ask. There is the tone of voice and how you ask."
Other: Use of technology. TV and video

Date: 10/31/05 (Monday)
Content: MEAP AED: budget, making contact with sources, mission statement, appointment with superintendent then will have a deadline. Daily living skills. Social skills. Community contacts. Problem solving. Goal setting: Wish list
Instructional Principles Used: “You guys worked so hard last week.” Teacher passes out treats to students. If you blew off the MEAP you will have to revisit it. You will have to talk to them. Students say they don’t like them, but one guidance counselor works well with them. Talk about how to address the problem of MEAP. Teacher is collecting papers. Teacher “Don’t worry I will not submit grades, since we were MEAP testing. We don’t have a lot of grades, but we have some. Don’t worry I will get it fixed up this afternoon. I will not submit without talking to you.” It has been about a week since they have worked on the project and today the teacher is covering most of the project and revisiting work that has been done and work that still needs to be completed. Discussion.
Participation of Focal Students: Constant conversations going on in the class. Some on task but a lot off task. Sally: almost constant participation and engagement in the work. She is taking notes on the board for the class. Sam: responds to teachers question about his regional cross country competition. He had the flue and did not post a good time for him. He does not participate in the review and plans of what to do. Cathy: is absent
Other: Technology use for AED project. Phone calls. Talk about ebay and using that as a source. Video, technology will not work, so the students gather around her computer and watch the video that way. A review of the video watched before the MEAP

Date: 11/1/05 (Tuesday)
Content: Grades AED Project Daily living skills. Prescription How to fill out forms
Instructional Principles Used: Grades are done. Teacher walks around the class and talks about their grades with them. Teacher passes out handouts for the project. (There is only a small group of students today. Need a prescription for the AEDs. Work on filling out a grant form. They talk about who should be the contact person and decide that the teacher should be the contact. Teacher addresses student problems due to absence from class due to MEAP testing. (Students missed a week worth of classes.) They talk about what they misses and what can be done to help them. The teacher constructs a table on the board of time needed and subjects to be made up. Teacher talks about what needs to be accomplished this 9 weeks. We have to read a novel. Students start the discussion about what they will read and a discussion of book begins. Teacher has a collection of books in the room and they talk about the pros and cons of reading each book. They agree for a number of reasons not to read any of the books shared. Students talk about where their interest are. The decision is made to use the computer to search and read book reviews. Talk about where to search: Amazon and Barnes and Noble. Teacher does some searching on her own and them moves around to talk with students about what they have found and what they are interested in.
Participation of Focal Students: Student response to grades: Sam. no visible response. Sally: Good Bruce: is out of the room. Cathy: no response. Sally: wants to know what is a prescription? Sam: asks about what the school address. Bruce: enters late due to a problem in global studies: paper overdue another MEAP issue. All students are engaged in the search of book reviews and sharing what they find. Students are not off task and visiting other sites.
Other: Teacher asks how many have computer access at home. Most of the class has marginal. Use of technology to search book reviews. Students print those they are interested in and share.

Date: 11/3/05 (Thursday)
Content: MEAP Book reviews Preparation for LMC visit Student interests
Instructional Principles Used: Book discussion: Students are sharing with the class the books they are interested in reading. There is no consensus on which book to read. Teacher now reverts to areas of interest. Students are instructed to write down the areas of interest and turn them in. Students ask about their asset scores for LMC and teacher explains what they mean.
Participation of Focal Students: Two students are pulled out of class to work on MEAP. One student refused to go because he claims he has missed too much class time. (These are not the focal students) Guidance counselor comes in the pick up the rest of the MEAP tests from the teacher. Talks to the student who refused to leave class and arranges to take the rest of the test during a time when he will not miss class (She has brought on a whole different attitude in the student.) Bruce: suggested reading Troy Sally: suggests Lord of the Flies and talks about how afraid she is of Mexicans Cathy: 1 Sally: wants books about animals Sam: When asked directly he says he is neutral. Bruce: talks about not wanting to go to college
Other: Bruce: shares he doesn't have internet at home.

Date: 11/4/05 (Friday)
Content: Book: Student interests reading vocabulary
Instructional Principles Used: Book chosen: Call of the Wild by Jack London, based on student areas of interest. Introducing and setting the stage for the reading. She builds anticipation by talking about her interests and theirs. Teacher talks about how this is one of her very favorite books, she likes dogs. Talks about the breed of dog in the book. Most of the author's books are about survival and the outdoors and animals. Teacher hands out a reading guide with questions and vocabulary for them to look for. Teacher reads the vocabulary words and comes to artesian well and says that she doesn't know the word or the meaning and says they will work through these words. She models how to sound out the word. One student gets a dictionary (without being asked). Teacher reads the words again and as she does has the students circle the words they do not know and underline the words you have heard but don't know what they mean. Student has found the word in the dictionary. Teacher models how to use the information in the dictionary. Derivation Antagonist and protagonist. Models how to figure out the meaning pro positive like the pros and cons we were working on in the project. Directions for work on the book: "when one is reading no one interrupts or says anything. It is their responsibility to figure it out. This is your IEP objective. We all have trouble. That is why I told you about my word that I do not know." Teacher reads and stops to talk about inferential information. Teacher stops to address the vocabulary words. Sometimes directly instruction sometimes cooperatively figuring it out. Relates words to things they are familiar with and with their lives. Look for clues as to the meaning. Providing strategies for the students as they work.
Participation of Focal Students: Bruce: 3 Sally: 3 Cathy: 3 Sam: 2
Other: Student dismissed early to get report cards.

Date: 11/8/05 (Tuesday)
Content: Student issues Appropriate behavior in public Tardiness of focal student Reading/writing/vocabulary
Instructional Principles Used: Teacher spends time addressing some student issues (non focal students) Focal student is tardy-share time sub teacher would not let her leave the school. Sent to the principal, who say she could leave. Student reading and stops and says she has to read it again and then asks meaning of what she read. "Fire in his eyes" Vocabulary word "shock" in this context means surprise. Teacher shares an experience and how she handled the experience when the students said "she should have gone down and beaten them up." Strategy use: the context in which the word is used. Example of student reading and working out problems Cathy; p. 100 reads, struggles, gets the word and finishes the sentence and asks what it means. Read on and you will find out. Stumbles over a word tries and gets it. Reaches another word, laughs and says, "I am not going to try that word "Enthusiastically.
Participation of Focal Students: Bruce: reads aloud Cathy: read aloud. Cathy: uses the dictionary
Other: Use of technology by t he teacher to find pictures and information about the dogs in the book. Class is interrupted by the Assistant principal to ask the teacher about the use of technology for a presentation.

Date: 11/9/05 (Wednesday)
Content: MEAP issue Reading Problem solving Working together
Instructional Principles Used: Teacher reviews what has happened in the book so far. We are making progress. Teacher reads and stops to ask about the meaning of word. Now I want you to take the information from the chapter and make a timeline. Everything from the beginning to now. Jot down all ideas on a piece of paper. Model how to do this on the board. I am going to give you 7 minutes to write down everything you can think of. Look at your questions on the sheet. Now partner up with someone. I will not choose for you unless I have to. Why are you working together? To combine all your ideas you may have different strengths. Student cut their ideas in strips and then organize all the ideas into a time line
Participation of Focal Students: Cap and Gown meeting will be held tomorrow. Bruce: says he will have to talk to the principal to see if he can walk. MEAP: Sam got an absence for MEAP. Teacher has been "harping on me about when I was taking the MEAP and now is going to give me detention for the MEAP. I have to work. Teacher takes care if it. Student moves to work with Sam: Bruce and Cathy have no partners. Cathy begins to work on her own. Bruce: can't get report card because of a lost book and doesn't have the money to pay for it. Cathy: suggests he go to the student viewer to see his grades.
Other: Sally and Cathy both ask questions

Date: 11/14/05 (Monday)
Content: Cooperative work. Writing
Instructional Principles Used: Students are back in their pairs working on the timeline, which you are going to turn into a paragraph, abstract. Peer review of work Students are to work on reading Chapter 2 for the next two days with the substitute teacher.
Participation of Focal Students: Sam and partner lost their work. Sam: Asks;" We are pretty much writing a paragraph about the chapter?" Sally and partner have a rough draft done. Sam: is writing what his partner says
Other: Two computers in the room purchased for \$20 by the teacher. Must be careful the school will not repair them.

Date: 11/17/05 (Thursday)
Content: Discussed the visit with LMC representative (agency) Transition goals. Community connections
Instructional Principles Used: Teacher listened to the student's complaints about the representative (teacher was absent). Said they did not need financial aid and they did not know what their IEP was about. They were concerned because they were told it was not documentation they needed a Dr. documentation for any accommodations. Teacher asked questions and attempted to call LMC for verification of information. Gave us our scores but did not explain them. Teacher gave the rationale for the LMC visit and for going through the process of applying and taking the asset test. It is a learning experience. Project community p. 110 What it takes for a community to work. What kind of service do we have. What do you use and what are you responsible for. Now think of family and specifically what are you responsible for and what are your parents responsible for? Compare yours and theirs. As maturing young adults are you prepared to do this for yourselves? We enjoy saying I am independent.
Content: Sally, Bruce, and Cathy are actively engaged in the project. Sam does not verbally participate.
Other: Use of the overhead to construct and record the work on the community project.

Date: 11/18/05 (Friday)
Content: Policy: New, no eating and drinking of pop in school Reading IEP objectives for students.
Instructional Principles Used: Students, I thought they considered us adults and encourage us to make our own decisions. Discussed the effect it will have on the school store. Ironically Cathy is selling suckers for art and teacher and students are buying and enjoying in class. Listens to a lot of pre-instruction conversation today. Teacher talks about what the terms mean, for example OHI. Students are asking questions. Begin reading book. They have a new scaffolding sheet with questions and vocabulary. Continue to work as previous days, read stop and work on vocabulary and meaning. Student record on sheet.
Participation of Focal Students: Sally: asks about what her objectives mean. Bruce: sleeps through most of the class. Cathy: is asking questions and answering questions today-very involved. Sam: volunteers that he is going up north this weekend.
Other:

Date: 11/28/05 (Monday)
Content: Learning styles Multi Intelligence Test Importance of taking your meds when they have been prescribed.
Instructional Principles Used: Teacher gives example of how she learns best. They are going to write about how they learn and put this writing in their portfolio. Scaffolds the writing for them. "After completing the Multi Intelligence Test I found that I learn best by ... Student questions about how to read the results sheet. Teacher explains. Discussion of bipolar. Teacher eyes and ears up here for a second. This is a 4 square for power writing. Everyone's first sentence will be the same. Metacognitive awareness: How you learn best. Make sure you have chosen your three most important. Teacher works with students providing assistance when needed. Bruce: I have the first paragraph, but don't know what comes next
Participation of Focal Students:
Other:

Date: 11/29/05 (Tuesday)
Content: Writing
Instructional Principles Used: Teacher moves around the lab supporting their writing. Reads aloud, edit together.
Participation of Focal Students:
Other: Use of the computer lab. Working on their multi Intelligence Paper

Date: 12/2/05 (Friday)
Content: Writing
Instructional Principles Used: Teacher talks about what a conclusion is. Continued use of teaching strategies.
Participation of Focal Students:
Other: Use of computer for writing

Date: 12/5/05 (Monday)
Content: Reading Vocabulary Law suits
Instructional Principles Used: Continued reading and addressing vocabulary and meaning. Relates word example pandemonium to Basketball game Duke and Virginia Tech Discussion of local case and law suite
Participation of Focal Students: Bruce: talks about the law suit against McD. Bruce: reads aloud and has an especially difficult section. "This is a really hard passage. This is gay." Cathy: uses the dictionary to look up a word they can't figure out.
Other:

Date: 12/8/05 (Thursday)
Content: Work day
Instructional Principles Used: Teacher helps Sam for most of the period on the computer on his paper. She read out loud and he correct and she helps him. Don't use pronouns so much. How about something... What does this green line mean. He is now watching the computer to tell him mistakes. When finished "You did a really good job. It really shows your maturity. I am very impressed by what you have done. Sam: is laughing and smiling through this process.
Participation of Focal Students:
Other: Students are at her computer checking on their grades and assignments

Date: 12/16/05 (Friday)
Content: Work day
Instructional Principles Used: Teacher giving a test to three students. Sally: is organizing her folder. Bruce: is working on the computer on a project for another class. Sally and Cathy: are working on organizing some files for the teacher. Sam: is absent
Participation of Focal Students:
Other: Use of computer for a class project for Bruce

Date: 12/19/05 (Monday)
Content: Work day
Instructional Principles Used:
Participation of Focal Students: Cathy: is absent Bruce: is finishing up his project. Sally and Sam do not accomplish much.
Other: Use of the computer for a class project for Bruce

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