The Perception of High School Teachers of the Efficacy of Transition Planning for
Students with Mild Intellectual Disabilities

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This dissertation titled

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Abstract

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The Perception of High School Teachers of the Efficacy of Transition Planning for Students with Mild Intellectual Disabilities

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Individuals with intellectual disabilities often have a difficult time transitioning to adulthood once they leave high school. This is evidenced by low employment rates and multiple reports showing that many still live in their family home. Though legislation over the past forty years has attempted to address these issues, the outcomes for individuals with intellectual disabilities reflect an over reliance on an institutional model of service delivery once they reach adulthood. Research regarding the effectiveness of transition planning in education is critical. The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of high school teachers in Ohio. Using data collected from survey instruments, this study considered the perspectives of teachers regarding the effectiveness of transition planning approaches for their students as they play an important role in the process. Findings revealed that teachers have a high level of personal self-efficacy with regards to transition planning but are less confident in the effectiveness of the process or the schools’ services in promoting good transitions. Recommendations from this study are for more research regarding transition planning and having teachers more involved in the process.
Dedication

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my loving wife Rhonda and daughter Sophie.

Your support and encouragement kept me going.
Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge the members of my committee for their guidance during this process. I would especially like to thank Dr. Krisanna Machtmes and Dr. Charles Lowery for their work as co-chairs of my dissertation. They provided a map that lead me to completion. I also would like to thank Dr. Dwan Robinson and Dr. William Larson for serving on my committee and providing helpful insights, and Dr. Scott Sparks for his role as the Dean’s representative.
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I can keep a few challenging behaviors from disrupting lessons when teaching a student with intellectual disabilities.  

I am able to implement a behavioral management plan for one student with intellectual disabilities that does not disrupt other students.  

I help my students with intellectual disabilities enjoy communicating.  

I help my students with intellectual disabilities to interact in a positive manner with others to help build positive relationships.  

The IEP process allows me to reach the most challenging students with intellectual disabilities in a manner that promotes learning.  

The IEP process helps students with intellectual disabilities to work collaboratively with other students or peers in their school.  

The school offers assistive technology for students with mild intellectual disabilities (ID).  

Transition planning helps students with intellectual disabilities to believe they can do well in school.  

The school provides training to teachers that is aimed at helping students with intellectual disabilities behave safely in school.  

Transition planning fosters independence in students with intellectual disabilities.  

Transition planning fosters self-determination in students with intellectual disabilities.  

I am able to express views freely on important matters about students with intellectual disabilities.  

I am able to establish a trusting relationship with students with intellectual disabilities.  

I encourage students with intellectual disabilities to expand their communication skills.  

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Chapter One: Background

Intellectual disabilities (ID) are neurological impairments that manifest before the age of eighteen. They are diagnosed through intelligence testing in combination with an assessment of adaptive behavior. Intellectual disability is determined to be present with a score of seventy or below according to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders: 5th ed., 2013 (DSM-5) (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Adaptive function is assessed to determine whether or not a child is meeting the behavioral milestones associated with their age group. The combination of IQ testing and the assessment of adaptive behavior are critical in making an accurate diagnosis of intellectual disability (Milne & McDonald, 2015).

Most often diagnosed in the developmental years as students enter pre-school, intellectual disabilities affect an individual’s ability to learn skills that promote independence. The number of people affected by developmental disabilities and more specifically intellectual disabilities is not exactly known. Intellectual disabilities are characterized in four levels, mild, moderate, severe and profound (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

Individuals with mild intellectual disabilities tend to function at a level in which they are able to take care of most of their daily needs independently or with reminders. Individuals with moderate intellectual disabilities can reach the same levels of independence as those in the mild range with more intensive training. Individuals with severe and profound intellectual disabilities tend to need ongoing assistance to meet their daily needs (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).
Historically individuals with intellectual disabilities have lived in either their family home or paid residential settings once they reached adulthood. The group as a whole has been underemployed with only approximately 25% working in competitive jobs with non-disabled peers. Many still work in sheltered settings in which they receive pay at a per piece rate for contracted jobs. These settings are segregated as the only non-disabled workers are staff persons that are present to assist individuals.

The Human Service Research Institute (HSRI) conducts research annually regarding topics that affect the lives of individuals with disabilities nationwide. In conjunction with the National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services (NASDDDS) and 44 states, HRSI completes research on various subjects, such as adult services, employment and living arrangements to establish the National Core Indicators (HRSI, 2015). The report generated is the National Core Indicators Adult Consumer survey final report.

The report from 2013-2014 shows that individuals with disabilities continue to have an overdependence on their family or paid support for daily living. It also shows that there is still a need for more employment opportunities. The residential service delivery system in Ohio reflects the national scene. There are residential settings that include ten state operated developmental centers, smaller private intermediate care facilities for individuals with intellectual disabilities (ICF-IID) and waiver services which provide funding for staffing in one’s home. All of these residential options are provided with funding from the federal government through Medicaid, state taxes, and local property taxes garnered by Ohio’s county boards of developmental disabilities through
levies. Though many individuals receive these services, there are a significant number of people on waiting lists (HSRI, 2015).

Ohio also has public and private segregated sheltered workshops where services are delivered that allow individuals to earn money. These settings were established by parents in the 1950’s as places for their children to go during the day once they finished school. In that same time the county board system was adopted by the state to provide oversight and assist with funding programs. Eventually the county boards became providers of the services. The sources of the funding come from local, state and federal money through Medicaid the same way as with residential services.

Today, new regulations from the Center for Medicaid Services are placing an emphasis on community living and employment. Their interpretation of sheltered work settings and ICF-IIDs is that they are segregated and should be downsized. This means there is more of a need for residential supports through waivers and community employment. These supports have traditionally been more successful if the individuals receiving them have training to be more independent in daily living (Sitlington, 1996).

To develop a service delivery system for adults with disabilities with more people working and living in non-segregated settings, it is important to examine the current system. Legislation throughout the last forty years has placed an emphasis on preparing students with disabilities for adulthood, but the results have not been promising. The overall numbers of people living independently or with minimal supports and being competitively employed have not drastically changed in that time (Rusch & Braddock,
The legislation outlines transition planning for students beginning at age sixteen (fourteen if agreed upon by the individual’s team) to help them after graduation.

Transition planning focuses on developing goals for students that are meant to prepare them for life once they graduate from school. Each student with a disability has an Individual Education Program (IEP) developed through a team process. The team is made up of the student, their family, their teacher, the IEP coordinator, and any other professionals that may be needed (i.e. Speech Pathologist, Occupational Therapist, etc…). This transition planning team is charged with developing a plan that is carried out during school. The teacher plays an important role as they are part of the team, as well as a provider of some of the services outlined. The purpose of this study is to examine the high school teachers’ perceptions regarding the effectiveness of transition planning.

Transitioning to Adulthood

The transition from high school to adult life presents challenges for many students (Asberg, Bowers, Renk, & McKinney, 2008). Whether graduates are moving on to higher education or joining the workforce, high school graduates find that life after high school is much different from life during high school (Tappan, Aoyagi, & Kayson, 2007). The transition may require students to try things they never had to try before to accomplish goals, which may be difficult because they are unfamiliar. Furthermore, they may be unaccustomed to navigating the new surroundings associated with adult living arrangements and workplaces (Tappan et al., 2007). This transition can be even more challenging for individuals with intellectual disabilities than it is for students who do not have disabilities (Blalock & Patton, 2006; Davies & Beamish, 2009). This paper will
focus on those challenges and ask educators important questions to examine the process of transition planning for students with intellectual disabilities.

The transition from high school to adult life requires major changes in routine, and these changes can be especially difficult for individuals with intellectual disabilities (Rynders, Schleien, & Matson, 2003). Attending school, for example, gives students with intellectual disabilities an established structure for meeting needs of daily living (Rynders et al., 2003). They know what to expect during the school day, week, and year; and this regular schedule allows them to plan and look forward to routine and special events. Without this type of structure, many individuals with moderate and severe disabilities have difficulty sustaining their focus on meaningful activities. Rynders et al. (2003) characterized the change in the following way: “The movie theater still exists as it did during the school years, but organized, ongoing activities, many of which are connected in some way with school, tend to diminish rapidly after graduation” (p.8).

According to Blalock and Patton (1996), the difficulties facing young adults with intellectual disabilities are more fundamental than those relating to the structuring of their time. One of the goals of adulthood is to move out of the family home and establish one’s own place to live. Individuals with disabilities often experience significant challenges in performing the activities required to maintain a home and even to meet their basic needs (Sitlington, 1996).

As some writers note, the success of individuals with intellectual disabilities is dependent on the social skills they acquire and use during their schooling (Constanbander, 2000; Kemp & Carter, 2002). In other words, these writers suggest that
educational strategies to maximize the social skill development of individuals with intellectual disabilities are more important to those students’ eventual success than strategies to maximize the academic skill development of those individuals. Some writers (e.g., Blalock & Patton, 1996; Sitlington, 1996) claim, moreover, that educators can help smooth the transition for individuals with intellectual disabilities by providing particular kinds of instruction and assisting these individuals to develop transition plans including those mandated under IDEIA 2004 at age 16 (14 if it is deemed necessary by the IEP team). The planning process is critical, from their perspective, because young adults with intellectual disabilities need to acquire certain life skills that are crucial for independent living (Blalock & Patton, 1996; Sitlington, 1996). For example, they need to acquire skills for managing a home and interacting with others in the community.

According to advocates of life-skill instruction, the goal of such instruction should be to reduce the need for a person with disabilities (i.e. intellectual disability, visual impairments, physical limitations…etc.) to receive extensive, ongoing professional support (Blalock & Patton, 1996; Sitlington, 1996).

In contrast to studies and other reports that consider adjustment more broadly, some scholars have focused more narrowly on competitive employment as a means of defining successful adult adjustment for students with disabilities (Sitlington, Frank, & Carson, 1992). This scholarship suggests that transition planning contributes to a greater likelihood that individuals with disabilities will gain competitive employment (Luftig & Muthert, 2003; O’Reilly, Lancioni, & Kierans, 2000).
Preparing individuals with disabilities to compete for jobs once they graduate from high school is a challenging goal for many schools (Rusch & Braddock, 2004). When students with disabilities are underprepared for the workforce, not surprisingly they find it difficult to secure work (Luftig & Muthert, 2003). Facing these difficulties, some individuals with disabilities accept other day programming options, such as sheltered workshops or activity based programs, and get on wait-lists for job coaching while still hoping eventually to secure competitive employment (McInnes, Ozturk, McDermott, & Mann, 2010).

Some evidence suggests that supported employment does provide a viable transition for young adults with disabilities. With this approach, the individual receives assistance from an on-site instructor or job coach (McInnes et al., 2010). The role of the job coach is to teach the specific job requirements to the young adult in need of such support (McInnes et al., 2010). This arrangement reduces the necessity for employers to offer special on-the-job training to individuals with disabilities (McInnes et al., 2010).

Although the job coach plays a critical role early on, his or her involvement lessens as the new employee learns the procedures needed to perform his or her job effectively (McInnes et al., 2010). According to some observers, this arrangement works best when the employee has already learned some of the job-related skills during his or her years in school (i.e., prior to employment) (Harvey, 2001). Some commentators suggest that establishing a realistic set of vocational goals may be effective for helping special education students make the transition to the workforce following graduation (e.g., Harvey, 2001). Unfortunately, empirical studies have tended to show that, despite
legislation focusing on outcomes for students with disabilities, their rate of obtaining competitive employment has not changed since the 1980’s (Rusch & Braddock, 2004).

Lindstrom et al. (2008) developed a curriculum specifically designed to address the vocational needs of women with disabilities. This curriculum thereby diminished the apparent gender gap in instruction that exists between men and women with disabilities (Lindstrom et al., 2008). After this research team developed the curriculum, they studied its use with more than 100 participants over a four-year period. The researcher’s results showed positive outcomes for women with disabilities: the young women’s completion of the curriculum enabled them to obtain better vocational placements after graduation than is typical across the nation in general (Lindstrom et al., 2008).

Although certain high school, on-the-job, and community-based learning options might be helpful in easing the school-to-adulthood transition for individuals with disabilities, relevant empirical literature on such arrangements is limited. Some researchers with an interest in school-to-adult transitions have pointed out the need for additional empirical research (Chambers, Hughes, & Carter, 2004; Davies & Beamish, 2009; Eaves & Ho, 2007). One gap in the literature is empirical research on the views that members of different stakeholder groups have about the efficacy of transition planning and programming. The proposed study will help to fill this gap by examining perceptions of the value that educators place on transition planning and programming that Ohio students with mild intellectual disabilities receive. In particular, the study will examine the perceptions of high school teachers regarding the value of transition planning as part of the IEP process and programming for preparing individuals with
intellectual disabilities to achieve important developmental outcomes, in particular independent living and paid employment.

**Legislative History of Transition Planning and Employment Outcomes**

Transition planning for students with disabilities became a priority with the signing of the Education for Handicapped children act of 1975. The law mandated that students receive a free public education and have an individual education plan (IEP). This lead to students receiving the education in their home districts rather than in segregated specialized schools. This practice, called inclusion, has become the most common method for the education of students with intellectual disabilities. Though some schools continue to have a class specifically designed for the delivery of special education, most students are mainstreamed into classrooms with their non-disabled peers. With these mandates came federal funding to assist schools (http://www.thearc.org, 2015). This legislation set the foundation for what is done today in schools and set the table for more laws to be enacted. Renamed the Individuals with disabilities education Act (IDEA) in 1990, the law mandated that all students have a transition plan with a statement of need as part of their IEP no later than age sixteen. Transition services were defined as “a coordinated set of activities for a student, designed with an outcome-oriented process, which promotes movement from school to post-school activities” (§ 602, 30A). Updated again in 2004 as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA), the law called for teachers to meet a higher level of training similar to language from No Child Left Behind (http://www.thearc.org, 2015; http://www.pandasc.org, 2015).
In 1992, the Rehabilitation Act was amended to include the same definition of transition as outlined in IDEA. In 1994, the School to Work Opportunities Act was passed which called for the inclusion of all students in school programs. This legislation was meant to increase access to employment for students with disabilities following graduation. The spirit of the law was for service delivery to be timelier and focused on individual need as outlined during transition. Research regarding outcomes suggested more successes as perceived by rehabilitation counselors (Whitney-Thomas, Timmons, Gilmore, & Thomas, 1999).

Golden et al. (2012) recapped the last forty years of legislation regarding employment for people with disabilities. Their review of policy changes based on the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, and the Ticket to Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999. The legislation focused on increasing opportunities for people with disabilities by expanding the network of service providers that provide vocational rehabilitation, which is assisting in obtaining and keeping employment. With the increase in service providers there has been an increase in the number of people with disabilities having the opportunity to gain employment. However, since 2006, there has been a steady decline in successful outcomes in which individuals gain employment (Golden et al., 2012).

**Theoretical Framework**

According to Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1999), human behavior has an effect on the environment in which one operates. In other words, having a system in place does not automatically produce results since humans play a role in producing the
result. People are motivated in their approach to a challenge based on what they believe
the outcome may be and their ability to affect change of that outcome. The established
success rate of the system in which a person works may have an effect on their
motivation to reach goals (Bandura, 1999).

Bandura (1993) notes that the self-efficacy of teachers is affected by many factors
and stressors when working with students. Without a strong sense of instructional
efficacy, teachers may show less of a commitment to their students. Teachers that have
high self-efficacy tend to spend more time in their classrooms and are more creative
when it comes to developing a learning atmosphere (Bandura, 1993). Without a strong
commitment to student learning in an environment where there are significant challenges,
student achievement may be affected (Bandura, 1993).

Several studies have been completed examining the efficacy of teachers and the
effect it has on their classes. Findings are consistent with Bandura’s theory that teachers
with a higher self-efficacy approach challenges with more confidence and experience
lower levels of burnout. Hartmann (2012) researched teacher efficacy for students who
were deaf and blind. Her findings supported the belief that there is a measurable effect
on the classroom based on the attitude and approach of the teacher.

Hoy and Wolfolk (1993) examined the impact of organizational health on a
personal self-efficacy of teachers as well as the collective efficacy of the schools in the
study. They looked at factors that have an effect on the overall climate of a school to see
if it impacted teacher efficacy. Their findings suggest that these factors shape the way
teachers view their own ability to be effective in their classrooms.
Lim and Kim (2014) researched the effect of character strengths on personal teacher self-efficacy for special education teachers in Korea. They defined these strengths in terms of attitude towards challenges and intrinsic motivation for solving problems and working through difficulties. Their work also suggest that teachers have an impact on their class based on personal self-efficacy and their feelings about how much they are in control of their environment.

Eroglu and Unlu (2015) focused on the attitudes of physical education teachers towards the profession. Their research reflected several studies regarding the belief that there is a direct effect on efficacy based on said attitudes. The level of effectiveness of teachers may be influenced by whether or not they have confidence in the profession as a whole. This research suggests a link to performance that in the end has a result on the classroom.

**Statement of the Problem**

As noted above, a limited amount of literature has focused on the post-graduation outcomes of students with disabilities, especially in relation to their schools’ formal efforts to provide transition planning and programming. The existing research, however, has neither been definitive in establishing a link between effective transition planning and programming and desired outcomes, nor has it evaluated the perceived impact of such planning and programming efforts.

The proposed study will represent a first step in filling the gap by focusing on the perceptions of Ohio’s high school teachers regarding the impact of transition planning and programming on students’ adult adjustment. Specifically, the study will investigate
the perceptions of teachers in public schools whose work involves the implementation of transition plans for students with mild intellectual disabilities. The study will not only provide evidence of these teachers’ views about the effectiveness of transition planning and programming, it will also examine personal efficacy and the efficacy of the process. This examination may offer insights into the effectiveness of transition planning and programming for students with intellectual disabilities.

The study is guided by three research questions:

(1) What is the perspective of high school teachers in Ohio regarding transition planning and programming for students with intellectual disabilities and the effectiveness of this process?

(2) Which transition services do high school teachers in Ohio believe are most beneficial or least effective in promoting success in the classroom?

(3) Does transition planning and the IEP process have an impact on high school teachers’ ability to be effective in the classroom?

**Significance of the Study**

Although the literature about best practices suggests that transition planning and programming are beneficial, that claim is based on very limited evidence from empirical studies. Limited research, for example, shows how young adults make use of transition plans in their efforts to adjust to adulthood. This researcher has not discovered many studies about the impact of transition planning and programming on how individuals with disabilities fare in the competition for employment, in their efforts to pursue postsecondary education, or in their attempts to establish and sustain independent living.
arrangements. It appears that almost no research to date, examines the impact of transition planning and programming on adult performance and adjustment. Studies of transition planning and programming and outcomes associated with those practices, however, would enable educators, educational administrators, and policy makers to understand the benefits of and challenges associated with transition planning and programming. Such understanding might then lead to improvements in policies and practices relating to the secondary school education of students with disabilities.

Along with educators and policy makers, parents and students with disabilities themselves have a stake in how well transition planning and the services provided to address the goals of transition plans work to improve the adjustment of young adults with disabilities. A discussion of the implications for each stakeholder group of possible findings from this proposed study is provided below. It is followed by a brief discussion explaining the events in my work life that make this study significant for me.

**Significance for educators.** Educators will gain insights from this study irrespective of what its findings reveal. If the study shows that a large number of educators believe that transition planning and programming are working well in their current form, for example, then educators and researchers must look for other reasons why so many students with disabilities have serious difficulties with adult adjustment (see e.g., Sanford et al., 2011).

By contrast, if the study documents difficulties with transition planning and programming, such findings might help explain why adult adjustment so often poses challenges for young adults with disabilities. In fact, teachers’ perceptions about the
effectiveness of particular practices relating to transition planning and programming may reveal problems with the types of preparation that schools are typically offering to secondary school students with disabilities. Furthermore, the study will enable educators to learn if current approaches to transition planning and programming appear to be working, which would suggest there are other areas that need addressed to promote better outcomes.

In addition to providing a gauge of the degree to which transition planning and programming are working overall, the study will provide information about the features of this practice that are working more effectively than other features. This information will provide a guide to educators’ decision-making about which practices should be retained and which might need to change. For instance, findings might suggest, from the perspective of educators, that life-skill instruction is sufficient for preparing young adults with disabilities to live independently. They might show the need for greater focus on social interaction, community engagement, or other life skills.

**Significance for policymakers.** Although educators play an important role in providing transition services, they are not typically in a position to compel needed changes in policy or practice. Policy makers at local and state levels (e.g., school board members, legislators, governors) are better able to use policies, regulations, and laws to require changes. This is part of the focus of the legislation adopted in IDEIA (IDEIA, 2004).

The proposed study will produce findings that can help policy makers determine whether or not changes in transition services are needed and, if so, what kinds of changes
might be beneficial. For example, if the study suggests that transition planning and programming are not working well for individuals with intellectual disabilities, policy makers might want to support additional research to determine why these services are not working well. Findings from such studies might also point to policy changes that would be likely to improve the outcomes of transition planning and programming. By contrast, if the proposed study shows that, at least from the vantage of teachers, transition services are effective, then policy makers might want to investigate the practices of employers that are limiting access to jobs for young adults with disabilities.

**Significance for parents and students.** For parents of students with disabilities and the students themselves, this study may offer information that will be useful in advocating for effective services. As legal guardians for their children, parents play multiple roles in the transition planning and service delivery process. Not only do they provide instruction to their children in the home, they also assist school personnel in formulating and in some cases implementing the school’s transition plans for their children. Having knowledge of the extent to which teachers believe such plans and related programming are effective can help parents and students put the process into perspective. Such perspective can guide their future advocacy efforts.

For example, if the study suggests that transition planning and programming are not working as well as they might, parents and their children can advocate for improvements in the nature and intensiveness of services. If the study instead shows that this process tends to be effective, then families may need to seek other ways to prepare young adults with disabilities for independence. Perhaps they may even need to alter
their expectations about what independence entails. Notably, patterns of adult
development may be changing for many individuals, not just those with disabilities.
Some research, in fact, provides evidence of this change (Sage & Johnson, 2012). More
young adults now, for example, seem to be living with their parents while they complete
postsecondary education and/or get settled into careers (Furstenberg, 2010). Moreover,
young adults who live with their parents tend to start many aspects of adult life (i.e.
careers, marriage, having their own families) later than others in their same age cohort
(Sage & Johnson, 2012). These social changes suggest that traditional demarcations of
adulthood may have become delayed or blurred (Settersten & Ray, 2010). How these
new markers of adulthood will impact individuals with disabilities is not yet known?

**Personal significance.** As a professional who works with adults with disabilities,
this study has personal significance for me. In my career I have worked in varied settings
that serve adults with disabilities. I started in 1996 as a job coach in Rhode Island,
working one-on-one with people to teach them skills needed for specific jobs. I also
provided direct care for four individuals in a small waiver home, often referred to as a
supported living facility. In this role, I taught skills of daily living to help promote the
independence of the home’s residents.

When I returned to Ohio in 1998, I began to work in various capacities as a home
manager and a case manager in group homes and sheltered work settings. In 2007, I
accepted a job with the state of Ohio to complete surveys of providers who work with
adults with disabilities. In 2009, I became the Program Director at the Columbus
Developmental Center, a state-sponsored facility providing residential services to adults with disabilities. In 2014, I became the Superintendent at the center.

Throughout my career I have wondered why individuals with disabilities end up in different places with respect to home life and employment. Some do become independent—finding and keeping jobs and living on their own. Others remain dependent on parents or other caregivers. What conditions make one outcome more likely than the other? How has their schooling experience contributed to their adult adjustment?

In my own experience, I found high school contributed only a limited amount to the sorts of skills I needed in adult life. I needed experiences beyond high school to enable me to function independently. For individuals with disabilities, whose adjustment is likely to be even more challenging than mine, what kinds of experiences are truly supportive of independence? How close to or distant from this ideal are the actual transition services that individuals with disabilities typically receive? These are the questions that have sparked my interest in the topic of transition planning for students with disabilities.

**Definition of Terms**

Below are definitions of terms that are pertinent to the proposed study. These definitions are conceptual—providing background information for the reader of the study. In chapter three, I provide operational definitions of the dependent and independent variables included in the study.
Adult with Disabilities: an adult with a disability is “a person eighteen years or older with intellectual or a developmental disability” (Ohio Revised Code, Chapter 5126.30)

Adults with intellectual disabilities: any individual above the age of eighteen who has an intellectual disability. Some individuals with intellectual disabilities also have physical disabilities. In Ohio a student with a disability can remain in school until the age of twenty-two, however, such students are still considered to be adults once they reach the age of eighteen (Ohio Revised Code, Chapter 5126.30).

Individual education program (IEP): a plan developed by a team of professionals, a student’s parents, and the student him or herself to identify learning objectives and educational services positioned address the student’s educational and life goals. The plan specifies the level of support the student requires and identifies the personnel who will provide the services and support required in order to meet the student’s needs (IDEIA, 2004).

Intellectual disability: The Ohio revised code, “significantly sub-average general intellectual functioning existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior, and manifested during the developmental period” (Code of Federal Regulations, title 34, chapter 3, subpart A, page 13; Ohio Revised Code, chapter 5123.01).

Group Home: A congregate living arrangement for adults with disabilities. This is a general term often used to describe such settings (Chambers et al., 2004).
**Sheltered Workshop:** A work setting in which people with disabilities are segregated from the general public and have only paid staff as the non-disabled employees at the setting (Rusch & Braddock, 2004).

**Students with disabilities:** For the purpose of this study, students with disabilities as those with Intellectual Disabilities (i.e. Mild or Moderate Mental Retardation) who are receiving special education services under an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). The term “child with a disability” means a child: “with mental retardation, hearing impairments (including deafness), speech or language impairments, visual impairments (including blindness), serious emotional disturbance, orthopedic impairments, autism, traumatic brain injury, other health impairments, or specific learning disabilities; and who, by reason thereof, needs special education and related services” (IDEIA, 2004, p. 6).

**Team Process:** This term refers to the planning completed by an interdisciplinary team. Individual plans are developed by a group of people that includes, at a minimum, the individual student, his or her parent or guardian, and professionals with knowledge of the students’ levels of performance and educational needs. Other professionals, such as speech therapists, occupational therapists, psychologists, counselors, and physical therapists are included on teams as needed (Wehman, 2011).

**Transition Planning:** the discussions, typically taking place during the IEP-development process, to identify strategies for helping secondary school students
learn the skills required for independent functioning as adults. The definition of transition planning as specified in IDEA was:

(A) a coordinated set of activities for a student with a disability that –is designed within an outcome-oriented process … which promotes movement from school to post-school activities including post-secondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation;

(B) is based upon the individual student's needs…taking into account the student's 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 (IDEIA, 2004).

Summary

This chapter provided a rationale for conducting a study of high school teachers’ perspectives on the efficacy of transition planning and programming for students with mild intellectual disabilities. In addition, the chapter reviewed the limited empirical evidence on the outcomes of these services. Discussion pointed to the fact that few studies have explored perspectives on the efficacy of transition planning and programming.

A presentation of three questions that guided the research was also included. It considered the significance of answering these research questions for educational
practitioners and policy makers as well as for students and their families. This section of
the chapter concluded with a discussion of why the research questions are salient for me
as a professional and dissertation researcher. At the conclusion of the chapter are
relevant conceptual definitions. Operational definitions of dependent and independent
variables appear in chapter three of the dissertation.

Chapter two reviews literature on transition planning from many perspectives. The research discussed in this chapter presents a sample of the ongoing examination of
transition planning. There are many points of view that were explored. The literature
review also highlighted the lack of perspective from high school teachers. This paper
examined the perspective of high school teachers as their role in the process is vital.
Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to review relevant literature on the practice of transition planning and the provision of transition services. As noted in chapter one, transition planning is part of the IEP-development process in which a secondary student’s educational planning team identifies strategies for helping him or her learn the skills required for independent functioning as an adult. Transition services are the instructional programs and related activities provided by schools in accordance with each individual student’s transition IEP.

The chapter starts with a review of literature that provides the historical review of transition planning and services. This literature talks about early efforts to promote effective school-to-adulthood transitions and more recent efforts, following the passage of first PL94-142 and then its reauthorization as IDEA and IDEIA. This literature also provides insights into the extent to which transition planning and services were effective during each successive time period.

Next, the chapter explores Prescriptive literature about what transition planning and services ought to entail. This is the literature to which practitioners often turn when they are seeking advice about “best practices.”

Finally, the chapter examines the Empirical literature on the current status of transition planning and services. The studies in this section focus on the effectiveness of specific strategies for transition planning and service delivery. Although the Literature on transition outcomes is small, it is reviewed in this section as well.
The History of Transition Planning

Transition planning is the school practice of developing and implementing explicit plans for instructional and related services that are designed to prepare students with disabilities for adult life. The practice of engaging in explicit transition planning has roots in the 1980s. At that time, advocates and policy makers were responding to what had been learned about the adult experiences of individuals with disabilities. Several studies that had been completed in the late 1970s and early 1980s regarding post-school outcomes for students with disabilities (Hasazi, Gordon & Roe, 1985; Mithaug, Horiuchi & Fanning, 1985; Will, 1984) revealed a discouraging picture. Notably, despite a range of improvements in the services provided to individuals with disabilities, their post-school adjustment was still problematic. For example, many individuals with disabilities were still not able to obtain competitive employment or live independently (Hasazi et al., 1985; Mithaug et al., 1985).

Will (1984) wrote an article based on her address to the Conference for Exceptional Children that described the state of special education up to that point. As the Assistant Secretary for the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services for the U.S. Department of Education, she was an important spokesperson with relevant expertise. Her address and article noted many positive accomplishments, such as the routine use of the IEP as a planning document and the team processes used for special education referral, evaluation, and instructional planning. She also praised advances in the use of technology and specialized behavior strategies to help individuals perform better in school. Nevertheless, she reported several concerns. One of her major concerns
had to do with service delivery systems that failed to work in concert to help individuals with disabilities once they left school. She noted, for example, that many students with disabilities were not ready for the workplace despite the fact that they had received special education services in high school. She proposed the Bridges to Transition model, which emphasized preparing special education students for work after exiting from school.

As noted above, criticism of services to help young adults with disabilities transition to independent living and meaningful work came in response to several studies of the adult adjustment of individuals with disabilities. Notable among those studies was one conducted by Hasazi et al. (1985). This study used quantitative methods to examine the experiences of 462 adults with disabilities who had graduated between 1979 and 1983 from nine school districts in Vermont. The goal of the study was to see if the graduates were employed and what factors led to their gaining employment. These researchers found that about half of the sample had gained employment and that the type of education and work experiences they had received while in high school seemed to affect this outcome. Students who had received vocational training or studied in resource rooms that focused on preparing them for employment had higher rates of employment than others. Students who had participated in paid work during summer breaks also fared better in terms of post-graduation employment rates than their counterparts who had not had such work experience.

The researchers also saw other factors that seemed to be significant, such as gender and high school completion. In particular, males were more likely to be employed
than females, and high school graduates were more likely to be employed than dropouts. As the authors pointed out, however, the study was limited because it dealt with residents of Vermont only—a rural state with an occupational structure and cultural characteristics that differ from those found in other states.

Mithaug et al. (1985) completed a qualitative study to follow up in Colorado with 234 students who had graduated from special education programs in 1978. They completed interviews to gauge the extent to which graduates felt prepared for adult life after finishing high school. The survey instrument consisted of five parts that gleaned information regarding the students’ economic status and employment experiences after leaving school. Respondents who had received vocational training or special education services in resource rooms reported that they felt more prepared for adult life than did others. Nearly two-thirds of the former group reported being employed. Though that number seemed encouraging on the surface, the researchers were disturbed to find that most respondents reported working at minimum or sub-minimum wage jobs or working part-time for just a few hours each week. In terms of adjustment to independent life, most respondents reported living with their parents and having few outside social contacts. Although the study’s sample was small and focused on young adults in Colorado only, the researchers worried that their findings might be similar to circumstances nation-wide. The implications suggested that further research in this area would be beneficial.

An additional study by Halpern (1985), focused on broadening transition services to encompass living in settings that are not segregated from the general population. This
living arrangement is often referred to as “living in the community”. Halpern’s belief was that community living was as important as preparation for work and needed to be developed during the transition process. For this reason, he conducted a survey of adults living in residential settings. The participants were individuals from Colorado, Washington, Oregon and California who were receiving some level of paid support to live outside of their family homes. Halpern used responses from the survey to see what factors played a significant role in the adult adjustment of individuals who were living in these residential facilities.

Based on his analysis of data from this study, Halpern found that an adult with disabilities success in one dimension of adjustment (independent living, social adjustment, or employment) was independent of their success in other dimensions. In other words, some adults were successful in one dimension but unsuccessful in other dimensions or successful in two dimensions but unsuccessful in the third. With this finding in mind, Halpern concluded that transition planning needed to include specific steps to help each individual achieve independence in each dimension of adult adjustment. The main recommendation from the study was the development of state policy focusing on four dimensions: The general curriculum, vocational education opportunities, programming for transition and the characteristics of secondary special education teachers.

Findings from these studies and other related studies led advocates to identify transition planning for students with disabilities as a priority. This led to the development of approaches that they hoped would gain greater prominence nationally.
Responding to the concerns of advocates, the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) began to encourage changes at the federal level. In 1989 OSERS funded the first National Longitudinal Transition Study, which focused on outcomes of high school graduates who had received special education services during their secondary schooling. Wagner et al. (1991) surveyed over 8,000 respondents and family members to produce a comprehensive report for OSERS. This study showed that, on average, individuals who reported having mild intellectual disabilities were employed at a lower rate than their non-disabled peers. Also, respondents with disabilities noted that they spent less time socializing with non-family members than did their non-disabled peers. Findings from this study as well as research with a similar focus in specific states led policy makers to require transition planning as a new provision of the 1990 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Under IDEA all students with an identified need were required to receive transition services once they reached the age of 16 (Mazzotti, 2009). Please refer to the definition of transition planning from IDEA in Chapter 1. In 1991, soon after IDEA had been authorized, OSERS began funding Systems Change grants to individual states to help them develop School to Work programs. This model called for cooperation between state education departments and the state-level departments or offices that were in charge of vocational rehabilitation services. The funding allowed for states to meet the requirements outlined in IDEA, but did not mandate how each state would accomplish this task. This method left it up to each state to determine how to spend the money it received from its grant. As long as the requirements outlined in IDEA for transition
planning and other education services were met, the federal government was satisfied. This approach meant that programs from state to state did not look alike. Whereas some used the money to support efforts at the local level, others established state level programs.

During this same time period, research on transition planning continued to examine adult adjustment in terms of its various dimensions—focusing on the person as a whole and not privileging one dimension of adjustment over other dimensions. Sitlington et al. (1992), for example, looked not only at employment status, but also focused on marital status and living arrangements of 878 individuals graduating with IEPs from Iowa high schools. The graduates who participated in the study had been classified in the following three categories of disability: Learning Disability, Behavior Disorders, and Mild Mental Retardation. The researchers conducted interviews to determine the percentage of students who met their criteria for successful transition. Three criteria were most important: employment, independent living outside of the family home, and participation in at least three leisure activities a month. Using these criteria, the researchers found a very low success rate for the graduates. With less stringent criteria (employment, living with a friend or family member, and participating in one leisure activity per month), the researchers found that “success” increased dramatically.

The research completed during the early years of transition planning helped to shape how the process works today. This research exposed a problem of national scope and significance because study after study showed the same patterns—inadequate transitions across the domains of adult adjustment—regardless of the setting. With this
information in hand, advocates were well prepared to push for legislation aimed at improving the system. At the same time, they also called for continuing research—and both efforts—the effort better to understand transition and the effort to improve it—are still underway.

**Prescriptions about Transition Planning**

Some articles and books provide guides to what their authors believe are effective approaches to transition planning. For example, some of the researched authors talk about how to create transition IEPs for students with disabilities. Other theorists talk about how to involve parents and students in the IEP meetings at which transition plans are negotiated. These prescriptive works will be examined in the following section.

**Effective transition IEPs: The process.** Among the educators who offered prescriptions about effective transition IEPs, Wehmeyer and Webb (2011) focused on the process from beginning to end, providing a comprehensive approach that can be used by educators in most states. Their recommendations are based on evidence from the research literature.

According to Wehmeyer and Webb (2011), the IEP should be developed primarily to help students meet their goals, not just to comply with the requirements of the IDEIA legislation. For this reason, the authors stress the need to use the students’ interests, desires, and needs as the foundation for the planning process. Although Wehmeyer and Webb claim that planning frameworks can help teams strategize, they also explain that no one plan will work for all. Not only will transition plans look different for each student, so too will the composition of his or her team. These authors
explain the many factors that may play significant roles in ensuring the success of the transition planning process.

Wehman (2011) also describes the process of transition planning in order to talk about how to accomplish it effectively. Based on relevant research, his recommendations are meant to serve as a guide to educators as they begin to oversee the process of transition planning for their students. The author covers topics such as writing IEP goals for transitioning to competitive employment and helping students plan for independent living. Calling his approach “person centered planning,” Wehman describes practices that focus primarily on students’ assets and downplay their limitations. He outlines the role of each team member and provides worksheets to help professionals ensure that transition plans are developed according to his method. He also discusses some evidence-based practices for developing relevant transition curricula and for finding community resources.

Effective assessment for transition planning. Clark (2007) provides guidance to help educators use and interpret assessments that would be helpful for successful transition planning. He recommends that educators consider various assessment domains based on the needs of individual students: These domains include socialization, emotional development, interests, preferences, skills of daily living, and interdependent living skills. According to Clark, collecting assessment data pertinent to these domains can help the IEP team determine where assistance would be most helpful. For each domain of need, the author recommends useful methods of assessment and questionnaires. He provides a list of commercially available assessments and describes the areas of need they are meant
to assess. Overall, he emphasizes the importance of assessing students’ needs in systematic and efficient ways to ensure that appropriate supports are provided—supports capable of helping students maximize success and transition to adulthood.

Sitlington and Payne (2004) expand on this notion by suggesting the use by higher education institutions of the assessment data collected during the transition process. Much of the data collected regarding the person during the IEP process is needed again by higher education facilities to establish reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. However, the standards established in IDEA for what is collected and when meant that much of this data would not be current enough when applying for post-secondary education. As students transition from high school to post-secondary education, this information would need to be updated. With this in mind the authors recommended using existing assessment techniques to provide information specifically regarding disability to post-secondary institutions as part of the transition.

**Helping family and other team members to be effective.** Much of the literature regarding successful transition planning focuses on the roles that parents and family play in the team process. These studies suggest that successful transitions may be the product of more involvement by families. With this in mind, some researchers have provided strategies that family member can implement to become more active team members. The following section will explore those strategies.

Theorists such as Hess and Gutierrez (2009) talk about assistive technology and how to use it as an approach to aid individuals and families in developing plans. Their manual for families helps them better understand how to access services or relevant
documents via the computer. The goal of their guide is to educate parents on what is available and help them to make good decisions during the transition process. The authors spend some time discussing the history of and legislation governing transition planning; then they focus on practical suggestions for how parents can help educational personnel make their child’s transition successful.

Based on a survey of students, parents, and education professionals, Kellems and Morningstar (2010) provide a collection of tips for promoting better outcomes through transition planning. The idea for the collection came from the authors’ review of literature from the past 20 years that examined various “best practices” for transition. The survey helped the authors gather a comprehensive list of approaches that might be useful to teams during the transition planning process. The research categorizes the tips by topic: (1) student and family involvement, (2) transition assessment, (3) involving other agencies, (4) using assistive technology, and (5) specific tips for students with particular disabilities.

Some advocates of transition planning claim that the process can be accomplished successfully through the IEP process especially when families participate (Rowe & Test, 2010). From their perspective, the process works most effectively when students, their parents, and other family members along with a team of interested educators play an active role in the planning process (see also Chambers et al., 2004; Espiner & Guild, 2011). The participation of family members, on this view, enables the team to learn about the young adult’s interests, capabilities, and motivations and make plans accordingly.
Some researchers, however, offer an opposing perspective, claiming that family participation can actually interfere with the process of transition planning. From their point of view, transition planning provides an important way to help individuals with disabilities increase their self-determination—a mindset that contributes to success in adult life (Shogren, 2011; Wehmeyer et al., 2011). These writers claim that when IEP teams focus on the input of family members rather than primarily on the input of the individual him or herself, they actually interfere with the young adult’s feelings of self-determination and ultimately his or her motivation to succeed (Thoma et al., 2002). According to this view, educators would need to make intentional decisions about team composition and processes in order to keep them from depriving the young adult of the ability to make judgments about his or her own future (Thoma et al., 2002). Garay (2003) provided an example of this type of explicit preparation in her discussion of gathering input from deaf students as well as their family members in order to increase the success of the transition planning process.

Overall, the guides to practice offer several recommendations in common. First, they stress the value of relevant assessments. Such assessments enable transition teams to have accurate understanding regarding each student’s skills and needs. Second, they emphasize the value of the planning process. Third, authors of these guidebooks focus on how to establish the transition team, the role of team members, and how teams can function effectively to develop useful transition plans. Perhaps the overarching theme that pervades these works relates to the belief that because each individual is different and has different needs, there is no one-way to plan for success. Transition planning,
therefore, involves thorough assessment; careful consideration of the individual’s skills, needs, and options; and flexibility.

**Current Status of Transition Planning and Services**

Though some research suggests that progress has been made in preparing students with disabilities for employment after high school (Frank & Sitlington, 2000), other research suggests the number of people entering sheltered employment is outpacing community work placements (Rusch & Braddock, 2004). Employing adults with disabilities in sheltered employment for sub-minimum wage has been a standard practice for several decades (Rusch & Braddock, 2004). These workplaces (often called “sheltered workshops”) provide a controlled work environment and a steady supply of low-skill tasks tied to piecework obtained through contracts with companies that find such outsourcing cost-effective (Rusch & Braddock, 2004). The authors completed a study of states and the funding that is used to provide sheltered settings and adult day programs compared to the amount used for community employment programs. Their research suggested that though the push for decades has been to have more people involved in community employment, the results were not as promising as you would think. There had been growth in the area of community employment that was significant, but the amount in sheltered workshops remained constant and enrollment in adult day programs grew significantly.

According to recent research, adults with disabilities are struggling once they leave school. Evidence of their difficulties is presented in a 2011 longitudinal study conducted by the U.S. Department of Education (Sanford et al., 2011). The study
investigated the adjustment of students with disabilities six years after their last date of high school attendance. Sanford et al. (2011) spent ten years making contact and interviewing individuals for their descriptive study. They interviewed graduates with disabilities, parents of graduates with disabilities, graduates without disabilities, and parents of graduates without disabilities. The study was based on data collected through multiple surveys and telephone interviews with these participants. The study was very large in scope and the researchers interviewed thousands of participants in multiple subgroups based on the length of time they had been out of school. They also interviewed many parents of individuals regarding capacity for independent living.

Findings from the study echoed much of what had been seen in earlier literature regarding outcome for individuals with disabilities. It showed a significant difference in the number of individuals with disabilities attending and completing post-secondary schooling and employment as compared to their non-disabled peers (Sanford et al., 2011). Even for those who are employed, the median wage is much lower for individuals with disabilities than for students who do not have disabilities (Sanford et al., 2011). Also, the number of full time employees is lower. The lower median wage and less hours available make it much more challenging for individuals to afford housing. This is reflected as the data also showed that people with disabilities are less likely to live on their own than those without disabilities (Sanford et al., 2011).

In the 2013-2014 National Core Indicators study, Ohio respondents provided data reflecting much of what had been shown through national studies when it comes to employment and independent living. The purpose of the report is to allow states the
opportunity to see how they fare against other participating states to gage services for individuals with disabilities. Participants are selected through the National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services (NASDDDS), with each state having a representative to collect data. The respondents include individuals receiving services through waivers, ICF-IIDs, or through county boards of developmental disabilities. The data collected has covers several areas of daily living, including but not limited to: participating in activities such as shopping and going out to eat, using tobacco products and receiving ongoing and needed emergency medical care. Also researched are topics regarding the protection of basic rights such as the ability to have privacy and to own things, and the capacity to live independently. The report also explores different levels of employment from sheltered settings to community employment. Besides collecting raw data reflecting the numbers of people receiving services in various settings, the researchers also look at satisfaction with services. As far as the data collected regarding community employment, respondents report having struggles in these areas at levels higher than the national average reported in the longitudinal study conducted by the Department of Education. Ohio residents report that they are working in the community at a lower rate than the national average, but do receive slightly higher wages on average (HSRI, 2015). The researchers also report that individuals with disabilities in Ohio are living on their own at a lower level than the national average (HSRI, 2015).

Doren, Gau and Lindstrom (2012) completed a quantitative study to examine the correlation between parent expectations and outcomes for students with disabilities. The
aim of the study was to expand upon the social cognitive and expectancy-value theory which examines the impact of parent expectations on their child’s autonomy which then impacts the child’s development and future successes. They acquired a restricted-use license and human subjects’ approval to examine data regarding 13 to 17 year-old respondents from the National Longitudinal Transition Study 2 (NLTS2). They used the data collected regarding he students and the responses of their parents to see if there was a correlation between the types of response given and outcomes for students. The authors’ belief was that there is a similar impact for students with learning and intellectual disabilities. Their findings suggest that though parent expectations have a significant positive impact on students with learning disabilities, this is not the case for students with intellectual disabilities for traditional benchmarks such as graduating with a diploma. The authors suggest this may be due to parent expectations that there are more important things for their child to accomplish, or possibly there are other influences from supports. Though they could not establish a correlation, this research is important for exploring transition planning as parents are significant member of planning teams.

Further research in this area would be beneficial.

Chambers et al. (2004) researched parents and siblings regarding involvement in the transition planning process. This qualitative study included eight parents and eight siblings of students with disabilities and their involvement in the process. The selected participants were questioned to see how parents and siblings differ when it comes to what they think is important regarding post-secondary outcomes for their family members with severe cognitive disabilities. The participants were chosen based on enrollment of their
family member in a large rural district. Both groups reported uneasiness with the process due to lack of knowledge as to how it works, thus making them less likely to play an active role in planning. According to their results parents reported that they would like to have more involvement in the transition process. Though both parents and siblings reported that post school employment and living arrangement were important for their loved one, they each predicted that their family member would live with the parents and work at a segregated sheltered workshop. Parents report that their eventual hope is that their child resides in a group home setting, whereas siblings said they expect them to live with them in their home. This study is important because family members are stakeholders in this process and may play an active role in the individual’s life for many years. That being said, the sample size in this group is very small and from similar backgrounds. This would need to be replicated on a larger scale across more environments to show whether or not this information will transfer. More research is needed in this area to understand the perceptions of family members regarding their role in this process.

Espiner and Guild (2011) completed a case study in New Zealand regarding student centered planning for the transition process. They used a model in which the student was the center of all meetings and documents and the family and professional formed a circle of support. This was illustrated in the process with actual circles drawn on documents. The participants reported having a strong team and feeling extensively involved in the process. The researchers’ claim this can be replicated for any student in this process. Though the feedback from participants was good, the sample of one
planning team was too small to say this would be good for all students. It may be a good way to build teams and to steer the meeting process, but there is no evidence that it results in better outcomes.

Shogren (2011) completed a literature synthesis study regarding self-determination and cultural influences. Her study involved ten articles that looked for a correlation between self-determination and cultural influences. Her findings were that cultural influences do have an impact on how self-determination is implemented during the transition process. The main differences come from whether or not the culture stresses family before the individual. The study showed that in some cultures this does occur, but in others they embrace the process as it was developed in the United States. This study is important because it shows how different cultural values can affect a person with disabilities on an individual level. The problem with this research is it is based on a very small sample of literature. It is a good topic and should be the catalyst for future research.

**The impact of training.** Lindstrom et al. (2011) set out to see what kind of training is most helpful for individuals with disabilities to acquire and maintain employment. They completed a case-study analysis of individuals that participated in an earlier study on factors leading to employment. Their criteria for selection included being employed, having had post-school employment training and having finished school between 1996 and 2001. They used qualitative methods of interviewing to gather their information from the sample of eight. They also interviewed many key members of the participants planning teams, such as parents, transition planners and teachers. There were
specific factors that were noted as keys to success in the initial years after school ended included employment during school, transition services and family involvement. For individuals to maintain employment beyond those years and earn wages that would meet living wage, factors including post-secondary training, stability of employment, and personal attributes were noted as important. This study provides some good information for career planning and underscores the importance of transition planning. The authors point out the limitations as the sample is small and employed at a level that does not necessarily reflect the general population of people with disabilities. More research in this area is needed.

**Empirical Research on Transition Outcomes**

Despite various claims about transition planning and the strategies used to help young adults with disabilities make the transition from school to adult life, only a few studies have investigated either the process or its outcomes. The discussion above reviewed studies relating to the transition planning process, and the current discussion now turns to the studies relating to the outcomes of transition planning. Most of these studies do not use direct methods to examine the impact of transition planning; instead they provide descriptions of what life is like for young adults with disabilities after they have left school. In a way such studies do speak to the value of transition planning and transition programs, but the connection is inferential.

These descriptive studies include some that focus on describing how well students with disabilities fare in the workplace as well as some that focus on describing how well these students adapt to various living arrangements. As noted above, however, the
 descriptive nature of these post-graduation studies has quite limited bearing on determinations about the effectiveness of transition planning.

Once goals are established the process by which they are achieved becomes critical. This seems to depend on the focus of the IEP planning. For some it is important to focus on post-secondary education (Dukes & Shaw, 2004), while others emphasize employment (Harvey, 2001; Lindstrom et al., 2008). The research available is more extensive when it comes to discussing the planning process and outcomes. Where it is lacking is in getting the perspective of the students in how the process helped them to achieve personal goals.

Research completed shortly after the enactment of IDEA suggested new ways to look at transition planning. It had become more common for researchers to look at other factors than just employment (i.e. living arrangement, social interactions) when determining if an outcome was successful. By taking a more holistic approach researchers changed the perception of what constituted a successful outcome. Research that expanded definitions of adjustment led to a new construct for interpreting adult “success”—quality of life. Attentive to the “quality of life” construct, Halpern (1993) conducted a literature review to identify how others had interpreted “quality of life” in relationship to transition planning and outcomes through the construct of overall quality of life. Using four definitions from researchers to determine how to categorize quality of life, Halpern developed a set of recommendations for incorporating quality of life into transition planning and ultimately improving outcomes for individuals. His assertion was
that the research that was being done was really already concerning quality of life, it just wasn’t focused on it as the main principle.

Rowe and Test (2010) suggested that effectiveness can be increased if parents receive training regarding transition options prior to their participation in the IEP and transition planning process. Their research focused on four families in which a computer based instructional program was use with the parents to see if it increased their knowledge of post-secondary options for their child. They completed baseline testing to see what the parents new regarding transition planning. Then they used a power-point program to show the parents information regarding the process. Their results show increased knowledge for all four groups. The strength of this article is the researchers’ ability to show that the information they provided the parents actually benefited them and taught them more about transitioning. Unfortunately, even though the study shows that parents increased their knowledge of the process it does not delve into whether or not they used the newly acquired knowledge in a team setting. This is an area where further research is needed.

Lindstrom, Doren and Miesch (2011) completed a case study examining outcomes for students with disabilities seven to ten years after their graduation from high school. The goal was to see what respondents listed as the most important factor in helping them in attaining employment. The sample was made up of eight individuals who participated in a school to work transition program for at least one year. The researchers looked at many other factors in the study that may have contributed to the individuals reaching their current level of employment success. The sample came from a
larger group that participated in a previous study. They selected the sample based on total annual income of the participants. Their methods included multiple interviews and also interviews with other individuals that had an impact in the participants’ lives during the process. These interviews included family members and professionals that were involved in the individual participants’ planning team. The information gathered was used to see if multiple people reported similar information. The results showed that there were multiple reasons reported as to how the participants gained and secured employment, but specifically pointed to work experience and transition services as important factors. This study offers some very good information as it shows different influences that may help an individual with a disability gain employment. Unfortunately, the study only deals with individuals that have had success in attaining and maintaining employment. This makes it difficult to really examine the impact of certain factors such as transition planning because the data suggests that there are many more people with disabilities that do not reach this level of success.

Landmark, Roberts and Zhang (2013) completed a study with elements of quantitative and qualitative research. In expanding upon a quantitative study they completed in 2012, the researchers asked educators for their insight on parent involvement and barriers to wit from two local education agencies from areas with differing socio-economic statuses. The areas were called “uptown” and “downtown”, as uptown was an area where there was higher income. Since parent involvement is believed to be an important factor in successful transitioning, it is then important to understand what educators believe to be barriers for promoting more involvement. They
listed culture as a barrier for parent involvement from the local education agency in a lower socio-economic area. In that area there appeared to be a perception that education was not needed to prepare students for a life of physical labor, so parents did not get involved as much as in uptown. Both areas listed lack of time as a barrier. Another barrier was a belief that this is the role of the agency and that they should "do their job". Many of the educators believed it was important for successful transition to have parent involvement, however, there was a belief it was not their responsibility to involve them. They felt this rested with the transition specialist and should have started before they got to the high school level. Educators from the different areas had differing views on parental responsibility in the process, whereas educators from uptown believed it was their responsibility to involve parents, three of the downtown educators said it was the parent’s role. This study is important because it examines educators’ beliefs regarding barriers and their role in an important part of the transition process. How educators see themselves when it comes to the various components in transition planning may play a role in how the process evolves. More research in this area would be beneficial.

Dukes and Shaw (2004) focused their research on the effectiveness of transition planning for students with disabilities that move on to higher education. Transition planning has made for progress in this area, however many barriers still exist (Dukes & Shaw, 2004). The barriers that they are discussing are due to a lack of skills for working with this population in post-secondary settings. The researchers sent out surveys to eight hundred administrators of post-secondary schools and received over five hundred responses. Though the data clearly shows more students with disabilities enrolling in
post-secondary schools, there has not been an increase in the amount of staff
development for educators in these settings. Thus they conclude there is a lack of
preparation on the part of the institutions to serve these individuals. They suggest the
need for further training to meet these needs. This research is very important for
individuals with disabilities and needs to be expanded upon.

Garrison-Wade (2012) completed a qualitative study to examine services received
that students with disabilities report as either a help or hindrance to success in post-
secondary settings. Through interviews, three themes emerged as having the biggest
impact on success for students from the time they decide to pursue higher education. The
first was self-determination. The respondents noted that this could be enhanced by
having high expectations for individuals and encouraging them to do more for
themselves. The second was proper planning in the transition phase during high school.
Students reported that this was critical to prepare them for the challenges of college. The
third was ongoing support at the post-secondary setting. Having supports available if
needed and sought out would be beneficial. The findings in this study are in line with
many of the other studies regarding successful transitions. The data is meaningful
because the respondents are the people that are receiving the services. More research in
this area would be beneficial.

A few descriptive studies have examined the extent and effectiveness of
independent living among individuals with disabilities (Luftig & Muthert, 2005). Luftig
and Muthert (2005) conducted longitudinal research on a group of individuals that
attended a vocationally oriented program. The goal of the study was to see if program
participants had higher rates on employment whether they had a learning disability or mild mental retardation and how that compared to national data. The study also looked at the participants living arrangements as compared to national data. These researchers developed a questionnaire to gather information regarding the individuals’ work as well as their capacity for independent living. The researchers found that although these young adults had a higher than average success rate in finding employment, most still lived with their parents. As the researchers point out themselves it is difficult to make any generalizations based on such a limited study. This area needs to be researched more.

O’Reilly et al. (2000) studied the social interactions of four adults with disabilities. These interactions actually took place in a local bar. The researchers found that the individuals with disabilities eventually made regular friends, but an intervention was needed by support personnel to help them to complete their order and become acquainted with other patrons of the establishment. According to the researchers, these individuals would not have had the social skills necessary to make friends without such an intervention. Through observation and interviews they concluded that the intervention helped the participants to increase their social skills. A follow up visit showed the participants were still able to order on their own and interact with other patrons without staff intervention.

**The impact of context.** In gaining a better understanding of the challenges faced when developing successful transition services, you must consider the very real problem that all schools are not created equal. There are many different factors that will have an impact on whether or not such planning is successful. Though there are mandate in place
for transition planning, there is not an equal amount of funding available for school district. So the resources allocated to the special education department from school to school may be different and will have an impact on services available as well as the people that deliver them. Also, whenever there are socio-economic issues affecting the school, the surrounding community is also going to be affected. So transition planning and outcomes may be affected. The research in this area reflects these concerns.

When examining transition planning and adult adjustment it is important to remember that the environment presents challenges that you may not see in other settings. Applequist (2009) focused on the involvement of parents from rural settings. There were 32 participants in the study, 30 were parents and 2 were grandparents that served as the primary caregivers for the children from rural and urban settings. The study was qualitative in nature and focused on asking open-ended questions in a semi-structured format to gather depth and also determine patterns of responses. The interview consisted of 24 questions that elicited responses regarding their child’s experiences with school services ranging from early intervention through graduation. They were asked whether or not they were asked to participate in the educational process and what recommendations did they have for changes. They were also asked what they liked about the services and what they did not like. Her research suggests that parents from urban and rural settings may have limitations of their own that they must deal with while trying to understand the schooling process for their children. This in combination with other factors such as socio-economic issues and a lack of public transportation provide additional barriers for students and their families to overcome. The study also suggests
that it is difficult to draw qualified teachers to these areas due to the lack of funding in rural schools to compete in terms of salary and benefits (Applequist, 2009).

Sheehey and Black (2003) completed an article synthesis concerning outcomes for individuals with mild or moderate disabilities in rural areas following transition planning. The articles chosen were published between 1990 and 1998 and focused primarily on employment. This coincided with the passage IDEA in 1990, so the goal of the article is to see if there are trends in this area. It is based on five empirical studies from that time frame. The articles chosen showed higher than average employment rates for individuals with disabilities in rural areas than their non-disabled peers. The authors came to this conclusion by selecting the mean of all the studies examined. The numbers were considerably lower when full-time employment was spotlighted. They also showed a predominant number of respondents living with their parents. Though the author states that the article synthesis shows that there has been improvement in the quality of life for these individuals in the years since the mandates first came into place, there is an obvious lack of research in the area.

Kinnison, Fuson and Cates (2005) examined transition services in Oklahoma and discussed barriers related to success in rural areas. Their focus was on services available to individuals with low incidence disabilities in rural area once they exit school. There methods included surveying providers of residential and employment services to see what would be required for these individuals to participate in their programs, if possible at all. This was not a scientific study, but otherwise potentially useful for parents or caregivers in rural areas to find assistance for individuals. These types of questions and concerns
raised by the authors shows that different locales are more equipped to work with people than others. The case study they outlined showed the struggles associated with serving challenging people in small areas where funding and other resources are a concern. The limitations of the study are due to the fact that it is only information from Oklahoma. Research in other rural areas may show a common theme.

The goal of this study was to limit the differences between the schools as one of the factors. Schools were selected using the 2013 School District Typology Overview completed by the Ohio Department of Education. All the schools in the study came from the same typology.

**Efficacy**

Social Cognitive Theory suggests that efficacy is a belief in one’s ability to have an impact on their environment, as well as the belief that the environment has an impact on them (Bandura, 1993). Some of the research on teacher efficacy suggests it can be impacted by several factors. From school location to the make-up of personnel and interactions with administrators, there are outside influences that may play a role (Hoy & Wolfolk, 1993). Others believe a strong sense of self-efficacy will produce better outcomes for students (Eroglu & Unlu, 2015). In this section some of the empirical research on this subject is examined.

Bandura (1993) completed a literature synthesis regarding research of personal efficacy and its impact on student achievement and the classroom atmosphere. The article examined the impact of perceived self-efficacy on the cognitive development of students from three levels; the students’ perceived self-efficacy to regulate learning, the
teachers’ perceived self-efficacy to motivate learning and the collective instructional
efficacy to impact academic achievement. All of this factors into the students’ cognitive
development and ability to perform what is asked of them in school. Bandura summed
up the research by saying a person with low self-efficacy will not put forth the effort
needed to accomplish goals based on their own belief that they will fail once they face
adversity. Whereas a student with a high personal self-efficacy will be more likely to
look at obstacles as challenges and will not let setbacks determine overall success. For
teachers with a high sense of self efficacy there is research that suggests that their
students achieve at a higher rate. Also there is research that suggests that parents are
more actively involved in their child’s education when the teacher has a high sense of self
efficacy. The collective efficacy of the faculty has an impact on each teacher’s sense of
personal self-efficacy. The research suggest that teachers have a higher sense of self-
efficacy based on the collective efficacy early on in the educational process. When
students first come into school teachers believe their impact to be more. This decreases
as the children progress through school.

Bandura (1999) completed a literature synthesis to review the tenets of social
cognitive theory. The article delved into the belief that understanding people has an
effect on their environment and their environment has an effect on them as well. The
research reflects that efficacy is the product of one’s reinforcement from
accomplishments or failures. The way an event is viewed may shape one’s future beliefs
about outcomes and dictate their interaction. The article went on to discuss collective
efficacy and differentiated that it is not about how each person’s personal efficacy effects
the collective group, but instead is that there is a collective effort or goal that shapes
collective efficacy. The way each person contributes to the overall goal determines the
collective efficacy of the group.

In one of their studies regarding organization health and a teacher’s sense of self-
efficacy, Hoy and Woolfolk (1993) completed a quantitative study of 179 elementary
teachers from New Jersey. They selected the teachers randomly from 37 schools. This
made for a diverse group as the schools were from areas of various socio-economic
levels. However, 27 of the schools were from areas with above average socio-economic
levels. The researchers used two instruments: the Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale (TSES)
that they adapted from another scale, and a version of the Organizational Health
Inventory scale. They completed descriptive statistics and found both scales to have high
reliability coefficients. Their results suggest that a teacher’s personal sense of self-
efficacy is formed through a combination of their personal attributes and their perceptions
about the school in which they work. They also suggest that it is a reciprocal relationship
in that school climate effects self-efficacy and that self-efficacy helps shape perception
about climate. They also found that teachers with a higher education level also had
higher levels of personal self-efficacy. They were surprised to find that personal self-
efficacy did not have an impact on morale. This study is somewhat limited as it is only
elementary teachers from New Jersey and the schools were predominantly from areas
with above average socio-economic levels. The research in this area is important and
needs to continue to be explored.
Hartmann (2012) developed a scale to measure self-efficacy of teachers working with students with deaf-blindness. The Teacher Efficacy in Deaf-blindness Education Scale (TEDE) was developed to rate the self-efficacy of special education instructors in the United States. It was a mixed methods analysis pilot study of eighty-seven participants. The quantitative aspect included a survey based on a Likert-like scale to measure the responses to 36 questions. Then there was a qualitative aspect that added more context to the participants’ answers. The goal of the research was to determine if the TEDE could be a reliable test for self-efficacy amongst teachers of students with deaf-blindness. Reliability was tested two ways through Cronbach’s alpha and split-half reliability. Both scores came back demonstrating strong reliability. The researcher concluded that with some adjustments the TEDE could become an instrument used to measure self-efficacy among other groups of educators. The noted limitations stem from this being a pilot study and the first time the scale was used. More research in this area would be beneficial.

Lim and Kim (2014) completed a quantitative study to examine the influence of character strengths on personal self-efficacy (PTE) of 111 special education teachers in Korea. The teachers were from three schools and were 27 males and 87 females. They used two existing instruments to collect data. The researchers used the Character Strength test (CST) and the Korean version of the teacher efficacy scale-personal (K-TES-P). Character strength is broken down into four dimensions; Interpersonal, restraint, intellectual and theological. The researchers analyzed the data using bi-variate Pearson correlations and hierarchal regression analysis. The results suggest a moderate
correlation between the four dimensions of character strength and personal self-efficacy. Their analysis indicated the dimensions of interpersonal and restraint were strong predictors of PTE. So those teachers that perceive themselves to have strong interpersonal and restraint characteristics also believed they had the ability to affect change in their classrooms. The limitations they noted included the fact that the sample was made up of voluntary participants that may have inflated the data to give the researchers what they perceived was wanted. Another limitation was the size of the sample. They suggested further research should be done with the general population.

Eroglu and Unlu (2015) completed a quantitative study of self-efficacy for physical education teachers. They surveyed 601 physical education candidates from six universities in the Republic of Turkey. They used two existing instruments; the Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale (TSES) and the Attitude Scale for the Profession of Physical Education Teaching (ASPPET). The researchers used descriptive statistics to analyze the data and completed a t-test, Pearson Correlation Coefficient Technique, and Multiple Regression for reliability. Their results suggest there is no bias based on gender in relation to a correlation between attitudes and self-efficacy. The teachers score on the TSES showed a significant and positive relationship with scores on some of the subsets of the ASPPET. However, they concluded that self-efficacy scores were not predictors of scores for the ASPETT. This suggests that a physical education teacher’s self-efficacy will not have an impact on their attitude towards the teaching profession. This study is somewhat limited in its scope as it only focuses on Physical Education teachers in the Republic of turkey. Additional research in this area would be beneficial.
What We Know and What We Still Need to Learn

Throughout the research many some common themes emerge. People with disabilities face many challenges when transitioning to adulthood in this country. This is seen time and time again in the literature and Ohio is no exception. In fact, the literature suggests that the struggles in Ohio may even be greater. This knowledge tells us that more research is needed in this state.

This study explored the perceptions of high school teachers in Ohio regarding the process of transition planning. The literature does not explore this point of view, and it is an important one as teachers play a significant role in the transition process. The insights of high school teachers may lead to further questions.
Chapter Three: Methodology

Purpose

Transition planning for students with disabilities in Ohio is meant to assist individuals during a critical time in their lives. Making the leap from high school to either the job market or a post-secondary school can be a challenge for any student. This is also a time in which peers in their age group start to leave the family home and establish their own residence. For students with intellectual disabilities there are services available once they graduate to help in these areas, but without a good transition plan, they may not access them. In Ohio, adults with disabilities are eligible for services through the eighty-eight County Boards of Developmental Disabilities. The services delivered vary depending on the level of need of the individual. This could mean employment in a sheltered setting or in the community. Depending on their level of need an individual may receive assistance in the home or placement in a group home.

This study focused on Ohio high school teachers as they play an integral role in the process of transition planning and the impact it has on the students’ adult adjustment. The focus of the study was to investigate the perceptions of teachers in public schools whose work involves participating in the team process for the implementation of transition plans for students with mild intellectual disabilities. The study surveyed these teachers about their views of the effectiveness of transition planning and programming based on their experience of teaching students with intellectual disabilities in their classroom.

The study was guided by three research questions:
(1) What is the perspective of high school teachers in Ohio regarding transition planning and programming for students with intellectual disabilities and the effectiveness of this process?

(2) Which transition services do high school teachers in Ohio believe are most beneficial or least effective in promoting success in the classroom?

(3) Does transition planning and the IEP process have an impact on high school teachers’ ability to be effective in the classroom?

Schools in Ohio differ based on the socio-economic status of their locale. They also differ based on whether or not they are located in urban areas, suburban areas or rural areas. The study examined the perceptions of teachers from eight suburban districts of the state. The districts selected were similar in size and from comparable areas as far as socio-economics are concerned. Though the selection process was meant to find locales that are as similar as possible, there were still differences in the districts. This study did not focus on the differences between the districts, but the fact that they are different may add to the discussion if the data suggests the differences have an impact.

**Research Design**

The study was an exploratory descriptive study with the purpose of gathering evidence regarding a reoccurring theme for people with disabilities. As reflected in the first two chapters, the data has shown consistently throughout the past few decades that people with disabilities are under employed and maintain homes with assistance more often than independently. The goal of this study was to examine one aspect of an individual’s education that may have an impact for them once they graduate.
Exploratory studies ask the questions of “who”, “what”, “why” “where” and “how” (Yin, 2009). These types of questions allow the researcher to examine a person’s feelings and thoughts about a phenomenon. The responses may provide evidence that will call for further examination of the topic. Exploratory studies look either to provide descriptions of events or an explanation for them. The types of questions asked will elicit responses that serve one of these two purposes, describing an event or explaining one. Descriptive questions focus on gathering enough information to determine what phenomenon is occurring and often suggests that further research would be beneficial. Explanative questions can offer a reason an event occurs. The distinction comes down to whether or not the researcher is trying to prove a theory (Punch, 2005).

The study examined teacher perceptions regarding transition planning effectiveness in Ohio’s public high schools. The participants were chosen based on their standing as active employed teachers in the public school system in Ohio. An online survey (Qualtrics) was utilized to explore the participants’ perceptions regarding the transition planning. The data gathered was analyzed and reported according to the on the research questions.

**Population**

Population is made up of the entire group that you would like to learn about. The results of the study apply to this group (Aron, Aron, & Coups, 2005). The population for this study consisted of all teachers in public high schools in suburban locations in Ohio. According to the 2013 School District Typology Overview completed by the Ohio Department of Education, there are eight distinct typologies of Ohio schools. Typologies
one and two are labeled rural districts, three and four are small town districts, five and six are suburban districts and seven and eight are urban districts. The typologies were developed based on data regarding the districts’ total enrollment, median income, the percentage of student poverty and the percentage of minority enrollment (http://education.ohio.gov, 2016).

Typologies five and six consist of one hundred and twenty-three public school districts that are labeled as suburban in Ohio. The group that falls into typology five includes seventy-seven districts that are stated to serve students considered to have a low rate of poverty and the district is of average size. The total number of students in this group is 320,000. The group that falls into typology six includes forty-six districts that are stated to serve students considered to have a very low rate of poverty and the district is large in size. The total number of students in that group is 240,000 (http://education.ohio.gov, 2016). For the purpose of this study the participants selected were from the districts in typology five as the total number of students served in this group was the single largest of the eight typologies. It should be noted that these numbers reflected all students served in districts that fall into the typologies. This study only solicited responses from high school teachers in the districts as transition planning does not begin until high school.
Sample

This study asked a sample of high school teachers questions regarding the transition process with the goal of exploring their perceptions of its effectiveness. Transition planning is required through IDEIA and is completed in all schools regardless of location of socio-economic status. Thus researching the process itself should not affect the views of the respondents. The goal of the research was to garner responses that represent the perceptions of this population regarding transition planning. So it was critical to choose a sample that is reflective of the population as a whole so that the data collected could be generalized to the entire group (Punch, 2005).

The sample is a small portion of the entire population from which you gather your data (Aron, Aron & Coups, 2005). The purpose of sampling is to give the researcher feedback from a smaller group so that the information can be used to make predictions for the population from which the sample was selected (Aron, Aron & Coups (2005). The sample selection was made to satisfy the following criteria for quantitative research: The size of the group, how it was selected, why it was selected, and what claims were made for the representatives (Punch, 2005).

The survey was sent to high school teachers in eight suburban districts from typology five in Ohio. There was any other criteria for them to receive an online request to complete the survey. It was completed on a voluntary basis and informed consent was attained from the respondents. The number of respondents made up the sample. The goal was to acquire responses from all of the teachers in the eight districts selected. This provided a small sample of high school teachers in suburban districts in Ohio, which was
the overall population. The questions were aimed at eliciting responses that reflected the perceptions of the educators towards the transition planning process. Since students with mild intellectual disabilities are taught in regular classrooms with their non-disabled peers, the perception of all teachers in each district is important.

**Instrumentation**

The survey instrument was developed to pose questions of the sample regarding high school teachers’ perceptions regarding transition planning. They were asked to use the following Likert-like scale strongly disagree, disagree, agree or strongly agree to respond to statements regarding the transition process. The statements examined three main themes based on the research questions posed in this study. The questions were developed with the goal of soliciting a response from the participants which accurately reflects their perceptions of transition planning (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2009).

The survey examined teacher efficacy as it relates to transition planning for mildly intellectually disabled students. It asked the teachers about their role in the process, what strategies about transition planning are effective, and what is their perspective of the process as a whole. Some of the questions were designed to see if personal efficacy has an impact on the perceived effectiveness for transition planning. The survey asked the respondents to rate their level of agreement with a set of statements. They responded as instructed and their answers were rated on a Likert-like scale as follows: Strongly disagree = 1, disagree = 2, agree = 3, and strongly agree = 4. The statements were general comments about transition planning and the effectiveness of the
process. They also explored how the process is viewed by respondents to see what their perspectives were regarding the role of the school in the process.

Some of the questions asked in this section were modified from an established teacher efficacy scale that was used in another study. Hartmann (2012) developed the Teacher Efficacy in Deaf-blindness Education scale (TEDE) as a tool to help educators understand the importance of self-efficacy in the education of deaf and blind students. The TEDE is made up of 23 statements that were rated on a 5 point Likert–like scale. Data reliability was tested using Cronbach’s alpha and split-half reliability producing a .99 coefficient indicating a strong construct reliability. Validity was tested by adding four multiple-choice questions regarding efficacy. There was a strong correlation between the multiple-choice answers and ratings from the scale indicating validity (Hartmann, 2012).

The purpose of this study was to examine self-efficacy of teachers who work with a population that has some similarities in characteristics. Based on that, the survey was modified slightly to examine high school teachers’ perceptions of working with students with mild intellectual disabilities. Hartmann has given permission to use a modified version of the TEDE.

**Selection and/or Development of Instruments**

The development of a survey related to the perceptions of high school teachers quantified the researcher’s data. The survey instrument for this focused on teacher perceptions of transition planning effectiveness. A survey based on a Likert-like scale can make information quantifiable that is based on their level of agreement with statements regarding a subject. The questions asked were on a scale in which
respondents selected an answer that best reflects their feelings on the subject matter in the question. Each answer was given a corresponding number score. The data was collected and analyzed using a software statistical analysis package (SPSS). By using a numbered scale, the researcher can quantify data that may have normally been solicited through a qualitative method of research (Punch, 2005).

**Pilot Study**

A pilot study was completed to ensure that the respondents were able to answer the questions without any problems. One of the first questions was used to ensure that the participants fit the sampling frame. This question was a skip logic question built into the survey to determine whether or not the participants taught students that had an IEP. A response of no to the sampling frame question sent the respondents to a screen that thanks them for their participation and removed them from the rest of the survey. If the participants answered yes to the sampling frame question (did they teach children with an IEP?) then they were directed to respond to the rest of the survey.

**Data Collection**

Data was collected through an online survey of high school teachers in eight school districts from topology five in Ohio. The teachers were asked to respond to a series of questions relating to their perceptions of the effectiveness of transition planning. The questions were designed to elicit responses regarding overall effectiveness as well as the effectiveness of specific aspects of the process. The survey was distributed through an online service called Qualtrics. Once the survey was in the Qualtrics program it was be distributed via e-mail. The eight schools were selected randomly from the list under
typology five. The school districts were kept anonymous to further ensure that participants remained anonymous.

**Data Analysis**

The responses to the survey were analyzed to determine how common the answers are amongst the individuals in the sample. The survey provided scores for each answer as each response was on a scale of one to four. Through the software package SPSS the data was analyzed to establish the mean and standard deviation of responses. This data will provide the reader with evidence of the respondents’ feelings regarding the subject matter. Using this type of research method allows the researcher to elicit statistical data and make general determinations regarding the population (Punch, 2005).

**Validity Considerations**

Validity in research studies is about asking whether or not the method being used to gather information actually gathers the information the researcher wanted (Punch, 2005). The data collected allows a researcher to make determinations about a subject. This means that they interpret that data and then decide what it means as it relates to the subject. The actual tool that is used to gather the data is not what determines validity but rather what is interpreted by the researcher through the data collection (Punch, 2005).

Construct validity has to do with determining whether or not the methods used to gather data are proper for the study. In other words, there are certain methods that should be used in research based on what the researcher is trying to determine. Studies are often challenged based on the concept that the researcher did not develop methods that solicit valid data and then made determinations based on said data, thus nullifying their
hypothesis (Yin, 2009). The validity of this study was be determined by how well the research of can be generalized to the population of Ohio special education teachers.

**Limitations and Delimitations of the Study**

The limitations of this study stem for a lack of research in the area. Most research that has been completed on transition planning focuses on employment. There is very little information available regarding the perceptions special education teachers regarding their students’ preparedness for life after school. There are many other variables in a school that could have an effect on the issue of transition planning. For example, the socio-economic of the area in which the individuals live and the ability of the school to pass tax levies can affect access accommodations. Not having the financial resources available would greatly alter the staffing patterns and possibly not allow for extra instruction.

The delimitating factors the study of this nature would be centered on the group that is studied. The number of participants is one factor that narrows the scope of the study. The school district in which they work plays a large role in the education options open to students. All of the participants have a similar socio-economic background.

**Ethical Considerations**

Ethical issues that arise from social research usually deal with data that may have been tainted by personal bias of the researcher. This is more common in qualitative data collection because the method requires a more in-depth and personal approach to collecting the data through interviews (Punch, 2005). This study collected data based on a survey on a Likert-like scale. Though the questions were of a nature that was intended
to solicit responses regarding personal feelings, the number associated with each response will make them quantifiable. Also, the survey was anonymous and completed online, thus not allowing for researcher bias in how the questions were answered. The survey itself could be viewed as biased so it was reviewed as part of the proposal prior to research. The study received IRB approval prior to the survey being sent out.

**Summary**

The purpose of this research was to collect data from Ohio special education teachers regarding transition planning. This was done through an online survey developed to gather general opinions regarding the effectiveness of transition planning, while also exploring the efficacy of this approach according to the teachers’ responses. High school teachers were selected as the respondents because they play an integral role in the process of IEP planning and delivery.

The statistical analysis of the data collected was used to make general inferences about the research. This data was useful in determining whether or not future research in this area would be beneficial. The goal of the study was to gather information about a group that plays a specific role in the overall picture for individuals with mild intellectual disabilities in Ohio. Research shows that this population continues to need ongoing assistance once they leave school to gain and maintain employment and to live independently. This leads to the general question of what are schools preparing these individuals for?
Chapter Four: Results

The purpose of this study was to examine the self-efficacy of high school teachers as it relates to working with students with mild intellectual disabilities. The focus was on the IEP process and transition planning for post-secondary outcomes for students. The population of the study was high school teachers in Ohio from eight school districts that fall into Typology 5 as outlined by the Ohio Department of Education. Survey were sent to 615 participants. Only 77 participants responded to the survey and only 54 (8.8%) participants completed surveys that were usable for the analysis.

The survey instrument consisted of 35 questions. Four of the questions were related to demographic information. They solicited responses regarding gender, years of teaching, course of instruction and grade level taught. The fifth question asked if they have taught students in their classrooms with mild intellectual disabilities and an IEP. This question was designed for the survey to end if answered in the negative.

The remaining 30 questions were intended to elicit responses to reflect the research questions posed by the study. The main areas of examination were teachers’ perceptions of the efficacy of transition planning and programming for students with intellectual disabilities and the effectiveness of this process, which transition services do high school teachers in Ohio believe are most beneficial or least effective in promoting success in the classroom and does transition planning and the IEP process have an impact on high school teachers’ ability to be effective in the classroom? The participants were asked to rate their level of agreement with 30 statements using a Likert-like four-point
scale. The responses were coded as Strongly disagree = 1, Disagree = 2, Agree = 3, and Strongly agree = 4. The following is a breakdown of the data for each question:

**Demographic: Gender**

Of the sample that responded to my survey, 16 out of 54 or 29.6 % were male. The number of female respondents totaled 37 of 54, or 68.5 %. It should be noted that there was one of 54, or 1.9% of the total respondents in the sample that did not respond this question. Of the three choices of male, female or other none were select by one respondent. The missing respondent did complete the rest of the survey so their data has been added to the final results.

**Demographic: Number of Years Taught**

Of the sample that responded to my survey, 16 of 54 or 29.6% taught from 0 to 10 years. The number of respondents that reported teaching from 11 to 20 years was 18 of 54, or 33.3%. The number of respondents that reported teaching from 21 to 30 years was 14 of 54, or 25.9%. The number of respondents that reported teaching 31 or more years was six of 54, or 11.1 %. There was not any missing data for this question.

**Demographic: Main Course of Instruction**

Of the sample that responded to my survey, nine of 54, or 16.7% reported that their main course of instruction was Math. The number of respondents that reported their main course of instruction was Science was seven of 54, or 13 %. The number of respondents that reported their main course of instruction was Social Studies was five of 54, or 9.3 %. The number of respondents that reported their main course of instruction was English was six of 54, or 11.1 %. The number of respondents that reported their
main course of instruction was Special Education was 18 of 54, or 33.3 %. The number of respondents that reported their main course of instruction was Non-core was nine of 54, or 16.7. There was not any missing for this question.

**Demographic: Grade Currently Teaching**

Of the sample that responded to my survey, 15 of 54, or 27.8 % reported that they teach the 9th grade. The number of respondents that reported teaching the 10th grade was 12 of 54, or 22.2 %. The number of respondents that reported teaching the 11th grade was eight of 54 or 14.8 %. The number of respondents that reported teaching the 12th grade was 18 of 54, or 33.3 %. There was one respondent of 54, or 1.9 % that did not respond to this question. Though the data is missing for this question, the respondent did complete the rest of the survey so their responses are in the final sample.

**Reliability**

The results of the study were examined using SPSS to test for reliability. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, a test of homogeneity of variances, a one-way ANOVA and robust tests of equality of means. A Cronbach’s Alpha score of .862 was measured for the 30 statements. Cronbach’s Alpha based on standardized items was .868. These scores indicate strong reliability.

**Statements of Teacher Perception**

My input into each student’s IEP in my classroom is reflected in the **transition plan.** Of the sample that responded to my survey, 7 of 54, or 13% said they strongly disagree with this statement. The number of respondents that reported they disagree with the statement was 11 of 54, or 20.4%. The number of respondents that
reported they agree with the statement was 29 of 54, or 53.7%. The number of respondents that reported they strongly agree with the statement was 7 of 54, or 13%. The mean was 2.67, the standard deviation was .87 and the variance was .755.

**When a student with disabilities is not achieving, I am able to improve their understanding of the content.** Of the sample that responded to my survey, 1 of 54, or 1.9% said they strongly disagree with this statement. The number of respondents that reported they disagree with the statement was 7 of 54, or 13%. The number of respondents that reported they agree with the statement was 38 of 54, or 70.4%. The number of respondents that reported they strongly agree with the statement was 6 of 54, or 11.1%. There were 2 of 54, or 3.7% that did not respond to this question. The mean was 2.94, the standard deviation was .57 and the variance was .330. Though data was missing the respondents did reply to the rest of the questions and statements of the survey so they were kept in the sample.

**I am able to help a student with intellectual disabilities who is not learning at the level of their peers improve their performance in class.** Of the sample that responded to my survey, 0 of 54, or 0% said they strongly disagree with this statement. The number of respondents that reported they disagree with the statement was 8 of 54, or 14.8%. The number of respondents that reported they agree with the statement was 42 of 54, or 77.8%. The number of respondents that reported they strongly agree with the statement was 4 of 54, or 7.4%. The mean was 2.93, the standard deviation was .47 and the variance was .221.
The IEP allows you to respond effectively to difficult behaviors from your students with intellectual disabilities. Of the sample that responded to my survey, 4 of 54, or 7.4% said they strongly disagree with this statement. The number of respondents that reported they disagree with the statement was 22 of 54, or 40.7%. The number of respondents that reported they agree with the statement was 27 of 54, or 50%. The number of respondents that reported they strongly agree with the statement was 1 of 54, or 1.9%. The mean was 2.46, the standard deviation was .67 and the variance was .442.

I am able to respond effectively to students with intellectual disabilities when they need assistance with an assignment. Of the sample that responded to my survey, 0 of 54, or 0% said they strongly disagree with this statement. The number of respondents that reported they disagree with the statement was 5 of 54, or 9.3%. The number of respondents that reported they agree with the statement was 42 of 54, or 77.8%. The number of respondents that reported they strongly agree with the statement was 7 of 54, or 13%. The mean was 3.04, the standard deviation was .47 and the variance was .225.

The goals of the transition IEP provide obtainable outcomes for very capable students with intellectual disabilities. Of the sample that responded to my survey, 0 of 54, or 0% said they strongly disagree with this statement. The number of respondents that reported they disagree with the statement was 11 of 54, or 20.47%. The number of respondents that reported they agree with the statement was 37 of 54, or 68.5%. The number of respondents that reported they strongly agree with the statement was 6 of 54, or 11.1%. The mean was 2.91, the standard deviation was .56 and the variance was .312.
Based on the transition IEP I am able to provide an alternative explanation or activity when students with intellectual disabilities have difficulty with a lesson. Of the sample that responded to my survey, 2 of 54, or 3.7% said they strongly disagree with this statement. The number of respondents that reported they disagree with the statement was 19 of 54, or 35.2%. The number of respondents that reported they agree with the statement was 30 of 54, or 55.6%. The number of respondents that reported they strongly agree with the statement was 3 of 54, or 5.6%. The mean was 2.63, the standard deviation was .65 and the variance was .426.

I am able to motivate students with intellectual disabilities who do not show an interest in school. Of the sample that responded to my survey, 3 of 54, or 5.6% said they strongly disagree with this statement. The number of respondents that reported they disagree with the statement was 25 of 54, or 46.3%. The number of respondents that reported they agree with the statement was 22 of 54, or 40.7%. The number of respondents that reported they strongly agree with the statement was 4 of 54, or 7.4%. The mean was 2.50, the standard deviation was .72 and the variance was .519.

I make my expectations clear about students’ behavior to students with intellectual disabilities. Of the sample that responded to my survey, 0 of 54, or 0% said they strongly disagree with this statement. The number of respondents that reported they disagree with the statement was 0 of 54, or 0%. The number of respondents that reported they agree with the statement was 36 of 54, or 66.7%. The number of respondents that reported they strongly agree with the statement was 18 of 54, or 33.3%. The mean was 3.33, the standard deviation was .48 and the variance was .226.
I can keep a few challenging behaviors from disrupting lessons when teaching a student with intellectual disabilities. Of the sample that responded to my survey, 0 of 54, or 0% said they strongly disagree with this statement. The number of respondents that reported they disagree with the statement was 5 of 54, or 9.3%. The number of respondents that reported they agree with the statement was 40 of 54, or 74.1%. The number of respondents that reported they strongly agree with the statement was 9 of 54, or 16.7%. The mean was 3.07, the standard deviation was .51 and the variance was .259.

I am able to implement a behavioral management plan for one student with intellectual disabilities that does not disrupt other students. Of the sample that responded to my survey, 0 of 54, or 0% said they strongly disagree with this statement. The number of respondents that reported they disagree with the statement was 9 of 54, or 16.7%. The number of respondents that reported they agree with the statement was 38 of 54, or 70.4%. The number of respondents that reported they strongly agree with the statement was 7 of 54, or 13%. The mean was 2.96, the standard deviation was .55 and the variance was .300.

I help my students with intellectual disabilities enjoy communicating. Of the sample that responded to my survey, 0 of 54, or 0% said they strongly disagree with this statement. The number of respondents that reported they disagree with the statement was 11 of 54, or 20.4%. The number of respondents that reported they agree with the statement was 37 of 54, or 68.5%. The number of respondents that reported they strongly agree with the statement was 5 of 54, or 9.3%. There was 1 of 54, or 1.9% that did not
respond to this question. The mean was 2.89, the standard deviation was .54 and the variance was .295. Though data was missing the respondent did reply to the rest of the questions and statements of the survey so they were kept in the sample.

I help my students with intellectual disabilities to interact in a positive manner with others to help build positive relationships. Of the sample that responded to my survey, 0 of 54, or 0% said they strongly disagree with this statement. The number of respondents that reported they disagree with the statement was 6 of 54, or 11.1%. The number of respondents that reported they agree with the statement was 37 of 54, or 68.5%. The number of respondents that reported they strongly agree with the statement was 11 of 54, or 20.4%. The mean was 3.09, the standard deviation was .56 and the variance was .312.

The IEP process allows me to reach the most challenging students with intellectual disabilities in a manner that promotes learning. Of the sample that responded to my survey, 4 of 54, or 7.4% said they strongly disagree with this statement. The number of respondents that reported they disagree with the statement was 22 of 54, or 40.7%. The number of respondents that reported they agree with the statement was 25 of 54, or 46.3%. The number of respondents that reported they strongly agree with the statement was 3 of 54, or 5.6%. The mean was 2.50, the standard deviation was .72 and the variance was .519.

The IEP process helps students with intellectual disabilities to work collaboratively with other students or peers in their school. Of the sample that responded to my survey, 4 of 54, or 7.4% said they strongly disagree with this statement.
The number of respondents that reported they disagree with the statement was 25 of 54, or 46.3%. The number of respondents that reported they agree with the statement was 23 of 54, or 42.6%. The number of respondents that reported they strongly agree with the statement was 2 of 54, or 3.7%. The mean was 2.43, the standard deviation was .69 and the variance was .476.

The school offers assistive technology for students with mild intellectual disabilities (ID). Of the sample that responded to my survey, 1 of 54, or 1.9% said they strongly disagree with this statement. The number of respondents that reported they disagree with the statement was 19 of 54, or 35.2%. The number of respondents that reported they agree with the statement was 31 of 54, or 57.4%. The number of respondents that reported they strongly agree with the statement was 3 of 54, or 5.6%. The mean was 2.67, the standard deviation was .61 and the variance was .377.

Transition planning helps students with intellectual disabilities to believe they can do well in school. Of the sample that responded to my survey, 2 of 54, or 3.7% said they strongly disagree with this statement. The number of respondents that reported they disagree with the statement was 11 of 54, or 20.47%. The number of respondents that reported they agree with the statement was 35 of 54, or 64.8%. The number of respondents that reported they strongly agree with the statement was 6 of 54, or 11.1%. The mean was 2.83, the standard deviation was .67 and the variance was .443.

The school provides training to teachers that is aimed at helping students with intellectual disabilities behave safely in school. Of the sample that responded to my survey, 12 of 54, or 22.2% said they strongly disagree with this statement. The
number of respondents that reported they disagree with the statement was 29 of 54, or 53.7%. The number of respondents that reported they agree with the statement was 13 of 54, or 24.1%. The number of respondents that reported they strongly agree with the statement was 0 of 54, or 0%. The mean was 2.02, the standard deviation was .69 and the variance was .471.

**Transition planning fosters independence in students with intellectual disabilities.** Of the sample that responded to my survey, 3 of 54, or 5.6% said they strongly disagree with this statement. The number of respondents that reported they disagree with the statement was 21 of 54, or 38.9%. The number of respondents that reported they agree with the statement was 28 of 54, or 51.9%. The number of respondents that reported they strongly agree with the statement was 2 of 54, or 3.7%. The mean was 2.54, the standard deviation was .67 and the variance was .442.

**Transition planning fosters self-determination in students with intellectual disabilities.** Of the sample that responded to my survey, 2 of 54, or 3.7% said they strongly disagree with this statement. The number of respondents that reported they disagree with the statement was 23 of 54, or 42.6%. The number of respondents that reported they agree with the statement was 27 of 54, or 50%. The number of respondents that reported they strongly agree with the statement was 1 of 54, or 1.9%. There was 1 of 54, or 1.9% that did not respond to this question. The mean was 2.51, the standard deviation was .608 and the variance was .370. Though data was missing the respondent did reply to the rest of the questions and statements of the survey so they were kept in the sample.
I am able to express views freely on important matters about students with intellectual disabilities. Of the sample that responded to my survey, 4 of 54, or 7.4% said they strongly disagree with this statement. The number of respondents that reported they disagree with the statement was 12 of 54, or 22.27%. The number of respondents that reported they agree with the statement was 30 of 54, or 55.6%. The number of respondents that reported they strongly agree with the statement was 8 of 54, or 14.8%. The mean was 2.78, the standard deviation was .79 and the variance was .629.

I am able to establish a trusting relationship with students with intellectual disabilities. Of the sample that responded to my survey, 1 of 54, or 1.9% said they strongly disagree with this statement. The number of respondents that reported they disagree with the statement was 0 of 54, or 0%. The number of respondents that reported they agree with the statement was 34 of 54, or 63%. The number of respondents that reported they strongly agree with the statement was 18 of 54, or 33.3%. There was 1 of 54, or 1.9% that did not respond to this question. The mean was 3.30, the standard deviation was .58 and the variance was .330. Though data was missing the respondent did reply to the rest of the questions and statements of the survey so they were kept in the sample.

I encourage students with intellectual disabilities to expand their communication skills. Of the sample that responded to my survey, 0 of 54, or 0% said they strongly disagree with this statement. The number of respondents that reported they disagree with the statement was 3 of 54, or 5.6%. The number of respondents that reported they agree with the statement was 38 of 54, or 70.4%. The number of
respondents that reported they strongly agree with the statement was 13 of 54, or 24.1%. The mean was 3.19, the standard deviation was .52 and the variance was .267.

I am able to control disruptive behavior in the classroom caused by students with intellectual disabilities. Of the sample that responded to my survey, 0 of 54, or 0% said they strongly disagree with this statement. The number of respondents that reported they disagree with the statement was 4 of 54, or 7.4%. The number of respondents that reported they agree with the statement was 41 of 54, or 75.9%. The number of respondents that reported they strongly agree with the statement was 9 of 54, or 16.7%. The mean was 3.09, the standard deviation was .49 and the variance was .237.

The team (individuals, transition coordinator, special education coordinator, family, principal…etc.) has addressed ways to calm a student with intellectual disabilities who is disruptive. Of the sample that responded to my survey, 3 of 54, or 5.6% said they strongly disagree with this statement. The number of respondents that reported they disagree with the statement was 15 of 54, or 27.8%. The number of respondents that reported they agree with the statement was 32 of 54, or 59.3%. The number of respondents that reported they strongly agree with the statement was 4 of 54, or 7.4%. The mean was 2.69, the standard deviation was .69 and the variance was .484.

The team process (individuals, transition coordinator, Special education coordinator, family, principal…etc.) addresses ways to adapt to adverse medical conditions that affect the learning of students who have mild intellectual disabilities. Of the sample that responded to my survey, 0 of 54, or 0% said they strongly disagree with this statement. The number of respondents that reported they disagree with the
statement was 15 of 54, or 27.8%. The number of respondents that reported they agree with the statement was 36 of 54, or 66.7%. The number of respondents that reported they strongly agree with the statement was 2 of 54, or 3.7%. There was 1 of 54, or 1.9% that did not respond to this question. The mean was 2.75, the standard deviation was .52 and the variance was .266. Though data was missing the respondent did reply to the rest of the questions and statements of the survey so they were kept in the sample.

**There is flexibility to accommodate or adapt lessons to students with intellectual disabilities.** Of the sample that responded to my survey, 0 of 54, or 0% said they strongly disagree with this statement. The number of respondents that reported they disagree with the statement was 5 of 54, or 9.3%. The number of respondents that reported they agree with the statement was 39 of 54, or 72.2%. The number of respondents that reported they strongly agree with the statement was 9 of 54, or 16.7%. There was 1 of 54, or 1.9% that did not respond to this question. The mean was 3.08, the standard deviation was .51 and the variance was .263. Though data was missing the respondent did reply to the rest of the questions and statements of the survey so they were kept in the sample.

**Assistive technology has helped students with mild intellectual disabilities perform better in my class.** Of the sample that responded to my survey, 3 of 54, or 5.6% said they strongly disagree with this statement. The number of respondents that reported they disagree with the statement was 16 of 54, or 29.6%. The number of respondents that reported they agree with the statement was 30 of 54, or 55.6%. The number of respondents that reported they strongly agree with the statement was 4 of 54, or 7.4%.
There was 1 of 54, or 1.9% that did not respond to this question. The mean was 2.66, the standard deviation was  .71 and the variance was .498. Though data was missing the respondent did reply to the rest of the questions and statements of the survey so they were kept in the sample.

The parents/guardians of students with mild Intellectual Disabilities in my classroom are encouraged to attend parent/teacher conferences. Of the sample that responded to my survey, 0 of 54, or 0% said they strongly disagree with this statement. The number of respondents that reported they disagree with the statement was 5 of 54, or 9.3%. The number of respondents that reported they agree with the statement was 29 of 54, or 53.7%. The number of respondents that reported they strongly agree with the statement was 19 of 54, or 35.2%. There was 1 of 54, or 1.9% that did not respond to this question. The mean was 3.26, the standard deviation was .63 and the variance was .390. Though data was missing the respondent did reply to the rest of the questions and statements of the survey so they were kept in the sample.

The parents/guardians of students with mild Intellectual Disabilities in my classroom are encouraged to be active in their child’s education. Of the sample that responded to my survey, 0 of 54, or 0% said they strongly disagree with this statement. The number of respondents that reported they disagree with the statement was 3 of 54, or 5.6%. The number of respondents that reported they agree with the statement was 31 of 54, or 57.4%. The number of respondents that reported they strongly agree with the statement was 20 of 54, or 37%. The mean was 3.31, the standard deviation was .58 and the variance was .333.
Table 1

Description of the Level of Agreement of High School Teachers with Statements Examining their Perception of the Efficacy of Transition Planning for Students with Mild Intellectual Disabilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements of Teacher Perceptions</th>
<th>Mᵃ</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Categoryᵇ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>STP1. My input reflected in IEP</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>.889</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STP2. I am able to improve understanding</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>.574</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STP3. I am able improve performance</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>.470</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STP4. IEP allows you to effectively respond</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>.665</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STP5. I am able to provide assistance on assignments</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>.474</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STP6. The goals of IEP provide obtainable outcomes</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>.559</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STP7. I am able to provide alternative activity</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>.653</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STP8. I am able to motive uninterested</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>.720</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STP9. I make expectation clear about behavior</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>.476</td>
<td>SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STP10. Keep behaviors from disrupting lessons</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>.508</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STP11. I am able to implement behavior program</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>.548</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STP12. I help students with ID enjoy communicating</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>.543</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STP13. I help interact and build relationships</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>.559</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STP14. IEP allows me to reach most challenging</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>.720</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STP15. IEP helps students work collaboratively</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>.690</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STP16. The school offers assistive technology</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>.614</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STP17. Transition planning helps students believe</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>.666</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STP18. The school provides training to behave safely</td>
<td>2.02</td>
<td>.687</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STP19. Transition planning fosters independence</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>.665</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STP20. Transition planning fosters self-determination</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>.608</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STP21. I am able to express freely</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>.793</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STP22. I am able to establish trusting relationships</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>.575</td>
<td>SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STP23. I encourage to expand communication skills</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>.517</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STP24. I am able to control disruptive behavior</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>.486</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STP25. Team addressed ways to calm disruptive</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>.696</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STP26. Team addresses ways to adapt medical</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>.515</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STP27. There is flexibility to adapt lessons</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>.513</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STP28. Assistive technology helped to perform better</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>.706</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STP29. Parents/guardians encouraged to attend conferences</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>.625</td>
<td>SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STP30. Parents/guardians encouraged to be active</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>.577</td>
<td>SA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N= 54. Missing values replaced with variable mean
ᵃResponse scale: 1 = strongly disagree (SD), 2 = disagree (D), 3 = agree (A), and 4 = strongly agree (SA)
ᵇInterpretive scale: 1 – 1.75= SD, 1.76 – 2.50= D, 2.51 – 3.25= A, and 3.26 – 4.00= SA
Examining the Effects of Demographic Variables on Efficacy of Transition Planning for High School Teachers Survey

One-way ANOVAs were completed for the demographic categories identified by the sample that responded to my survey. The four demographic categories were; gender, number of years taught, main course of instruction and the grade currently teaching. The objective was to see if there were any statistically significant differences in the answers bases on the demographic group in which the respondent identified themselves. The following shows a breakdown of the statistics based on the demographic categories respondents fall into:

Gender

The first demographic category examined was gender. The goal was to see if there would be a statistical difference in the responses regarding the efficacy of transition planning based on differences in gender. Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement to 30 statements. They were asked to rate their level as either strongly disagree, disagree, agree, or strongly agree. For the purpose of analysis, the responses were coded as follows: 1 = strongly disagree (SD), 2 = disagree (D), 3 = agree (A), and 4 = strongly agree (SA). Once gathered the data was analyzed to find the mean score and standard deviation.

The number of male respondents (N) was 16, the mean score (M) for level of agreement was 2.85 and the standard deviation (SD) was .35. The N for females was 37, the mean score for the level of agreement was 2.83 and the standard deviation was .27. The total of respondents for this demographic is 53 as one respondent did not respond to
this demographic. So the total was N=53, the mean was M= 2.83 and the standard
deviation was SD= .29.

Table 2

*Group Sizes, Efficacy of Transition Planning Item Mean Scores, and Standard Deviation by Gender for High School Teachers*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>.354</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>.268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>.293</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Levene’s test of Homogeneity of Variances revealed no statistically significant
differences between the different gender group with (F2, 49 = 1.108, p = 355). The
difference in the Efficacy of Transition Planning for high school teachers score indicated
that the gender groups were not statistically significant (f3, 49 = .900, p = .448).

**Number of Years Taught**

The next demographic category examined was the number of years taught. The
goal was to see if there would be a statistical difference in the responses regarding the
efficacy of transition planning based on differences in the number of years taught.
Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement to 30 statements. They were
asked to rate their level as either strongly disagree, disagree, agree, or strongly agree. For
the purpose of analysis, the responses were coded as follows: 1 = strongly disagree (SD),
2 = disagree (D), 3 = agree (A), and 4 = strongly agree (SA). Once gathered the data was analyzed to find the mean score and standard deviation.

The number of respondents (N) that reported teaching from 0-10 years was 16, the mean score (M) for level of agreement was 2.85 and the standard deviation (SD) was .25. The N for the number of respondents that reported teaching from 11-20 years was 18, the mean score for the level of agreement was 2.77 and the standard deviation was .35. The N for the number of respondents that reported teaching from 21-30 years was 14, the mean score for the level of agreement was 2.9 and the standard deviation was .301. The N for the number of respondents that reported teaching 31 or more years was 6, the mean score for the level of agreement was 2.89 and the standard deviation was .11. The total of respondents for this demographic is 54, so N=54, the mean was M= 2.83 and the standard deviation was SD= .29.

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
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<td>Total</td>
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Levene’s test of Homogeneity of Variances revealed no statistically significant differences between the different groups based on Number of Years Taught with (F2, 50 =
1.976, p = .130). The difference in the Efficacy of Transition Planning for high school teachers score indicated that the groups based on Number of Years Taught were not statistically significant (f3, 50 = .507, p = .680).

**Main Course of Instruction**

The next demographic category examined was the respondent’s main course of instruction. The goal was to see if there would be a statistical difference in the responses regarding the efficacy of transition planning based on differences in the main course of instruction. Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement to 30 statements. They were asked to rate their level as either strongly disagree, disagree, agree, or strongly agree. For the purpose of analysis, the responses were coded as follows: 1 = strongly disagree (SD), 2 = disagree (D), 3 = agree (A), and 4 = strongly agree (SA). Once gathered the data was analyzed to find the mean score and standard deviation. The following table examines this data.

The number of respondents (N) that reported teaching Math was 9, the mean score (M) for level of agreement was 2.67 and the standard deviation (SD) was .26. The N for the number of respondents that reported teaching Science was 7, the mean score for the level of agreement was 2.72 and the standard deviation was .32. The N for the number of respondents that reported teaching Social Studies was 5, the mean score for the level of agreement was 2.92 and the standard deviation was .52. The N for the number of respondents that reported teaching English was 6, the mean score for the level of agreement was 2.84 and the standard deviation was .25. The N for the number of respondents that reported teaching Special Education was 18, the mean score for the level
of agreement was 2.94 and the standard deviation was .24. The N for the number of respondents that reported teaching Non-Core was 9, the mean score for the level of agreement was 2.82 and the standard deviation was .20. The total of respondents for this demographic is 54, so N=54, the mean was M= 2.83 and the standard deviation was SD= .29.

Table 4

*Group Sizes, Efficacy of Transition Planning Item Mean Scores, and Standard Deviation by Main Course of Instruction for High School Teachers*

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<th>N</th>
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Levene’s test of Homogeneity of Variances revealed no statistically significant differences between the different groups based on the Main Course of Instruction with \( F(2, 48) = 2.068, p = .086 \). The difference in the Efficacy of Transition Planning for high school teachers score indicated that the groups based on The Main Course of Instruction were not statistically significant \( F(3, 48) = 1.461, p = .220 \).
**Grade Currently Teaching**

The last demographic category examined was the grade the respondent currently teaches. The goal was to see if there would be a statistical difference in the responses regarding the efficacy of transition planning based on differences in grade level taught. Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement to 30 statements. They were asked to rate their level as either strongly disagree, disagree, agree, or strongly agree. For the purpose of analysis, the responses were coded as follows: 1 = strongly disagree (SD), 2 = disagree (D), 3 = agree (A), and 4 = strongly agree (SA). Once gathered, the data were analyzed to find the mean score and standard deviation.

The number of respondents (N) that reported teaching from 9th grade was 15, the mean score (M) for level of agreement was 2.86 and the standard deviation (SD) was .34. The N for the number of respondents that reported teaching 10th grade was 12, the mean score for the level of agreement was 2.79 and the standard deviation was .32. The N for the number of respondents that reported teaching 11th grade was 8, the mean score for the level of agreement was 2.73 and the standard deviation was .27. The N for the number of respondents that reported teaching 12th grade was 18, the mean score for the level of agreement was 2.91 and the standard deviation was .23. The total of respondents for this demographic is 53, so N=53, the mean was M= 2.84 and the standard deviation was SD= .29.
Table 5

*Group Sizes, Efficacy of Transition Planning Item Mean Scores, and Standard Deviation by Grade Currently Teaching for High School Teachers*

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Levene's test of Homogeneity of Variances revealed no statistically significant differences between the different groups based on Grade Currently Teaching with ($F_{2, 49} = 1.108, p = .355$). The difference in the Efficacy of Transition Planning for high school teachers score indicated that the groups based on Grade Currently Teaching were not statistically significant ($F_{3, 49} = .900, p = .448$).
Chapter Five: Summary and Conclusions

Purpose of the Study

The overall purpose of the study was to examine the perspective of high school teachers regarding transition planning for students with mild intellectual disabilities. The topic was selected because the data that is available regarding adults with mild intellectual disabilities suggest that they are employed at lower rates than their non-disabled peers. Also, the number of adults with mild intellectual disabilities that report living independently in the community is lower than their non-disabled peers. As high school is the last step before adulthood it is important to examine how it is preparing students for the responsibilities that accompany being an adult.

Teachers were selected because they play an integral role in the education process. Their work is directly with students so they are in a position to have a significant impact. This researcher could find limited empirical research from this population regarding this topic. The goal of the study was to add to that body of research and explore the need for further research in this area. The study was guided through the following three research questions:

(1) What is the perspective of high school teachers in Ohio regarding transition planning and programming for students with intellectual disabilities and the effectiveness of this process?

(2) Which transition services do high school teachers in Ohio believe are most beneficial or least effective in promoting success in the classroom?
(3) Does transition planning and the IEP process have an impact on high school teachers’ ability to be effective in the classroom?

These questions guided the search for empirical literature regarding transition planning. The themes of the literature were the history of transition planning, prescriptions about transition planning, the current status of transition planning and empirical research on transition outcomes. The theoretical framework of the study was based in personal self-efficacy and organizational efficacy. Theories on efficacy reflect that an individual has an impact on their environment and vice versa. Teachers are in a position where they have an impact on their environment, but also must react to conditions in their working environment that are not in their control. Transition planning is part of the IEP process and it is spelled out in federal regulation as to how and when it must occur. Teachers operate within that system and have an opportunity to have an impact on how the process works, but some aspects are dictated to them.

Procedure

A survey was developed by adapting an instrument that used to examine the self-efficacy of teachers working with students who are deaf and blind (Hartmann, 2012). Questions from the instrument were served as the basis for 22 of the 30 questions on the survey. They were adapted to focus on the transition planning part of the IEP process and 8 other questions were developed to delve deeper into the subject.

The sample was selected from 615 high school teachers in Ohio. The schools were chosen randomly from the Typology 5 group of the 2013 School District Typology Overview on the Ohio Department of education’s website. Schools in Ohio are broken
down into 8 typologies. The schools in Typology 5 are from suburban districts with similar data regarding the districts’ total enrollment, median income, the percentage of student poverty and the percentage of minority enrollment (http://education.ohio.gov, 2016).

Once the districts were selected the teachers from each high school in those districts were e-mailed the survey. The respondents were asked to provide informed consent before participating. The data from the sample that responded to the survey was analyzed to rate the level of agreement the respondents had with the statements in the survey. The 30 statements on the survey elicited responses to examine the three research questions that guided the study.

The respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with the statements as strongly disagree, disagree, agree, or strongly disagree. The respondents level of agreement with the statements on the survey were coded as follows, 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= agree and 4= strongly agree. Means were determined for each of the 30 statements. The mean scores were then interpreted on the following scale; 1 – 1.75= strongly disagree, 1.76 – 2.50= disagree, 2.51 – 3.25= agree, and 3.26 – 4.00= strongly agree. Each research question had 10 statements that were written to gather data for that question.

**Research Question One**

The first question the study looked to examine was “What is the perspective of high school teachers in Ohio regarding transition planning and programming for students with intellectual disabilities and the effectiveness of this process?”. This question
focuses on teachers’ perception of the efficacy of transition planning as part of the IEP process and their role in it. The questions on the survey that corresponded with this research question dealt with the teacher’s role in the process and the effect that the process has on the teacher’s ability to complete their duties.

The 10 statements that were associated with this research question were; #4, #7, #8, #17, #19, #20, #21, #25, #26 and #27. The overall mean for these question was 2.68, which would mean there is general agreement with the statements. This score is at the lower end of the interpretative scale. Of the 10 statements, 2 had mean scores that would be interpreted as disagree and 8 had mean score that fall in the range for agree. None fell in the ranges of strongly disagree or strongly agree. The lowest mean score of the 10 statements was 2.46 for #4 which asked respondents if the IEP allows them to respond effectively to difficult behaviors from students with intellectual disabilities. The highest mean score was 3.08 for #27 which asked respondents if there is flexibility to adapt lessons.

The other statement that respondents had an overall level of disagreement was #8. The mean score was 2.50 to the statement regarding the teacher’s ability to motivate uninterested students. Responses to #20 and #19 both met the interpretive level of agreement for the statements with mean scores of 2.51 and 2.54 respectively. The statement for # 20 had to do with transition planning fostering self-determination. The statement for #19 had suggested that transition planning helps promote independence for students.
The responses for #7 had a mean score of 2.63 and focused on the teacher’s ability to provide an alternative explanation or activity based on the transition IEP. The responses for #25 and #26 had mean scores of 2.69 and 2.75. These questions focused on the team process with #25 asking about challenging behaviors and #26 asking about medical conditions. The mean score for #21 was 2.78 and the question focused on the teacher’s ability to freely express views regarding the transition process. The statement that had the second highest overall mean was #17 with a score of 2.83 and suggests that transition planning helps students believe they can do better in school.

All of the statements under this research question focus on how the teacher and the IEP process and transition planning interact. The overall theme of the statements focused on the teachers’ perceived level of control and input in the IEP process and transition planning. The statements were written in an affirmative manner and elicited responses to rate the level of agreement that the teachers are part of the process and not just expected to carry it out. Though the overall response mean rated as agreement on the part of the teachers, the fact that the mean is at the lower end of the interpretive scale suggests that several respondents have the perception they do not play a significant role in the process.

**Research Question Two**

The second question that the study set out to examine was “Which transition services do high school teachers in Ohio believe are most beneficial or least effective in promoting success in the classroom?” This question focused on the areas that were highlighted in the literature as best practices for transition planning. The themes that
were explored included parents’ involvement, behavior management and helping students collaborate with peers, input from team members and obtainable goals established through the IEP and using assistive technology to promote learning for students with intellectual disabilities. By rating their level of agreement to the statements associated with this research question, the respondents answered whether or not these practices exist in their schools.

The 10 statements that were associated with this research question were; #1, #6, #11, #14, #15, #16, #18, #28, #29 and #30. The overall mean for these question was 2.74, which would mean there is general agreement with the statements, however this score is at the lower end of the interpretative scale. Of the 10 statements, 3 had mean scores that would be interpreted as disagree, 5 had mean score that fall in the range for agree and 2 fell in the range of strongly agree. None fell in the range of strongly disagree. The lowest mean score of the 10 statements was 2.02 for #18 which asked respondents if the school provided training aimed at helping students with intellectual disabilities to behave safely in school. The highest mean score was 3.31 for #30 which asked respondents if parents are encouraged to be active in their child’s education. Statement #29 had the second highest mean score of 3.26 and focused on parent involvement in conferences with the teacher.

The other statements that focused on the theme of behavior management and peer collaboration were #11 and #15. The respondents predominantly agreed that the behavior support plan developed by the team is something they can implement for #11 with a
mean score of 2.96. However, the statement that the IEP process allows students to work collaboratively with peers was met with disagreement and a means score of 2.43.

Statement #1 focused on input from the teacher, #6 focused on obtainable goals and #14 had to do with the IEP process allowing the teacher to reach challenging students and promote learning. Though both #1 and #6 were interpreted to be agreed upon with mean scores of 2.67 and 2.91 respectively, the results would be interpreted as disagree for #14 with a mean score of 2.50.

There were two statements that focused on the use assistive technology to help students with intellectual disabilities. Both #16 and #28 fell into the agree rating with mean scores of 2.67 and 2.66 respectively.

When reviewing the data for this question the overall mean score of 2.74 suggests that the research regarding best practices has not been widely implemented. The mean score drops to 2.60 for the statements under this question if you remove the two highest means which both involved parent involvement. This suggests that much of the literature regarding best practices has not made it into mainstream practice in schools.

Research Question Three

The third question that the research examined was “Does transition planning and the IEP process have an impact on high school teachers’ ability to be effective in the classroom?” The statements under this question examined perceived self-efficacy of the respondents. The statements focused on affirmative pronouncements of general ability when it comes to teaching and interacting with students with intellectual disabilities. Though some of the themes examined are similar to themes from the first two questions,
the main contributor in each statement is the teachers themselves. So the responses given reflect the teachers’ perceptions about their own ability and the effect that they have on others rather than the environmental effect on them.

The 10 statements that were associated with this research question were; #2, #3, #5, #9, #10, #12, #13, #22, #23 and #24. The overall mean for these questions was 3.09, which would mean there is a high level of agreement with the statements. Of the 10 statements, 8 had mean score that fall in the range for agree and 2 fell in the range of strongly agree. There were no mean scores that fell into the range of strongly disagree or disagree. The highest mean score was for #9 with 3.33, whereas the lowest for #12 with a score of 2.89. The focus of #9 was making expectations clear for students. The focus of #12 was helping students with intellectual disabilities enjoy communicating.

The next highest mean score was for #22 at 3.30 which stated that the respondent was able to establish trusting relationships with students with disabilities. Next came #23 with a mean score 3.19 that focused on encouraging students to expand their communication skills. Next came #13 and #24 that both had a mean score of 3.09. The focus of #13 was helping students interact positively and build relationships. The focus of #24 was the teacher’s ability to control disruptive behaviors. The next highest mean score was 3.07 for #10 that also focused on disruptive behavior and the ability to not allow them to interrupt the entire class. Next came #5 with a mean score of 3.04 and focused on the teachers’ ability to respond effectively when students need assistance. The next highest mean score was 2.94 for #2 which dealt with the ability to help a student
that is not achieving. The last score was 2.93 for #3 that focused on the ability to help a student with intellectual disabilities that is not learning at the rate of their peers.

There were 8 statements in which the mean score was above 3. This is significant because there were only 3 statements under the first two questions that had a mean score above 3. In fact, the lowest mean score for the statements under this question was 2.89, which is higher than the mean score for 15 of the 20 statements for the first two questions.

The data for these statements suggest that the respondents have a high perceived self-efficacy regarding their personal ability in working with students with intellectual disabilities. Unlike the responses given for statements under the first two questions, there was very little variation in the range of the responses. The difference between the highest mean score and the lowest for the statements associated with the third research question was .44. The next closest is the range for the first research question with a difference of .62. The statements for the second research question had the widest gap at 1.29.

**Recommendations**

The data that has been collected from this study represents the perceptions of some of Ohio’s high school teachers regarding transition planning and the IEP process for students with mild intellectual disabilities. There is evidence that once these students leave school their journey to adulthood will be met with obstacles that they are not equipped to meet. This evidence comes from the data that suggests today that students with mild intellectual disabilities are employees at a lower rate than their non-disabled peers. There is also evidence that they have struggles financially and with daily living
skills which prevents them from maintaining home independently. These are rites of passage for young people in becoming adults more so than chronological age.

The results of the study suggest that a further look should be taken at this subject. Students with mild intellectual disabilities have interventions in their educational process that start at an early age. They continue throughout the process until ultimately they are working on a transition plan through their IEP meant to help them after school is done. Though this is one piece of the educational puzzle it is an important one as it may represent the last educational intervention in an individual’s life if they do not pursue post-secondary education. The data suggests most will not. The following is recommendations for purposeful use of this data to continue to search for better outcomes for individuals with mild intellectual disabilities.

Research

The research done in this study delved into a small portion of the life of an individual with mild intellectual disabilities. In can, however, be argued that this time in the life of any individual is the most important time in life. Transitioning from high school to the next phase in life can determine the path for one’s entire life. The decisions made at this time will have an impact that is lasting and significant. For an individual with a mild intellectual disability leaving school without the skills to gain competitive employment or attend college will distance them from their peers. If they leave school without the ability to take care of daily personal affairs, they can end up on a path of ongoing paid supports just to learn basic living skills. That is why continued research in this area is important.
This study provided evidence that teachers have valuable information to share regarding their perceptions of transition planning. It would be beneficial to continue this research and expand the size of the sample. This study examined high school teachers from eight school districts in Ohio. There are over six hundred school districts in Ohio. The districts in the study were from the same typology listed on the Ohio department of Education website. More research in schools in the other typologies would provide an opportunity to see if the data is comparable in areas with differing socio-economic means.

This study can be replicated as written which will help to limit questions of reliability. The study can also be modified to look at other populations that play a role in this process, such as administrators, transition coordinators or family members. These perspectives can be useful in gathering more information regarding this critical part of the education process.

Transition planning is not a phenomenon that occurs only in the eight school districts in Ohio where this research was completed. Transition planning is part of the IEP process and is federally mandated. This study is applicable in any school district in the United States. It would be beneficial to expand the study and to see if there are themes that occur.

**Practitioners**

The information gathered in this study can be used by practitioners to look at the process in their school system and see if there are areas that may need adjusted. For teachers it is important to examine what their students with mild intellectual disabilities
are getting from their class. The ability to adapt a lesson to help them to learn is an area that respondents stated they have flexibility in. This is useful if the adaptation helps the student to learn and gives them a skill they can then use again. However, if it is just helpful in getting through one lesson it has less potential for a meaningful impact in the long term.

School leaders can use the information from this study to examine what is happening in the classrooms. The respondents in this study offered insight into their feelings about transition planning and the IEP process. They showed great faith in their own abilities, but not nearly as much in the process or what they were getting from the schools. This information can be used to start conversations about how things can be improved.

It can at the very least be used to ensure that teachers know they can and should have input. Of the sample that responded to the study, 25% answered that they strongly disagree or disagree with the statement that they can freely express their views on students with intellectual disabilities. That is a troubling number when you consider that potentially one quarter of the teachers that touch the lives of students do not feel they can speak up about issues related to them. One third of the respondents stated that they strongly disagree or disagree with the statement that they have input into IEPs. That is very troubling as well. The teachers should at least be asked for their observations or concerns so that they team can accurately address the needs of the students. The teachers are often the ones that are interacting with the students on a daily basis so their viewpoint should be represented in this process.
Policymakers

When you look at the data that is available regarding adults with disabilities and the low rates of employment and independent living, it is natural to ask what went wrong? Rather than look for a place to set blame it would be more beneficial to ask what could have been done differently? Whenever you have a system in place there needs to be a measuring stick for success. Today the measuring sticks are achievement tests and graduation rates. Those areas are important, but they force schools to focus on the present rather than the future. Schools are meant to prepare students for the rest of their lives. So the question our policymakers should ask is “what are our schools preparing students for?”

With that in mind policymakers need to examine what it is they are asking schools to do for students with mild intellectual disabilities. The mandates that schools currently operate under are not new. The goal of integrating students with disabilities into their local schools was to break down barriers and give students the same opportunities as their non-disabled peers. Though much work has been done, there is still more. Children with disabilities are being served in their home districts with their neighbors, but once school ends the divide returns and many do not continue to be part of their community. It is time to look at the current mandates and see if there are ways to make adjustments with a focus on the next phase of life for students.
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**Ohio Revised Code.** Chapters 5123 and 5126 Amended by 128th General Assembly ch.127, SB 79, §1, eff. 10/6/2009. Effective Date: 01-30-2004; 2005 SB10 09-05-2005


Youth, Summer 2011, 20(2) 13-16.


after high school: Key findings from the National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2) NCSER 2011-3004 U.S. Department of Education


Wagner, M., Newman, L., D’Amico, R., Jay, E. D., Butler-Nalin, P., Marder, C., & Cox,


Appendix A: Efficacy of Transition Planning for High School Teachers Survey

Demographic Information:

1. Gender
   a. Male
   b. Female
   c. Other

2. Please select from the list below the number of years you have taught.
   a. 0-10
   b. 11-20
   c. 21-30
   d. 31 +

3. Please select from the list below your main course of instruction. (Please select only one)
   a. Math
   b. Science
   c. Social Studies
   d. English
   e. Special Education
   f. Non-Core

4. Please indicate the grade you are currently teaching. (Please select only one)
   a. 9th
   b. 10th
5. I have taught students with Mild Intellectual disabilities (ID) who have an IEP in my class.
   a. Yes
   b. No (please submit your survey now)

For the remaining questions please select the response that most accurately reflects your level of agreement with the following statements.

a. Strongly disagree
b. disagree
c. agree
d. strongly agree

1. My input into each student’s IEP in my classroom is reflected in the transition plan.
2. When a student with intellectual disabilities is not achieving I am able to improve their understanding of the content.
3. I am able to help a student with intellectual disabilities who is not learning at the level of their peers improve their performance in class.
4. The IEP allows you to respond effectively to difficult behaviors from your students with intellectual disabilities.
5. I am able to respond effectively to students with intellectual disabilities when they need assistance with an assignment.

6. The goals of the transition IEP provide obtainable outcomes for very capable students with intellectual disabilities.

7. Based on the transition IEP I am able to provide an alternative explanation or activity when students with intellectual disabilities have difficulty with a lesson.

8. I am able to motivate students with intellectual disabilities who do not show an interest in school.

9. I make my expectations clear about students’ behavior to students with intellectual disabilities.

10. I can keep a few challenging behaviors from disrupting lessons when teaching a student with intellectual disabilities.

11. I am able to implement a behavioral management plan for one student with intellectual disabilities that does not disrupt other students.

12. I help my students with intellectual disabilities enjoy communicating.

13. I help my students with intellectual disabilities to interact in a positive manner with others to help build positive relationships.

14. The IEP process allows me to reach the most challenging students with intellectual disabilities in a manner that promotes learning.

15. The IEP process helps students with intellectual disabilities to work collaboratively with other students or peers in their school.
16. The school offers assistive technology for students with mild intellectual disabilities (ID).

17. Transition planning helps students with intellectual disabilities to believe they can do well in school.

18. The school provides training to teachers that is aimed at helping students with intellectual disabilities behave safely in school.

19. Transition planning fosters independence in students with intellectual disabilities.

20. Transition planning fosters self-determination in students with intellectual disabilities.

21. I am able to express views freely on important matters about students with intellectual disabilities.

22. I am able to establish a trusting relationship with students with intellectual disabilities.

23. I encourage students with intellectual disabilities to expand their communication skills.

24. I am able to control disruptive behavior in the classroom caused by students with intellectual disabilities.

25. The team (individuals, transition coordinator, special education coordinator, family, principal…etc.) has addressed ways to calm a student with intellectual disabilities who is disruptive.

26. The team process (individuals, transition coordinator, Special education coordinator, family, principal…etc.) addresses ways to adapt to adverse medical
conditions that affect the learning of students who have mild intellectual disabilities.

27. There is flexibility to accommodate or adapt lessons to students with intellectual disabilities.

28. Assistive technology has helped students with mild intellectual disabilities perform better in my class.

29. The parents/guardians of students with mild Intellectual Disabilities in my classroom are encouraged to attend parent/teacher conferences.

30. The parents/guardians of students with mild Intellectual Disabilities in my classroom are encouraged to be active in their child’s education.
### Appendix B: IRB Approval

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<td>Robin Stack (<a href="mailto:stack@ohio.edu">stack@ohio.edu</a>)</td>
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<td>Primary Investigator:</td>
<td>Robert Capaldi</td>
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<td>EXEMPT</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The Ohio University Office of Research Compliance reviewed and approved by exempt review the above referenced research. The Office of Research Compliance was able to provide exempt approval under 45 CFR 46.101(b) because the research meets the applicability criteria and one or more categories of research eligible for exempt review, as indicated below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IRB Approval:</th>
<th>03/11/2016 08:06:52 AM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Review Category:</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Waivers: N/A**

If applicable, informed consent (and HIPAA research authorization) must be obtained from subjects or their legally authorized representatives and documented prior to research involvement. In addition, FERPA, PPRA, and other authorizations must be obtained, if needed. The IRB-approved consent form and process must be used. Any changes in the research (e.g., recruitment procedures, advertisements, enrollment numbers, etc.) or informed consent process must be approved by the IRB before they are implemented (except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to subjects).

It is the responsibility of all investigators and research staff to promptly report to the Office of Research Compliance / IRB any serious, unexpected and related adverse and potential unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects or others.

This approval is issued under the Ohio University OHRP Federalwide Assurance #00000095. Please feel free to contact the Office of Research Compliance staff contact listed above with any questions or concerns.