A Dissertation

entitled

Special Education Teachers’ Perceptions for Teaching Self-Determination to Students with Severe Disabilities

by

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Submitted to the Graduate Faculty as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Special Education

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An Abstract of

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Recognizing that many students with disabilities, including students with severe disabilities, lack self-determined behavior and the impact it has on students school and postschool outcomes. Educators and researchers are increasingly advocating to better equip those students with the needed skills and knowledge to enable them to be self-determined and control their life to the fullest possible extent. This study surveyed 197 elementary and secondary special education teachers in public schools in a single state. The survey focused on teachers’ perceptions of the importance of teaching the seven skills of self-determination and the barriers they perceive that inhibit them from teaching self-determination. Teachers attributed considerable importance to teaching self-determination skills and reported addressing these skills with moderate to high frequency in their classrooms. Overall, rating of the frequency of teaching these skills were less than the rating of the importance across all skills. Few differences in rating of frequency of instruction were found based on school level.
This dissertation is gratefully dedicated to my husband

Hassan Albreek

And my parents, sisters, and brothers
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Chapter One

Introduction

Self-determination is the “ultimate goal of education” (Halloran, 1993, p.214) for all students. Self-determination includes various skills that empower individuals to control their lives (Field, Martin, Miller, Ward, & Wehmeyer, 1998). Education, as a process, aims to empower all students, including students with severe disabilities to be self-determined and control their lives to the greatest extent possible (Ward, 2005). Sarason (1990) indicated that one of the main purposes of the educational process is to “produce responsible, self-sufficient citizens who possess the self-esteem, initiative, skills and wisdom to continue individual growth and pursue knowledge” (p. 163). Such an idea of education brings to light initiatives to promote the self-determination of students with disabilities.

Enhancing students with disabilities’ self-determined behavior characteristics has been a considerable element of policy, research, and curriculum standards and teaching practices to help students to have a smooth and successful transition to postsecondary settings (Cho, Wehmeyer, & Kingston, 2013). Special education legislative and policy initiatives such as Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004), No Child Left Behind Act (NCLBA, 2001), National Council on Disability (2004), and the President’s Commission on Excellence in Special Education (2002) included self-determination as a means and concept in special education policy and practice that can improve students achievement in academic and adult life areas (Wehmeyer & Abery, 2013). These legislative actions have placed pressure on school to enhance all students with disabilities’ self-determined behavior (Rotatori, Obiakor, & Burkhardt, 2008).
Self-determination is important for students with disabilities to succeed in any endeavor (Abery et al., 1994; Field et al., 1998). Students will need these skills no matter what option they choose after high school, whether to complete postsecondary education or to find a job. Self-determination is a key to success for many students with disabilities. Being able to create and develop the self-determined behavior skills in students will help them prepare for school and life after school (Kochhar-Bryant, Bassett, & Webb, 2009).

Field et al. (1998) explained that self-determination is a complex construct that includes various skills, attitudes, knowledge, and beliefs that all together empower individuals to control their lives. Similarly, Martin and Marshall (1995) described a self-determined person as one who is capable of controlling his life due to his ability to make choice and set goals, make plans and decisions, create and use different approaches to solve problems, see options, speak up for himself or herself, identify resources and supports that are needed for success, and know how to evaluate progress toward his or her goals.

**Statement of the Problem**

The problem addressed in this study is that many students with disabilities including students with severe disabilities lack critical self-determination skills and are less self-determined than their non-disabled peers (Stang, Carter, Lane, & Pierson, 2009; Wehman, 2006). Such a deficit may be one of the reasons as to why these students do not pursue higher education or have high quality jobs. According to Thoma, Bartholomew, and Scott (2009), students with disabilities who lack critical self-determination skills lag behind the general population in postsecondary graduation or completion rates. It has also been argued that individuals with disabilities who lack self-determination are, in general,
less likely to have more positive adult outcomes than their peers who are more self-determined (Wehmeyer, Agran, & Hughes, 2000). Therefore, promoting self-determination skills is important for all students with disabilities including students with severe disabilities.

Since students with disabilities would not naturally possess self-determination skills unless their teachers provide them with explicit, systematic, and applied instruction (Kochhar-Bryant et al., 2009; Eiseman, 2007; Field & Hoffman, 2002), it is important that teachers perceive the teaching of self-determination to their students as important. Ward (2005) stated, “many individuals with severe disabilities have too few opportunities for choice and therefore do not know how to make choices and need targeted, systematic instruction to do so” (p. 109). Many special education teachers who teach students with severe disabilities believe that the skills related to self-determination, such as choice making or problem solving, are complicated and difficult for their students to learn and practice (Wehmeyer, 1998; Ward, 2005). Wehmeyer (1998) clarified that it can be difficult for those students to be completely independent to perform these skills, but the construct of self-determination means having control in one’s life to the greatest possible extent. Students with severe disabilities do have preferences, but they have barriers and limited opportunities to express their preferences (Ward, 2005; Dattilo & Mirenda, 1987).

Wehmeyer (2015) stated evidence has shown that promoting self-determination has a positive impact on student school and postschool experiences, but efforts to do so are not widespread. Underlying reasons can be related to teachers, administrators, or schools as a system. He indicated that despite having a strong evidence base for the importance of self-determination skills, teaching these skills only occurs when teachers
and administrators decide to do so. Wehmeyer (2015) indicated that there is an apparent need to provide school-based support services for special education teachers to explicitly and systematically teach self-determination skills. To promote students’ self-determination skills, teachers need to place considerable emphasis on teaching self-determination skills, planning activities, assessing students’ self-determination, and including self-determination-related goals and objectives in the Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) (Cho, Wehmeyer, & Kingston, 2013).

**Purpose of the research**

Different from other studies, this is a state level study to identify local needs related to teaching self-determination to students with severe disabilities. The purpose of this study was to determine if Ohio elementary and secondary school special education teachers who teach students with severe disabilities perceive teaching self-determination skills as important and what barriers may inhibit them from teaching these skills. The research also examined to the extent to which special education teachers include self-determination related-goals in students’ plans and how often they teach self-determination skills to students with severe disabilities.

**Research questions**

**Research question 1.** What perceptions do special education teachers of students with severe disabilities in Ohio elementary and secondary schools hold about the importance of teaching self-determination skills?

**Research question 2.** Are there differences in the ratings of importance teachers assign to teaching the different components of self-determination?

**Research question 3.** Do special education teachers of students with severe
disabilities in Ohio elementary and secondary schools believe teaching self-determination skills to be helpful in preparing students with severe disabilities for school and postschool life?

**Research question 4.** To what extent are self-determination-related goals included in students’ IEPs?

**Research question 5:** How often do special education teachers in Ohio elementary and secondary schools teach self-determination component elements to students with severe disabilities?

**Research question 6.** Are there differences in the frequency teachers allocate to teaching the different component skills of self-determination?

**Research question 7.** What barriers exist that inhibit special education of students with severe disabilities in Ohio elementary and secondary schools from teaching self-determination skills?

**Research question 8:** Do secondary special education teachers place higher value (importance) on teaching the components of self-determination than elementary special education teachers?

**Research question 9:** Are there relationships between rating the importance of teaching self-determination skills and instructional time (frequency) elementary and secondary special education teachers devote to teaching these skills?

**Significance of the Study**

Increasingly, more researchers and educators have called for promoting students’ self-determination at an early age at the elementary school rather than waiting until the secondary school years (Cho et al., 2013). NCLB (2001) and IDEA (2004) mandate that
all students including students with disabilities to have access to general education curriculum (Agran, Wehmeyer, Cavin, & Palmer, 2010). Promoting self-determination has been recognized as a mechanism for access to general education curriculum (Cho et al., 2013). Considering the fact that students with disabilities lack the self-determination skills, it is imperative that teachers value and frequently teach those skills to lead their student to greater self-determination (Mithaug, Campeau, & Wolman, 2003).

To date, there is a dearth of research that examines the perceptions of special education teachers who teach students with severe disabilities of the importance of self-determination skills (Cho et al., 2013). Examining teachers’ perceptions of the importance of and the frequency of teaching self-determination skills to students with severe disabilities will provide useful information to state department officials, local teacher preparation programs, school and district level administrators, and special education teachers. That will ultimately benefit students with severe disabilities who would be more likely to have positive school and adult outcomes that lead them to pursue post-secondary education and find jobs. Examining teachers’ perceptions of different aspects of self-determination can provide information that may encourage administrators within each school district in Ohio to implement school-based teacher support and curricula that advances characteristics of self-determined behavior among students with disabilities. Implementing a better school-based support system will help students with disabilities achieve more positive postschool outcomes through increasing teachers’ knowledge of and understanding for teaching self-determination.

Definitions of Terms

Causal agent. Implies that it is the person who makes or causes things to happen
in his or her life (Cho, Wehmeyer, & Kingston, 2012)

**IDEA.** The Individual with Disabilities Education Act is a law ensuring that children with disabilities are entitled to a free appropriate public education to meet their needs. The law has been revised multiple times over the years. Congress passed the most recent amendments in December 2004, with final regulations published in August 2006 (National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities, 2009).

**Least restrictive environment.** According to the IDEA, students with disabilities can receive a free appropriate public education and be educated in a regular educational environment with students without disabilities, to the maximum extent appropriate (Rozalski, Miller, & Stewart, 2011).

**Transition plan.** A transition plan is required for students enrolled in special education who have an Individualized Education Program (IEP). It is a legal requirement that must be included in all IEPs when the student reaches age 16. A transition plan is part of the IEP where transition goals and services for the student are written and accomplished before finishing high school to assist him or her in meeting the post-high school goals. These goals and services are based on student’s individual needs, strengths, skills, and interests.

**Self-determination.** Self-determination is a “dispositional characteristic manifested as acting as the causal agent in one’s life” (Wehmeyer, 2015, p. 20). Self-determination is a complex construct that includes various skills, attitudes, knowledge, and beliefs that all together empower individuals to control their lives (Field et al., 1998).

**Self-determination skills.** Also called the component elements of self-determination and instructional domains of self-determination, the seven skills that most
cited in the literature are choice making skills, decision making skills, problem-solving skills, goal setting and attainment skills, self-management skills, self-advocacy skills, positive perception of control and efficacy, and self-knowledge and self-awareness.

**Self-determined people.** Are individuals who “act in service to freely chosen goals [and their actions] enable them to be the causal agents in their lives” (Wehmeyer, 2015, p. 20).

**Students with severe disabilities.** Handleman (1986) indicated that the term of “severe disabilities” is used as an umbrella term to refer to the disabilities of individuals with autism, severe intellectual disabilities, and multiple disabilities. A student with severe disabilities is the one whose disability (a) is “manifested before the age of 22, (b) is chronic and severe, (c) can be attributed to a mental or physical impairments or both, (d) results in substantial functional limitations in major life activities, and (e) requires special services that are individually planned and coordinated” (Browder, Wood, Thompson, & Ribuffo, 2014, p. 6).
Chapter two

Literature Review

History of Self-Determination

Self-determination and students with disabilities was first introduced in the literature by Swedish philosopher Bengt Nirje in 1972. He published a chapter titled *The Right to Self-Determination* in Wolf Wolfensberger's (1972) book on the principle of normalization. In this chapter, Nirje discussed the rights of people with disabilities to make decisions about their lives and choices over their personal activities (Ward, 2005). Later, Robert Perske (1972), who is a contemporary of Nirje, discussed the rights of people with severe disabilities to experience “the dignity of risk” (p. 199). Perske (1972) stated that the world in which we and people with severe disabilities live is not always safe and predictable and there will be a situation where we need to risk everything. “We must work to develop every human resource within us in order to prepare for these days. To deny any person their fair share of risk experience is to further cripple them for healthy living” (p. 199). According to Ward (2005), both Nirje and Perske’s work in supporting self-determination laid the basis for the special education initiative to start.

In 1986, Deci and Chandler published an article discussing the importance of internal motivation to students with disabilities. Then in 1987, the first model that was mainly developed to teach skills related to self-determination emerged. Mithaug, Martin, and Agran (1987) developed the adaptability instructional model, which was based on research on self-control. They developed an instructional tool to teach students with disabilities adaptability skills to improve their adjustments in school and postschool settings. This model includes teaching students with disabilities decision-making; self-
regulation; independent performance, including the use of student-directed learning and self-management strategies; self-evaluation; and adjustment skills. Subsequently, in 1989 the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) actualized the self-determination initiative and held the first conference on self-determination and students with disabilities (Ward, 2005). OSEP announced a funding competition to encourage grant-seekers to develop model demonstration projects to teach skills related to self-determination. Over a 4-year period, the OSEP initiative and a parallel competition (1991–1994) funded 26 projects and many of these innovative approaches focused on students with severe disabilities.

In 1990, the Individuals with Disability Education Act (IDEA) was reauthorized and mandated that transition services must be organized set of activities that directed toward producing outcomes. In addition, these transition services are based on student’s needs, preferences, and interests and focused on facilitating the student’s from school to post-school activities (Ward, 2005). The 1997’s reauthorization of the IDEA included the following statements to support using the IEP process to enhance student autonomy:

Beginning at age 14, each student’s IEP must include a statement of the transition service needs of the child under the applicable components of the child’s IEP that focuses on the child’s courses of study (such as participation in advanced-placement courses or a vocational education program). (Section III, ¶ 6)

IDEA requires transition planning for all students with disabilities, beginning at age 14, that focus on adult life activities such as employment, community living and preparation, and independent living. Research focuses on promoting self-determination as a means for achieving this mandate (Thoma, Nathanson, Baker, & Tamura, 2002).
Definitions of Self-Determination

Several definitions appear in the literature. Some define self-determination as an educational outcome and others defined it as a quality of the individual. Field (1996) indicated that there are many definitions that approach self-determination from different perspectives, but they all share some common elements: freedom, control, and choice. The Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) defined self-determination as an educational outcome: self-determination is "choosing and enacting choices to control one's life-to the maximum extent possible-based on knowing and valuing oneself, and in pursuit of one's own needs, interests and values" (Campeau & Wolman, 1993, p. 2). Ward (1988) defined the construct of self-determination as "the attitudes which lead people to define goals for themselves and the ability to take the initiative to achieve those goals" (p. 2).

Field et al. (1998) defined self-determination as “a combination of skills, knowledge, and beliefs that enable a person to engage in goal-directed, self-regulated, autonomous behavior” (p.115). Individuals who realize their strengths and limitations and believe in their abilities are deemed to be self-determined individuals. They act based on their skills and attitudes and they have greater ability “to take control of their lives and assume the role of successful adults in our society” (Field et al., 1998, p. 116).

Mithaug (1991) described self-determined students as those who have purpose in their lives, know what they like and want, know what they are capable of, have goals, and know how to achieve them. Similarly, Martin and Marshall (1995) described a self-determined person as one who is able to choose and set goals, make plans and decisions, create and use different approaches to solve problems, see options, speak up for himself
or herself, identify resources and supports that are needed for success, and know how to evaluate progress toward his or her goals (as cited in Bremer, Kachgal, & Schoeller, 2003).

Wehmeyer (1996) defines self-determined behavior as “acting as the primary casual agent in one’s life and making choices and decisions regarding one’s quality of life free from undue external influence or interference” (p. 24). Sands and Doll (1996) defined self-determination as a characteristic of behavior that emerges from a “complex constellation of intrapersonal, interpersonal, and social systemic events” (p. 60).

Further, Burgstahler (2006) illustrated that an individual who is self-determined can gain control over his or her life and learn and successfully apply a number of self-determination skills, such as goal setting, understanding his or her abilities and disabilities, problem solving, and self-advocacy. She described self-determination as the individual’s ability to learn, use, and self-evaluate these skills in a variety of settings.

Campbell-Whatley (2008) defined the self-determined student as the one who “is able to set goals and exhibit self-control by responding to events in an independent, empowered, and self-realized manner” (p. 137).

For the purposes of the current study, I will adopt a definition proposed by Wehmeyer in which self-determined behavior refers to “volitional actions that enable one to act as the primary causal agent in one’s life and to maintain or improve one’s quality of life” (Wehmeyer, 2006, p. 117). This definition describes four essential characteristics of self-determined behavior. These characteristics are autonomous, self-regulation, psychological empowered, and self-realizing. Casual agency entails behavior that (a) is autonomous which means acting based on the individual’s own preferences and abilities;
(b) is self-regulating, the individual is able to act in his or her long-term best interest, take actions, evaluate the outcomes, make necessary changes to improve the outcome; (c) the individuals is able to respond to different events in a psychologically empowered manner; and (d) the individual acts in a self-realizing manner (Wehmeyer, Abery, Mithaug, & Staneliffe, 2003; Wehmeyer & Garner, 2003). This model emphasizes the development of self-determination across the life span as it can be acquired by learning skills and attitudes that enable youth and adults to control their lives. These skills and attitudes were defined as component elements of self-determined behavior.

**Self-Determination Skills**

Promoting self-determination involves several dimensions of characteristics that enable individuals to have control of their life. According to Wehman (2006), “the essential characteristics that define self-determined behavior emerge through the development and acquisition of multiple, interrelated component elements” (p. 43).

Wehmeyer et al. (2000) described components skills or instructional domains that may contribute to enhance the self-determined behavior among students with disabilities. Such component elements can serve as a guide for instructional planning and activities designing, curricular design, and assessment (Wehmeyer et al., 2000). These component elements are choice making skills, decision making skills, problem-solving skills, goal setting and attainment skills, self-management skills, self-advocacy skills, positive perception of control and efficacy, and self-knowledge and self-awareness. Evidence suggests that the increased capacity in the component elements of self-determined behavior result in more positive transition outcomes for students with disabilities (Wehmeyer, 2007).
The first component element of self-determination is choice-making skills, which is appropriately choosing between a limited number of choices (Palmer & Wehmeyer, 2003). Making choice is essential for students with disabilities to learn other skills and to function independently in their community (Shevin & Klein, 2004). Further, Wehman (1993) identified enhanced student choice as one of the most critical transition issues for the 21st century. Research has shown that enhancing choice-making skills has several benefits. Choice-making skills enable students to have some control over their lives (Palmer & Wehmeyer, 2003). Researchers have found that when students with disabilities are provided with opportunities to make choices, a decrease in problem behaviors, an increased engagement in appropriate tasks, and an increase in adaptive behaviors are observed (Shogren, Faggella-Luby, Bae, & Wehmeyer, 2004; Wehman, 2006). Watanabe and Sturmey (2003) indicated that students with disabilities engaged actively in vocational activities when educators provided choice-making opportunities. Research showed that teachers can foster greater choice makings skills through infusing choice making opportunities for exercising those skills throughout the students’ school life (Shogren et al., 2004). Shevin and Klein (1984) indicated that educational activities directed toward enhancing choice making are neglected in educational programs for students with disabilities and especially for students with severe disabilities. Brown, Belz, Corsi, and Wenig (1993) recommended seven ways to integrate choices into instructional activities. These ways are choosing within an activity, choosing between two or more activities, deciding when to do an activity, selecting the person with whom to participate in an activity, deciding where to do an activity, refusing to participate in a planned activity, and choosing to end an activity at a self-selected time.
Problem solving is another component element of self-determination that often involves the ability to consider the pros and cons of each potential action and identify barriers to success (Wehman, 2006). Palmer and Wehmeyer (2002) defined problem solving as the ability to effectively create solutions for challenging situations that arise. Students need to learn to effectively solve problems in order to be independent and competent. Educators should teach students how to problem-solve step by step and provide opportunities to practice this on a day-to-day basis (Wehman, 2006). The first step of teaching problem solving is to teach students how to realize and identify the problem. The second step is to find and consider each alternative solution to the identified problem. The next step is to make a choice and select the solution that is most likely to solve the problem. The final step is to evaluate the effectiveness of the preferred solution or decision and how it affects oneself and others (Wehman, 2006). Wehmeyer and Schalock (2001) suggested that instruction in problem solving should include problem identification, problem explication and analysis, and problem resolution.

Additionally, decision-making is an important skill of the self-determined behavior that involves choosing between unlimited options and the ability to make timely, well-considered decisions (Wehmeyer, Agran, & Hughes, 1998). Making effective decisions typically involves mapping out the likely consequences of decisions, gathering information and balancing different factors, and choosing the best course of action to take (Wehman, 2006). Decision-making often occurs in combination with choice making and problem solving. Some decision-making steps and activities are part of problem solving and choice-making (Palmer & Wehmeyer, 2002).
Goal setting and attainment is another area related to self-determination. Wehman (2006) defined as the ability to identify and set appropriate goals for oneself and develop a plan to reach these goals. To make a successful transition, students need to have goals related to their lives after leaving school (Agran, Blanchard, & Wehmeyer, 2000). Also, they need to be able to perform behaviors related to goals they choose. Wehman (2006) explained that teachers can promote goal setting skills by teaching students to “identify and define a goal clearly and concretely, develop a series of objectives or tasks to achieve the goal, and specify the actions necessary to achieve the desired outcome” (p. 48). Wehmeyer and Schalock (2001) indicated that performance on academic activity improved when students engaged in goal setting process. Hence, teachers should provide students with instructions in how to break long-term goals into several manageable steps so they become more accessible and achievable. Learning goal-setting skills helps students become more independent and proactive (German, Martin, Marshall, & Sale, 2000). Goal setting gives students a motivation to work and achieve (Shogren, Palmer, Wehmeyer, Williams-Diehm, & Little, 2012). Providing instruction to promote goal setting and attainment skills gives students opportunities to work toward accomplishing their own IEP goals (Grigal, Neubert, Moon, & Graham, 2003).

Additional key element of self-determination is self-management and self-regulation. Wehman (2006) defined self-regulation as the ability to control, monitor, manage, and evaluate one’s own behavior by being aware of one’s actions. According to Wehmeyer and Schalock (2001), self-regulated behavior includes self-monitoring, self-evaluation, self-instruction, and self-reinforcement. Using different strategies, teachers need to teach and encourage students to assess, observe, and record their own actions to
be able to regulate their own behaviors (Ennis & Jolivette, 2012; Wehmeyer & Schalock, 2001). Agran et al. (2005) indicated that self-management has been used to improve students’ learning skills and classroom involvement skills of students with severe disabilities and showed positive results. Research has shown positive outcomes after teaching students with disabilities self-monitoring skills. After teaching these skills, students showed an improvement in the critical learning skills, classroom involvement skills, math performance, reading comprehension, work productivity, and on-task behavior specially for students with autism (Agran et al., 2005; Jitendra, Hoppes, & Zin, 2000; Levendoski & Cartledge, 2000; Uberti, Mastopieri, & Scruggs, 2004). These skills help students have a greater chance of experiencing positive outcomes when transitioning to postsecondary settings (Coyle & Cole, 2004).

Further, self-awareness/self-knowledge is another important element of self-determination. This element is defined as the awareness of one’s own individuality, strengths, limitations, preferences, interests, and needs. Besides identifying that knowledge, it is important to apply it to enhance success and increase quality of life (Thoma er al., 2009). Students must realize and understand such knowledge in order to act in a self-realizing manner (Wehmeyer & Schalock, 2001). Research has shown that self-awareness and self-knowledge skills are critical elements that individuals with disabilities are going to need in order to be successful in postsecondary education and the workplace (Izzo & Lamb, 2002). Indeed, Izzo and Lamb (2002) suggested that developing self-awareness should begin during the elementary years, and involves realizing one’s potential, interests, and limitations.
Self-advocacy, a component element of self-determined behavior, requires having the knowledge of self, knowledge of rights, communication skills, and leadership skills to be a self-advocate and act and communicate for oneself (Test, Fowler, Wood, Brewer, & Eddy, 2005; McCarthy, 2007). VanReusen, Bos, Schumaker, and Deshler (1994) define self-advocacy as having the ability to communicate, express, negotiate individual own rights, needs, preferences, and interests. Shore (2003) defined this concept as “realizing what a person needs in order to maximize his or her functioning in life and knowing how to arrange the environment or obtain the necessary accommodations to do so. It is being literate about a person’s needs” (Shore, p.173). VanReusen et al. (1994) described self-advocacy as the major component of self-determination that associates with successful transition as it allows students to make changes in their lives and get the support they need to be successful in postsecondary settings. Self-advocacy is particularly important for students with disabilities when it comes to transition (Cobb, Lehmann, Newman-Gonchar, & Alwell, 2009). Students need to speak for themselves, stand up for their rights, communicate effectively, and assert their needs. They need to learn how to advocate for themselves at their job, in the community, in college, in daily living situations, and with their friends and family (Test et al., 2005). Self-advocacy involves many other subcomponents such as self-awareness, knowledge of rights, communication, and leadership (Test et al., 2005). Development of self-advocacy skills highly correlates with the development of other elements of self-determination. For example, self-knowledge is the first step toward advocating for rights. Students need to know their strengths, limitations, needs, and interests before they can begin to advocate (Wehmeyer
& Schalock, 2001). Research has linked self-advocacy skills to improved school retention rate and more positive adult outcomes (Roberts, Ju, & Zhang, 2016).

Lastly, perception of control and efficacy is another component element of self-determination. Efficacy refers to an individual's belief in his or her ability to successfully complete tasks and reach goals (Wehmeyer & Schalock, 2001). Furthermore, Wehman (2006) discussed efficacy expectation, which is an individual’s estimate that performing a specific behavior will lead to a particular outcome. An individual’s efficacy expectations can serve as positive messages that can motivate individuals to complete certain tasks. Students who believe in their ability to produce a desired or intended result are more likely to make attempts and successfully perform tasks or behaviors. Research found that students’ perceptions of efficacy can impact their academic, social, and behavioral outcomes (Wehman, 2006). Wehmeyer and Schalock (2001) described individuals who have internal locus of control as those who feel they have control over outcomes that are important to their life. Research indicates that people with disabilities have control that is more external rather than internal. Likewise, research shows a strong correlation between internal locus of control and more positive educational and achievement outcomes (Wehmeyer & Schalock, 2001).

Promoting internal perceptions of control, as well as adaptive efficacy and outcome expectations, happens by enhancing the other elements of self-determination. A teacher cannot use direct instruction to teach students self-efficacy or internal locus of control. Instead, students can learn that they have control over their life by actively engaging in the environment and by providing them with ample opportunities to practice these skills (Wehmeyer & Schalock, 2001).
Impact of Self-Determination on Postsecondary School Outcomes and Quality of Life in Adulthood

Findings from different studies have supported the hypothesis that the emphasis on promoting self-determination can result in more positive outcomes for school performance and the transition into postsecondary settings. Over the past 20 years, research findings showed that one of the most critical issues for students with disabilities is the impact of self-determination on an individual’s social life and in the transition planning process (Thoma et al., 2002). The National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center (NSTTAC) conducted a systematic correlational literature review to identify evidence-based predictors of positive post school outcomes for students with disabilities. The findings revealed 16 significant predictors of successful secondary transition. Self-determination was identified as one of these important factors for postsecondary success (Test et al., 2009).

Wehmeyer and Schwartz (1997) used The Arc’s Self-Determination Scale to assess the relationship between adult outcomes for students with cognitive and learning disabilities and their level of self-determination. The Arc's Self-Determination Scale is a student self-report measure of self-determination designed by (Wehmeyer, 1995) to measure students' perceptions of the four self-determined behavior characteristics: autonomy, self-regulation, psychological empowerment, and self-realization. One year after graduating from high school, a follow-up survey was used to collect data on adult outcomes such as employment, postsecondary education, and community integration. Findings showed that individuals who scored higher on measures of self-determination and had positive self-esteem had more positive adult outcomes. They had better
employment and living situations after leaving school. They were employed with greater
job benefits more than their less self-determined peers. In addition, self-determined
students were satisfied with their lives and live independently, or with support, outside of
their family homes. Wehmeyer & Schwartz (1997) concluded that students are able to
make a successful transition to adulthood, including all life domains, if they demonstrate
a high level of self-determination skills. Thus, educators and parents should enhance
students’ self-determination through offering more opportunities for those students to
control and make choices regarding their lives.

Similarly, Wehmeyer and Palmer (2003) conducted a follow-up study on students
whose self-determination scores collected during the final year in high school. They
surveyed 94 high school students with cognitive and learning disabilities one and three
years after leaving high school. The purpose of the study was to determine students’
status in employment, independent living and community integration. Students were
divided in two different group based on their self-determination scores. They found
significant difference between groups and changes at the outcomes of 1 and 3 years post-
graduation measurement periods. Findings showed that students with higher scores in
self-determination achieved more successful outcomes across life areas, including
employment with different benefits, independent living, and financial independence.

Russo Jameson (2007) conducted a study to follow students with disabilities who
had different levels of self-determination and went to college. The purpose of the study
was to determine the relationship between self-determination and success outcomes of
two-year college students with disabilities and how student with low and high levels of
self-determination describe their outcomes of pose-secondary experiences. Using
quantitative and qualitative methods, the researcher measured the following success outcomes: retention status, self-reported cumulative GPA, and employment and salary status. Findings indicated that students who had lower degree of self-determination had negative success for all three outcomes. Students with high self-determination scores had more positive success outcomes and were more satisfied about their post-secondary experiences than those with lower degree of self-determination. In addition, students with low self-determination scores described more negative post-secondary experience than the two students with high self-determination who described highly self-determining behavior and more positive experiences.

Powers et al. (2012) conducted a longitudinal, randomized trial to examine the efficacy of the *Take Charge* self-determination intervention for improving the transition outcomes of 69 students who were highly at-risk youth and are in both foster care and receive special education services. Assessments were taken at baseline, post-intervention and at one-year follow-up. The researchers found that there were statistically significant differences between intervention and control groups in self-determination, quality of life, and utilization of community transition services. Results showed that students in the intervention group graduated from high school, were employed, and were independently involved in life activities at notably higher rates than those in the control group. Findings suggested that there is a relationship between self-determination and independent living.

Wehmeyer, Palmer, Shogren, Williams-Diehm, and Soukup (2013) conducted a randomized trial control group study to examine the effect of promoting self-determination of students with intellectual disabilities and learning disabilities in high schools. During three years, 235 students who were in the treatment group received
instruction to promote self-determination and student involvement in the IEP meetings, while 132 students in the control group did not receive instruction related to self-determination. Three measurements were taken at baseline, after two years of intervention, and three years of intervention to measure students’ level of self-determination. The researchers used two instruments: The Arc’s Self-determination Scale (Wehmeyer & Kelchner, 1995) and the AIR Self-determination Scale developed by the American Institute for Research (Wolman, Campeau, Dubois, Mithaug, & Stolarski, 1994). The researchers found that students with intellectual disabilities and learning disabilities who were in the treatment group demonstrated more positive outcomes related to the characteristics of the self-determined behavior and greater level of growth in their scores than did students who did not receive intervention to promote self-determination. This study provided evidence that there is a causal relationship between exposing students to intervention to promote self-determination and enhancement of the self-determination.

Moore and McNaught (2014) reported the outcomes of students with disabilities who participated in Virginia Department of Education Self-Determination Project. The *I’m Determined* project is a statewide initiative designed to engage students with disabilities to learn and demonstrate self-determined skills. This project provides students with disabilities with direct instruction, models, and opportunities to practice skills associated with self-determined behavior. Outcomes of students who participated in this project included improved confidence, self-acceptance, advocacy, and leadership skills. In addition, those students demonstrated better communication skills (Moore & McNaught, 2014).
Shogren, Wehmeyer, Palmer, Rifenbark, and Little (2015) conducted a follow-up analysis of 779 students with disabilities who participated in previous studies that examined the efficacy of self-determination intervention in secondary school (Wehmeyer, Palmer, Lee, Williams-Diem, & Shogren, 2011; Wehmeyer et al., 2013). The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between self-determination and adult outcomes (employment outcome, independent living, financial independence) one and two years after high school. Findings revealed that there is a relationship between higher level of self-determination when graduating from high school and positive adults outcomes, which is consistent with other studies’ results (Powers et al., 2012; Wehmeyer & Palmer, 2003). Students who were more self-determined upon exiting high school had more positive adult outcomes. In other words, this study showed that self-determination status when exiting high school predicted postschool outcomes related to employment, independent living, and financial independence. The above referenced studies provided causal evidence that enhancing self-determination has school and postsecondary benefits for students with disabilities. These studies showed that promoting self-determination enhanced the self-determined behavior, which was causally related to significantly more positive employment, community inclusion outcomes, independent living, financial independence, career goals, and satisfaction outcomes (Moore & McNaught, 2014; Powers et al., 2012; Shogren et al., 2015; Wehmeyer et al., 2013).

In general, studies have shown that the chances of making a successful transition are high if students have self-determination skills (Bremer et al., 2003). Consistently, research studies have shown positive relationship between self-determination and employment. Wehmeyer (2002) indicated that students with disabilities who are more
self-determined are twice as likely to be employed one year after high school and they earn significantly more. Also, three years after graduation, these students are more likely to have employment that provides benefits like health coverage and vacation and are more likely to be living somewhere other than the family home. Studies also ascertained that students who are self-determined are more likely to reach their goals and be successful in their postsecondary life (Wehmeyer, 1992a; Wehmeyer & Schwartz, 1998a). Research has shown that persons with disabilities who demonstrate self-determination skills also experience a higher quality of life (Wehman, 2006).

Studies also have shown a positive correlation between self-determination and school experiences. Students with high levels of self-determination have higher grades, improved academic behavior and attendance (Palmer & Wehmeyer, 2003), and fewer behavior problems (Martin et al., 2003). Several studies have demonstrated that providing self-determination interventions has an impact on students’ behaviors related to classroom success such as on-task behavior (Copeland & Hughes, 2002), aggressive behavior (Shogren et al., 2004), and communication skills and participation in the IEP meeting (Test et al., 2005). Fowler, Konrad, Walker, Test, and Wood (2007) examined many studies in the literature reviews and concluded that self-determination is not just a predictor of postschool success, but also a significant indicator of student success in postschool academic performance in areas such as reading, math, and writing. Wehmeyer and Schwartz (1998b) concluded that self-determination skills are very important to the success of the transition process as it enhances students’ abilities to solve problem, make decision, work toward achieving their goals, and regulate their behavior.
Educators’ Perceptions of Self-Determination

In the last two decades, surveys of teacher perception have revealed that the majority of special education teachers believe that self-determination is important and benefits students with disabilities at both school life and post school life. For example, Agran, Snow, and Swaner (1999) surveyed 100 special education teachers to examine their perceptions of self-determination benefits, characteristics, and strategies. Out of 69 completed surveys, 3% preschool level teachers, 41% elementary school teachers, 29% middle school, 29% secondary school and 4% postsecondary school level. The majority of respondents served students with severe disabilities (84%), moderate disabilities (67%), mild disabilities (33%) and profound disabilities (33%). Findings indicated that 42% of respondents rated self-determination as a very important curricular area, 35% viewed it as highest priority, 17% rated it as medium priority, and 3% considered it lowest priority. Findings also showed that 55% of the participants reported that self-determination skills were not included in the IEPs or just included in some. When respondents were asked what self-determination was, most teachers (91%) thought that self-determination is mostly related to choice making, followed by goal setting (74%), problem solving (72%), self-reinforcement (71%), self-monitoring (70%), and self-advocacy (60%).

In respect to teaching self-determination skills, 84% of teachers reported teaching choice making, 80% on expressing preferences, 67% problem solving, and 65% self-reinforcement. Only a third of respondents indicated that they gave instruction in self-monitoring, self-instruction or self-scheduling. When teachers were asked to indicate if they have received instruction in teaching self-determination skills, they reported that
they learned about self-determination in their inservice instruction (39%), university courses (30%) or professional journals. Most of respondents indicated that students used self-determination skills. Specifically, 7% of teachers responded that their students frequently used self-determination related skills in their classroom or other settings, 28% between frequent and sometimes, and 41% sometimes. However, only 8% of them observed their students using choice making skills and approximately 2% of them said they saw their students using each of the other skills. Lastly, when asked about the benefits of self-determination, 83% reported it enhanced student self-confidence, and 78% said it increase student self-concept and competence.

Wehmeyer et al. (2000) reported findings from a national survey that examined teachers’ perceptions of the value of self-determination and issues relating to teaching skills leading to this outcome, whether classroom setting or type of student disability has an impact on teachers’ promotion of skills related to self-determination, their familiarity and sources for learning about self-determination, and their barriers to promoting self-determination in their students with disabilities. The completed surveys totaled 1219. Twenty-one percent of respondents came from a middle school campus, 42% a senior high campus, 2% postsecondary education campus, and 30% in other (residential, facility, hospital) settings. The results indicated that 60% of the respondents were familiar with the self-determination construct. The most frequently cited sources for learning about self-determination were professional journal articles, followed by conferences presentations and workshops, and then teacher graduate training. Teachers rated providing instruction in all seven domains of self-determination as moderately to very important. Decision making, problem solving, and choice making received the highest
rating among the seven self-determination skills. Thirty-one percent of teachers reported that none of their students has self-determination related goals on their IEP or transition plan, 47% indicated that some students had self-determination related goals, 22% indicated that self-determination related goals were included on all their students’ IEP or transition plan. The most frequent student-directed learning strategies teachers used were self-reinforcement, self-evaluation, and goal setting. Teachers reported different reasons for not providing instruction to enhance self-determination, the most identified reason was that they did not believe their students with disabilities would benefit from instruction on self-determination skills (42%), followed by that teachers did not have enough information or training in teaching self-determination skills (41%), teachers did not have authority to provide instruction in these areas (32%), teachers believe students need instruction in other areas more urgently (29%), and not being aware of curricular materials and strategies (17%). Teachers of students with more severe disabilities rated teaching self-determination in all seven domains as less important than did teachers of students with mild disabilities, with the exception of choice making. Findings indicated that the severity of disability influenced teachers’ perceptions of the benefit of teaching self-determination. The majority of teachers of students with severe disabilities reported that their students would not benefit from teaching self-determination.

Thoma et al. (2002) surveyed 500 special education teachers to determine what they know about self-determination, their sources of learning about self-determination, what teaching strategies they used to facilitate student self-determination, how effective they believed those strategies were, and how would they rate the importance of each of the components elements of self-determination. The majority (75%) of teachers reported
that they were familiar with self-determination, but had insufficient training on self-determination. Teachers also reported that they learned most about self-determination in graduate-level courses (32%), journal articles (25%), and workshops or conference presentation (23%). Most of the teachers believed that teaching the component elements of self-determination was important and that they teach at least one of these components. However, teachers reported that they did not know many methods or curricula that can enhance student self-determined behavior and were not confident if the methods they know and use were effective.

Grigal et al. (2003) surveyed general and special education teachers of high school students with high- and low-incidence disabilities to examine their familiarity and views on self-determination. Respondents indicated that they slightly agreed that they were familiar with the self-determination concept. More than one third of the teachers indicated that they were not familiar with self-determination or how to teach it. Teachers also reported that students with disabilities did not have the opportunity to learn or practice skills related to self-determination. Grigal et al. (2003) also examined differences between general and special education teachers in different issues and found that special education teachers who worked with students with high incidence disabilities indicated more familiarity with self-determination concept than general education teachers, but there was no difference in the familiarity with self-determination between general and special education teachers who taught students with low incidence disabilities. In addition, teachers who taught community life skills to students with high incidence disabilities were more familiar with self-determination than those who taught in college preparation or career technology program. Furthermore, special education teachers who
participated in either college preparation or career technology program were more familiar with self-determination and how to teach it than general education teachers who taught the same subject areas. Grigal et al. (2003) also found that teacher position and years of experience influenced teachers’ perception about students’ opportunities to learn and practice skills related to self-determination. More experienced teachers who taught students with high incidence disabilities were more familiar with self-determination and knew how to teach it than teachers of students with low incidence disabilities. General education teachers with more experience were more likely than general education teachers with less experience to report that their students had opportunities to learn and practice self-determination skills. Lastly, special education teachers with less than 10 years of experience were more likely to indicate that their students had opportunities to practice self-determination in their school than general education teachers.

Mason, Field, and Sawilowsky (2004) surveyed 523 special education teachers (77%), general education teachers (12%), and administrators (8%) to obtain their instructional practices and attitudes that related to self-determination and student involvement in the IEP process. Most respondents indicated that both student involvement in IEPs and self-determination skills instruction were very important. However, respondents reported that student involvement in the IEP meetings was minimal. Participants reported that some students attended their IEP meeting, but were not that involved. Regarding respondents’ perception of instruction in self-determination, they described their approach to teaching self-determination as informal (70%) with limited instruction (41%). However, two thirds of teachers said that they taught self-management and goal setting to their students.
Mason et al. (2004) found that there was significant correlation between the degree to which student was involved in the IEP meeting and the respondents’ rating of the importance of self-determination activities. Also, teachers who reported that they taught self-determination skills were more likely to rate self-determination as being more important. Findings also showed that teachers were not satisfied with the degree to which students were involved in their IEP process. The study also showed that the degree of satisfaction with IEP process correlated with the level of student involvement that respondents reported. Respondents who reported higher levels of student involvement were more likely to be more satisfied. Further, several difference were found between the perceptions of elementary teachers (22%) and secondary teachers (47%). Both groups showed significantly different perceptions about IEP involvement and self-determination. Secondary teachers reported higher levels of student involvement in the IEP process and placed higher value on the importance of students’ active involvement in their IEP meetings than elementary school teachers. Also, secondary school teachers tended to report that they were prepared to teach skills related to self-determination more than elementary teachers. Lastly, secondary teachers were more likely than elementary teachers to report that they taught self-determination skills through using formal and systematic curriculum.

With regard to school administrators’ perceptions of student involvement in IEP and self-determination activities, there was a significant discrepancy between administrators and teachers responses. Administrators tend to respond more positively and report greater levels of student involvement in IEP and self-determination activities than teachers. They were satisfied with general IEP process and current informal
instruction for self-determination, whereas teachers were dissatisfied with their districts’ approach to IEPs and the level of involvement of their students in their IEP process.

One significant finding of this study was that students were not very involved in the IEP process or have self-determination related goals. This study corroborated other previous studies conducted by Agran et al. (1999), Wehmeyer et al. (2000), and Thoma et al. (2002). The majority of teachers indicated that their students did not have IEP goals related to self-determination. Mason et al. (2004) indicated that teachers rated self-determination to be important, but they did not teach or use self-determination activities to enhance students’ self-determination. The researchers concluded that providing teachers with additional training and information regarding curricula would increase student involvement in IEP process and self-determination activities.

Agran, Hong, and Blankenship (2007) conducted a study to investigate the perceptions of teachers of students with visual impairments about issues related to the importance of teaching self-determination. Participants were 187 teachers who designed and implemented transition related services for students with visual impairments. Results of this study were similar to those reported by Agran et al. (1999) and Wehmeyer et al. (2000) showed that teachers placed a moderate to very important values on teaching the seven skills of self-determination. Teachers gave the highest ratings to problem solving and the lowest rating to choice making skill. Teachers also reported that self-determination is more important for students with low vision than for those who are blind. This finding was anticipated as prior research found that teachers believed self-determination is more important for students with mild disabilities than for those with more severe disabilities (Wehmeyer et al., 2000). Teachers also indicated that self-
determination would be helpful to their students for success in a school setting and in preparing the students for postschool settings. Further, consistent with previous surveys’ findings, only 10% of teachers indicated that all of their students’ IEPs included goals related to self-determination skills. In relation to the primary sources of teachers’ knowledge of the term self-determination, teachers reported the primary sources were professional journal articles (33%), conferences and workshops (30%), and their graduate training (22%).

Agran et al. (2007) found that the most cited reason or barrier for not providing instruction in self-determination skills was that teachers believed “there are other areas in which students need instruction more urgently” (51.4%), followed by “not aware of available curricular or assessment materials” (38.3%), “don't have the time to provide instruction” (37.7%), “haven't had sufficient training or information” (34.4%), “students would not benefit from instruction in these areas” (29.5%), “don't have the latitude to provide instruction” (29.0%), “already have adequate self-determination skills” (28.4%), and "someone else is responsible for instruction in these areas” (24.6%).

Carter, Lane, Pierson, and Stang (2008) surveyed 340 general and special education high school teachers in three unified school districts in a Western state to examine their perceptions of the importance of providing instruction in skills related to self-determination and the instructional time they devoted to teaching the component elements of self-determination. The majority of participants (255) were general education teachers in academic area such as language, math, science, social science, humanities, and elective classes such as related arts, physical education, health/vocational, and 55 were special educators serving students in resource room or self-contained classrooms.
Results indicated that both general and special education teacher assigned moderate to high levels of importance to each of the seven component elements of self-determination. More than two thirds of respondents indicated problem solving, self-management/self-regulation, decision making, and goal setting/attainment as being very important. Findings also showed that teachers sometimes to often teach each of the seven skills related to self-determination. The most skills that teachers reported frequently teaching was problem-solving. Self-advocacy and leadership were taught less often than other skills. All other skills (self-management, decision making, goal setting, choice making, and self-awareness) had similar instructional time.

Carter et al.’s (2008) results also showed that there was a strong positive correlation between teachers’ rating of the seven skills importance and the instructional time they devoted to teach these skills. The researchers also found differences in general and special education teachers’ perception concerning the importance of teaching self-determination. Special education teachers placed higher value on teaching self-determination skills than general education teachers. In addition, special education teachers teach the seven skills associated with self-determination more frequently than general education teachers. Both general and special education teachers assigned the highest level of importance to the same three self-determination skills (problem-solving, self-management, and decision making). Carter et al. (2008) examined whether teachers’ rating of the importance of teaching and providing instruction in self-determination skills differ based on whether they teach academic courses, elective, or both. Results indicated that the rating of teachers teaching in both academic and elective courses were higher than those who only taught academic classes. Carter et al. (2008) found that ample
opportunities for learning and practicing skills related to self-determination were
available across high school curriculum. This finding seems to diverge from what Agran
et al. (1999), Wehmeyer et al. (2000), Thoma et al. (2002), and Mason et al. (2004)
concluded from their studies. This study’s result showed that the level of importance
teachers allocated to teaching self-determination skills was reflected in the amount of
instructional time they reported assigning to each skill.

Stang et al. (2009) surveyed 563 elementary and 328 middle school teachers.
Eighty-eight percent of participants were general education teachers and 22% were
special education teachers in a Western state. The researchers explored the importance
teachers allocate to teaching each of seven instructional domains associated with self-
determination and the instructional time they actually devote to teaching these skills.
Overall, Stang et al. (2009) found that elementary and middle school teachers attached
moderate to high levels of importance to teaching each of seven instructional domains
associated with self-determination. The majority of teachers rated problem solving, self-
management, goal setting, self-awareness, and decision making as being very important
compared with other instructional priorities in their classrooms. Most of the teachers said
that they taught each of seven self-determination skills at least sometimes in their
classrooms. More than half of the teachers reported that they often taught problem
solving and self-management more than other instructional domains. The findings of this
study also showed that elementary and middle school teachers held similar perceptions
concerning the importance of teaching self-determination skills. However, middle school
teachers were significantly allocated more instructional time to teach self-determination
skills than elementary school teachers. Results also indicated that general education
teachers perceived teaching the seven skills of self-determination as less important than did special education teachers. Stang et al. (2009) suggested that the reason why special education teachers’ rating of instructional priority was higher than general teachers is that special education teachers recognize the presence of self-determination skills deficits among their students and the need to address these deficits. This study, as other studies (Agran et al., 1999; Grigal et al., 2003; Mason et al., 2004; Thoma et al., 2002; Wehmeyer et al., 2000), showed that there were discrepancies between rating the importance of teaching self-determination skills and actual instruction provided.

Cho, Wehmeyer, and Kingston (2011) surveyed 407 elementary special education teachers (58%) and general education teachers (32%) in 30 states to explore their perceptions of the importance of self-determination and to extent they teach it and the barriers that inhibit them from teaching it. Findings indicated that special education teachers were more familiar with concept of self-determination than general education teachers. Both group had similar views of the importance of promoting component elements of self-determined behavior. Particularly, most of teachers assigned higher rating of importance of teaching goal setting. This finding is different from what previous studies have found in which teachers placed higher value on teaching problem solving, self-management, and decision making more other self-determination skills (Carter et al., 2008; Stang et al., 2009).

Another unexpected finding was that elementary school teachers placed more importance on teaching self-determination than did secondary school teachers. This study showed the opposite of what other studies found. For example, Mason et al. (2004) found that secondary school teachers placed more value on teaching skills related to self-
determination than did elementary school teachers. However, two studies (Carter et al., 2008; Stang et al., 2009) came across that same result as Cho et al. (2011). This contrast was unexpected because most of the efforts to promote component elements related to self-determination historically have been directed largely toward students at the secondary and transition levels. Thus, secondary school teachers were expected to rate the importance of self-determination higher than the elementary school teachers would do.

Furthermore, Cho et al. (2011) study showed that teachers reported teaching the component elements associated with self-determination at least “occasionally”. This finding supports other studies’ results that showed teachers teach some component elements related to self-determination (e.g., problem solving, self-management, and decision making) on a regular basis (Stang et al., 2009). Wehmeyer et al. (2004) indicated that most state and local general curriculum standards include references to many of these component elements, which may have increased the likelihood of teaching them. Cho et al. also examined the relationship between teachers’ rating of importance of teaching self-determination skills and their reported instructional time and found relatively low correlations. Relationships were found to be higher for special education teachers than for general education teachers. This finding does not corroborate what Carter et al. (2008) found. They found high correlation between rating the importance and frequency. According to Cho et al., one reason to explain that is Carter et al. (2008) investigated the relationship among high school teachers where they use more self-determination related instruction than do elementary school teachers whom were the sample of this current study.
With regard to barriers to promoting self-determination, the current research showed that teachers rated students to have more urgent needs for instruction in other areas as a top barrier to teaching self-determination. The next most cited barriers were lack of training and insufficient time. As mentioned before, previous studies have showed that the most cited barrier was that many teachers believe their students with disabilities would not benefit from such instruction followed by lack of training, insufficient time, insufficient resources, and lack of support from administrators (Wehmeyer et al., 2000; Thoma et al., 2002; Mason et al., 2004). The least cited barrier to providing instruction in self-determination was that “students with disabilities would not benefit from such instruction”. It is noteworthy to mention that the top barrier found by Wehmeyer et al. (2000) was the one least cited barrier by teachers in Cho et al. study.

Carter, Sisco, and Lane (2011) surveyed 347 paraprofessionals who worked with students with severe disabilities to understand how they view the importance of providing instruction in self-determination skills. Generally, paraprofessionals assigned high levels of importance to each of the seven skills. Findings also showed that paraprofessionals placed higher importance on teaching choice making and problem solving than the other skills. Paraprofessionals also reported that they sometimes taught most of the seven skills of self-determination. However, two thirds of paraprofessionals indicated that they often taught choice making skills. In terms of instructional frequency, choice making and problem solving were also rated significantly higher. On the other hand, more than 15% of participants indicated that they have never taught goal setting, decision-making, self-management, self-advocacy, and self-knowledge skills. Carter et al. discussed the reasons underlying such a difference in emphasis. Having students need instructional
related to each of these skills, the availability of intervention to address each of these skills, and the degree to which these skills are included in classroom curricula can affect how frequent these skills were taught by paraprofessionals. For example, Wood, Fowler, Uphold, and Test (2005) reviewed self-determination interventions in the literature of students with severe disabilities and found that most of interventions address choice making more than any skill. In fact, they stated that there are skills related to self-determination that have not been addressed as an outcome measure.

Carter et al. (2011) study showed that paraprofessionals attached comparable or higher ratings of importance to the seven skills of self-determination than the importance special and general teachers attributed to these skills in prior studies (Carter et al., 2008; Stang et al., 2009; Wehmeyer et al., 2000). The researchers suggested such differences in ratings of the importance of each skill could be attributed to difference reasons. Carter et al. (2011) believed that providing individualized and one-to-one support gives paraprofessionals a better viewing platform to understand and realize the needs of their students. Moreover, different from special and general teachers who often work with students in a single setting (classroom), paraprofessionals work with students across multiple school settings (inclusive classrooms, special education classrooms, cafeterias, hallways, and community settings). According to Carter et al. (2011), that offers these staff a different vantage point to assess students’ needs in a more comprehensive manner. Carter et al. (2011) concluded that paraprofessionals play an important role in developing the skills associated with the self-determined behavior. Therefore, paraprofessionals should be trained and well equipped to effectively address self-determination skills.

Most recently, Carter et al. (2015) surveyed administrators to examine their
perception of each of seven self-determination skills, whether and where staff at their schools are teaching these skills, and what ways they use to equip teachers to learn about teaching self-determination. Participants were 333 administrators of elementary, middle, and high schools in Tennessee. Carter et al. (2015) found that administrators assigned high importance on their staff teaching each of the seven self-determination skills. Second, the majority of administrators reported that their staff only sometimes taught self-determination skills to students with and without disabilities. The ratings administrators gave to the frequency were lower than the ratings they assigned to the importance of each of the seven self-determination skills. Administrators’ ratings regarding the availability of opportunities for students to engage in self-determined behavior were fairly modest. The ratings of frequency of teaching and opportunities students have to practice the skills related to self-determined behavior did not reflect the high importance administrators placed on teaching these skills. Carter et al. (2015) suggested that what might account for this results are either administrators were not aware of the extent to which these skills are being addressed or educators focus more on covering the academic materials which leaves them with less time available to address self-determination skills.

Another finding is administrators reported that self-determination skills were being taught typically in special education classrooms. The second frequently cited location within which self-determination skills were being taught were core content classes followed by elective and related arts classes. Although the self-determination is more used in special education than in general education, the researchers found no differences in the importance administrators assigned to teaching these skills to students
with disabilities versus students without disabilities. Lastly, administrators provided ideas of how their staff could access ways for professional development to enhance self-determination. Administrators reported in-districts and during-school workshops to access professional development. The least likely options to access self-determination skills workshops were in-districts and weekend workshops and national conferences. Carter et al. (2015) concluded that this study showed that administrators like special education and general education do value providing instruction on teaching the seven skills of self-determination.

**Self-determination and Students with Severe Disabilities**

Handleman (1986) defined the term severe disabilities as those students who receive services under the special education categories of autism, severe intellectual disabilities, and multiple disabilities. A student with severe disabilities is the one whose disability (a) is “manifested before the age of 22, (b) is chronic and severe, (c) can be attributed to a mental or physical impairment or both, (d) results in substantial functional limitations in major life activities, and (e) requires special services that are individually planned and coordinated” (Browder et al., 2014, p. 6).

Lane, Carter, and Sisco (2012) indicated that those students experience difficulties acquiring the skills and opportunities that can promote the self-determined behavior. The National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 reported that students with severe disabilities have low functional, social, and communication skills. Their scores from the Arc’s Self-Determination Scale were very low. Similarly, Carter, Owens, Trainor, Sun, and Swedeen (2009) asked teachers and parents to evaluate the self-determination capacities of students with severe disabilities. Findings showed that those students had limited
knowledge about self-determined behavior, limited ability to perform these behaviors, and little confidence regarding the efficacy of their self-determination efforts. Ward (2005) explained that the underlying reasons of such results are that students with severe disabilities have too few opportunities to experience and perform skills related to self-determination and their teachers are less likely to teach these skills to them.

As noted above, the severity of disability does influence teachers’ perception of teaching self-determination. Teachers of students with severe disabilities viewed self-determination as less important and taught it less often than teachers of students with mild disabilities (Carter et al., 2008; Stang et al., 2009; Wehmeyer et al., 2000). Wehmeyer (2005) stated that “the belief that students with severe cognitive and multiple disabilities will not or cannot become self-determined remains a barrier for many such students” (p. 113). Wehmeyer et al. (2000) explained that believing that students with severe disabilities would not benefit from instruction “may be tied to an interpretation of self-determination that place undue emphasis on performing behaviors independently, without appropriate supports” (p. 64). Wehmeyer (1998) indicated that it is true that acquiring and learning complex skills like decision making and problem solving can be affected by the severity of the disability and those students are less likely to independently perform some of the self-determined behavior, but that does not diminish the importance of teaching and providing opportunities for those students to become more self-determined. The fact that those students may not be able to independently make a decision or solve a problem does not mean they cannot become less dependent or participate in making decisions regarding their lives. To become self-determined does not mean to be completely independent and do everything alone. Students with severe
disabilities can become more self-determined, even if they are not fully independent (Wehmeyer et al., 2000, Wehmeyer, 1992b).

Most of studies have demonstrated that self-determination can be effectively taught to students with high-incidence or mild disabilities (Carter, Lane, Crnobori, Bruhn, & Oakes, 2011; Test, Fowler, Brewer, & Wood, 2005; Wehmeyer et al., 2011). Other studies have provided evidence that students with severe disabilities can learn to self-regulate and self-manage their own behavior, become less dependent on others, (Agran, Fodor-Davis, & Moore, 1986; Frea & Hughes, 1997). Also, those students can learn to self-instruct (Hughes, Killian, & Fischer, 1996) and make choice and express preferences (Hughes, Pitkin, & Lordden, 1998). Wehmeyer et al. (2012) found that students’ scores on the AIR and the SDS scales of self-determination significantly increased after teaching and receiving interventions related to the different skills associated with the self-determined behavior.

In conclusion, promoting the self-determination for all students with disabilities has become best practice to increase students’ success in school and postsecondary life (Cho et al., 2013). After 25 years of the OSEP model demonstration initiative, many studies have shown the effectiveness of teaching self-determination as a significant predictor of student success (Wehmeyer, 2015). Prior research documents the benefit of enhancing the self-determined behavior skills of students with disabilities in achieving more positive outcomes for academic performance and learning opportunities (Carter, Lane, Crnobori, Bruhn, & Oakes, 2011; Konrad, Fowler, Walker, Test, & Wood, 2007; Agran, Cavin, Wehmeyer, & Palmer, 2006; Lee, Wehmeyer, Palmer, Soukup, & Little, 2008; Palmer, Wehmeyer, Gipson, Agran, 2004; Martin et al., 2003), employment and
career goals (Wehmeyer & Palmer, 2003), postsecondary and community participation (Getzel & Thoma, 2008; Robbins, Allen, Casillas, Peterson, & Le, 2006; Wagner Newman, Cameto, Garza, & Levine, 2005), and improved quality of life and lifestyle satisfaction (Lachapelle et al., 2005; Wehmeyer & Palmer, 2003). Promoting self-determination can also support access to least restrictive environment or general curriculum for youth with disabilities (Carter et al., 2008). Research has also documented the fact that students with disabilities lack self-determination and are less self-determined than their non-disabled peers (Mehling & Tasse, 2015; Wehmeyer, Field, Doren, Jones, & Mason, 2004). Prior research indicates that educators teach or promote self-determination skills more incidentally than explicitly (Carter et al., 2015; Mason et al., 2004; Thoma et al., 2002). The need for self-determination instruction is well acknowledged (Agran et al., 2007; Cho et al., 2013). One solution that has been proposed as a means to resolving this problem is to increase attention to explicitly promoting and teaching self-determination skills at an early age (Palmer & Wehmeyer, 2003; Wehmeyer et al., 2004). Several researchers suggested that one of the most important content areas that enhances students’ learning and independence is self-determination (Agran et al., 2007; Chou, Wehmeyer, Palmer, & Lee, 2016). Students with disabilities are unable to acquire and master the skills of self-determination without the guidance of their teachers (Campbell-Whatley, 2008).
Chapter Three

Methodology

Participants

The target population of this study was 500 special education teachers who teach students with severe disabilities in elementary and secondary (Middle and high schools) in Ohio. That number was estimated based on the number of students with severe disabilities in Ohio. The sampling frame consisted of all teachers who provide instruction to students with severe disabilities in elementary and secondary schools and who are identified as educators from the 609 school districts in Ohio and the membership lists of TASH (The Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps). With the focus on exploring a variety of teachers’ experiences rather than generalization, the study will use nonprobability or nonrandom sampling. Also, because the population is finite and rather small, the non-probability/comprehensive sampling will be used. In other words, all teachers in the sampling frame will be included in the study. With a sample of 500 teachers, the sample size needed to be 95% confident with +/- 5% is 217.

Procedures

After receiving the IRB approval, the survey was emailed to the directors of special education and superintendents. Also, the researcher directly sent the surveys to the teachers who their directors or superintendents did not respond and confirm sending the survey to them. A follow-up reminder was sent one week after participants received the questionnaire and another reminder was sent two weeks after the questionnaire was received. Data collection lasted until the end of the school year.
Data for the study was collected using online methods. The survey was emailed to superintendents of the districts and the directors of special education in the state of Ohio and they were asked to pass them along to their teachers who teach students with severe disabilities. Also, the survey was emailed to educators identified as special education teachers in Ohio from the membership lists of TASH. It was specified that only those teachers who are responsible for teaching students with severe disabilities in Ohio return the survey. The participants were asked to complete the questionnaire via an online format (Survey Monkey). This method has been chosen because the population is educated professionals and they were more likely to respond by email or online. Further, all teachers have e-mail and web facilities available to them and are assumed to be technically competent in their use.

Because the use of an incentive has been found to be effective in increasing the response rate (King, Pealer, & Bernard, 2001), participants were told that all respondents who returned a completed survey and provided their emails were entered into a drawing of 10 gift cards (25$ each) after completion of the study. Ten gift cards were sent to 10 teachers who chose to enter into the drawing. Two hundreds and seventy-eight surveys were received. Forty-one responses were not qualified as the respondents indicated that they did not currently teach students with severe disabilities. Forty responses were incomplete. Response rate was calculated as number of qualified responses minus incomplete surveys divided by number surveys reaching recipients.

\[
\frac{237-40}{500} \times 100 = 39.4\%, \text{ the response rate was } 39.4\%.
\]

**Research Design**

A non-experimental cross-sectional survey research design was used to conduct
This design was chosen to examine special education teachers’ perceptions related to different aspects of the importance and frequency of teaching self-determination skills to students with severe disabilities. For this purpose, this questionnaire used an adapted version of a survey by Wehmeyer, Agran and Hughes (2000), described in greater detail in the “Instrumentation” section. The survey was adapted to explore the views and knowledge of elementary and secondary special education teachers on the topic of self-determination and how they use this knowledge in the classroom setting. This survey was adapted as it includes all the instructional domains associated with promoting self-determination that was based on the model of Wehmeyer et al. (2000). Also, each item was accompanied by brief definition and examples of instructional activities that represent the domain.

As noted previously, the survey items were placed on the Internet and teachers were invited to respond. This method was suitable because of the type of the sampling procedures where a list of target populations readily exists. The use of internet-based survey methodologies offers many benefits. One advantage of this method is that the cost for distribution of surveys is inexpensive. Also, a large number of participants can be reached very quickly at the same time. Another benefit is that the teachers can choose when and where to respond. A fourth advantage is that there is no time pressure for participants to finish the questionnaire. More importantly, web surveys can yield higher response rate compared to other type of surveys (Fricker & Schonlau, 2002). Moreover, an online survey will allow us to monitor data collection and quality on a daily basis. Also, follow-up reminders can be easily sent through this method. It has been found that response rates can be doubled with follow-up reminders (Solomon, 2001).
Instrumentation

The instrument that was used in this study is included in the appendix and is titled: *Promoting Self-Determination and Student Directed Learning: Expanded Version*. This version was based upon a survey developed and used by Agran et al. (1999). This original version was expanded and used in a study by Wehmeyer et al. (2000) and Cho et al. (2011) to conduct a national survey to determine if special education teachers are generally familiar with the term self-determination and whether they teach self-determination. The survey consisted of two sections, one to collect demographic information such as years of experiences, grade level, and number of caseloads, and the second section asking about (a) the importance teachers place on promoting self-determination, (b) the frequency with which teachers teach skills related to self-determination, (c) the perceptions of the benefits of self-determination in preparing students for school and for postschool life, (d) the extent to which they include self-determination related-goals in students’ IEPs, and (e) the barriers they perceive that inhibit teaching self-determination. To retain the ability to make comparisons across studies, items wording, examples, definitions, and scale anchors are identical to those included in the Wehmeyer et al. (2000) survey. The importance items were rated on a 6-point Likert-type scale ranging from low (1) to high (6). The frequency items were rated on a 6-point Likert-type scale ranging from never (1) to very often (6). Each item was accompanied by a brief definition. The next question asked respondents to rate how much promoting self-determination would help prepare their students for school and postschool life. Responses ranged from 1 (not helpful) to 6 (very helpful). The following question asked respondents to identify how many of their students have self-determination-related
goals on their IEP or transition plans. Respondents had four responses to choose from (“none”, “some”, “most”, or “all”). The final question asked teachers to choose from a list of items what they perceive to be barriers to promoting self-determination. Teachers were asked to select all viable reasons that might lead them not to provide instruction to promote self-determination. Examples of reasons included in the list are students already have adequate skills in these areas, students are too young to learn these skills, someone else is responsible for instruction in this area, I don’t have sufficient time to provide instruction in these areas, there are other areas in which your students need instruction more urgently (e.g. academic areas, challenging behavior), haven’t had sufficient training or information on teaching in these areas, as a teacher I am not aware of available curricular or assessment materials, I am not familiar with instructional methods or strategies related to these areas, or students would not benefit from instruction in these areas because of their characteristics.

**Pilot Study**

Pilot investigations were conducted to ensure the clarity, comprehensiveness, relevance of questionnaire items, and length of the survey. The pilot was sent to 18 special education teachers who were asked to complete the survey. The participants were asked to critique the questionnaire by responding to questions and making comments. They responded to items, provided feedback on the clarity of the items, the time it took to complete the questionnaire, and made suggestions for improvements. After receiving critical feedback, the survey questionnaire was revised. The final survey instrument reflects the recommendations of the pilot group. All teachers who chose to complete the survey and provided their contact information on the last page of this survey; their names
were entered into a drawing for a $25 gift card (American Express). The gift card was sent to one of the teachers who participated in the survey.

**Reliability**

The instrument has strong internal consistency with coefficient reliabilities of .90 and .83 for the importance and frequency of teaching self-determination scales. Both estimates exceeded the recommended value of .70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Besides the original study of Wehmeyer et al. (2000), the same tool has been used in many previous studies and showed good internal consistency, with Cronbach’s alphas higher than .80 (Cho et al., 2011; Carter et al., 2011; Carter et al., 2009; Stang et al., 2009; Carter et al., 2008). The importance of teaching components of self- determination and the frequency of teaching components of self-determination scales are both composed of 7 items: Choice-Making, Problem-Solving, Goal-Setting, Self-Advocacy/Leadership, Self-Management, and Self-Awareness and Decision-Making. Items on the scales are rated by each teacher in the survey on a Likert-type scale of 1 to 6, or low to high, reflecting the teacher's attitudes and classroom practices with respect to each component.

**Data Analysis**

Data was analyzed using a comprehensive statistical software package, SPSS for Mac Release 21.0.0.0. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize rating of importance and frequency across all respondents. The differences in mean scores for importance and frequency of instruction items based on school level (elementary vs. secondary) were reported. Descriptive statistics were also used to determine the demographic and professional characteristics of participants in this study. A repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to examine differences in ratings of importance and
frequency of instruction among the seven self-determination component skills. Pearson correlation coefficients was also conducted to examine the relationship between teachers’ ratings of importance and frequency of instruction of self-determination. Multivariate analyses of variance was used to compare differences in ratings of importance and frequency of teaching between elementary school teachers and secondary school teachers.

**Research question 1:** What perceptions do special education teachers of students with severe disabilities in Ohio elementary and secondary schools hold about the importance of teaching self-determination skills?

**Analysis:** Descriptive statistics were used to summarize ratings of importance to determine the levels of importance to each of the seven component elements of self-determination. After creating seven variables for each participant, a repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted across the seven skills. If the results were significant, a post hoc Tukey multiple comparison was conducted to determine the items that have high or least importance.

**Research question 2:** Are there differences in the ratings of importance teachers assign to teaching the different components of self-determination?

**Analysis:** A repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to determine if there are significant differences among the 7 components of self-determination with regard to Importance. The seven self-determination skills were the within-subject factor named “skill-Importance” and had 6 levels and the measure name was “rating”. If the finding was significant, follow-up pairwise comparisons post-hoc test was performed to determine which components were rated significantly higher than
Research question 3: Do special education teachers of students with severe disabilities in Ohio elementary and secondary schools believe teaching self-determination skills to be helpful in preparing students with severe disabilities for school and postschool life?

Analysis: Item 8 asks teachers to rate how helpful teaching their students self-determination would help them improve school and postschool outcomes on a scale of 1 to 6, Not Helpful to Very Helpful. Mean scores and percentage of teachers’ responses to each category were calculated.

Research question 4: To what extent are self-determination-related goals included in students’ IEPs?

Analysis: Item 9 asks teachers to indicate to what extent self-determination skills-related goals are included in their students’ IEPs on a scale of 1 (none) to 4 (all). The percentage of teachers’ responses to each category was calculated.

Research question 5: How often do special education teachers in Ohio elementary and secondary schools teach self-determination component elements to students with severe disabilities?

Analysis: Descriptive statistics were used to summarize ratings of how often teachers teach each of the seven component elements of self-determination. A repeated measures analysis of variance was conducted across the seven skills to see if they are different in the rating of the frequency of teaching. If the results were significant, a post hoc Tukey multiple comparison was conducted to determine the skills that were rated significantly higher in terms of instructional frequency relative to other skills.
**Research question 6:** Are there differences in the frequency teachers allocate to teaching the different component skills of self-determination?

*Analysis:* A repeated measures analysis of variance was used to find if there are significant differences among the components of self-determination with regard to the frequency teachers report teaching each component. The six self-determination skills are the within-subject factor named “skill” and has 6 levels and the measure name is “rating”. If the finding of the repeated measures ANOVA is significant, follow-up pairwise comparisons Post-hoc test will be performed to determine which components were more frequently taught than others.

**Research question 7:** What barriers exist that inhibit special education of students with severe disabilities in Ohio elementary and secondary schools from teaching self-determination skills?

*Analysis:* Teachers’ responses to item 10 was used to determine which barriers are the most or least commonly cited. Barriers reported in item 10 were rank ordered according to the frequency with which each was selected. Also, the percentage of teachers’ responses to each barrier will be reported.

**Research question 8:** Do secondary special education teachers place higher value (importance) on teaching the components of self-determination than elementary special education teachers?

*Analysis:* A one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVAs) was used to evaluate differences between teachers of students in secondary schools and teachers of students in elementary schools on the Importance of teaching the components of self-determination. Teacher school type was treated as a fixed-effects factor. Dependent
variables was the seven skills of self-determination. The first step was conducting a test to compare the two groups of teachers on all the components simultaneously. If the finding of the first part was significant, univariate analysis was conducted to determine which individual components differentiate between the two groups (secondary school teachers versus elementary schools teachers).

**Research question 9:** Are there relationships between rating the importance of teaching self-determination skills and instructional time (frequency) elementary and secondary special education teachers devote to teaching these skills?

**Analysis:** Pearson correlation coefficients was used to examine the relationships between two variables teachers’ ratings of the importance of teaching each of the components of self-determination (Importance) and the Instructional Time (frequency) they allocate to teaching each of those components.
Results

Participants in the current study were 197 special educators in Ohio who teach students with severe disabilities. Ninety four were elementary special educators and 103 were special educators in middle and high school (See Table 2). The majority of participants were female teachers and had worked as a teacher over 10 years (See Tables 1 and 3). The number of caseload each teacher had varied. A large portion of the participants had more than 16 cases (See Table 4). In the present study more than half of the participants were teaching in a resource room (See Table 5). Over three fourths (n=138) of the participants held a Master’s degree (See Table 7). Analyses examined teachers’ perceptions of the importance and frequency of teaching self-determination skills. In addition, analyses compared elementary and secondary special educators in order to explore differences in their teaching practices with regard to self-determination.

The following sections report the demographic and professional information of the participants and the results of statistical analyses of the survey responses organized by research question. Each section includes the research question, a description of the analytic method used, and a summary of the statistical findings.
Demographic and Professional Information of the Participants

Table 1

*Gender*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2

*School level*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School level</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary school</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary school</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3

*Years of Teaching experience*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of years</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-3 years</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>10.66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-6 years</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>11.17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-10 years</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>11.68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 10 years</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>66.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4

_Number of cases each teacher had_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of students</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>32.49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>35.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 and more</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>28.93%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5

_Setting of teaching_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regular class</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>41.12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource Room</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separate Class</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Respondents could choose multiple categories.

Table 6

_School Setting_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Large City</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>22.34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>30.96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town or small city</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>23.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>23.35%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7
Table 8  
*Disability Categories of Students*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>$n$</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Specific Learning Disabilities</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>72.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech or Language Impairments</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>54.08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual Disabilities</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>65.31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traumatic Brain Injury</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>23.47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Disabilities</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>50.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearing Impairments</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>18.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orthopedic Impairments</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>14.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blindness and Visual Impairments</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>11.73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autism</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>76.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Disturbances</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>56.12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deafblind</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other health impairment</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>65.31%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Respondents could choose multiple categories.

**Research Question 1**
What perceptions do special education teachers of students with severe disabilities in Ohio elementary and secondary schools hold about the importance of teaching self-determination skills?

**Analysis**

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize ratings of importance to determine the levels of importance to each of the seven component elements of self-determination. Percentage of respondents Rating instruction in self-determination as Not, Moderately, or very important, and mean scores and Standard Deviations for each component elements are reported.

**Findings**

Overall, special education teachers assigned moderate to high (ratings of 4, 5, or 6) importance to each of the 7 component elements of self-determination (see Table 9), with mean scores ranging from (5.59) for self-management skills to (4.99) for goal setting skills. All means exceeded the mid-point of the scale (rating of 3). More than 90% of teachers rated self-management skills as having high importance (rating of 5 or 6). More than 88% of teachers rated problem solving, self- advocacy, and, self-knowledge as having high importance. More than 84% of teachers rated choice making and decision making as having high importance. 69% of teachers assigned high importance to goal setting. Teachers rated the importance of these skills relative to other instructional priorities for the students with whom they worked.
Table 9

Percentage of respondents Rating instruction in self-determination as Not, Moderately, or very important, and mean scores and Standard Deviations for each component elements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component elements</th>
<th>% Rating</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 or 2</td>
<td>3 or 4</td>
<td>5 or 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not</td>
<td>Moderately</td>
<td>Very</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Important</td>
<td>Important</td>
<td>Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choice making</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>84.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision Making</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>86.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem Solving</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>89.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal Setting</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>24.7</td>
<td>71.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Management</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>92.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self Advocacy</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>90.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self Knowledge</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>88.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Percentage are based on the number of participants who completed all questionnaire

**Research Question 2**

Are there differences in the ratings of importance teachers assign to teaching the different components of self-determination?

**Analysis**

A one-way within subject ANOVA was conducted with the factor being the rating of each skill and the dependent variables being the seven self-determination skills. The means and standard deviations for skills ratings are presented in Table 10. A significant finding in the omnibus repeated measure ANOVA above, led to follow-up pairwise
comparisons post-hoc test to determine which components were rated significantly higher than others.

-findings-

The repeated measures ANOVA found that there were significant differences among teachers’ ratings of the of the Importance of the 7 component elements of self-determination, Wilks’s $\Lambda = .70$, $F (6,191) = 13.52$, $p < .01$, multivariate $\eta^2 = .30$. Post hoc tests using the Bonferroni correction revealed that Self-management received the highest importance ($M=5.59$, $SD=.77$), followed by Problem solving ($M=5.54$, $SD=.8478$), and then Self-advocacy ($M=5.51$, $SD=.83662$), Decision-making ($M=5.41$, $SD=.880$), Choice making ($M=5.36$, $SD=.9985$), Self-knowledge ($M=5.35$, $SD=.85366$), Goal setting ($M=4.99$, $SD=1.1157$).

According to the Post hoc tests, self-management and problem solving skills were rated significantly higher than all other skills ($p<.001$). Decision-making, choice making, and self-advocacy were statistically similar. Self-knowledge and goal setting received the lowest importance score. However, the rating for self-knowledge was significantly higher than goal setting ($p<.001$). All skills were rated significantly higher than goal setting ($p<.001$). (See Figure 1.)
Table 10

Means and Standard Deviations for the Importance of Teaching Self-Determination

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-determination Component element</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-Management Skills</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>5.59</td>
<td>.77491</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem Solving Skills</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>5.54</td>
<td>.84782</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self Advocacy Skills</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>5.51</td>
<td>.83662</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision Making Skills</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>5.41</td>
<td>.880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choice Making Skills</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>5.36</td>
<td>.9985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self Knowledge Skills</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>5.35</td>
<td>.85366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal Setting Skills</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>4.99</td>
<td>1.1157</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1. Rating of importance. This figure illustrates how rating of goal setting skills.
was lower than all other skills.

**Research Question 3**

Do special education teachers of students with severe disabilities in Ohio elementary and secondary schools believe teaching self-determination skills to be helpful in preparing students with severe disabilities for school and postschool life?

**Analysis**

Item 8 asked teachers to rate how helpful teaching their students self-determination would help them improve school and postschool outcomes on a scale of 1 to 6, Not Helpful to Very Helpful. Mean scores and percentage of teachers’ responses to each category were calculated.

**Findings**

The majority of teachers (85 %) believed that teaching their students self-determination would be very helpful in preparing them for future years in secondary education and/or for transition to adulthood. The mean of rating (M=5.27, SD=0.90) exceeded the mid-point of the scale (rating of 3). (See Table 11)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not Helpful</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Helpful</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5.27</td>
<td>0.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Helpful</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>85</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Percentages are based on the number of participants who completed all questionnaires.
Research Question 4

To what extent are self-determination-related goals included in students’ IEPs?

Analysis

Item 9 asked teachers to indicate to what extent self-determination skills-related goals are included in their students’ IEPs on a scale of 1 (none) to 4 (all). The percentage of teachers’ responses to each category was calculated.

Findings

According to 61% of the respondents, self-determination skills-related goals were either not included in the IEPs or appeared only on some. In addition, 24% of teachers reported that most of their students had self-determination skills-related goals. Lastly, only 16% of the respondents indicated that all their students had goals related to the different component elements of self-determination (See Table 12). The mean of rating is higher for secondary teachers than elementary teachers (See Table 13). Secondary schools teachers reported that their students had self-determination skills-related goals more than elementary schools teachers did.

Table 12

*Including self-determination skills-related goals in students’ IEPs*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>0.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 13

*Mean scores of elementary and secondary teachers responses regarding Including self-determination skills-related goals in their students’ IEPs*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Level</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>2.3077</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>.86528</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>2.5283</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>.92795</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Research Question 5**

How often do special education teachers in Ohio elementary and secondary schools teach self-determination component elements to students with severe disabilities?

**Analysis**

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize ratings of how often teachers teach each of the seven component elements of self-determination. Percentage of respondents Rating frequency of instruction in self-determination as Never, Sometimes, or Often, and mean scores and Standard Deviations for each component elements are reported.

**Findings**

Teachers generally reported that they at least sometimes (rating of 3) taught each of the skills associated with enhancing self-determination in their classrooms (see Table 14). Means scores ranged from (5.26) for problem solving skills to (4.38) for goal setting skills. All means exceeded the mid-point of the scale (rating of 3). Problem solving and self-management were the only domains that more than two thirds of the teachers
reported often teaching (rating of 5 or 6). Half of teachers reported teaching choice
making, self-advocacy, and self-knowledge. Goal setting was the least frequently taught
self-determination skills. More than 60 % of teachers reported that they did not often
teach goal setting skills.

Table 14
Percentage of respondents Frequency of teaching self-determination skills as Never,
Sometimes, Often and mean scores and Standard Deviations for each component
elements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component elements</th>
<th>% Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 or 2 (Never)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choice making</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem Solving</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal Setting</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Management</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self Advocacy</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self Knowledge</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Rating of frequency were made on scales of 1 to 6(1=never, 2=rarely,
3=sometimes, 4=occasionally, 5=often, 6=frequently).

Research Question 6

Are there differences in the frequency teachers allocate to teaching the different
compontent skills of self-determination?

Analysis

A repeated measures analysis of variance was used to find if there are significant
differences among the components of self-determination with regard to the frequency
teachers report teaching each component. The six self-determination skills were the within-subject factor named “skill” and had 6 levels and the measure name was “rating”. Because the finding of the repeated measures ANOVA was significant, a follow-up pairwise comparisons Post-hoc test was performed to determine which components were more frequently taught than others.

Findings

A repeated measures analysis of variance ANOVA revealed that there were significant differences in ratings of instructional time devoted to teaching the component elements of self-determination, Wilks’s Λ = .56, F (5,192) = 30.50, p < .01, multivariate $\eta^2 = .44$. Post hoc tests using the Bonferroni correction revealed that problem solving received the highest importance (M=5.26, SD=.79), followed by self-management (M=5.17, SD=.92), and then self-advocacy (M=4.64, SD=1.19), choice making (M=5.05, SD=1.008), Self-knowledge (M=4.71, SD=1.17), goal setting (M=4.38, SD=1.10). (See Table 15)

According to the Post hoc tests, problem solving, self-management, and choice making skills were taught significantly more frequently than all other skills (p< .001). Self-knowledge and self-advocacy were statistically similar. Goal setting received the lowest rating of frequency score. According to these results, skills can be grouped based on the significance of the difference; (a) problem solving, self-management, and choice making, (b) Self-knowledge and self-advocacy, and (c) Goal setting.
Research Question 7

What barriers exist that inhibit special education teachers of students with severe disabilities in Ohio elementary and secondary schools from teaching self-determination skills?

Analysis

Teachers’ responses to item 10 was used to determine which barriers were the most or least commonly cited. Barriers reported in item 10 is rank ordered according to the frequency with which each was selected. Also, the percentage of teachers’ responses to each barrier is reported.

Findings

As depicted in Table 16, teachers’ responses to which barriers they feel inhibit them from promoting self-determination skills indicated that the majority of teachers (53%) were not teaching self-determination skills because there were other areas in which...
students had more urgent needs. Next highest was not having the freedom to provide instruction in these areas insufficient time, cited by 41% of teachers, followed by insufficient time with 39% of teachers citing this barrier. The least frequently reported barrier was that it was difficult to empathize, with 1.0% of teachers citing this barrier. Teachers were also asked and given the option to specify barriers that were not any of the given barriers. All teachers who responded to the open-ended question indicated that they could not teach self-determination skills because they have to teach the common core standards. Examples of teachers’ answers are, “Due to the common core standards - I cannot teach these skills to my students. I have to teach the standards - and there are no standards that address these needs”, “We are allotted very little time with the testing and core curriculum”, “The pressure to have these students make up gap differences on state test scores takes significant time away from teaching self-determination skills”, “These are not areas that are assessed by the state, and growth in these areas are not part of how I am evaluated as a teacher, so although I want to teach these skills, because they are needed for real life and they would help raise future test scores”, “The curriculum is set by the state (Extended Standards). All IEP goals must reflect those standards”, “We have to teach the extended standards”, Our IEP objectives and goals have to be aligned with the Common Core dictated to educators by Ohio Department of Education. What is best for students does not matter. We are no-longer providing services to students with mild to intense disabilities that reflects individual needs, builds self confidence, self determination, and these students measure themselves against non-disabled peers through district (STAR) and state required assessments”. Teachers also mentioned behavior problems as another barrier that impeded them from
teaching self-determination skills. For example, one teacher stated “I feel I need to teach these skills daily as situations arise, but sometimes behavior gets in the way”. Another barrier that teachers pointed out was that others like family, school counselors, and specialists did not help in teaching and reinforcing self-determination skills.

Table 16

*Perceived barriers*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barrier</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There are other areas in which your students need instruction more urgently (e.g. academic areas, challenging behavior).</td>
<td>53.1%</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You don’t have the latitude to provide instruction in these areas (e.g., because of course content requirements, state testing requirements, etc.).</td>
<td>41.8%</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You don’t have sufficient time to provide instruction in these areas.</td>
<td>39.80%</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You are not aware of available curricular or assessment materials, or are not familiar with instructional methods or strategies related to these areas.</td>
<td>28.1%</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your students have difficulty communicating effectively</td>
<td>24.5%</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You haven’t had sufficient training or information on teaching in these areas.</td>
<td>16.8%</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your students are too young to learn these skills.</td>
<td>16.8%</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You have difficulty collaborating with your colleagues or administrators.</td>
<td>9.18%</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your students would not benefit from instruction in these areas because of their characteristics (e.g., their passivity, level of their ability or capacity to engage in behavior).</td>
<td>6.63%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Someone else is responsible for instruction in this area.</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You find it difficult to empathize with your students</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Question 8

Do secondary and elementary special education teachers differ on the importance and frequency they allocate to teaching self-determination skills?

Analysis

A one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVAs) was used to evaluate differences between teachers of students in secondary schools and teachers of students in elementary schools on the Importance and frequency of teaching the components of self-determination. Teacher school level was treated as a fixed-effects factor. Dependent variables were the seven skills of self-determination. First step was conducting a test to compare the two groups of teachers on all the components simultaneously. Because the finding of the first part was significant, univariate analysis was conducted to determine which individual components differentiate between the two groups (secondary school teachers versus elementary school teachers).

Findings

First, the omnibus test found that the two groups are not significantly different from each other in the value they place on teaching the component elements of self-determination, $\text{Wilks’s } \Lambda = .94$, $F (7,189) = 1.79$, $p > .05$. Since the omnibus F-test did not find a significant difference between the two groups of teachers in rating of the importance of the seven skills, follow-up univariate tests were not performed.
Second, a one-way multivariate analysis of variance was also used to test differences between elementary and secondary special education teachers on the time they devote to teaching the components of self-determination. The omnibus F test found that elementary and secondary special education teachers are significantly different from each other with respect to time allocated to teaching self-determination skills, Wilks’s Λ = .892, $F(6,190)=4.0$, $p<.01$, $n=113$.

Analyses of variance (ANOVA) on the dependent variables were conducted as a follow-up univariate tests to the MANOVA. Using the Bonferroni method, each ANOVA was tested at the .008 level. The ANOVAs on the self-advocacy and self-knowledge were significant, $F(1,195)=5.68$, $p<.001$ and $F(1,195)=5.68$, $p<.001$. Post hoc analyses to the univariate ANOVA for the self-advocacy and self-knowledge ratings consisted of conducting pairwise comparisons to find which school level teach these skills more frequently. The results showed that elementary and secondary school differed on the frequency of teaching self-advocacy and self-knowledge skills. Secondary school teachers were teaching these skills more frequently than elementary teachers. (See Table 17)

Table 17

*Importance of teaching Self-determination*

*Teachers of Students in Elementary Schools Versus Students in Secondary Schools*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>School Level</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Choice Making</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>5.47</td>
<td>.87666</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>5.26</td>
<td>1.08936</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5.36</td>
<td>1.00000</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>5.38</td>
<td>.90663</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision Making</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>5.44</td>
<td>.86278</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5.41</td>
<td>.88151</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Component</td>
<td>School Level</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Std. Deviation</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choice Making</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>5.16</td>
<td>.92300</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>4.96</td>
<td>1.07725</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5.05</td>
<td>1.01145</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem Solving</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>5.30</td>
<td>.74124</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>5.23</td>
<td>.84271</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5.26</td>
<td>.79656</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal Setting</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>4.26</td>
<td>1.09710</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>1.10626</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4.39</td>
<td>1.10600</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Management</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>5.27</td>
<td>.94572</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>5.08</td>
<td>.91670</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 18

*Frequency of teaching Self-determination*

*Teachers of Students in Elementary Schools Versus Students in Secondary Schools*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>School Level</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Problem Solving</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>5.57</td>
<td>.86180</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>5.52</td>
<td>.84212</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5.54</td>
<td>.84935</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal Setting</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>1.19925</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>4.99</td>
<td>1.04649</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4.99</td>
<td>1.11630</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Management</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>5.52</td>
<td>.87539</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>5.59</td>
<td>.77633</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5.59</td>
<td>.77633</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Advocacy</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>5.67</td>
<td>.63600</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>5.53</td>
<td>.91763</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5.53</td>
<td>.83166</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Knowledge</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>5.67</td>
<td>.94572</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>5.29</td>
<td>.90249</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5.36</td>
<td>.85034</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Research Question 9:

Are there relationships between rating the importance of teaching self-determination skills and instructional time (frequency) elementary and secondary special education teachers devote to teaching these skills?

Analysis

Pearson correlation coefficients was used to examine the relationships between two variables teachers’ ratings of the importance of teaching each of the components of self-determination (Importance) and the Instructional Time (frequency) they allocate to teaching each of those components.

Findings

Relationships between the Importance components and the corresponding Time components were predominantly weak, though statistically significant. The strongest correlation was choice making: instructional time for choice making was moderately related to its importance, $r = .43, p < .0001$. The other significant relationships, in order, were, Self- knowledge ($r = .42, p < .0001$), Goal Setting ($r = .39, p < .0001$), Self Management ($r = .37, p < .0001$), Self Advocacy ($r = .36, p < .0001$), Problem solving ($r = .28, p < .0001$) (see Table 19). All means of importance ratings for all skills were higher
than the means for frequency ratings. The results suggested that if teachers place high
importance on a component, they tend to state that they teach it more frequently. Overall,
correlation coefficients indicate weak relations between ratings of importance and
frequency of instruction from teachers’ perspectives.

Table 19
Correlations of Ratings of Importance of Teaching with Reported
Frequency of Teaching

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component element</th>
<th>r</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Choice Making Importance and Frequency</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem Solving Importance and Frequency</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal Setting Importance and Frequency</td>
<td>.388</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Management Importance and Frequency</td>
<td>.366</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Advocacy Importance and Frequency</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Knowledge Importance and Frequency</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Correlation is significant at the 0.001 level (2-tailed).
Chapter Five

Discussion

Promoting self-determination for all students with disabilities has become best practice to increase students’ success in school and have a smooth and successful transition to post secondary settings and adult life (Cho et al., 2013). Recognizing that many students with disabilities including students with severe disabilities lack the self-determined behavior (Carter, Lane, Pierson, & Glaeser, 2006) and the impact it has on students school and postschool outcomes, educators and researchers are increasingly advocating to better equip those students with the needed skills and knowledge to enable them to be self-determined and control their life to the fullest possible extent (Carter et al., 2015). The legislative actions and researchers who have explicitly called for promoting self-determination, encourage schools and teachers to enhance all students with disabilities’ self-determined behavior regardless of type and severity of their disabilities type and severity (Rotatori, Obiakor, & Burkhardt, 2008).

Increasingly, research is showing the effectiveness of teaching self-determination as a significant predictor of student success (Wehmeyer, 2015). Self-determination has been proposed as one of the most important content areas that enhances students’ learning and independence (Agran et al., 2007; Chou et al., 2016). Prior research has documented the benefit of enhancing the self-determined behavior skills of students with disabilities in achieving more positive outcomes in different areas such as academic performance, employment, postsecondary and community participation, and improved quality of life and lifestyle satisfaction (Carter et al., 2011; Wehmeyer & Palmer, 2003; Getzel & Thoma, 2008; Lachapelle et al., 2005).
Calls for promoting students with severe disabilities are based on the assumption that teachers at the elementary and secondary school levels value teaching these skills and teach them on a regular basis. Several studies investigated general and special education teachers’ perception of the importance of teaching self-determination. Previous studies showed that special education in general attributed moderate importance to teaching self-determination skills to students with disabilities in general (Carter et al., 2008). Previous research, however, has not explored how special educators who teach students with severe disabilities in Ohio perceive the importance of teaching self-determination to those students, relationships between values and practice concerning self-determination, and barriers to teaching self-determination skills that confront elementary school and secondary special education teachers. The current research was an effort to examine these unexplored areas.

The present study extends the literature on promoting self-determination in several ways. Teachers were surveyed to examine the status of efforts to promote self-determination in the classrooms of 197 elementary and secondary school teachers in a broad cross-section of the nation’s schools in Ohio. The study measured these teachers’ perceptions of the importance of teaching each of the seven component elements of self-determination and to what extent they actually teach those component elements.

First, the present study concluded that special education teachers working with students with severe disabilities generally attached considerable importance to promoting the component elements of self-determination skills among these students. Indeed, comparisons to previous descriptive studies suggested that special education teachers of students with severe disabilities attributed low importance to teaching these skills to their
students (Wehmeyer et al., 2000; Stang et al., 2009), this study shows students’ disability severity to have influenced to limited degree to teachers’ perceptions of the importance of teaching self-determination skills. Wehmeyer et al. (2000) indicated that teachers who worked with students with severe disabilities rated teaching self-determination skills as less important than did teachers of mild disabilities. The average ratings in this study are higher than average ratings in Wehmeyer’s study in which he concludes that teachers of students with severe disabilities perceived teaching self-determination skills to be less important. Indeed, these finding are fairly consistent with those highlighted in prior studies involving special education teachers in general. For example, the average ratings of teachers in the present study ranged from 5.59 to 4.99 on a 6-point Likert-type scale, compared with ranges of 4.34 to 5.17 (Stang et al., 2009), and 4.44 to 5.16 for high school teachers (Carter et al., 2008). Although teachers were not asked about the reasons underlying their views regarding the importance of each skill, it may be that more books, articles, and curricula have been published over the past decade allowing self-determination as a domain of instruction to be increasingly identified in special education practice discussions, policy, and in the literature. Another factor that can have an influence on teachers’ rating is that 67% of the participants in the present study held a master’s degree and more than 70% have more than 10 years of teaching experiences.

Also, this study found that self-management and problem solving received the highest mean for rating. This finding is also consistent with other prior studies. Stang et al. (2009) indicate that based on teachers’ rating, the most important instructional domains were problem solving and self-management. Stang et al. indicated that these findings are not surprising, as these two skills have broad applicability across various
curricular areas and the availability of opportunities to use these skills across different settings. Also, more than half of the teachers indicated that they have students with emotional disturbances, which might have an impact on why they perceived self-management as the most important skill. Wehmeyer et al. (2000) indicated that students’ disabilities might significantly affect which self-determination skills teachers value and teach. Different from previous studies, goal setting was rated considerably lower in this study than other studies (M=4.99). In fact, Cho et al. (2011) indicated that teachers rated goal setting as the most important instructional domain (M=5.77). It may be that the present study included just teachers of students with severe disabilities who might believe that goal setting is a complicated skill for their students to learn and practice. Overall, the range in average scores across all seven instructional domains suggests that teachers of students with severe disabilities viewed these domains differently.

Second, teachers’ reports of instructional time (frequency) devoted to teaching components of self-determination were relatively high in the present study, with all components averaging a frequency of at least “occasionally”. These levels were higher than those the teachers in the Cho et al. (2011) and the Stang et al. (2009) study reported. This study found that teachers reported that they are frequently providing instruction to students in the areas of problem solving, self-management, and choice making. The remaining skills were generally described by teachers as being less often addressed in their classroom. However, problem solving and self-management were the only domains that more than two thirds of the teachers reported often teaching (rating of 5 or 6). Such differences in emphasis could be attributed to different reasons. Carter et al. (2008) stated that the reported frequency of instruction related to these skills is based on “the degree to
which the students with whom they work have individual needs related to each of these skills” (p. 8), the availability of intervention strategies to address each of these skills, the degree to which the classroom curricula refer to these skills. Wehmeyer et al. (2004) stated that most state and local general curriculum standards refer to problem solving, choice making, and management skills more than the other skills. Another reason that may affect the variability in the extent to which teachers reported actually providing instruction addressing each of the seven skills is the input of a multidisciplinary team that affects teachers’ educational priorities. For example, Wood et al. (2005) conducted a systematic review of the literature on self-determination intervention for students with severe disabilities and found that choice making was the most frequently skill that addressed as an outcome measure followed by self-management and problem solving. As noted by Wood et al. (2005), “there are quite a few self-determination components that have not been adequately measured as dependent variables” (p.141).

Third, the relationship between teachers' ratings of Importance and their self-reported frequency of teaching (Instructional Time) was examined. The relationships between the frequency and importance of the components were generally weak, with a few moderately strong relationships. This corroborates Cho et al. (2011) with elementary teachers and Wehmeyer et al. (2000) with elementary and secondary teachers findings, that the importance teachers attached to promoting self-determination was not reflected in the amount of instructional time they reported allocating to each skill. Unlike the current findings with elementary and secondary school teachers, Carter et al. (2008) found high correlations between frequency and importance with high school teachers. Possibly the reason correlations were relatively low was this study included both elementary and
secondary school teachers, where only high school teachers in the Carter et al. (2008) study. According to IDEA (2004), by age 14, students should have IEP goals that can be related to self-determination skills, which requires high school teachers use more self-determination related instruction than do elementary school teachers.

Fourth, the current study found that the majority of elementary and secondary teachers believed that teaching their students self-determination related skills and content will be helpful in preparing them for future years in school and/or for transition to adulthood. However, the majority of teachers in this study also indicated that self-determination skills-related goals were either not included in the IEPs or appeared only on some. Only 16 % of the respondents indicated that all their students had goals related to the different component elements of self-determination. This finding corresponds with what previous studies reported that self-determination related goals were either not mentioned or appeared in only some students' IEPs (Cho et al., 2011, Agran et al., 1999; Wehmeyer et al., 2000). The present study found that secondary schools teachers reported that their students had self-determination skills-related goals more than elementary schools teachers did. This finding was anticipated due to the IDEA requirements and as greater attention is given to promoting self-determination skills at the secondary level more than at the elementary level. Most efforts have been directed to increase and support youth involvement in educational and transition to adulthood life at the secondary level (Test et al., 2009).

Indeed, this finding may be related to another finding in the current study: that teachers reported that they are not teaching or including IEP goals related to self-determination because all IEP goals must reflect the extended or Common Core
standards. As many teachers stated that their students’ IEP objectives and goals must be aligned with the Common Core dictated to them by Ohio Department of Education. That possibly has influenced the extent self-determination skills-related goals are included in their students’ IEPs.

Teachers’ perceptions of the importance of teaching self-determination skills can be a factor that influences instructional time. Besides perceived importance, there are other factors that affect instructional time and can explain the discrepancies between rating of importance and actual instruction, including barriers to teaching self-determination. This study sought to identify barriers secondary and elementary teachers felt inhibited them from teaching self-determination. Prior studies have reported that teachers believe their students with disabilities would not benefit from such instruction as the top barrier to promoting self-determination. Insufficient time, lack of training, insufficient resources, and lack of support from colleagues and administrators are other barriers often cited by special education teachers (Mason et al., 2004; Karvonen, Test, Wood, Brewer, & Algozzine, 2004; Thoma et al., 2002; Wehmeyer et al., 2000). In the present study and similar to what Cho et al. (2011) found, the barrier to teaching self-determination most cited by elementary and secondary school teachers was that students have more urgent needs for instruction in other areas. Specifically, more than half (53%) chose the previous barrier. Not having the latitude to provide instruction in these areas, cited by 41% of teachers, and insufficient time were the next most cited barriers. The least frequently reported barrier was that it was difficult to empathize, with 1.0% of teachers citing this barrier. These findings corroborate the finding of Cho et al. (2011).

Teachers also stated some other barriers as using the common core standards to
guide what they should teach to their students. Teaching based on standards leaves less
time for teachers to teach self-determination skills. Also, teachers indicated that behavior
problems take from their teaching time. As research has shown, teachers are more often
engaged in teaching different activities when their students have less problem behaviors
(Carr, Taylor, & Robinson, 1991). Also, teachers mentioned that they did not receive
enough support from parents and other specialists as self-determinations needs to be
reinforced across multiple settings.

Lastly, an analysis was conducted to determine if there is a difference between
elementary and secondary teachers on the level of importance and time they devote to
teaching the components of self-determination. Elementary and secondary teachers are
not different from each other in the value they place on teaching the component elements
of self-determination. The two groups hold similar views regarding the importance of
teaching self-determination skills. This similarity was unexpected. It was anticipated that
secondary teachers would place more value on some of the seven skills. For example, it
was anticipated that secondary teachers would rate self-advocacy and self-awareness as
having high importance in their classroom than elementary teachers would do.

Also, the present study found that elementary and secondary special education
teachers are different from each other with respect to time allocated to teaching self-
determination skills. The results showed that elementary and secondary school teachers
differed on the frequency of teaching self-advocacy and self-knowledge skills. Secondary
school teachers were teaching these skills more frequently than elementary teachers. It is
interesting that both groups perceived these skills to be important at the same level, but
secondary teachers provide instruction in these areas more frequently. Stang et al. (2009)
indicated that few self-determination intervention studies have been conducted at the elementary level. Indeed, the vast majority of interventions focused on high school students. Only less than one fifth of the interventions are directed toward elementary school students (Stang et al., 2009). Teachers need evidence-based instructional strategies to promote the self-determined behavior of their students. Additionally, Test et al. (2005) stated that these skills might be valued more and are taught frequently within secondary school classrooms due to students’ age.

Limitations and Future Research

Several limitations to this study suggest areas for strengthening future research endeavors. First, as the vast majority of research on self-determination, this study relied heavily on teachers’ self-reports. Self-report data can be affected by a social desirability bias (Van de Mortel, 2008). Direct observation should be used as a method for verification of the teachers’ self-reports. That would provide important insight and increase the validity of the findings. Observing how teachers perceive and provide instruction in self-determination skills would help in obtaining evidenced-based data.

Second, the survey was brief and short to obtain a high response rate. However, that limited the opportunity to gather more in-depth information in aspects related to self-determination skills such as the reasons underlying teachers’ views. Future research should focus on aspects such as why teachers perceived some skills as more important than others or how teachers provide instruction in each area and intervention strategies they use in their classrooms.

Third, the findings are limited to special education teachers working with students with severe disabilities in public schools within a single state. It is likely that other factors
that went unexplored in this study may influence the perceptions and actions of teachers. It is possible the perspectives of teachers may be shaped by the extent to which a state empowers teachers to have more authority over what to teach, infuses learning opportunities in areas of self-determination within state standards, or has provided teachers with professional development courses and training on promoting self-determination.

Fourth, although the perceptions of both elementary and secondary special education teachers were captured in this study, the views of paraprofessionals were not sought. Carter et al. (2011) indicated that little is known how paraprofessionals’ views and roles they have in promoting self-determination skills. Paraprofessionals play an important role in addressing different educational domain including self-determination as they provide individualized and one-to-one support across multiple school settings. Thus, it is essential to investigate how these school staff perceive, teach, and or if they are well equipped to butter support the self-determination of students in all school levels.

Fifth, the survey did not query teachers about how students’ diverse needs might influence their choice of curricular priorities and how much time they allocated for teaching them. The curricular priorities and the disability type may affect how teachers perceive specific skills to have greater relevance for their students. For example, Stang et al (2009) indicated that teachers might value and frequently teach self-management skills for students with emotional disturbance. Future research should investigate how students’ disabilities affect teachers’ perception of different skills of self-determination.

Lastly, another limitation of this study is that we did not know how many students with severe disabilities each teacher had in her/his classroom. Having a large number of
students with severe disabilities might affect how teachers perceive self-determination skills. Teachers’ might prioritize instruction in self-determination skills based on most of their students’ disabilities type. Teachers with many students with severe disabilities may value or teach different self-determination skills than teachers who have less number of students with severe disabilities.

Implications

With these limitations in mind, it is possible to tentatively pose some recommendations for practice. First, a frequently cited barrier to promoting self-determination skills was that teachers did not have sufficient curricula, materials, or information to better equip teachers to enhance the self-determined behavior. There is a need for future research to move from investigating teachers’ perception of the importance of self-determination to directing more focused efforts toward identifying intervention strategies, materials, and method to effectively support teachers in providing more systematic and frequent instruction in self-determination. This study supports what Wehmeyer et al. (2000) stated, “teachers seem to concur that this is important but seem less certain about how to promote self-determination” (p. 67).

According to the present study, teachers of students with severe disabilities do value all the seven skills, but they are frequently providing instruction in specific areas more than others. This finding implies that teachers need more instructional strategies that are evidence-based to teach these skills more frequently. Particularly, for students at the elementary level as most of the available curricula and interventions focused on high school students.

Additionally, participants in this survey reported that among the impediments to
teaching self-determination to their students with disabilities were the urgency of other areas of instruction and that they did not feel they had the latitude to deviate from the course design regardless of how important they considered instruction in self-determination. As teachers reported, they are under pressure to teach based on state standards and have little time to provide instruction that doesn't directly bear upon standardized test results. Administrators should give teachers the latitude to embed instruction and learning opportunities in areas related to self-determination skills into classroom activities and routines.

Teachers also reported that they haven’t had sufficient training on teaching in self-determination. Teachers do consider instruction in self-determination as important, but this perceived hindrance indicated that an ongoing and systematic training is necessary for teachers to progress and teach these skills. Training for in-service and pre-service teachers on the teaching of self-determination must be designed for special educators. Training programs should help teachers in applying their understanding of curricula, materials, and interventions to a subject learning environment. Universities and colleges should offer prospective teachers coursework that enhance their understanding of self-determination and expose them to the available intervention strategies and curricula in self-determination.

**Conclusion**

Promoting the skills of self-determination is an important aspect of educational services for all students including students with severe disabilities. Special education teachers’ views are vital as they are the instructional leaders who play a critical role in enhancing the self-determined behavior of the students whom they teach. This study
examined the efforts of elementary and secondary school teachers to enhance students’ capacities to engage in self-determined behavior. Findings of the present study suggest that teachers place a high value on providing instruction on teaching self-management, problem solving, choice making, self-advocacy, self-knowledge, decision making, and goal setting. While results indicated teachers value these skills at a high level, results also showed teachers taught these skills with moderate to high frequency at the elementary and secondary school levels. Several reasons may be behind the discrepancy between the importance teacher attached to each skill and how often they teach it. For example, a few evidence-based interventions strategies are available for teachers to use across all school levels. However, the broad affirmation of the importance of these skills is promising. Hopefully, clarifying the perceptions of special education teachers at different school level will play as an endorsement to build a solid foundation for informing intervention in all self-determination skills across the K-12 continuum. Particularly, these findings may strengthen the calls for directing more focused efforts toward promoting self-determination at an early age.
References


Available at:


Appendix A

Survey Cover Letter

Dear teacher,

My name is Norah Aldosiry. I am a doctoral student in Special Education at the University of Toledo working with Dr. Edward Cancio. I am soliciting your participation in my dissertation entitled "Special education teachers’ perceptions of the importance of teaching self-determination skills to students with severe disabilities." We are interested in the opinions of special education teachers who teach students with severe disabilities (multiple disabilities, severe cognitive disabilities, and autism).

The purpose of this research is to establish a baseline measure of elementary and secondary school teachers’ perceptions concerning teaching the different skills of self-determination. In addition, this research aims to understand teachers’ perceptions of the importance and frequency of teaching self-determination skills and what reasons can prevent teachers from doing so. The results of this study can potentially yield important information for assisting school districts in supporting teachers to promote self-determination skills among students with severe disabilities.

The questionnaire is expected to take approximately 7 minutes to complete. At the end of the survey, there will be a place for you to send me your email address. For completing the survey, your name will be entered into a drawing for 10 gift cards ($25 each) if you provide your name and email address. This information will be destroyed once your gift card is sent to you, at completion of the project. If you would like additional information concerning this study before or after it is completed, please feel free to contact me by phone or email. Completion of the survey indicates your willingness to participate in this project and that you are at least age eighteen. If you have any additional questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Department for Human Research Protections at The University of Toledo at (419) 530-2416.

Sincerely,
Norah Aldosiry
Doctoral student in Special Education program
The University of Toledo
(765) 702-1996
Norah.Aldosiry@rockets.utoledo.edu
Appendix B

Survey Instrument

Promoting self-determination and students with disabilities Ohio Survey

Part 1

1. On a scale from 1 (Not Important) to 6 (Very Important), please indicate how important do you feel it is for your students to learn the following skills?

a. Choice making skills (the expression of a preference between two or more options, encouraging students to identify interests, express preferences, and make choices; providing students the opportunity to select preferences in socially and age-appropriate ways)

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b. Decision making skills (The ability to choose and implement the best solution or decision, Teaching students to make effective decisions using peer and instructional modeling, and providing opportunities to participate in making decisions about their
education and extra curricular activities)

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c. Problem-solving skills (The ability to identify and evaluate possible solution, asking students to identify causes of problems, encouraging them to think about how to solve a problem and suggesting strategies that students can use to solve problems in socially appropriate ways)

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d. Goal setting skills (The ability to set and achieve goals, encouraging students to set goals, and helping students recognize what steps need to be taken to achieve those goals)

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1 2 3 4 5 6

e. Self-management and self-regulation skills (Students’ abilities to self-regulate their behavior and their lives, teaching students to monitor and evaluate their own behavior, encouraging the development of intrinsic motivation, and having students set their own schedule. Encouraging students to engage in self-directed learning through strategies like self-monitoring, self-instruction, self-reinforcement, and picture cues)

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f. Self-advocacy skills (The ability to advocate on one’s own behalf, teaching students to know and stand up for their (and others’) rights in socially appropriate ways, to negotiate effectively and assertively, and to be an effective leader or team member)
How often do you teach this component?

Never Rarely Sometimes Occasionally Often Very Often
1 2 3 4 5 6

Self-knowledge and self-awareness skills (Students’ abilities to understand their strengths, abilities, and limitations, Giving students various opportunities to identify their own strengths and limitations through interaction with their peers, and then guiding them to apply that knowledge to their advantage).

How often do you teach this component?

Never Rarely Sometimes Occasionally Often Very Often
1 2 3 4 5 6

2. On a scale from 1 (Not Helpful) to 6 (Very Helpful), please rate how much promoting self-determination would help prepare your students for school and for
postschool life.

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<th>Not Helpful</th>
<th>Somewhat Helpful</th>
<th>Very Helpful</th>
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3. On a scale 1 (None), 2 (Some), 3 (Most of them), and 4 (All of them), please indicate to what extent self-determination skills-related goals are included in your students’ IEPs.

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<th>None</th>
<th>Some</th>
<th>Most of my students</th>
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4. What reasons might lead you to decide not to provide instruction in any or all of the above? (Check all that apply).

- Your students already have adequate skills in these areas.
- Your students have difficulty communicating effectively
- Your students are too young to learn these skills.
- You find it difficult to empathize with your students.
- You have difficulty collaborating with your colleagues or administrators.
- Someone else is responsible for instruction in this area.
- You don’t have sufficient time to provide instruction in these areas.
- You don’t have the latitude to provide instruction in these areas (e.g., because of course content requirements, state testing requirements, etc.).
- There are other areas in which your students need instruction more urgently (e.g., academic areas, challenging behavior).
- Your students would not benefit from instruction in these areas because of their characteristics (e.g., their passivity, level of their ability or capacity to engage in behavior).
- You haven’t had sufficient training or information on teaching in these areas.
- You are not aware of available curricular or assessment materials, or are not familiar with instructional methods or strategies related to these areas.

None of the above.

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Part 2

Please respond to each question as completely as possible.

1. School Level
   - ☐ Elementary school
   - ☐ Middle School
   - ☐ High School

2. The number of years that you have been teaching
   - ☐ 0-3 years
   - ☐ 4-6 years
   - ☐ 7-10 years
   - ☐ More than 10 years

3. The number of cases on your current caseload
   - ☐ 1-5
   - ☐ 6-10
   - ☐ 11-15
   - ☐ 16 and more

4. Highest degree earned
   - ☐ BA/BS
   - ☐ MS/MA
   - ☐ Specialist
   - ☐ Doctorate

5. School setting
   - ☐ Large City
   - ☐ Suburban
   - ☐ Town or Small City
   - ☐ Rural