

THE STATUS OF TRANSITION SERVICES FOR SECONDARY
STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN VIRGINIA AND FACTORS
AFFECTING SERVICE DELIVERY

by

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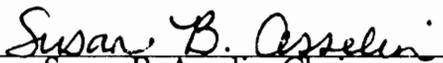
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TO
My husband Gary,
our boys, Gary, Nathan and Joseph
and
my Mother and Father

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CHAPTER ONE

Development of the Problem

Introduction

As the first generation of young persons with disabilities who received a mandated free and appropriate public education (P. L. 94-142) completes school, the need for successful transition of these individuals from school to work and community adjustment intensifies (Halpern, 1985; Will, 1984). Certainly preparation for employment and self-sufficiency is an implied promise of American education (Will, 1984). Nevertheless, youth with disabilities in our nation historically face patterns of high unemployment, low income, and inadequate educational attainment. While a successful transition from high school to adult living is critical for all youth, for youth with disabilities special planning and support for this transition is an absolute necessity (Ryan, 1988).

This study addresses the problem that systematic transition services for the planning and preparation for adult adjustment of secondary students with disabilities are not consistently delivered. Herein, the current level of transition services delivered in secondary schools in Virginia is assessed and factors related to delivery of

transition services are investigated. Further, persons most responsible for coordination of transition services are described by job titles, the inclusion of transition coordination in job descriptions and the time allocated for coordination of transition services.

Madeleine Will (1984), Assistant Secretary for the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS), defines the transition period as including high school, the point of graduation, postsecondary education, adult services and the first years of employment. She envisions transition as a bridge between the security and structure offered by the school and the opportunities and risks of adult life. Will asserts that success in the process is based on sound preparation during secondary school, and adequate support at the point of school leaving.

Halpern (1985) acknowledges the OSERS model and expands the concept to include three outcomes as equally important to adult adjustment: (a) employment, (b) social and interpersonal networks and (c) residential environment. His research reveals that success in one of the three areas was often unrelated to success in another; and that failure in any one of the areas could result in failure in community adjustment. Therefore, high school preparation and adult services must address each area as a separate entity.

In essence, the need for a systematic approach to transition planning and preparation surfaced in OSERS in 1984. Halpern enhanced the OSERS concept to go beyond employment to include many aspects of total community integration. Now, in the 1990's, there is no longer debate over the appropriateness of broadened perspectives of transition. Instead, the complex issue is how to make transition work in local communities (Halpern, 1992). Henceforth, this study examines implementation of transition services in local school divisions.

Problem

Transition planning and preparation for students with disabilities increases the possibility for independent and productive adult living for the individual, and brings economic benefits to society (Hill et al., 1987; Rusch & Phelps, 1986; Schneider, Rusch, Henderson & Geske, 1982). However, organized transition planning processes rarely exist in our schools and communities (Berkell & Brown, 1989; Cameron, 1989; Cobb & Hasazi, 1987; D'Alonzo, Faas, & Crawford, 1988; Dick, 1985; Halpern, 1985; Schill, 1989; Wehman, Moon, Everson, Wood & Barcus, 1988). The problem considered herein is the inconsistent delivery of transition services to prepare secondary students with disabilities for entry into adult life. Therefore, this study investigates:

(a) the status of specific transition services in Virginia

school divisions, (b) the status of specific factors associated with delivery of transition services, (c) relationships between categories of transition services and factors affecting transition services and (d) demographics about persons responsible for coordination of transition services.

Rationale

Despite national and state attention to transition issues, many students with disabilities continue to encounter difficulty in the transition process as they leave school (Berkell & Gaylord-Ross, 1989; Phelps, 1985; Ryan, 1988; West, 1988). However, barriers to productive adult living are not as much indigenous to the disabling condition as they are due to the fact that systematic preparation and planning for the transition from school to work and community adjustment are seldom done (Cameron, 1989). This is difficult to comprehend when transition planning leads to improved financial outcomes for persons with disabilities, reductions in social service costs, and capability for increased national productivity (Hill et al., 1987).

In Virginia, efforts to assist adjustment of individuals with disabilities to the community have included a number of transition initiatives to enhance planning and service delivery. Nevertheless, successful transition processes remain a complex and unresolved predicament for

many students, parents and service providers. It is crucial that schools focus on preparing students with disabilities for the transition into adult living by promoting inclusion in the mainstream and providing appropriate instructional programs, support services, and coordinated planning at both interdisciplinary and interagency levels.

The importance of this inquiry is sustained through legislation. The 1990 amendments to the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (P. L. 94-142), the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (P. L. 101-476) (U. S. Congress, 1990c), Section 602(a)19) defines transition as an "outcome oriented process which promotes movement from school to postschool activities (p. 1103)." Coordinated activities are to include: "instruction, community experiences, development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and, when appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation (p. 1104)." This powerful legislation also requires a statement of transition needs and services to be included in the Individualized Education Program (IEP) of every student with a disability no later than age 16. Furthermore, a statement of interagency responsibilities or linkages shall be included, as appropriate.

Similarly, the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act of 1990 (P. L. 101-392) (U. S.

Congress, 1990b) addresses students with disabilities. This legislation requires vocational education to assist in fulfilling the transition service requirements of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (P. L. 94-142). Specific assurances include equal opportunities in recruitment, enrollment and placement activities; equal access to a full range of programs in the least restrictive environment; and accommodations, support services and modifications for students with disabilities. Also, guidance, counseling and career development activities must be provided to facilitate transition from school to post-school employment and career opportunities. Further, this legislation requires that vocational and special education cooperate in planning and providing programs and services; however, special education legislation does not specifically mandate cooperation with vocational education.

Concomitantly, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (P. L. 101-336) (U. S. Congress, 1990a) enhances the importance of coordinated transition planning. This Act enlarges employment options while increasing independent living opportunities. The Americans with Disabilities Act mandates equal accessibility to employment, public accommodations, transportation, and telecommunications. This enhances the prospect of total community participation for which students with disabilities must be prepared.

Considering the comprehensive scope of opportunities and needed supports, the transition process can be lifelong. To clarify this issue Ianacone and Stodden (1987) specify three levels at which transition services actually occur: 1) preparation and planning, 2) linkage from a preparatory environment to the receiving environment, and 3) access and participation within the receiving environment. This research, with a focus on secondary transition services, is concerned with the first two of these levels. This rationale is based on the assumption that secondary education prepares youth for the transition to adult living with skills, attitudes and personal relationships, and facilitates linkages to employers and human service providers.

A review of literature, presented in the next chapter, specifically addresses secondary education transition planning and preparation. This literature coupled with the aforementioned legislation reveals four important transition service categories: (a) integration of students with disabilities with nondisabled peers; (b) instructional programs; (c) coordinated planning; and (d) support services. Additionally, three categories of factors surfaced in the literature: (a) cooperation of vocational and special education, (b) administrative support, and (c) an interagency team to coordinate planning.

While the above named factors are assumed to affect the level of transition service delivery, there is limited research to document the influence of these factors. This study examines transition services at the local level and determines relationships with specific factors which might affect delivery of those services. Therefore, the next section specifies research questions guiding this study.

Research Questions

As this study investigates secondary transition services at the local level the following research questions will be addressed:

1. To what degree are specific transition services delivered to secondary students with disabilities in Virginia school divisions?
2. To what degree do specific factors affecting delivery of transition services exist in Virginia school divisions?
3. What are the relationships between four categories of transition services for secondary students with disabilities (i.e., integration, instruction, coordinated planning and support services) and three categories of factors affecting delivery of transition services (i.e., cooperation between vocational and special education, support for

transition and a formal interagency transition team)?

4. What are the characteristics of persons who are responsible for coordination of transition services in local school divisions?

Results of this research are being considered by the Virginia Department of Education and Virginia's Transition Task Force as they propose guidelines for provision of transition services at the local level. Additionally, statewide training and inservice is being planned to assist localities in planning and implementing transition services.

As schools in our nation begin to include statements of transition needs and services in the IEPs of special education students, there is little known about factors related to delivery of transition services. This study will not only give a perspective of transition services in Virginia that prepare secondary students with disabilities for adult living, but it will also determine factors that affect delivery of those services at the local level. This will be an important contribution as the field seeks best practices in the provision of transition services.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Literature

This chapter includes major sections pertinent to the content of this study. First, national and state perspectives of transition are discussed. Next, is a summary of transition related legislation across rehabilitation, vocational education, and special education. Then, justification is provided for transition services and factors affecting delivery of transition services as applied in this study.

National Perspectives of Transition

An estimated 300,000 young persons with disabilities exit high schools in our nation each year. However, bleak statistics depict 50% to 80% of persons with disabilities as either unemployed or underemployed (Hasazi, Gordon & Roe, 1985; Will, 1984). Fewer than 15% of these individuals obtain employment with a salary above minimum wage and approximately two-thirds of those individuals continue to live at home with their parents as adults (Halloran & Ward, 1988). Considering this ongoing dilemma, successful adjustment of youth with disabilities who leave our educational programs must be addressed.

Predecessors to the current transition movement for persons with disabilities appeared as early as the 1950's. During these years work-study programs emerged as cooperative efforts of schools and rehabilitative services. Work-study programs provided integrated social, vocational and academic curriculum in conjunction with work experiences. Rehabilitative services funded teachers as half-time work coordinators in the schools, until new legislation came into play. The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 stipulated that a rehabilitation agency could not pay for services that were the legitimate responsibility of some other agency. Soon thereafter, Public Law 94-142 made a free and appropriate public education for persons with disabilities the responsibility of the school and work experiences in the community were considered "appropriate" for many students in special education (Halpern, 1992). Funding from rehabilitation was withdrawn, and so were work-study programs.

Subsequently, in 1970, Sidney Marland, the Commissioner of Education, gave top priority to career education for all populations. Career education was conceptualized as infused into traditional subject matter beginning in elementary school and continuing as the individual left secondary education and was assimilated into society. It emphasized development of life skills, affective skills and general

employability skills because all these areas directly impacted the employment potential of an individual (Brolin, 1989). By 1972 the federal special education agency gave career education financial backing and the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) and the American Vocational Association (AVA) jointly sponsored a conference on the topic. The U. S. Office of Career Education was established two years later under the supervision of Kenneth Hoyt. By 1976 CEC chartered its 12th division, the Division of Career Development, and soon a position paper confirming the necessity of career education for special education students was published. The Career Education Incentive Act of 1977 (P. L. 95-207) provided incentive funds to make career education an integral part of local education processes; however, when this Act was repealed in 1982 and federal and state monies subsided, so did the efforts of many school divisions (Brolin, 1989; Halpern, 1992). Still, career education flourishes throughout the literature as an important component in the educational process (Berkell & Brown, 1989; Knowlton & Clark, 1987; Ianacone & Stodden, 1987).

Transition planning and service implementation gained impetus as a priority when Madeleine Will (1984), Assistant Secretary for the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS), asserted that the public's

investment in special education could do much to prevent dependence if systematic attention were given to the transition of youth with disabilities from school to work and adult life. She pointed out that, for persons with disabilities, the transition period is often made difficult by others' perceptions of disabilities and by the complex array of services intended to assist adult adjustment.

Will defined transition as "an outcome oriented process encompassing a broad array of services and experiences that lead to employment. Transition is a period including high school, the point of graduation, additional postsecondary education or adult services and the initial years in employment (p. 149)." She depicted transition as a bridge between the support and structure of the school and the complexities of adult life. She further noted that any bridge needed a solid structure and secure foundations at each end; henceforth, success in the process was based on sound preparation during secondary school and adequate support upon school exit.

The OSERS view of transition grouped services into three levels. The first involved movement from school either without services or with only those that are available to the population at large; the second involved use of time-limited services such as rehabilitation, postsecondary education and job training programs which

terminated upon independent employment; and the third involved ongoing services to enable those who could not succeed in unsupported work to take advantage of work opportunities. The third level represented fundamental changes in policy and practice. Previously, ongoing services were not vocational, but custodial. The OSERS proposal called for establishment of local services and policies to provide whatever supports were necessary to find and maintain employment (Will, 1984).

Halpern (1985) acknowledged that there was much to praise in the OSERS model; however, he criticized the single focus of employment. He offered two additional outcomes of adult adjustment as equally important to employment. These were social and interpersonal networks and residential environment. His research revealed that success in one of the three areas did not necessarily relate to success in the others; but, failure in any one of the areas could result in unsuccessful community adjustment. Therefore, he envisioned a graphic representation in which community adjustment was balanced atop three pillars labeled "social and interpersonal networks", "residential environment", and "employment". If any one of the three pillars were not adequate, then the structure was in danger of collapse and the person's community adjustment would be threatened. Halpern concluded that each area should be addressed as a

separate entity throughout high school preparation and adult services.

Generally, transition literature tends to embrace the need for comprehensive community adjustment, similar to that advocated by Halpern. For example, Halloran & Ward (1988) discussed not only employment, but the need for preparation for adjustment to community settings. Koroloff (1990) asserted that when transition service policies concentrate solely on vocational and employment opportunities real needs of youth with disabilities are overlooked. She added that recreation and social functioning, independent living skills, health and mental health services and support to families were also critical. Johnson, Bruininks & Thurlow (1987) discussed the need for consistent policies across human services to enhance quality of life for persons with disabilities in terms of employment, community living, social and leisure opportunities. Further illustrations of comprehensive perspectives of transition can be found in the literature (Brolin, 1983; Halpern, 1988; Hasazi et al., 1985; McDonnell & Hardman, 1985; Wircenski, 1988).

State Transition Initiatives

Virginia is a national leader in the field of transition by promoting interagency cooperation and launching major initiatives to satisfy employment and independent living needs of persons with disabilities. An

Interagency Coordinating Council (IACC), established in 1983, set the stage for cooperation between agencies as it developed a state plan to meet related service needs of persons with disabilities from birth to age 22. Then, in 1986, the General Assembly expanded the role of this council to develop policies for incorporating transition planning into the IEP at the secondary level (Virginia, 1990).

Also, Virginia has accessed federal funding for various demonstration projects. The first project, in 1982, Virginia's Integrated Transition Approach through Leadership (VITAL), explored barriers to transition and sponsored a state-wide conference to educate professionals about model programs and best practices in transition. A 1984 federally funded project, Postsecondary Education/Rehabilitation Transition (PERT) established a continuum of services for selected clients which encompassed vocational evaluation, counseling, work adjustment, independent living skills development, vocational training, job placement, and job maintenance. This program evolved to become funded at the state level as a joint initiative of the Department of Rehabilitative Services and the Department of Education. This program has been implemented in 49 localities across Virginia (Virginia, 1990).

Another federal project, Virginia's Approach to Services for Transitioning Youth and Young Adults with

Disabilities (VAST), was funded October 1986 through September 1989. VAST established a local interagency teaming process to ensure interagency cooperation in transition planning and service delivery. A product of this project, Virginia's Transition Task Force, is still in operation. It is composed of professionals from 13 human service agencies. The Task Force is developing a state model for transition services which features coordinated transition planning through interagency teams (Virginia, 1990).

Still another project, Partnerships Linking Agencies Concerned with Employment and Maximizing Employment Networks in Transitioning Youth and Young Adults with Disabilities (PLACEMENT), optimized employment networks for young persons with disabilities who were job ready and exiting secondary education programs. This was done through innovative use of existing agency resources, linkages with business and industry, a job readiness assessment system, a computerized job match system, and establishment of local placement teams. This project was funded from July 1987 through June 1990 (Virginia, 1990).

As one might surmise, by 1989 many tangents of transition services existed in the state. Consequently, leaders recognized a need to synthesize best practices from the demonstration projects into a state model and to provide

transition technical assistance to localities on a regional basis. Consequently, the General Assembly appropriated funding over five years for the Southwest Virginia Transition Technical Assistance Center within the Division of Vocational and Technical Education at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. Funding was granted through the State Department of Education, the Division of Special Education. The Center currently provides technical assistance to 41 of the 135 public school divisions, as well as postsecondary institutions, adult service providers, and families (Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 1991). In concert with the Transition Technical Assistance Center and as commissioned by Virginia's Transition Task Force, this study is being conducted.

Legislative Rationale for Transition

The foundation of federally supported programs for employment preparation was laid in the early 1900's. The Smith-Hughes Act of 1917 extended the focus of vocational education beyond the college level to include preparation of youths for work before they left school. Then, the Smith-Sears Act of 1918 and the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1920 offered assistance to Americans who became disabled in World War I and were in need of vocational training to re-enter the work force (Rusch & Phelps, 1987). This created

what was to later become the Rehabilitation Services Administration to assist persons with disabilities to access and benefit from vocational education (Conaway, 1987). Thus began many years of cooperation between rehabilitation and vocational education.

The federal role in education continued to grow in the 1960's. The National Defense Education Act of 1963 focused on meeting diverse needs of individual students (Berkell & Gaylord-Ross, 1989). Meanwhile, the Vocational Education Amendments in 1963 and 1968 maintained this focus by appropriating funds for state departments of vocational education to facilitate the growth of projects designed to enhance vocational education for students with special needs. The 1968 amendments were the first to name set-asides for special populations: 15% for disadvantaged populations and 10% for students with disabilities (U. S. Congress, 1968). The Vocational Education Amendments of 1972 and 1976 maintained these set-asides for special populations.

Earlier, the 1959 amendments to the Rehabilitation Act emphasized employment issues by adding job counseling and job placement as services provided by local agencies (Berkell & Gaylord-Ross, 1989). Then, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (P.L. 93-112) represented a major overhaul as the Individual Written Rehabilitation Plan (IWRP) was

introduced to ensure consumer involvement in planning (Szymanski, King, Parker & Jenkins, 1989). Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act enhanced employment options by mandating employers receiving federal contracts of \$2,500 or more to develop and implement affirmative action programs and to make "reasonable accommodations" in the work environment to meet needs of workers with disabilities. Additionally, Section 504, prohibited discrimination on the basis of disabling conditions in all federally funded programs and activities, including vocational education (U. S. Congress, 1973). Educational institutions were required to provide equal access to programs, nondiscriminatory recruitment efforts, and to provide reasonable accommodations to enhance success in the program. The reauthorization of this act (P.L. 99-506) added supported employment as an approved vocational rehabilitation service and provided discretionary grant funds for transitional service activities (U. S. Congress, 1978).

Special education legislation evolved in 1975 with phenomenal impact. The Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EHCA) (P.L. 94-142) provided necessary funding for public schools to ensure that all students with disabilities, ages 3 to 21, received a free appropriate public education, including vocational education. Students were assured this education in the least restrictive

environment appropriate to their needs. Further, each child was provided an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) based on an assessment of their needs and the IEP was reviewed annually (U. S. Congress, 1975). The 1983 amendments to the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (P. L. 98-199) authorized funding to assist in the transition process through development of demonstration models, demographic studies, program evaluation, research and development, and cooperative models between education and adult service agencies (U. S. Congress, 1983).

The greatest impact on vocational education for special populations came in the Carl Perkins Vocational Education Act of 1984 (P.L. 98-524). This Act provided set asides for special populations: 22% for disadvantaged, 12% for adults, 10% for disabled, 8.5% for single parents, 3.5% for gender equity and 1% for the incarcerated. The disadvantaged and students with disabilities were assured: (a) equal access in recruitment and enrollment in the full range of vocational programs; (b) placement in the least restrictive environment; (c) coordination of vocational education, special education and rehabilitative services; (d) assessment of interest, aptitudes and special needs; (e) adaptations in curriculum, instruction, equipment and facilities; and (f) guidance and counseling services

(U. S. Congress, 1984). In other words, this highly prescriptive act introduced a full range of services for special needs students to be provided by all recipients of federal vocational education monies (Cobb and Albright, 1988). The underlying philosophy was that persons with mild to moderate disabilities could succeed in regular vocational education programs, provided they received individually prescribed supplemental services (Cobb and Kingsbury, 1985).

In 1990, both special education legislation and vocational education legislation were amended. The Education of All Handicapped Children Act was renamed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (P.L. 101-476) and in Section 602(a)19 transition was defined as:

a coordinated set of activities for a student, designed within an outcome-oriented process, which promotes movement from school to post-school activities, including post-secondary education, vocational training, integrated employment, continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, and community participation. The coordinated set of activities ... shall include: instruction, community experiences, development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and, when appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation (p. 1103).

Additionally, this Act required a statement of needed transition services be included in the IEP of every student with a disability by age 16 and annually thereafter. Also, a statement of interagency responsibilities or linkages was to be included, as appropriate, before the student exited school (U. S. Congress, 1990c). This is the first time requirement was made to specifically address transition on an individual basis.

The Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act was also renamed. The new Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act (P. L. 101-392) removed set-asides for special populations; still, Section 118 maintained the assurances and access originally set forth in the 1984 Perkins Act as described above. Students with IEPs were assured all the rights provided under EHCA (P. L. 94-142) and students with disabilities without IEPs were given assurances provided under section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (P. L. 93-112).

To further assure participation of special populations, local recipients of Basic State Grants were required to give priority to sites serving certain concentrations of students. The local funding formula was based upon the numbers of students in specific categories: 70% for disadvantaged students, 20% for students with disabilities and 10% for the total number of students enrolled in

vocational education. This formula maintained the tendency of vocational education legislation to encourage spending of monies to benefit students with the greatest needs.

Lastly, the 1990 Carl D. Perkins legislation directly addressed transition of students with disabilities. Each school division receiving federal monies under Title II was mandated to assist in fulfilling the transition service requirements of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (P. L. 94-142). It was further required that instructional services and counseling be provided to facilitate the transition from school to post-school career and employment options (U. S. Congress, 1990b).

Over the years the fields of rehabilitation, special education and vocational education have jointly established concern for the effective preparation of students with disabilities for the world of work and community adjustment. At the same time, these three disciplines have appreciated support from other legislative arenas such as health and human services, social security and labor. Nevertheless, students with disabilities often are ill-prepared for the transition to adult living. This problem highlights the need for quality comprehensive transition planning at both individual and systems levels (McDonnell, Wilcox & Boles, 1988).

Transition Services

Secondary education is the foundation from which transition services should emanate; therefore, schools hold initial responsibility for preparing students with disabilities for the transition to adult life and for linking students to a network of resources as they leave school (Halpern, 1985; West, 1988; Will, 1984). To fulfill these responsibilities, literature and legislation identify specific categories of services as important components of effective transition programs: (a) integration with nondisabled peers, (b) instructional programs, (c) coordinated planning and (d) support services. The following details these categories.

Integration with nondisabled peers. An anticipated outcome of the transition planning and preparation process for individuals with disabilities is that of maximum participation across social, residential, educational and employment environments. To prepare students with disabilities for community adjustment schools must facilitate interaction between students with disabilities and their nondisabled peers (Halloran & Ward, 1988; Halpern, 1985; McDonnell & Hardman, 1985; Retish, 1989). Interaction should occur across all school situations to prevent social isolation and to break down attitudinal barriers (Rusch & Phelps, 1987.)

A recent needs assessment of adults with learning disabilities affirmed the need for integration. This assessment was based on surveys of perceptions of 948 service providers, 381 adults with learning disabilities, and 212 parents and advocates. Deficits were identified in social behaviors in the categories of independence, friendship and conversation. The authors related the deficits to learned helplessness resulting from over protection of special education during the school years (Hoffman et al., 1987).

Inclusion in regular classrooms provides opportunities for students with disabilities to develop social skills and work ethics essential to the adult world. According to 50 surveyed employers, skills possessed by workers with disabilities who had successfully maintained employment for a minimum of three months were: (a) a high level of independent financial, social, emotional and employment functioning, (b) common sense, (c) appropriate dress, (d) communication of ideas, (e) punctuality and reliability and (f) use of transportation (Campbell, Hensel, Hudson, Schwartz & Sealander, 1987). Modeling by nondisabled peers accompanied by specialized curriculum components can prepare persons with disabilities for productive participation in society.

Vocational education in the mainstream is often a predictor of success in employment. A Vermont study consisted of a sample of 462 students who had exited school between 1979 and 1983. The employment status of youth with disabilities who had received special education services in resource rooms and special class programs was examined in relation to variables addressing education, vocation and use of social services. This study revealed that mainstream experiences in vocational classrooms enhanced employment potential by influencing students' self-expectations, as well as expectations on the part of teachers and parents (Hasazi et al., 1985). Despite the benefits, vocational education traditionally has not served students with disabilities on an equal basis. For example, a national study of adults with learning disabilities indicated that most of them were not included in career education activities and regular vocational programs during their school years. Henceforth, job training and employment were identified as critical needs (Hoffman et al., 1987).

Moreover, Halpern (1988), in a statewide study of the status of transition services in Oregon, found that educators may perceive students with disabilities to be sufficiently included with nondisabled peers, but those perceptions may not be reality. The sample for this study included 157 special education administrators, 411 high

school special education teachers and 677 parents of high school students participating in special education programs. Eighty percent of the special education teachers surveyed indicated the mainstream as an option for their students; however, only one-third of the parents reported their children were participating in the mainstream. Similarly, the Vermont study revealed the final school placement for 35% of the youth with disabilities to be a special class versus mainstream settings (Hasazi et al., 1985). In other words, integration may not occur as it should.

Instructional programs. Functional school curricula includes practical aspects of daily living, including success in residential situations, social interactions, personal financial management, use of leisure time, how to access and use transportation services, as well as specific job related skills (Halpern, 1985; Koroloff, 1990; Maryland, 1988; McDonnell & Hardman, 1985; Okolo & Sitlington, 1988; Poole, Cook & deFur, 1987). Such functional skills are essential for productivity and independence in adulthood (Hoffman et al., 1987; Ianacone & Stodden, 1987; West, 1988; Will, 1984). Also, they build the capacity of individuals with disabilities to generalize skills across vocational and occupational areas (Greenan, 1986).

Unfortunately, in secondary special education, one often finds the emphasis on academic objectives at the

expense of functional curricula (Brolin, 1989; Cobb & Phelps, 1983; Edgar, 1988; Elrod & Lyons, 1987; and Ianacone and Stodden, 1987). When secondary special education teachers were asked their rationale for selection of instructional goals for their students, most teachers could not justify skills included in educational programs as relative to projected postschool outcomes (Peters, Templeman, & Brostrom, 1987). In another study, over half the teachers in 15 resource rooms stated they spent a significant amount of time addressing social-emotional development, interpersonal skills and self-concept. However, observations of the classes revealed that only 8% of the instructional day was devoted to such activities (Okolo & Sitlington, 1985). Further, parents in the Oregon study revealed a lack of functional instruction when they reported that less than 50% of their children in special education received such instruction (Halpern, 1985).

A particularly appropriate avenue for providing functional education is community-based instruction. Concepts and skills can be taught as they apply to different environments when instruction extends beyond the school walls (Brolin, 1989; Halpern, 1988; Ianacone & Stodden, 1987; Maryland, 1988; Weisenstein & Elrod, 1987). With access to natural surroundings, students who normally have difficulty can learn to generalize instructional outcomes

from one situation to another (Halloran & Ward, 1988; McDonnell & Hardman, 1985; Snell, 1987).

As population shifts cause employers to consider youth with disabilities as an asset to the dwindling work age population, the need for career and vocational preparation is emphasized (Halloran & Ward, 1988; Meers, 1983). Chances for survival in the employment sector are strengthened when students are introduced to career options and instructed in job finding and retention skills (Maryland, 1988; Will, 1984; McDonnell & Hardman, 1985). Further, youth with disabilities who participate in vocational education are more likely to be employed than those who did not (Hasazi et al., 1985; Shapiro & Lentz, 1991). In Vermont, Hasazi et al. (1985) determined that for students with disabilities who had vocational education, 61% were currently employed, compared with 45% of those who did not. Schalock et al. (1986) conducted a five-year longitudinal follow-up study of 108 students with moderate and severe disabilities in Nebraska. This study statistically related student and school characteristics to outcomes affiliated with employment. An important finding was that the amount of time spent in vocational programs was significantly related not only to employment, but also to living and financial status. Nonetheless, increased academic requirements and skill development for competency testing leaves little time

for course work in vocational and career education, even though it prepares students for work in the community (Halloran & Ward, 1988; Halpern, 1985).

Another component of vocational preparation is that of work experience and employment prior to school exit. Direct exposure to these programs is highly beneficial for students with disabilities. The Vermont study revealed that of those students with no summer jobs only 37% were employed, compared to employment rates of 46% of those with subsidized employment and 69% of those with unsubsidized employment. Further, 70% of those students holding part-time outside jobs during school were employed, versus 41% of those who did not (Hasazi et al., 1985). The Nebraska study demonstrated that job training and placement during the school years resulted in a 61% employment rate at least one year after graduation (Schalock et al., 1986). Further, a one year follow-up study of 38 students with disabilities across three states concluded that direct exposure to work through cooperative and summer work programs was essential to success in employment (Roessler, Broolin & Johnson, 1990).

Nonetheless, the Vermont study also revealed that 33% of the sample of 462 youths with disabilities never participated in vocational education, 36% never had a part-time outside job and 76% never participated in work experience programs (Hasazi et al., 1985). Similarly, in

the Oregon study only 66% of the teachers reported availability of vocational education classes for students with disabilities and less than half reported availability of work experiences. They believed the main barrier to these options was the preconceived notion that students with disabilities do not possess the necessary prerequisite skills. This study concluded that an individualized, competency based approach to instruction could help identify strengths and weaknesses of individuals and cast out the notion of ineptitude of persons with disabilities (Halpern, 1988).

Another vital component in providing effective instructional services for transition is linkage to postsecondary education or training. Even though further education or training could be a legitimate outcome for many students with disabilities when supports are provided, postsecondary education is rarely included as a goal in transition planning (Benz & Halpern, 1987; Koroloff, 1990). Typically 80% of all students participate in postsecondary education or training, but less than 50% of youth with disabilities access such programs (Halloran and Ward, 1988). One misconception affecting enrollment of students with disabilities in postsecondary programs could be that those who are able to enter postsecondary programs do not need linkages to special services (Koroloff, 1990). Limited

participation of students with disabilities at the postsecondary level presents major restrictions on development and refinement of needed skills.

Purposes for instruction of students with disabilities should be two fold: to prepare individuals for the transition to adult life and then to make the initial placement in appropriate community settings with "follow-along" before they exit school programs (Halloran & Ward, 1988). Appropriate multifaceted curriculum at the secondary level fosters success in community living, education and employment. Simultaneously, placements and work experiences beyond the school walls can allow opportunity to pilot the transition plan and identify unforeseen logistical problems in the support network.

Coordinated planning. For comprehensive transition planning to occur, it is critical that schools, parents, postsecondary education and human service agencies communicate in a systematic manner. The need for interagency systems of coordination wherein client information and professional expertise is shared is elaborated upon throughout transition literature (Brolin, 1983; Elder & Magrab, 1980; Goldstein, 1988; Halpern, 1985; Ianacone and Stodden, 1987; Nebraska, 1989; Peters et al., 1987; Poole et al., 1987; Rusch & Phelps, 1987; Szymanski, Hanley-Maxwell & Asselin, 1990). Interagency cooperation

promotes effective service delivery by: (a) reducing duplication and overlaps of services, (b) covering gaps and oversights, (c) minimizing conflicts between service providers and (d) giving all agencies equal visibility (Canham, 1979). Yet, a national survey of federally funded transition project directors (n = 112) and state directors of special education (n = 58), vocational education (n = 54) and vocational rehabilitation (n = 58) revealed that interagency collaboration problems occurred regularly at the local level (Rusch, McNair & DeStefano, 1988).

Bringing a wide spectrum of service providers together is often a formidable task. Reconciliation of paradigms of organization and functioning particular to each agency is a major problem in establishing communication and collaboration (Goldstein, 1988; Johnson, Bruininks & Thurlow, 1987). Therefore, formal cooperative agreements are considered a best practice in coordinated planning. Such agreements provide written clarification of roles and responsibilities by addressing sharing of resources, expenditures and facilities (Missouri, 1989). However, less than half of the 157 Oregon school administrators surveyed indicated the presence of even informal agreements with agencies, while only 6% reported having formal agreements (Halpern, 1988). Likewise, written interagency agreements

were used infrequently and inconsistently in Virginia (Poole et al., 1987).

The need to actively address interagency responsibilities becomes clear in follow-up studies of special education students. In one instance only 30% to 40% of special education students reported assistance by social and rehabilitation agencies upon school exit (Roessler et al., 1990). Similarly, interviews with 301 special education youth revealed that 65% to 96% of them reported no contact across four human service agencies (Hasazi et al., 1985). Even though many services exist, they often are not accessed by persons with disabilities.

To promote access to appropriate services not only should there be coordination among service providers, but parents need to be prepared to serve as advocates for their children. It has been demonstrated that parent knowledge, expectations and undertakings impact on how well meaningful activities are implemented to maximize independence (Halpern, 1988; Halloran & Ward, 1988). A five year follow-up study demonstrated that students with disabilities whose parents were moderately to highly involved with the students' programs were more successful on employment-related outcomes. These students worked more hours per week, received higher hourly wages and worked more weeks per year than their peers whose family involvement was low

(Schalock et al., 1986). Consequently, it is no wonder that direct involvement of service providers and parents is proclaimed vital to the transition process (Koroloff, 1990; Maryland, 1988; Nebraska, 1989; West, 1988; Will, 1984).

Nonetheless, parents demonstrate little knowledge of curriculum or organizational features of high school programs that could enhance post-school success (Halpern, 1985) and the maze of adult services is often incomprehensible (Cameron, 1989; McDonnell, Wilcox & Bowles, 1988). Despite these problems, the Maryland survey of 75 parents of youth disabilities disclosed that only 18% of the parents received information on postsecondary services as their children exited school (Tilson & Neubert, 1988). This is unfortunate because parents need to understand eligibility criteria for the various service providers and procedures for accessing services that are needed.

On the other hand, educators may not always perceive parents as interested participants. Only 13% of 411 surveyed special education teachers in Oregon reported they were very satisfied with the level of parental participation and 57% of the 677 parents reported they saw their child's teacher only once a term or less (Halpern, 1988). Engelhard (1982) conducted a survey of 346 learning disability teachers, 119 special education administrators and 43 other related personnel across 176 school divisions in five

eastern states. In this study the special education teachers expressed frustration with limited interest and involvement displayed by parents. Further, another study found significantly less participation in IEP conferences by parents of older students than by parents of younger students (Lynch & Stein, 1982). In essence, parent participation is less than desirable during the critical transition years (Johnson et al., 1987).

Another component of coordinated planning is to include business and industry and other community representatives. These representatives can provide insight into the local job market and address community integration issues, while they also can become advocates for eventual job and community placements for individuals with disabilities (Maryland, 1988). Further, interface with business and industry teaches educators more about how to prepare students with appropriate occupational skills (Brolin, 1983).

Support Services. Vocational education legislation specifically requires students with disabilities be provided support services as needed to ensure success in regular vocational programs (P.L. 98-524). Supports are facilitated through cooperation of vocational and special education in planning and monitoring student progress. Students with disabilities are to have access to guidance and counseling

services and vocational programming that is based on an assessment of aptitudes, interests and special needs.

Under this legislation, professional counselors must use their expertise to assist special needs students more than ever (Kearns, Hughey, & Boyer-Stephens, 1988). Guidance counselors should play a crucial role in transition preparation and planning for students with disabilities (Hughey, 1989); however, studies document a lack of counseling and career planning services (Cobb & Phelps, 1983; Okolo and Sitlington, 1988; Rusch & Phelps, 1987). Counselors must assume a leadership role in advising students of options and assisting them in career planning, career decision making and development of employability skills (Hughey, 1989).

Another mandated support service is assessment. Students with disabilities often have limited experiences and needed assistance in choosing appropriate vocational options. Vocational assessment circumvents failure by allowing students to explore options and then predicting success in specific vocational areas (Peterson & Peterson, 1986; Weisenstein and Elrod, 1987.) Assessment data is useful in establishing program placement and instruction targeted specifically for the individual's interests, abilities, and aptitudes (Engleman, 1984; Ianacone & Hiltenbrand, 1982; Nebraska, 1989; Sands, 1985; Weisgerber,

Dahl & Appleby, 1981; West, 1988). Close interaction between assessment and prescription of vocational instruction enhances success of students with disabilities as they participate in vocational education programs (Peterson & Peterson, 1986; Phelps & Greenan, 1982).

Factors Affecting Delivery of Transition Services

The previous section featured services to be provided during planning and preparation for the transition process. However, this study not only investigates the current status of these services for secondary students with disabilities, but it also examines factors that might affect delivery of these services at the local level. The literature suggests three such factors: (a) cooperation of vocational and special education, (b) administrative support and (c) existence of a formal interagency transition planning team. The following details these factors.

Cooperation of vocational and special education.

Special educators are responsible for preparing their students for the many aspects of community integration; however, accomplishing this task alone would be nearly impossible. Henceforth surfaces the importance of unified efforts of special and vocational education. By working in concert these two disciplines can lay solid foundations for transition (Brolin, 1983; Halloran & Ward, 1988; Okolo &

Sitlington, 1988; Sarkees & Scott, 1986; Weisenstein & Elrod, 1987; West, 1988; Will, 1984).

Both vocational and special educators should contribute to the educational process. Actually, joint endeavors are required in the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act (P.L. 98-524). This Act specifies that vocational and special education teachers will collaborate in planning and monitoring vocational services and in writing the vocational component of the IEP.

The two disciplines complement one another in a truly cooperative situation. Vocational educators provide hands-on job entry and employability skills and special educators monitor and reinforce technical information within their classrooms (Peterson, 1984). Educators are sensitive to the need for such cooperation; a survey of 312 members of the Division for Career Development pinpointed a need to promote interdisciplinary communication and cooperation (Greenan, Miller, & White, 1985). However, cooperation between vocational and special education remains an exception rather than the rule (Okolo & Sitlington, 1988).

Administrative support. Another factor which might affect delivery of transition services is administrative support at the local level. A common characteristic of exemplary programs is support and commitment from leaders (Poole et al., 1987.) In Oregon, 62% of 157 school

administrators believed it was important for schools to assume responsibility for transition (Halpern, 1985). Acceptance of this responsibility by administrators is becoming increasingly wide spread (Pedhazur-Schmelkin & Berkell, 1989).

It is essential that administrators be vested in the development of local transition procedures. During early stages of a program, administrators can detect potential obstacles and maintain focus on maximum benefits to students. Overall, support of administrators is evidenced through such indicators as allocation of staff time (Asselin & Anderson, 1986; Maryland, 1988), an established continuum for service delivery (Maryland, 1988; West, 1988), the provision of inservice programs for staff (Asselin & Anderson, 1986; Halpern, 1988; McDonnell & Hardman, 1985; West, 1988), and administrative directives to follow specific procedures (Neubert, 1985).

Another indicator of administrative support for transition in the school division is support for cooperative planning between vocational and special education. If time is allocated for a person to coordinate such planning, that person can advocate for students with a disabilities as they prepare for the transition from school to community environments (Weisenstein and Elrod, 1987). Nevertheless, there often is no one designated to assume responsibility

for coordination and collaboration between vocational and special education. The Oregon study found frequent disagreement among teachers and administrators as to who was responsible for coordination. Administrators tended to place this role on special education teachers, while those teachers viewed the role as unassigned (Halpern, 1985).

Interagency team for transition planning. For successful transition planning and preparation, it is logical that turf issues must be extinguished and coordinated planning must occur. Goldstein (1988) proposed that when communication is formalized and procedures for transition are institutionalized, fewer persons with disabilities will fall through the cracks. Considering such a premise, it is no surprise that formal interagency team approaches to planning for special needs students are viewed as essential to the transition planning process (Dick, 1985; Everson & Moon, 1987; Levinson, 1984; Neubert, 1984; Szymanski et al., 1990).

Formalized teams facilitate collaboration when planning and providing services and monitoring progress of persons with disabilities as they move through the transition process. Formation of teams requires commitment from key education and human service representatives at the local level to unite in problem-solving to address local issues (Everson & Moon, 1987). Agency representatives benefit from

participation since teams provide opportunities to gain knowledge of one another's language, philosophies and needed outcomes (Repetto, 1987). Further, teams improve the basic service delivery structure in localities by providing agencies an avenue to project future service needs (Halpern, 1988; McDonnell & Hardman, 1985; McDonnell, Wilcox & Bowles, 1988). Overall, collective efforts through formal interagency teams can enhance quality of life for persons with disabilities as they leave school and face the challenges of adult living.

Summary

The above findings delineate several important transition services, as well as factors suggested to affect delivery of transition services. Various studies document that transition services are frequently lacking for secondary students with disabilities; however, there is a current void in the literature as far as research to verify factors that affect delivery of those needed services.

This study fills that void by seeking data from persons designated as responsible for coordination of transition services in Virginia school divisions. The current status of delivery of transition services and the status factors affecting delivery of those services is assessed. Then categories of transition services are correlated with categories of factors that might affect delivery of those

services to determine noteworthy relationships. Lastly, personnel assigned to coordinate transition services are described. The methodology under which this study was implemented is detailed in Chapter Three.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

The primary purposes of this study were two fold. First, the investigation determined levels of delivery of specific transition services and the extent to which specific factors existed. Second, relationships between four categories of the transition services and three categories of the factors were examined. In addition, demographic data were collected in reference to the transition coordinators who responded to the survey. Data were collected through a survey consisting of scales, closed-ended questions and open-ended questions. The surveys were mailed to transition coordinators in Virginia public school divisions.

Population

The population for this study consisted of persons in Virginia school divisions who were designated as coordinators of transition services. A roster of personnel responsible for coordination of transition services was created by contacting superintendents in all 135 school divisions to determine the appropriate person for each division. For the 17 nonresponding school divisions special education administrators were placed on the roster as

default survey recipients. Overall, the composition of the roster revealed that six school divisions had consolidated special education services with larger school divisions; therefore, the surveyed population represented 129 school divisions.

Instrumentation

Development of the Instrument. The survey instrument used in this study was partially developed in response to needs identified by Virginia's Transition Task Force. The Task Force is comprised of consumers, parents, employers, and state and local representatives from 13 state agencies. The goal of the Task Force is to ensure individual transition planning and service provision for all persons with disabilities, ages 15 through 21. The Task Force formally recommended and approved that a survey be conducted to determine the status of transition related factors within each local education agency (Bass & deFur, 1990).

Seven items appearing on the survey were specifically requested by the Task Force, but not intended for use in this study. Specifically, these items included: (a) barriers to successful transition to adult life, (b) whether the school division had a formal set of procedures for delivery of transition services, (c) how those procedures were developed/funded, (d) whether follow-up studies were conducted and if the respondent was willing to share results

of follow-up, (e) categories of students with disabilities who received transition services, (f) agencies with which the schools worked/coordinated to provide transition services, and (g) technical assistance needs.

The Task Force also recommended collection of demographic data which were used in this study. These data described persons responsible for coordination of transition services as per their titles and duties. Specifically, three items ascertained (a) roles of personnel that coordinate transition services, (b) formal inclusion of transition coordination as part of their duties and (c) the percentage of time allocated for transition coordination.

To strengthen the body of research-based literature in the field, this study was expanded beyond the original intent of the Task Force. The level at which transition services were delivered in local school divisions was determined and specific factors that might affect delivery of transition services were investigated.

Transition Services. Part One of the instrument presented items designed to obtain information about four categories of transition services: (a) integration, (b) instructional programs, (c) coordinated planning and (d) support services. Each category was delineated by a range of four to eight quality indicators derived from the literature. For each category participants circled

responses that best described the level of implementation of each indicator in their school divisions on a scale of: always (3), usually (2), seldom (1) or never (0).

The first category of transition services, integration, was studied through five indicators. These included integration in academic classrooms, in vocational education, and across the general school environment. The remaining two indicators addressed implementation of technology to facilitate integration and procedures to improve peer attitudes.

The second category, instructional programs, was measured through eight indicators. The first three indicators focused on community living by examining instruction in skills pertinent to independent living, social interactions and use of leisure time. The next four indicators addressed vocational/occupational preparation by inquiring about individualized vocational instruction, investigation of career options by students, instruction in job seeking and keeping skills, and participation in on-the-job training. The final indicator in the category of instruction addressed linkage to employment and postsecondary education/training programs prior to school leaving.

Coordinated planning, the third category, was considered through seven indicators. The first three items

investigated coordination in transition planning within the community through the presence of written statements of cooperation between agencies, involvement of business and industry and involvement of community representatives or persons with disabilities. The next item questioned if there was referral to educational, residential, and vocational services before students with disabilities left school. Parents were the focus of the last three items. Parent participation in educational programming and transition services was examined, as well as whether schools provided information about community resources to the parents.

Finally, the category of support services was composed of four indicators. The first two items focused upon guidance services. These items were indicators of the level at which guidance personnel assist students in career planning and participate in making program placement decisions. The last two items addressed the use of vocational assessment when selecting vocational programs and when designing vocational curricula and instruction for students with disabilities.

Factors Affecting Delivery of Transition Services.

Part Two of the instrument targeted factors that might affect delivery of transition services. Three factors related to delivery of transition services were identified

through a review of literature: (a) cooperation of vocational and special education, (b) administrative support, and (c) existence of a formal interagency team. The first two of these factors were addressed through four and five indicators, respectively. For each of these factors participants circled the degree to which each indicator occurred in their school divisions on the scale of: always (3), usually (2), seldom (1) or never (0).

Specifically, the first factor, cooperation of vocational and special education, was represented by four indicators. The first two items measured the level of cooperation in the initial stages of making program placement decisions and writing the IEP. The last two examined the level of cooperation in accommodating students with disabilities in vocational programs and monitoring and evaluating their progress.

The second factor, administrative support, was represented by five indicators to determine the level at which: (a) cooperative planning between vocational and special education was encouraged and supported by administrators, (b) a person was specifically assigned responsibility for coordination between vocational and special education, (c) established procedures provided a continuum of vocational education, including assessment, appropriate programs, individualized planning, and support

services, (d) there were established procedures for coordination of planning between the school, family, and human service agencies and (e) inservice was provided for personnel responsible for transition services.

The third factor possibly affecting delivery of transition services was that of existence of formal interagency transition planning teams. Respondents were instructed to select a "yes" or "no" response when asked if their school divisions participated in such a team. This was the only dichotomous variable incorporated into the relational statistics of this study.

Format of the Instrument. Overall, the instrument consisted of a total of 122 items within 17 questions. Parts One and Two addressed the level of delivery of transition services, two of the three factors affecting transition service delivery and the degree of specific barriers to adult living. The response format throughout these two sections was: always (3), usually (2), seldom (1) or never (0).

Parts Three and Four encompassed general information requested by the State Task Force and the factor of existence of a formal interagency team. Response patterns varied throughout this section. Participants (a) selected responses from lists, (b) selected either "yes" or "no"

answers, (c) indicated percentages or (d) responded to open-ended items (see Appendix A).

Pilot Testing. The instrument was initially piloted with two university faculty, the state coordinator of transition services, and thirty members of Virginia's Transition Task Force. After revisions, final pilot testing was completed by administering the instrument to 17 persons in a graduate class who worked in the area of transition, including transition coordinators, administrators, teachers in special education, and vocational resource personnel. All these individuals analyzed the questionnaire and made both written and oral comments relative to the (a) clarity of directions, (b) appeal of the format, (c) content of the questions, (d) appropriateness of categorized items, (e) and the method of response. Their analyses revealed the need to define specific terms, underline portions of the directions, change the wording of certain items to increase clarity, and to maintain a consistent, positive response format throughout each section. Their reviews also served to validate the categories of indicators and increase content validity. All comments and suggestions were considered and incorporated into the refined survey.

Procedures

Initially, it was necessary to identify the population to receive the instrument; therefore, a request was mailed

to each of the 135 school superintendents in Virginia to identify the person in the division who was most responsible for coordination of transition services. A cover letter explaining an interest in recognizing needs of Virginia school divisions accompanied two enclosures: (a) a summary of the transition related mandates in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (P. L. 101-476), and (b) a simple form to return with the requested information (see Appendix B). Business reply envelopes were enclosed.

The original request resulted in a 68% ($n = 92$) response rate and one follow-up contact by mail further increased the response rate to 87% ($n = 118$). For the 17 school divisions for which no contact person was named by the superintendent, the special education director was used as the default contact. This was logical since 82% of the persons identified by the superintendents were special education administrators.

Due to consolidated special education services of some school divisions the population to receive the survey consisted of 129 persons designated as transition coordinators. Those coordinators identified by their superintendents received surveys with cover letters indicating their superintendent advised they be personally contacted to complete the survey, but if another individual was more appropriate to please forward the instrument to

that person (see Appendix C). Special education directors used as default recipients were sent information that was originally sent to superintendents and were asked to complete the survey, if appropriate, or to forward the survey to the most appropriate individual (see Appendix D). The strategy of asking both parties to forward the instrument was effective since 13 percent ($n = 15$) of the returned surveys were forwarded to other personnel. Once again, business reply envelopes were enclosed.

Two weeks after the initial request the response rate was 71% ($n = 91$). At that time the first follow-up of nonrespondents was conducted in the form of a reminder letter (see Appendix E). This increased the response rate to 78% ($n = 101$). The second follow-up mailing not only included a reminder letter, but another copy of the survey (see Appendix F). This resulted in responses from 14 additional coordinators to increase the rate to 89% ($n = 115$). The third follow-up, conducted by phone, brought in five additional surveys which resulted in the final response rate of 93% ($n = 120$). This response rate was deemed acceptable and data analysis began.

Method of analysis

To summarize the data and perform statistical analysis, responses to the 122 items on the 120 completed surveys were entered into Lotus 123-R3 and imported into Number Cruncher

Statistical System. Resulting data encompassed four areas of analysis: (a) specific transition services, (b) specific factors affecting transition, (c) relational statistics and d) demographic data.

Transition services and factors. Four general categories of transition services contained 24 specific indicators. Also, two categories of factors which may affect delivery of transition services contained nine specific indicators. To describe transition services and the factors in terms of the specific indicators, responses of always (3) or usually (2) were considered to denote that the service or factor existed in the school division. Responses of seldom (1) or never (0) were considered to indicate that the specific service was lacking. Through this method of data interpretation, it was possible to calculate the percentages school divisions in which each transition service or factor was present.

Relational Statistics. To address relationships between delivery of transition services and factors that might affect delivery of such services, a decision was made as to the magnitude of correlation which would indicate an important relationship. Hinkle, Wiersma, and Jurs (1979) presented a rule of thumb: the absolute values of .90 to 1.00 represented a very high relationship, .70 to .90 a high relationship, .50 to .70 a moderate relationship, .30 to .50

a low relationship, and below .30 represented little relationship. Yet, they qualified this by adding that such determinations depended upon the variables under consideration. They recommended that correlations should sometimes be viewed in terms of variance. In other words, the coefficient of determination revealed the portion of the variance in one variable attributable to the variance in the other variable under consideration. Further, correlations do not necessarily demonstrate causal relationships. Such assumptions can only be made with strong supports of professional judgments and related literature. These recommendations were applied in this study.

Henceforth, two steps were implemented to analyze relational statistics. The first step was to collapse the specific indicators within the four categories of transition services and two of the categories of factors into single measures representing each category. To collapse the indicators intercorrelations were run on each of the four groups of indicators which represented the transition service categories of integration, instructional programming, coordinated planning and support services. Likewise, intercorrelations were run on the two factors of cooperation of vocational and special education and administrative support for transition. Such a process was not in order for the third factor of existence of a formal

interagency transition team because this was a dichotomous variable.

When an intercorrelation of the means of items within each category was .28 or above, the degree of correlation was considered to be of adequate magnitude to include the item in the category, because this accounted for over 7% of the variance. This procedure was to increase the internal consistency for each category of factors and services. This methodology was followed in lieu of formal factor analysis prior to actual administration of the instrument for two reasons: (a) the population of 129 was not large enough to permit a factor analysis on the instrument and (b) because the survey solicited facts, not opinions (Robert Frary, Ph.D., personal interview, April 1991).

This procedure resulted in five of the twenty-four transition service indicators being excluded from analysis due to an inadequate degree of intercorrelation. Specifically these were: (a) technology implemented as needed to promote integration, (b) procedures implemented to improve attitudes of nondisabled peers, (c) instruction in social/interpersonal skills, (d) instruction in leisure skills and (e) review and evaluation of the child's educational programming by parents. In addition, one of the nine transition factor indicators was excluded. Specifically, the excluded indicator investigated the degree

to which cooperation between vocational and special education was supported and encouraged by administrators.

The remaining indicators were collapsed into single mean scores for each category, so then the second level of analysis of relational statistics could be initiated. The second level of analysis was to correlate the mean scores of each of the four categories of transition services with the mean scores of each of the three categories of factors thought to affect delivery of services. Pearson Product Moment Correlations were utilized to correlate the first and second factors of administrative support for transition and cooperation of vocational and special education with each of the four transition service categories. Selection of this statistic was based on the fact that all data was continuous as responses fell on a continuum between three and zero. It is recognized that this type of data does not meet the strictest criteria to be considered interval data; however, for purposes of this study the data was considered as such. The yes or no responses to the third factor of existence of a formal interagency team resulted in a dichotomous variable which was correlated with continuous variables; therefore, a Point Biserial Correlation was used in this instance. These statistics determined noteworthy relationships between the categories of transition services and the factors thought to affect delivery of transition services.

Demographic data. Examination of the data produced demographic information about transition coordinators. Titles of the respondents were used to depict as percentages differing types of personnel responsible for transition coordination. Also, percentages of respondents who had transition coordination formally included as part of their duties were generated. The amount of time allocated for coordination was reported as a range, a mean and a mode. The full results of data analysis are presented in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER 4

Results

The purpose of this chapter is to present research results. Each research question presented in Chapter One is addressed. The results are described as follows: (a) the level at which specific transition services are provided secondary students with disabilities in Virginia school divisions, (b) the level at which specific factors relating to delivery of transition services exist in Virginia school divisions, (c) relationships between the four categories of transition services and the three categories of factors affecting transition service delivery and (d) demographic data about survey respondents.

Transition Services in Virginia School Divisions

This section addresses the first research question presented in Chapter One: At what level are specific transition services delivered to secondary students with disabilities in Virginia school divisions? On the survey respondents indicated the degree to which 24 transition services were provided in 120 school divisions (see appendix G). Responses of always (3) or usually (2) were considered to denote that the service existed in the school division. Responses of seldom (1) or never (0) were considered to

indicate that the service was lacking. Transition services are described herein according to the categories in which they appeared on the instrument: (a) integration, (b) instruction, (c) coordinated transition planning, and (d) support services.

Integration. The category of integration depicted the degree to which students with disabilities were included in the mainstream of school life and the use of technologies and procedures to enhance integration efforts (see Table 1). Integration across the general school environment and in vocational and academic classrooms was reported as occurring in 95% and above of the school divisions. Still, 20% of the transition coordinators reported that assistive technology was not used when needed to integrate individuals with disabilities into the mainstream of the school program. Implementation of procedures to improve attitudes of nondisabled peers toward inclusion of students with disabilities did not appear to be a priority; almost one-third of the schools reported this was not done.

Instructional programs. The area of instructional programs highlighted functional academic areas encompassing independent living, successful articulation into the community, and appropriate postsecondary outcomes (see Table 1). Over 90% of the school divisions reported that students with disabilities received instruction in independent living

Table 1

Percentages of Virginia School Divisions Reporting
Transition Services for Students with Disabilities

Integration Services	%
Across the general school environment	99
In academic classrooms	96
In vocational education classrooms	95
Technology implemented to increase integration	80
Procedures implemented to improve peer attitudes	69
Instructional Services	%
Independent living skills	93
Social skills	92
Career awareness	92
Job seeking/keeping skills	90
Individualized vocational education	84
Leisure skills	71
Linkage to employment/further education prior to school exit	71
On-the-job training	63

Table 1. Continued.

Coordinated Planning Services	%
Parents review and evaluate their children's programs	96
Parents informed of resources and agencies	92
Parents directly involved in planning and implementing transition services	82
Written interagency agreements	78
Systematic planning strategies for service referral	74
Business & industry involved in planning	29
Community representative involved in planning	29
Support Services	%
Vocational assessment considered in program placement	85
Guidance assists students in career planning	84
Guidance assists in program placement decisions	82
Curriculum and instruction based on vocational assessment data	73

$n = 120$

skills and social skills as needed. Likewise, 90% revealed career options and job seeking and keeping skills were part of the curriculum for students with disabilities. Individualized vocational instruction was provided as needed in 84% of the school divisions.

In contrast, around 30% of the school divisions reported no instruction in use of leisure time was provided and that there was no linkage to employment, or postsecondary education/training programs prior to leaving school. To add to this dilemma, over one-third revealed that students with disabilities who needed on-the-job training programs were not provided that opportunity.

Coordinated transition planning. This factor focused on coordination between parents, agencies, the community and the schools (see Table 1). Parent involvement was rated highly as far as their review of their children's educational programs (96%) and most schools indicated that they informed parents about community resources and human service agencies that would benefit their children (92%). In comparison, 82% indicated parents were directly involved in planning and implementing transition services.

Around one-fourth of the responses depicted that no written statement of cooperation existed between agencies involved in transition planning and that there were no systematic planning strategies to provide referral to

educational, residential, and vocational services before students leave school. Furthermore, less than one-third of the schools reported involvement of business and industry or community representatives in planning and implementing transition services.

Support services. The category of support services encompassed guidance services and vocational assessment (see Table 1). It was often reported that guidance personnel assisted students with disabilities in career planning and decision making (84%). Similarly, guidance personnel were frequently reported to participate in making program placement decisions for these students (82%). There was contrasting evidence on the use of vocational assessment data for program placement and actual application of the data to instructional planning . Eighty-five percent of the school divisions reported that vocational assessment data was considered when selecting vocational education programs for students with disabilities. A smaller percentage (73%) of the respondents indicated that once a student was placed in a vocational program curricula and instruction were based upon vocational assessment data.

Factors Affecting Transition Services

The second research question is addressed in this section: At what level do specific factors affecting delivery of transition services exist in Virginia school

divisions? Respondents indicated on the survey the degree to which nine specific factors existed at the local level. These data are detailed as they appeared on the instrument within the categories of cooperation of vocational and special education and support for transition. Further, respondents reported if a formal interagency team existed in their locality through a yes or no answer.

Cooperation of Vocational and Special Education.

Eighty-seven percent of the respondents reported that there was cooperation between the two disciplines in accommodating for special needs and 82% reported cooperation in monitoring and evaluating student progress. Three fourths (77%) revealed cooperation in making program placement decisions, but only 65% declared there was cooperation in writing the IEP vocational components (see Table 2).

Administrative Support for Transition. Ninety-two percent of the respondents indicated that cooperative planning by vocational and special education was encouraged in their local school divisions; however, only 52% communicated that anyone was assigned responsibility to coordinate such cooperative planning. There also appears to be a lack of support regarding the other items in the category of administrative support. Only 61% of the school divisions had procedures for coordination of planning or for a continuum of services encompassing assessment, programs,

Table 2

Percentages of Virginia School Divisions Reporting
Factors Affecting Delivery of Transition Services

Cooperation of Vocational and Special Education	%
Accommodating students in vocational education programs	87
Monitoring and evaluating progress of students	82
Making program placement decisions with students	77
Writing vocational goals and objectives on IEP	65
Administrative Support for Transition	%
Cooperative planning encouraged between vocational and special education	92
Procedures provide a continuum of services including assessment, appropriate programs, individualized planning, and support services	61
Procedures for coordination of planning between school, family, and human service agencies	60
A person is assigned responsibility for coordination of vocational and special education	52
Inservice provided personnel responsible for transition services	46

$n = 120$

individualized planning and support services. Further, less than half (46%) conveyed that inservice was provided to personnel responsible for transition services (see Table 2).

Formal interagency transition team. Survey respondents answered yes or no as to whether their school division had a formal interagency transition team. The proportion of school divisions with a team was 53% ($n = 64$), so the remaining 47% ($n = 56$) had no interagency team. This was the only dichotomous variable in the study.

Relationships Between Services and Factors

This section responses to the third research question: What are the relationships between four categories of transition services for secondary students with disabilities (i.e., integration, instruction, coordinated planning and support services) and three categories of factors affecting delivery of transition services (i.e., cooperation between vocational and special education, support for transition and a formal interagency transition team)? For each category of services and factors intercorrelations of each indicator with each of the others in that category were considered. Only those indicators that intercorrelated at .25 or above with the each of the others in the category were included when determining the overall mean score for each category (see Appendix H). Therefore, the category of integration was represented by three of the five original indicators.

These three indicators addressed integration in academic and vocational classrooms, as well as across the general school environment. The category of instruction had two items excluded, so six indicators remained: independent living skills, career awareness, job seeking/keeping skills, individualized vocational education, linkage to further education/employment and on-the-job training. One item was excluded from the category of coordinated planning so six remained: parents are informed of resources and agencies, parents are directly involved in planning and implementing transition services, implementation of written interagency agreements, the participation of business and industry in transition initiatives, participation of community representatives and systematic planning strategies exist for referral to services. In the last category, support services, all four items proved representative of the category.

Likewise, for the factor of cooperation of vocational and special education all indicators remained intact. For the factor of administrative support only one of the five indicators was excluded; therefore, this factor was represented by indicators denoting that a person was assigned coordination of vocational and special education; procedures provided a continuum of services; procedures existed for coordination between school, family and human

service agencies; and inservice was provided personnel responsible for transition services. Once the indicators with sufficient intercorrelations were transformed into single mean scores for each category, relationships between the categories of services and factors were determined. Presentation of the relational data is organized according to the three factors under investigation.

Cooperation between vocational and special education.

Pearson Product Moment Correlations were used to assess relationships between the factor of cooperation of vocational and special education and each of the four categories of transition services investigated in this study. Correlations ranged from .40 to .56 (see Table 3). The highest correlation was with instructional programs with and the lowest with integration with nondisabled peers. Overall, this factor had substantial positive correlations with all the categories of transition services.

Administrative support for transition. Relationships between the factor of administrative support for transition and each of the four specific transition services were expressed through Pearson Product Moment Correlations. Ranges of the correlations were from .22 to .67 (see Table 4). The high correlations existed with coordinated transition planning, instructional programs and support services. The lowest correlation was with the level of

Table 3

Correlation Coefficients for Cooperation of Vocational and Special Education and Transition Services

Transition Service Categories	r
1. integration with nondisabled peers	.40
2. instructional programs	.56
3. coordinated transition planning	.42
4. support services provided	.52

n = 120

Table 4

Correlation Coefficients for the factor of Administrative Support for Transition and Transition Services

Transition Service Categories	r
1. integration with nondisabled peers	.22
2. instructional programs	.63
3. coordinated transition planning	.67
4. support services provided	.52

n = 120

integration of students with disabilities with nondisabled peers, however this correlation was also of noteworthy magnitude.

Existence of a formal interagency transition team. A Point Biserial Correlation was used to examine relationships between the factor of existence of a formal interagency transition team and the four categories of transition services. Correlations delineating relationships between this factor and the four transition services ranged from .04 to .47. The only substantial correlation was with coordinated transition planning (See Table 5).

Demographic Data

The 120 respondents for the study were persons in the school divisions designated as most responsible for coordination of transition services. The final research question inquired about these individuals: What are characteristics of persons who are most responsible for coordination of transition services in local school divisions? One hundred percent of the participants provided their titles as requested. Collectively, the types of personnel responding included 82% ($n = 98$) special education administrators, 12% ($n = 14$) teachers, 3% ($n = 4$) general administrators, 1.5% ($n = 2$) counselors, and 1.5% ($n = 2$) school psychologists (see Table 6). Of the respondents, 44% ($n = 52$) had coordination of transition services formally

Table 5

Correlation Coefficients for the Factor of Formal Inter-agency Transition Planning Teams and Transition Services

Transition Service Categories	r_{pb}
1. integration with nondisabled peers	.04
2. instructional programs	.18
3 coordinated transition planning	.47
4. support services provided	.19

$n = 120$

Table 6

Demographic Data for Persons Designated as Most Responsible for Coordination of Transition Services

Role	%	n	% Formal Part of Job	Mean % of Time
Special Ed. Administrator	82.0	98	40	8
Teacher	12.0	14	57	48
General Administrator	3.0	4	25	5
Counselor	1.5	2	100	8
School Psychologist	1.5	2	100	13

$n = 120$

included as part of their job descriptions. When these 52 respondents were questioned as to what percentage of time was allotted for transition coordination, responses ranged from 0% to 100% of the time. The modal response was 5%, the median was 5%, and the mean was 15%. More specifically, 72% ($n = 37$) of 51 respondents for this item indicated that 10% or less of their time was allotted to coordination of transition services, 14% ($n = 12$) indicated from 15% to 60% of their time, while only 4% ($n = 2$) indicated that 100% of their time was allotted to coordination of transition services.

According to job roles, transition coordination fell on administrative personnel most of the time; however, only 40% of these administrators ($n = 39$) reported this role as formally included as part of their duties and only 8% of their time was allocated for such coordination. At the same time 57% of the teachers ($n = 14$) designated as transition coordinators reported the assignment was part of their duties and a greater 48% of their time was allocated for such coordination (see Table 6).

In this chapter data gathered via the survey was reported. Levels of specific services and factors were examined, relational data were derived and demographic data were given. Chapter Five will discuss implications of these data and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER FIVE

Summary, Discussion, Conclusions and Recommendations

Specialized planning and preparation are necessary for the successful transition of secondary students with disabilities to adult living. This study addresses comprehensive transition services for these individuals. Primary concerns are the current status of transition services for secondary students with disabilities in Virginia and the relationship between transition services and certain factors that might affect delivery of those services. Further, persons designated as most responsible for coordination of transition services are described. In this chapter, a summary of the study is presented. Then, discussion is organized around the research questions of the study. Finally, conclusions and recommendations for future study are set forth.

Summary

National and state attention has focused on transition issues; nonetheless, students with disabilities have continued to encounter difficulty in the transition process as they exit school (Berkell & Gaylord-Ross, 1989; Phelps, 1985; Ryan, 1988; West, 1988). However, barriers to productive adult living have not been due to disabling conditions as much as they are due to the lack of systematic preparation and planning for the transition from school to

work and community adjustment (Cameron, 1989). Therefore, this study investigated the status of transition services in Virginia public school divisions and factors that may affect delivery of those services.

The importance of this inquiry was sustained through legislation. The 1990 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (P. L. 101-476), defined transition and required a statement of transition needs and services to be included in the Individualized Education Program (IEP) of every student with a disability no later than age 16. Further, the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act of 1990 (P. L. 101-392) required vocational education to assist in fulfilling the transition service requirements of the special education legislation. Concomitantly, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (P. L. 101-336) made coordinated transition planning more critical as it enhanced the prospect of total community participation for students with disabilities; therefore, the schools needed to respond with appropriate preparation.

A comprehensive review of literature coupled with the aforementioned legislation revealed four important transition service categories: (a) integration of students with disabilities with nondisabled peers; (b) instructional programs; (c) coordinated planning; and (d) support services. Three factors that may affect transition service

delivery also surfaced: (a) cooperation of vocational and special education, (b) administrative support and (c) an interagency team for transition planning. Based upon these services and factors, an instrument was developed and administered by mail to the population of 129 persons designated as responsible for coordination of transition services in Virginia school divisions. Responses to items on the instrument provided data in the form of means, percentages and relational statistics.

Results of the survey responded to four research questions: (a) What is the status of specific transition services for secondary students with disabilities in Virginia school divisions? (b) What is the status of specific factors affecting delivery of transition services for secondary students with disabilities in Virginia school divisions? (c) What are the relationships between the four categories of transition services and the three factors that may affect service delivery? and (d) What are the characteristics of persons most responsible for delivery of transition services?

Findings concerning the status of the services and factors in Virginia were compared to research from other states. Further, the importance of administrative support, cooperation of vocational and special education, and a formal interagency team was demonstrated through relational

statistics backed by the literature. Finally, recommendations for further research were provided.

Discussion

Status of Transition Services

Results of this study depict the level at which 24 specific transition services are delivered to secondary students with disabilities in Virginia public schools. The most salient findings are discussed in accordance with the categories in which they were placed on the instrument.

Integration. In the context of transition services, results of this study reveal that Virginia schools are upholding their responsibility, as suggested in the literature, to facilitate community adjustment by promoting interaction of students with disabilities with their nondisabled peers (Halloran & Ward, 1988; Halpern, 1988; McDonnell & Hardman, 1985; Retish, 1989). Students are integrated at a very high level throughout the schools. This high degree of integration might be expected because the Education for all Handicapped Children Act (P. L. 94-142) and the Carl Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Act (P. L. 101-392) mandate that students with disabilities be served in least restrictive environments.

In reference to vocational education, a high percentage of the school divisions reported inclusion of students with disabilities in regular classes. Other studies produced

data inconsistent with these findings. The Vermont study revealed that one-third of the sample of 462 youths with disabilities never participated in vocational education (Hasazi et al., 1985). Similarly, one-third of the Oregon teachers reported no availability of vocational education classes for students with disabilities. Further, a national study of adults with learning disabilities indicated that most of them were never included in regular vocational programs during their school years (Hoffman et al., 1987). Virginia schools are either doing a remarkable job or the respondents overestimated the degree to which students with disabilities are included in regular vocational education classes.

Even though a high level of integration is reported in Virginia school divisions, it is unfortunate that procedures are seldom implemented to improve attitudes of nondisabled peers. This study confirms that students with disabilities are taught social skills, but what efforts are made to decrease negative attitudes of their peers? If attitudinal barriers were alleviated during the school years, the effect would likely extend throughout society as all students left the schools and took adult roles. Self-determination would likely increase for students with disabilities as they gained acceptance among their nondisabled peers.

Instructional services. The literature concluded that academic objectives are often emphasized in secondary special education at the expense of functional curricula (Brolin, 1989; Cobb & Phelps, 1983; Edgar, 1988; Elrod & Lyons, 1987; and Ianacone and Stodden, 1987). However, in Virginia this does not seem to be the case as far as independent living, social skills, career awareness and job seeking skills. Nevertheless, instruction was lacking in the area of leisure skills. Neglect in this area is unfortunate when it is realized that nearly three fourths of the week of a full-time worker is unstructured and that percentage drastically increases for the 50% to 80% of persons with disabilities are who are unemployed or underemployed.

In vocational education it was impressive to see that most school divisions not only mainstreamed students with disabilities, but they also provided individualized vocational instruction as needed. However, another vocationally related issue, the provision of on-the-job training experiences for secondary students with disabilities, appears to be a problem in Virginia as it is in other states. Virginia findings are consistent with those in Vermont (Hasazi et al., 1985) and Oregon (Halpern, 1988).

The lack of on-the-job training during school is disturbing because such work experiences can predict success in employment (Halloran & Ward, 1988). Consequently, there are strong implications for the inclusion of students with disabilities in vocational education. A high degree of integration of students with disabilities into regular vocational programs is considered positive by advocates of persons with disabilities. However, it must be recognized that an accountability measure for vocational education is successful employment of all students who complete the programs. As the Oregon study emphasized, a critical component to achieve positive interface of special and vocational education is increasing the array of job opportunities for students with disabilities (Halpern, 1988). In other words, every resource, including work experiences, should be tapped to enhance success of students with disabilities in the employment arena, which in turn would make their acceptance and success in vocational education programs more viable.

For many students with disabilities who are exiting school, further education may be an appropriate option. However, almost one third of the school divisions in Virginia provide no linkages from secondary education to further education. This supports the findings of Benz & Halpern (1987) and Koroloff (1990) that, despite the

potential value of further education for some students, postsecondary education is not consistently included as a goal their transition plans. Typically 80% of all students participate in postsecondary education or training, but less than half of youth with disabilities access such programs (Halloran and Ward, 1988).

Coordinated planning services. Coordinated planning should bring together parents, agencies, business and industry and community representatives. This study reveals adequate parent and agency involvement, but a very low level of involvement of business, industry and community representatives. By reason of the requirement for parent participation in the IEP meeting (P. L. 94-142), it is no surprise that parent involvement in reviewing and evaluating their children's programs is extremely highly rated; however, fewer schools report parents as directly involved in planning and implementing transition services. Perhaps the level of parent involvement in transition planning will increase as schools meet the new legislative requirement that transition services and interagency responsibilities be included in the IEP (U. S. Congress, 1990c).

The key is to make parents active participants in the IEP process. Parent participation was found to predict success on employment-related outcomes (Schalock et al., 1986). This is logical because parents become case managers

as their children with disabilities leave school. This study indicated that a high number of Virginia school divisions inform parents of postsecondary resources and agencies that can benefit their children. However, these findings are not consistent with those in a Maryland parent survey wherein only 18% of the parents received information on postsecondary services as their children exited school (Tilson & Neubert, 1988).

Another aspect of coordinated planning is the inclusion of human service agencies. Over three fourths of the school divisions in this study have written agreements with other agencies. This is better than expected in light of the finding of Pool et al. (1987) that written interagency agreements were used infrequently and inconsistently in Virginia. Similarly, only 6% of the Oregon schools had formal agreements with agencies and over half indicated that even informal agreements did not exist (Halpern, 1988). The high number of school divisions reporting interagency agreements in Virginia is likely due to the efforts of the Department of Rehabilitative Services to formulate cooperative agreements with school divisions. These cooperative agreements permit exchange of information so services can be offered to students with disabilities. Still, teachers typically must initiate referrals on each individual who receives services; therefore, if specific

procedures for making these referrals are not in place, numerous students could be overlooked.

The lowest rated of all specific transition services were those of inclusion of business and industry representatives, as well as community members in local transition planning initiatives. Much insight can be gained from these participants regarding labor market and community integration issues (Maryland, 1988). Interface also enlightens educators about how to better prepare students for employment (Brolin, 1983). With business, industry and community representatives as allies, local transition planning groups can target resources available in the community and develop opportunities that otherwise may have never existed. Unfortunately, it seems some of the most important players are not included in the process.

Support services. Guidance and vocational assessment services were considered in the support services category. Data indicate that guidance personnel in Virginia are doing a sufficient job of assisting students with disabilities. These data are impressive when considering that previous studies documented a lack of counseling and career planning services (Cobb & Phelps, 1983; Okolo & Sitlington, 1988; Rusch & Phelps, 1987).

Regarding vocational assessment, both special and vocational education legislation require program planning be

based on assessment. This study revealed that many school divisions considered assessment in program placement decisions, but less than three fourths based vocational curriculum and instruction on assessment data. These findings were reflective of two previous studies from the field of special education. Engelhard (1982) revealed that one third of the special education teachers reported problems in applying assessment data to IEPs and Peters, Templeman and Brostrom (1987) reported that most of the teachers in their study could not justify goals and objectives as being based on assessment results. If such problems occur with special educators, who are trained to interpret and apply assessment data, it is no wonder problems also surface with vocational assessment. The lack of application of assessment data is disturbing when it is widely recognized that close interaction between assessment and prescription of vocational instruction greatly enhances success of students with disabilities (Dick, 1985; Neubert, 1985; Peterson & Peterson, 1986; Phelps & Greenan, 1982).

Factors Affecting Delivery of Transition Services

This study also provided data about the frequency of three specific factors assumed to affect delivery of transition services. Key findings are discussed below.

Cooperation between vocational and special education.

Vocational education plays a salient role in the preparation

of all students for the transition to adult living. When students with disabilities are served in vocational classrooms, the literature indicates that close cooperation of vocational and special educators is needed (Brolin, 1983; Greenan, Miller, & White, 1985; Halloran & Ward, 1988; Halpern, 1985; Peterson, 1984;, Sarkees & Scott, 1986; Weisenstein & Elrod, 1987; West, 1988; Will, 1984). In Virginia cooperation occurs most frequently in areas such as placement, student monitoring, accommodations and student evaluation.

However, less than two thirds of the respondents reported cooperation between vocational and special education in writing goals and objectives in IEPs, despite the data indicating very high numbers of students are integrated into regular vocational education programs. This infers that either individualized vocational programs are written with no input from the vocational teachers or that no vocational component is included in the IEP. A reason for this may be that IEP goals and objectives for regular classrooms are not required within the framework of special education legislation. The amount of time spent in a regular classroom must be documented, not the manner in which the student is instructed (Engelhard, 1982). Nonetheless, cooperation is mandated in vocational education legislation.

Support for transition. A common attribute of exemplary programs is support of administrators (Poole et al., 1987). Administrators have the power to circumvent obstacles and maintain focus on benefits for students (Asselin and Anderson, 1986) or to hinder development of certain programs and services. Regrettably, with the exception of one indicator, measures of administrative support in Virginia ranged very low (46%-61%). The highly rated indicator was that of encouragement and support for cooperative planning of vocational and special education. Still, only half the school divisions reported that a person was assigned responsibility for such coordination.

Assignment of coordination duties was also a problem in the Oregon study. There was frequent disagreement among teachers and administrators as to who was responsible for coordination of transition services (Halpern, 1988). If time were allocated for a person to coordinate planning, that person could advocate for students with disabilities as they prepared for the transition from school to community environments. In this study descriptive data about the persons designated as most responsible for transition coordination demonstrated that less than half had transition coordination formally included as part of their job descriptions and for most of those respondents less than ten percent of their time was allocated for this purpose.

Support of administrators is evidenced through other indicators such as an established continuum for service delivery (Maryland, 1988; West, 1988) and the provision of staff development (Asselin & Anderson, 1986; Halpern, 1988; McDonnell & Hardman, 1985; West, 1988). This study disclosed that nearly half the school divisions lacked procedures to provide a continuum of services and procedures for coordination of planning. In addition, these schools did not provide inservice for personnel responsible for transition services. With this lack of support it might be predicted that many students would neither be appropriately prepared for the transition from school, nor be linked with appropriate supports upon school exit.

Formal interagency transition team. The literature addressed benefits of formal interagency transition teams, but only half the school divisions in Virginia report the presence of such teams. This may indicate not only a lack of commitment in schools, but also a lack of motivation of human service agencies to become involved in team situations. Teamwork in transition planning provides key personnel with a forum for learning how to pool resources and serve clients in the most effective manner.

Relationships Between Categories of Services and Factors

Relationships were examined between three categories of factors affecting delivery of transition services (i.e.,

cooperation between vocational and special education, support for transition and a formal interagency transition team) and four categories of transition services for secondary students with disabilities (i.e., integration, instruction, coordinated planning and support services). The discussion is organized around the three factors. Prior to this study the importance of each of these factors was only assumed throughout the literature.

Cooperation between vocational and special education.

This study revealed that cooperation between vocational and special education has substantial positive relationships with all four of the transition service categories. The highest relationship existed with instructional programs for students with disabilities. Causal relationships cannot be determined by relational statistics alone; however, it is rational that as cooperation of vocational and special education increases, it is more likely that functional instruction would be provided. The orientation of vocational education is that of teaching appropriate work behaviors, skills and ethics, while also integrating academic skills into the simulated or community-based work environment. Communication and cooperation help both special and vocational educators understand instructional needs of students with disabilities in independent living,

career related areas and preparation for employment through on-the-job training and work experience programs.

The second highest relationship was with support services. Through cooperation with vocational educators it may be that special educators become more aware of the complexity of appropriate vocational choices. Then, as case managers, these teachers would access vocational evaluation and guidance counseling services for their students. Further, vocational education legislation (U. S. Congress, 1990b) mandates that students with disabilities be provided assessment and guidance and counseling services; therefore, students in vocational education may be more likely to access these services.

The third highest relationship was with the degree of coordinated transition planning. Special education teachers often assume too much responsibility for the total program to the exclusion of others (Engelhard, 1982). At the same time, the nature of vocational education is to work with advisory councils and the employment community. By example, close involvement with vocational education can increase the special educators' awareness of the need to incorporate outside sources. Planning and preparing for the transition to educational, residential and vocational services prior to leaving school should be a shared responsibility.

The last relationship of noteworthy magnitude was with integration. The experience of participation in regular vocational education is similar to that which the students encounter as they participate in the mainstream of society. Peers are taught to work cooperatively and to have appropriate attitudes. As vocational and special education teachers cooperate, vocational educators hopefully receive the support and consultative services they need. Logically, when vocational educators feel supported and see the success of their students with disabilities, they welcome such students into their classrooms. In such instances, the level of integration would likely be greater.

Support for transition. The level of support for transition has acceptable relationships with three of the four categories of transition services. The highest relationship is with coordinated transition planning. For coordinated transition planning to occur, support of administrators must be strong. Bringing a number of agencies to the point of cooperation requires systematic plans for cooperation and allocation of staff time. Administrators who have established procedures to coordinate with agencies and families, would likely support direct involvement of parents in planning and implementation of services, and they would likely see that parents are

provided information about community resources for their children.

The second highest association was with instructional programs. Supportive administrators would likely assure that students with disabilities are provided the full range of functional education to facilitate positive postsecondary outcomes. For administrators to be truly supportive of transition, they would need to be vested in development of potential of students with disabilities to achieve total community integration.

The last meaningful relationship found for the factor of administrative support was with the category of support services. Vocational assessment and guidance and counseling are the foundations of transition services. These supports are essential to ensure appropriate directions for individuals with disabilities as they prepare for community participation. The Carl D. Perkins vocational education legislation states the assurance that instruction will be based on assessment and that guidance and counseling to facilitate transition will be provided by professional counselors. Such coordination of services within the schools would logically be a precedent to successful coordination with agencies outside the school; therefore, vocational assessment and counseling services would be

available in school divisions where administrators support the notion of transition services.

Formal interagency transition team. This last factor had a noteworthy relationship with only one of the transition service categories. That category was coordinated transition planning. This would be expected due to the fact that a team may be the procedure implemented to provide coordinated planning.

A limitation of this study is that it did not examine this variable more closely. This data might be more meaningful if it had determined who served on the team, activities of the team, the numbers of students served by the team and so on. Some of the existing teams in Virginia serve very limited numbers of students who meet specific criteria, while others may serve all the special education students who need interagency planning in a given school division. Also, some teams only access the Department of Rehabilitative Services while others may access as many as thirteen human service providers. Such differences in the teams might affect the magnitudes of correlations with transition services.

Another element that may have affected the magnitude of the correlations between the factor of a team and the categories of transition services was the dichotomous nature of this variable. This may have lessened the strength of

the team variable as compared to the others, each of which were formulated through several quality indicators. Were the above considerations taken into account this variable would have been measured more comprehensively.

Demographics of Transition Coordinators

Demographic data about persons who were designated most responsible for coordination of transition services in local school divisions were also collected. Less than half of the respondents indicated that transition coordination was formally included as part of their job duties. Even when coordination was included as a job responsibility, only a small proportion of time was generally attributed to these duties.

According to the results of this study, mostly administrative personnel are designated responsible for coordination of transition services with teachers occasionally assigned this duty. When comparing the teachers and administrators, it appears neither group had this responsibility formally included as part of their duties very frequently. However, an interesting contrast was that teachers reported more of their time as allocated for coordination of transition services.

Unfortunately, it is evident that coordination of transition services is hardly a priority in Virginia. Virginia's Project VAST operated on the premise that

interagency teams were more likely to function efficiently and to survive over time when an individual was assigned responsibility for coordination; therefore, assignment of such an individual was a requirement for assistance through that project. Still, unless administrators were highly dedicated to maintenance of the teams, the interagency teams terminated soon after the project ended (Virginia Department of Education, 1990b).

Typically, administrators have inadequate time to personally focus on transition coordination. Therefore, those administrators truly vested in the process would likely delegate these duties and allow time for that staff member to oversee the process. Nonetheless, in Virginia this duty falls on administrators 85% of the time.

Conclusions

Administrative support for transition at the local level is a critical need. To increase the level of transition services provided in a locality, it is essential that administrators provide procedures for a continuum of services and for coordinated planning across the school, agencies and the family. Further, even though it was reported in this study that cooperation is encouraged between special and vocational education, staff time is not often allocated for someone to coordinate cooperative efforts. It was also discovered that few administrators

provide inservice which would increase the competence of personnel responsible for transition planning and preparation.

Do schools that lack a continuum of preparatory services have the capacity to appropriately prepare their students for transition? In schools where inservice is not conducted or technical assistance is not provided do teachers have the capacity to plan and prepare their students? When IEP planning occurs without all the important players, is the individualized program really meaningful and thorough? In other words, this research raises the issue as to whether transition planning and preparation can be of substance when administrators are not vested in the initiative.

Another conclusion of this study is that cooperation of vocational and special education enhances the level of transition services provided secondary students with disabilities. It is true that special educators should cooperate with all regular educators, but perspectives from vocational education are rather unique. Vocational educators possess abilities and resources to identify specific occupational competencies, assist students in developing appropriate work behaviors, teach through hands-on experiences and develop work experiences and job placements within the community. Special educators offer

expertise in behavioral management, application of assessment to instructional planning, learning styles and adaptations of curriculum and instruction. Coordination of these two disciplines a key to preparing students with disabilities for successful transitions to community living.

The last conclusion is that a formal interagency transition team increases the level of coordinated transition planning for individuals. A formalized team approach brings together agency representatives and allows the pooling of resources. Planning and implementation strategies can be designed by the family, the school and human service representatives to ensure success as students with disabilities transition to the adult community.

Recommendations for Future Research

Based on analysis of data from this study, areas of future research are recommended. Investigations are needed to determine:

(a) What are the differences in the delivery of transition services as reported by school personnel and the delivery of services as reported by parents and students?

In this study some data reported about the status of services and factors indicated a much higher level than would be anticipated by professional judgments. This could be attributed to the fact that survey respondents were stakeholders, despite several attempts to guard against

inflated reporting. Similar data collection from parents and students could confirm the results of this study or provide a balance of information for use by the stakeholders in program improvement. Also, this approach would reveal importance aspects of including the family in the transition planning process.

(b) How comprehensive are transition services for students with mild/moderate disabilities as compared to those for students with severe disabilities?

Occasionally respondents expressed difficulty in reporting the degree to which services were provided due to differences in transition services according to the severity of the disability. A likely hypothesis for such a study would be that students with mild/moderate disabilities receive a higher degree of transition services than those with severe disabilities.

(c) What factors promote cooperation between vocational and special education and administrative support at the local level?

This research indicated that both the degree of cooperation of vocational and special education and the degree of administrative support had substantial positive relationships with the level of transition services provided secondary students with disabilities. Therefore, research

to investigate the nature of these two factors would be a contribution.

(e) Does the percentage of time allocated for coordination of transition services make a difference?

This study revealed that special education administrators were designated as persons with primary responsibility for transition coordination, but that only a small portion of their time was allocated for this duty. In contrast, when teachers were given this responsibility a major amount of their time was designated for coordination. Oftentimes, it is difficult to convince administrators that staff time for coordination is essential to quality programming. Unfortunately, the number of teachers designated as coordinators in this study was so small that such data cannot be meaningfully derived. Investigation of this concept could contribute to best practice information for the field.

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APPENDIX A
The Survey Instrument

**NEEDS ASSESSMENT OF LOCAL TRANSITION SERVICES
FOR YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES
ACADEMIC YEAR 1990 - 1991**

Directions:

Please respond to each item as directed and keep the following definition in mind:

Transition Services are coordinated activities for students with disabilities which promote movement from school to employment, post-secondary education, vocational training, continuing and adult education services, independent living, or community participation.

PART ONE: SPECIFIC TRANSITION SERVICES

THIS SECTION IDENTIFIES CATEGORIES OF TRANSITION SERVICES AT THE SECONDARY LEVEL. AS YOU REVIEW EACH STATEMENT, RESPOND BY INDICATING THE DEGREE OF IMPLEMENTATION IN YOUR SCHOOL DIVISION.

1. **INTEGRATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES in your school division. (Rate each statement by circling the response that best describes the level of implementation.)**

Scale: 3 = Always
2 = Usually
1 = Seldom
0 = Never

- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) Students are integrated with nondisabled peers in academic classrooms. | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| b) Students are integrated with nondisabled peers in vocational education programs. | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| c) Students are integrated with nondisabled peers across the general school environment (lunch, recreation, study halls, etc.). | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| d) Technology is implemented as needed to integrate students into the mainstream of the total school program. | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| e) Procedures are implemented to improve attitudes of nondisabled peers toward integration of students with disabilities. | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |

2. **INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES in your school division. (Rate each statement by circling the response that best describes the level of implementation.)**

Scale: 3 = Always
 2 = Usually
 1 = Seldom
 0 = Never

- | | | | | | |
|----|--|---|---|---|---|
| a) | Instruction in independent living skills is provided as needed. | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| b) | Instruction in social/interpersonal skills is provided as needed. | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| c) | Instruction on use of leisure time is provided as needed. | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| d) | Individualized vocational instruction is provided as needed. | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| e) | Students investigate career options. | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| f) | Job seeking and keeping skills are part of the curriculum. | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| g) | Students participate in on-the-job training programs as needed. | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| h) | Students are linked to employment, or postsecondary education/training programs prior to leaving school. | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |

3. **COORDINATED TRANSITION PLANNING FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES in your school division. (Rate each statement by circling the response that best describes the level of implementation.)**

- | | | | | | |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) | Systematic planning strategies provide referral to educational, residential, and vocational services <u>before</u> students leave school. | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| b) | A written statement of cooperation exists between agencies involved in transition. | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| c) | Business and industry representatives are involved in planning and implementing transition services. | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |

Scale: 3 = Always
 2 = Usually
 1 = Seldom
 0 = Never

- | | | | | | |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|
| d) | Community representatives or persons with disabilities serve as student advocates during the planning of transition services. | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| e) | Parents are involved in reviewing and evaluating their child's educational programming. | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| f) | Parents are informed about community resources and human service agencies that can benefit their child. | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| g) | Parents are directly involved in planning and implementing transition services. | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |

4. **SUPPORT SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES** in your school division. (Rate each statement by circling the response that best describes the level of implementation.)

- | | | | | | |
|----|--|---|---|---|---|
| a) | Guidance personnel assist students in career planning and career decision making. | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| b) | Guidance personnel participate in making program placement decisions for students. | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| c) | Vocational assessment data is considered when selecting vocational education programs for individuals. | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| d) | Once a student is placed in a vocational program, curricula and instruction are based upon vocational assessment data. | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |

PART TWO: FACTORS AFFECTING TRANSITION SERVICES

THIS SECTION INVESTIGATES FACTORS WHICH MAY AFFECT DELIVERY OF TRANSITION SERVICES. AS YOU REVIEW EACH STATEMENT, CIRCLE THE BEST RESPONSE.

- 5. COOPERATION OF VOCATIONAL AND SPECIAL EDUCATION in your school division. (Rate each statement by circling the response that best describes the degree to which it occurs.)**

Scale: 3 = Always
2 = Usually
1 = Seldom
0 = Never

- | | | | | | |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) | Special and vocational educators cooperate in making program placement decisions for students with disabilities. | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| b) | Special and vocational educators collaborate to write vocational education goals and objectives on Individualized Education Programs (IEP). | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| c) | Special and vocational education teachers work together to accommodate students with disabilities as they participate in vocational education programs. | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| d) | Special and vocational education teachers collaborate in monitoring and evaluating progress of students in vocational education. | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |

- 6. LEVEL OF SUPPORT FOR TRANSITION in your school division. (Rate each statement by circling the response that best describes the degree to which it occurs.)**

- | | | | | | |
|----|--|---|---|---|---|
| a) | Cooperative planning between vocational and special education is encouraged and supported by administrators. | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| b) | A person is specifically assigned responsibility for coordination between vocational and special education. | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |

Scale: 3 = Always
 2 = Usually
 1 = Seldom
 0 = Never

- | | | | | | |
|----|--|---|---|---|---|
| c) | Established procedures provide a continuum of vocational education, including assessment, appropriate programs, individualized planning, and support services. | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| d) | There are established procedures for coordination of planning between the school, family, and human service agencies. | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| e) | Inservice is provided for personnel responsible for transition services. | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |

7. **FACTORS IMPORTANT TO TRANSITION.** The list below contains items important to the successful transition of individuals with disabilities to adult living. (Circle the response which best indicates the degree to which each item is AVAILABLE in your locality.)

Scale: 3 = Always available
 2 = Usually available
 1 = Seldom available
 0 = Never available

- | | | | | | |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) | Community support services | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| b) | Access to services | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| c) | Case management | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| d) | Linkage of dropouts and adjudicated youth to services | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| e) | Employment services | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| f) | Employment opportunities | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| g) | Public or private transportation | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| h) | Housing and residential support | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| i) | Leisure skills development options | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| j) | Financial planning for individuals | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| k) | Physical and mental health services | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| l) | Knowledge of work incentives (SSI) | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |

Scale: 3 = Always available
 2 = Usually available
 1 = Seldom available
 0 = Never available

m) Awareness/knowledge about transition	3	2	1	0
n) Commitment of professionals	3	2	1	0
o) Bureaucratic flexibility	3	2	1	0
p) Positive attitudes toward persons with disabilities	3	2	1	0
q) Clearly defined roles and responsibilities	3	2	1	0

PART THREE: BASIC INFORMATION

8. You were identified as the person within the school system most responsible for coordination of transition services. Is this formally included as part of your duties? (Select one.)

- yes
- no

8a. If yes,

Approximate percentage of your time allotted for transition coordination _____%

9. Does your school division currently have, or has it had, a formal set of procedures for delivery of transition services? (Select one.)

- yes
- no

9a. If yes, (select one)

- locally developed/funded
- state developed/funded
- other, specify _____

10. Does your school division participate in a formal, interagency transition planning team? (Select one.)

yes

no

11. Please identify the agency which coordinates interagency transition efforts in your locality. (Select one.)

Local School Division, Special Education

Local School Division, Vocational Education

Department of Rehabilitative Services

Mental Health/Mental Retardation Services

Other, specify _____

Not applicable

12. On the list below, indicate the agencies with which your school division ACTUALLY works/coordinates to provide transition services for secondary students with disabilities. (Select all that apply.)

Adult Literacy Programs

Business and Industry

Independent Living Centers

Correctional Education

Employment and Training (JTPA)

Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Local Municipal Governments

Mental Health Services

Mental Retardation Services

Rehabilitative Services

Postsecondary Ed./Training

Social Services

Supported Employment

Employment Commission

Youth and Family Services

Visually Handicapped

Rights of Virginians with Disabilities

Others- specify, _____

13. Are post-graduation follow-ups conducted on students with disabilities? (Select one.)

yes

no

13a. If yes,
Are you willing to share your results?
(Select one.)

yes no

14. Which categories of students with disabilities in your school division receive transition services? (Check all that apply.)

Learning Disability

Speech Impairment

Emotional Disturbance

Visual Impairment

Mild Mental Retardation

Hearing Impairment

Moderate Mental Retardation

Orthopedic Disability

Severe Mental Retardation

Traumatic Brain Injury

Health Impairment

Autism

Other, _____

PART FOUR: TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NEEDS

15. Please select those technical assistance services you feel would most enhance the delivery of transition services in your locality. (Select all that apply.)

a) Staff Development

b) Parent/community education

c) Interagency communication/planning

d) Resource materials

e) Information and referrals

- f) Consultation (*Select all categories that apply*):
- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Team Building/Communication | <input type="checkbox"/> Parent Issues |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individualized Transition Plans | <input type="checkbox"/> Employer Issues |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Policy & Legislation | <input type="checkbox"/> Assessment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> State Task Force | <input type="checkbox"/> Curriculum |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Economic Development | <input type="checkbox"/> Barrier Resolution |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Interagency Coordination | <input type="checkbox"/> Self-Advocacy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Supported Employment | <input type="checkbox"/> Counseling |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Job Development | <input type="checkbox"/> College Programs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Job Placement | <input type="checkbox"/> Technology |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Case Management | <input type="checkbox"/> Accommodation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Program Development | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Specific Agency Programs & Services, specify | |
| _____ | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> other, specify _____ | |

Additional Comments:

Individual responses will remain confidential. The following information is necessary for regional reporting purposes and to verify our roster of school personnel responsible for transition services.

Survey Completer _____

Title _____

School System _____

APPENDIX B

Letter to Superintendent



Division of Vocational & Technical Education
Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University
Blacksburg, VA 24061-0254
Office (703) 231-8229
Hotline 800-648-2714

date

«mrms» «fname» «lname»
«if title»«title»
«endif»«if school»«school»
«endif»«if address»«address»
«endif»«city», «state» «zip»

Dear «mrms» «lname»:

The 1990 amendments to the Education for Handicapped Children Act, now the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (P.L. 101-476), requires schools to include a statement of transition needs and services in the IEP of each special education student no later than age 16. Enclosed is an information sheet summarizing this mandate.

It is important that needs of school divisions be recognized as policy is developed around implementation of this mandate. The Transition Technical Assistance Center at Virginia Tech plans to conduct research to determine the current status of transition services in Virginia and factors critical to delivery of effective transition services. Therefore, we need your help.

Please take a moment to complete the enclosed form to let us know who in your school division is most responsible for coordination of transition services as defined in the amendments. We need your response by Friday, January 25.

A business reply envelope is enclosed for your convenience. If you have questions please contact me at 703-231-8229. Thank you for your assistance!

Sincerely,

Alice G. Anderson
Transition Coordinator

RETURN BY FRIDAY, JANUARY 25, 1991

Please provide contact information for the person in your school division who is MOST RESPONSIBLE for coordination of transition services.

SCHOOL DIVISION _____

NAME _____

TITLE _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE _____

USE BUSINESS REPLY ENVELOPE, OR ADDRESS RESPONSE TO:

TRANSITION TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTER
VIRGINIA TECH
342 LANE HALL
BLACKSBURG, VA 24061-0254

APPENDIX C

**Letter to Transition Coordinators
Identified by Superintendents**



*Southwest
Virginia
Transition
Center*

Division of Vocational & Technical Education
Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University
Blacksburg, VA 24061-0254
Office (703) 231-8229
Hotline 800-848-2714

date

«mrms» «fname» «lname»
«if title»«title»
«endif»«if school»«school»
«endif»«if address»«address»
«endif»«city», «state» «zip»

Dear «mrms» «lname»:

Your superintendent identified you as the person in your school division most responsible for transition services. Therefore, we are asking for your assistance in a statewide needs assessment to determine the current level of transition services across the state and factors that may affect delivery of services. Results of the enclosed survey will be used by the Transition Task Force, coordinated by the Virginia Department of Education, to make recommendations for state guidelines in planning and delivery of transition services.

In the event that a person other than yourself is most responsible for coordination of transition services in your school division, please forward this survey to that individual.

We appreciate your response by Friday, March 22. A business reply envelope is enclosed for your convenience. Should you have questions, please call me at 703-231-8229. Thank you for your prompt response and for sharing your expertise!

Sincerely,

Alice G. Anderson
Transition Coordinator

aa/ek
Enclosure

APPENDIX D

Letter to Special Education Directors
as Default Survey Recipients



*Southwest
Virginia
Transition
Center*

Division of Vocational & Technical Education
Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University
Blacksburg, VA 24061-0254
Office (703) 231-8229
Hotline 800-848-2714

date

«mrms» «fname» «lname»
«if title»«title»
«endif»«if school»«school»
«endif»«if address»«address»
«endif»«city», «state» «zip»

Dear «mrms» «lname»:

The 1990 amendments to the Education for Handicapped Children Act (P.L. 94-142) mandate schools to include a statement of transition needs and services in the IEP of each special education student no later than age 16. Enclosed is an information sheet summarizing the transition related mandates.

The State Department of Education and the Transition Technical Assistance Center at Virginia Tech are conducting a state-wide needs assessment to identify needs of Virginia school divisions and critical factors to delivery of effective transition services; therefore, we need your help.

Please identify the individual in your school division most responsible for coordination of transition services as defined in the amendments (it may be you.) Then we ask that the appropriate person take a few moments to complete and return the enclosed survey. Results will be used in planning assistance to local school divisions in meeting this requirement.

We need the completed survey by February 28, 1991. If you have questions, please contact me at 703-231-8229. A business reply envelope is enclosed for your convenience. Thank you for your assistance!

Sincerely,

Alice G. Anderson
Transition Coordinator

APPENDIX E

First Follow-up Letter



*Southwest
Virginia
Transition
Center*

Division of Vocational & Technical Education
Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University
Blacksburg, VA 24061-0254
Office (703) 231-8229
Hotline 800-848-2714

date

«mrms» «fname» «lname»
«if title»«title»
«endif»«if school»«school»
«endif»«if address»«address»
«endif»«city», «state» «zip»

Dear «mrms» «lname»:

The first week in March you received a needs assessment survey to investigate the level of transition services in Virginia and factors which affect service delivery. Thus far, we have not received your response.

Please return your completed survey today. The Department of Education is now requesting the aggregate data for use in making application to the federal government for one of five grant awards to the states. Should we successfully attain an award, additional resources will be available for delivery of transition services.

A high response rate on this statewide needs assessment is necessary. If you have misplaced your survey, please request another one by calling 1-800-848-2714. Thank you for your prompt assistance!

Sincerely,

Alice Anderson
Transition Coordinator

aa/ek

APPENDIX F
Second Follow-up Letter



*Southwest
Virginia
Transition
Center*

Division of Vocational & Technical Education
Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University
Blacksburg, VA 24061-0254
Office (703) 231-8229
Hotline 800-848-2714

date

«mrms» «fname» «lname»
«if title»«title»
«endif»«if school»«school»
«endif»«if address»«address»
«endif»«city», «state» «zip»

Dear «mrms» «lname»:

Enclosed is a copy of the statewide needs assessment which you received in early March. The needs assessment is commissioned by Virginia's Transition Task Force and the aggregate data is being requested by the Department of Education for possible use in a federal proposal to bring monies into the state. As of today, we still need your response. If you just mailed it, thanks!

Respondents have commented that this needs assessment is a pleasant change from the typical surveys which cross their desks. It is easy to complete and the information being gathered is actually relevant.

Please help us out and put the completed survey in the mail by Wednesday, April 18. The response rate is already at 82%, but it needs to be even better. We sincerely appreciate your time and assistance.

Sincerely,

Alice Anderson
Transition Coordinator

APPENDIX G

**Percentages of Virginia School Divisions
Reporting Transition Services and Factors for
Students with Disabilities**

Percentages of Virginia School Divisions Reporting
Transition Services for Students with Disabilities

3 = always 1 = seldom
2 = usually 0 = never

Integration Services	3	2	1	0
<hr/>				
Across the general school environment	72	27	1	0
In academic classrooms	23	73	4	0
In vocational education classrooms	32	63	5	0
Technology to increase integration	19	61	19	1
Procedures to improve peer attitudes	16	53	30	1
<hr/>				
Instructional Services	3	2	1	0
<hr/>				
Independent living skills	42	51	7	0
Social skills	36	56	8	0
Career awareness	35	57	7	1
Job seeking/keeping skills	33	57	10	1
Individualized vocational education	30	54	15	1
Leisure skills	23	48	28	1
Linkage to employment/further education prior to school exit	17	54	27	2
On-the-job training	24	39	27	10

Coordinated Planning Services	3	2	1	0
Parents review and evaluate their children's programs	66	30	3	1
Parents informed of resources and agencies	39	53	7	1
Parents directly involved in planning and implementing transition services	28	55	15	2
Written interagency agreements	38	40	19	3
Systematic planning strategies for service referral	17	57	23	3
Business & industry involved in planning	2	27	52	19
Community rep. involved in planning	4	25	41	30
Support Services	3	2	1	0
Vocational assessment considered in program placement	34	51	14	1
Guidance assists in career planning	39	45	14	2
Guidance assists in program placement	31	50	17	2
Curriculum and instruction based on vocational assessment data	12	61	23	4

n = 120

Percentages of Virginia School Divisions Reporting

Factors Affecting Delivery of Transition Services

3 = always 1 = seldom
2 = usually 0 = never

Cooperation of Vocational and Special Education	3	2	1	0
<hr/>				
Accommodating students in vocational education programs	27	60	12	1
Monitoring and evaluating progress of students	23	58	19	0
Making program placement decisions	19	58	21	2
Writing vocational goals & obj. on IEP	18	47	31	4
<hr/>				
Administrative Support for Transition	3	2	1	0
<hr/>				
Cooperative planning encouraged between vocational and special education	48	44	8	0
Procedures provide a continuum of services including assessment, appropriate programs, individualized planning, and support services	21	40	33	6
Procedures for coordination of planning between school, family, and human service agencies	18	41	33	8
A person is assigned responsibility for coordination of vocational and special education	19	23	24	24
Inservice provided personnel responsible for transition services	12	34	41	13

n = 120

APPENDIX H
Intercorrelations Among Indicators

INTERCORRELATIONS AMONG INDICATORS

Integration

VARIABLES	1	2	3	4	5
1. academic classes	-	.37	.29	.15	.40
2. vocational education		-	.36	.27	.29
3. general school environment			-	.10	.22
4. technology implemented				-	.19
5. improve nondisabled peer attitudes					-

Instructional Programs

VARIABLES	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. independent living	-	.78	.57	.44	.39	.36	.32	.32
2. social/interpersonal		-	.59	.51	.39	.48	.18	.28
3. recreation/leisure skills			-	.29	.28	.33	.22	.17
4. individual voc. instruction				-	.55	.53	.48	.52
5. career options investigated					-	.45	.36	.39
6. job seeking/keeping skills						-	.42	.42
7. on-the-job training provided							-	.66
8. linked to education/employment								-

Coordinated Transition Planning

VARIABLES	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. systematic referrals	-	.43	.50	.39	.27	.55	.57
2. written agency cooperation		-	.31	.28	.20	.45	.48
3. business & industry participate			-	.64	.07	.33	.36
4. community reps. participate				-	.10	.25	.39
5. parents review & eval. program					-	.58	.43
6. parents informed of resources						-	.74
7. parent involved in implementation							-

Support Services

VARIABLES	1	2	3	4
1. guidance assists in career planning	-	.77	.46	.38
2. guidance assists in program placement		-	.41	.39
3. voc assmt data used for voc placement			-	.69
4. curr & instr based on voc assmt data				-

Cooperation of Vocational and Special Education

VARIABLES	1	2	3	4
1. coop. in program placement decisions	-	.69	.65	.66
2. coop. in writing voc goals on IEP		-	.59	.60
3. coop. in accommodation in voc ed			-	.79
4. coop. in monitoring & evaluating students				-

Administrative Support for Transition

VARIABLES	1	2	3	4	5
1. coop of voc & special ed encouraged	-	.23	.47	.37	.34
2. person assigned coord of voc & sp ed		-	.55	.51	.51
3. a continuum of services is provided			-	.64	.52
4. coord of school, family, & agencies				-	.50
5. inservice provided for personnel					-

VITA

ALICE GLOVER ANDERSON

Date of Birth: 12/31/52

Professional Address

Residence

Virginia Polytechnic Institute &
State University
342 Lane Hall
Blacksburg, Virginia 24061-0254
24179
Phone: 703-231-8229

1045 Finney Drive
Vinton, Virginia
703-890-5298

EDUCATION

- 1992 **Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.**
Doctorate of Education, Vocational Education, Special Needs.
- 1981 **Radford University, Virginia.**
Master of Science, Special Education. Minor, Psychology.
- 1974 **James Madison University, Virginia.**
Bachelor of Arts, Spanish. Minor, German.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg.**
- 1989-present Research Associate. Coordinate the Southwest Virginia Transition Technical Assistance Center. Research best practices. Assess local needs to develop service delivery models. Facilitate interagency and interdisciplinary collaboration. Conduct staff development and community education workshops. Teach graduate course in vocational special needs education.
- 1984 Graduate Assistant. Developed curriculum for vocational special needs graduate classes.

Roanoke County Schools, Salem, Virginia.

- 1981-1989 Vocational Consultant for Special Education, 1981-1989. Arnold R. Burton Technology Center. Provided consultation for special and vocational education personnel. Planned and implemented individualized vocational education programs and supports for students with disabilities. Coordinated transition planning.
- 1979-1981 Learning Disabilities Teacher
1974-1975 Teacher of Foreign Languages

Franklin County Schools, Rocky Mount, Virginia.

- 1978-1979 Learning Disabilities Teacher

Edgemoade of Virginia Residential Treatment Center for Adolescents with Severe Emotional Disturbances, Franklin County, Virginia.

- 1975-1978 Work-Study Coordinator

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Council for Exceptional Children
National Association for Vocational Education Special Needs Personnel
Virginia Council for Learning Disabilities
Virginia Vocational Association

CERTIFICATIONS

Supervisor- General Education and Special Education
Coordinator- Industrial Cooperative Training
Special Education- Emotional Disturbance
Special Education- Learning Disabilities
Foreign Language- Spanish

Signature

ABSTRACT

THE STATUS OF TRANSITION SERVICES FOR SECONDARY STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN VIRGINIA AND FACTORS AFFECTING SERVICE DELIVERY

This study addresses systemized transition planning and preparation for adult adjustment of secondary students with disabilities. Transition planning and preparation for youth with disabilities as they move from school to work and community adjustment is essential; however, thorough planning is rarely accomplished.

Therefore, it is important to study the level at which transition services are currently delivered for secondary students with disabilities and to examine factors that affect delivery of those services. This study investigates (a) the status of transition services in Virginia school divisions, (b) the status of specific factors that may affect delivery of transition services, (c) factors related to delivery of transition services and (d) demographics about persons most responsible for coordination of transition in local school divisions.

Specifically, four transition service areas were examined: a) integration of students with disabilities with nondisabled peers, b) instructional programs, c) coordinated planning and d) support services. Also investigated were three factors that affect delivery of transition services:

a) cooperation of vocational and special education, b) administrative support and c) a formal interagency transition team.

Findings indicated the degree to which transition services were delivered across the state, as well as relationships between the level of delivery of transition services and the factors that were examined. Positive correlations demonstrated that the greater the level of administrative support for transition at the local level, the greater the level of delivery of transition services. Further, the greater the level of cooperation of vocational and special education, the greater the level of delivery of transition services. Existence of an interagency team correlated substantially with coordinated planning services.